

## פרשת תולדות

'I want it.'

'You can't have it.'

'I want it.'

'You can't have it.'

'I want it.'

'Ok. Here it is.'

When we hear that type of dialogue we immediately associate it with a young child having a tantrum. She wants something that she cannot have and is refused. But she doesn't give up. She continues her protests and after many denials and refusals, she gets the piece of candy or toy for which she was clamoring.

How do we view the child at that moment and how do we view the parent?

Most likely, we will think that the parent has to do a better job of teaching the child that 'no' means 'no' and that since, in the end, the parent gave in to the child's whining, next time will be even worse.

But, what would be if that scenario would take place with adults? Presumably, we wouldn't be so quick to excuse the adult. Who would give a 'pass' to an adult who is exhibiting egregious child-like behavior? And what would we think of the adult?

And now let's apply our speculation to the event that is told in our Parsha.

Yaakov Ovinu has received the *B'rachos* from his father, Yitzchak Ovinu. Eisav comes, expecting to receive the blessings that his father promised him and, when discovering that Yaakov preceded him and it was Yaakov who was the recipient of the blessings, both Eisav and his father Yitzchak are stunned.

Let us review some of the relevant P'sukim. The instructions that Yitzchak gave Eisav were very clear. We read (B'reishis Perek 27/Posuk 4):

וַעֲשֵׂה לִי מִטְעָמִים כְּאֲשֶׁר אָהַבְתִּי וְהִבֵּיָאָה לִּי וְאֹכְלָה בְּעִבּוֹר תְּבָרְכֶךָ נַפְשִׁי בְּטָרִם אָמוֹת:

Make good-tasting food that I love and bring it to me and I will eat in order that my soul will bless you before I die.

Rivka l'meinu learns of Yitzchak's plans and she tells Yaakov (ibid. P'sukim 9-10):

לָךְ נָא אֶל הַצֹּאן וְקַח לִי מִשָּׁם שְׁנֵי גְדֵי עֲזִים טֹבִים וְאֶעֱשֶׂה אֹתָם מִטְעָמִים לְאָבִיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר  
אָהֵב: וְהֵבֵאתָ לְאָבִיךָ וְאָכַל בְּעֵבֶר אֲשֶׁר יְבָרְכְךָ לְפָנָי מוֹתוֹ:

Go please to the sheep and take for me from there two good goat kids and I will make them tasty foods for your father like he loves. You will bring them to your father and he will eat in order that he will bless you before his death.

Yaakov follows his mother's direction and we read (ibid. P'sukim 18-19):

וַיָּבֵא אֶל אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי מִי אַתָּה בְּנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל אָבִיו אֲנִי עֵשָׂו  
בְּכֹרְךָ עֲשִׂיתִי כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ אֵלַי קוּם נָא שָׁבָה וְאָכְלָה מִצִּידִי בְּעֵבוּר תְּבָרְכֵנִי נְפֹשְׁךָ:

Yaakov came to his father and he said, 'My father' and Yitzchak said, 'I am here – who are you my son?' Yaakov said to his father, 'I am Eisav your first-born, I have done that which you spoke to me; please arise and sit and eat from my hunting in order that your soul will bless me.'

Yaakov receives the blessings as the Torah writes and then we read (ibid. P'sukim 30-32):

וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר כָּלָה יִצְחָק לְבָרֵךְ אֶת יַעֲקֹב וַיְהִי אָךְ יָצָא יָצָא יַעֲקֹב מֵאֵת פָּנָי יִצְחָק אָבִיו וְעֵשָׂו  
אָחִיו בָּא מִצִּידוֹ: וַיַּעַשׂ גַּם הוּא מִטְעָמִים וַיָּבֵא לְאָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו יְקֹם אָבִי וַיֹּאכַל מִצִּיד  
בְּנֹו בְּעֵבֶר תְּבָרְכֵנִי נְפֹשְׁךָ: וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יִצְחָק אָבִיו מִי אַתָּה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי בְּנֶךָ בְּכֹרְךָ עֵשָׂו:

And it was when Yitzchak completed blessing Yaakov and it was that Yaakov had just gone out from before his father Yitzchak and Eisav his brother came with his hunted food. He brought it to his father and he said to his father, 'My father – arise and he should eat from the hunted food of his son in order that your soul should bless me.' Yitzchak, his father, said to him, 'Who are you?' Eisav said, 'I am your son, your first-born son, Eisav.'

Let us now see the P'sukim that form the basis for the 'tantrum' that we presented above. We read (ibid. P'sukim 34-39):

וַיִּחַדַּד יִצְחָק חֲרָדָה גְדֹלָה עַד מָאֹד וַיֹּאמֶר מִי אֵפוֹא הוּא הַצֵּד צִיד וַיָּבֵא לִי וְאָכַל מִכֹּל  
בְּטָרִם תְּבוֹא וְאֶבְרַכְהוּ גַם בְּרוּךְ יְהִיָּה: כִּשְׁמַע עֵשָׂו אֶת דְּבָרֵי אָבִיו וַיִּצְעַק צָעָקָה גְדֹלָה  
וּמָרָה עַד מָאֹד וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו בְּרַכְנִי גַם אֲנִי אָבִי: וַיֹּאמֶר בָּא אַחִיךָ בְּמִרְמָה וַיִּקַּח בְּרַכְתְּךָ:  
וַיֹּאמֶר הֲכִי קָרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב וַיַּעֲקֹבֵנִי זֶה פְעָמִים אֶת בְּכֹרְתִי לָקַח וְהִנֵּה עֵתָה לָקַח בְּרַכְתִּי  
וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלֹא אֶצְלַתְּ לִי בְרַכָּה: וַיַּעַן יִצְחָק וַיֹּאמֶר לְעֵשָׂו הֲנִי גָבִיר שְׁמִתִּי לָךְ וְאַתָּה כָּל אַחִיו

נִתְתִּי לוֹ לְעַבְדִּים וְדָגַן וְתִירֹשׁ סִמְכֹתָיו וְלָכָה אִפּוֹא מָה אֶעֱשֶׂה בְּנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂוּ אֶל אָבִיו  
הַבְּרָכָה אַחַת הוּא לָךְ אָבִי בְּרַכְנִי גַם אָנִי אָבִי וַיִּשָּׂא עֲשׂוּ קִלּוֹ וַיִּבְרַךְ: וַיַּעַן יַצְחָק אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר  
אֵלָיו הֲיֵה מִשְׁמֵנִי הָאָרֶץ יִהְיֶה מוֹשְׁבֶךָ וּמִטַּל הַשָּׁמַיִם מֵעַל:

Yitzchak trembled a great trembling and he said, 'Who then is the one captured the hunt and he brought it to me and I ate from all of it and I blessed him? He will also be blessed.'

When Eisav heard the words of his father, he cried out a great and bitter cry and he said to his father, 'Bless me also, my father'. Yitzchak said, 'Your brother came in wisdom and he took your blessing.' Eisav said, 'Is that they called his name Yaakov and twice he tricked me, he took my birthright and now he took my blessing;' Eisav said, 'Have you not separated a blessing for me?'

Yitzchak answered and he said to Eisav, 'Behold, I have placed him as a master for you, and all of his brothers I gave to him as servants, and I placed grain and wine for him, and for you, then, what should I do my son?'

Eisav said to his father, 'Is there not one blessing with you, my father? Bless me as well, my father;' and Eisav raised his voice and cried.

Yitzchak said to him, 'Behold from the fats of the land will be your dwelling and from the dew of the heavens from above.'

There are a number of questions to be raised.

First, why did Eisav want the blessings that Yitzchak was conferring? The Torah makes it very evident that Eisav rejected holy service.

When Eisav sold his birthright to Yaakov the Torah writes (ibid. Perek 25/Posuk 34):

וַיַּעֲקֹב נָתַן לְעֲשׂוֹ לֶחֶם וּנְזִיד עֲדָשִׁים וַיֹּאכַל וַיִּשְׂתֶּ וַיִּקָּם וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּבֶז עֲשׂוּ אֶת הַבְּכֹרָה:

Yaakov gave Eisav bread and a soup of lentils and he drank and he arose and he went; Eisav despised the birthright.

One can try and understand the dimensions of Eisav's decisions, his motivations and his thinking process. Nonetheless, one cannot deny the object fact that the Torah states: Eisav rejected the birthright with derision.

But the answer to that question is that Eisav distinguished between the *bechorah*-birthright and the blessings.

Birthright brings responsibility. It limits one's actions and Eisav was not one who wanted his freedom limited. That is what Rashi comments on the verse there (Posuk 32):

וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו הֲנִי אֹנֶכִי הוֹלֵךְ לָמוּת וְלָמָּה זֶה לִּי בְכֹרָה:

Eisav said, 'Behold I am going to die; what is this birthright for me?'

Rashi writes:

אמר עשו מה טיבה של עבודה זו, אמר לו כמה אזהרות ועונשין ומיתות תלוין בה, כאותה ששנינו<sup>1</sup> אלו הן שבמיתה שתויי יין, ופרועי ראש. אמר אני הולך למות על ידה, אם כן מה חפץ לי בה:

Eisav asked Yaakov, 'What is the nature of this service?' Yaakov said, 'There are many prohibitions, punishments and death penalties associated with it as it says in the Braisa, 'the following have the death penalty: one who drinks wine, one who did not have a haircut'. Eisav said, 'I am going to die because of the birthright, if so, I do not want it.'

Restrictions were far from the interest of Eisav. An additional verse there says (Posuk 27):

וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו אִישׁ יָדָע צִיד אִישׁ שֹׁדֵה וַיַּעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֹהֲלִים:

The lads grew; Eisav became a person who knew hunting, a person of the field; Yaakov was a pure person, sitting in the tents.

Rashi writes:

איש שדה - כמשמעו אדם בטל וצודה בקשתו חיות ועופות:

*A man of the field* – As it implies – a do-nothing person who hunts wild animals and fowl with his bow.

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<sup>1</sup> Tosefta Masseches Krisus Perek 1/Halachah 5). The discussion refers to Kohanim in their service in the Beis HaMikdosh. At that time in history, the first-born were designated to be the 'kohanim' and thus, presumably, all of the same Halachos of the Kohen would be applicable to the *Bechor*.

Blessings, on the other hand – at least in the mind of Eisav, implied bounty and largesse. And he was not wrong.

The blessing that he thought he should receive reads in its beginning (B'reishis Perek 27/Posuk 28):

וַיִּתֵּן לָךְ הָאֵל...לִיקִים מִטֵּל הַשָּׁמַיִם וּמִשְׁמֵנֵי הָאָרֶץ וְרֹב דָּגָן וְתִירֹשׁ:

And G-d will give you from the dew of the heavens and from the fats of the earth, an abundance of grain and wine.

Rashi notes that the opening word of this verse, וַיִּתֵּן, is noteworthy because it begins with the letter *vov*, meaning 'and'. Since this Posuk is not continuing anything, the letter *vov*, meaning 'and', is superfluous. Thus Rashi writes:

וַיִּתֵּן לָךְ - יִתֵּן וַיַּחְזֹר וַיִּתֵּן

*And G-d will give you – Hashem will give and He will give more.*

Thus, there is no inconsistency between Eisav's rejection of the *bechorah* and his desire for the Bracha. Eisav did not want to give anything; he was quite happy to take<sup>2</sup>.

However, it would seem to be an error to interpret Eisav's repeated request as only a matter of whining and complaining. There would seem nothing to learn by that dialogue that repeated itself multiple items if its entire goal was to draw our

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<sup>2</sup> We read in Parshas Vayishlach when Yaakov Ovinu meets his brother Eisav after a separation of decades (Perek 33/P'sukim 8-11):

וַיֹּאמֶר מִי לָךְ כָּל הַמַּחֲנֶה הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר פָּגַשְׁתִּי וַיֹּאמֶר לְמַצָּא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי אָדֹנָי: וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂוּ יֵשׁ לִי רֹב אַחֵי יְהִי לָךְ אֲשֶׁר לָךְ: וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֵל נָא אִם נָא מְצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְלִקְחֹת מִנְּחֹתֵי מִיָּדַי כִּי עַל כֵּן רָאִיתִי פָּנֶיךָ כְּרֹאֵת פָּנָי אֲ...לִיקִים וְתִרְצִנִּי: קַח נָא אֶת בְּרַכְתִּי אֲשֶׁר הֵבֵאתָ לָךְ כִּי חֲנִנִי אֲ...לִיקִים וְכִי יֵשׁ לִי כָל יַיִפְצֹר בּוֹ וַיִּקַּח:

Eisav said, 'Who is for you in all of this camp that I met?' Yaakov said, 'To find favor in your eyes, my master.'

Eisav said, 'I have more than enough, my brother; that is which yours will be yours.'

Yaakov said, 'Please, no. If I have found favor in your eyes, you will take my offering from my hand because that is why my seeing your face is like seeing the face of G-d and He favored me. Take, please, my blessing that was brought to you because G-d has favored me will all that I need.' Yaakov urged Eisav and Eisav took.

attention to the ire that ignited in Eisav and, at the same time, the immaturity and childishness of his behavior.

Or HaChaim HaKodosh offers us the beginning of an insight when he comments towards the end of Eisav's wheedling.

We read above:

וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל אָבִיו הַבְּרָכָה אַחַת הוּא לְךָ אָבִי בְּרַכְנִי גַם אֲנִי אָבִי וַיִּשָּׂא עֵשָׂו קוֹלוֹ וַיִּבְרַךְ:  
וַיַּעַן יִצְחָק אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הִנֵּה מִשְׁמַנֵּי הָאָרֶץ יִהְיֶה מוֹשְׁבֶךָ וּמִטַּל הַשָּׁמַיִם מֵעַל:

Eisav said to his father, 'Is there not one blessing with you, my father? Bless me as well, my father;' and Eisav raised his voice and cried.

Yitzchak said to him, 'Behold from the fats of the land will be your dwelling and from the dew of the heavens from above.'

Although Eisav has addressed his father as such earlier and Eisav has been described as Yitzchak's son earlier, only in this verse do we have the mention of fatherhood and childhood together. It is that combined mention in addition to identifying Yitzchak as Eisav's father in the next verse that leads Or HaChaim to write:

וַיַּעַן יִצְחָק אָבִיו. פִּירוּשׁ נְתִינַת טַעַם לְמָה חָזַר לְבָרְכוֹ. לְצַד רַחֲמֵי אָב כִּשְׁבֹכָה נִכְמַרו רַחֲמָיו:

*Yitzchak his father answered* – The explanation is that this verse gives the reason why Yitzchak changed his mind and blessed Eisav – it was because of the father's mercy for his son – his mercy was warmed up when his son cried.

The question begs to be asked. Where was Yitzchak's mercy until now? The Torah clearly tells us that immediately Eisav was astounded and suffered from the knowledge that the blessing that he thought was designated for him was given to Yaakov instead.

The Torah writes Eisav's immediate reaction that was coupled to his first request for a blessing. We read (ibid. Posuk 34):

כַּשְׁמַעַ עֵשָׂו אֶת דְּבָרֵי אָבִיו וַיִּצְעַק צְעָקָה גְדֹלָה וַמָּרָה עַד מָאֵד וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו בְּרַכְנִי גַם אֲנִי אָבִי:

When Eisav heard the words of his father and he cried out a great and bitter cry, extremely so; he said to his father, 'Bless me also, my father'.

And a second time, as well, Eisav requested a blessing. We read (ibid. Posuk 37):

וַיֹּאמֶר הַכִּי קָרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב וַיַּעֲקֹבֵנִי זֶה פַעַמַּיִם אֶת בְּכֹרְתִי לָקַח וְהִנֵּה עַתָּה לָקַח בְּרַכְתִּי  
וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלֹא אֶצְלַתְּ לִי בְרָכָה:

Eisav said, 'Was his name called Yaakov that he tricked me twice; he took my birthright and behold now he took my blessing;' he said, 'have you not another blessing for me?'

We hear the anguish of Eisav. Were three outburst required before Yitzchak was moved by the plight of his son?

Had Yitzchak Ovinu not blessed Eisav whatsoever, we would have understood. Had that been the case we would have surmised that Yitzchak Ovinu had decided that Eisav was not worthy of being blessed.

But that was not what happened. Since Yitzchak blessed Eisav at the end, why did he not bless him from the very beginning when he made his initial request?

The answer may very well be learned from the three expressions that Eisav used in each of his three requests for a blessing.

Eisav's original request was in response to what Yitzchak told him. Yitzchak said:

וַיִּחַרַד יַצְחָק חֲרָדָה גְדוֹלָה עַד מָאד וַיֹּאמֶר מִי אִפּוֹא הוּא הַצֵּד צִיד וַיָּבֵא לִי וְאָכַל מִכֶּל  
בְּטֶרֶם תָּבוֹא וְאַבְרָכְהוּ גַם בְּרוּךְ יְהִי:

Yitzchak trembled greatly, exceedingly so and he said, 'Who then was he who hunted the hunt and brought it to me and I ate before you came and I blessed him? *Also* he should be blessed.'

To that, Eisav said,

בְּרַכְנִי גַם אָנִי אָבִי:

Bless me, *also*, my father.

If Yitzchak seemed to be saying that Yaakov would *also* be blessed; that left room for Eisav to receive the same blessing. '*Also* I should receive *that* blessing', he demanded.

Eisav did not understand that the *also* said by Yitzchak meant that 'also now, now that I know after the fact that I blessed Yaakov and not Eisav, the blessing should *also* continue to be valid' for Yaakov.

Yitzchak's response (Posuk 35) is terse and to the point:

וַיֹּאמֶר בָּא אַחִיךָ בְּמַרְמָה וַיִּקַּח בְּרַכְתְּךָ

Yitzchak said, 'Your brother came in wisdom and he took your blessing.'

The blessing that I gave is a complete entity; it cannot be replicated.

Eisav's second request is formulated differently. We read:

הֲלֹא אֶצְלַתְּ לִי בְרָכָה:

He said, 'have you not another blessing for me?'

The commentators tell us that we have met the term אצלת elsewhere.

When Moshe Rabbenu imbues his new fellow *dayanim* with a modicum of *Ruach HaKodesh*, the Torah writes (B'midbar Perek 11/Posuk 25):

וַיֵּרֶד ה' בְּעָנָן וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלָיו וַיֵּאָצֵּל מִן הָרוּחַ אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו וַיִּתֵּן עַל שִׁבְעִים אִישׁ הַזְּקֵנִים וַיְהִי כְּנוּחַ עֲלֵיהֶם הָרוּחַ וַיִּתְנַבְּאוּ וְלֹא יָסְפוּ:

Hashem descended in a cloud and He spoke to him and he gave over from the spirit that was upon him and he placed it upon the seventy elders; when the spirit rested upon them they prophesied and did not cease.

That is a great person similar to Moshe Rabbenu has an abundance and he is able to share that abundance without diminishing his own portion.

When Eisav presents his second request we see that it is adjusted from the first. The first requested  $\aleph$ , also. Then Eisav sought a blessing completely equivalent to the one that Yaakov received and no less than the one that he, Eisav, thought that he deserved.

When such a request was denied because of its impossibility, Eisav requested to receive part of the abundance of that original blessing. Undoubtedly, Eisav thought, Yitzchak's ability to bless came from a treasure house of Divine blessing. Part of the treasure of the blessing certainly remained and even if he could not



receive the complete and identical blessing that Yaakov obtained, he could have a blessing that was part of the essence of that original one.

The response to this second request was also 'no'.

Yitzchak Ovinu denied that request of Eisav. Certainly Yitzchak possessed a treasure-house of Divine blessings. Certainly he was capable of sharing good wishes that have a Divine imprimatur. But in this particular case, after Yaakov had received a very inclusive blessing, sharing the abundance of that blessing, its remainder, would have no purpose.

Yitzchak says (Posuk 37):

וַיַּעַן יִצְחָק וַיֹּאמֶר לְעֵשָׂו הֲנִי גִבִּיר שְׂמֵתִיו לָךְ וְאֶת כָּל אָחָיו נָתַתִּי לוֹ לְעֲבָדִים וְדָגָן וְתִירֹשׁ  
סִמְכֵתִיו וְלֶכְהָ אֶפֹּא מָה אֶעֱשֶׂה בְּנִי:

Yitzchak answered and he said to Eisav, 'Behold, I have placed Yaakov as a master for you and for all of his brothers; I gave him slaves and grain and wine and gave him authority; and for you, Eisav, what can I do, my son?'

Rashi elucidates:

הֲנִי גִבִּיר - אמר לו מה תועלת לך בברכה, אם תקנה נכסים שלו הם, שהרי גביר  
שמתי לך ומה שקנה עבד קנה רבו:

*Behold a master* – 'What benefit will you have from that blessing? If you purchase property, it will be Yaakov's because I made him the master [in that blessing] and what the slave acquires is the possession of the master.'

Eisav realizes that he has exhausted the route of seeking the same or similar blessing that Yaakov received. It is not feasible.

That blessing was uniquely desirable because it stemmed from the Divine, as its first words indicate:

ויתן לך א...ליקים:

*G-d* should give you:

However, Eisav was well aware that there was an additional repository of blessings that was in the possession of Yitzchak Ovinu.

In Hashem's command to Avraham Ovinu to go to Eretz Yisroel, we read (B'reishis Perek 12/Posuk 2):

וְאֶעֱשֶׂךָ לְגוֹי גָדוֹל וְאֶבְרַכְךָ וְאֶגְדָּלְהָ שְׁמִי וְהָיָה בְרָכָה:

I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you and I will aggrandize your name; you will be a blessing.

Rashi writes:

והיה ברכה - הברכות נתונות בידך, עד עכשיו היו בידי, ברכתי את אדם ואת נח ואתך, ומעכשיו אתה תברך את אשר תחפוץ.

*You will be a blessing* – The blessings are placed in your hand. Until now, they were in My hand. I Hashem blessed Odom and Noach and you. From now on, you will bless whomever you wish.

What was the status of that power to bless following the death of Avraham Ovinu?

We read at the end of last week's Parshas Chaye Sarah (Perek 25/Posuk 5):

וַיִּתֵּן אַבְרָהָם אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ לְיִצְחָק:

Avraham gave all that was his to Yitzchak.

Rashi explains:

ויתן אברהם וגו' - אמר רבי נחמיה ברכה דיאתיקי, שאמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא לאברהם והיה ברכה, הברכות מסורות בידך לברך את מי שתרצה, ואברהם מסרם ליצחק;

*Avraham gave etc.* – Rabi Nechemia said that Avraham gave Yitzchak his will [which stated] that that which Hashem said to Avraham, 'you will be a blessing', meaning that 'the blessings are in your hand to bless whomever you wish' – that is what Avraham gave to Yitzchak.

It was to that reservoir of blessing that Eisav sought entry. And thus he emphasized 'my father' and Yitzchak emphasized 'my son' because the source was not direct from HaKodosh Boruch Hu but, rather, from the power that Hashem imbued in Avraham and which was then was given<sup>3</sup> to Yitzchak.

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<sup>3</sup> It is worthwhile to contemplate the extent of the blessings that were given to Avraham. It seems that the transfer was complete without anything being withheld.

And that reservoir was accessible to Yitzchak and thus Yitzchak did bless Eisav – but not necessarily because his paternal emotions were all of a sudden opened. Yitzchak blessed Eisav because there was now an opportunity to bless him, an opportunity that did not exist previously<sup>4</sup>.

Perhaps the clearest indication that this blessing that was given to Eisav was from a different source than the blessing that was given to Yaakov is from the former's introductory verse.

Yitzchak blesses Eisav and says (ibid. Perek 27/Posuk 39):

וַיַּעַן יִצְחָק אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הֲנֵה מִשְׁמַנֵּי הָאָרֶץ יְהִי מוֹשְׁבֶךָ וּמִטַּל הַשָּׁמַיִם מֵעַל:

His father Yitzchak responded and said, 'Behold from the fats of your land will be your dwelling and from the dew of the heavens from above.'

What is missing? When Yitzchak gave the blessing that Yaakov received he began with the words:

וַיִּתֵּן לְךָ אֱלֹהִים

G-d will give you.

This blessing, the one given to Eisav did not have those words 'G-d will give you' because that blessing came from a different repository.

We should ask, though, if that blessing was from the repository of blessings that Yitzchak personally was able to share, why did he include in it the phrase that plagues our people to this day. He said (Ibid. Posuk 40):

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Were it not for this Posuk, with Rashi's commentary, I would have thought that at the death of Avraham that it would have been necessary for HaKodosh Boruch Hu to give a new authorization for Yitzchak to utilize those same powers.

The fact that Avraham independently was able to give that power to Yitzchak emphasizes the completeness of Hashem's gift of the power of blessing to Avraham Ovinu!

<sup>4</sup> The *meforshim* discuss the content of the blessing given to Eisav and how it did not directly interfere, contradict or countermand that which Yitzchak blessed Yaakov Ovinu.

Here, we will not expand upon the content of those blessings.

וְעַל חֶרֶבְךָ תַחֲיֶה וְאֶת אַחִיךָ תַעֲבֹד וְהָיָה כְּאִשֶׁר תִּרְיֵד וּפְרֻקֶתָ עָלַי מֵעַל צַוְאָרְךָ:

Eisav, you will live by the sword and you will serve your brother; when you will suffer and if Yaakov forsakes the Torah<sup>5</sup>, you will remove his yoke from upon you neck.

The answer is, I believe, that the personal blessings that Yitzchak was able to say could not contradict objective truths. His blessings were given to enhance situations and possibilities. They were not intended to contradict reality.

One aspect of that reality was contained in the prophecy that Rivka, the mother of Yaakov and Eisav, received many decades earlier.

We read at the beginning of our Parsha (Perek 25/P'sukim 22-23):

וַיִּתְרַצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ וַתֹּאמֶר אִם כֵּן לָמָּה זֶה אֲנֹכִי וַתִּלְךְ לְדַרְשׁ אֶת ה': וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לָהּ  
שְׁנֵי גוֹיִם בְּבֶטְנִי וְשְׁנֵי לְאֻמִּים מִמֶּעִי: יִפְרְדּוּ וְיִלְאֻם מִלְאֻם יֶאֱמָץ וְרַב יַעֲבֹד צָעִיר:

The sons ran around in her insides and Rivka said, 'Why is this for me?' She went to seek G-d. Hashem said to her, 'There are two nations in your stomach; two nations will [go out and] separate from your insides; each of the nations will struggle against the other and the master will serve the younger one.'

That prophecy established the fact of the ongoing and perpetual struggle between Yaakov and Eisav and between their descendants. That was a fact beyond Yitzchak's control and he did not contemplate having his blessing contend with a Divine pronouncement.

That seems to be the explanation for that aspect of the content of the blessing that Yitzchak did give to Eisav.

But, even after suggesting a *p'shat* for the dialogue between Eisav and Yitzchak, it seems strange that the Torah would take us step by step through the complaints of Eisav. Why are we interested in Eisav's dissatisfaction? Will our understanding of his grievances make him more agreeable to us?

Perhaps the answer to that question is that the Torah wants to teach us the persistency of our enemies. Eisav didn't let up. His heirs do not let up.

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<sup>5</sup> Rashi.

The last few decades have been relatively peaceful for the Jewish people in the various lands of our exile and in Eretz Yisroel. Great things have been accomplished and many people probably came to the conclusion that the hardships that our people have encountered over the millennia are a thing of the past.

However, in the past decade, and particularly in the last two years, we find that Eisav did not cease to exist. Perhaps he slumbered but now, it appears, Chas V'Shalom, they he has awakened.

Do not be fooled, our Parsha tells us, Eisav will push and push until he gets what he wants or until the Ribbono Shel Olom puts a stop to it.

The Ribbono Shel Olom foretold of the struggle that began in the womb of Rivka l'meinu, in the holy womb of our Matriarch, and continues in the very unholy world in which we live.

What should be in our mindset as to how to restore that holiness for ourselves?

My Rebbe the Gaon and Tzaddik Rav Mordechai Rogov Zecher Tzaddik v'Kodosh Livracha, whose 51<sup>st</sup> Yartzheit is this week, the 29<sup>th</sup> of Marcheshvan<sup>6</sup>, writes a homiletical interpretation in his *Ateres Mordechai al HaTorah* (pages 90-91):

...ויאמר עשיו אל אביו הברכה אחת היא לך אבי?...<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Eisav said to his father, 'Do you only have one type of blessing?'

'Why, my father do you think that the only blessings that you give must be spiritual in content? For those who enjoy spirituality, that is appropriate. But there are other things in life besides Torah and *yiras shamayim*.

The world has many things to offer. The blessing you gave Yaakov may be fine for him – but there are other types of blessings for people like me. You should have more than one type of blessing in your repertoire!'

Yitzchak responded:

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<sup>6</sup> We were in Rav Rogov's shiur when he was niftar in 5729 and were called to his house to take him from there to where the Tahara was performed.

<sup>7</sup> This is not a verbatim translation. Most of what is written is a paraphrase of Rav Rogov's words.

You are wrong my son. There is only one type of blessing that brings true happiness and that is the one blessing that I have given.

Rav Rogov continues and points out that the blessing that Yaakov received emphasized 'the dew of the heavens and the fats of the earth, grain and wine'. Those are material blessings indeed. However, Chazal (Yalkut Shimoni Parshas Toldos 115) interpret them, in one explanation, to mean:

מטל השמים זה מקרא, ומשמני הארץ זה משנה, ורוב דגן זה תלמוד, ותירוש זה  
אגדה...

The dew of the heavens refers to Tanach; the fats of the earth refers to Mishnah; the abundance of grain refers to Talmud; wine refers to *Aggadah*.

There is no contradiction, Rav Rogov writes, between the *p'shat* and its allegories. Both physical sustenance and spiritual sustenance are vital and one cannot live in the absence of either.

אבל כשמתקיימים פירוש האחד, דהיינו דגן ממש בלי מקרא ומשנה והחיים הוא  
ערום וריק מתורה ומצוות אז הדגן והתירוש ממש אינו בכלל ברכה ואדרבה עצבות  
ותוגה במ.

When we fulfill only one explanation of the blessings, that is receiving real grain, without Tanach and Mishnah, then life is bare and empty of Torah and Mitzvos and then the physical grain and physical wine do not bear blessings – rather they bring sorrow and sadness.

Our days appear to be ones of trial and tribulation for Am Yisroel in Israel and throughout the world. The specific issues may appear to be very different on the surface, but their underlying challenges are our allegiance to the Ribbono Shel Olom.

Yaakov Ovinu pledged allegiance to the Ribbono Shel Olom and Eisav pledged allegiance to the goal of undermining and destroying Yaakov Ovinu.

We have the ability to emulate our Father Yaakov and renew our personal pledge of allegiance to Hashem and to His Torah.

We can make the difference!

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Pollock