



Parshas Toldos 2019, a father's love

This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated in memory of Shlomo Ben Edward and Yosef Ben Zev Wolf. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

This week's Parsha Perspective is also in honor of Sasson Betzalel ben Batya and Sapir Bas Ariela. May they have a quick and complete recovery.

Our Parsha introduces us to the third and final forefather of the Jewish people: Ya'akov Avinu. His parents, Yitzchak and Rivkah, had a similar issue as his grandparents, Avraham and Sarah; they were both childless for a long time.

But after twenty years, G-d finally accepted their prayers, and Rivkah gave birth to twins, Ya'akov and Esav. Even from birth, Ya'akov and Esav were extreme opposites; the firstborn, Esav, was naturally red, hairy, and full of energy.

On the other hand, Ya'akov was small and only managed to emerge from his mother's womb because he grabbed onto his brother's heel. As the Pasuk writes (25:26), *"Then his brother emerged, holding on to the heel of Esav; so they named him Ya'akov."*

As the two grew older, the differences between them became more evident. Esav was a man of the field and an expert hunter, contrasting Ya'akov, a gentle and modest person. Esav also served idols and married women from Canaan (which displeased Yitzchak greatly). At the same time, Ya'akov studied Torah and developed his relationship with G-d.

At the age of 123 years, Yitzchak summoned Esav and stated that he wished to bless him but first asked him to hunt an animal and prepare a meal so he could eat.

Rivkah, who overheard this conversation, quickly cooked some meat and told Ya'akov to put on some of Esav's clothing to trick his father into giving him blessings.

Ya'akov did as instructed: he put on Esav's clothes, took the meal his mother had made and went into his father's tent. Under the impression that Esav had returned (because he was blind), Yitzchak gave Ya'akov the blessings that he intended to give to Esav. These amazing blessings included the most important one: mastery over his brother.

As soon as Yitzchak concluded the blessings, Ya'akov left his father's presence just as Esav returned from the field. Esav entered Yitzchak's tent and offered him the food that he was asked to prepare.

Yitzchak realized he was tricked and informed Esav that he had already given blessings to Ya'akov. Esav, now enraged, was determined to kill his younger brother. But Rivkah had already sent Ya'akov far away to Charan so he could find a wife.

A question comes to mind: The Pasuk says (25:28), *“Vaye'ehav Yitzchak Es Esav Ki-Tza'id Befiv, VeRivkah Oheves Es-Yaakov”*—*“Yitzchak loved Esav because he was a trapper with his mouth; however, Rivkah loved Yaakov.”* We know Esav served Idols, so how could Yitzchak love Esav over Yakkov? Did he not know what Esav was up to?!

The most simple answer to this question is brought down by Rashi on this Pasuk. He writes that since Yitzchak was blind, he had no idea what Esav was up to. As the Bereishis Rabbah points out (63:10), the Pasuk says that Yitzchak loved Esav because *“Tza'id Befiv”*—*“a trapper with his mouth.”*

The Midrash explains that Esav would trick Yitzchak into thinking he was religious by asking difficult and complicated questions on Jewish law, convincing his father that he was worthy of the blessings.

Rivkah wasn't deceived because she lived around deception her whole life; she grew up with her uncle Lavan, a swindler. On the other hand, Yitzchak grew up with Avraham and Sarah; therefore, he only knew total honesty and integrity.

However, a deeper and more powerful explanation is that Yitzchak loved Esav specifically because he knew what Esav was up to. As the Pasuk says (28:8), *“Vayar Esav Ki Ra'os Benos Kena'an Be'einei Yitzchak Aviv”*—*“Esav saw that the Canaanite women were evil in the eyes of his father, Yitzchak.”*

Therefore, Esav went and married the daughter of Ishmael. Even though Yitzchak knew exactly what Esav was up to, he did not disavow or abandon him; instead, Yitzchak loved him even more passionately.

Yitzchak understood that his love would profoundly impact Esav more than anything else. We see he had a significant effect on Esav; he kept one of the ten commandments and fundamental principles of Judaism, honoring one's parents.

As it says in Devarim Rabbah (1:15), Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel said, *“No man has honored their father as much as I have, except for Esav.”* And as a reward to him for doing so, the Jewish people were commanded not to wage war against the nation of Edom. (*a descendant of Esav*)

In our daily lives, it is imperative that we understand that many times being loving and kind in difficult and challenging situations will have a greater impact than being harsh.

This approach is especially true with children, as many times it is just innocent, playful fun; however, a harsh reaction can have the opposite effect that we are trying to achieve and a lasting repercussion. Therefore, it is important that we measure our responses and reactions carefully so as not to make a mistake that we will regret forever.

“To be kind is more important than to be right.

**Many times, what people need is not a brilliant mind that speaks,
but a special heart that listens.”**

-The Lubavitcher Rebbe

*Have an inspirational Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*