

## “Grant truth to Yaakov and kindness to Avraham”

# HKB”H Chose Yaakov Avinu the Epitome of “Emes” to Defeat the Dishonesty of Eisav by means of Dishonesty

In this week’s parsha, parshas Toldos, we learn about one of the grandest mysteries in the history of the Jewish people—how Yaakov received the berachos from Yitzchak Avinu. Yitzchak’s initial plan was to bestow the berachos upon Eisav; however, at the instruction of Rivka Imeinu, Yaakov entered his father’s dwellings, dressed in Eisav’s finery, which were in Rivka’s possession. When questioned by Yitzchak (Bereishis 27, 18): **מי “בני אתה בני, ויאמר יעקב אל אביו אנכי עשו בכורך—”** **Yaakov answered his father, “I am Eisav, your firstborn.”** In this manner, Yaakov successfully swindled Eisav, receiving the berachos in his stead. Yitzchak confirms this fact with his declaration to Eisav (ibid. 35): **“בא אחיך במרמה ויקח ברכתך”—your brother came deceitfully and took your berachah.**

Now, it is apparent to everyone that HKB”H, the grand orchestrator, arranged for Yaakov to receive the berachos instead of Eisav. For, it states in the beginning of the passage (ibid. 27, 1): **“ויהי כי זקן יצחק ותכהיו עיניו מראות”—and it was when Yitzchak had grown old, his vision became poor.** Rashi explains: **“So that Yaakov should take the berachos.”** We can also deduce that this plan was ordained from above from the following passuk (ibid. 5): **“ורבקה שומעת בדבר יצחק אל עשו בנו”—now Rivka was listening as Yitzchak spoke to his son, Eisav.** The Targum Yonatan explains that she heard the words Yitzchak spoke to Eisav via “ruach hakodesh.” Thus, she understood that it was HKB”H’s will that she command Yaakov to enter his father’s quarters to receive the berachos prior to Eisav’s return.

## “Grant truth to Yaakov and kindness to Avraham”

Clearly, it was HKB”H’s will that Yaakov receive the berachos and not Eisav. This, however, leaves us with a huge and perplexing question. We have learned in the Gemara (Shabbas 55a): **“חזתמו”**

**“של הקב”ה אמת—HKB”H’s emblem is “Emes”—truth.** So, why would HKB”H arrange for Yaakov Avinu to receive these sacred berachos from Yitzchak Avinu in such a seemingly deceptive manner? Yaakov put on his brother’s clothes and proclaimed to Yitzchak: **“I am Eisav, your firstborn!”**

This is even more puzzling in light of the fact that of the three holy Avos, Yaakov specifically is associated with the label of **“אמת”—HKB”H’s emblematic seal.** In fact, we find an explicit reference to this association in the words of the prophet (Michah 7, 20): **“תתן אמת ליעקב חסד לאברהם”— grant truth (“Emes”) to Yaakov and kindness to Avraham.** Upon further scrutiny, it is quite apparent that the label **“אמת”** befits Yaakov Avinu. As a mere thirteen-year-old youth, he was recognized as an **“איש תם”**, as we find in the following passuk from our parsha (Bereishis 25, 27): **“ויהי עשו איש יודע ציד איש שדה, ויעקב ויגדלו הנערים, ויהי תם יושב אהלים—the lads grew up and Eisav became a man who knows trapping, a man of the field; but Yaakov was a wholesome man (“איש תם”), abiding in tents.**

Rashi comments: **“So long as they were young, they were not distinguishable by their behavior, and nobody could discern in them what their nature was. Once they turned thirteen years old, this one set out for the houses of Torah-study, while the other one set out for avodah-zarah.”** Regarding the description **“who knows trapping,”** Rashi comments: **“He knew how to trap and deceive his father with his mouth. He would ask him, “Father, how do we tithe salt and straw?” This led his father to believe that he was meticulous regarding mitzvos.** Regarding the description **“wholesome,”** Rashi comments: **“He is not expert in all these things. As is his heart, so is his mouth. One who is not adept at deceiving is called ‘wholesome’ (“תם”).”**

Thus, we have explicit proof that even as a young man, Yaakov was not adept at deception; he was an "איש תם". This allows us to conclude that he only entered his father's quarters and received the berachos via deception, because his mother Rivka directed him to do so (ibid. 27, 8): "ועתה בני שמע בקולי לאשר אני מצווה אותך"—**so now, my son, heed my voice to that which I command you.** Yaakov was already aware of the fact that his mother possessed "ruach hakodesh." Still, it behooves us to explain in greater depth why HKB"H—whose emblem is "Emes"—saw fit to orchestrate events in a such a way that Yaakov Avinu—also emblematic of "Emes"—would receive the berachos by means of deception; in the words of Yitzchak Avinu: "Your brother came deceitfully and took your berachah."

### The Tikun of Deception Is Accomplished by Using It to Reveal the Truth

We shall begin to illuminate the subject by presenting a wonderful explanation found in the exalted teachings of the Sefas Emes (Toldos 5633):

"ענין יעקב שלקח הברכות במרמה והוטב בעיני השי"ת, יש ללמוד מזה כי כדי להשיג האמת, באמת רשאי לעשות על ידי ערמה, כמו שאמרו רבותינו ז"ל (ברכות יז.) הוי ערום ביראה. פירש רש"י ז"ל, להערים בכל מיני ערמה ליראת בוראו, כיון שעיקר הרצון לבוא להאמת אינו בכלל שקר, ואדרבא זה תיקון השקר... שמערים כדי לבוא להאמת. כיון שעל ידי השקר בא להאמת מתקן השקר כנ"ל. ובוודאי בעולם הזה שנקרא (ויק"ר כו-ז) עלמא דשיקרא, היתה כוונת הקב"ה לבוא להאמת על ידי זה דוקא."

Regarding the matter that Yaakov took the berachos by means of deception and the Almighty approved: We learn from here that in order to achieve the truth, we are, indeed, allowed to do so by means of deception . . . since the desire to arrive at the truth is in no way considered "sheker" (a lie or deception); on the contrary, this constitutes the tikun of "sheker" . . . using deceptive methods to arrive at the truth. Since "sheker" is employed to reveal the truth, the "sheker" is rectified. Most certainly, in Olam HaZeh, which is referred to as "Alma D'Shikra" (the world of "sheker"), it was HKB"H's intent to arrive at the truth specifically in this manner.

It is worthwhile noting that this noble idea presented by the Sefas Emes—that sometimes it is necessary to employ "sheker" (deception), for the sake of eradicating "sheker"—comes from his elder, the esteemed author of the Chiddushei HaRim, in Sefer HaZakus (Shemos). Here is an excerpt with words of explanation in parentheses:

"וביעקב כתיב (בראשית כז-לו) הכי קרא [שמו יעקב] ויעקבני [זה פעמיים], שנקרא מתולדותו על שם הרמאות, שעם עיקש תתפתל (תהלים יח-כז)... וברמאות פיתה [הנחש] את חוה בעירוב טוב ורע, ואי אפשר לברר [את הטוב מן הרע] רק ברמאות דקדושה, כמו שמבואר בזוהר הקדוש ערום ביראה, ולכן כתיב [אחרי שגילה יצחק שיעקב רימה את הברכות מעשו (שם לג), ויאמר מי אפוא הוא] הצד ציד וכו' [ואברכהו גם] ברוך יהיה".

Regarding Yaakov, it is written: "Is he not rightly called Yaakov? He has deceived me twice." He was named from birth for being deceptive . . . With deception, the nachash tempted Chava, intermingling good with bad; it is impossible to separate the good from the bad except by means of deception of kedushah . . . Therefore, it is written after Yitzchak found out that Yaakov cheated Eisav out of the berachos: "And he said, 'Who, then, is he who trapped game etc. and I blessed him? He, too, shall be blessed.'"

Like a servant in the presence of the masters, I grasp onto their coattails to explain their sacred words in greater detail. Surely, not everyone is permitted to lie under the pretense that he is using the lie to eliminate "sheker." For, this is a dangerous ploy; a person could very easily use the lie or deception erroneously in the wrong situation. Instead of eliminating "sheker," he would then, chas v'shalom, fall into the trap of "sheker." Therefore, I would like to clarify the matter based on the explanations provided by our holy sources. Let us pray that Hashem will guide us on the path of Emes.

### A Battle to the Death between Emes and Sheker

It is well known that the battle in Olam HaZeh between good and evil is in fact a battle between two opposing systems—the system of "Emes" versus the system of "sheker." The source of kedushah is HKB"H, whose seal is "אמת"; similarly, the holy Torah, the wisdom of HKB"H, which he bestowed upon Yisrael, is referred to as "תורת אמת"—a designation we employ when we recite the berachos over the Torah: "אשר נתן לנו תורת אמת". Hence, when we cling to Hashem and His Torah, we are in essence attaching ourselves to the source of "Emes."

However, standing in opposition to this system of "Emes," is the system of "sheker," run by the yetzer hara and his forces—"the sitra achra" (literally, the "other side"). Their sole objective is to mislead mankind away from the Torah's path of "Emes" to the path of "sheker" opposing the laws and precepts of the Torah. To this end, David HaMelech prays (Tehillim 119, 29):

“דרך שקר הסר ממני ותורתך חנני” — **Remove from me the way of “sheker” and graciously endow me with Your Torah.** For only by adhering to the Torah of “Emes” is it possible to overcome the deceptions and lies of the yetzer hara. In the words of the Gemara (Kiddushin 30b): **“כך הקב”ה אמר להם לישראל, בני בראתי יצר הרע ובראתי לו תורה תכלין, ואם אתם עוסקים בתורה אין אתם נמסרים בידו—thus has HKB”H said to Yisrael: “My son, I have created the yetzer hara and I have created the Torah as its antidote; if you occupy yourselves with the Torah, you will not be delivered into its hand.”**

It is worth pointing out why the yetzer hara is identified as the source of “sheker.” The first sin in the world, when Adam and Chava ate from the Eitz HaDa’as Tov VaRa, was perpetrated by the “nachash hakadmoni,” the embodiment of the yetzer hara. It trapped and caused the downfall of Adam and Chava with its words of deception, as the Torah describes (Bereishis 3, 4): **“ויאמר הנחש אל האשה לא מות תמותן, כי יודע אלקים כי ביום אכלכם ממנו ונפקחו עיניכם -- והייתם כאלקים יודעי טוב ורע”** **“You will not surely die; for G-d knows that on the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like G-d, knowing good and bad.”** Rashi explains: **“כי יודע, כל אומן שונא את בני אומנתו, והייתם כאלקים, יוצרי עולמות”** — **The nachash argued: “Every craftsman hates others of his craft; G-d ate from the tree and created the world. So, by eating from the tree, you will be like G-d, fashioners of the world.”**

Now, the Torah attests to the fact that the nachash was wise and clever in the ways of evil and deception (ibid. 1): **“והנחש היה ערום מכל חית השדה”** — **now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field.** Targum Onkelos explains: **“והוא חזיר”** — **and the serpent was more cunning than any creature created.** Therefore, it understood that it would be impossible to persuade Adam and Chava to disobey and rebel against HKB”H—whose emblem is “Emes”—by any means other than “sheker”—the system diametrically opposed to “Emes.” As we know, the nachash’s ruse succeeded; Adam fell prey to its deception. As a consequence, Adam and Chava had to die along with all of the creatures included in their beings at the time of the sin.

### Yaakov and Eisav Head the Systems of Emes and Sheker

Now, upon closer scrutiny, it becomes apparent that Yaakov Avinu and the wicked Eisav, the two twin brothers, stand

atop the systems of “Emes” and “sheker” throughout their generations. Yaakov Avinu heads the forces of “Emes” for himself and his descendants, Yisrael. Whereas the wicked Eisav heads the forces of “sheker” for himself and his descendants, the goyim of the world. The Torah attests to this fact in the following manner: **“The lads grew up and Eisav became a man who knows trapping, a man of the field; but Yaakov was a wholesome man, abiding in tents.”** Recall Rashi’s comment: **“He knew how to trap and deceive his father with his mouth . . . One who is not adept at deceiving is called ‘wholesome’ (‘תם’)”**.

The battle and dichotomy between these two systems, between Yaakov Avinu and the wicked Eisav, began while they were still in their mother’s womb. The passuk states (ibid. 25, 22): **“ויתרוצצו הבנים בקרבה”** — **the children clashed within her.** Rashi provides the following clarification regarding the term **“ויתרוצצו”**: **“Our Rabbis expounded it as meaning “running.” When she would pass by the doorways of Torah-study of Shem and Eiver, Yaakov would run and struggle to get out. When she would pass by doorways of idol-worship, Eisav would struggle to get out.”**

Ever since then the conflict between these two opposing forces—the “Emes” of Yaakov versus the “sheker” of Eisav-- has never ceased. HKB”H alludes to this fact with His statement to Rivka (ibid. 25, 23): **“ויאמר ה' לה שני גוים בבטןך ושני לאומים ממעיך -- ויפרדו ולאום מלאום יאמץ ורב יעבוד צעיר”** — **and Hashem said to her: “Two nations are in your womb, and two regimes from your insides shall be separated; and one regime one regime shall become strong from the other regime, and the elder shall serve the younger.”** In other words, this epic battle that began in-utero was just the beginning of a struggle that would continue throughout the history of the world: **“ולאום מלאום יאמץ”**. Each side would struggle to overcome its counterpart. Nevertheless, HKB”H concludes His remarks with the promise: **“ורב יעבוד צעיר”** — ultimately, at the end of time, the older brother, Eisav, will submit and will serve the younger brother, Yaakov. “Sheker” will be abolished and “Emes” will be revealed in all of its glory.

### Eisav Represents the Primeval Serpent Whose Deception Caused Adam to Sin

Continuing onward and upward with this line of reasoning, let us explore the marvels of Hashem’s divine supervision and



management. He arranged for Yaakov Avinu to receive the berachos by utilizing “sheker”; thus, confiscating the berachos from the wicked Eisav. Now, the passuk states (ibid. 25, 27): **“ויהי עשו איש יודע ציד—**that Eisav was a trapper and a hunter. Yet, the Targum Onkelos and Targum Yonatan provide us with an alternate interpretation: **“זהו עשו גבר נחשירכן”**. The Peirush Yonatan explains in the name of the Tziyoni that the word “נחשירכן” is a contraction of two words **“נחש ירכן, שהיה סימן נחש על ירכו של עשו, לרמוז כי הוא מסטרא דנחש: ירכן”**—informing us that Eisav had a mark resembling a nachash on his thigh; this alluded to the fact that Eisav was a representative of the nachash. The Zohar hakadosh (Toldos 138b) also states that the wicked Eisav was the embodiment of the “nachash hakadmoni,” who trapped Adam and Chava in its malicious net.

Additionally, we learn from the Arizal in Shaar HaPesukim (Vayigash) that Yaakov Avinu was a gilgul and tikun of Adam HaRishon. His source is the following Zohar hakadosh (Bereishis 35b): **“דהא יעקב דוגמא דאדם הראשון הוה דיעקב שופריה דאדם”**—**“הראשון הוה”**. Moreover, our blessed sages allude to this fact in the Gemara (B.M. 84a): **“שופריה דיעקב אבינו מעין שופריה דאדם הראשון”**--**the magnificence of Yaakov Avinu was a semblance of the magnificence of Adam HaRishon.**

This provides us with a wonderful insight into the continuity that exists from generation to generation. The “nachash hakadmoni,” the cleverest and most cunning of all animals, was an evil force. It employed “sheker” to bring about the downfall of Adam HaRishon by saying to Chava: **“And you will be like G-d, knowing good and bad.”** Its treachery brought the reality of death to mankind and all of creation. As a punishment, HKB”H cursed the nachash (Bereishis 3, 14): **“ויאמר אלקים אל הנחש כי עשית: and Hashem G-d said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, accursed are you beyond all the cattle and beyond all beasts of the field.”**

Therefore, Eisav, the incarnation of the evil serpent employed his “sheker” to deceive Yitzchak with questions such as: **“Father, how do we tithe salt and straw?”** By means of this ruse, he intended to extract the berachos from Yitzchak—the berachos that Yitzchak received from Avraham, and Avraham received from HKB”H. As the Torah records, HKB”H said to Avraham (ibid. 12, 2): **“והיה ברכה”—and you shall be a blessing.** Rashi explains: **“The berachos are placed in your hand; until now they were in My hand; I blessed Adam, Noach and you. From now on, you will bless whomever you wish.”** Subsequently, Avraham passed on the berachos to Yitzchak, as it is written

(ibid. 25, 5): **“ויתן אברהם את כל אשר לו ליצחק”**— **Avraham gave everything he had to Yitzchak.** Here Rashi comments: **“He gave him his right to dispense blessing. For, HKB”H said to Avraham: “And you shall be a blessing”—implying that the berachos are given over to you, to bless whomever you wish. And Avraham handed them over to Yitzchak.**

This prompted the wicked Eisav to rebel against HKB”H, so to speak, Who cursed the nachash for employing “sheker” to cause Adam HaRishon to sin. By means of “sheker,” Eisav now aimed to receive the berachos from Yitzchak that he had received from Avraham, who had received them from HKB”H. If successful, this would annul the curses HKB”H cursed the nachash.

### Rivka the Gilgul of Chava Returned the Berachos to Their Rightful Owner

Once again, let us marvel at the wonders of the Torah. The Megaleh Amukot (Toldos) explains why HKB”H arranged for Yaakov to receive the berachos from Yitzchak specifically with the help of Rivka. He refers to the words of the Arizal in Likutei Torah, addressing the passuk in our parsha (Bereishis 25, 21): **“ויעתר יצחק לה' לנכח אשתו, לה' לנכ'ח אשתו' סופי תיבות חוה, כי רבקה תיקנה ויעתר יצחק לה' לנכח אשתו, ל'ה' לנכ'ח אשתו'—“Yitzchak beseeched Hashem in the presence of his wife, because she was barren.”** The final letters of the words **ל'ה' לנכ'ח אשתו'** can be rearranged to spell **חוה**. Rivka corrected the sin of Chava, because she was her gilgul. The Megaleh Amukot proceeds to explain:

**“ולפי שהיא גרמה להביא קללות לעולם על ידי אכילה, לכן עתה הוצרכה לגנוב דעת יצחק לתקן על ידי אכילה זו אכילת עץ הדעת, ולפי שיש מרבתינו ז"ל אמרו (ב"ר יט-ה) ענבים סחטה לו, ולכן (בראשית כז-כה) ויבא לו יין וישת, ענבים המשומרים מששת ימי בראשית, לתקן אותם ענבים ענבי ראש. ולפי שעל ידי האשה באו הקללות, עתה על ידי אשה הוצרך לתקן ברכות.”**

**Since she brought curses to the world by means of her act of eating, it was now incumbent upon her to deceive Yitzchak—to correct the eating from the Eitz HaDa’as by means of this act of eating . . . Since the curses came as a result of the woman, the tikun of the berachos now had to come through the woman.**

This agrees very nicely with the words of the Arizal regarding the passuk (ibid. 13): **“ותאמר לו אמו עליו קללתך בני אך שמע בקולי ולך קח לי”**—**his mother said to him, “Your curse will be on me, my son; only heed my voice and go fetch for me.”** Here are his comments:

“עלי קללתך בני. דע כי רבקה גלגול חוה, ובעבורה נתקלל האדם שהוא יעקב, דשופרא דייעקב מעין שופרא דאדם, ועתה היו צריכין לתקן בשמיעה זאת לטובה, כמו ששמע אז לרעה, כמו שכתוב (שם ג-יז) כי שמעת לקול אשתך. וזהו אך שמע בקולי, שהמיעוט הוא דהשתא הוה שמיעה לטובה, מכלל דתחילה לרעה.”

**Know that Rivka was a gilgul of Chava. Because of her, the man, who is Yaakov, was cursed. For “the splendor of Yaakov was a semblance of the splendor of Adam.” Now, it was necessary to perform a tikun via positive listening, just as he listened then negatively—as it is written: “Because you listened to the voice of your wife.” This is the significance of her directive “only heed (listen to) my voice.” The diminutive term (“אך”, which is translated in the passuk as “only”) indicates that this time the listening was for a positive purpose, implying that originally it was for a negative purpose.**

We learn from his sacred comments that Rivka was a gilgul of Chava, who caused Adam HaRishon to be cursed, because he heeded her advice to eat from the Eitz HaDa’as, as it is written (ibid.): “ולאדם אמר כי שמעת לקול אשתך, ותאכל מן העץ אשר צויתך לאמר: “**to Adam He said, “Because you listened to the voice of your wife and ate of the tree about which I commanded you saying, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ accursed is the ground because of you.”** Therefore, it was incumbent upon her to rectify these curses by ensuring that the berachos be returned to Yaakov, the magnificence and tikun of Adam HaRishon.

This then is the meaning of her remark to Yaakov: **“Your curse will be on me, my son.”** In other words, it is my responsibility to rectify the curses that I brought upon you in the previous gilgul; I plan do so by helping you receive the berachos. Now, to make amends for Adam HaRishon’s wrongdoing—heeding his wife’s advice for a negative purpose: **“Because you listened to the voice of your wife”**—it was Yaakov’s responsibility—as a tikun of Adam HaRishon-- to listen this time in a positive manner. He did so by heeding the advice of Rivka—Chava’s gilgul; thereby rectifying the initial, corrupted act of listening. This is the significance of Rivka’s statement: **“Only heed my voice,”** where the diminutive term “only” implies that this time he would listen for a positive outcome, as opposed to his listening in the previous gilgul, which resulted in a negative outcome.

## “He stole the spear from the hand of the Egyptian and killed him with his own spear”

Taking the high road, we shall proceed to explain why HKB”H arranged for Yaakov Avinu to receive the berachos intended for Eisav by means of subterfuge. On the one hand, HKB”H created “sheker,” so that man would avoid it totally, as it is written (Shemos 23, 7): **“מדבר שקר תרחק”—distance yourself from a matter of “sheker.”** On the other hand, when necessary, “sheker” should be used for the sake of peace and harmony, or in order to outmaneuver the yetzer hara.

The wicked Eisav, however, followed the path of “sheker” espoused by the “nachash hakadmoni.” He intended to trick his father into believing that he observed the mitzvos conscientiously, in order to receive the berachos from him. Had Yaakov, the epitome of “Emes,” stood on the side silently without intervening, this would have constituted the gravest travesty and “sheker” in all of creation. Therefore, HKB”H arranged for the man of “Emes,” Yaakov, to come and shatter the “sheker” of Eisav by employing a form of “sheker,” in keeping with the dictum (Tehillim 18, 27): **“עם עיקש תתפתל”—and with the crooked, you act deviously.**

We can suggest that this is precisely what occurred with Binayahu ben Yehoyada (Shmuel II 23, 21): **“ויגזול את החנית מיד --המצרי ויהרגו בחניתו” he stole the spear from the hand of the Egyptian and killed him with his own spear.** This event alludes to the fact that when we take away from the forces of evil the means with which they intend to harm Yisrael, and use this very same means to strike back against the forces of evil and subdue them, it constitutes a tremendous “kiddush Hashem.” Likewise, this is what occurred here. HKB”H arranged for Yaakov to utilize Eisav’s own “sheker,” in order to shatter Eisav’s “sheker”—thereby thwarting his efforts to acquire the berachos, which he did not deserve.

This provides us with a very nice interpretation of the passuk (ibid. 27, 15): **“ותקח רבקה את בגדי עשו בנה הגדול החמודות אשר —Rivka then took her older son Eisav’s coveted garments which were in her house, and clothed Yaakov, her younger son.** We must endeavor to explain the Torah’s use of the depiction “חמודות”. Also, what is the significance of the fact that she clothed Yaakov with them? Yet, based on what we have just learned, we can interpret the

term “חמורדות” as referring to Eisav’s lies, which he coveted. Sometimes, it is necessary to utilize this device against the yetzer hara to deceive it and to defeat it.

The wicked Eisav, however, uses “sheker” to rebel against Hashem and to satisfy all of his worldly appetites. Therefore, when it was time to shatter the “sheker” of Eisav—the “nachash hakadmoni”—with his own “sheker,” Rivka clothed Yaakov with Eisav’s “coveted” clothes. She wanted Yaakov to use “sheker” for the sake of a mitzvah—to prevent Eisav from receiving the berachos from Yitzchak. This, indeed, is the message conveyed by the Sefas Emes cited above: **“Regarding the matter that Yaakov took the berachos by means of deception and the Almighty approved: We learn from here that in order to achieve the truth, we are, indeed, allowed to do so by means of deception . . . since the desire to arrive at the truth is in no way considered “sheker”; on the contrary, this constitutes the tikun of “sheker.”**

### Only Yaakov Whose Attribute Is Emes Is Fit to Use Sheker to Abolish Sheker

We can add that this is why HKB”H chose Yaakov specifically for this task. As the epitome of “Emes,” he is the most appropriate agent for shattering the “sheker” of Eisav by donning Eisav’s coveted garments—i.e. “sheker.”

Besides the fact that Yaakov was the gilgul of Adam HaRishon and Eisav was the embodiment of the “nachash hakadmoni,” there is another factor to consider. While it is true that it is appropriate to abolish “sheker” by employing “sheker” itself; nevertheless, this tactic albeit “l’shem shamayim,” is fraught with danger. For, it is quite possible that in the process, a person is liable to be infected by the “sheker” for an inappropriate purpose—not for the sake of a mitzvah. It is precisely for this reason that the Zohar hakadosh (Toldos 143a) teaches us that when Yaakov received the berachos, he prayed (Tehillim 120, 2): “ה' הצילה נפשי משפת שקר מלשון רמיה” —**Hashem, save my soul from lips of “sheker” and from a deceitful tongue.**

Therefore, HKB”H chose Yaakov specifically, because he was the epitome of “Emes.” As the Torah attests, Yaakov was an “איש תם,” he did not know how to deceive; he lacked any hint of “sheker.” Therefore, it was assured that he would utilize the “sheker” solely for the sake of Hashem. He used the “sheker” to prevent Eisav—the representative of the nachash, whom HKB”H cursed in the aftermath of the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as”—from successfully deceiving Yitzchak and receiving the berachos.

Let us conclude with a wonderful insight from the esteemed Rabbi of Shinova, zy”a, in Divrei Yechezkel (Toldos), which appeared previously in Zos Zikaron (Tetzaveh) from the Chozeh of Lublin, zy”a. They address Rashi’s explanation as to why Yaakov is described as an “איש תם”: **“One who is not adept at deceiving is called ‘תם.’**” Yet, as the commentaries point out, Yaakov seemed quite adept at deceiving Eisav and Lavan, as it states (Bereishis 29, 12): **“וַיִּגְדַּר יַעֲקֹב לְרַחֵל כִּי אָחִי אֲבִיָּהּ הוּא—Yaakov told Rachel that he was her father’s brother.** Rashi clarifies Yaakov’s statement in the name of the Midrash: **“If he comes for deceit, I, too, am his brother in deceit; but if he is a decent person, I am also the son of Rivka, his decent sister.**

Let us explain Rashi’s comment. A person who is not adept at cheating and deceiving is referred to simply as “תם”. Yaakov Avinu, however, is not referred to simply as “תם” but rather as “איש תם”. This more inclusive designation indicates that he was above all an “איש”—a man in control of his midah of “תם”. When it was necessary and appropriate to behave in a wholesome manner, he exemplified the midah of “תם”, and deception was foreign to him. Yet, when he was confronted by “reshaim” such as Eisav and Lavan, he had to extract and retrieve what they had stolen from the realm of kedushah. To accomplish this noble feat, he had to beat them at their own game. In those circumstances, he employed their midah and became adept at deception. For deceit in dealings with “reshaim” is in fact “Emes.”

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