

Building Your Bible IQ - Parshas Toldos - Divine Gevura:

1. **Bereishis 25,19:** And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son; Abraham fathered Isaac. ואלה תולדת יצחק בן-אברהם אברהם הוליד את-יצחק
2. **Rashi:** And these are the generations of Isaac the son of Abraham: [תולדות refers to] Jacob and Esau mentioned in this section.
3. **QUESTION #1:** What insight is Rashi teaching us - this seems to be obvious !
4. **Rashi:** אברהם הוליד את יצחק. על ידי שכתב הפתוב יצחק בן אברהם הזקק לומר אברהם הוליד את יצחק; לפי שהיו ליצני הדור אומרים מאבימלך נתעברה שרה, שהרי כמה שנים שהתה עם אברהם ולא נתעברה הימנו; מה עשה הקב"ה? צר קלסתר פניו של יצחק דומה לאברהם, והעידו הכל אברהם הוליד אברהם: אַתְּ יִצְחָק, וְזֶהוּ שְׁכַתּוּב כֵּן יִצְחָק בֶּן אַבְרָהָם, שֶׁהָרִי עֲדוּת יֵשׁ שְׂאֵבְרָהָם הוֹלִיד אֶת יִצְחָק ABRAHAM BEGAT ISAAC — Just because Scripture wrote, "Isaac, son of Abraham" it felt compelled to say "Abraham begat Isaac", because the cynics of that time said, "Sarah became with child of Abimelech. See how many years she lived with Abraham without becoming with child". What did the Holy One, blessed be He, do? He shaped Isaac's facial features exactly similar to those of Abraham's, so that everyone had to admit that Abraham begat Isaac. This is what is stated here: that Isaac was the son of Abraham, for there is evidence that Abraham begat Isaac (Midrash Tanchuma, Toldot 1).
5. **QUESTION #2:** What was the point of the mockery? After all, even if Sarah conceived from Avimelech, that, too, would have been a miracle!
6. **Bereishis 6,9:** These are the generations of Noah; Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. אלה תולדת נח נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדרתיו את-האלהים התהלך-נח
7. **QUESTION #3:** That being the case, why isn't our Parsha called "Yitzchak" instead of "Toldos?"
8. **Pirkei Avos 5,2:** עשרה דורות מאדם ועד נח, להודיע כמה ארך אפים לפניו, להודיע כמה ארך אפים לפניו, ובאין עד שהביא עליהם את מי המבול. עשרה דורות מנח ועד אברהם, להודיע כמה ארך אפים לפניו, [There were] ten generations from Adam to Noah, in order to make known *what long-suffering is His*; for all those generations *kept on provoking Him*, until He brought upon them the waters of the flood. [There were] ten generations from Noah to Abraham, in order to make known *what long-suffering is His*; for all those generations *kept on provoking Him*, until Abraham, came and received the reward of all of them.
9. **QUESTION #4:** Did everyone from Adam on down 'anger' Hashem? there were certainly good individualist those generations such as Shem and Ever, etc.?
10. **ANSWER:** In those sets of generations, those righteous individuals had no continuation. The "generations" angered Hashem. The scoffers wanted to dispute the perpetuation of Avraham's lineage - not the miracle that happened. The Torah calls this Parsha "Toldos" to emphasize the critical aspect of continuity that would be achieved in this Parsha through Yitzchak?
11. **QUESTION #5:** How did Yitzchak succeed in perpetuating the Jewish people?
12. **Bereishis 25,27- 28:** And the boys grew; and Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he ate of his venison; but Rebekah loved Jacob.
13. **Rashi:** And the youths grew up, and Esau was: As long as they were small, they were not recognizable through their deeds, and no one scrutinized them to determine their characters. As soon as they became thirteen years old, this one parted to the houses of study, and that one parted to idol worship. — [From Gen. Rabbah 63:10; Tanchuma, Ki Theze 4]; who understood hunting: [He knew how] to trap and to deceive his father with his mouth and ask him, "Father, how do we tithe salt and straw?" His father thereby thought that he was scrupulous in his observance of the commandments (Tanchuma, Toeldoth 8); in his mouth: As the Targum renders: into Isaac's mouth. The Midrashic

interpretation is: with Esau's mouth, for he would entrap him and deceive him with his words. — [From Tanchuma, Toledoth 8]

14. **Rashi 25,29:** And he was exhausted. From murdering.
15. **Midrash Hagadol:** He (Avraham) is gone forever, never to rise again! He did just as the first man Adam died and will never return again!
16. **Bereishis 26, 34 -35 & 27, 1-4:** And Esau was forty years old when he married Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they made life bitter for Isaac and for Rebekah. And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said to him, My son; and he said to him, Behold, here am I. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death. Now therefore take, I beg you, your weapons, your quiver and your bow and go out to the field, and catch me some venison. And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless you before I die.
17. **Rashi:** "His eyes were dim" - through the smoke they raised by these women in offering incense to idols. Another explanation is: When Yitzchok was bound upon the altar and his father was about to slay him, at that very moment the heavens opened, the ministering angels saw it and wept, and their tears flowed and fell upon Yitzchok's eyes which thus became dim. Another explanation is: They became dim just in order that Yaakov might receive the blessings.
18. **Bereishis Rabba 65:** Sharpen your weapons - so that you do not feed me with improperly slaughtered animals, and suspend your weapons so that you do not feed me with animals stolen or robbed from others.
19. **FACT:** The Arizal could see every sin a Jew did by merely looking at his forehead !
19. **QUESTION #6:** Why doesn't Yitzchak throw Eisav out of the house, just like his father Avraham did with Yishmael? Why do Sarah & Hashem decide to throw out Yishmael, while Hashem and Rivkah do not see it fit to throw out Eisav ?
20. **QUESTION #7:** How could Yitzchak love, be fooled by, and want to bless Eisav ? It is impossible to think that Yitzchak was fooled by Eisav ?
21. **Zohar 1, 139a:** You might ask: How is it that Yitzchok knew not all of Esau's evil deeds? Certainly the Shechina (Divine Presence) was with him; for if the Shechina was not present with him, how could he have blessed Yaakov when he did? The truth is that the Shechina indeed dwelt with him always, but it did not reveal Esau's deeds to him so that Yaakov should be blessed without his knowledge, but only by the will of the Holy One, blessed is He.
22. Zohar tells us that Hashem withheld Eisav's total wickedness from him.
23. **QUESTION #8:** Why does Hashem withhold such vital information from Yitzchak ?
24. **QUESTION #9:** Why does the Torah tell us about the every day issues of Yitzchak dealing with Avimelech and the people from Gerar?
25. **QUESTION #10:** What is the message of Yitzchak digging the wells ?
26. **QUESTION #11:** What is the significance of Yitzchak establishing the Mincha prayer?
27. **Talmud Berachos 6b:** לעולם יהא אדם זהיר בתפלתה מנחה שהרי אליהו לא נענה אלא בתפלת ענני One must always be vigilant with regard to the afternoon prayer, as Elijah's prayer was only answered in the afternoon prayer, as it is stated: "And it was at the time of the afternoon offering that Elijah the Prophet came near, and he said...Answer me, Lord, answer me, [that this people will know that You, Lord, are God" (I Kings 18:36–37). Because Elijah was answered in the afternoon prayer, it has particular significance.]
28. **QUESTION #12:** What is so special about the Mincha prayer over Shacharis and Maariv ?

be to make us greater people. We must also believe that Hashem gives us the ability to successfully overcome these challenges. The greater the challenge, the more ability Hashem must give us to overcome it. ***This gives us the courage and confidence to become a Gibor!***

38. The very purpose of the neshamah's descent to This World is to combat the yetzer hara. Gevurah, fear of sin and strength of character, is vital in this battle.
39. **Slonimer Rebbe:** a day a person doesn't perform at least one act against his Yetzer Hora, he didn't advance in his life's mission. Gevura is a life-long mission.
40. **QUESTION:** Where does one require to have the most Gevura ?
41. **Chovos Halevavos 4,3:** (addresses the question of why Hashem decreed that man should work for a living) Divine wisdom required the testing of man in the service of G-d or rebellion against Him. Therefore, G-d tests man with what demonstrates his choice in this - needs and lacking for external things such as food, drink, clothing, shelter, and sexual relations. G-d commanded man to pursue and attain them through the available means in specific ways (according to the torah) and at specific times. What G-d has decreed that man will attain of them, man will attain fully after the completion of the prepared means. That which has not been decreed that he will attain - he will not attain, and the necessary means will be withheld. Through this process, his free choice of whether he served G-d or rebelled against Him will be demonstrated through his intention and choice, and the man will then deserve either reward or punishment, regardless whether or not he actually achieved his intentions.
42. **ANSWER:** Making a parnassa, which our entire existence depends upon !
43. **Talmud Shabbos 31a:** When they escort a person to his final heavenly judgment after his death, the Heavenly tribunal says to him: 1) Did you conduct your business transactions faithfully?

GEVURA IN YITZCHAK'S LIFE:

44. Examples of the Gevura of Yitzchak:
 - Akeidas Yitzchak (see below)
 - Established Tefilas Mincha - stopping what you are doing in the middle of the day to serve Hashem.
 - He is the Pillar of Tefila - which requires lots of concentration. (see below)
 - Planted crops successfully during a famine (see below)
 - Stayed in Gerar & dealt honourably with Avimelech (see below)
 - Allowed Eisav to stay in the house for such a long time, although he knew that he was a Rasha.
 - Yitzchak asks Hashem to bring suffering in the world - starting with him!
45. **Talmud Berachos 15b:** one who recites *Keriyat Shema* and is careful to properly pronounce its letters, *Gehinom* is "cooled off" for him.
46. **REASON:** But "heating himself" to hold back and slow down, he gets less "heat" in Gehinom.
47. **PARENTING:** The hardest thing for a parent is to deal with a child that it is totally the opposite of you and also in an evil way ! And more than that - your friends are talking about it ! many parents would throw such child out of the house!
48. You need Gevura to still deal with your child in the way Hashem would.
49. **STORY #1:** Rav Yerachmiel Kraus (Matok Ha'or pg. 163)
50. **STORY #2:** Gerer Rebbe (pg. 164)
51. Yitzchak was an Olah Temima, willing to die for God. he has a mother who threw out Yishmael. Eisav is a public Rasha , marries bad women, idol worshippers....
52. Now when Eisav offers deer meat to Yitzchak, instead of throwing out Yitzchak, the torah tells us that even though Eisav is such a disappointment , as a hunter, inspire of the fact that Eisav was a rasha - he had the gevura to love him....but it was Yitzchak who was trapping eisav to make him think that he was impressed by him. Yitzchak was fooling

Eisav - not the opposite ! Eisav is trying to fool Yitzchak, but Yitzchak also tricks him ! This took incredible Gevura on yitzchak's part !

53. ***Yitzchak shows self-control to Eisav for at least 63 years ! Yitzchak must conquer this Yetzer Hora without stop!***
54. **POINT: MAI SHILOACH:** Hashem, who knows what is best for us, sends people in our lives that are the opposite of us in order for us to develop ourselves. And Hashem may send many of these people into our lives to develop your Midos !
55. **POINT:** Hashem never reveals how evil Eisav is , so that he will spend his whole lifetime working on Gevura.
56. **POINT:** Yitzchak wants to bless Eisav to have good life, so that he will not throw away his Yiddishkeit !
57. **POINT:** Eisav never publicly went off the Derech during Yitzchak's lifetime.
58. **POINT:** Any other child, but Eisav, would have POSITIVELY responded to Yitzchak's love.
59. **POINT:** No need for Yitzchak to bless Yaakov - he can develop with no assistance.
60. **ANSWER #5:** Yitzchak became Yitzchak BECAUSE of his Toldos - the way he raised them , built up his Gevura !
61. **POINT:** Yitzchak was an excellent parent - but Eisav was a supernaturally bad child.
62. **QUESTION:** From where did Yitzchak learn about this attribute of Divine Gevura?
63. **ANSWER:** From Hashem ! (See source #8)

MANIFESTATIONS OF DIVINE GEVURA:

BEFORE:

- Look for daily examples of Hashem's Divine Gevura as He interacts with mankind.
- Look at every personal misfortune / yetzer hora that you go through as training to being a better Gibor.
- Feel compelled to search out for opportunities to show Gevura even when none appear to exist. Be a "Gevura Machine." A day can not go by without you having overcome your Yetzer Hora.
- View a day without Gevura as a day without special Hashgacha Pratis & Brocha from Hashem.
- Do not feel that any act of Gevura is beyond your abilities.
- Primarily focus on your own self-control; only afterwards work on controlling others.

DURING:

- Do not do an act of Gevura because it "makes you feel good" - do it because it fulfills Hashem's Divine will of 1) you're emulating Hashem, 2) perfecting yourself so that Hashem can come close to you, and 3) The Kiddush Hashem that your behaviour produces.
- Realize that every act of Gevurah to another person is also a Chesed to Hashem.
- Feel that you are doing every act of Gevura as a joint partner with Hashem.
- Minimize your appearance during the Gevura that you do.
- Empathize with the recipients feelings; and insure that he does not feel minimized by your Gevura.
- Have the recipient feel that he is the one doing you the favor.
- Areas to specially focus on Gevura: 1)monetary, 2)interpersonal, 3) parenting, and 4) prayer.

AFTER:

- Don't EVER expect anything in return for your Gevura
- Expect to use your gevura in the same area for a very long period of time.
- Gevura needs Gevura – because" Kol Shegadol Me'chaveiro, Yitzro Gadol Mimenu.

ADDENDUM:

64. **Rabbeinu Bechayai:** The Pelishtim were jealous of Yitzchak and therefore closed up these wells. Yitzchak overpowered them, reopened the wells, and gave them the names which had originally been used by Avraham. This, Yitzchak did in honor of his father, in order to demonstrate that he is clinging to his father's legacy. Rabbeinu Bechayai states that if Yitzchak was so careful not to change even the names of the wells which were attributed to his father, how much more so must we attempt to continue in the values and outlook of our own fathers and ancestors.
65. The Torah recounts how Yitzchak planted (fields) in the land of Pelishtim and received a blessing from G-d in these plantations. (Bereishit 26:12) Many of the commentaries point out that this was a time of famine and the land itself was difficult, yet despite this, Yitzchak attempted to act, to invest in the future and succeeded. He demonstrated both belief in himself and belief in Hashem.
66. Similarly, after having reopened the wells which had been originally dug by his father, Yitzchak embarks on his own attempts to draw water. He too encounters resistance from the local populous. It takes three attempts until he is allowed to keep his newly dug water source open. At each of these three encounters, Yitzchak gives the well a name.
67. Da'as Sofrim: these names are very different from the sorts of names used until this point. These names signify Yitzchak's personal history, his trials and tribulations, as he sought to preserve them for future generations. In Yitzchak's eyes, these events represented the depth of judgment and hardships which man can encounter in the world. We add to this point that Yitzchak not only named the wells which he failed to secure but also the final one which he succeeded in keeping open. This way ***Yitzchak left a lasting commemoration to the attribute of perseverance. Yitzchak aimed to achieve his goal.*** His first two attempts failed but he did not despair and continued until he was successful.
68. **POINT:** Yitzchak encompasses these two aspects of gevurah. He limits himself in order to consolidate his father's legacy. He holds back his personal will to create by becoming subservient to his role as the second in line, the one who must continue the work of his father before him. But Yitzchak also demonstrates physical and emotional might; he overcomes the Pelishtim, he recovers from his losses and builds until he succeeds. These two aspects are symbolized by the two sets of wells. The first wells were named as they were in the time of Avraham, symbolizing continuity. The second set of wells Yitzchak named himself to commemorate his trials and how they were overcome.
69. The defining event in Yitzchak's life was the Akeidah. Although this seminal event was a trial for Avraham, and we usually view it through his lens, it is universally referred to as Akeidas Yitzchak, "the Binding of Yitzchak." This title is based on a Midrash that tells us of Yitzchak's heroic request as he lay on the mizbeiach and prepared to be sacrificed: "Father, I am young, and I may flinch from fear of the knife; perhaps this will invalidate the offering. So bind me very well."
70. Binding — tying and restraining — is a fitting expression for gevurah. Pirkei Avos (5:1) famously defines a gibor not as someone who exerts his physical muscles, but as a person who displays moral strength and conquers his evil inclination. In its ultimate form, gevurah refers to giving up one's life, but more commonly, it's expressed by binding, or restricting, one's natural inclinations, and subjugating oneself to Hashem's Will.
71. Avodah, service, is a term that refers to gevurah as well as to korbanos and tefillah. In all these usages, the individual views himself as an eved Hashem, a servant whose raison d'être is to serve his master. He has no ego and no personal agenda. Introspection, discipline, and relinquishment of self are the hallmarks of the gevurah personality.
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