

Points to Ponder
Toldos 5775

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 ztl.** 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.

There are 2 nations inside of you (25:23) – The Midrash comments that Eisav was proud of his reign while Yaakov was inspired by his world. **Rav Shaul Yisraeli ztl.** commented that this is one of the fundamental differences between Eisav and Yaakov. Bnei Eisav focus on their own achievements – their bridges, their stadiums, their conquests wherein might makes right. Bnei Yisrael were the first nation to include the concept of unity in the world – that is, to establish an international system of functioning wherein individual strengths are brought to work for the greater goal of unity.

Ish Saeh – A man of the field (25:27) – What does it mean to be an Ish Sadeh? **Rav Soloveitchik ztl.** Described the Ish Sadeh as the overestimation of the self and the excessive absorption with business, politics and things “outside”. Excessive Sadeh Education makes man an Ish Tzayid – a hunter totally uninterested in the plight of his prey.

Sell me the Bechora “as today” (25:31) – **Rav Shlomo Berman ztl.** one of the Roshei Yeshiva of Ponovezh once explained why Yaakov wanted the sale to be clear as day. He explained that Eisav too, must have had an ideology, wherein as one who was Ish Sadeh, he went to work. Thus, he felt he was deserving of the Bechora since he too, worked hard for it. However, on the day he sold the Bechora, the Gemara tells us (Bava Basra 16b) that he committed 5 separate serious Aveiros. On that day it was evident that he did not deserve the Bechora or the work that it entailed. Thus Yaakov tells him to sell it to someone more deserving.

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 Shlita** 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.

The voice is the voice of Yaakov (27:22) – The well known midrash notes that when Yaakov’s voice is heard in the Shuls and Battei Midrash, the hands of Eisav cannot rule them. The questions begs, that the hands and the voice both ruled in the same person standing before Yitzchak. How then could he bless the man who really was Yaakov – if both hand and voice were equally potent? **Rav Yoel Schwartz of Poltova ztl.** explains that when the voice of Yaakov is dominant, the hands of Eisav are not even a consideration. The same is true when the hands and voice re found in two different peoples in the future.

And Eisav took Machalas Bas Yishmael (28:9) – Rashi notes that we learn that when he married her, he got a Mechilas Avonos. Alternatively, he added a Rishus by marrying this woman. How do we understand these disparate explanations and lessons? **Rav Hershel Schachter Shlita** explains that the

difference comes down to an understanding of Teshuva. If one does Teshuva then the Kappara can be achieved on the day of the wedding. If he doesn't do Teshuva, then the issue is an addition of evil.

Haftorah – Machar Chodesh: Why have a special Haftorah for the day before Rosh Chodesh? We do not have it for any of the other Yamim Tovim! **Rav Soloveitchik** ztl once noted that there are striking similarities between the moon and the Jewish people. Like the moon who right after it hits its nadir, it begins a rapid ascent toward a new beginning, the Jewish people can take solace in their darkest moments that Machar Chodesh – signaling a new day – a Yom She'Kulo Aruch!