

Kindert Torah

Parashas Toldos

Trapped in His Own Trap

Twins. Born from the same parents. Nurtured in the same womb. Raised in the same home. One would think that they would have almost indistinguishable natures. Yet, it was not so. In fact, they were opposites.

"Eisav became a man who knows hunting; a man of the field. Yaakov was a wholesome man, dwelling in tents." (Bereshis 25:27). Rabbeinu Bechaye explains that Eisav was drawn after the physical pleasures; therefore he became a trapper, for this is the profession of someone who likes to waste time and gratify his desires. A man of the field – his essence is like the dirt of the field – lowly, base. This led to further evils. Over-involvement with food and drink causes a person to spurn *Avodas Hashem* (Service of the Almighty). That is the meaning of the verse, "And he (Eisav) ate and drank, got up and left; thus Eisav spurned the *bechora* (birthright to perform the *Avodas Hashem* in the Beis HaMikdash)" [25:34].

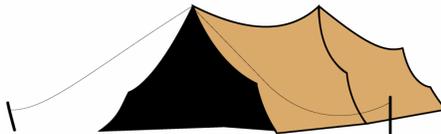
It is inevitable that someone of this nature will find himself losing out in the end. That is exactly what happened. Yaakov pushed him off twice. The first time he took the *bechora*, and the second time he took the *bracha*. Eisav knew that the pleasures of this world are only temporary, therefore he was very pained by losing his share, as the verse states, "He cried out an exceeding great and bitter cry" (27:34).

These faults are bad enough. However, Eisav compounded his problem by trying to hide it. "Yitzchak loved Eisav because the food that he trapped was in his mouth" (25:28). Our sages *darshen* that Eisav "trapped" Yitzchak by fooling him into thinking that he was a *tsaddik*. He would bring his father good food, and then ask him supposedly sharp questions, to show how scrupulous he was in performing mitzvos. Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch relates that Eisav also fooled himself. He hid his true evil nature under a guise of false righteousness. Therefore, he did not work on improving himself. He was forever trapped in suffering his bad *middos* (character traits).

This concept is reflected in Eisav's development at birth. "The first one emerged red all over like a hairy garment, so they named him Eisav" (25:25). The word "Eisav" has the same letters as "assu" – completely formed. Rashi explains that at birth he had the development of a much older person. The Keli

Yakar elaborates that he used all of his physical abilities from the beginning. He did not put the effort into developing his *neshamah* (soul). He would therefore remain a slave to his desires.

Contrast this with Yaakov, a man who pursued spiritual goals. He sat in the tents of Shem and Ever and learned Torah. He was born smooth, like a normal baby. This was a sign that he must develop, as a baby develops. He worked on himself, and became the father of the *Shevatim* (Twelve Tribes) – Yaakov Avinu.



*Kinderlach . . .
It is easy to get caught in the trap. It begins with laziness – wasting time. This leads to spiritual stagnation. It is impossible to grow if you do not work at it. The next step is frustration and making excuses. A person wants to save face. Therefore, he pretends that he is doing well. He ends up fooling himself and those around him. He enters a fantasy world of shekkar (untruth) from which is very hard to escape. Don't get caught in the trap, kinderlach! Be like Yaakov – sincere and hard working! Grow in ruchnius (spirituality). True greatness awaits you.*

Together in the End

"Go away from us, for you have become mightier than we!" (Bereshis 26:16). Thus Yitzchak Avinu became the first Jew to be exiled from a strange land. Rav Zalman Sorotzkin explains that this expulsion defied all logic. The Jews had not become too numerous – there was only one! They were not "milking" the economy of the country. Quite the opposite! The land of Gerar prospered during the time that Yitzchak Avinu lived there. He taught them better farming techniques. He gave *maaser* (one-tenth of his crops) as *tsedaka* to the poor people of the land, and they gained directly from his prosperity. A *tsaddik* always benefits

those around him. However, it did not help him. He was a Jew, and his status in *golus* (exile) in the eyes of the nations must be poor and downtrodden. When he begins to prosper, he hears the words, "Go away from us!" This became the pattern of the Jews in *golus*.

Another episode in the parasha relates two the two Bottei Mikdashim and the subsequent *golus*. Yitzchak's servants dug a well. The herdsmen of Gerar contested its' ownership, and they called the well "Esek." They proceeded to dig another well that was also contested, and they named it "Sitnah." Finally, they dug a third, uncontested well and named it "Rechovot." The Ramban explains that the wells represent the "wellsprings of living waters," the three Bottei Mikdashim. The first one was called "Esek" because there many struggles between the kings of Israel and Yehuda over the control of the Beis HaMikdash until it was finally destroyed. The second was called "Sitnah" after the *sinas chinam* (baseless hatred) that was rampant in all Klal Yisrael. This caused its' destruction, and prevents its' rebuilding to this very day. The third well is the third Beis HaMikdash, may it be rebuilt speedily in our days. There will be no contention over it, as there was none over the third well. Our part in the rebuilding it is to wipe out the *sinas chinam* that destroyed the second Beis HaMikdash and is preventing the third one from being rebuilt.

*Kinderlach . . .
We anticipate the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash. We pray for it three times each day. We have suffered so long in this bitter golus. Just as our forefather Yitzchak was exiled, so too the nations have exiled us from practically every continent on earth. When will it end? We can do our part in rebuilding the Beis HaMikdash by overcoming *sinas chinam*. Give in to the other person. Give him the benefit of the doubt. Understand him. Sympathize with him. Have rachmonus (mercy) on him. Build the Beis HaMikdash speedily and in our days, amen.*

Parasha Questions

- How did Eisav want to be fed? (Rashi 25:30)
- Why are eggs and beans food for mourners? (Rashi 25:30)
- Why did Yitzchak call his son Yaakov? (Rashi 25:26)
- What did Eisav trap? (Rashi 25:27)
- Which tents did Yaakov sit in? (Rashi 25:27)
- When did Yaakov and Eisav begin their conflict? (Rashi 25:22)

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