

And it came to pass, when Yitzchak became old, and his eyes dimmed from seeing, that he summoned Eisav, his older son. (27:1)

Yitzchak *Avinu* saw that his mortal years were slowly coming to a close. He called Eisav to grant him his fatherly blessing, as befits the first-born son. Rivkah *Imeinu* understood what was about to transpire, and she manipulated the situation, so that in the end it was Yaakov *Avinu* who received the blessings. One shudders at the thought of Eisav receiving the blessings. Yet, this was Yitzchak's intention. How are we to reconcile ourselves with this? What did Yitzchak see in Eisav that prompted him to view him as worthy of blessing? True, Eisav was a fraud, a very talented fraud, one who could pull the wool over his father's eyes. Are we to believe that Yitzchak was deceived and unaware of the truth about the real Eisav?

Clearly, this question has been mulled over by many commentators. Various approaches address what appears to be Yitzchak's "naïveté." The first principle that must be emphasized is that the only one who is naïve is he who believes that Yitzchak *Avinu* was in error. It is absolutely ludicrous to think that the Patriarch, who is considered the *olah temimah*, perfect offering, could be fooled. From the considerable literature written on the subject, I have chosen the words of the *Malbim*, whose explanation is both understandable and highly practical.

Yitzchak was well aware of his errant son Eisav's behavior. He knew that Eisav was not interested in making the *bais ha'medrash* his home base. As a practical father, Yitzchak was acutely aware that all boys are not cut from the same cloth; not all of them want to spend their lives poring over tomes of *Talmud* and commentaries. The ones who aspire, ascribe to and choose this way of life are few. The ones who succeed are even fewer. Yitzchak understood that while the fruit of the tree is the essential product, without the tree, the branches, the roots, the leaves, and the fruit has no chance. This is essentially the idea behind the partnership of Yissachar and Zevulun. Yissachar spent his life engrossed in Torah study, while Zevulun saw to his material needs – often at great sacrifice to himself. This relationship has sustained Torah scholarship throughout the ages.

So why not Eisav and Yaakov? The future Patriarch would continue devoting his life to Torah study, while Eisav would sustain him. It sounded like a great idea. There is, of course, one drawback: Zevulun has to be an individual of impeccable character who **appreciates** and **holds dear** the tenets of Torah, who values Torah study for what it is worth. Eisav's resume does not seem to have such flawless credentials. Can one even begin to imagine if *bnei Torah* would have to be supported by the likes of Eisav? Torah would quickly become an ancient relic. This is why Hashem, the Cause of causes, saw to it that Eisav would not receive the blessings. Some people are just not worthy of sustaining Torah study.