

"PERVERTING HISTORY"

25:19--"And these are the offsprings of Yitz'chak son of Avraham-Avraham gave birth to Yitz'chak". All commentators point out that the wording of this Pasuk is redundant. Once the Pasuk states that Yitz'chak was the son of Avraham, saying that Avraham gave birth to Yitz'chak is unnecessary!

Rashi, (based on Gemara Bava Metzi'a 87a), tells us, that the Litzanei HaDor, the scoffers of that generation said that Sarah became pregnant from Avimelech. Their claim was, "Look, all these years she lived with Avraham and could not have a child; now after she briefly stayed in Avimelech's palace, she suddenly became pregnant". Therefore, to demonstrate this cynical rumor as patently false, Hashem gave Yitz'chak the identical appearance of his father Avraham. This is what is meant by the repetition of "Avraham gave birth to Yitz'chak"- it was clear to everyone that Avraham was the father of Yitz'chak.

The problem with that explanation is , why refer to these people as "scoffers"? What they are insinuating is that Sarah had a relationship with a man other than her husband, which would mean that Yitz'chak (chas veshalom) was a Mamzer. These people then were not merely scoffers, they were outright Resha'im, evil and wicked people! Rav Pam once explained that they were called "leitzim" scoffers , because no one in their right mind believed them. It was common knowledge that Sarah's infertility was not due to Avraham-for he already had a child from Hagar. The problem was with Sarah. If she gave birth to a child at age 90, it was clearly a miraculous event, fulfilling Gd's promise to her and Avraham.

If so, if no one really believed them, then why did HaShem have to counteract these cynical remarks by creating a miracle that Yitz'chak looked exactly as Avraham? Gd is teaching us, a fundamental lesson in history. People can live through a period of time, knowing well the facts of an era-exactly as they happened. Then, some ten, fifty, of seventy years later, people start saying, "that's not what really happened". People start creating a different spin and perspective on history. That is why we hear of Holocaust deniers in our time. Even when confronted with hard evidence and live survivors, they try to minimize the facts by claiming "maybe it did happen, but stories were exaggerated, instead of 6 million murdered it was perhaps only 6 thousand".

General Eisenhower was well aware of this. When the Nazis were defeated and the allied troops entered the concentration camps, he made his staff take pictures of what they found. In 1945, he said, "I want history to record this-because somewhere down the road, some cynics will claim that this never happened." The general, who later became President of the

United States was so right! That is why there is such an important need for Holocaust museums and Holocaust studies and observance of a Yom HaSho'ah.

Claiming that Avimelech was the father of Yitz'chak may have sounded patently ridiculous, but facts can fade with time. That is why HaShem made the miracle that Yitz'chak looked like his father Avraham, so that no deniers in the future can ever claim otherwise.

Shabbat Shalom AND Chodesh Tov- from Yerushalayim---Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT TOL'DOT

1-Chazal tell us that Avraham, though he lived before days of Matan Torah, observed the laws of the entire Torah. Where did they get the source for that opinion?

2-Rivka suggests to Yaakov that he leave the house and go to Charan because she feared that Eisav would kill him. But then she adds, "Why should I lose both of you on the same day? [27:45] Why would she lose both?"

3-IN Birkat HaMazon –we say "BAKOL", "MIKOL" "KOL". Referring to Avraham Yitzchak and Yaakov. "MIKOL" IS IN OUR PARASHA, referring to Yitzchok- [27:33]. Where would I find the other two?

4-The Torah mentions Yitzchak in two ways; Yitzchak ben Avraham and Avraham Ho'lid et Yitzchak [25:19]. But Yishmael, is only noted as ben Avraham. Nowhere does it mention that Avraham Ho'lid et Yishmael. Why is this? [do not look for an answer for it is nowhere to be found. I am interested in any logical opinion of your own thinking- if you think your answer is logical then it is not wrong]

5- In [27:1] we read that "His (Yitzchak's)_ eyes were dimmed from seeing". What was the cause of his blindness?

A RIDDLE FOR FUN: WHAT HAS TO BE BROKEN BEFORE YOU CAN USE IT???