

Parshas Toldos

This week's Parsha Toldos, famously describes the early years of Yakov and Esav, their relationship with their parents, the sale of the firstborn rights, and Yitzchak giving the first blessing to Yakov ahead of Esav. The Torah is very descriptive of the transaction between Yakov and Esau, and the fact that Yakov (according to the Mepharshim) explained to Esau that the responsibility of the firstborn has certain stringencies, for which Esau reacted that he would die anyway, and he "held in contempt the firstborn rights".

Later, when Yakov got blessed first, Esav would complain and scream that Yakov tricked him twice (first, then, the second time by taking the blessing from Yitzchak). Yitzchak's blessing (that brother 1- Yakov- would be served by brother 2- Esav) aligns with the prophecy of Rivka, that the older would serve the younger. Meaning that within Yitzchak's power to give such a strong Bracha, it had to go to Yaakov, to ensure the continuity of the Jewish people. Yitzchak's first choice to bless Esav could have been viewed as complementary, and he would have still given Yakov the necessary blessing. But, when Yitzchak, who couldn't see well, smelled the clothes of Yakov, whose smell was of Gan Eden, Yitzchak felt as though the big full Bracha would have to be given to the boy in front of him. It was as if the sign was there that the channelling of the

profound Bracha would need to take place, with the boy in front of him, about whom we know it was Yakov.

Perhaps the whole episode of sending Esav away was a way for Yitzchak to give Yakov this channelled "one-off" bracha that aligns with the prophecy given to Rivka. Yitzchak confirms with Esav that the Bracha to Yakov was not going to be removed 27:33. Furthermore, Yitzchak trembled; multiple Mepharshim allude to the various fears that Yitzchak had, aligning with the idea as to whether Yitzchak made a mistake. Furthermore, Rashi contradicts in Posuk 27:42, "it was told to Rivka", what was stated earlier in 25:23, that Rivka was given divine inspiration for what Esav was thinking to himself, as opposed to what was said earlier that Rivka was not able to speak to Hashem directly, rather through Shem, with regards to the explanation of the twins and the fighting. It would seem to me that Rashi is positing support for Rivka's divine inspiration and prophecy received about Yakov 'surpassing' Esav as the younger one. The Torah didn't just tell us that Yakov was able to skip the line; instead, there was a transaction in which Yakov traded the slot of firstborn, i.e., the right to be the firstborn. Meaning, physically, Esav was born first, but contractually, he rescinded his rights. This is why Rashi expends a lot of effort explaining why and how Yakov didn't lie to his father. Furthermore, Rivka received another prophetic vision: both sons will

die on the same day (but not without Yakov having children¹).

This supports the idea that Rivka's first prophecy about her twins and Yitzchak's bracha align, and that the Torah explains the mechanism by which this could occur without being an outright lie. In Sefer Hamitzvos, the prohibition of cheating another when buying and selling, from Vayikra 25:14, Sifra explains that the posuk "do not cheat one another refers to cheating someone monetarily." One can infer from this that Yakov's transaction (which didn't involve money) was not a cheat, mainly because Yakov taught Esav what it meant to be the firstborn and how Esav disrespected it; it would seem Yakov followed halacha to ensure that the sale of the firstborn was not considered a Mekach Taos.

The Rebbe explains that Yitzchak saw the potential in Esav to be a leader², whereas Rivka saw that Yakov would become the leader he needed to be through Torah. Ultimately, that's what we see from the narratives and the explanations. When we follow the Torah and its edicts, and align our lives around them, the outcome is supposed to happen. The prophecy of Rivka will be

fulfilled, and the older will serve the younger, with the coming of Mashiach.

Good Shabbos



¹ Sotah 13a, when Yakov passed, his children were preparing to bury Yakov in Ma'aras Hamachpeila, and Esav tried to prevent this until Dan's son Chushim killed Esav (whose head ended up buried there).

² In the end, Yitzchak blessed Esav with Italia of Greece (which is a source for saying that Edom

(offspring of Esav) were the Romans who destroyed the second Beis Hamikdash, and thrust us into the darkness of the Golus we are in now. Which is why this Golus will end with our overpowering Esav (Ovadia 1:21)