



REBBETZIN SHIRA

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# Preferential Parenting

“*Vayehi Eisav...ish sadeh, veYaakov ish tam yoshev ohalim*”, Eisav became ... a man of the field and Yakov was a scholarly man who remained with the tents. We then learn that Yitzchak Avinu loved Eisav because “*tzayid befv*”, he fed his father venison. Rivka Imeinu, however, loved Yaakov. How are we to understand the love of Yitzchak Avinu towards Eisav? Was Yitzchak Avinu not aware of his son’s wickedness? Clearly, when analyzing these great personalities, emphasizes Rav Nebenzal, we are not doing a character assessment nor critiquing their actions. We focus our learning with the goal of deriving lessons and guidance, allowing insight and commentary to inform our own lives. Rav Nebenzal discusses that perhaps on some subconscious level, Yitzchak Avinu was influenced by the food that Eisav served him and that thus was indeed unaware of Eisav’s true personality. Having said this, we can apply the message personally. When confronted with the power of bribery, we must ask ourselves, are we

influenced by bribes? When we encounter different situations, can we employ clarity of vision to know what is objectively correct? Or are we influenced by what feels good, convenient and what works best? One must continuously daven “*Vehaer einenu beToratecha*”, may Hashem enlighten us to follow the path of truth.

Rav Schwadron in *Lev Shalom* sees a significant nuance in the *passuk* itself that may help us understand Yitzchak Avinu’s love for Eisav. Eisav is described as a “man of the field” and as “a man who knew how to hunt”. The double referral of “*ish*” indicates the dual personality that Eisav possessed. Indeed, when he was with his father he acted righteously, as a *talmid chacham* asking intricate questions. However, when he was in the field, he was the personality of Eisav as we know him, aggressive, contentious, and hostile. The *Zohar Hakadosh* supports this supposition by noting that Eisav’s head was buried in *Mearat Hamachpelah*. His head was full of Torah knowledge, but his limitation was his inability to translate what knew intellectually into practical application. The *Chidushei Harim* explains that this is the deeper meaning of the term ‘*talmid chacham*.’ One must be a ‘student of

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wisdom'; allowing the wisdom he absorbs to impact his behavior.

*Malbim* explains that Yitzchak Avinu believed that his sons would complement each other, like a Yissachar /Zevulun relationship. The *Netivot Shalom* further expounds that Yitzchak Avinu saw his own *middah* of *gevurah* in Eisav and was drawn to it. Rivka on the other hand, who's essence was *chessed*, was drawn to the loving kindness that she perceived in Yakov. Ideally, these two brothers should have worked in tandem to serve Hashem.

*Siftei Re'em* understands our *pasuk* slightly differently. He suggests that Yitzchak Avinu **also** loved Eisav; he looked for something positive to focus on and found the "tzayid be'fiv". Rav Belsky adds that the Torah is sharing the outer expressions of love that Yitzchak Avinu showed Eisav encouraging him to become a better person. The Chumash is teaching us that when a child is experiencing challenges, a parent must dispense many doses of love to boost and hearten him. With a parent's belief and love, a child will feel assured and inspired to become his best self. Clearly, Yitzchak Avinu knew his sons' distinct natures and provided the necessary framework for each to thrive. ■

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