



## A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

### פרשת תולדות

וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֵי יִצְחָק בֶּן אַבְרָהָם, אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת יִצְחָק. (בראשית כה, יט)

*These are the offspring of Yitzchok, son of Avrohom - Avrohom begot Yitzchok. (Bereishis 25:19)*

רש"י: לאחר שקרא הקב"ה שמו אברהם אחר כך הוליד את יצחק. דבר אחר, על ידי שכתב הכתוב "יצחק בן אברהם", הוזק לומר "אברהם הוליד את יצחק", לפי שהיו ליצחקי הדור אומרים מאבימלך נתעברה שרה, שהרי כמה שנים שהתה עם אברהם ולא נתעברה הימנו. מה עשה הקב"ה? לר קלסתר פניו של יצחק דומה לאברהם, והעידו הכל אברהם הוליד את יצחק, וזהו שכתב כאן יצחק בן אברהם, שהרי עדות יש שאברהם הוליד את יצחק.

*Rashi: After Hashem named him "Avrohom" he begot Yitzchok. Alternatively, since the possuk wrote "Yitzchok son of Avrohom" it had to say "Avrohom begot Yitzchok," for the scoffers of the generation were saying that Soroh became pregnant from Avimelech. For she spent many years with Avrohom, yet she did not become pregnant from him. What did Hashem do? He fashioned the form of Yitzchok's face to resemble Avrohom's, and everyone attested, "Avrohom begot Yitzchok." And this is what is written here: Yitzchok was the son of Avrohom for there is evidence that Avrohom begot Yitzchok.*

The Meforshim have noted that the Torah mentions the fact that Yitzchok was the son of Avrohom twice in the same *possuk*. Rashi, in his first explanation, explains that the repetition serves to emphasize that only after Avrom's name was changed to Avrohom did he bear Yitzchok. Accordingly, the *possuk* is saying: Only as Avrohom (i.e., only after his name was changed to Avrohom) did he bear Yitschok; not as Avrom. This is based on the *possuk* (17:5): וְלֹא יִקְרָא עוֹד אֶת שְׁמִי אַבְרָם וְהָיָה שְׁמִי אַבְרָהָם: *Your name shall no longer be called Avrom, but your name shall be Avrohom, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.* Hashem changed Avrohom's name, and with his new name reflecting his new role as the father of a multitude of nations, Avrohom merited to have Yitzchok.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* expands on this with a comment of the Ibn Ezra on the above *possuk*, where Avrohom is told about his name change. The Ibn Ezra writes that it was Divinely orchestrated that Avrohom performed *bris milah* before Soroh conceived. This ensured that his offspring would be יָרַע וְקִדְּשׁ, *holy offspring*. Therefore, the *possuk* conveys a deeper meaning - Only as Avrohom, i.e. as the transformed and sanctified Avrohom through *bris milah*, was Yitzchok born on an exalted level of *kedushah*.

The Rosh Yeshiva uses the context to explain an issue with Rashi's second interpretation of this *possuk's* repetitive nature. Rashi explains that the Torah is rejecting the false accusations made by the critics of Avrohom's generation. They claimed that Yitzchok was not Avrohom's son but rather Avimelech's because Soroh had lived with Avrohom for so long without bearing a child. They questioned how Soroh suddenly became pregnant after being abducted by Avimelech. To refute this, Hashem made Yitzchok's features so undeniably similar to Avrohom's that even the scoffers had to admit that אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת יִצְחָק, "it was indeed Avrohom who had begotten Yitzchok!"

The Rosh Yeshiva asks that, as we know Soroh was a niece of Avrohom, being a daughter of his brother Horon. According to Chazal (see Rashi 13:8), Lot, Soroh's brother, had a similar appearance to

Avrohom, indicating that all Horon's offspring had a resemblance to Avrohom. If this is the case, then how did Yitzchok's resemblance to Avrohom prove that he was not born from Avimelech? Perhaps Yitzchok's appearance was due to a general family resemblance to Avrohom.

Answers the Rosh Yeshiva, we are not merely talking about the same physical appearance. As per the explanation provided by the Ibn Ezra, Yitzchok was born after Avrohom had *bris milah*, which had a profound impact on Yitzchok. Therefore, when Chazal mention that צָר קִלְסֵתָר פָּנָיו שֶׁל יִצְחָק דּוֹמָה לְאַבְרָהָם, *the appearance of Yitzchok resembled that of Avrohom*, it means that the holiness and *shleimus* attained by Avrohom through his lifetime of *avodah* and *bris milah*, was reflected in Yitzchok. This "saintly" appearance could not have been inherited from the grandfather Horon, thus providing conclusive proof that אַבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת יִצְחָק and no one else.

In Parshas Vayeshev (37:3) the *posuk* states: וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶהָב אֶת יוֹסֵף מִכָּל בְּנָיו, כִּי בֶן זָקְנִים הוּא לוֹ, *And Yisroel loved Yosef more than all his sons since he was a child of old age*. Rashi brings an alternative explanation for the words "בֶּן זָקְנִים" that this phrase does not necessarily mean that Yosef was born when Yaakov was old, but rather that the splendour of his appearance resembled that of his father - לֹא הָיָה זֵיו אִיקוּיָנִין שְׁלוֹ דּוֹמָה לוֹ. (Accordingly, זָקְנִים is seen as a contraction of אִיקוּיָנִין.) It must be noted the change in the description from Rashi in our *parshah* which uses a different terminology - קִלְסֵתָר פָּנָיו.

According to the above idea, the difference in description between Rashi in our *parshah*, which uses the terminology "קִלְסֵתָר פָּנָיו", and the description of Yosef's appearance, can be aptly resolved. The קִלְסֵתָר פָּנָיו, the "saintly" appearance with which Yitzchok was bestowed, was his from birth, solely because he was born from Avrohom in a state of ultimate *kedushah*. The look which Yosef possessed, however, was attained through his wisdom and understanding of Torah, which he learned from his father Yakov. This is similar to the concept mentioned in Koheles (8:1): חָכְמַת אָדָם תְּאִיר פָּנָיו, *A man's wisdom lights up his face* (Kli Yakar).

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