



Who's Really Right?

The case was cut and dry. Trickery and cheating at its worst. The younger brother took advantage of his older brother's hunger, and tricked him into selling his birthright for a plate of beans. Years later, he disguised himself as his older brother, and tricked his father into giving him the special blessing reserved for the older brother. Who was right and who was wronged? The older brother looks like the innocent victim.

Rav Dessler zt"l takes a deeper look into the situation. When Eisav came to his father to get his blessing after Yaakov had left, "Yitzchak trembled an extremely great trembling" (27:33). He sensed deceit, but who was guilty? Was it Yaakov, who disguised himself, or Yitzchak himself, who allowed himself to be misled? As the verse states, "The voice is Yaakov's voice, but the hands are Eisav's hands" (27:22). Hashem assured Yitzchak that neither of them was guilty. Eisav, "the hunter with his mouth" (25:28) was the trickster. He trapped the game with his nets, and he deceived his father with his mouth. He appeared to be very righteous on the outside, asking Yitzchak about *chumros* (stringency in halacha). Does one need to give *maaser* (tithes) from salt? Yet inside, he was immoral and corrupt. Yaakov and Yitzchak corrected the situation by switching the brochos. They were really right.

Kinderlach . . .
We learn two very important lessons from this episode. Things are not always as they appear. The one who looks right may actually be wrong. The one who looks wrong may actually be right. We have to judge people and situations very carefully. Consult with older and wiser people before you come to conclusions.

Secondly, we have to be truly good. "If I close my eyes and look like I am concentrating while I pray, then people will think that I have good kavannah (concentration)." The mitzvah is to have good kavannah, not to merely look like you are concentrating. Looks are not enough. They are only skin deep. Kinderlach put Hashem deep in your hearts. Then you will be a truly good person, inside and out.

Whom Are You Addressing?

"Abba, may I please have money to buy a new sefer?"
"Which sefer would you like, Yoni?"
"Sefer Tehillim."
"With pleasure, Yoni. Here is the money."

A short time later, Yoni comes to his father

again.

"Abba, may I go to the park to play with my friends?"
"Which park and which friends, Yoni?"
"The park next to the shopping center. My friends Dovid, Simcha, Ephraim, Yisrael Meir, and Moishie are going."
"Have a good time, Yoni, but come back by six o'clock in time for dinner."

Later that evening at dinner . . .

"Abba, I need some new clothes and school supplies."
"What do you need Yoni?"
"Some shirts, socks, pencils, pens, and notebooks."
"Go with Imma and get whatever you need."
"Abba, can I ask you something?"
"Yes, Yoni."
"Do you ever mind that I ask you for so many things? Sometimes I feel like a *noodnik*. Am I asking too often? Am I asking for too much?"
"Not at all, Yoni. I want you to ask me."
"Why, Abba?"
"I will answer your question with a Devar Torah from the parasha. Yitzchak and



Rivka did not have children for many years. Yitzchak pleaded with Hashem, opposite his wife, because she was barren; and Hashem responded to his pleas, and Rivka his wife became pregnant' (Bereshis 25:21). The Gemora (Yevamos 64a) comments on this series of events. 'Why were our holy forefathers (and foremothers) barren? Because Hashem desires the *tefillos* (prayers) of tsaddikim.' *Tefillah* is called *Avodas* (service to) Hashem. The Maharal (Nesivos Olam Volume 1, Nesiv Ha'avodah chapter 1) asks a puzzling question. The third Mishnah in Pirkei Avos tells us not to be like servants who serve the master on the condition of receiving a reward. It seems that our custom is not to follow this Mishnah. In our *tefillos*, we ask Hashem for the various things that we want and need – both as individuals, and as a nation. We ask Him to fulfill our requests. Is this not serving Him on the condition of receiving a prize?"

"Wow! That is a difficult question, Abba."
"The answer is fascinating, Yoni. Let me begin with a few examples. If you want to buy eggs, do you go to a clothing store?"
"No."
"If you want to buy a hammer and nails, do you go to a book store?"
"Of course not. These places cannot give

you what you want. Therefore, why bother to go there?"

"Exactly. Whom do we ask when we want something? Someone who can provide it. When we pray to Hashem, asking Him for all of our needs, we are showing that He is the One Who can and does provide everything for us. We are addressing Him as our Master and Provider. We are His subjects. This is *avodah* – a servant serving his master. Therefore, the main point of *tefillah* is not the 'reward' that we receive if the Almighty grants our request. Rather, it is the fact that we are addressing Him as the Provider. This is the meaning of the Gemora, 'Hashem desires the *tefillos* of tsaddikim.' He wants us to realize that He is the right address to ask for everything. He is the Creator, and He is the Provider, who supplies us with everything. This is *Avodas Hashem*. This is the pillar upon which the world stands."

"I see, Abba. The main point of our *tefillah* is realizing that we are making requests from Hashem."

"Yes, Yoni. You can never be a *noodnik* with Hashem. He requires that you ask Him formally, three times a day. Additionally, He desires informal prayers, any time of the day or night. No request is too big or too small for Him. There is no limit to the number of times that you can ask Him for something. Yitzchak and Rivka prayed for children for many years. "Based on this Devar Torah, I can answer your question, Yoni. I do not mind that you ask me for everything. You cannot ask too much or too often. Ask, ask, and ask again, and again, and again, as much as you want. It only shows that you value me as Hashem's agent who provides for you. That is a great privilege for me. It also increases my love for you. Keep asking, Yoni. It shows that you realize whom you are addressing."

Kinderlach . . .
Why do we pray? To ask Hashem for our needs and wants. Whom are we praying to? To One Who cannot fulfill our request? *Cholila!* (Heaven forbid!) We are praying to the Creator of the Universe, the One Who makes the sun rise every day. He makes the wind blow and the rain fall. He makes the trees grow, and bear fruit. He brings us our food, clothing, and shelter. He provides all of our physical and spiritual needs. He is our Master and we are His servants. That is the point of our *tefillos*. To come to this realization. To know Whom we are addressing.

Parasha Questions:

- What were the names of the wells, and why were they called by these names? (26:20-22)
- Whom did Eisav take to be his wives? What did they do to his parents? (26:34-35 and Rashi)
- Which day did Yaakov trick Eisav out of Yitzchak's brocho? (Rashi 27:9)