

אברהם הוליד את יצחק הרב אליהו חקקיאן

In this shiur, we will explore two points. One of them is a principle which we are all familiar with, yet at the same time finds itself challenged. The second point is crucial to the point that we would be remiss to ignore it.

In this week's *parsha* we read how Yitzchok dug open the same *boros* that Avrohom Avinu held previously and gave them the same names that Avrohom had called them. [The *Pelishtim* had filled them up after Avrohom died.] The Torah, which is very conservative in its language and how many letters and words it uses, spent twenty-four words which contain ninety-seven letters in order to tell this to us. What is the significance of Yitzchok doing this that the Torah makes a point of telling us? We don't even know the names of those wells; does it make any difference to us that he called them the same as Avrohom did?

In the *Sheva Ushpizin* that we have, the seven *middos* or *sefiros*, the two which are most diametrically opposed to one another are the two corresponding to Avrohom and Yitzchok, father and son. Avrohom Avinu is the pillar of *chessed* and Yitzchok Avinu is known as the *middas hagevura*. *Chessed*, we all understand, is giving to others no matter how deserving the recipient. It is an abundance of giving; total *chessed* is limitless. Avrohom Avinu exemplified this through his immense *hachnosas orchim*. Yitzchok Avinu, on the other hand, represents *middas haGevura* [also called *middas haDin*]. *Midas haGevura/haDin* means that one gets only that which he deserves. There are no bonuses because the whole point of this *middah* is that everything is calculated. This is the opposite of Avrohom Avinu.

Here we have a father and son with totally reverse characteristics who have opposite outlooks on life. If we think about it, it would seem that such a father-son couple would have a difficult time just getting along. Even if they make peace, the son would probably think that his father is from a different generation, has a different approach and personality, and that he is different from that. Therefore, because he is different from his father, he also concludes that he has his own *mehalech*. He cannot live life the same way as his father or approach the world the same way, he must have a new way.

Yitzchok Avinu realized that when it comes to *avodas Hashem*, he is Avrohom's son. The first *posuk* in the *parsha* states, "v'eileh toldos Yitzchok ben Avrohom, Avrohom holid es Yitzchok." Yitzchok knew that he only came to this world because Avrohom yielded him. Even though he had a totally different personality than Avrohom, he was only Yitzchok because of his father. Yitzchok realized that although HaKadosh Boruch Hu blessed him with different *keilim* and bestowed upon him different *brachos*, he could only be successful if he built upon the foundation laid by Avrohom Avinu.

Yitzchok did not want to start his own method and become just another individual like those who preceded Avrohom. Adam, Sheis, even Noach, were individuals. Shem and Ever did not necessarily continue on the path of Noach and had their own approach. Avrohom Avinu was different. The *posuk* states, "ki yedativ l'ma'an asher yetzaveh es bonov v'es beiso acharov." (*Bereishis 18: 19*) Avrohom built a foundation for his descendants to build upon. He broke the cycle of individuals doing their own thing.

Yitzchok understood that the degree to which he built upon this foundation is the degree of success he would have in his *avodas Hashem*. That didn't mean that he would have to adapt Avrohom Avinu's characteristics because, after all, Hashem created him differently with his own *techunas hanefesh*. On the

contrary, Hashem wanted him to apply his own characteristics and strengths to building on Avrohom Avinu's foundation.

This is why Yitzchok started his *avodah* by digging the same *boros* which Avrohom Avinu originally dug. He gave them the same names and established that he was not carving his own path, rather he was continuing on that of his father.

Chazal tell us in *Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer* that the *chamor* which Moshe Rabbeinu rode down to Mitzrayim was the same *chamor* which Avrohom Avinu used to go to the *Akeidah*, and that same *chamor* will be ridden by *Moshiach*. A question is asked, why is this donkey *zoche* to live such a long life to be a part of each of these seminal events in history? What *zechus* does this donkey have to live for thousands of years? What does this *Chazal* mean? The idea is the following: The *geulah* of Mitzrayim was hinged upon the *zechus* of Avrohom Avinu which he established at the *Akeidah*. These three events are but a chain of the *mesorah* which Avrohom Avinu implanted into the fiber of Klal Yisroel. This trend of *avodas Hashem* started from Avrohom and will continue through the culmination of *be'as haMoshiach*.

We are not a group of individuals doing our own thing. Generations change, characteristics are different, but the principles are the same old principles that were given to us every year and every generation. We apply the old principles to the new situations that arise. This is the principle which Yitzchok Avinu established. We are very familiar to this *hashkafic* principle but it has been challenged and continues to be challenged on a daily basis in every new circumstance that comes up.

We read in the Torah that haKadosh Boruch Hu appeared to Yitzchok and gave him a *brachah* that He would be *m'kayem* the *shavua* which He made to Avrohom Avinu. (*Bereishis 26: 2-5*) Why? Because Avrohom listened to Hashem. Hashem told Yitzchok that he was receiving the blessing because of the *zechus* of Avrohom Avinu.

Did Yitzchok not have his own *zechusim* to merit to receive Hashem's blessing? Was he not an *olah temimah*? Why does he only receive it because of Avrohom's *zechus*?

The *Sforno* asks this question. He says that Yitzchok was *toleh b'zechus acheirim*. Yaakov had his own *zechus* and Avrohom certainly had his own. Nobody else has this phenomenon of being *toleh b'zechus acheirim*. Why Yitzchok?

He points out that these instances of Hashem telling him he would receive *b'zechus* Avrohom were all before Yitzchok was *koro b'shem Hashem*. Once he started to do that, then Avimelech came to him and said, "*Hashem imoch...ata ata b'ruch Hashem.*"

Yitzchok Avinu was an *olah temimah*. He allowed himself to be put upon the *mizbe'ach* for the *Akeidah* to give up his life. When Yishmoel chastised him by saying that he was thirteen by his own *bris milah*, Yitzchok declared that he would give up his own life if Hashem so willed it. Yet, all of this is not considered having *zechuyos*.

This tells us that even if one goes to yeshiva and learns to the highest heights of *ruchniyos*, so long as he does not reach out to others, give to others, or care for others, there is still a big gap missing. This person has *zechuyos*, but they are not cashable, if you will. Once he starts reaching out to others, just like Yitzchok digging the wells and calling out *b'shem Hashem*, then the *zechuyos* that previously accumulated can come out.

It does not matter whether we are in yeshiva or out. Once we start to reach out to help others, teach others, give to others, then we become "*b'ruch Hashem*," and "*Hashem imach.*" We need to remember this *gevaldigge yesod* our entire lives. With this *yesod* we will be *zoche* to many *brachos*.