

Seeing Red - Toldos 5784

In this week's Torah portion of Toldos - the offspring [of Yitzchak], we are introduced to the most famous twins ever. Yes, even more well known than the Sprouse twins. I am referring to the brothers Yaakov and Esav. There is a curious description given to Esav upon his birth. "And the first emerged red". Esav is described as being red-haired. What does that mean, and why is that the first quality to be mentioned?

Even more curious is that there is another (and as far as I know, the only other) fellow in the Torah who is described as red. Wanna guess who? The youngest of eight, despised by his brothers, his father in law tried to kill him, need any more hints?

If you said King David, you are correct! Ten points!

Can these two be any further apart? One of them, a corrupted monster, the other, the vehicle of the expression of Hashem's kingship on this earth. Why are these the poster children for "redness", and what does redness even indicate?

Redness speaks to fire, to anger, to fierceness of spirit. These two people speak to the two extremes of where this trait can take you. Esav seemingly has an excuse- "of course I became a murderer, pillager, living by the sword. That's my nature, what do you want from me?"

Enter David. Also inflamed, also sword wielding - to the extent that Hashem told him that he can't build the beis hamikdash, because a spiller of blood cannot build a house of peace. All the same characteristics, but much different ways of expressing it. Where Esav let his nature control him, David harnessed it, and used it to develop a deep connection with Hashem.

The message here is that although perhaps some of the traits you have can seem detrimental to developing a closeness to Hashem, and on the contrary, seem to be pulling you away from Him, they can be harnessed and brought under control and in fact lead to the greatest expression of Hashem! David is referred to as the fourth leg of the chariot of Hashem, after Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, which means that he is the fourth method of expressing Hashem's greatness. That's some pretty good company.

The traits and characteristics you were given were given to YOU, and to YOU only. As much as you may wish not to have them, you are intended to utilize them to bring out an awareness of Hashem, in a way that only you can. This is the lesson of Esav and David.

May we merit to recognize the tremendous value that we have, believe in the uniqueness of our individual mission, and bring it out from concept to practical expression.

Good Shabbos