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Hilula

16 - Rabbi Shaul Yedidya Taub, Admor of Modzitz

17 - Rabbi Yosef Yozel Horowitz

18 - Rabbi Baruch of Mezibozh

19 - Rabbi Dov Ber, Maggid of Mezritch

20 - Rabbi Zvi Pesach Frank

21 - Rabbi Rafael Bardugo

22 - Rabbi Eliezer Ashkenazi, author of 'Ma'asei Hashem'

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a

MASKIL LEDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Immersing Oneself in Torah Removes Worry and Fear

"Then Ya'akov sent angels ahead of him to Esav his brother to the land of Seir, the field of Edom" (Bereishit 32:4)

Ya'akov Avinu left Be'er Sheva according to his mother's instruction: "Behold, your brother Esav is consoling himself regarding you to kill you. So now, my son, heed my voice and arise; flee to my brother Lavan, to Charan" (ibid 27:42-43)

Rivka instructed Ya'akov to flee to Charan since she was concerned for his fate out of fear of his brother Esav's plans to kill him. However, Ya'akov himself was not afraid of Esav and he left town with confidence. This is why the verse does not say "Ya'akov fled from Be'er Sheva", rather, "Ya'akov departed from Be'er Sheva" (ibid 28:10). How was Ya'akov Avinu able to remain calm and assured? He knew that as long as the voice of Ya'akov can be heard studying Torah, the hands of Esav have no power and he cannot overcome him or harm him since the merit of Torah will protect him. This is what enabled Ya'akov to leave with confidence and without fear.

We can ask the following question: Why did Ya'akov stop off for fourteen years to study Torah in Yeshivat Shem v'Ever and not go straight to the home of Lavan, his mother's brother? The answer is that Ya'akov wished to prove to Esav that he is not afraid of him. He specially remained in Eretz Yisrael for another fourteen years studying Torah with tranquility, since one who possesses the power of Torah is protected from the hands of Esav. If so, what reason did he have to run away?

Through this conduct, Ya'akov wished to instill his descendants with the message that as long as the Jewish people hold on to the holy Torah, there is no room for fear and no reason to flee from the enemies that surround them, for Torah is the most sophisticated and effective weapon against the enemy. When the voice of Ya'akov rings out from the Batei Knessiot and Batei Midrashim, the hands of Esav have no power. Ya'akov therefore secluded himself in the study halls of Shem v'Ever and specifically for fourteen years. The number fourteen (יד) is the gematria for the Hebrew word hand (יד), implying the hands of Esav. As long as Ya'akov is studying Torah, Esav's hands have no power over him and cannot harm him since the Torah protects and saves from our enemies.

Another difficulty is why Ya'akov told the emissaries to tell Esav (ibid 32:5), "I have sojourned with Lavan". Chazal expound on these words that Ya'akov was implying, "Though I have sojourned (גרתי) with Lavan, I have observed the six-hundred and thirteen (תר"ג) – same letters as (גרתי) mitzvot and did not learn from his evil ways". Why was this message of interest to Esav?

In addition, it seems that Ya'akov was contradicting himself. On the one hand, he informs Esav that he has not become an important prince or achieved status (implied by the wording of the verse "I sojourned (גרתי) with Lavan", I remained a stranger [from גר = alien]). On the other hand, he arouses his jealousy and sends a message that he is

wealthy and has acquired much oxen and donkeys, flocks, servants and maidservants. Since a rich person is generally a respected individual, why did Ya'akov tell this to Esav?

The answer is that throughout the time he was away from home, Ya'akov wished to impart the message to Esav that since he possesses the power of Torah and mitzvot, he has no reason to be afraid of Esav at all. Just as when he left his father's home, he did not flee in a panic but remained in Eretz Yisrael in the study halls of Shem v'Ever where he studied Torah for fourteen years and only then did he continue on to Lavan's house, so too now on his way home he is not arriving secretly and out of fear, but openly and with an upraised arm, and even sent messengers to announce his arrival, since the power of Torah is as much part of him now on his return, just as when he left.

Ya'akov tells Esav: You were aware all these years that I was in Lavan's house in Charan. You were certainly capable of turning up there and harming me. Who prevented you from doing this? It was due to the power of the taryag (613) mitzvot that I observed even while in Lavan's home. The merit of the holy Torah stood in my stead and prevented you from coming to harm me. In the same way, now too I am returning without fear since I possess the merit of Torah.

Ya'akov also added that Esav should not imagine that chalila, devoting oneself entirely to Torah study and expending all one's energy in Torah alone, precludes having a respectable income. Even though Ya'akov merited studying Torah, he nevertheless possessed many oxen, donkeys, flock, servants and maidservants. This is a powerful foundation that is important for every Ben Torah to understand. Unfortunately, today the difficulties and concerns that people face regarding their parnassah are widespread. There are some people who mistakenly think that if they take off a bit of time from Torah study and invest that time in some type of business venture, their financial situation will improve and they will become rich. Ya'akov Avinu comes to teach us that this is not the correct path. On the contrary, to the degree that a person invests himself in Torah study, to that extent will he merit being blessed with wealth. because Yaakov Avinu a"h observed all the taryag mitvot, did he merit all this wealth. This is the message that Ya'akov wished to teach Esav the rasha who represents the yetzer hara. Applying oneself to Torah study with diligence is what brings a person blessings and he will enjoy abundant parnassah.

It sometimes happens that when a person merits becoming wealthy, his outlook changes and he now epitomizes "Yeshurun became fat and kicked". He forgets Hashem and kicks at everything holy. Ya'akov told Esav that he shouldn't think that chalila his wealth will cause him to change his approach and discard the yoke of Heaven. On the contrary, through his wealth he will find even more favor in the eyes of his 'master', referring to the Creator Yitbarach, for he will use his assets to increase his mitzvot and good deeds.





Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoan Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

He Should Occupy Himself with Torah Study

Once, on an overseas flight, I was beset by foreign thoughts. No matter how hard I tried, I could not rid my mind of them. I began wondering how this trip was different from countless others that I should be plagued by such negative thoughts.

Suddenly, I remembered Chazal's advice in such a situation (Eliyahu Zuta, Ish Shalom, Parashah 16): "Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said: Whoever involves himself in words of Torah removes negative thoughts from his mind. He is spared thoughts of sin, of the sword, of subjection to the government, of nonsense, of the Yetzer Hara, of immorality, of wicked women, of idolatry, of subservience to others, of inanities... as it says (Devarim 28:47-48), 'Because you did not serve Hashem, your G-d, amid gladness and goodness of heart, when everything was abundant. So you will serve your enemies whom Hashem will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and without anything.'"

Meaning, whoever is overcome by foreign thoughts should occupy himself with words of Torah since they have the power to chase away unwanted thoughts. I immediately put this advice into action and the negative thoughts finally left me. After a while, I stood up. I finally discovered the cause of my problems. The man who was sitting directly behind me was behaving most inappropriately.

I immediately decided to change my seat, as our Sages exhort us in Avot (1:7), "Distance yourself from a bad neighbor." I did not want his negative behavior to rub off on me any longer.

The Haftarah

"The vision of Ovadiah" (Ovadiah 1)

Some Ashkenazim have the custom to read from **"And yet My people waver"** (Hoshea 1)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftara speaks about Esav's constant hatred of Ya'akov. This hatred is described at length in the Parsha, when Esav headed towards Ya'akov with four hundred men, intending to harm him.

Guard Your Tongue

Taking Precautions So that One is Not Harmed

Although it is a Torah prohibition to accept lashon hara (meaning accepting what one hears as the truth), nevertheless Chazal say that one is permitted to be wary.

This means that one may be wary, in order to protect oneself from suffering any harm from this person. Although this is the case, one may not even regard the matter as a doubt since every person is considered righteous (until proven guilty).



Words of our Sages

Financial Advice for Torah Observers

"So he divided the people with him, and the flocks, cattle, and camels, into two camps" (Bereishit 32:7)

Ya'akov Avinu a"h prepares himself for a meeting with Esav with a three-pronged strategy - gifts, prayer and battle.

In preparation for the battle that awaits him, he divides his wives and children, livestock and all his possessions, into two camps. In this way, if Esav smites one camp, then the remaining camp will survive.

The sefer 'Eved Hamelech' points out an important foundation: The Torah uses this incident to teach us a strategy for life. A person should not invest all his money in one place. From whom do we learn this? From Ya'akov Avinu as it says, "So he divided the people with him".

This guidance on protecting one's assets also appears in Chazal (Baba Metzia 42a): "A person should always divide his money into three, a third in property, a third in business and a third he should keep in his possession."

Ya'akov Avinu's approach imparts a practical lesson on how to protect one's possessions. If one divides one's belongings, with each part being guarded in a different way and different place, then if he loses one half, or it disappears or is stolen, he will still be left with the remaining half.

In connection to this idea, Harav Munk shlita, in his sefer 'Darkei Noam', quotes a wonderful story that is brought in Chazal, about the shrewdness and wisdom employed by one who was exploited, in order to retrieve his money:

A certain merchant traveled to a distant place and took with him a considerable amount of money. He debated what to do with this sum. On one hand, he was afraid to walk around with such a large amount,

but on the other hand, he was afraid to entrust in the hands of someone he hardly knew.

In the end, he decided to dig a pit in the ground and he hid his money in that pit. But what he didn't realize was that a pair of envious eyes was watching his every move from the house next door...

As soon as he left, the neighbor discreetly dug up the money.

Sometime later, the merchant returned to the place where he had hidden his money yet to his dismay – the money was no longer there!

He looked all around and noticed that there was a hole in the wall of the neighboring house, from which one could observe the entire area, including this part of the ground where he had hidden his money... He hurried over to the house and poured out his 'predicament' to the owner:

"My dear acquaintance, I recently came to stay in this area and I am still not familiar with the local people. I possess two wallets, one contains five hundred zehuvim and the second one contains one thousand zehuvim. I hid the first wallet in a secret place, and now I am debating what to do with the other wallet. Is it worth hiding it in the same place as the first wallet, or is it better that I give it over to one of the locals for safekeeping?"

"The best thing to do," advised the owner, who was already picturing one thousand zehuvim falling into his hands, "is to hide it in the same place as the first wallet."

As soon as the merchant left his house, the neighbor realized that his advice would not serve him at all. In just another moment, the merchant will uncover the hole and discover that all his money has disappeared! Then he will certainly not hide his second wallet in the same place!

He came up with a grand idea...

He took out the wallet which was still full of money and quickly replaced it in its original hiding place. The merchant, who was waiting for this to happen, then approached the pit, took the wallet that had been returned and hurried home...



Pearls of the Parsha

Esav's Son is Called "Achi"

"Rescue me, please, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav" (Bereishit 32:12)

This double description, "from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav", appears redundant since it is clear to all that Esav was Ya'akov's brother.

There are several explanations offered. We will quote the Rokeach who brings the Midrash that when Ya'akov fled to Charan because of Esav, a son was born to Esav whom he named 'Achi'. He gave him this name so that he shouldn't forget what Ya'akov did to him.

When this child grew up, his father Esav commanded him that if he ever comes across his uncle Ya'akov, he should kill him. Therefore, Ya'akov Avinu a"h prayed, save me from the hand of 'Achi', the son of Esav, and also from Esav himself.

Constantly Thank and Feel that Everything is Good

"And You had said, 'I will surely do good with you'" (Bereishit 32:13)

Rabbi Yechezkel of Kuzhmir takes the wording of this verse and explains it in the following fashion:

If a person is full of appreciation to Hashem, he feels that Hashem is constantly showering him with abundant goodness and he always looks at the positive in his situation, then Hashem says in return, I will show you what is really considered good, and He bestows great goodness on him.

This idea is hinted at in the words of the above verse, "ואתה אמרת היטב". This implies that if you say that Hashem does only good with you, then "איטיב עמך", "I will do good with you" in a double measure. But if G-d forbid, a person says that his situation is bad, then Hashem, as if, says to him, I will show you what true bad is until you realize that your original circumstances were not that terrible.

The Comparison to the Sand of the Sea Which Never Diminishes

"And You had said, 'I will surely do good with you and I will make your offspring like the sand of the sea which is too numerous to count'" (Bereishit 32:13)

We find that the angel blessed Avraham Avinu in a similar fashion, "That I shall surely bless you and greatly increase your offspring like the stars of the heavens and like the sand on the seashore" (Bereishit 22:17).

Why are Bnei Yisrael compared to the sand?

The holy Ohr Hachaim zya"l explains the idea behind this comparison: It was a blessing given to Bnei Yisrael that if their possessions or money diminish, the lack will replace itself on its own, through a special holiness that is present in their possessions.

Just as when you dig into the sand on the seashore or remove part of it, it caves in and fills up on its own, so too if the Jewish people's possessions decrease, they will be replaced with abundant good from Heaven and no lack will be noticeable.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon
Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya
Pinto, shlita



The Tzaddik Protects Himself and Remains "Alone"

"Ya'akov was left alone and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn" (Bereishit 32:25)

The fact that the guardian angel of Esav fought specifically against Ya'akov Avinu a"h, and not against Avraham or Yitzchak, is most puzzling.

The explanation is because Avraham was an 'Ish chessed', he performed many acts of kindness, while Yitzchak was considered as 'The pillar of prayer'. The yetzer hara is prepared to come to terms with these qualities, out of a lack of choice. But when he saw Ya'akov toiling and exerting himself in the Holy Torah, and that in the future this will afford him the merit of being the one to rule over the lower worlds, just as Hashem alone rules over the Upper Worlds, he wasn't prepared to agree to this under any circumstances. This is why he came to fight against him with all his might.

In order to merit the high level of Torah that Ya'akov Avinu a"h achieved, a person is obligated to relinquish all worldly concerns and partake of worldly pleasures as little as possible, without pursuing them. As the Gemara says (Sanhedrin 111a): "Torah is not found in one who studies it through indulgence, but in one who studies with discomfort and exertion". This was the attribute of Ya'akov Avinu.

This idea is hinted to by the words of the verse, "And Ya'akov was left alone". This implies that Ya'akov Avinu a"h relinquished all worldly matters and despised all physical pleasures, which are only imaginary. He distanced himself from them in an extreme manner and instead chose to occupy himself with Torah study, remaining "alone", without any attachment to anything else. The foremost attribute of Am Yisrael is when they distance themselves from the nations of the world and do not follow their corrupt culture and evil customs. As the verse tells us (Bamidbar 23:9) "Behold! It is a nation that will dwell in solitude and not be reckoned among the nations". This is the way that Ya'akov Avinu behaved throughout his life. Even during the time that he was growing up in his parents' home together with his wicked brother Esav, he tried very hard not to be associated with him. Instead, he secluded himself in his tent and occupied himself solely with Torah study. Even on the way to Charan, he stopped off in the Beit Midrash of Shem v'Ever where he was secluded from his surroundings and absorbed himself in Torah with diligence and exertion.

And when Ya'akov arrived at Lavan's house, there too he was careful not to become friendly with him since Ya'akov wished to remain "alone", so as not to learn from his evil ways and not be influenced by his corrupt manner.

Measure for measure, in the future too Ya'akov Avinu will be the one who rules, on his own, over the lower worlds, just as Hashem is the only Ruler of the Upper Worlds.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

"Ya'akov arrived intact"

(Bereishit 33:18)

Rashi: "Intact physically... intact financially... intact in his learning- having forgotten nothing in Lavan's house".

Achieving perfection in life is not measured by a person's inherent qualities but is dependent on what he achieved with his actions. The meaning of this perfection is known as "beyond the letter of the law" as we shall elucidate.

The Gemara (Baba Metzia 30b) explains: "That they should do- this refers to behaving לידה תרושם מינפול, beyond the letter of the law".

The Gaon Rabbi Reuven Elbaz shlita explains that the obligation to behave beyond the call of duty is a profound matter. It is not only an enhancement of a mitzva, but a mitzva in itself. Therefore, it is not correct to say, "If the matter is not a strict law, I am exempt".

There are many areas in life where a person is required to go beyond the call of duty. It is often advisable to forgo for the sake of another even if this is not required behavior according to the strict law. Hashem desires that we should be prepared to forgo and judge other people favorably.

A person cannot live for himself alone. He must always calculate his steps according to those in his environment, starting with his family, his friends, and including even wider circles. He must always take others into consideration and assist others.

This is the way in which Hashem wishes the world to function, as the Michtav M'Eliyahu writes, Hashem intended that a person should constantly be surrounded with opportunities to practice kindness, in his home, with his wife, with his children, and with all those with whom he comes into contact, as David Hamelech tells us (Tehillim 23:6) "May only goodness and kindness pursue me all the days of my life".

The world cannot exist if every person only does what he is obligated to do; behaving beyond the letter of the law is included within the parameters of doing good.

Man has a unique soul and Hashem created him in a way that he is constantly surrounded by opportunities to give. From the moment a baby is born, he receives and also learns to give, and as the years go by his circle of those with whom he comes into contact grows, until he reaches the stage for which he was created, marrying a wife and establishing a home.

The Michtav M'Eliyahu writes: "Hashem wished to give a person merits, so He created man in a way that he is surrounded by opportunities to do kindness, day and night. He gives and gives continually. How many opportunities does a yeshiva student have to do chessed? Not so many.

Since Hashem wanted man to be constantly involved with chessed, He therefore commanded that he set up a home. When they are blessed with children, he has additional opportunities to do good... all this in order to give a person merits from his giving, for family life is essentially one long chapter of giving!

The male was assigned the role of being the giver. His role is to constantly shower his wife with abundance. If he merits, he fulfills the purpose of creation and this is the greatest virtue he can have.

The Wife Does More Than What She is Required

In the past, I merited hearing shiurim from Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Rabbi Ben Zion Abba Shaul zt"l. When we learned masechet Ketubot and came to the words of the Mishna (59:2): "And these are the acts that a woman does for her husband: She grinds, bakes, launders and cooks". The Gaon Rabbi Ben Zion said:

"Apparently, what is a woman obligated to do? To take a potato, put it in a pot with a bit of salt and water and put the pot on the fire...

Ah, you wish to add some spices? Put it in yourself, she is not obligated to do this... and if she does flavor the dish, it is already considered as behavior beyond the call of duty. And if she chops onions and adds turmeric or cinnamon, it is al-

ready way beyond the letter of the law... she is not obligated to do this!

But in fact, a righteous wife certainly doesn't serve her husband plain boiled potatoes, but she invests time in food preparation and adjusts the taste so that it should be pleasing for her husband.

If so, is it not fitting that the husband too should do things that he is not obligated to do and shouldn't say "I will only do what I am obligated to do according to the law"? For if he contemplates he will realize that she also does things for him that she is not obligated to do at all...

She works hard to prepare tasty food, frying onions so as to add a richer flavor to the dish. She doesn't just throw a whole onion into the soup, she expends effort and does more than her obligation and for this, you must repay her accordingly. In which way? By doing things for her that also go beyond your basic obligations.

This outlook must constantly remain before our eyes. We must make a point of noticing all the effort that the wife puts into everything, instead of always noticing where she falls short...

Preparing the Fish – to Please His Wife

We find many examples of Gedolei Yisrael who behaved in this manner.

I heard from several trustworthy people that they personally witnessed the Gaon Rabbi Ben Zion zt"l going into the kitchen on Erev Shabbat, putting on an apron, descaling the fish, cutting it up and cooking it.

He didn't do this because he wanted to enjoy tasty fish. His sole intention was to bring pleasure to his wife, to add to her joy, so that she could welcome the Shabbat happy and calm, and that both of them together should enjoy a pleasant Shabbat. In order to achieve an atmosphere of peace, one must be prepared to bestow and give. This is the reason why Rabbi Ben Zion would prepare the fish for Shabbat.

A person who lives as a giver, lives in a different world. He enjoys a life which is 'a taste of the World to Come'. ('Mishkani Acharecha')