



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

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Parshat Toldot includes the challenging episode of *Rivka Imeinu*, disguising her son *Yaakov* as his older brother *Eisav*, in order to seemingly deceive an elderly and frail *Yitzchak* to bestow upon *Yaakov* the blessings of the first born. What is the significance of this troubling episode? How could it be that *Yaakov Avinu* would come to receive these blessings in such a way? How could it be that *Rivka* would facilitate this entire episode?

In the subsequent *pesukim*, *Eisav* approaches his father, having prepared his favorite foods, in anticipation that his father will indeed bless him, he is shocked to hear *Yitzchak's* reply:

“*Ba Achicha B'Mirma, vayikach birchat-echa -*” *Your Brother came cunningly, and took your blessing.* “

The *Ateret Yehoshua of Dzhikov, zy'a* offers a fascinating insight- the word *B'mirma* is equal in numerical value to the word *afikoman*.

When *Eisav* approaches his father with this meal, *Yitzchak* answers him that it is *Pesach* night, and I have already eaten a meal which your brother served me, which included the *Afikoman* - I therefore am no longer allowed to eat from your meal, as one is prohibited to eat any additional food on *Pesach* night, once they have consumed the *Afikoman*.

This novel approach of course takes into account the midrashic suggestion that each of the *Avot* fulfilled the entire *Torah* through *ruach hakodesh*, even though they

had not received the *Torah* and were not commanded to do so.

Rabbi Moshe Weinberger, *shlita* points out that on the *Seder* night, the matza which is set aside as the *Afikoman*, is one half of the matza which is broken for *Yachatz*, at the beginning of the *Seder*. ***Yachatz***, as explained by Rabbi Weinberger, is an acronym for the words: ***Yadav, Chelkat Tzavarav***- his hands and the smooth of his neck- a reference to the parts of *Yaakov's* body, which *Rivka* covered with fur to disguise him as *Eisav*!

So what are we to learn from both this episode of disguise and deception, as well as its connection to the *Afikoman of Layl HaSeder*?

On the *Seder* night, many have the custom that the *Afikoman* is hidden for the children to find, or to take it and “steal it” in exchange for a finder’s fee or present upon its return. Rabbi Weinberger points out that there is an important message hidden within this custom. *Yaakov Avinu*, the ultimate *Ish Emet*, did not feel it was right for him to receive the blessing, he was not the *bechor* and therefore did not see himself as deserving to be blessed accordingly.

So too, many of us may feel that we are unworthy or not deserving to learn

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the depths of *Torah*, to delve into *penimiut hatorah*- the inner secrets of *Torah*. Rabbi Weinberger suggests that on the *Layl HaSeder*, we too must step out of our comfort zone like *Yaakov Avinu* and hide or steal the *Afikoman*, to realize that yes we too, are worthy to learn the secrets of *Torah*, and experience the *Layl HaSeder*, the night of redemption, in the deepest way, to feel that redemption within us, and believe that we are worthy to be redeemed.

Reb Tzadok HaKohein MiLublin zy'a, in a powerful teaching in *Tzidkat HaTzadik* taught:

כשם שצריך אדם להאמין בהש"י כך צריך אח"כ להאמין בעצמו.

Just as a person is required to believe in Hashem, so too is he afterwards required to believe in himself

Yehi Ratzon, during these very challenging times, may we be blessed to feel in our hearts that we are indeed worthy to experience salvation, may we have the capacity to put our full faith and trust in *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, and may we also be blessed to believe that indeed each one of us can contribute in our own unique way to bringing those *yeshuot* to fruition. ■

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