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Weekly Torah insights translated and revised by Dovid Pinchas Rose, based on the Yiddish יהודה פארדס by Yehuda Zvulun Klitnick

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לעילוי נשמת אביו מרדכי בן ראובן ואמו שרה לאה בת אביגדור ע"ה

The skeptics: scoffers, but not really wicked

ואלה תולדות יצחק בן אברהם אברהם הוליד את יצחק: (כ"ה ט)
And these are the generations of Yitzchak the son of Avrohom; Avrohom begot Yitzchak. (25:19)

Why does the posuk draw attention to, and emphasize Yitzchak's patrimony? Rashi informs us of the scurrilous nature of the contemporaries:

לפי שהיו ליצני הדור אומרים מאבילמך נתעברת שרה שהרי כמה שנים שהתה עם אברהם ולא נתעברה הימנו

"because the scoffers of the generation were saying that Sarah had conceived from Avimelech for she had lived with Abraham for many years and had not conceived from him. ... The Holy One, blessed be He, shaped the features of Yitzchak's face to resemble Avrohom's, and everyone attested that Avrohom had begotten Yitzchak.."

It would seem that Rashi let these scoundrels off easy, by terming them merely "scoffers", and not the "wicked ones" of that generation. The Chida provides an answer by elaborating on Rashi. The scoffers of the generation were not truly wicked, but actually perceptive men who spoke the truth -- but with a twist. Rashi (on 21:1), explaining the juxtaposition of Hashem's remembering Sarah for a child, next to Avrohom's entreaties in prayer (in 20:17) teaches:

כל המבקש רחמים על חבירו והוא צריך לאותו דבר הוא נענה תחילה - "whoever begs for mercy for his friend, when needing the same thing, is answered first." Because Avrohom prayed on Avimelech's behalf, he was answered before Avimelech. Hashem remembered Sarah's plight before He healed Avimelech. One could admit that the scoffers actually spoke the truth, albeit in a twisted way: yes, Sarah conceived on account of Avimelech, but strictly owing to Avrohom's entreaties on behalf of Avimelech. But the dregs of society, hearing the skeptics' statement, could have taken it on face value -- that Avimelech sired Yitzchak biologically. To refute this preposterous gaffe, Hashem caused Yitzchak to mirror Avrohom's facial features exactly -- thus silencing the lower-grade scoffers.

(נחל קדומים)

True love is constant; the beauty of Yaakov's voice

ויצחק יצחק את עשו כי ציד בפיו ורבה אהבת את יעקב: (כה כח)
Yitzchak loved Esau because [his] game was in his mouth, but Rivka was loving Yaakov. (25:28)

Even on grammatical grounds, Yitzchak's love was in the past, and terminated; Rivka's was in the present, and ongoing. The Mishna in Avos (5:16) is a point of reference:

כל אהבה שהיא תלויה בדבר, בטל דבר, בטלה אהבה. ושאונה תלויה בדבר, אינה בטלה לעולם.

ANY LOVE THAT IS DEPENDENT ON SOMETHING--WHEN THE THING CEASES, THE LOVE ALSO CEASES. BUT A LOVE THAT IS NOT DEPENDENT ON ANYTHING NEVER CEASES.

Our posuk, with its varying verbal tenses, dovetails perfectly: Yitzchak's love for Esav hinged on a reason -- "the game in his mouth." No venison, no love -- a shallow and fleeting love indeed. Rivka's love did not stem specifically from anything Yaakov had done; rather it was a steady and constant love, expressed in a present-tense verb. [We might call it the prototype of a Yiddish mama's love. [DPR]] (של"ה הק) [DPR]

A Medrash Rabbah (Beraitis 63:10) bears on the Shelah's observation about Rivka's love.

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כל שהיתה שומעת קולו היתה מוספת לו אהבה על אהבה
"Hearing his voice in and of itself increased her love." This insight points directly to understanding the well-known subsequent posuk:

וינש יעקב אל יצחק אביו וימשהו ויאמר הקל קול יעקב והידיים ידי עשו: (כז כב)
So Yaakov drew near to Yitzchak his father, and he felt him, and he said, "The voice is the voice of Yaakov, but the hands are the hands of Esav." Why does the Torah mention "Yaakov's voice" not once, but twice? Recalling our Medrash, we can see what happened here. Hearing Yaakov's voice added to Rivkah's love. The sweet holiness of Yaakov's voice instilled love for him in anyone who heard it. We know that Yitzchak was unable to see Rivka. When Yitzchak experienced this phenomenon, i.e. when the Voice aroused his love, he concluded that the voice's owner must have been Yaakov, beloved by his wife Rivkah -- her love spurred on by that voice. Therefore we see twice: the first "KOL": "Oh, that Voice I'm hearing!", (which stimulated love in his heart), told Yitzchak that this could only be the "KOL YAAKOV", a voice of sweetness and holiness, which he knew Rivkah loved.

(שמח זבולון - י.ז. קליטניק)

Was Esav twice the "ISH" that Yaakov was? Hardly!

ויגדלו הנערים ויהי עשו איש ידע ציד איש שדה ויעקב איש תם ישב אהלים: (כ"ה כ"ז)
The youths grew up, and Esav was a man who understood hunting, a man of the field, whereas Yaakov was an innocent man, dwelling in tents. (25:27)

Throughout Tanach, the title "איש" usually indicates a person of righteous spirituality, or one of prominence without reproach. [Recall Mordechai's initial introduction in the Megilla: "איש יהודי" [DPR]] Esav would seem to be a counterexample. And he carries the honorific title not only once, but twice, while Yaakov is termed ISH only once. [This question has launched extensive commentaries from Torah giants such as the Mabarat and the Minchas Eluzer, and we cannot plumb those depths. [YZK]] The use of ISH for Esav may escape us, but we can perhaps explain why it occurs twice. We would call Esav a split, binary personality, because he acted like two disparate beings. To his father, he presented himself as a pious Yid, careful and exacting about details of mitzvos. But this was a sham -- a mere posturing. This trait of this "man understanding hunting" consisted of entrapping Yitzchak in false pretensions. His other facet was indeed that of a "man of the field" -- where he was active as an evil murderer. Not so Yaakov, the "ISH TAM", the unsullied man of perfection. The title ISH need occur only once to capture that exalted state. (חיים ושלום מונקאטש.)

Why did Esav turn to Yaakov for food?

הלעישני נא מן האדם ויאמר יעקב מכרה כיום את בכרתי לך: (כה כט -לא)
Esau said to Jacob, "Pour into [me] some of this red, red [pottage], for I am faint"; he was therefore named Edom. Jacob said, "Sell me as of this day your birthright."

If we understand the simple reason that Esav turned to Yaakov to supply him with rations, we will grasp the situation more clearly. Rashi explains (on 25:30) that Avraham Avinu was niftar on the day of that fateful encounter. The family was engaged in burial arrangements. Yaakov, the tent dweller, had to prepare a meal for the mourners as well as for the household. The "starving" Esav could hardly approach Yitzchak during his time of bereavement, and turned instead to Yaakov. Yaakov seized the opportunity to purchase the birthright for the paltry sum of a dish of lentils. (אשכל הכפר ש. ר. יידן חסיד פחד יצחק באיאן.)

The Avnei Nezer, the Holy Gaon Rav Avrohom miSochatschov frequently related these events to illustrate the central importance in a Yid's life of *emunas chachamim*: There was a wine merchant from Krakow who traded in fine kosher Hungarian wine from the famous Tokay region. He imported barrels and then repackaged the wine into bottles which sold very well in Poland. He had an unblemished reputation for honesty and integrity and managed to become quite wealthy from his wine business. But one Rosh Hashanah, it was decreed that his business should decline and a major investment of his turned sour. He lost most of his fortune, to the extent that he was forced to rely on loans to continue trading, but in just a few barrels at a time, with barely enough funds left over for basic living expenses. This sorry state continued for several years when he became aware of the great salvations wrought for Yidden by the great tzaddik Rav Hershele miRimanov זצ"ל. With full-fledged faith that the tzaddik would help him, he detoured through Rimanov on his next buying trip to Hungary. He skimmed off a bit of the borrowed money he was carrying and laid it on the Rebbe's desk along with his kvittl, to serve as a *pidyon*/redemption or his soul. But he was taken aback by the Rebbe's response: "If you want a potent and powerful bracha, I need *pidyon* money in the amount of 350 zlotys." The amount tallied to the penny with the amount the man had left in his purse -- borrowed funds all -- with which to conduct some minimal business in Hungary. Unhesitatingly, the merchant handed over his entire purse to the Rebbe, and was full of *simcha*, rooted in pure *emuna*/faith in a tzaddik, when the Rebbe assured him *be'ezras Hashem*, of great success in his upcoming venture in Hungary. In Tokay, the wine trade centered on a kind of exchange, or dealers' club where deals would go through the hands of experienced wine brokers, who brought buyer and seller together. Our merchant spent several days in the club, but without closing any deal. The exchange finally closed up shop for that season, but our merchant lingered in town after all the other traders had returned home. Before long, it came to his attention that a reliable broker was urgently seeking someone to close an unusual deal. He met with the broker, who assured him of a handsome profit if he managed to consummate the transaction. It seems there were two brothers who inherited a cellar full of barrels of

classic wines from their father. But as sometimes happens in estate settlements, the brothers had a bitter dispute which dragged on for twenty years without either speaking to the other. The feud was ended and as part of the peace settlement, the brothers sought a single buyer for the store of wines, and asked a below-market price, in the interest of a quick sale. The merchant waffled a bit since he had not a liquid penny with him, let alone the sum needed to finalize a large purchase, no matter how favourable the price. The broker -- eager to reap his commission, no doubt -- put him at ease: "You needn't worry. I assume that you have no liquid funds available after all of your trading here the past week. But you have a solid-gold reputation for honesty and I have a hunch the brothers would be willing to seal the deal with you on a line-of-credit basis." And so it was. The brothers had also heard good reports about the "man from Krakow" and that evening a sales contract, including a promissory clause, was written up. But before signing, the

merchant asked to have a taste of the wine he was buying, to make sure it was still in good condition. The brothers agreed to this reasonable request, and broke the seals to the wine cellar so the buyer could sample the wares. His expert verdict: *a taste of Gan Eden!* The contract was signed on the spot, the brothers provided a team of wagons to haul the barrels to Krakow, and all sides -- broker included -- were satisfied with the unusual business deal. The dealer was overcome with awe at seeing

the bracha of the Tzaddik from Rimanov unfold before his eyes. Back in Krakow, he spread the word that he had available an exceptional lot of rare, aged wines with a taste of Gan Eden -- but at prices which reflected their quality. The connoisseurs came a-running and snapped up the wine, some buying bottles and others entire barrels. The merchant quickly cleared enough profits to redeem the note the brothers in Tokay were holding, and to repay the other good friends who had loaned him money. He was able to resume his successful wine trading at even higher levels than before his reversal and became, hands down, the leading wine merchant in Krakow.

The Avnei Nezer frequently retold this story, naming the wine merchant clearly, and held it up as a shining example of what can be achieved by pure and unsullied faith in tzaddikim, not only for an individual, but for his descendants.

(ספר כהן גדול משרת)

STORY OF THE WEEK:

The fruits of simple, pure faith in a tzaddik: wealth across generations

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