

parshas Toldos

פרשת תולדות

☞ The Name of the Parsha ☞

On the words, “*These are the descendants (Toldos) of Yitzchak,*” Rashi comments that, “*these are Ya’akov and Eisav mentioned in the Parsha.*”

According to Chasidic teachings, Ya’akov represents the soul, and Eisav, the body. The *Parsha* is thus named after both Ya’akov and Eisav, because the soul and the body each have their own exclusive qualities.

The soul is described as a “child” of God, because the love shared between the soul and God is a natural type of love, resembling the parent-child relationship.

The body, on the other hand, has no inherent love for God – on the contrary, it conceals God’s presence. But, ironically, when God “chose” the Jewish people, He chose primarily our bodies. For, it would not have been an act of true *self-expression* to choose the Jewish soul, since *anybody* would choose a superior product over an

inferior one. Rather, it is the Jewish body which appears to be quite similar to that of the non-Jew, that was selected by God (See *Tanya* ch. 49).

Of course, this does not mean to say that the soul was not chosen by God *at all*. It is only that the body has no redeeming feature of its own *other than the fact* that it was chosen by God – so its chosenness “stands out” more than in the case of the soul.

When soul and body are *together*, each begins to learn from the other’s unique quality: Through observing Torah and *mitzvos*, the soul teaches the body how to love God; the body, in turn, teaches the soul how to reveal its chosenness.

And that is why Ya’akov, the soul, and Eisav, the body, are both “mentioned in the *Parsha*.”

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Toldos* 5752)

יֵשׁ וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן אַבְרָהָם אַבְרָהָם
 אֲוִלִיד יֵשׁ יִצְחָק: כ וְהוּא יִצְחָק בֶּן אַרְבָּעִין
 שָׁנָיִן בְּד נָסִיב יֵשׁ רִבְקָה בַת בְּתוּאֵל אַרְמָאָה
 מִפְּדַן אֲרָם אֲחֵתֶיהָ דָּלְבָן אַרְמָאָה לִיה
 לְאֵתָנוּ: כא וְצִלִי יִצְחָק קָדָם יי לְקַבֵּל אֶת־תִּיהָ
 אָרִי עֲקָרָה הִיא וְקַבֵּל צְלוֹתֶיהָ יי וְעַד־יֵאָת
 רִבְקָה אֲתִתֶיהָ: כב וְדַחְקִין בְּנֵיָא בְּמַעְהָא
 וְאָמְרַת אִם בֶּן לְמָא דְנָן אֲנֵא וְאֹלֶת לְמִיתְבַּע
 אֹלְפָן מִן קָדָם יי: כג וְאָמַר יי לָהּ תְרִין

יֵשׁ וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת יִצְחָק בֶּן אַבְרָהָם אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִצְחָק:
 כ וַיְהִי יִצְחָק בֶּן־אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בְּקָחְתָּו אֶת־רִבְקָה בַת־בְּתוּאֵל
 הָאֲרָמִי מִפְּדַן אֲרָם אֲחֹת לָבָן הָאֲרָמִי לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה: כא וַיַּעֲתֶר
 יִצְחָק לַיהוָה לְנִכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הוּא וַיַּעֲתֶר לוֹ יְהוָה
 וַתֵּהָר רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ: כב וַיִּתְרַצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקַרְבָּהָ וַתֹּאמֶר
 אִם־כֵּן לָמָּה זֶה אֲנֹכִי וַתִּלְדֵּךְ לְדָרֶשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה: כג וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה

רש"י

מפדן ארם. על שם ששני ארס היו, ארס נהרים וארס לוצה, קורא אותו פדן, לשון למד צקר, תרגום, פדן תורין, ויש פותרין פדן ארס כמו שדה ארס, שצלושן ישמעאל קורין לשדה פדן: (כא) ויעתר. הרצה והפליז בתפלה: ויעתר לו. נתפלר ונתפייס ונתפתח לו. ואומר אני, כל לשון עתר, לשון הפלרה ורצוי הוא, וכן ועתר ענן הקטורת¹, מרצית עליית העשן. וכן העתרתם עליו דצריכס², וכן ונתערת נשיקות שונא³, דומות למרובות והנס למשא, אנקרישיר"א בלע"ז: לנכח אשתו. זה עומד בזוית זו ומתפלל, וזו עומדת בזוית זו ומתפללת: ויעתר לו. לו ולא לה, שאין דומה תפלת נדיק בן נדיק לתפלת נדיק בן רשע⁴, לפיכך לו ולא לה: (כב) ויתרוצצו. על כרחך המקרא הזה אומר דורשני, שסתם מה היא ריזיה זו, וכתב אס כן למד זה אנכי. רבותינו דרשוהו לשון ריזיה, כשכיתה עוברת על פתחי תורה של שם ועבר, יעקב רן ומפרנס ללאת, עוברת על פתחי עכו"ם, עשו מפרנס ללאת. דבר אחר, מתרוללים זה עם זה, ומריצים בנחלת שני עולמות: ותאמר אם כן. גדול זער העבור: למד זה אנכי. מתאוה ומתפללת על הריון: ותלך לדרוש. לבית מדרשו של שם: לדרוש את ה'. שיגיד

(יע) ואלה תולדות יצחק. יעקב ועשו האמורים צפרשה: אברהם הוליד את יצחק. (לאחר שקרא הקצ"ה שמו אברהם אחר כך הוליד את יצחק. דבר אחר), על ידי שכתב הכתוב יצחק בן אברהם, הוזקק לומר אברהם הוליד את יצחק, לפי שהיו ליני הדור אומרים מאזימלך נתעברה שרה, שכרי כמה שנים שהתה עם אברהם ולא נתעברה הימנו, מה עשה הקצ"ה, לר קלסתר פניו של יצחק דומה לאברהם, והעידו הכל אברהם הוליד את יצחק, וזהו שכתב כאן יצחק בן אברהם (היה), שכרי עדות יש שאברהם הוליד את יצחק: (כ) בן ארבעים שנה. שכרי כשצא אברהם מבר המוריה נתצטר שולדה רצקה, ויצחק היה בן ל"ז שנה, שכרי צו צפרק מתה שרה, ומשולד יצחק עד העקידה שמתה שרה ל"ז שנה, דבת ל' היתה כשולד יצחק, ובת קכ"ז כשמתה, שנאמר ויהיו חיי שרה וגו', הרי ליצחק ל"ז שנים, וצו צפרק נולדה רצקה, המתין לה עד שחכא ראויה לציאה ג' שנים, ונשאה: בת בתואל מפדן ארם אחות לבן. וכי עדיין לא נכתב שהיא בת בתואל ואחות לבן ומפדן ארס, אלא להגיד שצחה, שהיתה בת רשע ואחות רשע ומקומה אנשי רשע, ולא למד ממשיכה:

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why does the Torah repeat that, "Avraham fathered Yitzchak"? (end of v. 19)

RASHI: After the verse stated, "Yitzchak, the son of Avraham," it then found it necessary to stress, "Avraham fathered Yitzchak," because the cynics of the generation were saying that Sarah had conceived from Avimelech, since she had lived with Avraham for

many years and had not conceived from him. What did God do? He fashioned the features of Yitzchak's face to resemble Avraham's, and everyone witnessed that Avraham had indeed given birth to Yitzchak. Thus the verse stresses here, "Yitzchak [is certainly] the son of Avraham," because there is evidence that "Avraham fathered Yitzchak."

TORAS MENACHEM

🕯 Sparks of Chasidus 🕯

According to Chasidic teachings, Avraham primarily served God with love, and Yitzchak with fear. In fact, their faces bore very little resemblance to one another, as an indication of their contrasting spiritual qualities. Thus, it took a miracle to make Yitzchak's facial features resemble those of Avraham (see *Rashi* to v. 19).

With the above in mind however, Yitzchak's name appears to be somewhat out of character with his nature. "Yitzchak" means "laughter," which is associated with happiness and rejoicing – a rather inappropriate name, it would seem, for a person whose life was dedicated to the fear of God.

God chooses to be close to those who are humble, as the verse states, "I dwell on high in holiness, and with the crushed and humble in spirit" (Isaiah 57:15). Thus, ultimately, it is fear of God that brings a person closer to his Creator more than love, because fear makes a person feel low and humble. Ironically, by feeling low a person actually makes himself great, because his humility acts as an empty vessel in which God can "dwell."

Therefore Yitzchak, who excelled in fear of God was named "laughter," because his humility propelled him to a more intimate and joyful unity with the Almighty than love alone can achieve.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* 30, pp. 103ff; vol. 20, pp. 116ff)

🌀 THE BIRTH OF YA'AKOV & EISAV 🌀

25:19

And these are the descendants of Yitzchak, the son of Avraham:
(The Torah now digresses, before continuing with Yitzchak's descendants in verses 25-26)
(After God gave Avram the name) Avraham, (he) fathered Yitzchak. ²⁰ Yitzchak was forty years old when he took Rivkah for himself as a wife. (Even though she was) the daughter of Besu'el the Aramean of Padan Aram, sister of Lavan the Aramean (she did not learn from their wicked ways).

²¹ Yitzchak prayed (a lot) to God (in one corner of the room) opposite his wife, because she was barren. God accepted his prayer, and his wife Rivkah conceived.

²² The children struggled inside her. She said, "If (the pain of pregnancy is) so (much) why (did I want to be like) this?" She went (to the Yeshivah of Sheim) to ask God (what was going to happen to her).

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Was Yitzchak unable to have children too, or just Rivkah? (v. 21)

MIDRASH HAGADOL: In fact, Yitzchak was also unable to have children. This is hinted at by verse 21, where the word "she" is not spelled in the Torah in the usual manner (אִתָּהּ), but rather אִתִּי, which can also be read as אִתִּי, also could not have children.

● Why did the children "struggle inside her"? (v. 22)

RASHI: When she passed by the entrances of the Yeshivos of Sheim and Aiver, Ya'akov would run and struggle to come out. When she

passed the entrance of a temple of idolatry, Eisav would run and struggle to come out. (See *The Last Word*)

● How did Rivkah "ask God" about her pregnancy? (v. 22)

RASHI: She went to the Yeshivah of Sheim. Sheim revealed to her what would happen through Divine inspiration (*Rashi* to v. 22-23).

TUR HA'ARUCH: Why did Rivkah ask Sheim and not Avraham? Perhaps she did not wish to distress Avraham with the bad news that she was having a difficult pregnancy.

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 YITZCHAK'S CERTAINTY (v. 21)

The Torah states that, "Yitzchak prayed (a lot) to God (in one corner of the room) opposite his wife, because she was barren" (v. 21). This begs the question: How did Yitzchak know that "she was barren"? Perhaps their inability to have children was his problem and not hers?

At first glance, one might argue that Yitzchak was sure of his own ability to have children because Avraham had already been promised by God that, "your (true) descendants will be through Yitzchak" (above 21:12).

However, this solution is untenable, because we find that Ya'akov also received a promise from God that he would have children (below 32:13), and he still prayed to God that this promise should be fulfilled in the fear that he had forfeited God's promises to him through inadvertent sin (see *Rashi* *ibid.* v. 11). Surely then, Yitzchak would also have feared that perhaps he had stumbled in sin, thus forfeiting God's promise to him?

THE EXPLANATION

In fact however, Yitzchak was certain that God's promise to him would be fulfilled, and he was sure that he had not stumbled in sin at all. *Rashi* writes (v. 26): "Since she did not conceive, he knew that she was barren, and he prayed for her, but he did not wish to take a maid [as Avraham had done] because he had been hallowed on Mount Moriah to be an *olah temimah* (perfect burnt offering)." I.e. since Yitzchak knew he was an *olah temimah*, a perfectly holy being (which God told him explicitly - see *Rashi* to 26:2 below) he knew that he had not stumbled in sin. Therefore, he could be certain that the failure to have children, which he had been promised by God, was because of her inability to have children, not his.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Toldos* 5748)

🌀 WHY DID RIVKAH SEEK SHEIM'S ADVICE (v. 22)

Rashi writes that Rivkah went to the Yeshivah of Sheim to find an explanation as to why her pregnancy was so difficult. However, this begs the following questions:

a.) Why did she not ask her husband, Yitzchak, or her father-in-law Avraham? Surely, they both could have helped her equally as well as

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

How could Yitzchak, our righteous patriarch, have a son whose very nature *even in the womb* was inclined towards idol worship? (see *Rashi* to v.22)

God can either make a person's disposition naturally good or naturally bad. But, even if a person has a natural inclination to evil, that does not mean that he is evil *per se*, for he is given free choice. Rather, the reason why he was given such an inclination was to rise to the challenge *and overcome it*. Thus Eisav was given a natural tendency to evil so that he could excel in the Divine service of "quashing" the evil inclination.

Even though he failed in his task, we can nevertheless learn from Eisav that if a person has strong desires to do something bad, it means that he has been given the special Divine mission of overcoming his inclinations.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 20, p. 108ff.)

* [Presumably the explanation of *Midrash Hagadol*, that they were both unable to have children, would have been unacceptable to *Rashi* since, at the literal level, we generally interpret a word as it is read, and not according to how it is written (c.f. *Likutei Sichos* vol. 5, p. 114, note 18) - Ed.]

עִמָּיִן בְּמַעֲבְרֵי וְתַרְתִּינִי מִלְכָּן מִמַּעֲבְרֵי
 יִתְפָּרְשׁוּן וּמִלְכּוֹ מִמְּלִכּוֹ יִתְקַרֵּ וְרָבָא
 יִשְׁתַּעֲבִיד לְזַעֲרָא: כד ושלימו יומהא למילד
 וְהָא תִּיּוּמִין בְּמַעֲרָא: כה ונפק קדמא סמוך
 כוליה בנלים דשער וקרו שמייה עשו:
 כו ובתר בן נפק אחיה וידיה אחידא בעקבא
 דעשו וקרא שמייה יעקב ויצחק בר שיתין
 שנין פד לידת יתהון: כז ורבאיא עולימיא
 והוה עשו גבר נחשירכן גבר נפיק חקלא
 ויעקב גבר שלים משמש בית אולפנא:
 כח ורחים יצחק ית עשו ארי מצידיה הוה אכיל

לָהּ שְׁנֵי גַיִם וְקַ גּוֹיִם בְּבִטְנָהּ וּשְׁנֵי לְאֻמִּים מִמַּעֲרָב יִפְרְדּוּ וְלֹאִם
 מִלְאֵם יֵאֱמָר וְרַב יַעֲבֹד צָעִיר: כד וימלאו ימיה ללדת והנה
 תומם בבטנה: כה ויצא הראשון אדמוני בלו באדרת שער
 ויקראו שמו עשו: כו ואחרי כן יצא אחיו וידו אחזת בעקב
 עשו ויקרא שמו יעקב ויצחק בן ששים שנה בלדת אתם:
 כז ויגדלו הנערים ויהי עשו איש ידע ציד איש שדה ויעקב
 איש תם ישב אהלים: כח ויאהב יצחק את עשו כי ציד בפיו

כ"ג

הנוצר באחרונה ילא ראשון, ויעקב שנוצר ראשונה ילא אחרון, ויעקב צא לעכבו
 שיהא ראשון ללידה כראשון לזיווג, ויפטור את רחמה, ויטול את הבכורה מן
 הדין: בעקב עשו. סימן שאין זה מספיק לגמור מלכותו עד שזכ עומד ונוטלה
 הימנו: ויקרא שמו יעקב. הקצ"ב, (אמר, אחס קריתון לזכורכם שם, אף אני
 אקרא לזני בכורי שם, הלא הוא דכתיב ויקרא שמו יעקב). דבר אחר אציו קרא
 לו יעקב על שם אחיזת העקב: בן ששים שנה. י' שנים משנשאה עד שנעשית
 צת י"ג שנה וראויה להריון, וי' שנים הללו, לפה והמתין לה, כמו שעשה אציו
 לשרה, כיון שלא נתעברה, ידע שהיא עקרה והתפלל עליה, ושפחה לא ראה
 לישא, לפי שנתקדש כבר המוריה להיות עולה תמימה: (כז) ויגדלו הנערים
 ויהי עשו. כל זמן שהיו קטנים לא היו נכרים צמעטיהם, ואין אדם מדקדק
 בהם מה טיבם, כיון שנעשו בני י"ג שנה, זה פורש לזחי מדרשות וזה פורש
 לעבודה חלילים: יודע ציד. לאוד ולרמות את אציו צפוי, ושאלו, אצא היאך
 מעשרין את המלח ואת התבן, כסבור אציו שהוא מדקדק צמות: איש שדה.
 כמשמעו, אדם בטל, ואודה בקשתו חיות ועופות: תם. אינו צקי ככל אלה, אלא
 כלבו כן פיו. מי שאינו חריף לרמות קרוי תם: ישב אהלים. אהלו של שם ואהלו

לה מה תהא צסופה: (כג) ויאמר ה' לה. על ידי שליח, לשם נאמר צרות
 הקדש, והוא אמר לה: שני גוים בבטנה. גיים כתיב כמו (המו) גאים, אלו
 אנטוניוס ורבי, שלא פסקו מעל שולחנם לא נגון ולא חזרת, לא צימות החמה
 ולא צימות הגשמים: ושני לאמים. אין לאוס אלא מלכות: ממעריך יפרדו. מן
 המעים הם נפרדים, זה לרשעו וזה לתומו: מלאם יאמץ. לא ישו בגדולה,
 כשזה קם זה נופל, וכן הוא אומר אמלאה החרבה¹, לא נתמלאה אור אלא
 מחרבה של ירושלים: (כד) וימלאו ימיה. אבל צחמר כתיב ויהי צעת לדתה.
 שלא מלאו ימיה, כי לז' חדשים ילדתה: והנה תומם. חסר. וצחמר תאומים
 מלא, לפי ששניהם נדיקים, אבל כאן אחד נדיק ואחד רשע: (כה) אדמוני. סימן
 הוא שיהא שופך דמים²: בלו באדרת שער. מלא שער כעלית של אמר המלאה
 שער, פלוקיר"א צלע"ז: ויקראו שמו עשו. הכל קראו לו כן, לפי שהיה נעשה
 ונגמר צשערו כצן שנים הרבה: (כו) ואחרי כן יצא אחיו וגו'. שמעתי מדרש
 אגדה הדורשו לפי פשוטו, צדן היה אוחז צו לעכבו, יעקב נוצר מטיפה ראשונה
 ועשו מן השנייה, לא ולמד משפופרת שפיה קלרה, תן צה שחי אצנים צו תחת
 צו, הכנסת ראשונה תלא אחרונה, והכנסת אחרונה תלא ראשונה, נמלא עשו

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Sheim, and she would thereby avoid the undesirable journey, on her own, to the Yeshivah of Sheim?

b.) In many places, this Yeshivah is referred to as, "the Yeshivah of Sheim and Aiver." Why did *Rashi* describe it here only as the "Yeshivah of Sheim"?

THE EXPLANATION

Verse 22 states that, "*she went to ask God.*" This suggests that she made some sort of journey. Obviously, this means that she did not ask Yitzchak, who was with her at home, or Avraham, who lived locally.

What led *Rashi* to conclude that she went to Sheim?

The Torah states earlier that, "*Malkitzedek King of Shaleim brought out bread and wine. He was a priest to the supreme God*" (14:18). *Rashi* explains that Malkitzedek was none other than Sheim.

Since the Torah describes Sheim as, "a priest to the supreme God," we could presume that Rivkah would have sought his advice when, "she went to ask God." I.e she was not seeking to study Torah in the Yeshivah of Sheim and Aiver, but rather, to "ask God." Therefore, she sought the advice of Sheim in particular (and not Aiver) since he was, "a priest to the supreme God."

Why did Rivkah prefer to speak to Sheim than to Yitzchak or Avraham?

Presumably, this was because, either:

a.) She asked their advice first, but they failed to provide her with an explanation. Therefore she sought the advice of Sheim. Nevertheless, *Rashi* does not mention this point as it is not hinted to at all in the Torah.

Or: b.) Perhaps she did not want to mention the matter to Yitzchak or Avraham, so as not to distress them. For, after so many years of waiting for Rivkah to become pregnant, Yitzchak (and Avraham) would surely have become pained to hear that, "the children struggled inside her," causing her such distress that she regretted wanting to have children (v. 22).

In fact, for Yitzchak and Avraham, this state of affairs would have been particularly distressing, because it would have been reminiscent of the *Akeida* (binding of Yitzchak) where, after finally being given a son, Avraham was asked to slaughter him. So too here, after many years of praying for Rivkah to become pregnant, Yitzchak and Avraham would surely be devastated to hear that Rivkah was suffering from an extremely difficult pregnancy. So, in order to save Yitzchak and Avraham from a challenge of faith resembling the *Akeida*, Rivkah sought the advice of Sheim instead.

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Toldos* 5748)

²³ (Through Sheim's Divine inspiration) God said to her, "(The ancestors of) two esteemed individuals are in your womb. (Furthermore,) two kingdoms will separate from your innards (one to wickedness, one to innocence) One kingdom will (always) become mightier than the other kingdom (for when one rises the other will fall). The elder (son) will serve the younger (son)."

²⁴ The term of her pregnancy was complete, and – look! – there were twins in her womb.

²⁵ The first one came out reddish and completely (covered in hair), like a fur coat of hair. They named him Eisav. ²⁶ Afterwards, his brother emerged, and his hand was grasping Eisav's heel. (God) named him Ya'akov.

Yitzchak was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.

🌀 YA'AKOV BUYS THE BIRTHRIGHT FROM EISAV 🌀

25:27 **T**he boys grew up (and their differences became recognizable). Eisav was a man who knew how to trap (people with his mouth), a man of the field (who enjoyed hunting). Ya'akov was an honest person, dwelling in tents (the Yeshivah of Sheim and Aiver).

²⁸ Yitzchak loved Eisav because (he provided) his mouth with game; but Rivkah loved Ya'akov.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How did Eisav trap? (v. 27)

RASHI: He knew how to trap and deceive his father with his mouth, asking him, "Father, how do we separate *ma'aser* (tithes) from salt and straw?" This made his father think that he was precise in the observance of *mitzvos*.

MIZRACHI: Why did *Rashi* not interpret the term "trap" literally, to mean trapping animals? *Rashi* was troubled by the repetition of the verse, "Eisav was a man who knew how to trap, a man of the field." Surely, these two expressions both mean the same thing, so why did the Torah make an unnecessary repetition? *Rashi* understood that "knew how to trap," must be referring to something else besides hunting, i.e. his ability to trap others with his mouth.

Eisav's question, "how do we separate *ma'aser* (tithes) from salt and straw?" was deceptive because there is in fact no obligation in Jewish Law to separate *ma'aser* from salt or straw (*ma'aser* is only separated

from agricultural produce). This would have led Yitzchak to think that Eisav was extremely particular in *mitzvos*, going beyond the letter of the law to separate *ma'aser* even in a case where there is no obligation to do so.

MASKIL LE DAVID: Surely, by asking, "how do we separate *ma'aser* (tithes) from salt and straw?" Eisav would have appeared to be an ignoramus, who did not know the basic law that *ma'aser* is only taken from agricultural produce? We must presume that Eisav was actually asking, "Since I am separating this as an additional stringency, not as a legal requirement, perhaps I should make some indication of this fact by altering some of the procedures?"

BARTENURA: Clearly, Eisav was not asking how to take *ma'aser*, since the answer to this is obvious: one simply separates a tenth of the produce.

TORAS MENACHEM

RASHI'S PROBLEM (v. 21)

In addition to the answers of the commentators, the following could be argued: *Rashi* was troubled why the verse states, "Eisav was a man who knew how to trap, a man of the field." Surely, the appropriate sequence should be, "a man of the field who knew how to trap," for one only starts trapping *after* going out into the field. Due to this problem, *Rashi* concluded that the "trapping" must have occurred *at home*, before Eisav went out "to the field."

What "trapping" could be done in the house? Answers *Rashi*: "He knew how to trap and deceive his father with his mouth."

EISAV'S DECEPTIVE QUESTION

Rashi's comment, that Eisav asked his father, "how do we separate *ma'aser* (tithes) from salt and straw?" is somewhat perplexing. Since salt and straw are in fact exempt from *ma'aser* Eisav's question would seem to display ignorance rather than precision, "in the observance of the *mitzvos*" (as **Maskil leDavid** writes).

Maskil leDavid [and **Mizrachi**] answer that Eisav indicated to his father that he wished to separate *ma'aser* beyond the letter of the law, even from his possessions that were exempt from *ma'aser*.

However, from *Rashi*'s choice of words this does not appear to be the case. Eisav said, "How do we separate *ma'aser* from salt and straw?" Taking this statement at face value, it appears that Eisav *did* think that salt and straw were obligated in *ma'aser*.

So what, then, was Eisav's trap?

THE EXPLANATION

Earlier, in *Parshas Lech Lecha*, we read that, "(Avram) gave him a tenth (*ma'aser*) from everything" (14:20). *Rashi* writes that, "Avram gave him *ma'aser* from all his possessions, because Malkitzedek was a priest."

Here we see that, at the literal level of Torah interpretation, Avraham did indeed give *ma'aser* from all his possessions ("everything"), and not only from agricultural produce. Presumably, the clause that *ma'aser* is only separated from agricultural produce must have been added later, with the giving of the Torah (see *Toras Menachem* to *Lech Lecha* *ibid.*).

וּרְבִקָּה רְחִימַת יִתְ יַעֲקֹב: כט וּבִשְׁלֵל יַעֲקֹב תְּבַשִּׁילָא וְאִתָּא עֲשׂו מִן חֲקֵלָא וְהוּא מְשַׁלְּהִי: ל וְאָמַר עֲשׂו לְיַעֲקֹב אֲמַעִימְנִי כְעֵן מִן סְמוּקָא הָדִין אַרְי מְשַׁלְּהִי אָנָּא עַל בֶּן קָרָא שְׁמִיָּה אָדוּם: לא וְאָמַר יַעֲקֹב וּבִין כְּיֻּם דִּילְהֵן יִת בְּכֻרְתָּךְ לִי: לב וְאָמַר עֲשׂו הָא אָנָּא אָוִיל לְמַמַּת וְלִמָּא דְנָן לִי בְּכֻרְתָּא: לג וְאָמַר יַעֲקֹב קָיִים לִי כְּיֻּם דִּילְהֵן וְקָיִים לִיָּה וּבִין יִת בְּכֻרְתִּיהָ לְיַעֲקֹב: לד וְיַעֲקֹב יְהִב לְעֲשׂו לֶחֶם וְתַבְשִׁיל דְּמִלּוּפְחִין וְאִכְל וְשָׂתִי וְקָם וְאָזַל וְשָׂמ עֲשׂו יִת בְּכֻרְתָּא: « וְהוּא כִּפְנָא בְּאַרְעָא בַר מִכְּפְנָא קְדָמָאָה דִּי הוּא בְּיוֹמֵי אֲבָרְהָם וְאָזַל יִצְחָק לֹת אֲבִימֶלֶךְ מִלְּכָא דְפְלִישְׁתֵּי לְגַרְרִי: ב וְאִתְגַּלִּי לִיָּה יִי וְאָמַר לָא תִּיְחֹת לְמַצְרַיִם שְׂרִי בְּאַרְעָא דִּי אִמְר לָךְ: ג דוֹר בְּאַרְעָא הָדָא וְיִהִי מִיּוֹמֵי בְּסַעֲדָךְ וְאֲבָרְכִינְךָ אַרְי לָךְ וְלִבְנֶיךָ

וּרְבִקָּה אֶהְבֵּת אֶת־יַעֲקֹב: כט וַיִּזְד יַעֲקֹב נָזִיד וַיִּבְא עֲשׂו מִן הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא עָיִף: ל וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂו אֶל־יַעֲקֹב הֲלִעִיטְנִי נָא מִן־הָאָדָם הָאָדָם הַזֶּה כִּי עָיִף אָנֹכִי עַל־בֶּן קָרָא־שְׁמוֹ אָדוּם: לא וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב מְכַרָּה כְּיֻם אֶת־בְּכֻרְתְּךָ לִי: לב וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂו הֲיֵה אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ לָמוֹת וְלִמְהֵרָה לִי בְּכַרְהָ: לג וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב הַשִּׁבְעָה לִי כְּיֻם וַיִּשָּׁבַע לוֹ וַיִּמְכַר אֶת־בְּכֻרְתּוֹ לְיַעֲקֹב: לד וַיַּעֲקֹב נָתַן לְעֲשׂו לֶחֶם וּנְזִיד עֲדָשִׁים וַיֵּאכַל וַיִּשְׂתֵּי וַיִּקָּם וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיָּבֹז עֲשׂו אֶת־הַבְּכֻרָה: פ כו « וַיְהִי רָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְהָרָעַב הָרְאשִׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר הָיָה בְּיַמֵּי אֲבָרְהָם וַיֵּלֶךְ יִצְחָק אֶל־אֲבִימֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ־פְּלִשְׁתִּים נְרָרָה: ג וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־תֵּרַד מִצְרַיִמָּה שָׁכֵן בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ג גֹּדֵר בְּאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְאֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ וְאֲבָרְכֶךָ כִּי־לֶךְ וְלִזְרַעְךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת־כָּל־

רש"י

קטן³. אבל, כל שלשה ימים הראשונים אינו משיב שלום לכל אדם, וכל שכן שאינו שואל בתחלה, מג' ועד ז' משיב ואינו שואל וכו', ברש"י (ישן): (לא) מברכה ביום. כתרומתו כיום דילכך, כיום שהוא צור, כך מכור לי מכירה צרורה: בברתך. לפי שהעבודה בצבורות, אמר יעקב אין רשע זה כדאי שיקריב להקצ"ה: (לג) הנה אנכי הולך למות. (מתבודדת והולכת היא הצבורה, שלא תהא כל עת העבודה בצבורות, כי שצט לוי ועול אותה. ועוד) אמר עשו מה טיבה של עבודה זו, אמר לו כמה אזכרות ועונשין ומיתות תלוין בה, כאותה שנינו⁴, אלו הן שצמיתה, שחיי יין ופרועי ראש, אמר, אני הולך למות על ידה, אם כן מה חפץ לי בה: (לד) ויבז עשו. העיד הכחוז על רשעו שצורה עבודתו של מקום: (ז) אל תרד מצרימה. שהיה דעתו לרדת למצרים כמו שירד אציו צימי הרעב, אמר לו אל תרד מצרימה, שאתה עולה

של עבר: (כה) בפיו. כתרומתו צפיו של יחזק. ומדרשו, צפיו של עשו, שהיה לך אותו ומרמכו בדבריו: (כט) ויזד. לשון ציטול כתרומתו: והוא עיף. צרניחה¹, כמה דתימא כי עיפה נפשי להורגים²: (ב) הלעיטני. אפתח פי ושפוך הרבה לחוכה, כמו ששנינו, אין אוצוסין את הגמל אבל מלעיטין אותו: מן האדום האדום. עדשים אדומות, ואותו היום מת אברהם, שלא יראה את עשו בן בנו יולא לתרבות רעה, ואין זו שיבה טובה שהצטיחו הקצ"ה, לפיכך קלר הקצ"ה ה' שנים משנותיו, שיצחק חי ק"פ שנה, וזה קע"ה שנה, וצישל יעקב עדשים להצרות את האבל, ולמה עדשים שדומות לגלגל, שהאבלות גלגל החוזר בעולם. (ועוד מה עדשים אין להם פה, כך האבל אין לו פה, שאסור לדבר, ולפיכך המנהג להצרות את האבל בתחלת מאכלו צינים, שהם עגולים ואין להם פה, כך אבל אין לו פה, כדאמרין צמועד

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Since Avraham commanded, "his household after him to keep the way of God, doing charity and justice" (ibid 18:19), we can presume that Yitzchak too was educated to separate *ma'aser* from all of his possessions (in addition to the Torah's explicit statement that he separated *ma'aser* from agricultural produce - 26:12, and *Rashi* ibid.). Likewise, Yitzchak would have taught Ya'akov and Eisav to give *ma'aser* from all their personal belongings too.

In this light, Eisav's question, "How does one take *ma'aser* from salt and straw?" was quite appropriate, as in their household it was customary to take *ma'aser* from all possessions, even salt and straw.

We are now only left with one question: What, exactly was Eisav asking with his enquiry, "How does one separate *ma'aser* from salt and straw?" Surely, one simply takes off a tenth (as *Bartenura* asks)?

However, there is a complication with salt and straw, as they are both substances of very little value, but when they are mixed with other things they can prove extremely important. E.g. salt is not merely a seasoning for food, but it brings out the flavor of the entire dish, without which it is

tasteless. Similarly, straw as it stands alone is mere animal fodder, but mixed with other components it can make bricks (see *Shemos* 5:7).

Hence, in an attempt to appear pious in his father's eyes, Eisav devised an ingenious question: Do we simply take a tenth of the salt or straw as it is worth *now*, or do we take into consideration their increase in value when used in a final product, since that is when their genuine use becomes apparent? This would make a practical difference when the *ma'aser* was separated, because Avraham's custom (which he passed on to his children) was not to separate *ma'aser* from each type of produce individually, but rather, to take a tenth of the value of "all his possessions" *collectively*. Thus there would be a difference in the total amount of *ma'aser*, depending on whether the salt and straw were evaluated as raw materials or not.

"This made his father think that he was precise in the observance of *mitzvos*," as Eisav appeared to be paying attention to such subtle details within the obligations incumbent upon him.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 25, p. 116ff)

²⁹ (On the day Avraham died), Ya'akov was cooking a (lentil) stew (to feed his father), when Eisav came (home) from the field, exhausted (from his murderous activities).

³⁰ Eisav said to Ya'akov, "Pour some of this red stuff (down my throat) because I'm exhausted!" – He was therefore given the name Edom (meaning "red").

³¹ Ya'akov (thought that Eisav was not fit to perform the sacrificial services carried out by the firstborn, so he) said, "Sell me your birthright (so that I own it undisputedly) like day(light)."

³² Eisav replied, "Look, (with my lifestyle) I am going to (be punishable by) death (if I retain the right to sacrificial services) so why do I need this birthright?"

³³ Ya'akov said, "Swear to me (so that I own it undisputedly) like day(light)." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Ya'akov.

³⁴ Ya'akov gave bread and lentil stew to Eisav, who ate and drank. Then he got up and left. Eisav despised (the whole idea of serving God which came with) the birthright.

🌀 YITZCHAK MOVES TO GERAR BECAUSE OF FAMINE 🌀

26 **T**here was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that had been in the days of Avraham. Yitzchak went to Avimelech king of the Philistines in Gerar.

² God appeared to him, and said, "Do not go down to Egypt! Inhabit the land which I will tell you. ³ Settle in this land, and I will be with you and I will bless you. For I will give all these lands to you

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why did God tell Yitzchak not to go to Egypt? (v.2)

RASHI: He had in mind to go down to Egypt, like his father had gone down in the days of the famine. God said to him, "Do not go down to Egypt! You are a perfect burnt offering, and being outside the Land [of Israel] is not fitting for you.

MIDRASH: The verse states, "Settle in this land" (v. 3). Rabbi Hoshayah said, "[Yitzchak had the sanctity of] a perfect burnt offering. Just like a burnt offering is invalidated if it is taken outside its prescribed area, likewise, if you go outside the Land [of Israel] you will be invalidated (*Bereishis Rabah* 64:3).

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 "A PERFECT BURNT OFFERING" (v. 2-3)

While, *Rashi* and the **Midrash** seem to be making similar points, there are nevertheless two important differences between them: a.) The *Midrash* bases itself on verse 3, "settle in this Land," a positive statement, whereas *Rashi's* comment is based on the negative verse 2, "do not go down to Egypt" b.) The *Midrash* stresses that leaving the Land of Israel would render Yitzchak "invalidated." *Rashi* merely writes, "being outside the Land [of Israel] is not fitting for you."

These two points are connected: The *Midrash* sees the Land of Israel as being the appropriate place for a "perfect burnt offering," therefore it cites the positive verse, "settle in the Land." *Rashi* however stresses the negative qualities of the Diaspora ("being outside the Land is not fitting for you") so he quotes the negative verse, "do not go down to Egypt."

What is the underlying difference between *Rashi* and the *Midrash*?

THE EXPLANATION

At first glance, one might presume that, according to the *Midrash*, Yitzchak was prohibited by God from leaving the Land of Israel because of its holiness, i.e. a positive quality. *Rashi* on the other hand was of the opinion that the land did not possess any holiness during the time of the patriarchs, so he merely stressed the negative qualities of the Diaspora.

However, it was explained above (*Toras Menachem* to *Lech Lecha* 15:18), that according to all opinions, the Land of Israel did not possess holiness at that time. Therefore *Rashi* and the *Midrash* would not be arguing about this point. Rather, the following distinction could be argued.

a.) *Opinion of the Midrash.*

The *Midrash* states that, "Just like a burnt offering is invalidated if it is taken outside its prescribed area, likewise, etc.," This is based on the

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

"EISAV DESPISED THE BIRTHRIGHT..." (v. 34)

Even though Eisav's moral and spiritual standing was extremely low, to the extent that he, "despised (the whole idea of serving God which came with) the birthright," and his very disposition indicated that he was a murderous person (*Rashi* to 25:25); nevertheless, we still find later on that Ya'akov sent messengers ("angels") to inform Eisav that he was at peace with him, and sought his affection (see *Vayishlach* 32:4; *Rashi* to v. 6 *ibid.*).

From this we can learn a powerful lesson: We should "reach out" and "send messengers" even to those Jews who appear to be on the level of Eisav. Even such a Jew is your "brother," who needs to be treated in a pleasant and peace-loving manner, with love and affection. He needs to be drawn closer to the Torah with "ropes of love" (*Tanya* ch. 32).

(Based on *Hisvaduys* 5746, vol. 1, p. 693)

אתן ית כל ארעתא האלין ואקים ית קנימא די קנימית לאברהם אבוי: ד ואסגי ית בנד ככוכבי שמיא ואתן לבנד ית כל ארעתא האלין ויתברכו בנדיל בנד כל עממי ארעא: ה חלף די קביל אברהם למימרי ונשר מטרת מימרי פקודי קמי ואוריית: ו ותיב יצחק בנדר: ז ושאלו אנשי אתרא על עיסק אתתיה ואמר אחתי היא ארי דחיל למימר אחתי דלמא יקטלונני אנשי אתרא על רבקה ארי שפירת חייו היא: ח והנה כד סגיאנו ליה תמן יומיא ואסתבי אבימלך מלכא דפלשתאי מן חרפא וחזא והא יצחק מחאיף עם רבקה אתתיה: ט וקרא אבימלך ליצחק ואמר ברם הא אתתך היא ואיכדן אמרת אחתי היא ואמר ליה יצחק ארי אמרית דילמא אתקטיל עליה: י ואמר אבימלך מה דא עבדת לנא כזעיר פון שכיב דמוחד בעמא עם אתתך ואיתיתא עלנא חובא: יא ופקיד אבימלך ית כל עמא למימר דינויק לנברא דדין ולאתתיה אתקטלא יתקטיל: יב וזרע יצחק בארעא ההיא ואשכח בשתא

הארצת האל והקמתי את השבעה אשר נשבעתי לאברהם אביך: ד והרביתי את זרעך ככוכבי השמים ונתתי לזרעך את כל הארצת האל והתברכו בזרעך כל גויי הארץ: ה עקב אשר שמע אברהם בקלי וישמר משמרת מצותי חקותי ותורת: [שני] ו ישב יצחק בנדר: ז וישאלו אנשי המקום לאשתו ויאמר אחתי הוא כי ירא לאמר אשתי פן יחרגני אנשי המקום על רבקה כי טובת מראה הוא: ח ויהי כי ארכו לו שם הימים וישקף אבימלך מלך פלשתים בעד החלון וירא והנה יצחק מצחק את רבקה אשתו: ט ויקרא אבימלך ליצחק ויאמר אך הנה אשתך הוא ואיך אמרת אחתי הוא ויאמר אליו יצחק כי אמרתי פן אמות עליה: י ויאמר אבימלך מה זאת עשית לנו כמעט שכב אחד העם את אשתך והבאת עלינו אשם: יא ויצו אבימלך את כל העם לאמר הנגוע באיש הזה ובאשתו מות יומת: יב וזרע יצחק בארץ ההוא וימצא בשנה ההוא מאה שערים

כ"ט

שטענו, שאין טעם לדבר אלא גזירת המלך וחקותיו על עבדיו: ותורתו. להביא תורה שבעל פה, הלכה למשה מסיני: (f) לאשתו. על אשתו, כמו אמרי לי אחי הוא: (ח) בי ארכו. אמר, מעתה אין לי לדאוג, מאחר שלא אנסוכ עד עכשיו, ולא נזכר להיות נשמר: וישקף אבימלך וגו'. שראוכו ממשש מטתו: (י) אחד העם. המיוחד צעם, זה המלך: והבאת עלינו אשם. אש שכב, כבר הצאת אשם עלינו: (יב) בארץ ההוא. אף על פי שאינה חשובה כארץ ישראל עומה, כארץ שבעת הגוים: בשנה ההוא. אף על פי שאינה כחקה, שהיתה שנת רעזון: בארץ ההוא בשנה ההוא. שיהם למה, לומר שהארץ קשה והשנה קשה: מאה שערים. שאמדוכ כמה

תמימה, ואין חולק לארץ כדאי לך: (ג) האל. כמו הלאה: (ד) והתברכו בזרעך. אדם אומר לבנו יהא זרעך כזרעו של יצחק, וכן בכל המקרא, וזה אב לכולן, כך יברך ישראל לאמר ישמך וגו', ואף לענין הקללה מזינו כן, והיתה האשה לאלה, שהמקלל שונאו אומר תהא כפלונית, וכן והנחתם שמכס לשזועה לזחירי, שהנשבע אומר, אהא כפלוני אם עשיתי כך וכך: (ה) שמע אברהם בקולי. כשנסיתי אותו: וישמור משמרת. גזרות להרחקה על אזכרות שפתורה, כגון שניות לעריות, ושבות לשבת: מצותי. דברים שאילו לא נכתבו ראיון הן להטוות, כגון גזל ושפיכות דמים: חקותי. דברים שייר הרע ואומות העולם משיבין עליהם, כגון אכילת חזיר ולנישת

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principle that every sacrifice has its prescribed area. Some sacrifices may not be taken out of the Temple courtyard; others, of a lesser degree of holiness, may not be taken outside Jerusalem; the Pesach Sacrifice may not be taken outside the group of people who are assigned to eat it, and so on. This principle has nothing to do with holiness of the land, but rather, it is a general law that every sacrifice has its own prescribed area outside which the meat may not be taken (see Tosfos to Makos 18a).

Thus, we can presume that since Yitzchak was considered to be a "burnt offering" from when he was offered up on the Altar by the Akeida, there was a specific prescribed area within which he must not leave.

What were the boundaries of this area?

It was explained above (ibid.) that, according to the Midrash in Parshas Lech Lecha, Avraham and his family actually were granted ownership of the Land of Israel at the Covenant of the Parts. If we presume that the

Midrash in Parshas Lech Lecha is consistent with the Midrash here, then it follows that the prohibition against Yitzchak leaving the Land of Israel is connected with Avraham's ownership of the land.

Therefore, when Avraham offered up Yitzchak on the Altar as a burnt offering, the entire Land of Israel became the prescribed area of the "sacrifice," since this was a natural boundary, based on the fact that Avraham owned the entire land. Consequently the Diaspora became a prohibited area for Yitzchak.

b.) Opinion of Rashi

Rashi, however, rejected the notion that the Land of Israel was given to Avraham at the Covenant of the Parts. Therefore, he was forced to adopt a different approach from the Midrash.

Rashi explained earlier, in Parshas Chayei Sarah, that when Avraham sent his servant Eliezer to find a wife for Yitzchak, he said, "Now He is the

and to your descendants, and I will uphold the oath that I swore to Avraham, your father. ⁴ I will multiply your descendants like the stars of the heavens, and I will give your descendants all these lands. All the nations of the Earth will give blessings to each other by (comparing themselves to) your descendants. ⁵ (All this is) because Avraham listened to My voice (when I tested him); he guarded My (secondary prohibitions that) protect (a person from transgressing Biblical prohibitions), My (rational) commandments, My (irrational) statutes, and My instructions (in the Oral Law).”

SECOND READING

⁶ So, Yitzchak settled in Gerar. ⁷ When the local men asked about his wife, he said, “She is my sister,” because he was afraid to say, “(She is) my wife,” (because he said to himself,) “perhaps the local men will kill me because of Rivkah, for she is pleasant looking.”

⁸ Then, when he had been there for many days (he felt it was safe to stop acting as if Rivkah was his sister). Avimelech, king of the Philistines, looked through the window, and he saw – look! – Yitzchak was courting Rivkah, his wife.

⁹ Avimelech summoned Yitzchak, and he said, “She really is your wife! How could you have said, ‘She is my sister?’”

Yitzchak said to him, “Because I said (to myself), ‘perhaps I’ll die because of her.’”

¹⁰ “What have you done to us?” said Avimelech. “(I the king,) the highest of the people, might easily have slept with your wife, and (if I had done so) you would have brought guilt upon us.”

¹¹ Avimelech instructed all the people, saying, “Whoever touches this man or his wife will be put to death.”

🌀 YITZCHAK PROSPERS 🌀

26:12 **Y**itzchak sowed (crops) in that land (which was not as fertile as the main part of the Land of Israel), and he found (even) in that year (which was a bad one for crops, that the land yielded) a hundred times (more than average) – and God blessed him.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How did they know that the land yielded a hundred times more than average? (v. 12)

RASHI: They had estimated how much the land was fit to produce, and it produced one hundred measures for each measure that they had estimated. Our Rabbis said that the purpose of this estimate was for separating *ma’aser* (tithes).

MIDRASH: There is a principle that God’s blessing does not rest on something which is weighed, measured or counted. However, in the case of measuring for a *mitzvah*, this principle does not apply. Therefore, Yitzchak measured the field for the purposes of tithing.

GUR ARYEH: We see from the *Midrash* that *Rashi’s* two comments are one single explanation: Yitzchak measured the field specifically for a *mitzvah*, and therefore he received God’s blessings.

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God of the heaven and the God of the earth, because I have made it habitual for creatures to mention Him. But, when He took me from my father’s house, He was the God of the heavens but not the God of the earth, because mankind did not acknowledge Him, and His Name was not commonplace on the earth” (Rashi to 24:7).

From this we see that, according to *Rashi*, the Land of Israel (where Avraham lived) had become a place where it was “habitual” for people to mention God, in contrast to the Diaspora where, “mankind did not acknowledge Him.”

On this basis, *Rashi* concluded that God told Yitzchak not to leave the Land of Israel because, being a holy entity (a perfect burnt offering), it was not appropriate for him to reside in a place where “mankind did not acknowledge” the Almighty.

Nevertheless, *Rashi’s* choice of the phrase, “I have made it *habitual* for

creatures to mention Him,” suggests that the local Cana’anite residents had not come to a genuine recognition of God. Rather, they had merely been trained to mention God’s Name, and even that was only done *habitually*. Consequently, *Rashi* could not stress that Yitzchak needed to stay in the Land of Israel for a *positive* reason, since the habitual, insincere “mention” of God’s name by Cana’anite “creatures” was not a quality worth staying for. Therefore, *Rashi* stressed the negative features of the Diaspora, which was something inappropriate for Yitzchak, who was “a perfect burnt offering.”

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 15, p. 200ff.)

🌀 YITZCHAK’S HUNDRED-FOLD BLESSING (v. 12)

After explaining that Yitzchak compared the yield of his land with that year’s expected yield, *Rashi* continues with the explanation of “our Rabbis” that, “the purpose of this estimate was for separating *ma’aser*.”

ההיא על חר מִאֵה בְדַשְׁעֲרוֹהִי וּבְרַבִּיהִי יִי: יי וּרְבָא נִבְרָא וְאוּל אֲזוּל וּרְבִי עַד דִּי רַבָּא לַחֲדָא: יד וְהוּוּ לִיה גִּיתִי עָנָא וְגִיתִי תוּרִי וּפּוֹלְחָנָא סְנִי וְקִנְיָאוּ בֵּיה פְּלִשְׁתָּאִי: טו וְכַל בִּירִין דִּי חֲפְרוּ עֲבָדֵי אֲבוּהִי בְיוֹמֵי אֲבָרְהָם אֲבוּהִי טְמוּנֹן פְּלִשְׁתָּאִי וּמְלוֹנֹן עִפְרָא: טז וְאַמֵּר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְיִצְחָק אֲזוּל מִעֲמֵנָא אֲרִי תְקִיפְתָּא מִנָּנָא לַחֲדָא: יז וְאוּל מִתְּמֵן יִצְחָק וְשָׂרָא בְנַחְלָא דְגֵרָר וְיִתִּיב תְּמֵן: יח וְתֵב יִצְחָק וְחֲפַר יֵת בִּירֵי דְמִנָּא דִּי חֲפְרוּ בְיוֹמֵי אֲבָרְהָם אֲבוּהִי וּמְמוֹנֹן פְּלִשְׁתָּאִי בְּתַר דְּמִית אֲבָרְהָם וְקָרָא לְהוּן שְׂמֵהּוֹן בְּשִׁמְהוֹן דִּי הוּוּ קְרִי לְהוּן אֲבוּהִי: יט וְחֲפְרוּ עֲבָדֵי יִצְחָק בְּנַחְלָא וְאֲשַׁכְחוּ תְּמֵן בִּירָא דְּמִדְרִין נְבָעִי: כ וְנִצְוּ רַעֲוֹתָא גֵרָר עִם רַעֲוֹתָא דִּיִּצְחָק לְמִימַר דִּי לָנָא מִנָּא וְקָרָא שְׂמָא דְּבִירָא עֵיסַק אֲרִי אֲתַעֲסְקוּ עִמִּיהִ: כא וְחֲפְרוּ בִירָא אוּחְרֵי וְנִצְוּ אִף עֲלֵה וְקָרָא שְׂמָה שְׂמֵנָה: כב וְאֲסַתְּלַק מִתְּמֵן וְחֲפַר בִּירָא אוּחְרֵי וְלֹא נִצְוּ עֲלֵה וְקָרָא שְׂמָה רַחוּבֹת וְאַמֵּר אֲרִי כַעַן אֲפִתִי יִי לָנָא וְנִיפּוּשׁ (וּפְּשִׁנָּא) בְּאַרְעָא:

וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ יְהוָה: [שלישין] יג וַיִּגְדַּל הָאִישׁ וַיֵּלֶךְ הַלֹּחַ וַיִּגְדַּל עַד כִּי־גָדַל מְאֹד: יד וַיְהִי־לוֹ מִקְנֵה־צֹאן וּמִקְנֵה בָקָר וַעֲבֹדָה רַבָּה וַיִּקְנֵאוּ אֹתוֹ פְּלִשְׁתִּים: טו וְכָל־הַבְּאֵרֹת אֲשֶׁר חָפְרוּ עֲבָדֵי אָבִיו בְּיַמֵּי אֲבָרְהָם אָבִיו סִתְּמוּם פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּמְלְאוּם עֶפְרָא: טז וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ אֶל־יִצְחָק לֵךְ מִעֲמֵנִי כִּי־עֲצַמְתָּ מִמֶּנִּי מְאֹד: יז וַיֵּלֶךְ מִשָּׁם יִצְחָק וַיַּחַן בְּנַחְל־גֵרָר וַיֵּשֶׁב שָׁם: יח וַיֵּשֶׁב יִצְחָק וַיַּחְפְּרֵ אֶת־בְּאֵרֹת הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר חָפְרוּ בְיוֹמֵי אֲבָרְהָם אָבִיו וַיִּסְתְּמוּם פְּלִשְׁתִּים אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אֲבָרְהָם וַיִּקְרָא לָהֶן שְׁמוֹת כְּשִׁמְתֹת אֲשֶׁר־קָרָא לָהֶן אָבִיו: יט וַיַּחְפְּרוּ עֲבָדֵי־יִצְחָק בְּנַחְל וַיִּמְצְאוּ־שָׁם בְּאֵר מַיִם חַיִּים: כ וַיְרִיבוּ רַעֲיֵי גֵרָר עִם־רַעֲיֵי יִצְחָק לֵאמֹר לָנוּ הַמַּיִם וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם־הַבְּאֵר עֵשֶׂק כִּי הִתְעַשְׂקוּ עִמּוֹ: כא וַיַּחְפְּרוּ בְּאֵר אַחֲרֵת וַיְרִיבוּ גַם־עֲלֶיהָ וַיִּקְרָא שְׂמָה שְׂמֵנָה: כב וַיִּעַתֶּק מִשָּׁם וַיַּחְפְּרֵ בְּאֵר אַחֲרֵת וְלֹא רָבוּ עֲלֶיהָ וַיִּקְרָא שְׂמָה רַחוּבֹת וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי־עָתָה הִרְחִיב יְהוָה לָנוּ וּפְרִינוּ בְּאַרְצֵנוּ:

רש"י

עלינו. טמונין פלשתאי, לשון סתימה, וזלשון התלמוד מטמטס את כל: (יז) בנחל גרר. רחוק מן העיר: (יח) יושב ויחפר. את בצרות אשר חפרו צימי אזרכס אציו, ופלשתים סתמום וקודם שנסע יצחק מגרר, חזר וחפרו: (כ) עשק. ערעור: כי התעשקו עמו. נתעשקו עמו עליה צמריצה וערעור: (כא) שטנה. נושמי"ט: (כב) ופרינו בארץ. כתרגומו וניפוש בצרעא:

ראויב לעשות, ועשה על אחת שאמדוכ, מאה. ורצותינו אמרו, אומד זה למעשרות כיה: (יג) כי גדל מאד. שכיו אומרים זל פרדותיו של יצחק, ולא כספו וזכבו של אצילמל: (יד) ועבדה רבה. פעולה רבה, זלשון לע"ז אצורוינ"א, עבודה משמע עבודה אחת. עבודה משמע פעולה רבה: (טו) סתמום פלשתים. מפני שאמרו תקלה הם לנו מפני הגייסות הצרות

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This begs the question: What is lacking with *Rashi's* first explanation, that led him to bring the interpretation of the Rabbis?

Gur Aryeh, following the **Midrash**, explains that *Rashi* was troubled as to why Yitzchak would measure his field knowing that, "God's blessing does not rest on something which is weighed, measured or counted."

However, at the literal level of Torah interpretation, there is no indication that this was Yitzchak's concern. Therefore, it is difficult to accept that this was *Rashi's* problem.

So what forced *Rashi* to conclude that Yitzchak measured the field for the purposes of separating *ma'aser*, and not simply because he had wanted to estimate its approximate yield at the time of purchase, to see if he was being charged the correct price?

THE EXPLANATION

A key distinction between *Rashi's* two explanations, concerns the time at which the estimate was made. According to *Rashi's* first interpretation – that Yitzchak measured the field to estimate how much it would yield – he obviously measured it before the crops had grown, presumably when purchasing the field, to assess its value. However, according to *Rashi's* second interpretation (from "our Rabbis") that he measured it for the purposes of separating *ma'aser*, it turns out that Yitzchak would have

measured the crops *after* they had fully grown, since *ma'aser* is one tenth of the *actual* yield.

Obviously (according to both interpretations) the blessing of finding one hundred-fold must have occurred after Yitzchak had made his calculations, otherwise he would have no way of knowing that the magnitude of the increase was one hundred-fold.

Thus, according to *Rashi's* second interpretation (that he measured for the purposes of separating *ma'aser*), the one-hundred fold increase would have occurred *after* Yitzchak measured them. Thus, a great miracle must have occurred, that the crops increased one-hundred fold, *after* they had fully grown!

According to the first interpretation, however, that Yitzchak estimated how much the field would produce in advance, the one-hundred fold increase could have occurred more naturally, throughout the entire period of the crops' growth. Thus, *Rashi* placed this interpretation first, as it is more acceptable at the literal level.

Nevertheless, there is a problem with the first interpretation which led *Rashi* to add the explanation of the Rabbis:

According to *Rashi*, the land where Yitzchak was situated was infertile, and that year was a famine (*Rashi* to beginning of v. 12). Though it would

THIRD
READING

¹³ *The man (Yitzchak) became prosperous, and he grew constantly greater until he had grown very great (even in comparison to Avimelech). ¹⁴ He had flocks of sheep and cattle and many enterprises, and the Philistines envied him. ¹⁵ The Philistines stopped up all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Avraham, his father, and they filled them with earth.*

¹⁶ *Avimelech said to Yitzchak, "Go away from us, for you have become much stronger than us."*

¹⁷ *Yitzchak went away from there, set up camp in the Gerar valley, and settled there.*

¹⁸ *(However, before he left Gerar) Yitzchak re-dug the water wells which had been dug in the days of his father, Avraham, and were stopped up by the Philistines after Avraham's death. He gave them names; the same names that his father had given them.*

¹⁹ *(After settling) in the valley, Yitzchak's servants dug, and they found there a well of living waters.*

²⁰ *The shepherds of Gerar argued with Yitzchak's shepherds, saying, "The water is ours," so he named the well "Esek" ("argument"), because they had argued with him.*

²¹ *They dug another well, and the (shepherds) quarreled about it also, so he named it Sitnah ("harassment").*

²² *He moved away from there and dug another well. They did not quarrel over it, so he named it Rechovos. He said, "For now God has made space ("hirschiv") for us, and we will be fruitful in the land."*

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● **Why does the Torah inform us that Yitzchak dug three wells? (v. 19-22)**

RAMBAN: This account does not appear to have much significance at the literal level. However, there is a hidden meaning here, that the three wells hint to the three Holy Temples. The first well, named *Esek* ("argument") alludes to the First Temple, which was contested by the

nations, who oppressed the Jewish people with wars, until they destroyed it. The second well, *Sitnah* ("harassment"), is a name actually used by scripture to refer to the Second Temple (see Ezra 4:6). The third well was called *Rechovos* ("spacious"), alluding to the future Third Temple which will be built without quarrel or feud, when God will expand our borders, speedily, in our days.

TORAS MENACHEM

have been quite surprising for Yitzchak to find one hundred times more than the average yield for that year, nevertheless, even that would not have made him prosperous, since the average for that year was so pitiful. The Torah however appears to indicate that Yitzchak *did* become wealthy from the harvest, as the next verse continues, "*The man (Yitzchak) became prosperous.*"

Therefore, in order to explain why he became prosperous, *Rashi*

brought the second explanation "of the Rabbis," that Yitzchak's yield multiplied miraculously one hundred times after it had already grown. This yield would have been much greater, since we are speaking here of 100 times Yitzchak's *real* yield, rather than 100 times the estimated average local yield. And surely, Yitzchak – being a *tzadik* – would have been blessed by God to reap *well above* the average yield for that year.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 5, pp. 121ff; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Toldos* 5727)

🔥 *Sparks of Chasidus* 🔥

According to **Ramban**, the three wells dug by Yitzchak allude to the three Holy Temples. The analogy of digging a well precisely describes the process of building the Temple: First there is a phase of intense physical effort to dig the well, followed by the actual filling of the well with water which does not require any direct effort – it simply floods in. Similarly, the building of the Temple requires tremendous human effort, but the indwelling of the *Shechinah* (Divine Presence) - which is the very purpose of building the Temple - is an effortless consequence of the Temple's construction

This analogy appears to break down however in the case of the Third Temple which, according to the *Zohar* (III 221a), will be built by God, and not by man. It seems at first glance, that *Ramban's*

analogy for the Third temple of *digging* a well is inappropriate.

However, even according to the *Zohar*, the Third Temple is built through human effort too. Not through the physical effort of working with stones and mortar, but rather, by the dedicated acts of super-rational *mitzvah* observance by Jewish people, in defiance of the challenges of exile. The cumulative effects of these acts are thus described by the *Zohar* as a "building made by God," though in fact, it is a building made by human *mitzvah* acts that are *totally dedicated* to God.

Thus, the building process of the Third Temple consists of *mitzvos* performed out of simple obedience to God. Therefore, they are eternal.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 30, pp.116ff.)

כג וסליק מתמן לבאר שבע: כד ואתגלי ליה יי בליליא ההוא ואמר אנא אלהיה דאברהם אבוק לא תדחל ארי בסעךד מימרי ואברכינד ואסגי ית בנד בדיל אברהם עבדי: כה ובנא תמן מדבחא וצלי בשמא דיין ופרסיה תמן למשכניה וברו תמן עבדי יצחק בירא: כו ואבימלך אזל לותיה מנרר וסיעת מרחמוהי ופיכול רב חיליה: כז ואמר להון יצחק מה דיין אתיתון לותי ואתון סניתון יתי ושלחתוני מלותכון: כח ואמרו מחזא תוינא ארי הוה מימרא דיין בסעךד ואמרנא תתקיים כען מומתא דהוה בין אבהתנא ביננא ובינד ונגור קים עמך: כט אם תעביד עמנא בישא כמא די לא אנזיקנד וכמא די עבדנא עמך לחוד טב ונשלחנד בשלם את כען בריכא דיין: ל ועבד להון משתיא ואכלו ושתיא: לא ואקדימו בצפרא וקיימו גבר לאחיהי ושלחנינו יצחק ואזלו מלותיה בשלם: לב והוה ביומא ההוא ואתו עבדי יצחק וחויאו ליה על עיסק בירא די חפרו ואמרו ליה אשכחנא מיא: לד וקרא יתה שבעה על פן שמח דקרתא באר שבע עד יומא הדין: לה והוה עשו בר ארבעין שנין ונסיב אתתא ית יהודית בת בארי התאה וית בשמת בת אילון התאה: לה והואה מסרבן ומרגנן על מימר יצחק ולרבקה: א והוה פד

ורביעין כג ויעל משם באר שבע: כד וירא אליו יהוה בלילה ההוא ויאמר אנכי אלהי אברהם אביך אל-תירא כי-אתך אנכי וברכתיד והרביתי את-זרעך בעבור אברהם עבדי: כה ויבן שם מזבח ויקרא בשם יהוה ויט-שם אהלו ויכרו-שם עבדי-יצחק באר: כו ואבימלך הלך אליו מנרר ואחזת מרעהו ופיכל שר-צבאו: כז ויאמר אלהם יצחק מדוע באתם אלי ואתם שנאתם אתי ותשלחוני מאתכם: כח ויאמרו ראו ראינו כי-היה יהוה | עמך ונאמר תהי נא אלה בינותינו בינינו ובינד ונברתה ברית עמך: כט אם-תעשה עמנו רעה באשר לא נגענך וכאשר עשינו עמך רק-טוב ונשלחך בשלום אתה עתה ברוך יהוה: וחמישי | ויעש להם משתה ויאכלו וישתו: לא וישכמו בבקר וישבעו איש לאחיו וישלחם יצחק וילכו מאתו בשלום: לב ויהי | ביום ההוא ויבאו עבדי יצחק ויגדו לו על-אדות הבאר אשר חפרו ויאמרו לו מצאנו מים: לד ויקרא אתה שבעה על-פן שם-העיר באר שבע עד היום הזה: ס לה ויהי עשו בן-ארבעים שנה ויקח אשה את-יהודית בת-בארי החתי ואת-בשמת בת-אילן החתי: לה ותהיין מרת רוח ליצחק ולרבקה: ס כז א ויהי כיי-זקן

כש"י

אציק, תחי גם עתה ציינו וציניך: (כט) לא נגענוך. כשאמרנו לך לך מעמנו: אתה. גס אתה (ס"א עתה) עשה לנו כמו כן: (לג) שבעה. על שם הכרית: (לד) בן ארבעים שנה. עשו היב נמשל לחזיר, שנאמר יכרסמנה חזיר מיער⁵, החזיר הזה, כשהוא שוכב פושט טלפיו לומר ראו שאני טכור, כך אלו גזולים וחומסים, ומראים עלמם כשרים. כל מ' שנה היב עשו לד נשים מתחת יד צעליהן, ומענה אותם, כשהיב בן מ', אמר, אבא בן מ' שנה נשא אשה, אף אני כן: (לה) מורת רוח. לשון המראת רוח, כמו ממריס כייסס⁶, כל מעשיכן היו להכעיס ולעצבון: ליצחק ולרבקה. שהיו עוזדות

(כו) ואחזת מרעהו. כתרנומו וסיעת מרחמוכי סיעת מאוכזבי. ויש פותרין מרעכו מ' מיסוד הכיזב¹, כמו שלשים מרעים², דשמשון, כדי שחכיב תיבת ואחוזת דבוקה, אצל אין דרך ארץ לדבר על המלכות כן, סיעת אוכזביו, שאם כן כל סיעת אוכזביו כוליק עמו, ולא היב לו אלא סיעה אחת של אוכזבים, לכן יש לפותרו כלשון כראשון. ואל תחמה על תי"ו של אחת, ואף על פי שאינה תיזב סמוכה, יש דוגמתה במקרא עזרת מזר³, ושכורת ולא מיינ⁴: אחזת. לשון קצילה ואגודה, שנאחזין יחד: (כח) ראו ראינו. ראו באציק ראינו כך: תהי נא אלה בינותינו וגו'. האלה אשר ציוותינו מימי

	ALIAS (PARSHAS TOLDOS)	REAL NAME (PARSHAS VAYISHLACH)
EISAV'S WIVES	YEHUDIS, DAUGHTER OF BE'AIRIY THE CHITITE (26:34)	AHALIVAMAH, DAUGHTER OF TZIVON THE CHITITE (36:2)
	BASMAS, DAUGHTER OF AILON THE CHITITE (26:34)	ADAH, DAUGHTER OF AILON THE CHITITE (36:2)
	MACHALAS, DAUGHTER OF YISHMA'EL (28:9)	BASMAS, DAUGHTER OF YISHMAEL (36:3)

FOURTH
READING

²³ He went up from there to Be'er-Sheva. ²⁴ That night, God appeared to him and said, "I am the God of Avraham, your father. Do not be afraid, because I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for the sake of Avraham, My servant."

²⁵ He built an altar there, and he (prayed) in the Name of God. He pitched his tent there, and Yitzchak's servants dug a well there.

AVIMELECH SWEARS AN OATH WITH YITZCHAK

26:26 **A**vimelech went to him from Gerar with a group of his companions and Fichol, his army-general. ²⁷ Yitzchak said to them, "Why have you come to me, if you hate me, and you sent me away from you?"

²⁸ They said, "We see that God was with you (and) we saw (that God was with your father), so we said: Let the oath that was between us (from the days of your father) be between ourselves and you. Let us form a covenant with you, ²⁹ that you do no harm to us, just like we have not touched you. And, just like we only treated you well and we sent you away in peace, you too – blessed one of God – now (do the same)."

FIFTH
READING

³⁰ (Yitzchak) made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. ³¹ They got up early in the morning and swore an oath with each other. Yitzchak sent them off, and they went away from him in peace.

³² Then, on that same day, Yitzchak's servants came and told him about the well that they had dug. They said to him, "We have found water." ³³ He named it Shivah ("oath"). The city is therefore called Be'er-sheva to this very day.

EISAV MARRIES

³⁴ When Eisav was forty years old he married Yehudis, the daughter of Be'airiy the Chitite, and Basmah, the daughter of Ailon the Chitite. ³⁵ (Their idol-worship) tormented Yitzchak and Rivkah.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why did Eisav marry when he was forty years old? (v. 34)

RASHI: Eisav has been compared to a pig, as the verse states, "The pig from the forest gnaws at it" (Ps. 80:14). This pig, when it lies down, stretches out its hooves, as if to say, "See, I am a clean (kosher)

animal." So do these [descendants of Eisav] rob and plunder and then pretend to be honorable. For forty years, Eisav kidnapped wives from their husbands and violated them. When he was forty years old, he said, "My father married at forty. I too will do the same."

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🕯️ EISAV'S WIVES (v. 34)

In *Parshas Vayishlach*, when Eisav's descendants are listed, the Torah reveals the true names of Eisav's wives (36:2-3). *Rashi* (ibid.) explains the significance of each of the pseudonyms that are used here in *Parshas Toldos*.

However, one detail *Rashi* does not explain is why the name of Yehudis's father is changed here from Tzivon the Chitite to Be'airiy the Chitite.

Another, more general question is: What is the connection between Eisav's marriage and the preceding passage, about Yitzchak's digging of wells and the oath with Avimelech?

THE EXPLANATION

According to *Rashi*, Eisav married at the age of forty to fool people into thinking that he was a loyal son who followed in his father's footsteps, to the extent that he even married at the same age. In this vein, *Rashi*

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The Talmud states that in the future redemption we will say to Yitzchak, "you are our father," more so than to the other patriarchs (*Shabbos* 89b). This messianic quality of Yitzchak is evident here in the account of how Avimelech came of his own volition to make peace with Yitzchak (v. 26ff.), an act which is reminiscent of the time when, "in the End of Days, the mountain of God's house will be established on the top of the mountains... all nations will flood to itand many people will go and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of God.'" (*Isaiah* 2:2-3).

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 25, p. 127-8)

סיב יצחק וכתביו עינוהי מלמחזי וקרא ית
 עשו בריה רבא ואמר ליה ברי ואמר ליה
 הא אגא: ב ואמר הא כען סיבית לית אגא
 ידע יומא דאימות: ג וכען סב כען וננד סיפוד
 וקשתה ופוק לחקלא וצוד לי צידא: ד ועבד
 לי תבשילין כמא די רחמיית ותעיל לי
 ואיכול בדיל די תברכינך נפשי עד לא
 אימות: ה ורבקה שמעת כד מליל יצחק עם
 עשו בריה ואזל עשו לחקלא למיצד צידא
 לאותאה: ו ורבקה אמרת ליעקב ברה
 למימר הא שמעית ית אבוד ממליל עם עשו
 אחוד למימר: ז איתי לי צידא ועבד לי
 תבשילין ואיכול ואברכינך קדם יי קדם
 מותי: ח וכען ברי קביל מני למא די אגא
 מפקדא יתך: ט אזיל כען לות ענא וסב לי
 מתמן תרין גדיי עזין טבגן ואעבד ותהון
 תבשילין לאבוד כמא די רחבי: י ותיתי
 לאבוד ויכול בדיל די יברכינך קדם מותיה:
 יא ואמר יעקב לרבקה אמיה הא עשו אחי
 גבר שערן ואגא גבר שעיע: יב מאים

יצחק ותבחינו עינוי מראת ויקרא את-עשו | בנו הגדל
 ויאמר אליו בני ויאמר אליו הנני: ב ויאמר הנה-נא זקנתי לא
 ידעתי יום מותי: ג ועתה שא-נא בליך תליך וקשתך וצא
 השדה וצודה לי צידה [ק' ציד]: ד ועשה-לי מטעמים כאשר
 אהבתי והביאה לי ואכלה בעבור תברכה נפשי בטרם
 אמות: ה ורבקה שמעת בדבר יצחק אל-עשו בנו וילך עשו
 השדה לצוד ציד להביא: ו ורבקה אמרה אל-יעקב בנה
 לאמר הנה שמעתי את-אביך מדבר אל-עשו אחיך לאמר:
 הביאה לי ציד ועשה-לי מטעמים ואכלה ואברכה לפני
 יהוה לפני מותי: ה ועתה בני שמע בקלי לאשר אני מצוה
 אתך: ט לך-נא אל-הצאן וקח-לי משם שני גדיי עזים טבים
 ואעשה אתם מטעמים לאביך כאשר אהב: י והבאת לאביך
 ואכל בעבור אשר יברכה לפני מותו: יא ויאמר יעקב אל-
 רבקה אמו הן עשו אחי איש שער ואנכי איש חלק: יב אולי

כש"י

(ג) תליך. חרצך, שדרך לתלוה: שא נא. לשון השחזק, כחותה שנינו², אין משחזין את הסכין אבל משיחה על גבי חצתה, חדד סכין ושחוט יפה שלא תאכלני נבלה³. וצודה לי. מן ההפקר, ולא מן הגזל: (ה) לצוד ציד להביא. מכו להצוא, אם לא ימצא ליד, יצא מן הגזל: (ז) לפני ה'. צרותו, שיסכים על ידי: (ט) וקח לי. משלי הם ואינם גזל, כך כחז לה יחזק צתוצתה לטול שני גדיי עזים בכל יום⁴: שני גדיי עזים. וכי שני גדיי עזים היה מאכלו של יחזק, אלא פסח היה, האחד הקריב לפסחו, והאחד עשה מטעמים. צפרקו דרבי אליעזר: כאשר אהב. כי טעם הגדי כטעם הצז: (יא) איש שער. צטל

עזות חלילים¹: (ח) ותבחינו. צעשן של אלו, (שכיו מטענות ומקטירות לעבודת חלילים). דבר אחר, כשנעקד על גבי המזבח, וכיה אצוי רוצה לשחוט, צאותה שעה נפתחו השמים, וראו מלאכי השרת והיו צוכים, וירדו דמעותיהם ונפלו על עיניו, לפיכך כהו עיניו. דבר אחר, כדי שיטול יעקב את הצרכות: (צ) לא ידעתי יום מותי. אמר רבי יהושע בן קרחה, אם מגיע אדם לפרק אצותיו, ידאג חמש שנים לפניכם, וחמש לאחר כן, ויחזק היה בן קכ"ג, אמר, שמא לפרק אמי אני מגיע, והיא צת קכ"ז מטה, והריני בן כ' שנים סמוך לפרקה, לפיכך לא ידעתי יום מותי, שמא לפרק אמי שמא לפרק אצתי

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 5, p. 163ff.)

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explains in *Parshas Vayishlach* that he gave his wife (who was really called Ahalivamah) the name Yehudis, a name whose meaning suggests that she had abandoned idol worship (*Rashi* 36:2).

And since Ahalivamah was born from a wicked family, as *Rashi* explains, Eisav was forced to change her father's name too, in order to maintain the image that he had married a righteous person. So he called her Yehudis, daughter of Be'airiy the Chitite.

At the literal level, there is no need to explain the significance of every name. (Only those names which pose some sort of question or contradiction are explained by *Rashi*). Therefore, *Rashi* was not required to explain why Eisav chose the name Be'airiy in particular, since it is already self-evident from *Rashi's* commentary why Eisav was forced to change this name.

Perhaps it could be argued that Eisav chose the name Be'airiy in order to further promote his deception. We read in the previous section that after Yitzchak dug a series of wells which were contested by Philistines, his

third well was left in peace, and Yitzchak then swore an oath of peace with Avimelech, king of the Philistines. Therefore, after marrying at forty years to mimic his father, Eisav continued his ploy of paternal imitation by acquiring his own well – not in the literal sense, but rather, by acquiring a father-in-law whose name was Be'airiy, literally: “my well.” Thus he was intimating, “just like my father has his own well, I have my own too.”

☞ RASHI'S THREE INTERPRETATIONS (v. 1)

Rashi offers three explanations as to why Yitzchak's sight became weak. However, *Rashi's* comment is perplexing because:

- a.) The Torah itself appears to explain why Yitzchak's vision became impaired, because he was old: “*Yitzchak had grown old*. The vision of his eyes had dimmed” (See **Rashbam**). Why did *Rashi* need to offer any explanation at all?
- b.) Why did *Rashi* find it necessary to bring three interpretations?

🌀 YA'AKOV TAKES EISAV'S BLESSING 🌀

27 **Y**itzchak had grown old (and he wanted to bless Eisav*).
The vision of his eyes had dimmed. He summoned Eisav, his older son, and he said to him,
“My son.”

“I’m here,” he replied.

² “Look, now I have grown old. I don’t know when I will die. ³ So now, sharpen your tools, (take) your sword and your bow, and go out to the field to hunt game for me. ⁴ Make for me the tasty foods that I love, and bring them to me to eat. For (doing this) my soul will bless you before I die.”

⁵ Rivkah was listening when Yitzchak spoke to Eisav, his son...

Eisav went to the field to hunt game. (He intended) to bring (meat from stolen animals if he was unable to trap his own).

⁶ Rivkah said to her son Ya’akov, “Look, I heard your father speaking to Eisav your brother, saying, ⁷ ‘Bring me game and make me tasty foods to eat, and I will bless you before my death, before God.’ ⁸ Now, my son, listen to my voice, to what I am commanding you: ⁹ Go now to the flock, and take two of my choice kids from there, and I will make (one of) them into tasty foods for your father, (the types) that he loves (since a goat tastes like game). ¹⁰ You will bring (them) to your father to eat. For (doing this) he will bless you before he dies.”

¹¹ Ya’akov said to Rivkah his mother, “But my brother Eisav is a hairy person, and I am a smooth

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why was Yitzchak’s vision weak? (v. 1)

RASHI: Because of the smoke of the above-mentioned [wives of Eisav] who would burn incense in idol worship.

Another explanation: When Yitzchak was bound on the altar and his father was about to slaughter him, the heavens opened and the ministering angels looked on and wept. Their tears fell upon Yitzchak’s eyes and as a result, his eyes became dim.

Another explanation: To enable Ya’akov to take the blessings.

RASHBAM: Yitzchak’s eyes dimmed from old age.

SIFSEI CHACHAMIM: First *Rashi* offers an explanation which is based on the juxtaposition of verses (since the previous verse alludes to the idol worship of Eisav’s wives). However, this leaves the reader with the question: How could God cause this to happen to Yitzchak? Therefore *Rashi* brings the latter reason, that Yitzchak’s blindness was to enable Ya’akov to take the blessings. However, we are still left with the question: Why did Rivkah not become blind too from the smoke? Therefore, *Rashi* brings the additional explanation that Yitzchak’s eyes had already been weakened at the *Akeida*, therefore his eyes were more severely affected by the smoke.

TORAS MENACHEM

THE EXPLANATION

Towards the end of *Parshas Chayei Sarah*, the Torah states that, “After Avraham died, God blessed Yitzchak his son” (25:11). *Rashi* explains why it was God, and not Avraham, who blessed Yitzchak: “Even though God gave over the blessings to Avraham, he was afraid to bless Yitzchak since he foresaw Eisav coming forth from him. He said, ‘Let the Master of blessings come and bless whoever He pleases!’ So, God came and blessed him.”

Thus, on reaching our verse, that, “the vision of his (Yitzchak’s) eyes was dimmed,” *Rashi* was troubled by an obvious question: If God personally blessed Yitzchak, then how is it possible that he should lose his sight? Surely God’s blessing should have spared him from this aggravation?

Thus, *Rashi* searched for an explanation why Yitzchak’s loss of vision was not due to his old age, but rather, due to some external factor. In the final analysis, *Rashi* found it necessary to bring three interpretations, since each of them have their own respective advantages and disadvantages:

a.) *Rashi’s* first explanation: smoke damage

This explanation is preferable as it is indicated by the Torah itself. In the previous verse, we read that Eisav and his wives, “tormented Yitzchak and Rivkah” (26:35), and *Rashi* writes that this was due to their idol worship. In the following verse we read that, “Yitzchak had grown old. The vision of his eyes had dimmed” (27:1) so it follows that Yitzchak’s visual impediment here in 27:1 was caused by the idol worship mentioned in 26:35 (see **Sifsei Chachamim**). Since this is the most contextually preferable solution, *Rashi* cited it as his first and primary interpretation.

However, this explanation alone is insufficient, as we are left with two questions: Presumably, Eisav and his family would not have burned incense to idols in Yitzchak’s presence – they probably lived in a separate residence in any case – so why should Yitzchak have been affected by the smoke? And, if Yitzchak was affected, why was Rivkah not harmed too?

Therefore, *Rashi* looked for another interpretation.

יְמוֹשִׁינֵנִי אָבָא וְאָהִי בְעֵינֹהִי כְמִתְלַעִיב וְאָהִי מִיְתִי עָלַי לְוֹטִין וְלֹא בְרַבִּין יי וְאִמְרַת לִיה אַמִּיה עָלַי אֲתֵאמֵר בְּנִבּוּאָה דְלֹא יִיתוּן לְוֹטִיא עֲלֶיךָ בְּרִי בְרַם קָבִיל מִנִּי וְאִיוּל סָב לִי יי וְאִזֵּל וְנִסִּיב וְאִתִּי לְאִמִּיה וְעִבְדַת אַמִּיה תְּבַשְׂלִין כְּמֵא דִי רַחֵם אַבּוּהִי: טו וְנִסִּיבַת רִבְקָה ית לְבוּשֵׁי עֵשָׂו בְּרָה רַבָּא דְכִיתָא דִי עֵמָה בְּבֵיתָא וְאֶלְבִּישֵׁת ית וְעֵקֵב בְּרָה וְעִירָא: טז וַיִּת מוֹשְׁבֵי דְגִדְיִי בַר עֵזִי אֶלְבִּישֵׁת עַל יְדוּהִי וְעַל שְׂעִיעוֹת צְוֹאֲרֵיהִי: יז וַיִּהְבַּת ית תְּבַשְׂלִיא וַיִּת לְחֵמָא דִי עִבְדַת בִּידָא דְעֵקֵב בְּרָה: יח וְעֵאל לֹת אַבּוּהִי וְאִמֵּר אָבָא וְאִמֵּר הֵא אֲנָא מֵאֵן אַתְּ בְּרִי: יט וְאִמֵּר וְעֵקֵב לְאַבּוּהִי אֲנָא עֵשָׂו בּוֹכְרֶךָ עִבְדִּית כְּמֵא דִי מִלְתָּא עִמִּי קוּם כְּעֵן אֶסְתַּחַר וְתִיכּוֹל מְצִידִי בְּדִיל דִּי תִבְרַכְנִינִי נִפְשָׁךְ: כ וְאִמֵּר יִצְחָק לְבְרִיה מַה דִּין אוֹחִיָּתָא לְאַשְׁכְּחָא בְּרִי וְאִמֵּר אֲרִי זְמִין יי אֵלְהֶךָ גְּדַמִּי: כא וְאִמֵּר יִצְחָק לְעֵקֵב קְרִיב כְּעֵן וְאִמִּישׁוּנְךָ בְּרִי הֵאֵת דִּין בְּרִי עֵשָׂו אִם לֹא: כב וַקְרִיב יִצְחָק לֹת יִצְחָק

יְמוֹשִׁנִי אָבִי וְהִיְתִי בְעֵינָיו כְּמִתְעַתֵּעַ וְהִבְאִתִּי עָלַי קָלְלָה וְלֹא בְרַכָּה: יג וְתֵאמֵר לוֹ אֲמוֹ עָלַי קָלְלַתְּךָ בְּנִי אֲךָ שָׁמַע בְּקֻלִי וְלֶךְ קַח-לִי: יד וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּקַּח וַיָּבֵא לְאִמּוֹ וַתַּעַשׂ אִמּוֹ מִטְעָמִים כַּאֲשֶׁר אָהֵב אָבִיו: טו וַתִּקַּח רִבְקָה אֶת-בְּנֵי עֵשָׂו בְּנֵה הַגְּדָל הַחֲמֹדֹת אֲשֶׁר אִתָּהּ בְּבֵית וַתִּלְבַּשׂ אֶת-יַעֲקֹב בְּנֵה הַקָּטָן: טז וַיֵּאת עֹרֹת גִּדְיֵי הָעֵזִים הַלְבִּישָׁה עַל-יָדָיו וְעַל חֻלְקֹת צְוֹאֲרָיו: יז וַתִּתֵּן אֶת-הַמִּטְעָמִים וְאֶת-הַלֶּחֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂתָה בְּיַד יַעֲקֹב בְּנֵה: יח וַיָּבֵא אֶל-אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִינִי מִי אִתָּה בְּנִי: יט וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל-אָבִיו אָנֹכִי עֵשָׂו בְּכֹרֶךָ עָשִׂיתִי כַּאֲשֶׁר דְּבַרְתָּ אֵלַי קוּם-נָא שָׁבָה וְאֲכַלְהָ מְצִידִי בְּעֵבוֹר תִּבְרַכְנִי נִפְשָׁךְ: כ וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל-בְּנָו מַה-זֶּה מִתְרַתְּ לְמַצָּא בְּנִי וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי הִקְרָה יְהוָה אֵלָיְךָ לְפָנָי: כא וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל-יַעֲקֹב גִּשְׁה-נָא וְאִמְשֶׁךָ בְּנִי הֵאֵתָה זֶה בְּנִי עֵשָׂו אִם-לֹא: כב וַיִּגַּשׁ

כ"ז

(יט) אנכי עשו בכרך. אנכי המציא לך, ועשו הוא צדוקך: עשיתי. כמה דברים, כאשר דברת אלי: שבה. לשון מיכס על השלחן, לכך מתורגם אסתחרי: (כא) גשה נא ואמשך. אמר יצחק כלבו, אין דרך עשו להיות שם שמים

שער: (יב) ימושני. כמו ממשש בלחיים! (טו) החמדות. הנקיות כתרנומו דכיתא. דבר אחר שחמד אותן מן נמרוד: אשר אתה בבית. והלא כמה נשים היו לו, והוא מפקיד אלל אמו, אלא שכיב זקי צמעטיכון וחושדן:

TORAS MENACHEM

(As for Eisav’s wives, we can presume that either they indeed lost their sight, or they knew how to avoid the ill effects of the smoke. Eisav himself was, “a man of the field” (25:27), who spent little time at home, so presumably he was unaffected).

b.) *Rashi’s second interpretation: damage by angels’ tears at the Akeida*
 This interpretation – that Yitzchak’s eyes were damaged by tears of the angels at the Akeida – is preferable to the other two explanations which Rashi brings, for two reasons. Firstly, it explains how Ya’akov received the blessing from Yitzchak due to a *positive* reason (Yitzchak’s courage at the Akeida) rather than the negative reasons of the other two interpretations. Secondly, this interpretation explains more satisfactorily why Yitzchak never noticed that Eisav worshipped idols, since he lost his sight at the Akeida, before Eisav was born. According to the other interpretations however, it is somewhat difficult to imagine how Eisav’s unholy activities would have remained totally undiscovered by Yitzchak for so many years.

However, this interpretation alone is unsatisfactory, since it is a non-literal, Midrashic teaching which is not indicated at all by scripture. Therefore, Rashi sought for a third solution.

c.) *Rashi’s third interpretation: God took away Yitzchak’s sight*

Rashi’s third interpretation – that God took away Yitzchak’s sight in order for Ya’akov to receive the blessings – is superior to the other

interpretations since it explains how Yitzchak lost his sight only at the end of his life, a fact stated *explicitly* by scripture (“*Yitzchak had grown old. The vision of his eyes had dimmed*”). According to the second interpretation, Yitzchak lost his sight at the Akeida, at the age of 37, well before old age; and according to the first interpretation, he lost his sight from the age of 100 when Eisav married, 80 years before his passing. The verse should thus have stated that, “The vision of his eyes had

The Last Word

Rather than take away Yitzchak’s sight, God could have made Yitzchak give the blessing willingly to Ya’akov in a very simple manner: he could have revealed to Yitzchak that Eisav was in fact a wicked person.

From this we can learn to what extremes a person should go to avoid speaking negatively about another Jew. For God was willing to allow Yitzchak to lose his sight rather than to speak badly about Eisav.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 15, pp. 215-6)

(skinned) person. ¹² Maybe my father will feel me, and see that I am an imposter – I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing.”

¹³ But his mother said to him, “Let your curse be on me, my son. Listen to my voice: go and get (the goats) for me.”

¹⁴ So he went, and took (the goats), and he brought (them) to his mother. His mother made tasty foods, that his father loved. ¹⁵ Rivkah took her older son Eisav’s clean clothing which she had in the house, and she dressed Ya’akov, her younger son. ¹⁶ She put the goats’ skins on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. ¹⁷ She gave the tasty foods and the bread which she had made, into the hand of Ya’akov, her son.

¹⁸ He came to his father and said, “My father!”

(Yitzchak) said, “I’m here. Who are you, my son?”

¹⁹ Ya’akov said to his father, “I am... Eisav your firstborn. I did what you told me. Please come and sit (at the table) and eat some of my game, in order that your soul will bless me.”

²⁰ Yitzchak said to his son, “How did you find it so quickly, my son?”

He said, “Because God, your God, brought it to me.”

²¹ (When Ya’akov mentioned God, Yitzchak became suspicious, so) Yitzchak said to Ya’akov, “Please come closer, so that I may feel you, my son, to see if you are my son Eisav, or not.”

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why did Yitzchak tell Ya’akov to come closer? (v. 21)

RASHI: Yitzchak said to himself, “Eisav doesn’t usually mention God’s name, but this man said: ‘Because God, your God, brought it.’”

MIDRASH: Yitzchak said, “I know that Eisav doesn’t mention God’s name, and this man did mention it. He must be Ya’akov and not Eisav.”

TORAS MENACHEM

dimmed,” before, “Yitzchak had grown old,” and not the other way around.

However, this interpretation too is flawed, since we are left with the question: Why did God make Yitzchak suffer in order for Ya’akov to receive the blessing? Surely, God has many possible ways at His disposal of achieving any given result, so why did He not find a less harmful method for Ya’akov to receive the blessing, than causing Yitzchak to lose his vision?

In fact, *Rashi* deemed the force of this question to be so strong, he recorded this interpretation last, indicating that it is the least preferable of the three.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 15, pp. 211ff.)

🔗 YITZCHAK’S SUSPICION (v. 21)

At first glance, *Rashi* appears to differ in opinion from the *Midrash*:

Rashi writes that, “Eisav doesn’t usually mention God’s Name,” whereas the *Midrash* stresses that, “Eisav doesn’t mention God’s Name,” suggesting that he never mentioned it.

However, at the literal level we can only conclude that Eisav never mentioned God’s Name, otherwise the casual reference to God in verse 20 would not have aroused Yitzchak’s suspicion. *Rashi*’s intention here must be that Eisav never mentioned God’s Name, and he does not differ with the *Midrash*. Their slightly different phraseology is thus inconsequential in this instance. (see *Sparks of Chasidus*)

(Based on *Sefer Hama’amorim Melukat*, vol. 4, p. 64, note 14)

🔥 Sparks of Chasidus 🔥

YITZCHAK’S BLESSING

If Yitzchak knew that, “Eisav doesn’t mention God’s Name” (see *Classic Questions & Toras Menachem* to v. 21), then why did he want to bless Eisav, and not Ya’akov?

Yitzchak perceived that within Eisav were holy sparks of an extremely lofty spiritual source, more so than in Ya’akov’s case. Therefore, he chose to bless Eisav, because Yitzchak understood that his blessing had the spiritual power to elevate the sparks which were trapped within Eisav’s unholy existence, allowing them to return back to their source.

In a sense, Yitzchak was indeed correct – his blessings did have the power to rescue the sparks trapped within Eisav. But the blessing needed to pass first via Ya’akov, because Eisav was not sufficiently prepared to utilize Yitzchak’s blessing properly.

So, God arranged matters such that Ya’akov would first receive the blessing, and then, Ya’akov in turn would utilize the blessing to elevate the sparks trapped in Eisav.

(Based on *Sefer Hama’amorim Melukat*, vol. 4, p. 64, note 14)

אָבוהוּ וּמִשְׁנֵיהֶּ וְאָמַר קָלָא קְלִיָּה דְעֵקֵב וַיְדִיא
 יְדוּהֵי דְעֵשָׂו: כֵּן וְלֹא אֲשַׁתְּמוּדְעִיהָ אַרְבֵּי הוּוּ
 יְדוּהֵי בִידֵי עֵשָׂו אַחוּהֵי שְׁעִירֵן וּבְרָבִיָּה:
 כֵּן וְאָמַר אֶת־דִּין בְּרִי עֵשָׂו וְאָמַר אָנָּה: כֵּן וְאָמַר
 קָרִיב קְדָמִי וְאִיכּוֹל מִצִּידָא דְבָרִי בְּדִיל
 דְּתִבְרַכֵּינֵךְ נַפְשִׁי וְקָרִיב לִיָּה וְאָכַל וְאִתִּי לִיָּה
 חֲמָרָא וְשָׂתָּ: כֵּן וְאָמַר לִיָּה יִצְחָק אָבוהֵי קָרִיב
 כְּעַן וְנִשְׁק לִי בְרִי: כֵּן וְקָרִיב וְנִשְׁק לִיָּה וְאַרְח
 יָת רִיחָא דְלִבּוּשׁוֹהֵי וּבְרָבִיָּה וְאָמַר חַזֵּי רִיחָא
 דְּבָרִי בְרִיחַ חֲקָלָא דִּי בְרָבִיָּה יְיָ: כֵּן וַיִּתֵּן לָךְ
 יְיָ מִטְּלָא דְשִׁמְיָא וּמִטּוֹבָאָד דְאַרְעָא וּסְגִיּוֹת
 עֲבוּר וְחֲמָר: כֵּן וּפְלֹחֹנֵךְ עֲמִינִן וַיִּשְׁתַּעֲבְדוּן

יִעֲקֹב אֶל־יִצְחָק אָבִיו וַיְמַשְׁהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַקָּל קוֹל יִעֲקֹב וְהַיָּדִים
 יְדֵי עֵשָׂו: כֵּן וְלֹא הִבִּירוּ בִּי־הֵיוּ יָדָיו בִּידֵי עֵשָׂו אָחִיו שְׁעֵרֶת
 וּבְרָבִיָּהוּ: כֵּן וַיֹּאמֶר אֶתָּה זֶה בְּנִי עֵשָׂו וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי: כֵּן וַיֹּאמֶר
 הַגִּשָּׁה לִּי וְאָכְלָה מִצִּיד בְּנִי לְמַעַן תִּבְרַכְךָ נַפְשִׁי וַיִּנְשְׂלוּ
 וַיֹּאכְל וַיָּבֵא לוֹ יַיִן וַיִּשְׂתָּ: כֵּן וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו יִצְחָק אָבִיו גִּשָּׁה־נָּא
 וַשְׁקֵה־לִּי בְנִי: כֵּן וַיִּנְשׂ וַיִּשְׁק־לוֹ וַיֵּרַח אֶת־רִיחַ בְּגָדָיו וַיְבַרְכֵהוּ
 וַיֹּאמֶר רִיחַ רִיחַ בְּנִי בְרִיחַ שְׂדֵה אֲשֶׁר בִּרְכוּ יְהוָה: [ששׁי]
 כֵּן וַיִּתֵּן־לָךְ הָאֱלֹהִים מִטְּלַת הַשָּׁמַיִם וּמִטּוֹבֵי הָאָרֶץ וְרֵב דַּגָּן
 וְתִירֵשׁ: כֵּן יַעֲבֹדוּךָ עַמִּים וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ [בן וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ] לָךְ לְאֲמִים הַזֶּה

רש"י

כמשמעו, ומדרש אגדה יש להרבה פנים. (דבר אחר, מהו האלוהים, דין, אם
 ראוי לך, יתן לך, ואם לאו לא יתן לך, אבל לעשו אמר, משמני הארץ יהיה
 מושבך, צין לדיק צין רשע יתן לך. וממנו למד שלמה, כשעשה הבית סודר
 תפלתו, ישראל שהוא בעל אמונה ומלדיק עליו הדין, לא יקרא עליך תגר,
 לפיכך ונתת לאיש כדרכיו אשר תדע את לבבו, אבל נכרי מחוסר אמונה,
 לפיכך אמר ואתה תשמע השמים וגו' ועשית ככל אשר יקרא אליך, הנכרי,
 צין ראוי צין שאינו ראוי תן לו, כדי שלא יקרא עליך תגר. ברש"י ישן מדויק):

שגור בפיו, וזה אמר כי הקרה ה' אלהיך: (כב) קול יעקב. שמדבר בלשון
 תחנונים, קום נא, אבל עשו בלשון קטוריא דבר, יקום אצו: (כד) יאמר
 אני. לא אמר אני עשו, אלא אני: (כז) וירח וגו'. וכלא אין ריח רע יותר
 משטף העזים, אלא מלמד שנכנס עמו ריח גן עדן: בריח שדה אשר
 ברבו ה'. שנתן צו ריח טוב, וזה שדה תפוחים, כן דרשו רז"ל: (כח) ויתן
 לך. יתן ויחזור ויתן! ולפי פשוטו מוסב לענין הראשון, ראה ריח בני שנתן
 לו הקב"ה, כריח שדה וגו', ועוד יתן לך מטל השמים וגו': מטל השמים.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What “fragrance” did Yitzchak’s smell? (v. 27)

RASHI: Surely there is no odor more offensive than that of goat’s hair? [which Ya’akov was wearing - see v. 16]. This teaches us that the fragrance of the Garden of Eden entered with him [and it was *this* fragrance that is referred to in v. 27]. “The fragrance of a field, which God has blessed,” indicates it had a pleasant fragrance, that of a field of apples. This is how our Sages explain it..

SIFSEI CHACHAMIM: Eisav’s garments, which Ya’akov was wearing, originally belonged to Nimrod, and they were coveted [and stolen

from him] by Eisav. Nimrod obtained them from Adam, who wore them in the Garden of Eden.

NACHALAS YA’AKOV: *Rashi* cited the teaching of our Sages, that Yitzchak smelled a field of apples since it explains why the verse uses the term “field” in the singular.

However, at the literal level, we can presume that the verse refers to fields in general. Thus Yitzchak smelled the fragrance of grasses and flowers.

TORAS MENACHEM

☞ YA’AKOV’S PLEASANT AROMA (v. 27)

What forced *Rashi* to conclude that, at the *literal level* of Torah interpretation, that the fragrance of the Garden of Eden entered with Ya’akov?

[*Sifsei Chachamim* suggests] that the aroma came from Eisav’s garments, which were originally owned by Adam in the Garden of Eden.

This argument is based on an earlier comment of *Rashi* to v. 15. The Torah describes Eisav’s garments as הַמְּוֹדוֹת, and *Rashi* offers two interpretations: “הַמְּוֹדוֹת means “the clean ones,” as *Onkelos* renders, דְּכִיָּתָא (clean ones). Another explanation: the garments that he had coveted (שְׁחָמַד) from Nimrod.”

However, even though *Rashi* does mention that Eisav acquired his garments from Nimrod, he makes no indication *at all* that they had a specific smell. Therefore, at the literal level, we can conclude that they had no particular smell. And, obviously, according to *Rashi*’s first

interpretation that they were “clean garments,” they would have been odorless.

So, why did *Rashi* conclude that he had the aroma of the Garden of Eden?

Similarly, we need to explain why, at the literal level, Yitzchak exclaimed that Ya’akov had the aroma of an apple field, in particular. What would be wrong with presuming that we are speaking here of an ordinary field, of grasses and flowers? [see *Nachalas Ya’akov*]

THE EXPLANATION

In order to answer the above questions, we need to first address an obvious problem with *Rashi*’s comment here:

Presumably, Rivkah did not foresee that the aroma of the Garden of Eden would enter with Ya’akov into Yitzchak’s chamber. So, if, “there is no odor more offensive than that of goats’ hair,” why did Rivkah not take

²² *Ya'akov drew near to Yitzchak his father, and he felt him. (Yitzchak) said, "The voice is (polite like) the voice of Ya'akov, but the hands are the hands of Eisav!"* ²³ *He did not recognize him because his hands were hairy like his brother Eisav's hands, and he blessed him.*

²⁴ *He said, "Are you my son Eisav?"*

"I am," he said.

²⁵ *He said, "Serve me, so that I can eat my son's game. For (doing this) my soul will bless you."* *(Ya'akov) served him, and he ate. He brought him wine, and he drank.*

²⁶ *His father Yitzchak said to him, "Please come closer and kiss me, my son."*

²⁷ *(Ya'akov) came closer, and he kissed him. (Yitzchak) smelled the fragrance of (what he thought was) his garments, and he blessed him. He said, "Look, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field (of apples), which God has blessed!"*

²⁸ *"And may the Almighty give you (repeatedly) from the dew of the skies and from the fatness of the earth, an abundance of corn and wine."* ²⁹ *Nations will serve you; kingdoms will bow down to you.*

SIXTH
READING

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● What did Yitzchak *begin* his blessing with the word, "And..." (v. 28)

RASHI: [He was saying:] "May He give, and give again."

According to its literal meaning, the verse is a continuation of the previous topic: "Look, the fragrance of my son," which God has

given him, "is like the fragrance of a field..." (v. 27), and furthermore, "May He give you from the dew of the skies..." (v. 28).

SIFSEI CHACHAMIM: According to *Rashi's* first interpretation, Yitzchak said, "May He give" blessings initially, and even if you will sin, He will "give again."

TORAS MENACHEM

any precaution to stop Yitzchak from smelling the goats' hair? Surely such a foul odor would have been an obvious give-away?

The solution to this problem however lies in Yitzchak's instructions to Eisav: "Go out to the field to hunt game for me. Make for me the tasty foods that I love, and bring them to me to eat" (v. 3-4). Clearly this involved hunting an animal, slaughtering it, skinning and gutting it and then preparing it to eat. All these jobs would have rendered Eisav quite odorous indeed, so we can presume that Yitzchak was *expecting* Eisav to have a bad smell.

Therefore, when the Torah relates in verse 27 that Ya'akov actually had a pleasant fragrance, *Rashi* immediately asks: "Surely there is no odor more offensive than that of goats' hair?" What happened to the foul smell of goats' hair that Ya'akov was wearing, which served to imitate the bad aroma which Yitzchak was expecting?

Due to this question, *Rashi* understood that the Torah is hinting here, at the literal level, to the *Midrashic* teaching that the aroma of the Garden of Eden entered with Ya'akov.

Since Yitzchak was not aware that the aroma of the Garden had entered the room, he presumed that Ya'akov must have picked up the pleasant smell while he was cooking the "tasty foods," which obviously involved the use of spices and sweet-smelling cooking agents. Thus, *Rashi* rejected the notion that Yitzchak thought he was smelling a field of grasses and flowers, since these items are not used in cooking. Rather, *Rashi* accepted the *Midrashic* account that he smelled like a field of apples, since apples could be used when cooking "tasty foods."

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Toldos* 5741)

🔔 THE BEGINNING OF YITZCHAK'S BLESSING (v. 28)

Rashi was troubled as to why Yitzchak would have *begun* his blessing with the word, "and." He therefore explained that Yitzchak was hinting to a twofold blessing, "May He give and give again."

However, this interpretation is difficult to accept, since it begs the question: Since God's blessing is *unlimited* and devoid of any imperfection, why would He need to give it *twice*?

Therefore, *Rashi* brought a second interpretation, that verse 28 begins with the word "and" because it is a continuation of verse 27.

Nevertheless, this interpretation is problematic as there appears to be no connection between the subject of verses 27 and 28. So, *Rashi* cited both interpretations – the first, because it explains better the *context* of the verse, and the second, because it explains the use of the word "and," in particular.

WHY IS GOD'S BLESSING REPEATED?

According to **Sifsei Chachamim**, Yitzchak gave a two-fold blessing ("May He give, and give again"), to indicate that God's blessings would be "given again" even if Ya'akov and his descendants sinned.

However, this interpretation appears to contradict verse 40 below, where Yitzchak tells Eisav that, "you shall serve your brother. But, when you grieve (about the blessings he took, because the Jewish people have transgressed the Torah,) then you will break his yoke off your neck." Here we see that if the Jewish people would sin, Yitzchak's blessing that, "you will be a master over your brothers, and your mother's sons will bow down to you" (v. 29), would indeed be revoked, and instead, "you (Eisav) will break his yoke off your neck."

Rather, it would seem that the implication of Yitzchak's two-fold blessing is that the recipient would: a.) first receive the actual blessing itself; b.) He is then given the ability to *utilize* the blessing to its full extent. I.e. since God's blessing is unlimited, there is reason to fear that the person will not use it to his full potential, so the person actually requires a *further* blessing, to enable him to use the initial blessing properly.

Thus, God gives the blessing, and then, He "gives again" the ability to utilize and internalize the blessing properly.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 10, pp. 80ff.; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Toldos* 5724)

לך מלכזון הני רב לאחור ויסגדו לך בני אמך ליטף יהוה לטין וברכך יהוה פריכין: ל והוה כד שיצי יצחק לברכא ית יעקב והוה בראם מיפק נפק יעקב מן קדם יצחק אבוהי ועשו אחוהי אתא מצידיה: לא ועבד אף הוא תבשילין ואעיל לאבוהי ואמר לאבוהי יקום אבא ויכול מצינא דבריה בדיל די תברכינני נפשך: לב ואמר ליה יצחק אבוהי מאן את ואמר אנא ברה בוכרך עשו: לד ותוה יצחק תוהא רבא עד לחדא ואמר מאן הוא דיכי דצד צידא ואעיל לי ואכלית מכולא עד לא תיעול וברכתיה אף בריך יהי: לה כד שמע עשו ית פתגמי אבוהי ועוה צוהתא רבא ומרידא עד לחדא ואמר לאבוהי ברכני אף אנא אבא: לה ואמר עאל אחור בחוכמא וקביל ברכתך: לו ואמר יאות קרא שמיא יעקב וחכמי דנן תרתין זמנין ית בכירותי נסיב והא פנן קביל ברכתי ואמר הלא שבקת לי ברכתא: לו ואתיב יצחק ואמר לעשו הא רב שויתיה עלוך וית כל אחוהי יקבית ליה לעבדין ובעיבור ובחמר סעידתיה ולך פנן מה אעביד ברי: לה ואמר עשו לאבוהי הברכתא חדא היא לך אבא ברכני אף אנא אבא וארים עשו קליה ובכא: לט ואתיב יצחק אבוהי ואמר ליה הא

גביר לאחור וישתחוו לך בני אמך ארריך ארור ומברכיך ברוך: ל ויהי כאשר בלה יצחק לברך את יעקב ויהי אך יצא יצא יעקב מאת פני יצחק אביו ועשו אחיו בא מצידו: לא ויעש גם הוא מטעמים ויבא לאביו ויאמר לאביו יקם אבי ויאכל מציד בנו בעבר תברכני נפשך: לב ויאמר לו יצחק אביו מי אתה ויאמר אני בנה בברך עשו: לד ויחרד יצחק חרדה גדלה עד מאד ויאמר מי אפוא הוא הצד ציד ויבא לי ואכל מכל בטרם תבוא ואברכהו גם ברוך יהיה: לה כשמע עשו את דברי אביו ויצעק צעקה גדלה ומרה עד מאד ויאמר לאביו ברכני גם אני אבי: לה ויאמר בא אחיך במרמה ויקח ברכתך: לו ויאמר הכי קרא שמו יעקב ויעקבני זה פעמים את בכתתי לקח והנה עתה לקח ברכתי ויאמר הלא אצלתי לי ברכה: לו ויען יצחק ויאמר לעשו הן גביר שמתיו לך ואת כל אחיו נתתי לו לעבדים ודגן ותירש סמכתיו ולכה אפוא מה אעשה בני: לה ויאמר עשו אל אביו הברכה אחת הוא לך אני ברכני גם אני אבי וישא עשו קלו ויבך: לט ויען יצחק אביו ויאמר אליו הנה משמני הארץ

רש"י

תימה הוא, כמו הכי אחי אתה⁴, שמה לכך נקרא שמו יעקב, על שם סופו שהוא עתיד לעקבני. תנחומא⁵, למה חרד יצחק, אמר, שמה עון יש בי שזכרתי קטן לפני גדול, ושניתי סדר היחס, החיל עשו מלעק ויעקבני זה פעמים, אמר לו אביו מה עשה לך, אמר לו את זכורתי לקח, אמר, זכך הייתי מלך וחרד, שמה עזרתי על שורת הדיון, עכשיו לזכור זכרתי, גם ברוך יהיה: ויעקבני. כתרגומו וכמו, ארצני. ורצ, וכמן. ויש מתרגמין וחכמי, נתחכם לי: אצלתי. לשון הפרשה, כמו ויאכל (כ"א וילל): (לז) הן גביר. זכרתי זה שזיעית היא, והוא עושה אותה ראשונה, אלא אמר לו, מה תועלת לך בזכרה, אם תקנה נכסים שלו הם, שהרי גביר שמתיו לך, ומה שקנה עבד קנה רצו: ולכה אפוא מה אעשה בני. איב איפא צקש מה לעשות לך: (לח) הברכה אחת. כ"א זו משמשת לשון תימה, כמו הצמחניס⁶, השמנה היא⁷, הכמות נכלל⁸: (לט) משמני הארץ וגו'. זו

(כט) בני אמך. ויעקב אמר ליהודה בני אבך, לפי שהיו לו צנים מכמה אמכות, וכאן שלא נשא אלא אחת, אמר בני אמך: ארריך ארור ומברכיך ברוך. ובצלעם הוא אומר מזכריך ברוך וארריך ארור, הדייקים תחלתם יסורים וסופן שלום, ואורחיהם ומלעריהם קודמים למזכריהם, לפיכך יצחק הקדים קללת אורחים לזכרת מזכרים, והרשעים תחלתן שלום וסופן יסורין, לפיכך צלעם הקדים זכרה לקללה: (ל) יצא יצא. זה יולא וזה בא: (לג) ויחרד. כתרגומו ותוה, לשון תימה. ומדרשו, ראה גיבסם פתוחה מתחתיו: מי איפוא. לשון לעלמו, משמש עם כמה דברים. דבר אחר איפוא, איב פה, מי הוא ואיפוא הוא הכד ליד: ואבל מכל. מכל טעמים שצקשתי לטעום טעמתי צו²: גם ברוך יהיה. שלא תאמר, אילולי שרימה יעקב לאביו לא נטל את הזכרות, לכך הסכים וזכרו מדעתו³: (לה) במרמה. בזכמה: (לו) הכי קרא שמו. לשון

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why did Yitzchak become “extremely bewildered”? (v. 33)
RASHI: The *Midrash Tanchumah* states: Why did Yitzchak become bewildered? He said, “Perhaps I am guilty of a sin, for I have blessed the younger son before the older one, and thus altered the order of the relationship.”
 Then, Eisav started crying, “He has already deceived me twice!”

His father said to him, “What did he do to you?”
 He replied, “He took my birthright.”
 [Yitzchak] said, “That is why I was troubled and bewildered, for I was afraid that perhaps I had transgressed the line of the law. But now I know that I actually blessed the firstborn, let him be blessed too” (see v. 33). (*Rashi* to v. 36)

You will be a master over your brothers, and your mother's sons will bow down to you. Those who curse you will be cursed, and those who bless you will be blessed."

EISAV DISCOVERS THAT HIS BLESSING WAS GIVEN AWAY

27:30 **T**hen, when Yitzchak had finished blessing Ya'akov – just as Ya'akov had left his father Yitzchak's presence – his brother Eisav came back from his hunt. ³¹ He had also made tasty foods, and he brought (them) to his father.

He said to his father, "My father should get up and eat his son's game, so that your soul will bless me."

³² *His father, Yitzchak, said to him, "Who are you?"*

He said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Eisav."

³³ *Yitzchak was extremely bewildered. He said, "Who then is the one who hunted game and brought it to me, then I ate it all before you came, and I blessed him? Let him be blessed too (in any case)."*

³⁴ *When Eisav heard his father's words, he cried extremely loudly and bitterly. He said to his father, "Bless me too, my father!"*

³⁵ *(Yitzchak) said, "Your brother came ingeniously and took your blessing."*

³⁶ *(Eisav) said, "Is that why he was called Ya'AKOV, (because he was destined to deceive me [le'AKVeini])? He has deceived me twice! He took my birthright, and look, now he has taken my blessing!"*

(Eisav) said (to Yitzchak), "Haven't you saved a blessing for me?"

³⁷ *Yitzchak answered, saying to Eisav, "(Whatever blessing I give you will be of no use, because) I have already made him a master over you, given him all his brothers as servants, and I have sustained him with corn and wine. So, for you then, what shall I do, my son (if I bless you he will acquire your possessions in any case, since he is your master)?"*

³⁸ *Eisav said to his father, "Haven't you got just one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father." Eisav raised his voice and wept.*

³⁹ *His father Yitzchak answered saying, "Look, your dwelling place shall be from the fat places of the*

TORAS MENACHEM

YITZCHAK'S BEWILDERMENT (v. 33)

Why was Yitzchak "extremely bewildered" by the thought that he had blessed the wrong son? Surely this was an over-reaction?

However, Yitzchak's primary concern was not that he had blessed the wrong person, but rather, that he had lost the status of "a perfect burnt offering," a Divine assurance of purity and perfection (See *Rashi* to 26:2). It now appeared that he had not been given special protection from above to prevent him from giving the blessing to the wrong son (see *Rashi's* citation of *Tanchuma* in *Classic Questions*).

Thus, when he discovered that Eisav had in fact sold the birthright to Ya'akov, Yitzchak was relieved that he had, after all, been protected from above against blessing the wrong son, and his apparent "mistake" was actually Divinely inspired.

One might ask: surely the fact that Yitzchak wanted to bless Eisav was a mistake in itself? Why did Yitzchak not lose his status of "a perfect burnt offering" for this misjudgment alone?

However, earlier we witnessed that a misplaced intention is not sufficient to revoke the status of "a perfect burnt offering." For Yitzchak actually *planned* to go down to Egypt when God told him, "Do not go down to Egypt! You are a perfect burnt offering, and being outside the

land [of Israel] is not fitting for you" (Rashi 26:2). From this we see that the intention to leave the Land of Israel did not invalidate Yitzchak as a "perfect burnt offering." Likewise in our case, the intention to bless Eisav did not tarnish Yitzchak's perfect holy status, and he was still protected from above to bless Ya'akov, his true firstborn son.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Toldos 5748)

Sparks of Chasidus

"YOUR BROTHER CAME INGENIOUSLY..." (v. 35)

According to Kabbalistic teachings, Ya'akov corrected the spiritual damage caused by Adam's sin.

Therefore, just like Adam had been misled by the ingenious plot of the serpent, the correction of Adam's sin had to come through ingenious trickery - "Your brother came ingeniously and took your blessing" (v. 35).

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 1, p. 56)

מטובא דארעא יהי מותבך ומטלא דשמיא מלעילא: מ ועל חרבך תחי וית אחוד תפלה ויהי פד ועברון בנחיה על פתגמי אוריאתא ותעדי ניריה מעל צוארך: מא וגטר עשו דבבו ליעקב על ברכתא די ברביה אבוהי ואמר עשו בלביה יקרבוני יומי אכלא דאפא ואקטול ית יעקב אחי: מב ואתחנא לרבקה ית פתגמי עשו ברה רבא ושלחת וקרת ליעקב ברה זעירא ואמרת ליה הא עשו אחוד כמין לך למקטלך: מג וכען ברי קבל מני וקום איזיל לך לות לבן אחי לחרן: מד ותתיב עמיה יומין זעירין עד די תיתוב חימתא דאחוד: מה עד דיתוב רונא דאחוד מנד ויתנשי ית די עבדת ליה ואשלח ואדברנד מתמן למא אתפל אף תרויכוני יומא חד: מו ואמרת רבקה ליעחק עקית בתי מן קדם גנת התאה אם נסיב יעקב אהתא מבנת התאה פאלין מבנת ארעא למא לי חייני: מז וקרא יצחק ליעקב ובריד יתיה ופקדיה ואמר ליה לא תסב אתתא מבנת כנען: נ קום איזיל לפדן ארם לבית בתואל אבוהא דאמך וסב לך מתמן אתתא מבנת לבן אחוהא דאמך: נ ואל שדי יברך יתך ויפשינד ויסגינד ותחי לכנשת שבטין: ד ויתן לך ית ברכתא דאברהם לך ולבנד עמך למירתך ית ארע הותבותרך די יתב וי

יהיה מושבך ומטל השמים מעל: מ ועל חרבך תחיה ואת אחיך תעבד והיה כאשר תריד ופרקת עלו מעל צוארך: מא וישטם עשו את יעקב על הברכה אשר ברכו אביו ויאמר עשו בלבו יקרבו ימי אבלי אבי ואהרנה את יעקב אחי: מב ויגד לרבקה את דברי עשו בנה הגדל ותשלח ותקרא ליעקב בנה הקטן ותאמר אליו הנה עשו אחיך מתנתחם לך להרגך: מג ועתה בני שמע בקלי וקום ברח לך אל לבן אחי חרנה: מד וישבת עמו ימים אחדים עד אשר תשוב חמת אחיך: מה עד שוב אף אחיך ממך ושכח את אשר עשית לו ושלחתי ולקחתיך משם למה אשב גם שניכם יום אחד: מז ותאמר רבקה אל יצחק קצתי בחיי מבני בנות חת אם לקח יעקב אשה מבנות חת פאלה מבנות הארץ למה לי חיים: כח ויקרא יצחק אל יעקב ויברך אתו ויצוהו ויאמר לו לא תקח אשה מבנות כנען: כ קום לך פדינה ארם ביתה בתואל אבי אמך וקח לך משם אשה מבנות לבן אחי אמך: נ ואל שדי יברך אתך ויפרך וירבך והיית לקהל עמים: ד ויתן לך את ברכת אברהם לך ולזרעך אתך לרשתך את ארץ מגריך אשר נתן אלהים

* ק' זעירא

רש"י

תנחומים, מתחם הוא על הצרכות צהריגתך: (מד) אחדים. מועטים: (מה) למה אשכל. אהיה שכולה משניכם. (למד על) הקוצר את בניו קרוי שכול. וכן ציעקז אמר כאשר שכלתי שכלתי: גם שניכם. אם יקום עליך ואתה תכרגנו, יעמדו בניו ויכרגוך, ורוח הקדש נזרק צה, ונתנצח שציוס אחד ימותו, כמו שמפורש צפרק המקנא לאשחוי: (מו) קצתי בחיי. מאסתי בחיי: (צ) פדנה. כמו לפדן: ביתה בתואל. לצית בתואל, כל תיבה שזריכה למ"ד צחלחה הטיל לה ה"א צסופה: (ג) ואל שדי. מי שדי צצרכותיו למצרכין מפיו, יצרך אותך: (ד) את ברכת אברהם. שאמר לו ואתשך לגוי גדול.

איטליא"ה של יו"ל: (מ) ועל חרבך. כמו צחרבך. יש על שהוא צמקוס אות צ, כמו עמדתם על חרצכס, צחרצכס. על צצחס צצצחס: והיה כאשר תריד. לשון זער, כמו אריד צשיחי, כלומר כשיעצרו ישראל על התורה, ויהיה לך פחחון פה להצטער על הצרכות שנטל, ופרקת עלו וגוי: (מא) יקרבו ימי אבלי אביו. כמשמעו, שלא אלצער את אבא. ומדרש אגדה לכמה פנים יש: (מב) ויגד לרבקה. צרוח הקודש כוגד לה מה שעשו מהכרח צלצו: מתנחם לך. נחם על החסוד, לחשוב מחצצה אחרת להנכר לך ולהרגך. ומדרש אגדה, כצ אהה מת צעיניו, ושחם עליך כוס של תנחומים. ולפי פשוטו, לשון

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why did Rivkah suggest that Ya'akov should get married at this point? (v. 46)

BIURAY MAHARAY: Rivkah did not want to tell Yitzchak that Eisav wanted to kill Ya'akov. She feared that Yitzchak might withhold some blessing from Ya'akov, so as not to further anger Eisav. She therefore claimed that she had sent Ya'akov away, because, "I am sick of my life, etc."

● What is the "blessing of Avraham"? (v. 4)

RASHI: [God] said to [Avraham], "I will make you into a great nation" (above 12:2), "[All the nations of the world] will be blessed through your children" (22:18). May those blessings be for you. May that nation and those blessed children come out from you."

MIZRACHI: Why did Rashi not learn, more simply, that the "blessing of Avraham," which Yitzchak gave to Ya'akov, is precisely that which

land, and from the dew of the skies from above. ⁴⁰ You will live by your sword, and you shall serve your brother. But, when you grieve (about the blessings he took, because the Jewish people have transgressed the Torah,) then you will break his yoke off your neck.”

🌀 EISAV PLANS TO KILL YA'AKOV / RIVKAH TELLS HIM TO FLEE 🌀

27:41 **E**isav hated Ya'akov because of the blessing which his father had given him. Eisav said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father will soon come, and then I will kill my brother Ya'akov.” ⁴² Rivkah was told (by Divine inspiration) the words of Eisav, her older son. She sent (a message) and summoned Ya'akov, her younger son. She said to him, “Beware, your brother Eisav regrets (his relationship) to you (and wishes) to kill you. ⁴³ Now, my son, listen to my voice! Go and run away to my brother Lavan, in Charan. ⁴⁴ You can live with him for a few days until your brother's anger has calmed down, ⁴⁵ until your brother's anger against you has calmed down, and he forgets what you did to him. Then I will send (for you) and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved from both of you on one day (for if you kill him, his sons will kill you)?”

🌀 YITZCHAK INSTRUCTS YA'AKOV TO MARRY 🌀

27:46 **R**ivkah said to Yitzchak, “I am sick of my life because of the Chitite girls. If Ya'akov takes a wife from a Chitite girl like one of these, from the daughters of this Land, what use is life to me?” ¹ Yitzchak called Ya'akov and blessed him. He instructed him, saying to him, “You should not take a wife from the Cana'anite girls. ² Go and travel to Padan-Aram, to the house of Besu'el, your mother's father, and take yourself a wife from there, from the daughters of Lavan, your mother's brother. ³ May God Almighty bless you, make you fruitful and multiply, and you will become an assembly of nations. ⁴ May He give you the blessing of Avraham to you, and to your seed with you, that you will inherit the land in which you (only) wandered (in up until now), which God gave to Avraham.”

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

is mentioned in verse 4 itself, “that you will inherit the land in which you wandered, which God gave to Avraham”?

However, this could not be Yitzchak's blessing, as the Land of Israel was given to Avraham as a gift, and not as a blessing.

TORAS MENACHEM

🌀 “THE BLESSING OF AVRAHAM” (v. 4)

Mizrachi questions why *Rashi* needed to explain the meaning of “the blessing of Avraham” at all, since the verse itself seems to state precisely what the blessing was: “May He give you the blessing of Avraham to you, and to your seed with you, that you will inherit the land in which you wandered, which God gave to Avraham.”

Mizrachi explains that the inheritance of the Land of Israel could not possibly have been “the blessing of Avraham,” since the Land was already given to Avraham as a gift, and not as a blessing for the future.

However, it was explained above that a precise reading of *Rashi* indicates conclusively that, at the literal level of Torah interpretation, God only promised to give the land in the future, He did not actually give it, so the blessing was not yet fulfilled (See *Toras Menachem* to 15:18, sec. 'd').

Why then does *Rashi* refuse to take the verse at face value, that Yitzchak was now blessing Ya'akov that the “blessing of Avraham” should be fulfilled in him?

THE EXPLANATION

Normally, when the Torah relates how a certain individual received a particular blessing, we are informed *why* the blessing was given. For

example, in the preceding section we read how Yitzchak wanted to bless Eisav because he was getting old. Similarly, we read earlier God gave a series of blessings to Yitzchak to prosper in the Land of Israel, to counter his intention to leave the Land (above 26:1-4). Avraham likewise received God's blessing for a specific reason, “All the nations of the world will be blessed through your children, because you listened to My voice.” (22:18).

In the current passage, we read how Yitzchak blessed Ya'akov before his departure to Padan-Aram to find a wife. The blessing in verse 3, to be “fruitful and multiply, and you will become an assembly of nations,” thus makes sense, as this was connected to Ya'akov's marriage.

However, when reading verse 4, *Rashi* was troubled by the question: How is the blessing of Avraham and the inheritance of the Land of Israel connected with Ya'akov's journey to find a wife? This blessing seems rather out of place.

Therefore, *Rashi* searched for an explanation why the “blessing of Avraham” could be connected with Ya'akov's marriage preparation. *Rashi* came to the conclusion that Yitzchak's blessing here must have been the words that God said to Avraham in connection with having children: “I will make you into a great nation” (12:2), and, “[All the nations of the world] will be blessed through your children” (22:18).

לְאַבְרָהָם: ה' וַיִּשְׁלַח יִצְחָק ית יַעֲקֹב וְאָזַל לְפָדֵן אֶרֶם לְוֹת לְבָן בְּרַתּוֹאֵל אֶרְמָאָה אַחִיהָא דְרַבְקָה אִמִּיהָ דְיַעֲקֹב וְעָשׂוּ: ו וְחָזָא עָשׂוּ אַרְי בְּרִיד יִצְחָק ית יַעֲקֹב וְשִׁלַּח יְתִיהָ לְפָדֵן אֶרֶם לְמִסְבָּ לִיהָ מִתְּמָן אֶתְתָא כַּד בְּרִיד יְתִיהָ וּפְקִיד עֲלוּהִי לְמִימַר לָא תְסַב אֶתְתָא מִבְּנֵת כְּנַעַן: ז וְקַבַּל יַעֲקֹב מִן אַבְיָהִי וּמִן אִמִּיהָ וְאָזַל לְפָדֵן אֶרֶם: ח וְחָזָא עָשׂוּ אַרְי בִּישׁוֹן בְּנֵת כְּנַעַן בְּעֵינֵי יִצְחָק אַבְיָהִי: ט וְאָזַל עָשׂוּ לְוֹת יִשְׁמַעֵאל וְנָסִיב ית מַחֲלַת בֵּת יִשְׁמַעֵאל כַּר אַבְרָהָם אַחֲתִיהָ דְנִבְיֹת עַל נְשׁוּתֵי לִיהָ לְאַנְתּוֹ: ס ס ס

לְאַבְרָהָם: [שביעי] ה' וַיִּשְׁלַח יִצְחָק אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וַיֵּלֶךְ פְּדֹנָה אֶרֶם אֶל־לְבָן בֶּן־בְּתוּאֵל הָאֶרְמִי אֶת־י רַבְקָה אִם יַעֲקֹב וְעָשׂוּ: ו וַיֵּרָא עָשׂוּ כִּי־בָרַךְ יִצְחָק אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וְשִׁלַּח אֹתוֹ פְּדֹנָה אֶרֶם לְקַחַת־לוֹ מִשָּׁם אִשָּׁה בְּבָרְכוֹ אֹתוֹ וַיֵּצֵא עָלָיו לֵאמֹר לֹא־תִקַּח אִשָּׁה מִבְּנֹת כְּנַעַן: ז [מפסיר] ז וַיִּשְׁמַע יַעֲקֹב אֶל־אָבִיו וְאֶל־אִמּוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ פְּדֹנָה אֶרֶם: ח וַיֵּרָא עָשׂוּ כִּי רָעוֹת בְּנֹת כְּנַעַן בְּעֵינֵי יִצְחָק אָבִיו: ט וַיֵּלֶךְ עָשׂוּ אֶל־יִשְׁמַעֵאל וַיִּקַּח אֶת־מַחֲלַת אֶת־יִשְׁמַעֵאל בֶּן־אַבְרָהָם אַחֹת נְבִיֹת עַל־נְשָׁיו לֹו לְאִשָּׁה:

ס ס ס

ק"ו פסוקים. על"ו סימן.

רש"י

רעב, ויעקב אמר לפרעה ימי שני מגורי שלשים ומאת שנה, לא וחשוב י"ד שנה שלפני לידת יוסף, ושלשים של יוסף, ותשע משמלך עד שצא יעקב, הרי נ"ג, וכשפירש מאציו היה בן ס"ג, הרי קי"ו, והוא אומר שלשים ומאת שנה, הרי חסרים י"ד שנים, הא למדת, שאחר שקבל הצרכות נטמן צבית עזר י"ד שנים. (אצל לא נענש עליהם צרכות התורה, שהרי לא פירש יוסף מאציו אלא כ"ב שנה, דהיינו מ"ז עד ל"ט, כנגד כ"ב שפירש יעקב מאציו ולא כצדו, והם כ' שנים צבית לבן, ושתי שנים ששבה צדך, כדכתיב ויצן לו בית ולמקנהו עשה סכות, ופירשו רז"ל מזכ הפסוק ששבה י"ח חדשים צדך, דבית הוב צימות בגשמים וסכות הוב צימות החמה, ולחשבון הפסוקים שחשבנו לעיל, משפירש מאציו עד שירד למצרים שהיה בן ק"ל שנים, ששם אנו מוצאים עוד י"ד שנים, אלא ודאי נטמן צבית עזר כהליכתו לבית לבן ללמוד תורה ממנו, וצביל זכות התורה לא נענש עליהם, ולא פירש יוסף ממנו אלא כ"ב שנה, מדה כנגד מדה, עד כאן מלאתי צרש"י יצן: על בשיו. הוסיף רשע על רשעתו (ר"ל מרעשת על מרשעות שהיו לו כזר וק"ל) שלא גרש את הראשונות: חסלת פרשת תולדות

והצרכו צזרעך. יהיו אותן צרכות האמורות צשצילך, ממך ילא אותן הבוי ואתו הצרע המצורך: (ה) אם יעקב ועשו. איני יודע מה מלמדנו: (ז) וישמע יעקב. מחובר לענין של מעלה, וירא עשו כי צרך יצחק וגוי וכי שלח אותו פדנה ארם, וכי שמע יעקב אל אציו והלך פדנה ארם, וכי רעות צנות כנען, והלך גם הוא אל ישמעאל: (ט) אחות נביות. ממשמע שנאמר צת ישמעאל איני יודע שהיא אחות נביות, אלא למדנו שמת ישמעאל משועדה לעשו קודם נשואיה, והשיאה נביות אחיה, ולמדנו שהיה יעקב צאותו הפרק בן ס"ג שנים, שהרי ישמעאל בן ע"ד שנים היה כשנולד יעקב, שו"ד שנה היה גדול ישמעאל מילחק, וילחק בן ס' שנה צלדת אותם, הרי ע"ד, ושנותיו היו קל"ז, שנאמר ואלה שני חיי ישמעאל וגוי, נמלא יעקב כשמת ישמעאל בן ס"ג שנים היה, ולמדנו מכאן שנטמן צבית עזר י"ד שנה, ואחר כך הלך לחרן, שהרי לא שבה צבית לבן לפני לידתו של יוסף אלא י"ד שנה, שנאמר עבדתיך י"ד שנה צבתי צנותיך ושש שנים צלאנק, ושכר האלן משנולד יוסף היה, שנאמר ויהי כאשר ילדה רחל את יוסף וגוי, ויוסף בן ל' שנה היה כשמלך, ומשם עד שירד יעקב למצרים ט' שנים, ז' של שובע וצ' של

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In fact, the former blessing is particularly appropriate in this case as it was given to Avraham before embarking on a journey, which is precisely what Ya'akov was about to do here. *Rashi* comments there that God gave Avraham this blessing because, "traveling diminishes... fertility," so "the blessing of Avraham," was especially apt for Ya'akov at this time, when he was embarking on the task of building a family.

One serious problem here however is that God's blessing to Avraham to have any children was not, in fact, fulfilled. For during his travels, Avraham only merited *one* son who proved to be a true heir.

In response to this problem, *Rashi* continued, "May those blessings be for you." I.e. that God's words for Avraham were actually intended for Ya'akov. (And we see that they were indeed fulfilled, for despite all his travels Ya'akov established twelve tribes who were all true heirs.)

WHY DID YITZCHAK SEND YA'AKOV AWAY?

Based on the above explanation, we can solve a problem with the Torah's narrative here:

In *Parshas Chayei Sarah* we read that when Avraham was seeking a marriage partner for Yitzchak, he did not send his son away, but rather,

SEVENTH READING ⁵ *Yitzchak sent Ya'akov off, and he went to Padan-aram, to Lavan the son of Besu'el the Aramean, the brother of Rivkah, Ya'akov and Eisav's mother.*

🌀 EISAV MARRIES YISHMA'EL'S DAUGHTER 🌀

28:6 **E**isav saw that Yitzchak had blessed Ya'akov and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take himself a wife from there, and that when he blessed him, he instructed him, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Cana'an"; ⁷ (and he saw that) Ya'akov listened to his father and his mother, and went to Padan-Aram. ⁸ (So, since) Eisav saw that the daughters of Cana'an were displeasing to his father Yitzchak, ⁹ Eisav went to Yishma'el, and took for a wife Machalas, the daughter of Avraham's son Yishma'el, a sister of Nevayos – in addition to his other wives.

THE HAFTARAH FOR TOLDOS IS ON PAGE 375. THE HAFTARAH FOR EREV ROSH CHODESH IS ON PAGE 385.

TORAS MENACHEM

he sent his servant Eliezer to find a wife, and bring her back home to Yitzchak. So why did Yitzchak not do the same for his son?

At first glance it seems that Yitzchak sent Ya'akov away to save him from being murdered by Eisav.

However, at the literal level, we can presume that Rivkah did not tell Yitzchak about Eisav's plot, for fear that Yitzchak might refuse to bless Ya'akov further (as **Biuray Maharay** explains).

One might suggest that Avraham did not want Yitzchak to leave the Land of Israel, because he had the status of a "perfect burnt offering" that must remain within the Land (See *Rashi* to 26:2, above).

However, Yitzchak was only informed that he was a "perfect burnt offering" that must stay in the Land of Israel *after* his marriage. So, this could not have been the reason why Avraham insisted that he should not leave home to find a wife (see above, *Toras Menachem* to 24:6-7).

Rather, the reason why Yitzchak instructed Ya'akov to travel away from home to find a wife is because: a.) Avraham's blessing for having many children had not yet been fulfilled, so Yitzchak was certain that it would be fulfilled through Ya'akov. And, b.) Avraham's blessing was to have children *while he was travelling away from home*. Therefore, Yitzchak instructed Ya'akov to leave.

INHERITANCE OF THE LAND

After giving Ya'akov the "blessing of Avraham," only one fear might have remained in Ya'akov's mind: Since Eisav was remaining in the Land of Israel and Ya'akov was leaving, perhaps Eisav would seize the land for himself?

To relieve Ya'akov from this worry, Yitzchak added, "*that you will inherit the land in which you (only) wandered (in up until now), which God gave to Avraham.*"

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 20, pp. 116ff.)

🌀 The Last Word 🌀

EISAV'S MARRIAGE TO MACHALAS

In *Parshas Toldos* we read about Eisav's deceptive acts towards his father, climaxing here at the end of the *Parsha*, where he marries one of Yishma'el's daughters in order to appear righteous in Yitzchak's eyes. *Rashi* however comments that, in fact, "*He added wickedness upon his wickedness, in that he did not divorce the first ones*" (v. 9). I.e. just like he had married his first wives in an attempt to appear righteous (see 26:34 above), so too here "he added wickedness upon wickedness," marrying once again, this time to a member of Avraham's family in order to maintain his deceptive veil of righteousness.

In the following *Parsha*, *Vayeitzei*, we read of another trickster, Lavan, who acted deceptively towards Ya'akov. However, it could be argued that Eisav's deception towards his father represented a greater degree of moral corruption than the acts of Lavan, because Eisav *actively promoted himself* as a righteous person. Lavan, on the other hand, may have acted deceptively, but he did not scheme to find ways of proving his righteousness to others. He merely *concealed* his selfish and corrupt motives so Ya'akov would not come to uncover his plans.

So, the Torah's description of Eisav here, at the end of *Parshas Toldos*, comes to warn us of the moral corruption which was exemplified by Eisav. Here we are warned to steer clear of this lowly activity: promoting oneself as righteous while the truth is something very different indeed.

(Based on *Likutei Sichos* vol. 35, p. 116ff)

