

## Friday Night, Parshas Toldos, 5767

On Friday night, Mohorosh Shlit" a spoke inspiring words on the verse (*Bereishis*, Ch. 27): "And he said: See now, I am old, I do not know the day of my death. And now please take your weapons....and make for me delicious food such as I love....so that my soul may bless you before I die."

Let's try to understand why Yitzchak wished to bless Esav right before his death and not at some earlier point in his life. Also, why did Yitzchak command Esav to prepare delicious food for him before he blessed him? Apparently, Yitzchak wanted Esav to do something in order for the blessing to be able to rest on him. It is possible to say concerning all this that our holy Sages have made known to us the tremendous preciousness of the mitzvah of *Kibud Av v'Eim* (honoring ones parents) to the extent that they have said (*Kidushin* 30b) "their honor is compared to the honor of Hashem: And Hashem said: 'If you honor your father and mother, it's as if you are honoring me.'" Therefore, our holy Sages called the mitzvah of *Kibud Av v'Eim* (*Midrash Rabba Parshas Ki Saytsay*): "The most severe of all mitzvos", for there is nothing more severe than degrading the honor of one's father and mother as well as showing ingratitude to them despite all the acts of kindness they have done with their child since he was born – for they are the ones who brought him into the world and raised him, and it is only through their strength and merit that he is alive; and through them he has the chance to fulfill the Torah and mitzvos to merit the world to come.

Therefore, it is a tremendous obligation to honor them as much as possible. Our holy Sages have already said (*Kidushin* *ibid.*): "Honor them in their lifetime and honor them in their death." For even after they have departed for life in the world to come, there is still a great mitzvah to honor them with every kind of honor, for instance, to learn Torah and give *tzedaka* for the elevation of their souls. It is explained in *Zohar Chadash* (Ruth) that all of the souls in the upper worlds are very jealous of someone who has left behind a son in this world who is involved in Torah and mitzvos as this causes a tremendous elevation and delight to the soul of his father and mother who are in the upper worlds. Therefore, happy is the one who merits to be very careful in fulfilling the mitzvah of *Kibud Av v'Eim*. And this will cause one's parents every sort of pleasure and delight in this world and the next. And through this

mitzvah, the child will draw upon himself all of the blessings in the world. And he can be assured that his own children will always honor *him*. Happy is he and fortunate is his lot.

In light of these teachings about the mitzvah of *Kibud Av v'Eim* we can now try to answer the questions we asked above, namely, why did Yitzchak call for Esav specifically before his death and command him to bring him delicious food, as it is written: “See now, I am old, I do not know the day of my death.” Yitzchak *Avinu* wanted to be assured that Esav would be involved with good things even after his death for the sake of Yitzchak’s soul in the upper worlds. Therefore, the first thing he did was command him in the mitzvah of *Kibud Av v'Eim* and he said to him: “And now please take your weapons...” in order to hint to him that all of the good deeds that he does now as well as after his father’s death will be a source of delight for his father and an elevation for his soul in the upper worlds. Also, through the power of the mitzvah of *Kibud Av v'Eim* that he fulfills *now*, a blessing will rest upon Esav which are the words “And **now** please take your weapons and make for me delicious food.”

It is brought in the *Tikunei Zohar* (52b): “‘Make me delicious food such as I love’ – this allude to the positive commandments of the Torah that are done out of love.” For by Esav preparing a meal for his father Yitzchak, he thereby fulfills the positive commandment of *Kibud Av v'Eim* which is the most severe of all mitzvos. And this will give Esav the strength to continue to fulfill other mitzvos. And this is the verse: “So that my soul may bless you before I die”, by this Yitzchak was telling Esav, “Your performing the mitzvos causes blessing for my soul, and death will not be able to touch me”, as our holy Sages have said (*Bereishis Rabbah Parsha* 49:8): “Whoever has a son who toils in Torah it’s as if he hasn’t died.” Therefore, at the time Yitzchak was giving out the blessings, he said (*Bereishis*, Ch. 27) to Yaakov, thinking that he was Esav: “And may G-d give you of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the land and abundant grain and wine.” And our holy Sages have commented on this verse (*Bereishis Rabbah Parsha* 66:3): “‘The dew of the heaven’ is the written Torah and ‘the fatness of the land’ is the Mishnah; ‘an abundance of grain’ – this is Talmud; and ‘wine’ – this is *Agadata* (Midrash).” For Yitzchak blessed him that he should merit to learn the four parts of the holy Torah every day which correspond to the Four Worlds. And through this, he will draw down a great light upon his soul from all of the Four Worlds, as explained in the writings of the Ariz”l that the written Torah corresponds to our world, the world of Action; Mishnah

corresponds to the world of Formation; Talmud to the world of Creation; and *Agadata* which includes the Zohar and the secrets of the Torah to the world of Emanation. And through his learning the four parts of the Torah every day, he thereby fulfills the mitzvah of *Limud Torah* (learning Torah) and this causes great pleasure and delight to the soul of his father and mother in the upper worlds. Now we understand why Yitzchak summoned Esav specifically before his death and commanded him in these matters. It was because he wanted to show him the special importance and preciousness of the mitzvah of *Kibud Av v'Eim*. May Hashem help us to occupy ourselves in Torah and mitzvos all the days of our lives and we will give pleasure to Hashem and to all of the souls of those who are alive and those who have departed this world, until we merit to see the redemption and salvation of Israel swiftly in our days. *Amen v'amen*.