

Aligning Our Destiny WITH THE BIRTHRIGHT

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Toldos

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Eliezer is Not Mentioned Specifically By Name

CLICK TO VIEW!



The Extra Vav

CLICK TO VIEW!



Delineating Rivka's Lineage

CLICK TO VIEW!



Yitzchok's Lineage is Irrefutable

CLICK TO VIEW!



The 3 Most Humble People

CLICK TO VIEW!



1 of the 10 Expressions of Prayer

CLICK TO VIEW!



NEW SERIES!

Appreciating Avraham: The Founding Patriarch of the Jewish People

Ramchal: The Knowing Heart

Aligning Our Destiny WITH THE BIRTHRIGHT

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Toldos

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Withholding The Script of Reality

CLICK TO VIEW!



1. Rivka was barren and miraculously became pregnant due to Yitzchok's supplication.
2. During her pregnancy, she experienced unusual agitation within her womb and suffered greatly.
3. She sought out clarity from Shem the prophet.
4. He told her that there are two nations in her womb; one represents good and the other evil.
5. The 2 entities were in opposition of one another.
6. Rivka was now aware that Esav was truly evil.
7. Why didn't Rivka share this information with Yitzchok? It would have prevented so much pain & suffering.
8. Why did Rivka seek out clarity from Shem and not from Avraham or Yitzchok?
9. Avraham passed away 5 years before his time so not to see his grandson Esav pursuing an evil path.
10. Rivka did consult with Avraham, but he didn't know.
11. The basis for Esav hating Yaakov is a consequence of Yaakov haven taken the blessing meant for Esav.
12. Had Yitzchok been aware of the evil of Esav he would have never considered blessing him.
13. The context for Esav to be considered for the Blessing was only because Yitzchok did not know his true nature.
14. Rivka realized this should not to be known to her husband Yitzchok, and so could not divulge the true nature of Esav.

Tracing The Force That Brought Existence Into Being

CLICK TO VIEW!



1. Yitzchok was only conceived by Sarah after Avraham was circumcised & had the letter Hei added to his name.
2. The world was created with the spirituality that is contained in the letter Hei.
3. Gemara: The shape of the letter Hei is indicative of man's free choice.
4. The shape: two vertical legs that are spaced and a small opening on the top of left leg.
5. The wide open space alludes that man has the choice to go into the oblivion, free fall.
6. If he chooses to repent, he can return by taking another path to allow himself to maintain his change for the better.
7. A Noachide must live his life within the context of seven Noachide Laws.
8. Before the sin of Adam, that would have been sufficient to achieve spiritual perfection.
9. After the sin, due to spiritual regression one needs 248 Positive and 365 Negative Commandments for perfection.
10. Since man is prone to fail, Repentance was embedded in the profile of creation.
11. Avraham needed a Hei added to his name to create the force that brought all existence into being.

Aligning Our Destiny WITH THE BIRTHRIGHT

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Toldos

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

The Empowerment of the Patriarch Through The Matriarch

[CLICK TO VIEW!](#) 

1. After Yitzchok marries Rivka, the Torah tells us of Avraham's passing at the age of 175.
2. Avraham passed away when Yaakov and Esav were 13 years old; why mention it here?
3. Midrash: The Patriarchs' actions are indicative of the future events of the Jewish People.
4. Midrash: Avraham went down to Egypt and so did the Jewish People; Avraham left with great wealth and as did the Jewish People.
5. A Patriarch assumes that role if there is a Matriarch.
6. Yitzchok did not become the Patriarch until he married Rivka.
7. Although Avraham lived many more years, he no longer contributed as a Patriarch once Yitzchok married Rivka.
8. Avraham's actions were valued as an individual; no longer contributing to the destiny of the Jewish People.

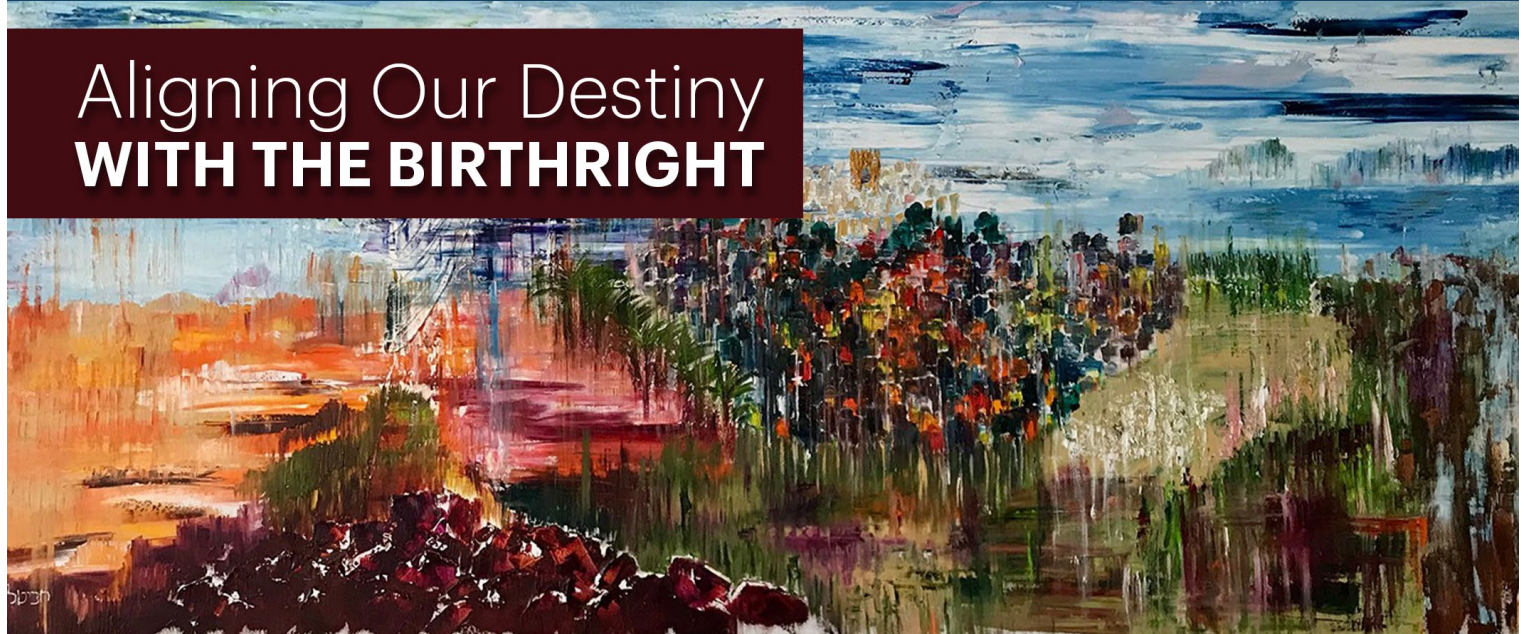
When Intervention Is Without Self Interest

[CLICK TO VIEW!](#) 

1. Esav returns from the field fatigued and famished.
2. He asks Yaakov to give him from the lentil soup he is cooking.
3. Yaakov agrees only if he sells him his birthright.
4. Esav agrees to sell his birthright for a pot of lentils and a loaf of bread.
5. As the narrative reads – Yaakov took advantage of the moment to snatch the birthright.
6. Midrash: The service in the Temple was reserved exclusively for the first born.
7. Yaakov said it would be disgraceful for such an evil person to be the officiant before G-d.
8. Yaakov had no self interest in the birthright; his initiative was solely to avert a desecration of G-d's name.
9. Years later Yaakov took the blessings that were meant for Esav by impersonating Esav.
10. Esav, upon returning and realizing what Yaakov had done, lets out a yelp and wails.
11. Yitzchok blesses Esav: When you are pained by the fact that your birthright was taken from you, when the Jews don't keep the Torah, you will then cast their yoke from your neck.
12. Why is the transgression of the Torah a basis to cast off their yoke?
13. Yaakov's justification to take the birthright was that it was disgraceful for an evil person to be G-d's officiant.
14. If there is a desecration it is no longer justified because the Jews themselves transgressed the Torah.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Toldos

Aligning Our Destiny WITH THE BIRTHRIGHT



Contentment, A Gift from G-d

Torah: “And Avraham passed away at a good old age, mature and content, and he was gathered to his people.”

Ramban: “Avraham passed away in a satisfied and content state because he had seen all the aspirations of his heart fulfilled and was thus sated with all good. The *Torah* is telling us of the special kindness of G-d that He does for the devoutly righteous (*tzaddikim*). This is a gift that is bestowed upon the righteous. It is a positive quality of the *tzaddik* that he desires only what is needed and has no interest in excess...”

“*Midrash:* ‘A person does not leave this world with half of his desires in his hand. This is because one who has one hundred, he desires two hundred. If he has achieved two hundred he desires four hundred... One who loves silver will never be sated...’” This particular aspiration has no relevance to the *tzaddik*. It is only the one who sees excess as necessity.

Ramban: “Chazal tell us that before a *tzaddik* leaves this world, G-d shows him the extent of his reward in the world to come, so that he should feel sated. Then he will sleep. Not only is the *tzaddik* satisfied because he has met the aspirations of his life, G-d also shows him the reward that awaits him in the world to come before he passes away.” Why is it important for G-d to show the *tzaddik* his reward in the world to come at the moment before his passing?

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos* tells us that righteous people, after they pass, are considered as if they are alive; however, evil people, even when they are alive they are considered to be dead. How is this to be understood? It is because the *tzaddik* in his lifetime utilizes every moment and aspect of his physical existence as a means to spiritualize himself and advance the spirituality of the world. The physical is only a medium to bring about spirituality. When the *tzaddik* passes away, it is merely a transition to a more advanced level of spirituality. Although he is no

longer physically alive, the state of his essence has not changed. He only exists in another venue.

However, the evil person, although his mission and purpose in existence is to develop his spirituality to no less a degree than the *tzaddik*, he chooses to ignore its potential and allows it to wither. He focuses only on advancing his material horizons. He exists and functions in the world as an intellectual animal rather than as a spiritual being. His spirituality has no relevance to his life. He is thus considered as if he is dead.

This type of individual, because of his material aspirations, is the one who is referred to by King Solomon in the *Midrash*: "If one has one hundred he desires two hundred..." The more one has, the more one desires. There is no end and no point of satisfaction for the one who is driven by his desires to accumulate the material. This is another reason that the evil one, who has no relevance or interest in the development of his own spirituality, is considered to be dead although he is alive. To live in constant pursuit of a goal that is not attainable can be equated to death.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Berachos* contrasts the passing of a devoutly righteous person and the passing of an evil person with an allegory. When the soul of the *tzaddik* departs from his body its transition is as smooth and gentle as a hair being removed from milk. In contrast, when the soul of the evil one departs from his body it is the equivalent of the fleece of a sheep being torn from a briar bush. Because the soul of the evil one has been materialized and enmeshed with his physicality it does not want to depart from this world. It has difficulty separating itself from the body as the separation of fleece from a briar bush. However, the *tzaddik*, whose entire existence was imbued with spirituality, departs without being encumbered by his physicality.

King David in *Psalms*: "I rejoice (sos) over your words (the *Torah*) as if I found great spoils." The word for joy that King David utilizes is "sos" rather than "simcha" or other terms for joy.

Vilna Gaon: The word "sos" connotes a joy that is experienced with a sense of being denied. He explains this with a parable. A king wanted to reward his loyal and dedicated subject for his service. He said to him, "You will have the privilege to enter into my royal treasury and take whatever you want but only for a period of an hour." The king tells him that he will see

objects of value that the commoner has never seen. When the subject enters into the treasury, he realizes that what the king had described was only a semblance of what he actually seeing. He understands that time was of the essence. Although he had amassed within the hour a great amounts of wealth, simultaneously he was anguished and pained by the time constraint. This is because there was so much more that he could have taken if he only had the time.

Similarly, King David rejoiced over the *Torah* that he had come upon because he understood and internalized its infinite value; however, simultaneously he was distressed by the fact that there was so much more to be amassed, but he was limited by the length of his years. Because of his profound appreciation of the *Torah* he thus experienced a frustration because of his limitation of time.

Every *tzaddik* before he passes away experiences something that has a semblance of King David's experience. Although he feels privileged and fortunate that he had lived a life that was in accordance with G-d's Will, he understands at the end of his life how much more there is to accomplish. In order for the *tzaddik* to leave the physical existence in a state of peace and not feel denied, G-d reveals to him his share in the world to come in order to satisfy and calm him so that he should pass away in a tranquil state.

The Spiritual Capacity and Dimension of the Jewish people is Rooted in Their Antecedents – The Patriarchs and Matriarchs

Torah: *Rivka* our Matriarch was barren.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains why G-d cause *Rivka* to be barren. Before *Eliezer* returned with *Rivka* to be the future wife of *Yitzchak*, his master, her mother and brother *Lavan* had given her a blessing 'Our sister, may you come to be thousands of myriads, and may your offspring inherit the gate of its enemies.'

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh citing a *Midrash*: The reason *Rivka* was barren was because if she would have conceived naturally, it would have been said that the blessing that was given to her by her evil *Lavan*, could bring about something that is truly good. This is not so. The evolvement of the Jewish people would have

been attributed to the blessing of *Lavan*. Therefore, G-d caused *Rivka* to be barren in order to establish beyond any doubt that the essence of the Jewish people has no relevance to the blessing of this evil person. She was only able to conceive as a result of *Yitzchak's* special and intense supplications on her behalf. This caused G-d to perform a miracle.

Torah: Initially *Bilaam* wanted to curse the Jewish people; however, G-d told him not to do so. After being restrained by G-d, *Bilaam* asked G-d if he could bless them. Again, G-d denied his request, saying "I do not want you to bless them," Why did G-d not want *Bilaam* to bless the Jewish people since blessing is something of a positive nature?

Chazal: Just as one says to a bee, "not your honey and not your sting!" G-d did not want *Bilaam* to bless the Jewish people because only evil emanates from evil. Although initially the blessing of an evil person may seem something of value, since it emanates from a source of evil, the outcome cannot have any positive value. Similarly, when *Lavan*, who epitomized evil pursued *Yaakov* when he had fled from his home, G-d said to *Lavan* in a dream, "not good words and not bad words shall you speak to him" This is because only evil could emanate from evil.

Chofetz Chaim: If one were to succeed materially by conforming to the dictates and guidelines of the *Torah*, G-d will protect that individual's possessions because his blessing comes from the "G-d's treasury."

There is a Positive Commandment for the Priests (*Kohanim*) to bless the Jewish people. The priestly blessings are comprised of three blessings. The first is, "May Hashem bless you and watch over you."

Rashi: "May Hashem bless you" can mean that one should be blessed with material blessing and "G-d should watch over you" so that thieves should not steal that which was given. When a master gives a gift to his servant, he cannot guarantee that it will not be stolen. When G-d endows the Jewish people with material blessing He assures them that it will remain intact.

However, if one amasses material wealth in a manner that is not in conformance with the dictates of the *Torah*, it will ultimately be forfeited and cause even what was attained through legal means to be lost. Because the Jewish people are G-d's holy people, they needed to emanate from the purest source, the Patriarchs

and the Matriarchs. *Rivka*, our Matriarch needed to be barren so that no one could say that what had descended from her had any relevance to the blessing of her brother *Lavan*, the evil one. The purity and dimension of spirituality of the Jewish people cannot, under any circumstance, emanate from a source of evil, regardless of the intent of the evil one. In order to establish this fact beyond any doubt, *Rivka* needed to be barren and only conceive through a miracle.

Yitzchak, the Patriarch Who Guaranteed Existence

Midrash citing *Proverbs*: "'The father of the righteous one shall rejoice. The one who gives birth to the wise one will rejoice with him.' To whom is King Solomon referring in the verse? It is to the birth of *Yitzchak*, our Patriarch. When *Yitzchak* was born everyone rejoiced. Heaven and earth rejoiced. The sun and the moon rejoiced. The stars and the zodiac rejoiced. Why did all existence rejoice after the birth of *Yitzchak*? Had *Yitzchak* not been born, the world would have not continued.

"*Yirmiya*: 'If not for My covenant, which is in effect day and night, the extent of heaven and earth would not be put in place.' What is the covenant to which G-d is referring? It is *Yitzchak* – as it states in the *Torah*, 'My covenant I will establish with *Yitzchak*.'"

Torah in *Bereishis*: "And it was the sixth day (*yom hashishi*)." Regarding all of the other days of Creation, the *Torah* refers to the day as "day one," "day two, etc." However, regarding the sixth day of Creation the *Torah* states, "the sixth day" indicating that there is something special about the sixth day.

Chazal: That this is alluding to the sixth day of the month of *Sivan*, when the Jewish people were to receive the *Torah* at Sinai. If they were to accept it on that day, when it will be offered to them, the world would continue to exist. However, if they choose reject G-d's *Torah*, the world would revert back to preexistence.

Gemara in Tractate *Avoda Zorah*: "Existence was not tranquil until the Jewish people accepted the *Torah*." The world was only created for the purpose of the fulfillment of the *Torah* by the Jewish people who were the only ones qualified to be spiritualized through its laws. Had they not accepted the *Torah* on the sixth day of *Sivan*, Creation would have no value, thus causing it to come to an end.

Gemara in Tractate *Nidarim* interpreting the verse in *Yirmiya*: 'If not for My covenant, which is in effect day and night, the extent of heaven and earth would not be put in place' is referring to the study of *Torah*. If the study of *Torah* should cease for even a moment, existence would not be able to continue. The existence of the world is contingent, firstly on the Jewish people accepting the *Torah* and secondly on its study.

In order for the *Torah* to be accepted at Sinai, there needed to be a people qualified to receive it. Had *Yitzchak* not been brought into existence, this would not have occurred. The miracle that allowed our Matriarch *Sarah* to conceive was necessary to guarantee the future of existence. Therefore, when *Yitzchak* was born and was circumcised, it set forth the future of the Jewish people who would receive the *Torah* at Sinai and allow the world to continue. *Yitzchak* only had relevance to *Torah* and spiritual advancement after he was circumcised.

There is an argument in the *Gemara* in Tractate *Nidarim* regarding the words, "if not for My Covenant (*Bris*)" in the verse from *Yirmiya*, is referring to the study of *Torah* or circumcision (*Bris milah*).

R' Akiva Eiger: he opinion that states that "*Bris*" is referring to circumcision also concurs that it refers to the study of *Torah*. In order for one to have relevance to *Torah*, the foreskin must be removed. The removal of the foreskin allows the removal of a spiritual impediment that prevents the Jew from having relevance to his spiritual potential which is achieved through the study of *Torah*.

Therefore, when the covenant (*Bris milah*) is in effect, do the Jewish people have relevance to continuous spiritual growth through the study of the *Torah*. Every aspect of existence rejoiced with the birth of *Yitzchak* because heaven, earth, and all aspects of existence correspond to a spiritual world that functions through a hierarchy of angels. They carry out G-d's Will for the sake of His Glory. If the world would come to an end as a result of *Sarah*, remaining barren, the intent of Creation would never be realized and G-d's Glory would never be addressed.

Intense Supplication is Greater than One's Merit

Midrash: "Avraham our Patriarch's wife was barren. *Yitzchak* our Patriarch's wife was barren. Why did G-d

cause the Matriarchs to be barren?...It is because G-d desired their supplications."

Chazal: G-d desires the supplications of the devoutly righteous. Why is this so? Although the *tzaddik*, when he prays to G-d it is always with a sense of self-negation; however, if he is in a state of need, he will pray with a greater level of intensity. Regarding *Yitzchak's* supplication (*tefillah*), the *Torah* uses the term "*vayetar*," which is a powerful and urgent expression of prayer.

Gemara in Tractate *Succah*: The *tefillah* of *tzaddikim* is compared to a pitchfork (which is referred to as *aatar*). Just as the pitchfork is able to overturn the hay and the straw, so too, so too does the prayer of *tzaddikim* overturn G-d's Attribute of Justice and establishes the Attribute of Mercy.

Torah: Every day, when the Jewish people were in the desert, they received their daily allocation of the Manna.

Chazal: "Why was the Manna not given on a monthly or weekly basis? Why did G-d choose to provide the Manna only in allotments of one day at a time?"

Midrash: This is analogous to a king who loves his son and wishes to give him a daily stipend. The prince asks his father, "Why do you not give me a monthly or yearly stipend rather than me coming every day to receive my needs?" The king answers, "If I were not to give you a stipend on a daily basis I would not have the pleasure of seeing you every day. It is because of my love for you that I desire to see you every day."

Similarly, G-d desires the supplications of the devoutly righteous because of His love for them. It is through their intense requests that they are drawn close to Him and receive His blessing. On the other hand, regarding the evil person, G-d will grant him his needs or even his desires because He does not want this person to be associated with Him. Thus, the evil one does not need to beseech G-d for his needs to the degree that a *tzaddik* does.

Anaf Yosef (a student of the *Vilna Gaon*): The words of *Chazal*, "G-d desires the supplications of the devoutly righteous" can be explained in a different manner. This is based on the understanding of *Rabbeinu Bachya* in his work *Kad HaKemach*. He asks, "Is it not so that the devoutly righteous are continuously engaged in prayer and supplication to G-d? If this is so, then how do we understand the words of the *Midrash* that the

reason the Matriarchs were barren was because G-d desires the supplication of *tzaddikim*? Seemingly, the Patriarchs had sufficient merit due to their own spiritual dimension to merit children. Why then were the Matriarchs barren? It is to teach us that one's merit, despite its dimension is not sufficient to merit children.

Gemara in Moed Katan: 'Children, quality of life, and livelihood are all based on *mazal* (zodiac).' However, intense prayer is able to supersede and cause one to merit children." In order for one to appreciate and understand the value of the prayers of the devoutly righteous, G-d caused that the Matriarchs should be barren. Thus, if they conceived after intense supplication, one would understand that the miracle was initiated by prayer and unrelated to merit. G-d desires the prayers of the *tzaddikim* not only because of His love for them but also to demonstrate to the world the exceptional value of prayer. The supplications of the devoutly righteous are able to overturn nature and bring about miracles.

Torah: "Yitzchak supplicated G-d on behalf of his wife, because she was barren."

Rabbeinu Bachya: The *Torah* should have first mentioned that *Rivka* was barren and therefore Yitzchak supplicated G-d. Why did the *Torah* choose to mention first his prayers and afterwards reveal the fact that she was barren? It is to teach us that the reason that G-d caused her to be barren is for us to appreciate the value of prayer.

Gemara in Tractate Berachos citing *Psalms*: "'There are things that are deprecated by man...' There are things upon which the world stands that people belittle and do not value. What is it that the universe stands upon?"

Rashi: It is the supplication of man that ascends to heaven. The prayers of the Jew are able to alter nature and bring about miracles. Despite the innate reality of its power, mankind does not appreciate its value, and therefore belittles it. People invest their ability in the pursuit of amassing material. If mankind would understand the power of one's supplication and its effectiveness, then one would invest greater amounts of time in prayer.

One's Responsibility as a Jew

Torah: When Yitzchak our Patriarch was in *Gerar*, he became exceptionally wealthy. His level of renown and

wealth was so great that the subjects of *Avimelech*, the king of *Gerar* said that they would prefer the "dung of Yitzchak's mules more than the silver and gold of Avimelech." They believed that the "dung" of Yitzchak's animals provided a greater value than his gold and silver. Avimelech, could not tolerate, that his subjects esteemed Yitzchak to such a degree. He thus expelled Yitzchak from his community.

Torah: "He (Avraham) went up from there to Beersheva. Hashem appeared to him that night and said, "I am the G-d of your father Avraham: Fear not, for I am with you; I bless you and increase your offspring because of Avraham My Servant."

Yitzchak our Patriarch was the equivalent of an angel. Because he allowed himself to be brought as a sacrifice at the *Akeidah* he was viewed by G-d as "the unblemished burnt offering." One would think Yitzchak should merit the blessing of G-d in his own right, because of his own spiritual dimension and caliber. Nevertheless, G-d informs him that all the blessing that he will receive is only due to the merit of his father Avraham, who is referred to by G-d as "My servant."

The fact that Yitzchak's blessing emanated solely from the merit of his father was an indication that he had a spiritual deficiency, despite the fact that he had chosen to conduct his life with the context of the attribute of Justice. He was exacting in every aspect of his service of G-d in the most perfect manner. The *Torah* continues, "He built an altar there, invoked Hashem by Name, and there he pitched his tent..."

Torah: Immediately after this, "Avimelech went to him (Yitzchak) from Gerar with a group of his friends... generals of his legions. Yitzchak said to him, 'Why had you come to me? You hate me and drove me away from you!' And they said 'We have indeed seen that Hashem has been with you...let us make a covenant with you... He made them a feast and they ate and drank.'" What transformation took place that Yitzchak should be seen in such a different light in their eyes?

Sforno: "Avraham was always considered special and beloved to G-d because he invested his life in loving kindness. As it is stated, 'What are the ways of Hashem? Kindness and Truth and to advise sinners to walk the proper path.' Avraham's kindness was expressed by bringing pagans under the wings of the Divine Presence by espousing monotheism. As

it is stated, 'and he called in the Name of Hashem.' *Avraham* selflessly interacted with mankind to dispel paganism from existence. He was a paradigm to the world of what G-d wanted a human being to be....

On the other hand, *Yitzchak's* service of G-d was directed to his own self-perfection. He did not impact upon the world in the same way that his father had done. However, after *Yitzchak* chose to call out in the Name of G-d (as his father had done), indicating that he began to espouse to mankind G-d's existence, he became worthy in his own right." It was only after *Yitzchak* assumed this new role that the *Avimelech* and the community of *Gerar* perceived and appreciated that G-d's Presence was associated with *Yitzchak*. Thus, they wanted to end the dispute and enter into a covenant with him so that they should benefit from the blessing that was upon him.

Torah: Noah only fathered his three sons at the age of 500.

Sforno: Although during the generations of *Noach* people began fathering children at an earlier age, he was not able to father a child until he was 500 years old. It was only after he began building the Ark, which was meant to be a medium for him to admonish his generation and interact with them to repent, did he merit to have children. Although prior to that moment he was considered by G-d to be a devoutly righteous individual who was unique in spirituality in all of his generations, he did not merit to have children until he began to interact with the world. He needed to assume the responsibility for his generation. We see that it is not enough for one to be focused on perfecting one own service of G-d in order to fulfill one's objective in life.

One must assume the responsibility for his fellow and affect him in a positive manner to his best ability. We find that the blessings of the *Amidah* (Silent Prayer) are said on behalf of the entire Jewish people. Although one is obligated to recite the *Amidah* to supplicate G-d for his own needs, the text of all the blessings are written in the plural. For example the blessing for repentance states, "Bring us back, our Father..." The blessing for forgiveness states, "Forgive us, our Father..." G-d wants every Jew to repent and cleave to Him. It is every Jew's responsibility, as a servant of G-d, to dedicate himself to affecting his fellow. *Avraham* was referred to as "My servant" by G-d only because he dedicated himself to the espousal of monotheism to all mankind.

Until *Noach* engaged in building the Ark, which was the means for him to impact upon his generation, he did not merit to have children. Until *Yitzchak* called out in the name of G-d and assumed responsibility for his fellow human being, he needed to rely in the merit of his father to be deserving of blessing. One must understand that the only reason one merits blessing and success is because G-d deems it so. If one feels the responsibility to do G-d's Will, then he will merit G-d's Assistance. However, if one is occupied with own personal spiritual growth, it is not sufficient to be a full beneficiary of G-d's blessing and Assistance.



Yad Avraham Institute