Dvar Torah

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Graciously shared with PhiloTorah



TO-L'DOT

"And Yitzchak went back and dug the wells of water that had been dug in the days of his father Avraham." (26:18)

Parshat Toldot puts Yaakov Avinu in the limelight. We read about his birth, his birthright and the conflict between Eisav and himself. Yet, in the middle of the Parsha, we are witness to another story. We read about Yitzchak after the death of Avraham. Yitzchak is seen as persona-non-grata. The Pelishtim showed their dislike to Yitzchak and destroyed all the wells that Avraham had dug. Yitzchak is sent out of his land and is forced to camp in a new area. He redigs those wells of Avraham that had been filled with sand by the Pelishtim. Controversy begins between Yitzchak, and the Pelishtim until Yitzchak is forced even further away that brings a sense of tranquility. Why is this story so important? Why do we need to hear about Yitzchak in this situation of quarrels surrounding these wells?

A very interesting idea raised is that until now Avraham Avinu was our hero. He was the chosen one to come to this land. He received the Covenant from G-d and passed the Akeida. This week's Parsha introduces the new hero, Yaakov Avinu. All that we learn about Yitzchak, as an active character in the Torah, is this story of the wells. The Torah seems to be teaching us something important regarding Yitzchak.

The Torah describes Yitzchak, not as a warrior, not as a financial wizard. Rather, Yitzchak is described as a "great follower". Avraham was a hard act to follow. How could one compete with the overall success of Avraham in all the spheres?

Yet Yitzchak respected the achievements of Avraham and does not hesitate to follow his lead. He had to choose how to act as the new generation. He did choose, he chose to follow his father's footsteps, a commendable act. He redug Avraham's well and calls them by the same name that Avraham called them.

Everyone wants to stand out and blaze their own trail. Yet Yitzchak is presented to us with this one story that seems a story of quarrels and controversy. The real message is that the Torah wants to present Yitzchak as a hero in his own right. He chose to discern the right way and he followed it.

Yitzchak showed true leadership. He set an important example of being

able to follow the right way. Yitzchak became a role model not in accomplishing something new but rather how to continue the right path from our previous generation.

Who is the real leader? Not one who blindly follows any path presented. Rather, like Yitzchak, choosing the right path that one discerns as correct and following it. This is the great contribution of Yitzchak.

We too, find blessing in following our past generations as we now as the tradition of the Jewish people.