

He said to his father, “Let my father rise and eat of his son’s game, so that your soul will bless me. (27:31)”

The commentators (*Midrash Tanchuma*) note the stark disparity between the manner in which Yaakov *Avinu* addressed his father and the way that Eisav spoke to him. Yaakov spoke to his father with the words, *Kum na shvah v’achlah mitzeidi*; “Rise up, please, sit and eat of my game” (*Bereishis* 27:18). *Eisav ha’rasha* said, *Yakum avi v’yochal mitzeid bno*; “Let my father rise and eat of his son’s game” (*ibid.* 27:31). Yaakov said, “Please;” Eisav demanded, “Get up.” Yaakov spoke with humility. Eisav arrogantly commanded, insisting that his father eat. We are well aware that the *mitzvah* of *Kibud av*, honoring one’s father, held great significance for Eisav. It was the one *mitzvah* he observed with all of its stringencies. The holy *Tanna*, Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel, declared, “All of my days I honored and served my father, but it was not even one-hundredth of the manner in which Eisav served Yitzchak *Avinu*. This being the case, why did Eisav speak to Yitzchak in a manner unbecoming a person who respects his father? One speaks to a father with humility – not arrogance. Why did Eisav not speak like Yaakov?”

Furthermore, if Yaakov were to succeed in his ruse of presenting himself as Eisav, he should have spoken in the same doltish, crude manner, in which Eisav spoke. Why speak in a refined manner? Also, Yaakov used Hashem’s Name in attributing the quick success of his mission to the Almighty. The real Eisav would never do that.

Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl, explains that the answer is quite simple. The tongue, man’s speech, is the quill of the heart. In other words, one cannot transform his manner of speech. It is an expression of his heart, his essential self. Eisav could put on a show, make himself appear righteous and observant, but he could not alter his speech. He was a brute who lived in the field, living with the animals and wild beasts, preying on innocent people. He could change everything, but not the way he spoke. So, too, Yaakov could don Eisav’s clothes. He could appear to be a hunter, but he still spoke with refinement, attributing everything to Hashem. The intrinsic Yaakov did not change.