Points to Ponder

Toldos 5784

**וַתַּ֖הַר רִבְקָ֥ה אִשְׁתּֽוֹ And Hashem answered his prayers and his wife Rivka became pregnant (25:21) – Rashi**explains that Hashem answered Yitzchak because he was a Tzaddik Ben Tzaddik as opposed to her. One would assume that he was able to channel the Zechus of his parents into the situation to assist his tefillah. **Rav Chaim Kamil** . suggests that it is harder to be a Tzaddik Ben Tzaddik than a Tzaddik Ben Rasha. The latter sees the ways of the parent and inherently knows not to act that way. The Tzaddik Ben Tzaddik needs to overcome the desire to be lazy and merely rely on Zechus Avos.  By Yitzchak using his own efforts, Hashem heard his tefillah since it came from a place that overcame complacency.

**וַיְהִ֤י רָעָב֙ בָּאָ֔רֶץ There was a famine in the land in addition to the one that took place in the days of Avraham (26:1) –** **Rav Schachter**  pointed out to us on many occasions that Yitzchak was the forefather who followed his father fully. Therefore, he wanted to go to Mitzrayim like his father did. But sometimes the circumstances are different for the son than for the father. Keeping the tradition sometimes does not mean blind following. Similarly, the Gemara notes that Yehoshua did the same by making a Cheirem on the spoils of Yericho. He thought he had done the same as Moshe did. However, the Maharsha says that the circumstances are different – after the Jews crossed the Yarden the principle of Arvus applied. **Rav Teitz**  often notes that we cannot always be in the shoes of our parents and Rabbonim but we can certainly walk in their footsteps.

**וְכָל־הַבְּאֵרֹ֗ת אֲשֶׁ֤ר חָֽפְרוּ֙ עַבְדֵ֣י אָבִ֔יו בִּימֵ֖י אַבְרָהָ֣ם אָבִ֑יו And all the wells that the servants of Avimelech had dug during Avraham’s life , the Philistines had filled in with dirt (26:15)** – **Rav Moshe Wolfson**  examines why the Torah includes the well story and explains that there are many parts to the job of bringing the sense of Hakadosh Baruch Hu into this world. Those who say that there is no point – merely throw dirt on the efforts to build a Beis HaMikdash in this world and need to see the power of their own destructive nature.

**וַיַּחְפֹּר֙ בְּאֵ֣ר אַחֶ֔רֶת וְלֹ֥א רָב֖וּ עָלֶ֑יהָ And he dug another well (26:22)** – Why was it that the first two wells had arguments about them and this third one had no arguments over its ownership? **Rabbi Lamm**  quoted his uncle who noted that in the first 2 cases Yitzchak left the digging of the wells in the hands of others and as a result the wells led to Eisek and Sitna – hatred and arguments. Once he did the job himself, the well he dug led to Rechovot – to a willingness to work by himself to expand the world by committing his own energies, talents concern and participation to the task. The same is true for each of us who commit ourselves to the mission in life that each of us is assigned to.

**וַיִּקַּ֤ח אִשָּׁה֙ אֶת־יְהוּדִ֔ית בַּת־בְּאֵרִ֖י הַֽחִתִּ֑י וְאֶת־בָּ֣שְׂמַ֔ת בַּת־אֵילֹ֖ן הַֽחִתִּֽי:  Esav’s wives (26:34)** – Here they are referred to as Yehudit Bas Be’Eri and Basmas Bas Eilon HaChivi. Later, they are referred to as Adah Bas Eilon and Alalivah Bas Anah Bas Tzivon  (P. VaYishlach). How did their names change so dramatically? **Rav Chaim Kanievsky**  explains that Esav saw that they did not provide a good relationship for the in laws. As a result, he thought that be changing their names, it would change their relationship with Yitzchak and Rivka (of course, a change of a name does not mean much…)

**הַקֹּל֙ ק֣וֹל יַֽעֲקֹ֔ב The voice is the voice of Yaakov (27:22) – Ramban** suggests that Yaakov even disguised his voice but could not speak the crude style of Eisav. Why not? **Rav Pam** . explains in the name of **Rav Moshe Sternbuch**  that there were certain steps that Yaakov just would not take. To speak crudely like Eisav was out of the question and Yaakov would rather be found out than speak to his father crudely. Rav Pam added that we see how important the manner of speech is for each person – for that defines who and how we carry ourselves our entire lives.

**וַיֶּֽחֱרַ֨ד יִצְחָ֣ק חֲרָדָה֘ גְּדֹלָ֣ה עַד־מְאֹד֒ And Yitzchak was greatly terrified (27:33)** – What was Yitzchak’s great fear? **Rav Haim Sabato**  suggests that Yitzchak’s desire was to connect to both his children and keep them close so that he could place them both under the wing of the Shechina. However, Hashem showed him that the son who was so callous that he sold the Bechora for a mere bowl of lentils is one who does not get the power of the Berachos nor the responsibilities from the world to uphold their uniqueness. Thus, terrified that he was almost mistaken, he noted that Gam Baruch Yihiyeh.

**Haftara:**

**בֵּ֛ן יְכַבֵּ֥ד אָ֖ב וְעֶ֣בֶד אֲדֹנָ֑יו A son shall honor his father...and if I am a master, where is my awe? (Malachi 1:6)** - We open the section with Kavod and end with Mora. Why the change? **Rav Yaakov Kaemenetzy** . noted that when one has a Yirah from love, it is a Yiras HaRomeimus and is part of Ahava/Kavod. Hence, he cautions, one needs to differentiate between Kivod and Keebud. The idea of Kivod Somayim is that it is the source of the relationship and can also include Yirah. Keebud is based on the positive actions one does that demonstrate honor -- as opposed to others that demonstrate Yirah.