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# DAF KESHER

SHAPELL'S / YESHIVA DARCHÉ NOAM · MIDRESHET RACHEL V'CHAYA · JACK E. GINDI Z"L PATHWAYS ISRAEL &amp; PATHWAYS PLUS

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Please contact Emuna Diamond at [emuna@darchenoam.org](mailto:emuna@darchenoam.org) for details.**

## DVAR TORAH ESAV IS EDM

When Esav came into the world, he was all red and hairy. He was eventually referred to as Edom – meaning red – and his mountain was called Mount Seir – which means hairy. But even though these two names became associated with him, at birth he was named Esav. Asks the author of the Chatam Sofer, Harav Moshe Sofer זצ"ל of Pressburg (1762–1839): Why did they call him Esav and not Edom or Seir?

He answers that a name should refer to something's essential content, not to its superficial or incidental aspects. Esav's hair was an external sign that he was completely formed at an early stage. Therefore, the appropriate name for him was "Esav," which means, as Rashi explains, "completely done" ("עָשׂוּי"). A person's name should penetrate to his essence, not refer to his external appearance.

However, Esav himself did not look at the inner essence of things, but, ironically, was caught up in their externals. He "ate of this world and inherited Gehinnom." This superficiality led Esav to sell his birthright. When he was hungry he saw a pot of lentils and referred to its superficial appearance – "Give me some of that red stuff" – as opposed to referring to its contents – lentils or beans. He likewise looked at the birthright itself superficially. For him it became a means of purchasing food, not as a conduit for the blessings of Avraham and a special connection with the Divine.

During the episode of the selling of the birthright the Torah calls him Edom, referring to his own superficial appearance, as opposed to his essence – someone uniquely born as a completely developed person. In fact, Esav-Edom revealed that he was not completely developed; on the contrary, at his core was a real emptiness. This is what the Torah later says, "Esav is Edom" (Bereishit 36:1). What seemed to originally be finished and complete (Esav) proved to be superficial and lacking (Edom).

Esav realized that Yaakov did grasp the importance of the birthright. Therefore, he said to Yaakov, "למה זה לי בכורה – What good is a birthright to me?" (Bereishit 25:32). To Esav the birthright was not worth much; to Yaakov it had immeasurable value.

External appearances can be deceiving, even to the greatest of people. When Hashem asked the prophet Shmuel to anoint a king to replace King Shaul, He did not reveal the new king's identity. He only told Shmuel that the new king would come from among the sons of Yishai of Beit Lechem. Yishai's son Eliav was brought before him; and Shmuel was ready to anoint him. But Hashem had to tell him, "Do not look at his appearance and how tall he is; for I have rejected him. For [the way G-d views things] is not as a man does. For a man sees with his eyes and G-d sees to the heart" (I Shmuel 16:7). This scene repeated itself with the next six sons, until Shmuel asked, "Are there no more youth?" Apparently, no one had considered the remaining son, David, as a potential king of Israel. When David came, Shmuel saw that he was אדמוני – he had a reddish complexion, and thought, "He looks like an Esav-like spiller of blood!" (Bereishit Rabbah 63:8). Hashem immediately told Shmuel, "Go anoint him, for this is the one" (I Shmuel 16:12). Looks can deceive.

## SOURCE GUIDE: SEEING A FRAGRANCE

Yitzchak smells the fragrance of Yaakov's garments and says, "See, the fragrance of my son is like that of a field blessed by G-d." Why does Yitzchak use the verb "see" in conjunction with smell? This source guide is based on the Meshech Chochmah's answer to this question (aided by Harav Yehudah Cooperman [1929-2016, Israel] זצ"ל's extensive footnotes.)

### A. The Difficulty

Note the difficulty posed by the "ראה-ריח - see-smell" combination:

<p><b>1. Bereishit 27:27</b> He (Yaakov) approached and he (Yitzchak) kissed him. And he (Yitzchak) smelled the fragrance of his (Yaakov's) clothes; and he blessed him and said, "See the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field that has been blessed by Hashem."</p>	<p><b>בראשית כז:כז</b> וַיִּגַשׁ וַיִּשָׁק לוֹ וַיְרַח אֶת רִיחַ בְּגָדָיו וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר רְאֵה רִיחַ בְּנֵי כְרִיחַ שְׂדֵה אֲשֶׁר בְּרָכָה ה'.</p>
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In his Meshech Chochmah, Harav Meir Simchah of Dvinsk, זצ"ל (1843–1926) asks two questions:

<p><b>2. Meshech Chochmah on Bereishit 27:27</b> It is astounding – how does the Torah speak about sight in conjunction with fragrance? Furthermore, why is the word "see" (in the command form) directed at a second person (was Yitzchak speaking to Yaakov)?</p>	<p><b>משך חכמה על בראשית כז:כז</b> יפלא, האיך יוחס על ריח ראיה? ועוד, מה ראה בלשון נוכח?</p>
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### B. Seeing a Fragrance

The author of the Meshech Chochmah assumes that the word "see" means using the sense of sight, with one's eyes. But a number of other commentators drop that assumption and thereby resolve the difficulty:

<p><b>3. Rabbeinu Bechayei on Shemot 20:15</b> "The entire nation saw the sounds" – This "sight" means "understanding". This is similar to "See the fragrance of my son," for sound and fragrance are not seen.</p> <p><b>Sforno on Bereishit 27:27</b> "See the fragrance of my son" – You, my son, see and understand that this fragrance is like the fragrance of a field ...</p> <p><b>Ibn Ezra on Bereishit 42:1</b> "Yaakov saw [that there was grain in Egypt]" – Because the senses connect together in one place (in the brain), they are exchanged one for another (even though Yaakov heard, the verse says that he saw). Other examples (of one sense being exchanged for another) are: "See the fragrance of my son" (Bereishit 27:27); "The light is sweet" (Kohelet 11:7); and "Yaakov saw" (Bereishit 42:1). For afterwards it is written, "Behold I have heard."</p>	<p><b>רבינו בחיי על שמות כ:טו</b> "וכל העם רואים את הקולות" – ראייה זו ענין השגה, וכן "ראה ריח בני" (בראשית כז:כז), כי אין הקול והריח נראים.</p> <p><b>ספורנו על בראשית כז:כז</b> "ראה ריח בני" – אתה, בני, ראה והתבונן שזה הריח הוא כריח שדה.</p> <p><b>אבן עזרא על בראשית מב:א</b> "וירא יעקב" – בעבור היות ההרגשות נחברות במקום אחד יחליפו זו בזו. כמו "ראה ריח בני" (בראשית כז:כז), "ומתוק האור" (קהלת יא:ז), וכן "וירא יעקב" (בראשית מב:א). כי אחריו כתוב "הנה שמעתי."</p>
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### C. Who Said "See"?

The author of the Meshech Chochmah prefaces his answer with two introductory points. Here is the first:

<p><b>4. Meshech Chochmah on Bereishit 27:27</b> This matter can be understood through two introductory points: A. The Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 68:5) comments on the verse, "His (Yitzchak's) eyes were dimmed from seeing" (explaining the seemingly superfluous expression, "from seeing"). "From seeing" the smoke of Esav's wives (who</p>	<p><b>משך חכמה על בראשית כז:כז</b> והענין יובן עפ"י שני הקדמות, א. מדרש (בראשית רבה סח:ה) ותכהן עיניו מראות מראות ברעתו של רשע מראות בעשן של אלו (רש"י).</p>
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offered idolatrous sacrifices) – Rashi’s comment on that verse.

Rashi’s comment is based on the verses immediately preceding Yitzchak’s blindness:

<p><b>5. Bereishit 26:34-35</b> (34) Esav was forty years old; and he took a wife – Yehudit daughter of Beeri the Hittite and Bosmat daughter of Eilon the Hittite. (35) They were a cause of anger and distress for Yitzchak and Rivkah.</p> <p><b>Rashi on Bereishit 26:35</b> ... All of their actions were geared at angering and saddening Yitzchak and Rivkah for they worshipped idols.</p>	<p><b>בראשית כו: לד-לה</b> (לד) וַיְהִי עֶשָׂו בֶן אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה וַיִּקַּח אִשָּׁה אֶת יְהוּדִית בַּת בְּעֵרִי הַחִיטִּי וְאֶת בּוֹסמַת בַּת אֵילֹן הַחִיטִּי. (לה) וַתְּהִינָן מְרֵת רוּחַ לְיִצְחָק וּלְרִבְקָה.</p> <p><b>רש"י על בראשית כו: לה</b> ... כל מעשיהן היו להכעיס ולעצבון. "ליצחק ולרבקה" – שהיו עובדות ע"א.</p>
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His second introductory point: The Zohar raises a question – who said the word “See”?

<p><b>6. Meshech Chochmah on Bereishit 27:27</b> B. The Holy Zohar (142b): “He said, ‘See’” – This is ambiguous. Some say it was Divine Presence and others that it was Yitzchak. Both are true, since the Prophetic Spirit spoke through his mouth in the name of the Holy One, blessed be He.</p>	<p><b>משך חכמה על בראשית כו: כז</b> ב. זוה"ק (דף קמב:) ויאמר ראה מלה סתום הוא אית דאמרי שכינתא הוא ואית דאמרי יצחק. ושניהן אמת כי רוח"ק מדבר בפיו בשמא דקוב"ה</p>
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Based on his introduction, the Meshech Chochmah offers an explanation in which “see” can be taken literally. Hashem is the speaker, Yitzchak the listener; and “see” means using your eyes:

<p><b>7. Meshech Chochmah on Bereishit 27:27</b> This is what is meant by “see”: You are able to see without your eyes dimming as with that evil one (Esav). For the fragrance of My son (Yaakov) is like the fragrance of a field that Hashem blessed. The prophetic voice called Yaakov “My son,” as it is written: “My first born son Israel” (Shemot 4:22).</p>	<p><b>משך חכמה על בראשית כו: כז</b> וזה שאמר “ראה”: תוכל לראות ולא יכה עיניך מאותו רשע, כי ריח בני (הוא יעקב) כריח השדה אשר ברכו ד'. וזה שקרא הרוח"ק בני ליעקב כמו שכתוב (שמות ד, כב) בני בכורי ישראל.</p>
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#### D. What Is the Fragrance?

What is the significance of Yaakov’s fragrance? For this we turn to the previous comment in the Meshech Chochmah on our Parshah. All of the things Yaakov brought his father Yitzchak were geared at facilitating prophecy. Yaakov’s goal, as directed by Rivkah, was to give Yitzchak all he needed to enter a state of prophecy; then he would surely bless Yaakov. The Meshech Chochmah cites the Ramban, who says that the bread, wine, and meat Yaakov brought parallel grain offerings, libations, and sacrifices. Now we can explain Yaakov’s fragrance. It was the last element needed for Yitzchak’s prophecy:

<p><b>8. Meshech Chochmah on Bereishit 27:27</b> ... Therefore only when Yitzchak smelled the fragrance of Yaakov’s clothing – which corresponded to the incense [did he bless him.] ... Therefore, Chazal explained that the verse, “See the fragrance of my son is like a field blessed by G-d,” refers to the Beit Hamikdash – that Yitzchak referred to as a field (Pesachim 88a or b???) and Bereishit Rabbah 65:19).</p>	<p><b>משך חכמה על בראשית כו: כז</b> ... לכן רק בהריחו ריח בגדיו שזה נגד קטורת ... לכן אמר ראה ריח בני כריח שדה כו' זה בהמ"ק שקראו יצחק שדה (פסחים פח) וכן דריש במ"ר (סה, יט) פ"ה על בהמ"ק שראה אותו והבן.</p>
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Yaakov’s descendants will build the Beit Hamikdash, bringing the Divine Presence back to the world. In the Beit Hamikdash the People of Israel will offer the incense, the fragrance of a field (Yitzchak referred to the Beit Hamikdash as a field) blessed by G-d.

Rashi comments: When Yaakov entered, the “fragrance of the Garden of Eden” entered with him. Yaakov, says the Gemara (Bava Metzia 84a) resembled Adam Harishon, Man in his pre-sin state. “Look,” says Hashem to Yitzchak. “You have no need for blindness, for your son Yaakov is My first-born son. He is the Man I created.

## TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT BY RABBI GIDON SHOSHAN

In Parshas Toldos, the Torah tells us of Rivka's unusually difficult pregnancy. Quoting the Midrash, Rashi tells us of the strange pains that bothered her as she carried her unborn children. Each time she would pass places of holiness such as the yeshiva of Shem and Ever, one of the two babies inside her would attempt to push his way out of the womb. Unaware that she was carrying twins, it was especially strange to her that the same pain struck her when she passed the temples of the idolaters. Troubled and nervous, she consulted Shem, one of the greatest prophets of her time.

Shem explained to her that she was indeed carrying within her the progenitors of two nations. She was carrying twins that would chart their lives' paths in opposite directions. Yaakov, her righteous unborn son, was aching to leave the bounds of her womb to encounter the holiness of the beis medrash. Esav, the spiritual heir to Avraham's idolatrous ancestors, was driven to escape his mother's body for refuge in the churches of pagan ritual. Driven by their opposing spiritual ambitions, the fetal twins threatened their mother's pregnancy with their attempts to escape.

There is a question that presents itself: While we can understand the energetic desires of Esav to cleave to the idolatrous priests, it is Yaakov's inverse desire that doesn't quite make sense. For after all, the Talmud teaches that while every child is gestating, he or she is accompanied by an angel who teaches them the entire Torah. Just as he is about to be born, the child is hit above the mouth causing him to forget that which he had learned, but leaving a spiritual imprint on his soul that will allow him to reclaim Torah throughout his lifetime.

Why, then, did Yaakov want to escape to the halls of Shem and Ever? As good as they could be as his rabbeim, could they be better than an angel of G-d?

My rebbe, Rabbi Meyer Juzint, זצ"ל, of Chicago, would often repeat to us his deep insight on this question. He used to explain that while Yaakov indeed had the privilege of learning with an unparalleled rebbe; that alone was not enough to create a positive environment for his spiritual development. What was of greater consequence to him was the influence of his peers, in this case, the negative impact of his proximity to Esav. Yaakov taught us a basic element of human nature: The single element of our education that impacts our spiritual development most is our community and our peer group.

When we study in yeshiva or seminary, we are privileged to exist in a rarified environment with both great rabbeim and teachers and an inspirational environment and peer group. The challenge and the true developmental opportunity is when we leave yeshiva and enter a world of varied influences and dynamic responsibilities. During the month of Chanukah, we realize more than ever the delicate balance and sensitive tension that accompany us in a life that combines Torah living and professional or academic ambition. Our primary responsibility is to ensure that Torah remains primary and continues to be our source of guidance and inspiration. Our greatest tool is to associate ourselves with friends and community for whom a Torah life is "in style," and to grow along with them in an upward direction.

שבת שלום ומבורך

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The following digital Torah resources have been extremely helpful in researching and preparing the Shapell's Daf Keshet:  
DBS – Hataklitor Hatorani, Otzar Hachochmah, the Bar Ilan Responsa Project, and Hebrewbooks.org.

**We pray for a refuah shleimah, a complete healing, for all those wounded in the attacks against our People.**