

SEDRAH SELECTIONS PARSHAS TOLDOS 5775 BS"D

Ch. 25, v. 23: "Shnei goyim b'vitneich" – Two nations are in your womb – Rivkoh asked of Hashem or a prophet why her pregnancy was so painful and she received the reply that she was carrying to children who would build two nations that would be diametrically opposed. Hence there was already a sort of discord within her. Once she was apprised of this did the pains subside? The Tur writes that they did, as the point of her feeling severe pain was so that she would ask and find out this information. Now that she knew there was no further need for pain.

Ch. 25, v. 23: "Mi'mei'ach yiporeidu" – From your innards they will separate – While some explain that their differences will be readily noticeable immediately from birth, the Sforno writes that the message was a continuation of information about the pregnancy. Notwithstanding that Rivkoh was carrying twins and having abnormal pains from their jostling, the twins will both be born live and the jostling will not cause one child to cause the other to die.

Ch. 25, v. 24: "V'hi'nei somim b'vitnoh" – And behold there were twins in her womb – Rivkoh knew she was carrying twins, so for whom was it a surprise? Rivkoh didn't tell anyone that she was carrying twins so it was a surprise to her midwife. (Rabbi Moshe Sender Zack)

Ch. 25, v. 30: "Ho'odome ho'odome ha'zeh" – This red red – In Rashi yoshon he explains why Yaakov prepared a round lentil broth. In his second explanation he says that just as the round lentils have no mouth (no visible seam) so too, a mourner has no mouth, i.e. that he should not talk (unless it is quite necessary). A war survivor couple settled in Eretz Yisroel and the husband died shortly thereafter. Two Gerrer Chasidim went to be "m'nachem oveil" the surviving family. The widow cursed Hashem with a string of sharp complaints. They later went to Imrei Emes to ask how they should have acted, as they said not a word and just let her curse away. The Imrei Emes answered that "oveil ein lo peh" means we consider it as if he has no mouth, i.e. all that emits from it is as if it wasn't said, a case of "ein odom nitfas al tzaaro." (shomati)

Ch. 25, v. 33: "Va'yishova lo va'yimkore es b'choroso l'Yaakov" – And he swore to him and he sold his primogeniture right to Yaakov – The Rosh derives from these words that although a person cannot transfer ownership to another when the matter is something that is not yet existent, nevertheless, when the attempted transfer is accompanied by a vow it is binding.

Ch. 26, v. 8: "Va'y'hi ki orchu lo shom ha'yomim" – And it was when the days were long for him – Lekach Tov explains that it either means that he had an extended stay there, or that his stay entered into the depth of the summer, when daylight is long.

I do not understand the second explanation. According to the first it is well understood that the days were long for HIM as his stay was for a long time. According to the second explanation the days were long for everyone not just for Yitzchok.

Ch. 26, v. 33: "Al kein shem ho'ir B'eir Sheva" – Therefore the name of the city is B'eir Sheva – This is not the same city as the B'eir Sheva mentioned by Avrohom, "Va'yovo Beir Sheva asher liHudoh." (Rashba"m)

This is the same city. After Avimelech abrogated the covenant Yitzchok stopped calling it B'eir Sheva, and now that he had committed himself to keep it again Yitzchok renewed the same name. (N'tzi"v)

Ch. 26, v. 35: "Vati'h'yenoh moras ruach l'Yitzchok ulRivkoh" – And they were an aggravation for Yitzchok and for Rivkoh – Targum Onkelos says that this means they aggravated and refused to cooperate. Sforno says that "moras" is sourced from "moroh," a razor. They acted in a way that caused their in-laws to feel as if they were being stabbed with knives.

Bchor Shor says "moras" is sourced from "mar," bitter. They made their in-laws lives bitter.

Medrash Agodoh adds that we find right afterwards that Yitzchok's eyes weakened greatly. We see from this that when one is angered, as were Yitzchok and Rivkoh, it weakens one's eyes. Perhaps we can explain why Rivkoh's eyes remained healthy. Our sages say that she had less aggravation from this than Yitzchok had because she had experienced idol worship in her parents' home.

Ch. 27, v. 2: “Lo yodati yom mosi” – I do not know the day of my death – Since Yitzchok has aged his soul has begun to separate from his body. This is an appropriate time to give a blessing. (Sforno)

Ch. 27, v. 3: “V’tzudoh li tzayid(h)” – And capture for me game – “Tzayid” has a male and female connotation. The male component is the way it is read, and the female component is the way it is written, with a letter Hei at the end. This alludes to the male Paschal offering, and the female to the Chagigoh offering. (Haksav V’hakaboloh)

Ch. 27, v. 4: “V’hovioh li v’o’cheiloh” – And bring it to me and I will eat it – What need was there for Yitzchok to eat food as a prelude to blessing Eisov? We have dealt with this in the past, introducing the concept of “ko’ach hapo’el b’nifal,” that a very spiritual person can sense the level of another through that persons works.

Droshos hoRa”n cites a number of places in Tanach where a prophet was told to eat before he prophesied. He mentions the opinion that this would bring them into a positive mind-set and helped to receive a prophecy. He prefers the approach that although very spiritual, the prophet is in a human body. Its needs and desires detract from being able to prophesize. “Throwing the body a bone” of a good meal allows it to let the spirit be free to receive a prophecy.

Ch. 27, v. 4: “Baavur t’vo’rech’cho nafshi” – So that my soul bless you – Why didn’t Hashem simply tell Yitzchok to bless Yaakov? Yitzchok had a high opinion of Eisov and strongly preferred to bless him over Yaakov. If Hashem would apprise him of Yaakov’s being the one who should be blessed, he would be so disappointed that he would not be in a positive mood and the prophecy for blessing would not be received, as a prophet has to be in a positive state of mind to prophesize. Thinking that he was blessing Eisov, he was in a positive frame of mind. (Droshos hoRa”n)

Ch. 27, v. 27: “Rei’ach b’godov” – The scent of his apparel – Our Rabbis read this as “rei’ach bogdov,” the scent of those who rebel against Hashem. The message is that notwithstanding that some bnei Yisroel sin against Hashem, nevertheless Hashem concentrates on their positive attributes. This interpretation dovetails with the explanation for Hashem’s orchestrating the blessings to be placed upon Yaakov through trickery, when he was dressed in eisov’s garments, so that even when some of the bnei Yisroel are ch”v behaving and dressing as Eisov does, the blessing remains in place, “rei’ach bogdov.” (n.l.)

Ch. 27, v. 33: “Va’yecherad Yitzchok charodoh g’doloh ad m’ode” – And Yitzchok trembled to an extreme – Compare this “g’doloh ad m’ode” with Eisov’s “g’doloh ad m’ode” of the next verse. When Yitzchok’s efforts did not produce the results he wanted he trembled to an extreme, worried about what he shortchanged his son Eisov, while Eisov, when his wishes were not realized, screamed to an extreme. (n.l.)

#### OROH V’SIMCHOH - MESHECH CHOCHMOH ON PARSHAS TOLDOS

Ch. 27, v. 25: "Va'yo'vei lo ya'yin" - We find the cantillation sign "meircho k'fuloh" under the word "lo." It appears very infrequently, and indicates some sort of doubling or repetition. The MESHECH CHOCHMOH cites the words of the "Yenuko," the holy child, in the Holy Zohar on parshas Bolok page 189b. I am far from clear on how it sheds light on the cantillation. Perhaps his intention is that the Holy Zohar states that the main components of a meal are bread and wine and everything else is ancillary to these two items, so it is understood that if our verse says "va'yochal" as well as "va'yeisht," it is understood that Yaakov was fed bread. This is especially appreciated in light of it being the night of Pesach (see Rashi on verse 9 d.h. "shnei"), when one is required to consume matzoh. Thus "va'yo'vei lo" with a "meircho k'fuloh" alludes to Yaakov's bringing not only wine, which is openly mentioned in the verse, but also matzoh.

The MESHECH CHOCHMOH suggests that the cantillation can be explained in a straightforward manner. The gemara P'sochim 88b says that one who drinks the contents of a large glass of liquid in one gulp is a guzzler. If he drinks it in two gulps he is a person who behaves with proper etiquette. Thus Yitzchok drank the contents of his goblet in two gulps, putting the goblet down in between and requiring Yaakov to serve him twice.

A few other possible answers:

Targum Yonoson ben Uziel says that the wine Yaakov gave Yitzchok came from the grapes that were created at the time of the world's creation (from Gan Eden). The Baa'lei Tosfos say that the angel Micho'eil gave the wine to Yaakov. How do we see this from the verse? Possibly it can be derived from the change in wording from "va'ya'geish" by the "matamim," and "va'yo'vei" by the wine. "Va'ya'geish," - and he brought close, indicates that it was there, just that it was distanced and now brought CLOSE. This was the case with the two goats, which were here in this world. However, the wine, which came through the messenger Micho'eil was BROUGHT from another world, Gan Eden. This might be indicated by the cantillation "meircho k'fuloh," a double "meircho," on the word "lo." Wine was brought "to him" twice, once to Yaakov from the angel Michoel, and a second time to Yitzchok from Yaakov.

Alternatively, we fill the goblet a second time shortly after kiddush, "mozgin kose sheini," on the night of Pesach. Yaakov not only filled the goblet for kiddush, but also after kiddush, alluded to by the "meircho k'fuloh."

Another explanation: Since the verse says "va'yochal" and only afterwards "va'yeisht," and one makes kiddush first before eating anything, we must say that this bringing and drinking of wine must be the second time it happened, alluded to by the "meircho k'fuloh."

#### CHAMISHOH MI YODEI' A – FIVE QUESTIONS ON THE WEEKLY SEDRAH – PARSHAS TOLDOS 5775 – BS”D

1) Ch. 25, v. 21: “Vatahar Rivkoh ishto” – And Rivkoh his wife conceived – Earlier in this verse we have “I’ nichach ishto” without Rivkoh’s name mentioned, as it is obvious. If so, why is her name mentioned here?

2) Ch. 25, v. 24: “V’hi’nei somim b’vitnoh” – And behold twins in her uterus – “Hi’nei” is used where there is a surprise. Rivkoh was already advised that she was carrying twins, so what was the surprise?

3) Ch. 25, v. 26: “Vayikra shmo Yaakov” – Rashi offers two opinions, either that his father Yitzchok gave him this name, or that Hashem gave him this name. Rabbeinu Chaim ben Paltiel says that we can only accept the opinion that Hashem gave Yaakov his name, as we find in 27:36, “Va’yomer hachi KORO shmo Yaakov.....” Eisov says to his father, “Has HE not called him Yaakov because he has tricked me twice.” If Yitzchok gave Yaakov his name, Eisov would surely have said, “Hachi KOROSO shmo Yaakov,” – haven’t YOU called him Yaakov. This seems like a daunting question, especially with Rashi’s keeping with the straightforward explanation of the verses (see Rashi Breishis 3:8).

4) Ch. 25, v. 33: “Hishovoh li” – Swear to me – Why didn’t this transaction take place without an oath?

5) Ch. 26, v. 1: “Milvad horo’ov horishon asher hoyoh bi’mei Avrohom” – Besides the first famine that took place in the days of Avrohom – It is now eighty years after the famine that took place in Avrohom’s days. If so, what need is there to tell us that this was not one and the same as the earlier one?

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#### ANSWERS:

#1

M.R. 44:10 says, “Avrom cannot sire a child, but AvroHOM can.” A bit later, in 44:12 the M.R. says that changing one’s name can annul a negative decree against a person. To magnify the miracle that took place here the verse stresses that it was Rivkoh, who retained her same name, who miraculously conceived. (Rabbi Yaakov Meisels Gaava”d Pietrikov)

#2

The next verse answers this. The fact that Eisov emerged first was very unusual, since Yaakov was smooth and Eisov very hairy, the smooth baby should have slipped out ahead of the hairy one. (Sforno)

#3

A careful analysis of our verse and an earlier verse should yield a most satisfactory answer. The last words of our verse are, “va’yomar halo otzalto li brochoh.” “Va’yomer” seems to be superfluous, as the verse begins with Eisov speaking, “Va’yomer hachi . . . . .” Since no narrative interrupts his words why place “va’yomar” in the middle? Note that in verse 31, where Eisov begins to speak to his father the first thing he says is, “YOKUM ovi v’YOCHAL,” in the third person, a respectful manner of speaking. Immediately on the heels of this in verse 32 he says, “ani binCHO b’chorCHO.” Although this is second person, since it is in response to the question, “mi otoh,” Eisov could not say, “I am HIS son HIS firstborn.” He had to respond unequivocally, “I am YOUR son, YOUR firstborn.” The next time Eisov spoke, in verse 34, he said, “borcheini gam oni ovi.” Here again third person form is improper, since it is a command, and “tzivuy” form only exists in second person. Back to our verse. Eisov is still in respectful mode. He therefore said, “Has HE not called him Yaakov because he has tricked me twice.” Eisov means that his father Yitzchok gave the name, but is expressing himself in third person. Then out of extreme anger and disappointment his resolve bursts, and he changes to second person mode. This necessitates a “va’yomar,” a different type of speaking, and he says “halo OTZALTO li brochoh,” haven’t YOU, second person, set aside for me a blessing.” (Nirreh li)

#4

- 1) An oath was necessary because technically, Eisov had the right to rescind his offer, as the primogeniture birthright was not his to sell until after his father’s death. (Chizkuni)  
Rabbi Yochanon Luria in M’shivas Nefesh seems to say the same, adding that Eisov swore to sell the birthright after Yitzchok would pass on.
  - 2) Alternatively, the birthright is not a tangible item so there is no structured binding act of transfer of ownership. (A’keidas Yitzchok)
  - 3) Eisov might simply deny that the whole thing took place, so Yaakov had him swear in front of witnesses. (Rokei’ach)
- It seems that even if the sale took place in front of witnesses they might forget, but being witness to an oath makes a lasting impression.
- 4) Note that the oath took place before the sale. This shows that Eisov sold the birthright without coercion or under duress, or else he would not have sworn first. (Rabbi Avrohom ben hoRambam)
  - 5) He swore that he would never lay claim to the birthright in the future. (Ramban)
  - 6) Yaakov asked Eisov to swear that he truly had no appreciation of the birthright, or else Yaakov would not purchase it. (Rabbi Yoseif ben Dovid of Saragossa)

#5

- 1) Horo’ov horishon” alludes to a famine that took place in the days of Odom Horishon. (Rabbeinu Tovioh)
  - 2) The famine in the days of Avrohom was now recollected. Yitzchok therefore wanted to copy his father’s action, to descend to Egypt. This is why it was necessary for Hashem to communicate to him to not descend to Egypt. (Ramban)
  - 3) Earlier in Yitzchok’s days there was a minor famine. Our verse tells us that the present one was of a similar intensity to that of the days of Avrohom. (Moshav Z’keinim)
  - 4) This teaches us that the present famine was of the same intensity as the one in Avrohom’s days, to teach us that Yitzchok would not readily have left to G’ror. (Rabbi Avrohom ben hoRambam)
  - 5) This teaches us that the present famine was less severe, and yet, Yitzchok left to G’ror for relief. Avrohom only left when there was a very severe famine. This is why it was considered one of Avrohom’s ten tests, and not as a test to Yitzchok. (Rabbeinu Chaim Paltiel)
- Where is the indication that this one was less severe?
- 6) This teaches us that during that lengthy span of time there was no other famine. The land was blessed in Avrohom’s merit. (Abarbanel and Ralba”g)
  - 7) This teaches us that this famine was even more severe than the one in Avrohom’s days. (Mo’ore Ho’a’feiloh)
- Targum Yonoson ben Uziel agrees with this. In 12:10 he says “Vahava kafna,” while here he says “Vahava kafna SAKIF.”

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