Yitzchak loved Eisav for game was in his mouth. (25:28)

Eisav used guile to fool Yitzchak. He was "*tzayid b'fiv*", a hunter with his mouth. He ensnared his father with *halachic* questions. He portrayed himself as a devout scholar, concerned about the intricacies of giving *Maaser*, tithing crops. "How does one tithe salt? How does one tithe straw?" he asked Yitzchak, knowing fully well that *Maaser* does not apply to these two substances.

Chazal interpret the words "*tzayid b'fiv*", to be descriptions of Eisav's cunning. He used his mouth for subterfuge. Should one assume that Yitzchak yearned for Eisav's "hunt"? Surely, he had sufficient sheep and cattle that he did not have to send Eisav to look for outside sources of food. When it was time for the *brachos*, blessings, Yaakov was able to prepare a fine feast from the available sheep. Yet, the *pasuk* seems to imply that Yitachak enjoyed the *tzayid*, hunt, which Eisav had brought to him. Moreover, Yitzchak requested Eisav to bring him a "*tzayid*" that was prepared according to his liking before he would bless him. Something about this "*tzayid*" eludes us.

Horav Elchanan Sorotzkin, zl, renders the narrative of Yaakov and Eisav homiletically, in order to teach us a timely lesson. The dispute between Yaakov and Eisav was of a spiritual nature, namely, how to reach out to those who were distant from Hashem. Yaakov's *derech*, approach, to serving Hashem was such that his influence was limited to those in his immediate environment. Eisav considered Yaakov's ability to influence others to be focused only on the "sheep and cattle," an analogy for those who were in his immediate "domestic" surroundings. Eisav, on the other hand, sought to reach out to "wild beasts and fowl," those who were extremely distant from his father's teachings. Eisav questioned the *halachah* regarding tithing straw; once again, this is an analogy for the external shell that flies away. Yaakov concerned himself with the kernel which remained in his immediate presence. Eisav went out into the "world" to seek those who were outside of Yaakov's spiritual periphery. He employed various methods for outreach, methods that were as unconventional as the people he sought to inspire. In contrast to Yaakov, Eisav was a firm believer in the idea that the end justifies the means. Regrettably, the "end" did not always turn out the way Eisav had planned. Eisav was left with his questionable "means," which all too often left their imprimatur on him.

Yitzchak was not aware of Eisav's "success" ratio. He was, indeed, impressed with his visionary approach to reaching out to the alienated. This was Yitzchak's goal in life. Consequently, he encouraged Eisav, taking deep pride in his son's exploits. Although he was truly proud of Yaakov's "sitting and learning" in his tent of *Torah*, his daring to reach out to others paled in comparison to Eisav's description of his own plan for success. Yitzchak desired Eisav's *tzayid*, his hunt, the person that he would bring in from afar.

Rivkah knew that Eisav's *tzayid* was all in his mouth; he was a *tzayid b'fiv*. Instead of captivating others, he himself became ensnared. The methods he used for outreach turned him into a monster. She loved Yaakov's *tzayid*, his hunt, which was solid, firmly rooted and spiritually balanced. On the other hand, she did not value the unstable, strange people who Eisav

indiscriminately collected, who were unlikely to remain for the duration of the experience.

We now understand why Eisav sought the blessings and why Yitzchak desired to give them to him. He saw in Eisav's work a daring which contrasted with Yaakov's solid accomplishments. He saw Eisav reaching out to a world. He overestimated Eisav, not realizing that Eisav had become an unfortunate sacrifice of his own work. He had rejected his father's faith and was living a life of sham and shame.

Why did Eisav denigrate the "*bechorah*", right of the first born, and then become furious when Yaakov received the *berachos* in his place? *Chazal* tell us that Yaakov feared Eisav's merit for all the years that he had served his father, fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *Kibbud Av V'eim*, honoring one's parents, while Yaakov was away at the *yeshivah* of Shem and Eivar. Eisav also had the advantage of living in *Eretz Yisrael* the entire time that Yaakov was away. Using the same approach, *Horav* Sorotzkin explains that Yaakov feared Eisav's social *mitzvos* and his devotion to *Eretz Yisrael*. Why did he need the *bechorah*? He was a warrior, fighting for the land, concerning himself with social action and love for his fellow man. The *bechorah* was intended for one who would sit in his corner studying *Torah*. Eisav had more "important" things to do. Yet, if the *bechorah* could help him to succeed in his quest to reach out to others, then he also wanted the *bechorah.*

When Yitzchak commanded Yaakov not to take a Canaanite wife, Eisav also followed his father's orders and married Yishmael's daughter. He, however, did not divorce his previous pagan wives. He wanted to live in both worlds, perform a few social *mitzvos*, fight for the land and continue to maintain his pagan lifestyle. This approach resulted in the birth of a grandson named Amalek, the archenemy of the Jewish People, as well as the development of Eisav's hatred for the land that he supposedly loved and a hatred for his father.

Eisav represents the paradigm of the confused Jew who wants to save the world, regardless of the means that he must employ. In the end, he is at odds with his own brethren, whose lifestyle he has denigrated in the name of *Am Yisrael*. How sad it is that history repeats itself so often. If we would only open our eyes, we might see its message.