

Assuming Responsibility

In this week's *Parsha Toldos*, we meet *Yitzchak's* two sons, *Yaakov* and *Esav*. *Yaakov*, the *ish tam yoshev ohalim*, is the man who studied all day in the tents. *Esav* is known for being the one who despised his birthright of being the first born and sold it to his brother. He is condemned in the *Torah* for this action. However, when taking a closer look at *Esav's* action, it is not readily apparent that what he did was wrong. In fact, *Rashi* comments that *Esav* realized what kind of responsibility being the first born was and he said, "Behold, I am going to die from this birthright."

Esav knew that as the first born, he would be required to follow certain laws related only to that position. He also knew that there was no way he could do that. Therefore, the question arises what did he do wrong by selling his birthright? After all, wasn't he just being a realist about himself? He understood his nature and realized that he was incapable of fulfilling this responsibility.

Actually, *Esav's* mistake was just that. He sold himself too short. He automatically assumed that there was no way for him to accomplish this task. He was overwhelmed by the responsibility and gave up before even trying.

On the other hand, *Yaakov* rose to the occasion and willingly accepted upon himself a monumental task as our forefather. As Jews, we understand that although at times it appears that we have an awesome responsibility, we do not shy away from it. We take it on and realize that this is our purpose in life, to assume the role of being an *Am Segulah* (a treasured nation) to *Hashem*. This is a very important lesson that we must instill in our children. We must teach our children that even when a task seems daunting and overwhelming, one must still assume the responsibility for with *Hashem's* help, we all can accomplish much more than we ever imagined.