



## SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

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**P**arshat Toldot includes the challenging episode of Rivka Imeinu, disguising her son Yaakov as his older brother Eisav, in order to seemingly deceive an elderly and frail Yitzchak to bestow upon Yaakov, the blessings of the first born. What is the significance of this troubling episode? How could it be that Yaakov Avinu would come to receive these blessings in such a way? How could it be that Rivka would facilitate this entire episode?

In the subsequent *pesukim*, Eisav approaches his father, having prepared his favorite foods, in anticipation that his father will indeed bless him, he is shocked to hear Yitzchak's reply:

“*Ba Achicha B'Mirma, vayikach birchatecha.*” *Your Brother came cunningly, and took your blessing.* “

The Ateret Yehoshua of Dzhikov, zy'a offers a fascinating insight- the word **B'mirma** is equal in numerical value to the word **afikoman**.

When Eisav approaches his father with this meal, Yitzchak answers him that it is Pesach night, and I have already eaten a meal which your brother served me, which included the *Afikoman*- I therefore am no

longer allowed to eat from your meal, as one is prohibited to eat any additional food on Pesach night, once they have consumed the *Afikoman*.

This novel approach of course takes into account the midrashic suggestion that each of the *Avot* fulfilled the entire *Torah* through *ruach hakodesh*, even though they had not received the *Torah* and were not commanded to do so.

Rabbi Moshe Weinberger, *shlita* points out that on the *Seder* night, the *matza* which is set aside as the *Afikoman*, is one half of the *matza* which is broken for *Yachatz*, at the beginning of the *Seder*. **Yachatz**, as explained by Rabbi Weinberger, is an acronym for the words: **Yadav, Chelkat Tzavarav**- his hands and the smooth of his neck- a reference to the parts of Yaakov's body, which Rivka covered with fur to disguise him as Eisav!

So what are we to learn from both this episode of disguise and deception, as well as it's connection to the *Afikoman* of *Layl HaSeder*?

On the *Seder* night, many have the custom that the *Afikoman* is hidden for the children to find, or to take it and “steal it” in exchange for a finder's fee or present upon its return. Rabbi Weinberger points out that there is an important message hidden within this custom. *Yaakov Avinu*, the ultimate *Ish Emet*, did not feel it was right for him to receive the blessing, he was not

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the *bechor* and therefore did not see himself as deserving to be blessed accordingly.

So too, many of us may feel that we are unworthy or not deserving to learn the depths of *Torah*, to delve into *penimiut hatorah*- the inner secrets of *Torah*. Rabbi Weinberger suggests that on the *Layl HaSeder*, we too must step out of our comfort zone like *Yaakov Avinu* and hide or steal the *Afikoman*, to realize that yes we too, are worthy to learn the secrets of *Torah*.

In truth, this beautiful teaching is an important message not only for the *Layl HaSeder*, but for the entire year. We should all be open, and blessed to realize that each of us is indeed worthy to delve into the depth and inner meaning of *Torah*, and to find *chizuk* and joy in exploring the beauty of *Penimiut HaTorah*. ■

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