

Now Eisav harbored hatred toward Yaakov. (27:41)

David *Hamelech* dedicates an entire *perek Tehillim* (109) to Eisav *ha'rasha*, wishing that this representative of evil incarnate receive his due via serious, painful punishment. He writes about the type of sins Eisav committed, the wrongs that he did, and he sums it up with what seems to be an enigmatic detail of his sins: *Yizacheir avon avosav el Hashem, v'chatas imo al timach*; "May their ancestors' wrongs be recalled by G-d, the sins of their mothers not erased" (109:14). Obviously, the literal translation and actual meaning of the *pasuk* do not align. The *Avos* and *Imahos* did not sin. *Rashi* explains that it refers to the effect of his egregious behavior on his forebears, making it appear as if they had sinned, as if they had been punished. How do we see this? Avraham *Avinu* was to live to be one hundred and eighty years old, just as his son, Yitzchak. Hashem shortened Avraham's life by five years, so that he should not be alive when his grandson, Eisav, went off the *derech*. Until this day, no one knows the burial site of Rivkah *Imeinu*. She did not want people to curse her for being the mother who brought Eisav into this world. How are we to understand the depth of the sins of Eisav which translate themselves into diminished life and prestige for Avraham and Rivkah?

Horav Eliezer HaLevi Turk, shlita, explains this practically. Can anyone begin to fathom the value of one minute of life – not of a *tzadik*, but of a common, ordinary Jew? Every individual is filled with immeasurable spiritual potential. One good deed, one *amein*, one *daf Gemorah*, one *pasuk Chumash*, one *davening* – they create worlds! Now take all the super computers and attempt to tally up what Avraham *Avinu* could have achieved in five more years. We are literally blown away! Had Rivkah been able to live out her life garnering the public reverence that she deserved, would *Klal Yisrael* not have been impacted? It was not to be, because Eisav catalyzed its premature demise. This is an unpardonable sin, and we are unable to calculate its ramifications.

It is well-known that, when the *Rosh Yeshivah* of Radin, *Horav Naftali Trop, zl*, was gravely ill, his *talmidim* contributed "time" from their lives to be added to his. The *talmidim* were so close to the *Rosh Yeshivah* that they were prepared to give up part of their own lives for him. After the tally was made, someone suggested approaching the *Chafetz Chaim* to ask if he, too, wanted to join in this *chesed*. He listened intently, ruminated over the request, and, after deep thought, said, "I will contribute one minute."

When the *bachur* heard this, he was shocked. After all, the students in the *yeshivah* were donating much more than one minute. Out of respect for the sage, the *bachur* did not react. The *Chafetz Chaim* saw the incredulity of the *bachur's* face and said, "Do you know the value of one minute of life?" Obviously, the *Chafetz Chaim's* perspective on life was different than ours. David *Hamelech* knew the value of life. Thus, he understood the indescribable harm which Eisav's sins caused.

I would like to expand on this idea, even though I am perhaps treading into dangerous territory, in order to bring to the fore a frightening issue which we are unable to acknowledge exists. Eisav presented himself as an obedient son, asking pious questions, speaking in learning, going through

all the external motions of a *ben* Torah. During this façade, he was causing his parents anguish. The only person whom he deceived was himself.

Are we any different (of course, on a much different scale)? We speak, act disrespectfully to our parents, causing them pain. Eventually (most of us) we make amends, but, nonetheless we have left a wound. Wound care in the medical field is a very critical and multi-disciplined specialty. It is surely so in the emotional/spiritual field. As they grow, *talmidim* become more and more obsessed with their own identity. As such, where they attend *yeshivah*, and who their *rebbe* is, all play a critical role in their self-definition. What about the *rebbeim/chavrusos*, and friends who must be exchanged for others in order to enable personal growth. Last, but not least, is the power that *baalei batim* hold over their *Rav*, financial and emotional. When *baalei batim* overstep their bounds, misuse their influence to suppress and even impugn their spiritual leaders, they undermine Torah itself, as they act out an Eisavian façade by attempting to mask/do harm, all in the name of Torah.

While, in most instances, the hurt is not deliberate, but rather, a by-product of frustration, immaturity and a desire to get attention – it still hurts. Lack of intent does not necessarily mitigate impact. Reverence for the people that guide us on the path of Torah life is not a societal nicety. It is not optional, but rather, it is a *mitzvah* which, by its performance, indicates how much we truly value Torah and its lessons. To ignore this is to follow in Eisav's self-deceptive path. It also takes vital time/life from those we hurt. This cannot be reimbursed. This is why it is frightening.