Points to Ponder

Toldos 5780

**אַבְרָהָ֖ם הוֹלִ֥יד אֶת־יִצְחָֽק Avraham gave birth to Yitzchak (25:19)** - Much commentary has been written to highlight what exactly Yitzchak’s leadership was. **Rav Schachter Shlita** would often remind us (I believe in the name of the **Brisker Rav**), that Yitzchak’s nuance was in the idea that he did not need to create a Chiddush in the world. Sometimes we think people need to make major changes in order to demonstrate leadership but Yitzchak’s Chiddush was in the lesson that one does not always need a Chiddush to lead. **Rav Medan Shlita** notes that the Chiddush is in Kevishat HaYetzer to simply make Chiddushim.

**הַלְעִיטֵ֤נִי נָא֙ מִן־הָֽאָדֹ֤ם הָֽאָדֹם֙ הַזֶּ֔ה Give me from this red stuff (25:30) - Rav Dovid Povarksky  ztl.** noted that Yaakov seems to be swindling Eisav out of his Bechora. How could it be that growing up in Yitzchak’s home, Eisav would not understand the value of the Bechora? Rav Dovid ztl. explains that this is the path of the Yetzer HaRa. First, it merely blocks one’s ability to see the positive benefits of his actions. This is what happened with Eisav. His desire to simply swallow life whole without taking the time to appreciate each aspect of life leads one to be like a Beheima and not to value anything. This leaves a person ripe for takeover by the Yetzer HaRa.

**וַיִּמְצָ֛א בַּשָּׁנָ֥ה הַהִ֖וא מֵאָ֣ה שְׁעָרִ֑ים וַיְבָֽרֲכֵ֖הוּ And Hashem blessed him (26:12) - Sforno** notes that the blessing was found in the high market prices he received for his crop. And, adds Sforno, this was a direct result of the tithing.  In fact, the Gemara (Taanis 8b) notes that in regard to giving Tzedaka, this is the only area where one is allowed to test Hashem (See **Rabbeinu Yona** that this applies to Maaser Kesafim just like other Maaseros -- see also Rema YD 247:4 but see Pischei Teshuva there for those who argue...) **Rav Schachter Shlita** noted that this is a source of disagreement between the commentaries as to whether Maaser Kesafim is the same as Maaser Tevuah and is based on whether Yitzchak innovated the giving of Maaser or whether Avraham did so with Malkitzedek (or perhaps Avraham’s “maaser” was just tzedaka). **Rav Yonasan Sacks Shlita** noted the comments of the Or HaChaim Hakadosh (Shemos 22:24) that say that any extra that one has after taking care of the Tzorchei HaBayis is really there for the purpose of giving Tzedaka. **Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl**. explains that giving Tzedaka is a Nachas Ruach for Hashem because in that moment, a person is doing that which Hashem himself does and is supposed to do, and as a result, Hashem receives Nachas Ruach in the process.

**וַֽאֲבִימֶ֕לֶךְ הָלַ֥ךְ אֵלָ֖יו מִגְּרָ֑ר And Avimelech came to him from Gerar (26:26) - Sforno** explains that after he went to call in the name of Hashem, the servants of Yitzchak discovered another well, this time without any arguments. Avimelech came at that point to set the terms of the peace pact. **Rav Leib Chasman ztl.** Notes that even an Olah Temimah like Yitzchak needed to commit to serve Hashem before he had success. We see from here that to have success in life, one must call in the name of Hashem at which time all challenges will leave him.

**רְאֵה֙ רֵ֣יחַ בְּנִ֔י כְּרֵ֣יחַ שָׂדֶ֔ה  See the scent of my son it is like the scent of the field (27:27)  - Rav Gedaliah Schorr ztl** notes that scents are reminiscent of Korbanos. The ideal Beracha comes to someone who has the capacity to properly utilize the Beracha. Hence the comparison to the scent. He notes in the name of **Rav Leibele Eiger** that in order to benefit from the scent of spices, the spices need to be ground up. The same is true for man. When man performs Avodas Hashem, he too, needs to bend down and break down his hubris and middos in order to make room for the Kedusha of Hashem. Nowhere is this more apparent than in regard to the Reiach Nichoach which is the ultimate purpose of the Korban.

**וְיִתֶּן־לְךָ֙ And Hashem should give to you (27:28)-  Rashi** cites the Midrash that Hashem should give and return to give again. **Rav Shmuel Rozovsky ztl.** explained that if Hashem had given everything all at once, then the connection to Him would ultimately be broken and strained. Since we need more from Him each day we strengthen the Kesher with him in the process.

**יִקְרְבוּ֙ יְמֵי֙ אֵ֣בֶל אָבִ֔י וְאַֽהַרְגָ֖ה אֶת־יַֽעֲקֹ֥ב אָחִֽי: When the days of mourning for my father are over, I shall kill Yaakov my brother(27:41)** - Why did Eisav say that he would wait for the end of the Shiva? **Klei Yakar** explains that this is because Eisav needed Yaakov not to be on top. On top for Yaakov meant to be a leader because of Torah superiority. Torah is not studied by an Avel so Eisav thought he would reign supreme at the time Yaakov was just past Aveilus. **Rav Zilberstein Shlita** quotes the **Beis Yisrael of Gur** who asks why Eisav did not consider the study of the sections of Torah an Avel **IS** allowed to study? He answers that Torah study without Simcha lacks the ability to serve to protect. It merely helps to subsist. Eisav knew that and realized that this would be his ideal time to attack.

**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 ztl**. 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.