

SICHA SUMMARY

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 25

Toldos, Sicha 2

The Context:

The forefathers' lives and exploits provide us with a premonition of what we are capable of accomplishing in spiritual life. "The actions of the fathers are a signpost for their children."

Generally speaking, Avraham and Yitzchak embodied two divergent paths to spiritual leadership and activity. Avraham traveled broadly to share the message of monotheism with anyone he encountered. He was extroverted, giving, and non-judgmental. Avraham set the precedent for those who devote their lives to elevating the external world, and those outside the confines of holiness.

Yitzchak, on the other hand, was not allowed to ever leave the Land of Israel. Where Avraham was gregarious, Yitzchak was circumspect, careful, and deeply introspective. He didn't extend himself outwards to find students, he remained in his sacred place, engaged in his sacred inner

work, and attracted seekers to him. From Yitzchak, we draw the inspiration for internal, private spiritual work.

The Question:

The parshah that speaks extensively about Yitzchak's life is called Toldos, the "generations" and "offspring" of Yitzchak. The theme of offspring highlights the spiritual legacy and impact that a leader has on his students in subsequent generations. Why is the one parshah that is named for the theme of spiritual legacy given specifically to Yitzchak, whose life was an embodiment of inner-focused work, not external proselytizing?

The Explanation:

Yitzchak did not have to disrupt his own spiritual work in order to influence others. His intensity and aura drew people in and inspired them to remake themselves in his image of devotion. This is similar to how the prophets describe the future Messianic redemption, which will inspire neighboring nations to flock to the Beis Hamikdash to seek a relationship with G-d, not through the Jewish people's departure from the Land of Israel, but from the force of the

spiritual magnetism of the people in their own place.

When Yitzchak inspired others to come under his influence, they developed more closely according to his own example, being that why observed him in his natural state, focused on his own authentic spiritual work. When Avraham would travel to influence others, however, meeting them where they were, the individual would retain their own identity and only be peripherally changed. Thus the idea of Toldos, of spiritual birth,

where the child mirrors the parent, is actually more fully realized in Yitzchak, who birthed students who molded themselves in their father/teacher's image.

The lesson is straightforward: Even those who dedicate their lives to outreach, to leaving their open place to spread the teachings of Torah and mitzvos, must also develop their own, internal spiritual self. Because by authentically focusing on themselves, they will actually inspire a deeper kind change in their students.
