

## And he slaughtered sacrifices to the G-d of his father Yitzchak. (46:1)

Why Yitzchak and not Avraham? Surely, Yaakov *Avinu* remembered his *zayde*, grandfather, the Patriarch of the family. *Rashi* comments that Yaakov underscored the idea that a son owes more to his father than to his grandfather. The other commentators focus on the *middah*, attribute, of Yitzchak, which Yaakov felt would benefit his descendants most as they were about to commence the bitter Egyptian exile – which would lead to the next exiles, until the Final Redemption at the End of Days. *Horav Shlomo Freifeld, zl*, explains Yaakov's actions as a lesson to his descendants about how to live a Torah life despite the vicissitudes of the bitter exile.

*Chazal* question Yaakov's actions. They, too, want to know why the focus was on Yitzchak, when, in fact, the father of our nation was Yaakov's grandfather. Among the explanations that the *Midrash* gives is the notion that: *Ro'im afro shel Yitzchak k'ilu tzavur al gabi ha'Mizbayach*, "We view the ashes of Yitzchak *Avinu* as if they are piled upon the *Mizbayach*, Altar." The *Rosh Yeshivah* explains that when we look at the story of *Akeidas Yitzchak*, we do not view the incident through conventional three-dimensional perspective. This would present to us an image of Avraham replacing Yitzchak with the ram, and then slaughtering the ram instead of Yitzchak. *Chazal* teach that we should view this incident through the lens of *nitzchiyus*, eternity, during which Yitzchak was slaughtered, sacrificed, and now his ashes lay piled on the *Mizbayach* to serve as a *z'chus*, merit, for *Klal Yisrael*. While this is inspiring and uplifting, it does not explain the connection between *afro shel Yitzchak* and Yaakov's choice to offer his sacrifices solely to the G-d of his father, Yitzchak.

*Rav Freifeld* explains this after first distinguishing between the manner in which the nations/peoples of the world react to being exiled and the manner in which *Klal Yisrael* responds to its pressures and challenges – both physical and spiritual. Probably without exception, every nation which has been forced into exile has ceased to exist, as a result of it becoming swallowed up by the surrounding culture. The host nation has absorbed its language, customs and traditions. After a century (more or less), the original nation is no longer extant, almost as if it had never existed. The one exception to this phenomena is *Klal Yisrael*, who has experienced *galus*, exile after exile, and has managed to retain its identity.

Yaakov *Avinu* was acutely aware that he was descending into the bitter Egyptian *galus* – the forerunner of other exiles to follow during our tumultuous history. *Titein emes l'Yaakov*, "Give truth to Yaakov": Our Patriarch's attribute of absolute truth was in danger. How would it survive *galus*? It was in response to this question that Yaakov focused on *afro shel Yitzchak*. He was, by his actions, imparting a powerful lesson to his descendants: *Galus* cannot be confronted by means of a three dimensional perspective on reality. Survival in *galus* is possible only when we look through *nitzchiyus* vision – a vision that penetrates past the three-dimensional world with its ambiguities and illusions. Yaakov knew that only by strengthening his relationship with *emes*, absolute truth,

which is *nitzchiyus*, would he survive *galus*.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* notes that Torah in America was established by those who adhered to *emes*. They ignored the conditions, they did not listen to the naysayers; they did not worry about their own co-religionists' fear of shaking up the status-quo. They looked with *emes* when everyone else looked through the conventional, three-dimensional prism. People made jest of *Horav Aharon Kotler, zl*, and his plan to establish a *kollel*, learning center for married men. They were wrong, because *Rav Aharon* focused on *emes*, and a world without Torah is *sheker*, false. When one works with *emes*, he has no deterrents, no conditions, and no compromises. It is either absolute truth or it is totally false.