

RABBI YOSEF GINSBERG
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TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE

The beautiful and wondrous Parsha of Toldot opens up with the very beginnings of a new generation. It tells of the offspring of Avraham and immediately goes into the beginning of the next generation being created by Yitzchak Avinu and Rivka Imenu. Even before they enter the world, it goes into detail about the twin pregnancy of Rivka and the eternal fight between them ("Vyitrotzitzu Habanim B'kirbah"–"The children agitated within her") that began in the womb. Even before they had names and identities (Yaakov and Eisav), Hashem Himself in Pasuk 23 of Perek 25 tells how there are two nations and two regimes and how one will be mightier than the other. It then follows with relatively great detail about the birth of the two sons and how they looked and the reason for their names.

You may then be disappointed to discover that the next Pasuk, 27, skips over the childhood of Yaakov and Eisav and goes straight into "Vayigdilu Hanearim – The boys grew up," describing how Esav was an 'animal trapper' and 'man of the field' while Yaakov was 'simple' and 'sat in tents'. With all the detail of their coming into this world, where is their childhood?!

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, in a controversial commentary, tells us how the Torah is hinting to us a lesson in education (especially with our children). According to the Pesukim, if we look at the two personalities in the beginning of the Parsha, without bias, they seem to be different, but not necessarily good or bad. It's only when they grow up that we see things play out. Mishlei tells us to "Chanoch l'naar al pi darko" – "bring up each child according to his/her own way". Rav Hirsch brings up how every child is different, yet Yitzchak and Rivka brought up their children in the same way. If they had educated Esav NOT in the way of Yitzchak, but rather in the way in which 'a man of the field' should be educated, Yitzchak would still have been great, and Esav could have been just as great in his own way. He says those Pesukim of their childhood are missing since the education was focused on the result of their children and not necessarily on their everyday needs.

While I don't know if I could agree with such a claim made on our holy foremother and forefather, the message, I believe, is deep and correct. The way of education is not to force the Torah onto our children, but to help find our children's place within

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the Torah.

May we all be Zoche to find ourselves in the Torah and in the rebuilding of the Beit Hamikdash speedily in our days.

Shabbat Shalom



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WHO AM I?

This parsha starts with the pasuk וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק, בֶּן-אַבְרָהָם: אַבְרָהָם, הוֹלִיד אֶת-יִצְחָק. Why does the Torah need to mention that Avraham is Yitzchak's father? We already know that from the last sentence.

So, Rashi says it says Avraham fathered Yitzchak because the scoffers of that generation claimed that Avimelech was the one who had fathered Sarah's child. That's why Avraham's face was made to look like Yitzchak's, so that all would see that Yitzchak looked like Avraham and thereby recognize that Avraham was his father.

My opinion on the pasuk is that Yitzchak is asking himself, "Who am I? Am I Yitzchak, just the son of Avraham, or Yitzchak, the father of Yaakov and the Jewish nation?"

Everyone asks themselves at some point in their life, "Who am I? What will I be? Will I be the next great one, or will I be just another Jew?" Everyone has the power to be the next Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov; the question is what they will do with it. Based on this idea, we can now understand the two parts of the pasuk. אברהם הוליד את יצחק means that Yitzchak was born into Avraham's home and brought up and educated by his father according to his ideology. אלה תולדות יצחק בן אברהם means Yitzchak took his father's ideology and added to it from his perspective and vision for the Jewish nation, and handed down both ideas to the next generation.

We, too, can take the ideals from our parents and add our experiences growing up in Israel, and make our contribution to our generation and the next. ■

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