

## But he (Yitzchak) said, “Your brother came with cleverness and took your blessing.” (27:35)

That Yaakov *Avinu* received the blessings from Yitzchak *Avinu* under what seems to have been a surreptitious method has been a major point of contention presented to challenge those who adhere to the Patriarch’s way of life. Veritably, the question is glaring: Why did Hashem cause the blessings that apparently belonged to Eisav to go instead to Yaakov? One who studies the gist of the blessings notes that they are physical in nature, promising material bounty. Is this really what Yaakov wanted? The Patriarch was devoted to his spiritual development: Why would he want a blessing that guaranteed him abundant physical bounty? Imagine a contemporary *ben Torah* blessing his son: Would he bless him with materialistic success, or would he pray that the boy grow spiritually into a great Torah scholar who would illuminate the hearts and minds of our People?

In order to explain this anomaly, **Horav Arye Leib Heyman, zl**, first focuses on the variant images of Yaakov and Eisav. Yaakov was an *ish tam yosheiv ohalim*, “wholesome man abiding in tents.” These tents are a metaphor for the tents of Torah, various *yeshivos* in which Yaakov imbibed Torah values. There was nothing else of importance to Yaakov. The world at large was not his concern. As long as he had his *Gemorah*, he was fine. His world was one that was pristine, pure of any vestiges of materialism and mundane issues which occupy the minds of lesser men.

His brother, Eisav, was an *ish sadeh*, man of the field. His desires revolved around *olam hazeh*, this world, with its materialism and physicality. His very essence bespoke *taavah*, passion and base desire. Even as an infant in his mother’s womb, Eisav would attempt to free himself of the encumbrances of his “prison,” so that he could emerge and have his fun.

One thing is certain: When two individuals are so vastly disparate, no partnership can be established between them. They each have their own individual proclivities, with no room for compromise. When the Torah writes that Yitzchak *Avinu*’s eyes dimmed with age, *Rashi* comments that this was actually Providential, so that Yaakov would be able to appropriate the blessings. This is a reference to the specific blessings which Yitzchak had planned to bestow on Eisav. The materialistic blessings which seemingly are endemic to Eisav were to be “channeled” instead to Yaakov. Why? What would he do with them? Imagine giving a mansion with all of the accoutrements to one of our *gedolei hador*. It would be ludicrous.

Yitzchak was well aware of the disparate personalities of his twins. He knew that Yaakov had no use with *gashmius*, physicality. Materialism which is used purely for mundane purposes will ultimately defeat one’s spiritual goal in life. The idea is to sanctify the physical by utilizing it to sustain the spiritual. Yitzchak sought to develop a sort of Yissachar/Zevulun partnership, in which Yaakov would devote himself to Torah, and Eisav would commit to material pursuits. Eisav would, of course, support his brother, and Yaakov’s merits from his incessant Torah study would protect Eisav. It did not work out in the way that Yitzchak had planned. In order for a partnership to work,

each partner must appreciate what the other one is doing. One places greater emphasis on Torah, while the other one underscores the material. It cannot work, however, when each one absolutely shuns the other's contribution. Yaakov had no interest whatsoever in the materialism. Eisav absolutely rejected anything spiritual. Such a relationship would not have achieved a positive outcome. Furthermore, if Yaakov were to have been blessed with material abundance, would he even have appreciated it? Would he know what to do with it?

Thus, the Master of all that occurs created a situation in which Yaakov, at the behest of his mother, Rivkah *Imeinu*, presented himself to Yitzchak in the guise of Eisav in order to receive the blessings. Thus, the blessings of material abundance were given to Yaakov, so that he could elevate the physical dimension of this world.

Veritably, had Leah *Imeinu* not been switched with Rochel *Imeinu*, she would have ended up marrying Eisav – which would have appropriated the materialistic blessings for her. So Yaakov, who married Leah, received the blessings in a more indirect manner. Yehudah, who was Leah's son, became the monarch of the tribes and was able to make constructive use of these blessings. A king must rule over both the physical and spiritual dimensions. As a result of his maternal and paternal lineage, Yehudah had access to both.

Let us go back further in time, to the birth of Rivkah into the family of Besuel and Lavan, men who exemplified the "art" of *ramaus*, cheating and swindling. The *Midrash* in *Shir HaShirim* compares the Matriarch to a *shoshanah bein ha'chochim*, rose among thorns. Had she been raised in a more suitable family, however, she might not have seen through the guile of Eisav or had the temerity to induce Yaakov to appropriate the blessings. Everything in life happens for a reason. Initially, it often does not make sense. As we continue down the road of life, the many questions which had troubled us earlier on all seem to resolve themselves. We must trust in Hashem and rely on Him. He knows what is best and how to bring it forth – all at its proper time and place.