



## *Parshas Toldos 2020, honesty is the best policy*

*This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated in memory of Rabbi Gabi and Rivki Holtzberg, H"YD. They were killed on the 29 of Cheshvan in 2008 while helping Jewish people in Mumbai, India. May their memory continue to inspire Jews all over the world to strengthen their connection to G-d.*

*This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated in memory of Shlomo Ben Edward, and Edward David Shaul Ben Efraim. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.*

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 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 energetic. 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 blessing him.

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.

However, a question comes to mind: The Torah describes Ya'akov as a (2:19:) *"Ish Tam - a modest and simple man."* Rashi writes that a "Tam" is a person who does not know how to lie or cheat. Yet, we see that Ya'akov seemingly lied to his father when he got his blessings. As the Pasuk says (27:19) *"Vayomer Ya'akov El-Aviv Anochi Esav Bechorecha- and Ya'akov said to his father, I am Esav, your firstborn."* How could the Torah describe Ya'akov as a person who does not know how to lie if he did so to receive his blessings?!

The Radak (Rav Dovid Kimchi) on this Pasuk writes that at critical points in a person's life, they can lie for harmony and peace. As we see with Avraham telling Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister and not his wife. Or when Avraham told Yeshmael that both he and Yitzchak would return after they finished their offerings as he went to sacrifice Yitzchak.

When Ya'akov told his father that he was Esav, he did so only to obtain the blessings meant for him. For he was to carry the knowledge of G-d to the next generations; therefore, he needed to receive the ultimate blessing, being a master over his brother.

The Radak continues that Ya'akov only followed his mother's instructions and directions. For Ya'akov would not lie on his own, but since Rivkah told him to so, he listened without delay. Ya'akov knew that his mother was an extraordinarily righteous and holy woman and would not lead him away from G-d.

However, the Or Hachaim Hakadosh (*Rav Chaim Ibn Attar*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He explains that when Ya'akov responded to his father "*Anochi Esav Bechorecha- I am Esav, your firstborn,*" he meant that I am just like Esav, your firstborn. For Esav sold his birthright for a bowl of soup when Avraham Avinu passed away.

Since Esav sold his birthright to Ya'akov, Ya'akov was within his rights to tell his father that he was taking over Esav as his firstborn. Hence, Ya'akov did not lie when he said to Yitzchak that he was Esav, his firstborn. For Ya'akov would not lie as honesty was his character trait, as it says (Micha 9:20) "תתן אמת ליעקב- *You (G-d) gave Ya'akov truthfulness, in days gone by.*"

In our daily life, it is imperative that we always be honest and truthful with each other, even when it's difficult. Because when we lie, we do not only deceive others, but ourselves as well. We can begin to believe our falsehood, leading us on a path of downfall and ruin.

Lies are only a temporary delay to the inevitable truth that shatters the false pretenses we work so hard to maintain. Therefore, we must be truthful and honest even when it's challenging and difficult, for it will allow us to sleep better at night, knowing that we have nothing to hide.

***“Honestly is the best way to prevent a mistake from turning into a failure.”***

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,  
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*