

Yitzchak loved Eisav, for game was in his mouth. (25:27)

Yitzchak *Avinu's* love for Eisav has been the topic of many a commentator's pen. The Patriarch achieved an extraordinary level of spirituality. He was a *Navi*, Prophet, having reached a level of *yiraah*, awe of Hashem, that was unparalleled. As the *Olah Temimah*, perfect sacrifice, his devotion to the Almighty was without peer. He was the *Amud ha'Gevurah*, Pillar of spiritual strength. Taking all of this into consideration, we wonder how such a holy, perceptive *tzaddik* could possibly have been blind to Eisav's corruption. Moshe *Rabbeinu* did not kill the Egyptian until he saw that no righteous person would ever descend from him. Elisha saw that none of the forty-two youths (they were over 20 years old) who degraded a Heavenly prophet would not ever produce a *tzaddik*, and then he cursed them. Yaakov *Avinu* beheld his grandson, Ephraim, and was able to perceive that Yaravam and Achav (two *reshaim*, evil kings) would descend from him. Yitzchak, however, was unable to see through the sham of Eisav. Does this make sense?

L'hisadein b'ahavascha quotes the *Arizal*, who says that Shmaya and Avtalyon were *geirim*, converts, who became *Tanaaim*. Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Meir, both descendants of *geirim*, all descended from Eisav! *Pesach Eliyahu (Tikunei Zohar)* teaches that the *Malchus Peh*, "Kingdom of the Mouth," which is a reference to *Torah She'Baal'Peh*, the Oral Law, descended from Eisav. This is alluded to by the *pasuk*, "Yitzchok loved Eisav for game was in his mouth." The Patriarch loved his irreverent, contemptuous son, because – despite all of his flaws, of which he was well aware – the Oral Law, which is implied by the "*peh*," mouth (*piv*), the monarchy of *Mishnah* and *Talmud*, would descend from him. This was cause for maintaining his "loving" relationship with Eisav.

Yes, Yitzchak knew quite well what type of person his son Eisav was. He put on a show, feigning to be a *tzaddik* who was meticulous in his tithing. Yitzchak was not fooled. Eisav went out of his way to honor his father, to show him ultimate respect. Once again, Yitzchak was not moved to the point that he would overlook Eisav's many faults. These "shams" of faith and observance, however, reinforced Yitzchak's resolve to hold on to Eisav, because, if he let go, an Oral Law might not have existed.

There was once a *chassid* who made a point of spending time in the court of the *Gerrer Rebbe*, *zl*, the *Bais Yisrael*. The man would visit the *Rebbe* bedecked in full *Chassidic* garb, act and speak like a *chassid*. While he "talked the talk," however, he only purported to "walk the walk." In his home, he acted far from *Chassidic*. From his quick change out of his *Chassidic* garb, to his lifestyle that in no way resembled *Chassidus*, the man was a total sham artist. The *gabbai*, *Rebbe's* aide/sexton, was bothered by the man's insolence. He felt that the man's behavior was insulting to the *Rebbe*.

The *Bais Yisrael* replied, "I know quite well who this man is and how he acts when he leaves our court. Yes, it is all a masquerade. I, however, approve of his disguise. His malingering has a positive side. Imagine if he were to come to me with the 'truth,' '*Rebbe*, I no longer want to be observant. I want to enjoy a life of freedom and abandon. The Torah's restrictions are suffocating

me. I want to renege Torah and *mitzvos* from my life.' What could I do for him? He, his wife, and their children would all become *chiloniim*, secular Jews – not just for now, but for future generations! Listen, as long as he sends his children to *yeshivos*, *chadorim*, and *Bais Yaakovs*, I will have at least saved the children. Now you know why I love his brand of deception."

Why was Eisav *zocheh*, did he merit, that the greatest scholars associated with the Oral Law were his descendants? The *Chasam Sofer* posits that Avraham *Avinu's* *mesiras nefesh*, devotion and self-sacrifice, evinced during *Akeidas Yitzchak*, the Binding of Yitzchak, demonstrated his commitment for *Torah She'B'Ksav*, Written Law. He heard the command to slaughter Yitzchak directly from Hashem, which is the Written Law, through which Hashem speaks directly to us. Yitzchak's acquiescence to be sacrificed represents *Torah She'Baal'Peh*, since he listened to his father, who was also his *Rebbe*.

Because Yitzchak was to be the repository through which the Oral Law was to be transmitted to future generations, the bequest would be through him. Yitzchak saw a glimmer of hope beneath Eisav's veneer of evil. He showed extraordinary respect to his father, which *Horav Pinchas Friedman, Shlita*, explains, prompted Yitzchak to manifest special favor to him. He felt that by "keeping the door open and the light on," he was preserving whatever good Eisav might harbor within him. Heaven recognized Eisav's performance of the *mitzvah* of *Kibbud Av* – a *mitzvah* that acknowledges parental/mentor authority, which happens to be the foundation of *Torah She'Baal'Peh*. Eisav's observance of that one *mitzvah* incurred his father's favor and merited that his future progeny be the expositors of the Oral Law.