

## "These are the generations of Yitzchak, the son of Avraham, Avraham begat Yitzchak." (25:19)

The commentators address the apparent redundancy of the *pasuk*. Obviously, if Yitzchak was the son of Avraham, then Avraham begat Yitzchak. In his commentary on *Chumash*, the *Tzemach Tzedek* offers an explanation rooted in *Chasidus*. Avraham *Avinu* is a figure who serves as a paradigm for *avodas Hashem*, service of Hashem, through love and *chesed*. In contrast, Yitzchak is the model of fear and stringency.

These two divergent approaches to serving the Divine have two levels. The lower level of fear is represented by *yiraas ha'onesh*, fear of punishment. The higher, more sublime sense of fear, *yiraas ha'rommemus*, is described as awe of transcendence. In the latter case, one withdraws from sin as a result of his awareness that the act is counter to the will of Hashem. Love is also divided into two distinct levels. On the first level, the attachment to Hashem is motivated by a desire for reward. The higher level is distinguished by a desire to cling to Hashem simply out of love.

The redundancy of this *pasuk* teaches us the manner of serving Hashem via these four levels of service. The order of the names, Yitzchak, Avraham, Avraham, Yitzchak, implies a specific ascending order for the worship of Hashem. First, the lower level of fear transforms to the lower level of love. This ascends to the higher level of love, which ultimately reaches the pinnacle of worship in the higher level of fear. We develop our worship of Hashem through ascending degrees of relationship reflecting awe of transcendence and reverence of Hashem's majesty as the summit of worship.

In a homiletic rendering of the *pasuk*, *Horav Moshe Swift, z.l.*, emphasizes the importance of maintaining each link in our tradition. We should all stop to reflect how removed we are in spirit and behavior from the previous generations. Do we still adhere to the same ideals and values? This is the *pasuk's* message: "*These are the generations of Yitzchak.*" The generations that followed Yitzchak were secure in their commitment only when "Yitzchak" could assume that "*Avraham begat Yitzchak.*"

Yitzchak's spiritual survival was dependent to a great extent upon the degree to which his father's ideals were transmitted to him. The unfolding development of Yitzchak's generations, their destiny and spiritual proclivities, were derived from the fact that "*Avraham begat Yitzchak.*" The transmission of values and beliefs from generation to generation is the source of our survival.