

GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

7th Edition
By Mishaël Sionov
BS"D

PARSHAT

TOLDOT

Yitzchak's Moment To Shine

My Rebbe, R' Avraham Mirsky, shared a beautiful thought on the Parshah. Chazal teach us that each of the Avot had to overcome specific tests that challenged their personal characteristic. We know that Avraham personified *chesed* and love, and his biggest test was *akedat Yitzchak*, an act of cruelty. Yaakov personified *emet*, truth, and he was tested to go against his nature by having to steal the *berachot* as well as deal with Lavan. The question becomes, what about Yitzchak Avinu? What was his challenge of breaking his nature?

R' Eliyahu Dessler offers an insight, that both answers this question and helps explain the whole story of Yitzchak wanting to give Esav the blessings in the first place. Yitzchak had a unique power, that we find he used a number of times. Initially, he was unable to have children because Rivkah was barren, but after Yitzchak prayed, Hashem changed her nature and they had children. We also find Yitzchak working lands for crop, lands that were barren and having an unfruitful year, yet seeing incredible success (מאה שערים) and reaping a bountiful harvest. When there was an issue with the wells, too, Yitzchak found success in a tricky situation. Yitzchak had a special strength, that he was able to flip things over and change a dark situation into one of light. In fact, when referring to Yitzchak's prayer, the Torah uses the word וַיַּעֲתֶר, the root of which (עתר) means "pitchfork," signifying that he was able to flip the situation with a metaphoric "pitchfork."

Yitzchak knew of his own strength, and realized that he can use it for the greatest purpose yet – on Esav. He knew, for the most part, who Yaakov and Esav really were, and reasoned that he can achieve the "impossible" and flip Esav, too. The way he saw it, if he would give Esav the blessings, Yaakov and Esav would share a relationship similar to Yissachar and Zevulun, in which Yaakov would pursue spiritual endeavors while being supported financially by Esav. He could have just given the blessings to Yaakov to spare the need of a partnership, but that would lose him the opportunity of changing Esav through the *berachot*. This is hinted to in the *parshah*, where it says "Yitzchak smelled the scent of his clothes, and blessed him." The word for 'clothes' is בגדיו (*begadav*), which our Sages also read as *bog'dav*, which means "his rebelliousness." Yitzchak specifically wanted to bless Esav *because* of his rebelliousness, so he could change him, too.

In fact, the Sfat Emet has a similar explanation behind the incident of Esav asking his father questions such as "does one tithe salt?" to impress his father. Esav was conveying a deeper message. There are 4 levels of existing creations – דומם, מְדַבֵּר, צומח, חי, מדבר [inanimate, growing vegetation, living creatures, and humans (with speaking-abilities)]. Esav knew who he was, and was classifying himself in the lowest level, that of the inanimate. In essence, explains the Sfat Emet, Esav was asking if it was possible to elevate ("tithe") something on the lowest level ("salt," referring to the inanimate). *You, Yitzchak, are the "flipper,"* Esav was conveying, *so give me the berachot!*

In the end, though, Hashem had a different plan. Rivkah heard the prophecy that there would always be strife between Yaakov and Esav, and knew that the idea of Yitzchak's "ideal partnership" would never work. And so, when Yitzchak came to the trembling realization that he had really given the blessings to Yaakov instead of Esav, *that* was when he had faced his moment of truth. And that was when he had passed it, too. His desire to bless Esav, stemming from his characteristic of turning things around, was put aside after having blessed Yaakov. He could have stuck with his *cheshbon* and have declared that Yaakov's blessing was stolen and meaningless, and have blessed Esav there and then. Instead, he overcame his nature, as did his father and as would his son, and declared on Yaakov "גם ברוך יהיה" – he should retain the blessings, thereby nullifying his will before that of Boreh Olam.

**"Think good,
and it will be
good."**

(Lubavitcher Rebbe)

*Dedicated for the safe return
of the captives, the safety &
success of our dear soldiers,
our brothers & sisters in Eretz
Yisrael. and all Am Yisrael.*

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida Frida Bat Yaffa Miriam Bat Bakol Esther Bat Frida Chaya Dina Bat Chana Mindel
Yitzchak Ben Sara Noach Yisrael Ben Yaffah Rachamim Ben Shifra Yitzchak Ben Naama
Menachem Mendel Chaim ben Merel Chana Perel Bat Rachel Rachel Bat Leah Tzvi Chaim Ben Malka
Shoshana Bat Miriam Chana Ahuva Bat Fradel Noam Ben Adi Michael Rachamim Ben Mazal