

# FEAR OF PARENTS AND FEAR OF G-D

by Rabbi Chaim Ozer Shulman

## by Guest Contributor: Chaim Ozer Shulman

The end of this Parsha describes how Yitzchock wanted to bless Eisav before he died, and told him:

*"Hunt for me delicacies the way I like them so that I may bless you before I die." (27:2-4)*

Why did Yitzchock need to eat his favorite dish in order to bless Eisav?

We are actually told earlier in the Parsha that Yitzchock loved Eisav because he enjoyed the meat that he hunted for him. (25:28) Again, it is strange that he should love Eisav because of the food!

From Chazal we see that Yitzchock loved Eisav, not because he enjoyed his food, but because Eisav was so zealous in Kibud Av (honoring his father). As the Midrash tells us (Bereishis Rabbah 65):

*Our teacher Shimon Ben Gamliel stated: "All of my days I served my father, and I didn't accomplish even 1/100th of the degree to which Eisav honored his father. When Eisav served his father he served him (wearing) royal garments."*

Even Raban Shimon Ben Gamliel's Kibud Av did not compare with that of Eisav. Similarly, it is brought down from the Zohar that there was no one in the world who honored his father like Eisav did, and that Zechus (merit) protected Eisav in this world.

Yaakov, on the other hand, was not as careful as he could have been with Kibud Av. This is seen from the fact that he had to mourn his son Yosef whom he thought dead for 22 years as a punishment for the 22 years that Yaakov was away from his father; 20 years hiding from Eisav in the house of Lavan, and 2 years on the way back. (37:34)

What remains to be understood, though, is why was it so important that Eisav be involved in Kibud Av at the same time that he receive the blessing.

I would suggest that there is a direct connection between Kibud Av and the blessing of Veyiten Licha Elokim Mital Hashamayim Umishmanei Haaretz (may G-d give you from the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth) (27:28). This is a blessing for the material gifts of this world. Kibud Av, the

Sefer Hachinuch tells us, is a Mitzvah of Hakaras Hatov (appreciation) to our parents for bringing us into this world. And in fact, in the Aseres Hadibros (Ten Commandments) we're told that we should honor our father and mother "so that it will lengthen your days". If we honor our parents we will be rewarded with a long life. Long life is an appropriate reward, Midah Keneged Midah (measure for measure), for one who shows appreciation for life by honoring one's parents who gave life in the first instance.

Because Eisav was zealous in Kibud Av his father thought that he should get the blessing of Olam Hazeh (the physical world) as a reward for recognizing the value of life and parents. It is therefore understandable why Yitzchock felt that in order for such a blessing to take effect Eisav must be involved in Kibud Av at the very moment of the Bracha.

Several commentators point out that Yitzchock always intended to give what is known as the "Birchas Avraham" (blessings of Avraham) to Yaakov. Before Yaakov leaves for Lavan, Yitzchock blesses him as follows:

*"May He give you the blessings of Avraham for you and your children..." (28:4)*

This "Birchas Avraham" is the promise given in Parshas Lech Lecha, "and I will make you a great nation," that Avraham's descendants will become the Am Hanivchar (the chosen people). The Birchas Avraham, is in a sense the spiritual blessing, while "may He give to you from the dew of heaven, and the fat of the land" is the physical blessing. Yitzchock always intended that the spiritual blessing of Avraham should go to Yaakov.

Although Yitzchock felt that the blessing of material wealth should go to Eisav, Rivka felt that even the worldly blessing should go to Yaakov. Rivka was right. In fact Yitzchock in the end draws this same conclusion when he finds out that Yaakov stole the blessing, and he says "Gam Baruch Yihiyeh" (even he shall be blessed) (27:33). He saw that when Yaakov entered the room the smell of Gan Eden (paradise) entered with him, while when Eisav entered he saw Gehenam (hell) open up under him. He also saw that Yaakov spoke in a soft respectful manner - Kum Na (please sit up), while Eisav spoke in a commanding manner - Yakum Avi (rise father). Thus, Eisav was lacking in Morah Av (reverence), which Yaakov had. The Talmud says in Tractate Kidushin (30):

*"The Torah equates reverence of parents with reverence of G-d."*

Fear of one's parents comes with fear of G-d. Eisav could never achieve this fear. Thus, the Torah acknowledges that Yaakov properly merited not only Birchas Avraham (the blessings of Avraham) but also the physical blessing of Mital Hashamayim Umishmanei Haaretz (the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth).

Good Shabbos!

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