

Yaakov simmered a stew, and Eisav came in from the field, and he was exhausted. (25:29)

Yaakov *Avinu* was not cooking red lentil soup because he had a yen for eating legumes. Lentils are round, and hence, an appropriate food to be eaten in the house of a mourner. Round brings to mind the cycle of life. A circle has no opening – no beginning – no end. A mourner is cloaked in grief; thus, he has no mouth. They were mourning the passing of Avraham *Avinu* who had died that day. To Eisav, however, it was nothing more than a quick fix: grab a bite and go on his merry way. The world is mourning the passing of its great spiritual mentor. Eisav, his grandson, is busy going about his usual daily endeavor of evil in order to satisfy his base desires.

Chazal teach that Avraham's passing was actually untimely. He had originally been destined to live five more years. His life was cut short, so that he would not witness his grandson's wicked ways. Five years is an incredibly long time. So much can be achieved in five years – especially if one is Avraham! Time is Hashem's greatest gift to man. When *Horav Naftali Trop*, the *Rosh Yeshivah* of Radin, became gravely ill, the *yeshivah* students made an appeal, requesting each student to donate part of his life to the *Rosh Yeshivah*. Together, the students donated a considerable amount of years to the *Rosh Yeshivah*. Although it was highly unusual to do this – *Rav Naftali Trop* was an unusual person. They even dispatched one of the students to the home of the *Chafetz Chaim* to ask if he would also participate.

When the *bachur*, student, presented the request, the *Chafetz Chaim* replied that he would think about it. A short time later, the *Chafetz Chaim* asked the student to return. He then said that, after deep thought and thorough introspection, he was willing to contribute five minutes! To the *Chafetz Chaim*, five minutes was an eternity! He could achieve so much in five minutes, because he never wasted a second. Yet, for the *Rosh Yeshivah*, *Rav Naftali*, he would part with five minutes.

Now, with this in mind, **Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl**, points out that Avraham *Avinu's* time was certainly no less valuable than that of the *Chafetz Chaim*. Indeed, a righteous person's time becomes more valuable as he ages and his spiritual plateau becomes elevated. Thus, Avraham's service to Hashem at age 175 years old was more than anything we could imagine. During the next allotted five years of his life, he could have soared to spiritual heights beyond the scope of our ability to perceive. Yet, Hashem granted him a special favor by shortening his lifespan by five years. All this was just so that he would not see his grandson, Eisav, go off the *derech*, alienate himself from Judaism. Do we now have any idea concerning the suffering of a parent when their child turns away? We have just witnessed the pain of a grandfather. Certainly, the pain of a parent supersedes even that. We might take the above into consideration when we meet someone who has undergone such an experience. Perhaps a little empathy might be in order.