

In this week's *Parashah*, we read about the birth of Yaakov and Esav. *Rashi z"l* writes that the name "Esav" alludes to his being born a "made person"--on the simplest level, a reference to his being born covered with hair like an adult.

R' Yaakov ben Asher z"l (the "Ba'al Ha'turim"; Germany and Spain; 1269-1343) notes that the *Gematria* of "Esav" equals the *Gematria* of "Shalom." He explains: If not for the "peace" within his name, Esav would already have destroyed the world.

R' Yaakov Moshe Hillel *shlita* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Ahavat Shalom in Yerushalayim) writes: The allusion to *Shalom* in Esav's name could also be referring to the same thing that *Rashi* writes, *i.e.*, that Esav was born "Shalem" / "complete." But, R' Hillel asks, what is the nature of this completeness?

He explains: Yaakov's and Esav's names tell us about their essence. Esav was a man of the physical world, interested only in what the world he can sense has to offer. Thus, he was complete as soon as he was born, because everything he cared about was right in front of him.

Not so Yaakov, writes R' Hillel. Yaakov's focus was on spiritual growth, referred to in Hebrew as "*Aliyah*" / "rising." He was fittingly named after the *Eikev* / heel, the lowest part of the body, for that is where he pictured himself: at the bottom, needing to climb upwards. (The letter "Yud" placed in front of the word "*Eikev*" to form "Yaakov" (יַעֲקֹב) alludes to the spark of *Kedushah* / holiness within him.) After Yaakov fought Esav's angel, he was renamed "Yisrael" (יִשְׂרָאֵל) which contains within it the letters of the word "*Rosh*" (רֹאשׁ) / "head," signifying the success of Yaakov's "climb." (*Sulam Yaakov*)

Shabbat

The *Gemara* (*Bava Batra* 75a) states that, in the future, *Hashem* will make a feast for *Tzaddikim* from the flesh of the Leviathan (see also *Rashi z"l* to *Bereishit* 1:21). R' Yisrael Eliyahu Weintraub z"l (1932-2010; Bnei Brak, Israel) quotes R' Eliyahu z"l (1720-1797; the *Vilna Gaon*) as saying that this feast will take place at the end of our present world, before the inauguration of the World-to-Come--like the first *Seudat Shabbat* / Friday night meal, which one may eat during "*Tosefet Shabbat*" / the last few minutes of *Erev Shabbat* that we make part of *Shabbat*.

R' Weintraub explains: Throughout the story of Creation (*Bereishit* ch.1), G-d is referred to as "*Elokim*"--never by the Four Letter Name that we pronounce "*Hashem*." The *Shulchan Aruch* (*O.C.* 5) teaches that "*Elokim*" means "Master of all forces"--implying that there are other forces besides G-d, but He is the Master of them all. That is how the created world appears to us--as if there are other forces, notably the forces of nature--and that is why the Name *Elokim* is used in connection with Creation. While we do believe that G-d is superior to those forces, we do not perceive Him as the only force. Instead, we see Him as *Elokim*--Master of all the forces. (In contrast, "*Hashem*" refers to G-d's Unity, which is not evident in Creation. Therefore, that Name is not used in describing Creation.)

In the World-to-Come, everything will become clear, and we will finally see Him as the One and Only Force, as we read (*Yeshayah* 2:12), "*Hashem* alone will be exalted on that day." About this we read also (*Yeshayah* 40:5), "The glory of *Hashem* shall be revealed, and all flesh as one shall see that the Mouth of *Hashem* has spoken." - **Continued in box inside** -

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“Yitzchak’s servants dug in the valley and found there a well of fresh water. The shepherds of Gerar quarreled with Yitzchak’s shepherds saying, ‘The water is ours’ . . . Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over it also . . . He relocated from there and dug another well. They did not quarrel over it, so he called its name ‘Rehovot,’ and said, ‘For now Hashem has granted us ample space, and we can be fruitful in the land’.” (26:19-22)

Targum Yonatan ben Uziel (an Aramaic translation and commentary of the Torah dating to the end of the Second Temple period) relates that after the shepherds of Gerar misappropriated the first well, it dried up, and they returned it to Yitzchak. After they misappropriated the second well, it also dried up, but they did not return it to Yitzchak. Why?

R’ Tzvi Abba Gorelick *z”l* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshiva Gedolah Zichron Moshe in South Fallsburg, N.Y.; died 2010) explains: When Yitzchak dug the first well, the shepherds of Gerar claimed, “The water is ours.” They did not claim that the well stood on their land, only that the well was being fed by a spring that belonged to them. When a miracle occurred and the well gave its water only to Yitzchak, they had to admit that the well was not drawing from their spring, and they returned it to Yitzchak.

In contrast, when Yitzchak dug the second well, the shepherds of Gerar claimed that he had actually dug it on their property. Thus the verse says that they “quarreled over it,” not over the water. And, therefore, whether it was giving water or not, they did not return it to Yitzchak, because they claimed the place itself was theirs. This explains why, before Yitzchak dug another well, “He relocated from there,” *i.e.*, he moved far away so that the shepherds of Gerar would not claim that he was on their land. And, indeed, they did not quarrel with him over that well. (*Pirkei Mikra*)

– Continued from back page –

On *Shabbat*, we obtain a glimpse of that future clarity, R’ Weintraub continues. This is why we say in the Friday night prayers, “You have sanctified the Seventh Day for Your Name”--*i.e.*, the Name “*Hashem*,” which is associated with the clarity of a future time. (This is the message also of the familiar verse (*Zechariah* 14:9), “On that day, *Hashem* will be One and His Name will be One.”) When we observe *Shabbat*, we are, in effect, ushering in the World-to-Come a little early, just as, in this world, we usher in the Sabbath Day a few minutes before the actual end of *Erev Shabbat*. And just as we may enjoy our *Seudat Shabbat* during *Tosefet Shabbat*, so the Feast of the Leviathan will take place in the moments just before the beginning of the World-to-Come.

(*Nefesh Eliyahu: Bereishit* p.174)

“And these are the offspring of Yitzchak son of Avraham--Avraham fathered Yitzchak.” (25:19)

R’ Yaakov Abuchatzzeira *z”l* (1806-1880; Morocco; known as “*Abir Yaakov*”) asks: Why does the verse interrupt and speak about Avraham and never mention the offspring of Yitzchak? (They are not mentioned until later.)

R’ Abuchatzzeira answers: *Rashi z”l* (to *Bereishit* 6:9) writes that the primary progeny of the righteous are their good deeds. Accordingly, our verse could be read as saying: Yitzchak’s progeny were his good deeds, and whoever saw him said, “He is a worthy son of Avraham!” (*Pituchei Chotam*)

“Yitzchak sowed in that land, and in that year he reaped a hundredfold; thus had Hashem blessed him.” (26:12)

Rashi z”l comments: Our Sages say that the estimate was made for the purpose of *Ma’aser* / tithing. [Until here from *Rashi*]

R’ Moshe Yirmiyahu Narol Hakohen *z”l* (rabbi in Narol, Poland and Metz, France; died 1659) asks: How do our Sages know that?

He answers: The *Gemara* (*Ta’anit* 9a) teaches that it is forbidden to test *Hashem*, except with regard to tithes, about which it is written (*Malachi* 3:10), “‘Bring the entire tithe to the storehouse and let there be food in My House -- and test Me now thereby,’ says *Hashem*, Master of Legions, ‘[and see] if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour down for you blessing beyond your capacity.’” Why is one permitted to test *Hashem* regarding tithes?

R’ Narol explains: On the one hand, one may not estimate when giving tithes; he must make a precise calculation. On the other hand, our Sages (*Ta’anit* 8b) teach that blessings rest only on things that are hidden, not on things whose quantity is known. Thus, one would expect that counting one’s produce in order to tithe it would be harmful. No! says *Hashem*. Test Me by giving tithes, and you will see that I will bless your produce even though you counted it.

Our verse, too, ends with the words “*Hashem* blessed him,” writes R’ Narol. Since Yitzchak counted his produce and *Hashem* blessed him nevertheless, he must have done so for the purpose of tithing. (*Birkat Tov*)

Why is blessing found only in things that are hidden from the eye? R’ Yehuda Loewe *z”l* (*Maharal* of Prague; died 1609) answers: When we see things with our eyes, we visualize their physical limits. In contrast, “blessing” is the absence of limits. Therefore, the two are inconsistent.

(*Chiddushei Aggadot: Bava Metzia* 42a)

R’ Yerucham Levovitz *z”l* (*Mashgiach Ruchani* of the Mir Yeshiva; died 1936) writes: When a person counts his wealth, he surely blesses himself that he should prosper. However, compared to the blessing that *Hashem* can offer, any blessing that we offer ourselves is puny, almost a curse. Therefore, it is better to leave our wealth uncounted [except when counting is necessary in order to tithe correctly]. (*Da’at Chochmah U’mussar* II p.13)