

"And he said (Yitzchak), 'Your brother came with cleverness and took your blessing.'" (27:35)

Probably one of the most difficult narratives in the *Torah* to understand, is the one which depicts Yaakov as "taking" the blessings from Yitzchak, through a manner uncharacteristic of someone who is considered to be the epitome of veracity. We do not understand the ways of Hashem. Why did He choose that Yitzchak be unaware that he was actually blessing Yaakov -- and that Eisav was actually not fit for blessing altogether. The *Zohar Ha'Kadosh* comments that this scenario was essential so that the blessing would come directly from Hashem to Yaakov via the medium of the unsuspecting Yitzchak.

The *Sfas Emes* cites the *Targum Onkelos* who differentiates between the word *vnrn*, which is translated as *t,nfj*, wisdom, and the word *vnrg* which is commonly defined as cunning or deceit. Yaakov did not come with deceit to cheat Eisav out of his blessings. Rather, he applied the wisdom of the *Torah* that he had studied. *B'heter*, with *halachic* permission, he cleverly took the blessings that should rightfully have been his.

The *Midrash* comments that when Yaakov approached his father to receive the blessings in a manner which may be viewed as inappropriate, he implored Hashem with the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* (120:2), *rea ,pan hapb vkhm vhnr iuaknw* "Rescue my soul from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue." This is enigmatic! Yaakov is prepared to use whatever "cleverness" he can to receive the blessings. He was about to make statements which could be viewed as lies. Yet, at the same moment he entreats Hashem to save him from *vhnr iuak*, a deceitful tongue. Does this not seem slightly insincere? Where is the "*emes*" in the "*ish emes*" that Yaakov *Avinu* purported to personify?

Horav Gedalyah Shorr, zl, explains Yaakov *Avinu's* behavior in the following manner: The purpose of a *nisayon*, a trial from Hashem, is to help man attain perfection in his *middos*. A *nisayon* is successfully completed when one has finished the task, while demonstrating that no blemish exists in his character. Each of the *Avos* withstood *nisyonos* focusing on the individual *middah* which they exemplified. Avraham *Avinu* was tested in the area of *chesed* to see if his devotion to *chesed* was sincere to the point of self-sacrifice. He withstood the test. Yitzchak personified *din*, the *middah* of justice. He desired that others deal with him on the level of pure justice without the "buffer" of *rachamim*, mercy. *Chazal* tell us that Yitzchak demanded *yesurim*, severe pain, which he withstood without complaint.

Yaakov was tested in the *middah* of *emes*. Yaakov was to take the blessings from Yitzchak in a manner that was totally atypical for a man of his integrity. His mother assured him that he was behaving in a correct manner, that she was Divinely inspired to guide him in his endeavor. Yet, it was not "*emesdik*" to act in this manner. Yaakov feared that some of the *sheker*, falsehood, deceit that he would be obliged to use, would taint him. He entreated Hashem, "*Ribono Shel Olam*, help me that I do not become affected by the *mirmah* that I must use. Guide me out of the muck of

falsehood and deliver me back safely to the solitude of *emes*."

This world is called the "*almah d'shikra*," the world of falsehood. Everything is imaginary; nothing is real. Falsehood surrounds us wherever we go. At times, we must resort to act with *ormah* - cleverness - in dealing with the *yetzer hora* or with *reshaim* in general. We pray that what we must do does not become a part of us, merely a tool which is necessary to utilize in order to maintain our spiritual position. We pray that we will derive no benefit from the use of continued cleverness -- and that it will leave no mark on us - whatsoever.