

And Yitzchak trembled in very great perplexity. (27:33)

Chazal teach us that the words, *gedolah ad meod*, “very great perplexity,” mean that the fear that Yitzchak *Avinu* experienced when Eisav walked in was even greater than when he lay at the *Akeidah* about to be slaughtered. Imagine, up until this moment, Yitzchak was under the impression that Eisav was fine, upstanding and observant. He would ask him *halachic* questions which, by their very nature, indicated that he was extremely stringent in his observance. Suddenly, the floor fell out from beneath him, and he saw Eisav in his true colors, for all that he was. The shock of discovery that all we have believed in has been in error – whether it was in a person, a way of life, an organization – is a devastating shock. To find out that the son in whom you placed so much hope and love is a fraud was a shock even greater than the *Akeidah* for Yitzchak.

Horav Chaim Zaitchik, zl, relates that the *Alter, zl, m’Novarodok, Horav Yosef Yoizel Horowitz, zl*, would travel to a small village in an area which was known for its clean air. He hoped that the pristine climate would have a recuperative effect on his lungs. The *Alter* was meticulous in bringing along a *mezuzah* written specifically for him by a *sofer*, scribe, in whom he had the greatest faith. He demanded that every stringency be included in the writing of the *mezuzah*. The *Alter* was not willing to settle just because he was on “vacation.” When he returned to the *yeshivah*, he would remove the *mezuzah* and take it with him.

One time, as he was removing the *mezuzah* from the doorpost, he noticed to his shock and chagrin that when he had attached the *mezuzah* to the doorpost, he had driven the nail through a letter, essentially invalidating the *mezuzah*. He was so palpably shocked, that his students, who were watching nearby, took notice. He said nothing, refusing to respond to their query at the time. Instead, he said that he would explain during *Elul* what had just taken place and the lesson that he derived therein.

During the month of *Elul*, the *Alter* spoke to the students of the *Yeshivah* one *Motzei Shabbos*. He began to weep uncontrollably, saying that man thinks everything in his life is in order, that he is observant, committed, dedicated towards helping his fellow-man, but he is wrong! True, it seems that everything is fine, that he goes through life meticulously adhering to everything that is demanded of him, but something is amiss. Sadly, many of us find out what we are missing, but alas, we are too late. Just like the *mezuzah*. Everything had been planned to perfection. Yet, one small error invalidated his entire vacation! He had been in an apartment without a *mezuzah*!

We now know why Yitzchak *Avinu* trembled. An entire life was just invalidated when he saw Eisav as his true self. We pray that Hashem will not have any surprises for us. To prevent this, we should go the extra mile to be certain that our actions and intentions are consistent with that which Hashem asks of us.