

## And may G-d give you of the dew of the heavens and of the fatness of the earth. (27:28) - Behold, of the fatness of the earth shall be your dwelling and of the dew of the heaven above. (27:39)

Two blessings: Yaakov *Avinu* received the first one from his father, Yitzchak *Avinu*. Eisav received the second blessing after he discovered that Yaakov had preceded him in blessing. At face value, both blessings are material in nature and quite similar. Both sons were promised blessings from the fat of the land and dew from the Heavens above. *Chazal*, however, detect what appears on the surface to be a stylistic difference in the syntax of the *pasuk*. Being that verse (28) begins the text of the blessing, which is a new topic, the conjunction *vov* – *v'yitein*, and (may G-d) give, seems superfluous. *Rashi* quotes *Chazal* who interpret this as continuous blessing, occurring repeatedly. Furthermore, the definite article Hashem's Name, *Elokim*, underscores this blessing as emanating from Hashem when He acts in the role of *Elokim*, employing the *Middah*, Attribute, of *Din*, Strict Mercy, which is in contrast with the Name Hashem, implying *Rachamim*, Mercy. Thus, Yitzchak was intimating to Yaakov that his blessing was contingent upon his being worthy of the blessing. With regard to Eisav, however, the *pasuk* speaks unconditionally, implying that Eisav's minions will receive their material blessing regardless of their worthiness.

The **Sefas Emes** explains that the difference between Yaakov and Eisav's blessings lies in the *vav* of Yaakov's blessing. Eisav's blessing granted him immediate and unconditional material prosperity. The predominant aspect of Yaakov's blessing was that it gave him constant connection to the Source of *brachah* – Hashem. He gives, and then He gives again.

Our Patriarch received enough to sustain him – and no more. When that would run out, he would turn to Hashem in prayer and ask. This constant connection is not a punishment. It is a sign of the unabiding love that exists between Hashem and the Jewish People. This love must be earned, but ultimately engenders the greatest good – closeness with Hashem.

**Horav Yaakov Moshe Charlap, zl**, interprets the *v'yitein* as an admonition to Yaakov to always remember the Source of his blessing. Under no circumstances should Yaakov (or his descendants) think that what they receive is in their own merit. It is all a gift from Hashem. This is essentially how a Jew should think. Whatever he needs is provided by Hashem; whatever he wants – that is something altogether different.

Understandably, much commentary has been written to explain the concept of *yitein v'yachzor v'yitein*. When the Torah writes: And Hashem will give you, it already implies constant giving. Why, then, does *Rashi* feel it incumbent to write, "And then He will return and give you again." When a person blesses his friend with material abundance, he does not need to reiterate, "May G-d give you abundance and may He give you abundance again." It is obvious that consistency is part of

the blessing.

There is one brilliant homily from **Horav Kalonymus Kalman Shapiro, zl**, the *Piascesner Rav*, who presided in Warsaw during World War II, which is noteworthy, for it focuses on the *matzav*, the prevalent status, both physically and emotionally, of the Jewish population at the time. First, a bit of background.

The *Piascesner's Eish Kodesh*, from which this *dvar Torah* is gleaned, was written at a time of utter personal and communal devastation, after the *Rebbe* had lost most of his family. Indeed, it is the last work of *Chassidic* origin in Poland. The period of the Holocaust was not conducive to creative thought, certainly not religious thought which required deep thinking and lucid perception. While this tragic era has engendered a voluminous body of religious and philosophical writing, it was all generated in hindsight following the war. It was possible to look back and reflect – and then write. Thus, the *Eish Kodesh* is an extraordinary piece of work – which I use whenever pertinent. Not only is it an unparalleled example of personal achievement, it is a singular testament to the ability of the Jews to think cogently even during moments of the most difficult travail. His words speak to us from amidst the heart of darkness itself. Now for the *dvar Torah*.

The *Navi Yeshayah* (28:13) says: *U'va'u ha'ovdim b'erezt Ashur, v'ha'nidachim b'erezt Mitzrayim*. "They will come, those who are lost in the land of Assyria and those who are outcast in the land of Egypt." The *Rebbe* explains that there are people who are really "lost," and there are those who are simply "outcast." The outcast person has merely been exiled from one location to another place, but he can still be seen and recognized. A person who is lost, however, is neither visible nor recognizable.

In his homily to *Parashas Toldos* (1940), the *Rebbe* applies the similes of "lost" and "outcast" to the psychic disintegration of the Ghetto Jews. "For now, the troubles are greatly increasing," the *Rebbe* says "Indeed, they are shearing the beards of Jews, so that they cannot be recognized by their external appearance. Furthermore, due to the many persecutions and unbearable, unimaginable torments, people even lose their inner identities. This process can digress so far that he loses himself (*ehr farlitzich*) and no longer recognizes himself. He no longer recalls his self-image as it was a year ago, on *Shabbos*, or even a weekday before prayer, during prayer and other such times. Now he is crushed and trampled, so much that he cannot discern if he is a Jew, a human being, or rather an animal who does not have the capacity for feeling. He is then 'lost' in the Scriptural sense."

The *Rebbe* concludes with a message of hope. In the *Talmud Kiddushin*, *Chazal* state, *Baal aveidah machzir al aveidaso*, "The loser (one who has lost an article) must return to search for his lost article." This is because a truly lost article cannot be seen nor recognized and so it is the owner who must go around looking for it in order to find it, to lift it up and bring it back to him. Thus, bearing in mind that *Klal Yisrael* is Hashem's "lost article" and we are His *aveidah*, it is Hashem Who is in search of His people. He will find us. He will give us everything good, returning to Him,

redeem us, rescue our bodies and souls with great mercy.

This is the underlying (homiletic rendering) meaning of Yitzchak's *brachah* – *yitein v'yachzor v'yitein*. Hashem will give not only when the Jew is visible and recognizable (*yitein*), but also when he is lost, where he is neither recognizable nor visible as a Jew. At such times, Hashem will return (*yachzor v'yitein*) and give again. The Owner of the lost object will return to search for us and find us – and then bless us with His beneficence.