

And Eisav came in from the field... and he was exhausted... pour into me how, some of the red stuff... Eisav spurned the birthright. (29,30,34)

We tend to view one's present offensive behavior without considering the root cause that led to this indiscretion. From character failing to acting out ignominiously, it often takes time as the person evolves from moral deficiency to offensive action. Just as one does not achieve success overnight, he, likewise, does not suddenly descend to the pit of iniquity. Perhaps if we would take heed of the root cause, we might be able to nip it in the bud. Eisav is a perfect example of this.

Chazal (Bava Basra 16b) teach that the fateful day that Eisav returned exhausted and famished from the field was actually the day that Avraham *Avinu* had died. Eisav was exhausted from committing five sins: He violated a *naarah ha'merasa*, betrothed woman; murdered a fellow human; apostatized himself, denied the Resurrection of the Dead; and eschewed the *bechorah*, birthright. It is enigmatic that spurning the birthright (and all that it implies) is included among Eisav's egregious behavior. The first four are hard-core sins for which one is liable for the death penalty. Repudiating the birthright is a serious infraction, but is it on even keel with the other sins? It may be likened to one who mass murders, commits immoral acts, denies the presence of the Creator, and does not seem to care about the Torah. Clearly, these are not related to one another. Furthermore, the first four sins are derived from the Torah's use of the word *ayeif*, exhausted, and *sadeh*, field. They are not written explicitly – only thorough allusion. Eisav's last sin, that of spurning the birthright and denigrating his holy service to Hashem, is written explicitly, *Vayivez Eisav es ha'bechorah*. This last sin is the least severe of Eisav's spiritual breaches. Yet, it is underscored, while the others are not.

Apparently, the sin of dismissing the *bechorah* and all that it represents is the root cause of the other sins. How is this? *Horav Avraham Yitzchak Bloch, zl*, explains that, since Eisav was raised and educated in a Patriarchal home, under the tutelage of both Avraham *Avinu* and Yitzchak *Avinu*, he was well aware of right and wrong. He was acutely aware of the gravity of committing such sins as apostasy, denying *Techiyas HaMeisim*, murder and immoral behavior. Thus, with regard to these insurrections, he had an excuse: he had fallen under the spell of the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination. He had lost control, so that he deviated from the path of the righteous. These sins, although very grave, were not yet a clear indication of Eisav's true spiritual deficiency. He had excuses. Concerning disgracing the birthright, however, he had no excuse other than he was an immoral, uncouth, deviate, whose odious behavior was representative of his perverse character. Thus, when he instructed Yaakov to pour down the red stuff, he was acting true to his nature: like a contemptible and vulgar person who was more animal than human.