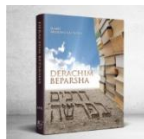


דרכים בפרשה תולדות

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ויאמר יצחק אל יעקב גשה נא ואמשך בני האתה זה בני עשו אם לא

Yitzchok said to Yaakov, *Come close, if you please, and let me touch you, my son. Are you my son Esav or not?* (27:21)

Rashi writes: אמר יצחק בלבו אין דרך עשו להיות שם שמיים — שגור בפיו, וזה אמר כי הקרה ה' אלקיך — Yitzchok said to himself, “It is not Esav’s way to have Shem Shamayim so readily on his lips, and this one speaks that way.”

The plan was simple. Yaakov needed to disguise himself as Esav, and the brochos would be his. Following his mother’s instruction, he took the goat skins that resembled his brother’s hair. Yitzchok never questioned the sound of his voice — only what he said — which shows that their actual voices were apparently similar. Everything was in place. It was only because Yaakov mentioned the name of Hashem, something completely atypical of Esav, that Yitzchok began to suspect that the person before him was not Esav.

If Yaakov was worried about being caught, why did he speak like Yaakov? Did he really need to invoke Hashem’s name? And if this contradiction was so noticeable that Yitzchok himself was bothered by it, why did he nevertheless decide to give him the brochos?

The Beis Halevi answers that Esav was afraid Yaakov might steal the brochos through great chochma, by imitating Esav’s speech. So Esav told Yitzchok, “In that case, I will speak like Yaakov, and that way you will know it is really me.” Realizing this, Yaakov deliberately spoke like Yaakov, so that Yitzchok would think it was Esav — exactly as Rashi comments, *Yaakov came with chochma*. With the feel and touch of Esav but sounding like Yaakov, Yitzchok became convinced that this was indeed Esav and proceeded to give him the brochos.

There is a great lesson here: רבות מחשבות בלב איש. Esav had the whole strategy figured out; he planned

everything in a way that he thought would ensure Yaakov would lose the brochos. But ועצת ה' היא תקום — in the end, the very plan Esav crafted is what convinced Yitzchok to give the brochos to Yaakov.

The Ralbag writes: כי לא תועיל לו בזולת זה שום תחבולה להמלט ממה שגזר הש"י עליו, אבל ימצא שכל מה שחשב — להתרחק מהדבר ההוא ימציא הסבות המקרבות אותו אליו — No matter what a person does to escape what Hashem has decreed, it will not help him. Everything he tries in order to distance himself will actually become another factor that brings him directly to the fulfillment of Hashem’s decree.

We can explain Yaakov’s mention of Hashem’s name in another way as well. Although externally Yaakov was prepared to put on a disguise to receive the brochos, inwardly he refused to alter his *pnimiyus*, which is expressed especially in the way a person speaks. “Ay, by mentioning Hashem you may ruin the whole plan...” Yaakov was unafraid. He wasn’t worried that he would be penalized by Hashem for speaking like a Yid.

And this point extends further. A Yid’s *dibbur* is refined. Even in the office or on a job site, where people speak like “truck drivers,” a Yid is better than that. Our words reflect who we are. We don’t lower our manner of speaking in order to gain business or to “fit in.” This is exactly what Yaakov felt — even when everything depended on succeeding with the plan, he refused to speak in a way that wasn’t true to his *pnimiyus*. And Hashem did not penalize him for that; on the contrary, it was by maintaining the way a Yid sounds that the brochos came to him.

This lesson remains true in anything we do that is ratzon Hashem. In business, we must be honest and follow the laws of Choshen Mishpat. Earning parnassah does not mean one must skip minyan. And there are times when a person faces an opportunity to do a great mitzvah — perhaps one that many would consider pikuach nefesh. But if the *means* of achieving it are not aligned with the Torah’s outlook, Yaakov Avinu teaches that we do not say “the ends justify the means.” Whatever Hashem wants to happen will happen — without compromising our hashkafos.

מרדכי אפפֿעל, Good Shabbos,