

RED ALERT!

TO-L'DOT

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DIVREI TORAH

- Rivka finally became pregnant, but had a very difficult time with her pregnancy, and she went to seek Hashem to find out why (25:23). Rashi comments that she went to speak to Sheim, the son of No'ach, who had a Yeshiva nearby. Why did she not consult with Avraham or her husband? The Gur Aryeh wrote that perhaps they would think it was as a result of her sinfulness. I find that hard to accept. They were prophets and would say only what Hashem had told them. The Rashbam wrote that she consulted with prophets in the area. (What prophets were they?!) The Ibn Ezra wrote that maybe she did consult with Avraham. The Radak claimed that Avraham was busy with his new family from Ketura. Others suggest that maybe she davened hard and received the answer directly from Hashem. A key in this matter is that she did not share the answer with her husband.

- Yaakov successfully purchased the birthright from his older brother Eisav. If you think that the deal was not legal because Eisav did not know the true value of the birthright, the

last line of the chapter is quite revealing: Eisav spurned the birthright (25:34). Daat Z'keinim MiBaalei HaTosfot adds an additional comment: From here we learn that if an evil person possesses a Sefer Torah, it is permissible to deceive him in order to get the Sefer Torah from him.

In 2010 there was a meeting in a kosher restaurant in Washington between the Iraqi ambassador to the US, Rahm Emmanuel, then Chief of Staff in the Obama administration (he is currently the US ambassador to Japan), and Nat Lewin, prominent Jewish lawyer in DC. The Iraqi ambassador claimed that two Jewish American teenage tourists had recently visited Iraq and stole two Torah scrolls and smuggled them to America. He wanted them returned. Mr. Lewin told him that there are no Jews left in Iraq. Iraq does not need them any longer. Mr. Emmanuel agreed with Mr. Lewin. The Iraqi ambassador left abruptly. I believe the Daat Z'keinim would have endorsed the theft as well.

- Yitzchak was blessed financially while in Philistine territory, to the point that the Philistines were jealous of him (26:14). The animosity grew to the point that Avimelech, the Philistine king expelled Yitzchak from the area. Historically this became a repeated story in our history. When Jews became successful in a host

country, the local population would become extremely jealous, thinking the Jews were taking their money from them. In the 18th century, the rabbinical leadership cautioned the Jewish population not to flaunt their financial success, lest the locals will turn on them. During the 2008 Recession in America, Jews stopped the construction of their big houses in order not to show off their financial success during the time of need for the masses. The lesson is felt: Don't flaunt it!

- Again we see the town of Be'er Sheva being created due to the oath taken by Avimelech and Yitzchak. Some commentators claim that this must have been a different Be'er Sheva than the one created by Avraham when he entered into a Peace Treaty with Avimelech. It is possible. When Avimelech came, Yitzchak wanted to know why he came. "You hate me", Yitzchak said to him (26:27). Avimelech responded that we see that Hashem is with you. Let's make a deal. So a peace treaty was created even though there was already a peace agreement in place from Avraham's time. (It is possible that it was a different Avimelech. The word Avimelech was reserved for the title of the king of Philistine, similar to the Pharaoh in Egypt, and Agag of Amalek.) A Midrash exists about Samson, questioning the essence of his existence. The Midrash states

that the peace treaty from Avraham's time was still in existence. The reason for Samson's life was to cancel that peace treaty!

- Yitzchak saw Eisav marry two non-Jewish wives and yet still wanted to bless Eisav and give him a prestigious B'RACHA befitting the firstborn. Rivka could never tell her husband straight: Eisav is no good, and he is not your heir. The Netziv commented on the importance of the veil that Rivka put on before meeting her groom when she came with Eliezer. The Netziv wrote that the veil represented the barrier that would exist between them throughout their marriage. This barrier created a true flaw in their marriage. But it was not that she feared her husband. It was a result of a deep reverence that she had for him. Eisav was successful in deceiving his father into believing that he was righteous. So strong did Yitzchak believe in his son that he was willing to overlook Eisav's choices in marriage.

- After Yaakov successfully deceived his father that he was Eisav, Eisav was furious when he found out what Yaakov did. Esav said (in his heart) that when their father would die, he was going to kill Yaakov. This thought was revealed to Rivka (through a divine spirit (Rashi on 27:42) and yet she could not tell this to her husband. Instead she proposes to her husband to send Yaakov to her brother's

house, miles away, to marry within the family. We must come to realize that the entire dynamic in the household resulted from the flaw in the Yitzchak-Rivka marriage. When Sara told her husband to expel Yishmael, Avraham couldn't accept it. It took Hashem to intervene and command Avraham to heed his wife's wishes. I am not sure that Yitzchak would have accepted Rivka's wishes even if she had stated them.

- When Yitzchak does dispatch Yaakov to Lavan's house, the Torah states that Rivka was the mother of Yaakov and Esav (28:5), and Rashi immediately commented that he does not know what the verse teaches us. What bothers me is that I have an answer to the question. The Torah was contrasting Rivka to Sara. When Sara tells her husband to expel Yishmael, she wasn't Yishmael's mother. It was obvious why she would favor Yitzchak. But in this case, when Rivka favors one son over the other, the Torah tells us that she is the mother of both of them. It is not the equal case as that in Avraham's family. I still don't know why Rashi did not accept my answer.

Questions by RED for Parshat To-I'dot

From the text

1. What meaning did Rivka receive about her pregnancy? (35:23)
2. Why was Yaakov given that name? (25:26)
3. During the famine, to where did Yitzchak move? (26:6)
4. How old was Eisav when he married? (26:34)
5. What did Yitzchak get to eat after he ordered food from Eisav? (27:9)

From the Rashi

6. To whom did Rivka go to find out why her pregnancy was so tough? (25:22)
7. Why did the Philistines plug up the wells that Avraham dug? (26:15)
8. What caused Yitzchak to lose his eyesight? (27:1)
9. During what holiday did Yitzchak wish to bless Eisav? (27:9)
10. What fragrance did Yitzchak smell when Yaakov entered with the goat meat? (27:27)

From the Rabbis

11. When did Eisav wear the precious clothes he stole from Nimrod? (Rashbam)
12. What benefit were Eisav's tears

when he learned he lost the precious B'RACHA? (Zohar)

13. How did Eisav think that he could regain the Blessing of Eretz Yisrael (which had been given to Yaakov)? (Rashbam)

Midrash

14. What delayed Eisav in hunting an animal to serve his father?

Haftara -

Machar Chodesh - Shmuel Alef

15. How is David's life represented by the line "Tomorrow is Rosh Chodesh"?

Relationships

- a) Kalev - Betzalel
- b) Nachshon - Gershon
- c) Aminadav - Pinchas
- d) Tamar - Yehuda
- e) Elisheva - Gershon

ANSWERS

1. She was having twin boys who will become two nations. And the elder will serve the younger.
2. Because Yaakov was born holding the heel of his brother. (The word Eikev means heel.)
3. To the land of the Philistines.
4. Forty, just like his father.
5. Goat meat.
6. To Sheim, No'ach's son.
7. Because the wells might attract marauders.

8.

- 1) Due to the smoke from his idolatrous daughters-in-law.
- 2) From the Akeida, the aborted sacrifice when the tears of the angels fell into Yitzchak's eyes.
- 3) In order to enable Yaakov to get the B'RACHA.

9. On Pesach

10. The fragrance of the Garden of Eden.

11. When he served his father.

12. We will remain under Eisav's power until we repent and shed tears that can outweigh Eisav's.

13. By marrying the daughter of Yishmael.

14. Hashem purposefully made Eisav less successful to allow Yaakov to complete Rivka's plan.

15. David's career will start anew, beginning tomorrow.

Relationships

- a) Great-grandfather & great-grandson
- b) Uncle & nephew
- c) Great-grandfather & great-grandson
- d) Originally daughter-in-law & father-in-law; Later wife & husband
- e) Aunt & nephew