

# CHIZUK & IDUD

*Divrei Torah from the weekly sedra  
with a focus on living in Eretz Yisrael  
Chizuk for Olim & Idud for not-yet-Olim*

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Last week, in Parshat Chayei Sarah, we read of the growing friction between Sarah Imeinu and Hagar. The two mothers of Avraham Avinu's sons - Yishmael and Yitzchak - are at loggerheads with one another. Avraham receives a clear directive from G-d: He is to take Sarah's side, and do everything that she tells him to. This quickly brings him face to face with an additional NISAYON, and he must muster the inner fortitude needed to cast out Yishmael from his home. This traumatic event has left reverberations throughout history, and till this day Yishmael's descendants continue to bear animosity towards the Jewish People...

In this week's Parsha, this already familiar theme is continued: In order to attain the divine blessing, a painful process of separation and individuation must take place. Avraham had separated himself (-Lech L'cha) from his homeland and his father's house; he had been willing to distance himself from his own son, and yet this

is still not enough. Similar to his father Avraham, Yitzchak will also not be able to impart the divine Bracha equally upon both of his two sons, and once again a similar historical animosity will ensue: "And Eisav hated Yaakov because of the bracha that their Father had blessed him and Eisav said in his heart let the days of my Father's mourning draw near and I will kill my brother Yaakov" (B'reishit 27:41). Here too, these negative feelings will continued on through the ages. As Rashi writes: HALACHA HI B'YADUA SHE'EISAV SONEI L'YAAKOV.

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l explained that this historical insight bears the status of a 'Halacha' in the sense that it requires of us to take action. He explains that we are to be aware that the Christian World's animosity toward the Jewish People, carries on to this day, and as a result we must apply extra caution even in our dealings with world leaders who are ostensibly in favor of the Jewish People, (Igrot Moshe, Choshen Mishpat 2, 77). Recent world events only authenticate these points, and in light of the anti-Jewish animus sadly found in every corner of the globe, the raison-d'etre of the Jewish State is more evident than ever.

The Midrash tells us that for Rivka

Imeinu, the two brothers' different predilections were apparent from the very beginning. VAYITROTZ'TZU HABANIM B'KIRBA. When Rivka passed near a pagan temple, Eisav would try to wriggle out, and when she passed a place of Torah, Yaakov would impatiently try to exit the womb. She quickly learned that her twins would strive with one another for the inheritance of two worlds. "Two nations are in your womb and two kingdoms will separate from within you."

This dichotomous picture, which was clear in Rivka's mind, was not shared by her husband Yitzchak: "And it came to pass, that when Yitzchak was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Eisav his elder son, and said unto him... Behold now, I have grown old; I do not know the day of my death..." (27:1-2). As Yitzchak prepares to pass on the Divine blessing to the next generation, his impaired vision sets the scene for the well-known charade that will soon come to pass. What caused the 'dimness' of the Yitzchak's eyes? Was it simply old age?

Rashi, on this pasuk, quotes the Midrash which claims that when Avraham tied Yitzchak upon the altar to offer him as a sacrifice to G-d, the

angels on high shed tears! These tears fell into Yitzchak's eyes and caused them to become dimmed. This viewpoint suggests that Yitzchak's early history, his MESIRUS NEFESH, critically affected his behaviour towards the end of his life. It was the ZECHUS of the Akeida that indirectly insured that he made the right choice steering the blessing towards Yaakov. A second view brought by Rashi explains that Yaakov's eyes were adversely affected by the smoke which was constantly wafting through the air in Yitzchak's home, rising up from the idolatrous offerings Eisav's wives regularly brought to Avoda Zara.

This second suggestion assumes a simple and powerful fact of life: No one is an island - The people - and society - surrounding us have a crucial effect on our daily lives.

This understanding, that everyone (Even Yitzchak Avinu) is greatly affected by the goings on around them, is one of the reasons Chazal always emphasized the importance of living in Eretz Yisrael.

The reality is that we are continuously wrestling with both the Arab and Christian world for domination over the Holy Land. As Chazal tell us when one rises the other falls. On a broader level, we are sparring with

them on a moral-spiritual and theological plane as well. For our world view to prevail we need to be able to see clear and far. We cannot bear to have our eyesight dimmed by the 'smoke' rising from our surroundings. We must distance ourselves from the foreign influences which affect a minority living within a Gentile society and come home to OUR Land where we set the cultural and spiritual tone.

It is within our power to make Jerusalem rise and never fall - by rising to the occasion and making Aliya! 🇮🇱👉