

Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

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The brothers grow up and face different destinies.

וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו אִישׁ יָדָע צֹד אִישׁ שָׂדֶה וַיַּעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֹהֶלִים:

“The youths grew up. And it was that Eisav was a man, knowledgeable in hunting, a man of the field. And Yaakov he was a simple man, a dweller of tents.” (Bereishis 25:27).

What did Eisav do and what did Yaakov do? How does this explain their essence?

The Torah follows this pasuk with, וַיֵּאָהֵב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו כִּי־צֹד בְּפִיו וְרִבְקָה אֶת־יַעֲקֹב: “And Yitzchok loved Eisav because game in his mouth, and Rivka loved Yaakov.” Why did Yitzchok and Rivka love a different child? Midrash learns from our pasuk that Yaakov was a learner. (Bereishis Rabbah 63:10). The Gemara says that Yaakov was a quiet man dwelling in tents.” (Bava Basra 123a). There is a contextual approach.

The Torah says about Moshe, “And the child grew up.” (Shmos 2:10). Then it says, “And it was in those days, and Moshe grew up.” (Ibid 2:11). How did he grow up twice? He first grew to one stage, where he became a son to Pharaoh – a prince of Egypt. Then he grew again, he matured further, and he realized he was an Ivri. Here, the children grew up, into their own potential.

The word נער means youth but it also means attendant. “Yosef was seventeen years old....and he was an attendant.” (Bereishis 37:2). The pasuk did not have to add he was a youth, as it already stated he was seventeen. This is the same with, “And Avraham said to his attendants, remain for yourselves here, with the donkey.” (Ibid 22:5). The two brothers grew up and attended to their father in their own ways.

Both of them are called “man.” Eisav is a man – knowledgeable of trapping – and also a man – of the field. Yaakov is called a simple man. In this narrative, including when Yitzchok asked for a delicacy so he can bless Eisav, the word ציד means game or meat of delicacy.

There are two other places when the word is used. A pasuk in Vaykra will explain and give a key to understanding the word. “Any man...that shall hunt game of wild animals, or birds that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth.” (Vayikra 17:13). It is clear in the Torah that animals that die from arrow wound are not kosher. Therefore, this pasuk can only mean that “hunting game” means to round it up in a humane way that does not injure it. The term trapper is more appropriate than hunter.

“He was a mighty hunter before Hashem; therefore, they say, “Be like Nimrod, mighty hunter before Hashem.” (Bereishis 10:9). Perhaps it would be fitting to praise him as a hunter, but why before Hashem? The pasuk can be read, *He was a mighty game before Hashem, therefore they say, ‘Like Nimrod, a mighty game before Hashem.’* Why would he be called a delicacy or game? The pasuk before says, “And Kush begot Nimrod, he

commenced as being mighty in the land.” (Ibid 10:8). Nimrod’s big accomplishment was building cities. (Ibid 10:10). The Torah defines “game meat” as wild animals that are kosher. This is mainly the Cervidae family – deer, elk, ibex. They are all animals that wander but return in the evening to feed and rest. The people compared Nimrod to a moose or elk – a mighty game – because he was able to build cities and he established security.

Yitzchok was known as a man of the field. He went to discuss business in the field. (Ibid 24:63). When the famine got so great, not only did the Egyptians sell their land to Yosef but also their “man of their fields.” (Ibid 47:20). A man of the field is a farm manager. Eisav trapped and raised game and he was a farmer. He managed Yitzchok’s farms and agriculture and never wandered too far from home.

Noach was called pure – pure of faith. (Ibid 6:9). Avimelech claims to have had a pure heart in the incident with Rivka. (Ibid 20:5). Yitzchok was a complete man, a man of complete faith. As for sitting in tents, Yaval was the ancestor of those that dwell in tents and raise herd. (Ibid 4:20). Yaakov was the nomad, following the herd and flock. There is also a further meaning. Dwellers of tents are seen as those that do not sow fields or plant vineyards, but travel in tents. (Yirmiyahu 35:8). Even so, this is because living this way is a method to live long in the Land. (Ibid). Hoshea prophesizes that Bnei Yisroel will dwell in their tents again. (Hoshea 12:10). This means to dwell in one’s home [lit. tent] with security. (II Melachim 13:5).

Yaakov and Eisav attended their father. They were important people (termed ish) and Eisav trapped game and attended the fields while Yaakov spent his time moving with the herd. This was not just jobs, but their essence. Eisav built cities, took over Seir, became extremely wealthy, was a leader of many men, and established farms. His entire purpose was to stay in one place. When he could not live in Canaan with Yaakov, he was the one that moved to Seir. (Ibid 36:8).

Yaakov was more comfortable on the move. He was able to go to Charan, move around Canaan, and then even go to Mitzrayim. Brick houses did not give Yaakov security. It was his faith in Hashem that did. Eisav needed the cities, the walls, and land. His children could not last forty years in the wilderness. Yaakov gave a special mesorah to his children. That is why they merited the Mishkan. They also, uniquely, obtained the ability to be wanderers and still keep their faith and hold on to what is important – the Torah.

Yitzchok did not love Eisav because he was able to trap deer. He loved Eisav when – that one time – he had the delicacy in his mouth; that time he requested game and he intended to bless Eisav. He asked for game because it represented Eisav’s stability. Yitzchok felt that was the quality of a person who could settle Eretz Canaan, build cities, and establish a lasting presence in the Land. Rivka saw the quality in Yaakov. She received the prophecy that the greater will serve the younger. She knew Yaakov was destined to be served by Eisav. Therefore, she saw the quality of longevity in him. Many nations are established. When their capitals are conquered, they disappear. Only the sons of Yaakov have been able to last through exile and wandering. Because the tent is really the most stable dwelling to live in. Home is wherever the Torah is.