

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON PARSHAS VAYISHLACH - 5757

For e-mail of current or back issues contact cshulman@paulweiss.com

Some Internet Dvar Torah Lists

VIRTUAL JERUSALEM: E-mail to: listproc@virtual.co.il In msg type: subscribe <listname> Your_Name" Some of lists: Aviner-Eng: Ateret Cohanim; Ask: Ask-the-Rabbi; Bircas: Parsha by Rabbi Dov Rabinowitz; DafYomi: Ohr Somayach; Halacha: by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt; Parasha - Page: by Rabbi Kornfeld; Parasha-QA: Ohr Somayach; Torah-Talk: Parasha by Rabbi Steinberg; Weekly: Ohr Somayach on Parsha; Yhe-Halak by Rabbi Friedman; Yhe-MB by Rabbi Rimon; Yhe-UndHalakha by Rabbi Bick and Zvi Shimon; Yhe-IntParsha by Zvi Shimon; Yhe-Pesachim; Yhe-Metho by Rabbi Taragin; Yhe-Sichot - of Rav Lichtenstein and Rav Amital; Yhe-Jewhpi - on Jewish philosophy; Yhe-Parsha: by YHE rabbis (& yhe-par.d); YS-Parasha and YS-personalities - from Shaalvim; YITorah; Arutz-7; Shabbat-Zomet. Send command "lists" for complete lists.

SHAMASH: E-mail to listproc@shamash.org In message write " sub 'listname' <your name>" Bytetorah: Zev Itzkowitz; Enayim: YU parsha; Daf-hashavua: London; mj-RavTorah: Rav Soloveichik ZTL on Parsha. Send "lists" for complete list.

PROJECT GENESIS E-mail to majordomo@torah.org with "subscribe listname <your e-mail address>" in message. Lists include: Torah-Forum-digest / DvarTorah / Halacha-Yomi / Maharal / Rambam / Ramchal / RavFrاند / Tefila / YomTov / Drasha. Send "lists" for complete list.

SHEMA YISRAEL: E-mail to: listproc@jen.co.il In msg type: subscribe <listname> Your_Name" Some of lists: Peninim - on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum; Outlooks on Parsha by Rabbi Zev Leff; Hear - insights from Rabbi Weber; Companion - Shalom Bayis by Rabbi Feinhandler; Yitorah; Daf-insights, Daf-background, Daf-review, etc. by Rabbi Kornfeld. Send "lists" for complete lists.

CHABAD E-mail to listserv@chabad.org. In subject write: subscribe me. In text write: "Subscribe <code> (e.g.: code = W-2)" Some of Codes: D-3) Rambam Daily; W-2) Likutei Sichos On Parsha; W-3) Week in Review on Parsha; W-4) Once Upon A Chasid; W-7) Wellsprings - Chasidic Insight into Torah Portion. Send command "lists" for complete list of codes.

ISRAEL NEWS To: Listserv@pankow.inter.net.il Subject: Subscribe Listname <your name> Type "Subscribe <listname> <your name>". Lists include "Israeline" and "Israel-mideast". Must confirm w/i 48 hours by sending to same address msg "OK xxxx" with xxxx the code receive in confirmation. Also Jer1 (listproc@virtual.co.il) has Arutz-7.

WWW - Shamash - <http://shamash.org> & <http://shamash.org/tanach/dvar.html>; Jerusalem 1 - <http://www.virtual.co.il>; Maven - <http://www.maven.co.il>; YU - <http://yu1.yu.edu>; YHE - <http://www.virtual.co.il/education/yhe>; OU - <http://www.ou.org>; Chabad - <http://www.chabad.org>; JCN <http://www.jcn18.com>; Project Genesis <http://www.torah.org>; ShamaYisrael - <http://www.shemayisrael.co.il>; Children - <http://www.pirchei.co.il>; Rav Soloveichik archives - <http://www.gopher://shamash.org:70/11/judaica/tanach/commentary/mj-ravtorah>; Rabbi Leibtag Tanach archives - <http://www.virtual.co.il/torah/tanach>; YOSS Drasha <http://www.yoss.org/whindex.htm>; List - http://www.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Religion/Judaism; Israel - <http://www.ac.il>; Good link page - <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~akiva/HOJMI/links.html>; NCYI - <http://www.youngisrael.org>; My link page - <http://members.aol.com/CRShulman>; **Congregation Bais Yitzchok** - <http://members.aol.com/shtiebel/jamaicaestates.html>; **Holliswood Jewish Center** - <http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/3648/>; **Upcoming YLJE site - stay tuned!**

5756 Parsha Sheets on Disk - If you want Internet Parsha Sheets from 5756 drop off formatted disks (6 for complete set - or 1 for just Rav Soloveichik and Rabbi Leibtag) at 184-62 Midland Pkwy

From jr@novell.com Wed Jan 3 22:58:12 1996 mj-ravtorah@shamash.org
Shiur HaRav on Parshas Vayishlach [From last year]

"And G-D said to Yaakov go up to Beth El and stay there. Make an altar there for the G-D who appeared to you when you fled from Esav your brother"

In the next posuk Yaakov tells his family to discard the idols which they have in preparation for the ascent to Beth El, where he would build an altar for 'the G-D who answered me in my time of need and was with me on the path which I traveled.' The question is obvious: why did Yaakov change the description of G-D from that which G-D himself had used?

There is a Mussar Haskel to be learned from the above. It is a lesson in Vhalachta Bdrachav, emulating the ways of Hashem. The humility of Hashem is clearly demonstrated by the way Hashem asks Yaakov to pay his vow. Hashem only reminded Yaakov of the vow that he had taken upon awakening from the vision of the ladder. Yaakov promised that he would give thanks to Hashem if Hashem would return him home in peace to his father and provide him with the bare physical necessities of life (clothing and food). As it turned out, not only was Yaakov saved from Esav, but many miracles were done on his behalf and he returned home a wealthy man. However Hashem (Breishis 35:1) only asked Yaakov to build an altar in thanksgiving for his delivery from Esav, i.e. to fulfill the conditions of his original vow. Hashem did not

ask for the complete Hakaras Hatov (recognition for all the kindness of Hashem) which would have included such major miracles as the defeat of Shechem, protection from reprisals of the neighboring lands, his deliverance from Lavan and the wealth he amassed. Yaakov understood on his own that he owed Hashem a tremendous Hakaras Hatov. Hence his announcement to his family that he was to build an altar to Hashem who answered him in all the times of trouble and who accompanied him throughout all his travails. the Mussar Haskel is for us to emulate the ways of Hashem and the response of Yaakov. One who is in a position to grant a favor to another should not limit his largesse to the minimum amount requested. In turn the one requesting should show proper Hakaras Hatov that recognizes the complete scope and extent of the favors that were done for him (e.g. the concept of Chesed Shel Emes).

When Avrohom defeated the four kings the posuk says "Do not fear, Avrohom, your reward is very great". The Ramban comments that Avrohom was afraid that the kings whom he had just defeated would regroup and attack him. About this G-D tells him not to worry. When Moshe was about to enter into battle with Og G-D told him not to fear him. However, when Yaakov fears Esav "and Yaakov was very afraid and it pained him" G-D does not tell him not to be afraid!

The Rov (Rabbi Soloveitchik z"l) explained that in the cases of Avrohom and Moshe each was concerned about a one time conflict. (Ed: Hashem anticipated the fear of Avraham and Moshe and calmed them before they could even express the fear they felt). Yaakov however foresaw a conflict down through the ages. "Until I come to my master to Seir" upon which the Medrash, noting that there is no posuk stating that Yaakov actually came to Seir, refers this to the coming to Seir in the times of Moshiach "and the redeemers will ascend Mt Zion to judge the mountain of Esav". Yaakov fears, and expresses his fear of, the struggle with Esav which begins here and stretches out across the millenia. Of this struggle it cannot be said not to be afraid; the conflict is too long and bitter.

Chazal interpret the displacement of the thigh of Yaakov as the loss of Jews to the Jewish nation in the time of shmad. Can Yaakov be reassured not to fear Esav in such a protracted struggle? Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi and Antoninus were the closest of friends, yet when Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi went to see this "friend" he first consulted the parasha of Vayishlach. The struggle is too long and the gap between Yaakov and Esav is too wide and unbridgeable. This is why Yaakov was afraid, yet G-D could not reassure him.

The Rav concluded this shiur with the following observation: "Vayira Yaakov M'od Vayetzer Lo". Rashi comments Vayira Yaakov that he should not be killed and Vayetzer Lo that he should not kill others. The Rav commented that Yaakov knowing that the conflict with Esav will continue through the ages was afraid that Bnai Yisrael would not in turn adopt the modus operandi of Esav, that of Yadayim Y'dei Esav, and sinking to the level of an Esav.

(c) Dr. Israel Rivkin, Gershon Dubin, Arnie Lustiger, Josh Rapps Permission to reprint and distribute, with this notice, is hereby granted. These summaries are based on notes taken by Dr. Rivkin at the weekly Moriah Shiur given by Moraynu V'Rabbeinu Harav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveichik ZTL

ryfrand@torah.org "RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Vayishlach

Rabbi Frاند respectfully requests that people should daven and learn for the benefit of Rabbi Yitzchak Isbee. [Yitzchak ben Chaya Rochel]

Guarding Against Esav the 'Biter' as well as Against Esav the 'Kisser'
This week's parsha teaches us how Yaakov has to deal with Esav in order to survive in Galus [exile]. We read the story of Yaakov, who, with great trepidation, was meeting Esav for the first time after all these years. Yaakov offers a prayer to G-d: "Please save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav..." [Bereshis 32:12].
Yaakov's prayer contains an apparent redundancy -- "the hand of my brother,

the hand of Esav." Shouldn't Yaakov have said, "save me from the hand of my brother, Esav?" However, the pasuk [verse] seems to indicate a prayer to be saved from two different people -- from his brother and from Esav. Rav Shlomo Breur gives a very nice insight into this 'redundancy.' Rav Breur says that there are in fact two individuals about whom Yaakov is worried. Yaakov is worried about Esav -- the rough sibling who is out to kill him. But Yaakov is also worried about being saved from the hand of his 'brother.'

Esav can have two faces. He can be the Esav who will kill you, have pogroms against you, try to throw you out of his country and have Inquisitions against you. We certainly have to be saved from this Esav. However, there is another disguise that Esav uses, and that is the loving brother. This is not the Esav that kills you, it is the Esav that loves you. But the Esav that loves you is sometimes as dangerous as the Esav that will kill you. If we have lost hundreds and thousands and even millions of Jews to the Esav that kills us -- we our losing hundreds of thousands of Jews to the Esav who loves us, the Esav that wants to marry us, marry our sons and daughters, and who offers us "salvation through love." This is Yaakov's prayer. Save me from Esav AND save me from my brother.

The Pardes Yosef comments on a later pasuk [33:4], where the Torah says that Esav kissed Yaakov (vayishakeihu). The word 'vayishakeihu' has dots on top it. Rash"i explains that Esav really wanted to bite Yaakov, but the Medrash says that Yaakov's neck turned to stone and Esav wasn't able to bite him, so instead Esav kissed him. The Pardes Yosef quotes a Yalkut that Esav said, "I won't kill Yaakov with bows and arrows, but with my mouth and my teeth..." In other words, I will kiss him to death. That is to say, Esav tries two approaches. First he tries biting; but if biting doesn't work, then the other approach is kissing. A Jew can be literally kissed to death. This is what Chaza"l are telling us -- we need to be on guard against both the Esav who wants to shoot arrows and against the Esav who wants to stretch out his hand.

The Legacy of 'Gid HaNashe'

With this approach, Rav Breur says a beautiful insight in the chapter of the 'Gid HaNashe' and makes some beautiful inferences ('diyukim'). The Torah tells us of the battle that Yaakov has against the Angel of Esav. This is such a crucial event in Jewish history that the Torah wants to remind us about it for all time. As a result of this event, the Torah says "Therefore the Children of Israel do not eat the 'gid haNashe'" [32:33]. Every time we sit down and eat a kosher meat meal we are constantly reminded why we are we not eating porter-house or T-bone steaks or sirloin. The reason is because of this incident. Since the Torah makes a reminder for this event, to be remembered for all generations, clearly the Torah wants us to learn something from the event. What does the Torah want us to learn?

The pasuk tells us that "Yaakov remained alone. A stranger wrestled with him until just before daybreak. When the stranger saw that he could not defeat him, he touched the upper joint of Yaakov's thigh. Yaakov's hip joint became dislocated as he wrestled with the stranger" [32:25-26]. At this point, the Torah does not mention any manifestation of consequence resulting from the incident.

Later [32:31], the pasuk says that Yaakov named the place Peniel, saying, "I have seen the Divine face to face, and my soul has withstood it." The next verse [32] continues "the sun rose and was shining upon him as he left PenUel" (rather than PenIel) and then concludes "He was limping because of his thigh." This is the first time we learn that Yaakov has a physical impairment as a result of his wrestling with the Angel. Why didn't the Torah tell us 5 verses earlier that as a result of the battle Yaakov was limping?

Rav Breur says that this parsha is telling us that during the struggle in the night, when Yaakov was struggling with the Angel of Esav and Esav tried to damage him, there were no lasting effects. We have had Inquisitions and pogroms and Holocausts. Unfortunately, we have lost many. But a lasting effect on Yaakov is not visible, because we can cope with that Esav. That battle we can withstand.

However, when "the sun rises," when it becomes brighter, when it becomes

an age of Enlightenment, when things become good and fine and secure [the sun connotes the new bright day], when Esav shines his face upon Yaakov, takes him into his society, accepts him as an equal, shows him the kiss, shows him the shake of the hand -- that is when it is obvious that "he is limping on his thigh." The effects of the "hand of my brother," of assimilation, of the loving brother Esav are devastating. That is what is going to kill us. That is what is going to damage us permanently.

When Yaakov meets Esav at night, and succeeds, he calls it PenIel. This is the Face of G-d. But when the dawn arrives and we get the 'brotherly love' of Esav, then it is PenUel. Meaning 'penu E-l' -- G-d clears away, He leaves.

When one is fighting and must struggle with Esav, one can be assured of PenIel -- the Face of G-d is present. One knows that "I'm a Jew and he's Esav." It may be tough, it may be difficult, but one knows he is a Jew and he knows this is the Face of G-d.

However, when the "sun comes up" and Esav tries to 'love you to death,' then it becomes 'Penu El' -- G-d, so to speak, turns away. Then, the real impact is evident -- "and he limps on his thigh."

This is the legacy of 'gid haNashe' -- to know that Esav can try to kill us and extinguish us and burn us, but we can survive. We must be afraid, however, of the 'hand of my brother,' the 'and the sun rose upon him,' the Esav that would have our sons marry his daughters and his daughters our sons, and who would offer his "salvation through love." That is the Esav that leaves the lasting effect of "he limped upon his thigh."

----- Transcribed by
David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@scn.org Technical
Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@clark.net
Copyright (c) 1996 by Rabbi Y. Frand and Project Genesis, Inc.
Project Genesis, the Jewish Learning Network 3600 Crondall Lane, Ste. 106
http://www.torah.org/ Owings Mills, MD 21117 (410) 654-1799

Peninim on the Torah <http://www.shemayisrael.co.il>
by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Hebrew Academy of Cleveland

"And he struck the socket of his hip, and Yaakov's hip socket was dislocated." (32:27) The Zohar HaKadosh interprets the "kaf yerech" as "tamchin do'oraisa," referring to those who support Torah. The Chafetz Chaim explains that Eisav's angel disputed Yaakov's claim to the blessings, offering the argument that Eisav had as much right to the blessings as Yaakov did. Yaakov retorted that his descendants would one day receive the Torah to study. Although Eisav's angel could not impugn this rationale, he nevertheless attempted to hurt Yaakov. He succeeded in weakening the financial support for Torah. In the "Ikvasa d'Meshicha," the period of time close to the advent of Moshiach, Torah supporters will seek excuses to shirk their responsibility. This was the manner in which the Sar shel Eisav, angel of Eisav, left an eternal blemish on Yaakov's ability to "move" forward. The Chafetz Chaim adds that the actions of the Patriarchs serve as a portent for their children. In every generation, those who seek to challenge and undermine Torah, attempt to do so in every way possible. When they see that the lomdei Torah, those who study Torah, reinforce themselves by affirming their commitment to Torah study, these detractors - by withholding their material support - attempt to prevent their continued study. They do everything in their power to undermine Torah study -- be it disparaging those who study, concocting reasons for channeling funds to other charities, or making impossible demands upon those institutions whose goal it is to teach and disseminate Torah. The demands are not based upon logic. Their goal, however, is apparent - to prevent the study of Torah. Just as Yaakov triumphed over the angel, even though he limped away, he continued to build a vibrant nation devoted to the observance and study of Torah, so, too, will we continue to overcome the present detractors of Torah. ...

YESHIVAT HAR ETZION VBM STUDENT SUMMARIES OF SICHOT
DELIVERED BY THE ROSHEI YESHIVA PARSHAT VAYISHLACH

SICHA OF HARAV AMITAL SHLIT"A

What Yaakov Told Esav

Summarized by David Tee

"And I have oxen and donkeys... - 'oxen' refers to Yosef, as it is written: 'the firstling of his herd, grandeur is his' (bekhor shoro hadar lo) (Devarim 33); 'donkeys' refers to Yissakhar, as it is written: 'Yissakhar is a strong ass' (Yissakhar chamor garem) (Bereishit 49); 'sheep' refers to Israel, as it is written: 'But you my flock, the flock of my pasture...' (Yechezkel 34); and 'servants' refers to David, as it is written: 'I am Your servant, son of Your handmaiden' (Tehillim 115); 'and maidservants' refers to Avigayil..."

(Bereishit Rabba 75:12) Our Sages taught: "'Oxen' refers to the kohen anointed for war... 'donkeys' refers to Melekh Ha-Mashiach." (ibid. 7)

What the midrash seems to be saying is a far cry from the 'pshat' of the text. What does the midrash mean, and what is the real significance of Yaakov's statement, "I have oxen and donkeys, sheep and servants and maidservants...?" This midrash needs to be understood in light of another midrash which appears later in the parasha: "'Let my lord, I pray you, pass over before his servant, and I shall lead on slowly, according to the pace of the cattle that goes before me and the children, until I come to my lord to Se'ir.' - When will he come? In the days of Mashiach, as it is written, 'And the saviors will ascend to Har Tzion to judge the mountain of Esav...' (ibid. 78:17)

When Yaakov tells Esav that he is on his way to meet him at Se'ir, he isn't referring to the immediate present. Yaakov doesn't mean to go right now to Se'ir; he is referring rather to acharit ha-yamim, when the time comes and the hour is right, and then "the saviors will go up to Har Tzion..." Until then, Yaakov says, "I shall lead on slowly" - there is no need to hurry. We learn (Bereishit 36:31), "These are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned a king over the children of Israel" - "there were eight of them, and Yaakov established (his own) and cancelled the kingship of Esav in their days" (Rashi).

Yaakov has a historical perspective. He doesn't live for the moment; rather, with every action he behaves in light of the perspective of the future - there is no need to hurry now, because the kings of Israel will have their hour after the kings of Esav, and hence "Let my Lord, I pray you, pass on before his servant." This, then, is the deeper significance of Chazal's words in their explanation of the pasuk, "I have oxen and donkeys, sheep, servants and maidservants..." Yaakov shows Esav what he has achieved, what is destined to develop from him and where his strength lies - in Melekh Ha-Mashiach, in the kohen anointed for war, in Yosef and Yissakhar.

Chazal are teaching us that we should not view this as a private battle between Yaakov the man and Esav the man, but rather between two nations: the nation of Yaakov - Israel, and the nation of Esav - Edom. This battle will continue through the years and throughout the generations, and Chazal point out to us the message behind Yaakov's strategy. In dealing with his challenges, his strategy isn't merely pragmatic, based on the contemporary reality, but rather historic and futuristic: what will the ramifications of my present actions be for Israel?

The expression "ma'aseh avot siman la-banim" is well known, but in light of the above its meaning can be sharpened: we are not referring simply to a pattern or sign, signifying that what happened to our forefathers will also happen to us. There is a profound significance here - the forefathers knew that they were going to found a nation, and their sense of mission and responsibility in each and every action was enormous. There is no doubt that when Yaakov went out to engage in a battle against Esav, he weighed his future strength, comparing his descendants and his contribution to the world with those of Esav. Only against the background of such a view could he be confident in the justice of his way and his actions. He would certainly survive and be saved, for he was destined to bring Yissakhar, Yosef and Melekh Ha-Mashiach to the world!

A lesson for our daily lives may be learned from this. During our many years of exile, Am Yisrael felt no sense of responsibility towards our history. With the establishment of the State, however, it becomes our obligation and responsibility to understand the historical significance of every step we take.

In the course of our contemporary lives we determine the future of the nation and the State!

(Originally delivered Shabbat Vayishlach 5750. Translated by Kaeren Fish.)
Copyright (c) 1996 Yeshivat Har Etzion. All rights reserved.

ohr@jer1.co.il Torah Weekly - Vayishlach * TORAH WEEKLY *
Insights ...

Your Money or Your life "And Yaakov was left alone..." (32:25) There are some people who are so attached to their money that their money is more important to them than their bodies. Some people even have their bodies deep-frozen in cryogenic suspension, hoping that one day they'll be able to carry on enjoying their money where they left off. What makes it all the more surprising is that our Sages teach us that us that tzaddikim (righteous people) value their money more than their bodies. (Chullin 91a) We learn this from an incident in this week's Parsha. Yaakov Avinu went back to collect some objects of minimal value that he had forgotten, even though by doing so he put himself in a dangerous situation. Really, you would think that the more a person is immersed in the materialism of this world, the more careful he would be with his money. And the more spiritual, the less concerned.

However the reason materialistic people are careful with money, is not for the money itself, but for what they can do with it: Pamper their bodies, gain acceptance and status... So really, it's their bodies which are important to them. The money is only a means to an end. Tzaddikim, on the other hand, value their money more than their bodies only because of the spirituality that they can create with their wealth. With your body alone, maybe you could build one room in an orphanage -- which would probably fall down after not too long a time! But with your money, you could hire the best architects and contractors, and build a whole orphanage... and put a plaque on the wall that your grandchildren will be able to look up to. Heard from Rabbi Mordechai Becher in the name of Rabbi Berel Eichenstein

The Face Of An Angel "And Yaakov sent malachim" before him to Eisav" (32:4) The word in Hebrew malach can mean a human messenger or a supernatural one -- an angel. Rashi teaches us here that these messengers were angels. How did Rashi know that? It's a disappointing fact that angels don't walk around in this world with circular florescent tubes floating over their heads. If they did, they'd be much easier to identify. Rather, in this world, they clothe themselves in human bodies, and to most of us they are un-recognizable as anything more than flesh and blood. That's to most of us. Yaakov wasn't most of us. He had the eyes to see who they really were. Ostensibly, the words "before him" in this verse are redundant. Obviously if Yaakov sent messengers to Eisav, they went before him. Rather, in front of Eisav these messengers would appear as mere flesh and blood, but "before him" -- i.e., before Yaakov -- they were clearly supernatural. Based on Degel Machane Ephraim

...

Haftarah: Ovadiah 1:1-21

The entire Book of Ovadiah, the shortest in all of the Tanach, is this week's Haftarah. Ovadiah was a convert to Judaism from the nation of Edom. Eisav lived among two tzaddikim, Yitzchak and Rivka, and failed to learn from them -- Ovadiah lived among two of the wickedest people, Achav and Jezabel, yet he remained a tzaddik. His prophecy follows Eisav/Edom through various periods of history until its eventual downfall in the times of the Mashiach

The Eagle Has Landed "If he will rise up like an eagle and if he will make his nest among the stars -- even from there I will bring him down" (1:4). In last week's Parsha, Yaakov has a dream of angels ascending and descending a ladder. The Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer explains that these angels represent the four nations who will exile the Jewish People. At first, Yaakov saw the guardian angels of Babylon, Persia and Greece ascend and descend in succession. Finally, the protecting angel of Rome/Edom climbed up the ladder, but he didn't come down. Yaakov feared that this final exile would never end, until Hashem said "If he will rise up like an eagle and if he will make his nest among the stars -- even from there I will bring him down." We

have still not emerged from that that final exile. If a single moment in recent history epitomizes the over-confidence of our age, it is arguably the 'Moon Landing' in 1969. It seemed at the time that "we have the technology -- we can do anything!" (Since then there has been the rude awakening of unimaginable mindless violence, urban poverty and pandemic disease, to knock the gloss off that arrogant assumption). The first words broadcast from the moon were "Houston, this is Tranquillity Base. The Eagle has landed." Nearly 2,000 years ago, Ovadiah predicted: "If he will rise up like an eagle and if he will make his nest among the stars -- even from there I will bring him down."

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer (C) 1996 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

"ohr@jer1.co.il" , Parsha Q&A - Vayishlach In-Depth Questions on the Parsha and Rashi's commentary. Parshas Vayishlach Parsha Questions

1. What sort of messengers did Yaakov send to Eisav? 2. Why was Yaakov both 'afraid' and 'distressed'? 3. In what three ways did Yaakov prepare for his encounter with Eisav? 4. Where did Dinah hide and why? 5. After helping his family across the river, Yaakov remained alone on the other side. Why? 6. What was the angel forced to do before Yaakov agreed to release him? 7. What was it that healed Yaakov's leg? 8. Why did Eisav embrace Yaakov? 9. Why did Yoseph stand between Eisav and Rachel? 10. What happened to the 400 men who accompanied Eisav? 11. On what day of the week did Yaakov encamp near Shechem? 12. What did Shimon and Levi do wrong when they killed the people of Shechem? 13. What does the name Binyamin mean? Why did Yaakov call him that? 14. Who was born along with Binyamin? 15. In verse 35:22 the Torah states "The sons of Yaakov were twelve." Why? 16. How old was Yaakov when Yoseph was sold? 17. Eisav changed the name of his wife, Ahalivamah, to Yehudis. Why? 18. Which three categories of people have their sins pardoned? 19. Why did Eisav leave the land of Canaan? 20. By what other name was Magdiel known?

ffffffffffffffffffff

Recommended Reading List

Ramban 32:4 Yaakov's Error 32:9 Sign for the Future 32:26 The Gid Hanashe 33:14 The Journey to Seir 34:12 Dinah 35:8 Rivka's Death 35:16 Rachel's Tomb Sefer HaChinuch 3 The Gid Hanashe Sforno 32:19 Strategy of the Gifts 32:25 The Wrestling Match 32:26 Yaakov's Injury 32:33 The Gid Hanashe 33:4 Surviving Eisav 34:27 The Guilt of Shechem 35:10 The Meaning of Yaakov's Name 35:23 Power of Repentance

ffffffffffffffffffff

Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 32:4 - Angels. 2. 32:8 - He was afraid he would be killed. He was distressed that he would have to kill. 3. 32:9 - He sent gifts, he prayed, and he prepared for war. 4. 32:23 - Yaakov hid her in a chest so Eisav wouldn't see her and want to marry her. 5. 32:25 - He went back to get some small containers he had forgotten. 6. 32:27 - Admit that the blessings given by Yitzchak rightfully belong to Yaakov. 7. 32:32 - The shining of the sun. 8. 33:4 - His pity was aroused when he saw Yaakov bowing to him so many times. 9. 34:7 - To stop Eisav from gazing at her. 10. 34:16 - They slipped away one by one. 11. 34:18 - Friday afternoon. 12. 34:25 - They acted without consulting their father. 13. 35:18 - Ben-Yemin means 'Son of the South.' He was the only son born in the Land of Israel, which is south of Aram Naharaim. 14. 35:17 - His two twin sisters. 15. 35:22 - To stress, that all of them -- including Reuven -- were righteous. 16. 35:29 - One hundred and eight. 17. 35:2 - To fool Yitzchak into thinking that she had abandoned idolatry. 18. 36:3 - One who converts, one who is elevated to a position of leadership, and one who marries. 19. 36:7 - He was ashamed for having sold his birthright. 20. 36:43 - Romi (Rome).

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Reuven Subar General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer Ohr Somayach International

rmk@torah.org ALL...MOST -- DRASHA PARSHAS VAYISHLACH -- Yaakov prepared himself to confront his brother -- a man who 22 years ago set out in a rage to kill him. Yaakov had no idea what this encounter would yield. All he knew was that his brother Esav was fast approaching with 400 armed men. And the prospects for peace were dim. There was little to do. He prepared for war, but he also prepared to avert war by offering gifts to appease the wrath of his mighty kin. He sent messengers laden with sheep, cattle, donkeys and camels all as offerings of peace to Esav. The bribe worked and the encounter that ensued was not confrontational at all. Yaakov greeted his older brother with great dignity. He bowed and called him, "my master." At first, Esav declined Yaakov's generous gifts. "I have much, let what you have remain yours." (Genesis 33:9) Yaakov urged Esav to accept the offering. "Please accept my gift," he pleaded, adding that "G-d has been gracious to me and I have everything." (Genesis 33-11) Ultimately Esav agreed, accepted the gifts and made a counteroffer. He asks Yaakov to join him or at least let his men accompany Yaakov and his family on their journey. Yaakov refused the magnanimous offer from his former enemy and the brothers parted ways. Esav left toward his destiny -- Seir -- while Yaakov traveled to a town he named for its symbolic transience -- Sukkoth, meaning tents. What are the roots of these brothers' ideological differences. One refused generous offers from his former nemesis; the other accepted. One travels with an entourage, and the other only with family and some servants. One traveled toward his permanent home and the other names the resting place with a word that means huts.

The Rebbe, Reb Ber of Mezritch, was once approached by a chasid who had a very common problem. "Rebbe," he pleaded. "I never seem to have enough. The more I get, the more I want. I know it is improper to think this way and I need help." The rebbe told the man to visit Rebbe Zusia of Anipoli. "He can guide you with your difficulty." The man was shocked as he approached Reb Zusia's residence. He saw a ramshackle wooden hut with boarded windows. Upon entering, the poverty was overwhelming. The man figured, "surely this is a man who is in constant need. He hardly has what he needed, and must grapple with new desires on a constant basis. He surely will be able to counsel me on my longing for the articles that I lack." The man discussed his problem with Reb Zusia, but Reb Zusia looked at him in amazement. "What are you coming to me for? How can I advise you? I have absolutely everything I need!"

There is a distinct difference in how Yaakov and his brother Esav perceived their lot. Yaakov said he had everything. He needed no favors, wanted neither gifts or help from Esav, and was very happy to live in a tent city named Sukkoth. Esav only had most of what he wanted. If you push the right buttons, he could be bought, cajoled and swayed for a little more. The vision of one's future is determined by the essence of one's present. One who believes he has only most of what he can acquire will not be satisfied until he has it all and he will never have it all. But one who feels he has it all, will be most happy -- always.

Mordechai Kamenetzky - Yeshiva of South Shore rmk@torah.org
Drasha, Copyright (c) 1996 by Rabbi M. Kamenetzky and Project Genesis
Project Genesis, 3600 Crondall Lane, Owings Mills, MD 21117

"halacha@jer1.co.il" Parshas Vayishlach dneustadt1@juno.com
Jeffrey Gross Moderator of Halacha L'zchus Hayeled Daniel Meir ben Hinda
HALACHA FOR 5757 COPYRIGHT 1996-7

SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS VAYISHLACH
By Rabbi Daniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

Therefore the Children of Israel are not to eat the displaced sinew of the thigh... (Gen. 32:33)

Conducting Business with Non-Kosher Food Items

By definition, non-kosher means an item that is forbidden to eat, Assur B'achillah. But eating is not the only restriction that applies to non-Kosher foods. Certain non-kosher foods are also Assur B'hana'ah; it is forbidden to derive any benefit from them whatsoever. From other non-kosher foods one may derive benefit, but they are forbidden to eat and they are Assur B'schorah; it is forbidden to do business with them. Most foods fall into this category, for the general rule is that foods that are forbidden to eat are also forbidden to be bought and sold for business. [The exceptions to this rule - foods which are forbidden to eat but permitted to be bought and sold - will be listed below.] The Rishonim debate if the prohibition of conducting business with non-kosher food items is Biblical(1) or rabbinical in origin(2).

Do not confuse "deriving benefit" with "doing business". "Doing business" refers strictly to buying and selling a given item, while "deriving benefit" includes every imaginable type of benefit that one could derive from an item. For example: Lobsters, which are forbidden to eat, are Mutar B'hana'ah; it is permissible to derive benefit from them. Hence, it would be permissible to drive a truck that delivers lobsters [to a non-Jew] and get paid for the delivery. Nevertheless, lobsters are Assur B'schorah; business may not be done with them. It is, therefore, forbidden to buy or sell lobsters for profit(3).

To clarify the distinctions between the different restrictions on non-kosher foods, we have compiled three lists. While by no means exhaustive, they will provide general guidelines on the subject.

List # 1 - Assur B'achillah and B'schorah Forbidden to eat and forbidden to buy and sell: Any edible part of all non-kosher animals, fish or fowl; Kosher animals that are Traifos (rendered non-kosher due to terminal illness); Kosher animals which are Nveilos (rendered non-kosher at the time of slaughter); All cooked meat and milk mixtures; Chometz on Pesach; Orlah (fruit yielded by a tree during its first three years of growth); Non-kosher wines(4).

List # 2 - Assur B'achillah, B'hana'ah and B'schorah Forbidden to eat, to "derive benefit" and to buy and sell: Cooked meat and milk mixtures; Chometz on Pesach; Orlah.

List # 3 - Assur B'achillah Forbidden to eat (but permitted to buy and sell) - Non-kosher fats of a kosher animal(5); Blood of a kosher animal(6); Eiver Min Hachai (a limb of a kosher animal which was severed while the animal was alive)(7); Wormy fruits(8); All non-kosher items which are Biblically permitted but have been forbidden by the Rabbis(9), such as unsupervised cheese(10); Food items which are manufactured for animal consumption, even if people could eat them(11); Live horses, donkeys, camels(12) or household pets(13); Non food items, such as furs and soaps(14);

QUESTION: Are there any extenuating circumstances that would allow for doing business with the items on List #1? DISCUSSION: Shulchan Aruch rules that if a hunter happened to net kosher and non-kosher animals or fish together, he may sell the non-kosher items along with the kosher ones. This is permitted because the non-kosher items came to him "by chance", unintentionally. Similarly, an animal that was rendered non-kosher during the slaughtering process may be sold, since the non-kosher item came to him "by chance". The non-kosher animal must be sold immediately, without delay, even if he is able to recover only a minimum price for it(15). He is not, however, required to sell it below market value(16). Based on this precedent, many Poskim(17) rule that if one is offered a deal in which he must buy prohibited items together with permitted items, he may buy the entire package, since the prohibited items came to him "by chance". Therefore: If a customer will order from a supplier only if the supplier will sell him non-kosher items along with kosher ones, the supplier is allowed to sell the non-kosher items on the customer's terms, since this is considered "by chance"(18). But it is clearly forbidden to own a store or a business that stocks up on prohibited items routinely in order to have them on hand for customers, even if not stocking them would cause the business to fail(19).

One who is owed money by a gentile may collect his debt by foreclosing on non-kosher items(20).

Some Poskim permit buying non-kosher meat to feed one's workers(21).

Others prohibit this practice(22). The custom is to be lenient in this matter(23).

QUESTION: Is it preferable to use kosher soap for washing oneself? DISCUSSION: There is a view(24) that prohibits the use of non-kosher soap for washing, based on the Talmudic(25) principle of Sicha Kishtiya (anointing oneself on Yom Kippur is like drinking on Yom Kippur). Other Poskim(26) rule leniently, however, since soap is not fit for consumption. Mishnah Berurah(27) says that if kosher soap is readily available, one should conduct himself according to the more stringent view.

FOOTNOTES: 1 Tosfos (Pesachim 23a); Rosh (Bava Kama 79b) and others. 2 Rashba and other Rishonim quoted in Taz 117:1. According to this view, the Rabbis forbade profiting from non-kosher items as a precaution against eating them. 3 YD 117:1. 4 See The Weekly Halacha Discussion Vayishlach 5756 for clarification. 5 Since the Torah explicitly allows conducting business with fat- Rama 117:1. 6 Pischei Teshuva 117:1 quoting Pri Toar, Noda B'yehuda 2 YD 62 and Chasam Sofer 106 - since the Torah compares blood to water. 7 Pischei Teshuva, ibid quoting the Chasam Sofer. Minchas Chinuch (452), however, remains undecided on this issue. 8 Many Poskim quoted in Darkei Teshuva 117:6. 9 YD 117:1. 10 See Kaf Hachayim 117:77. 11 Igros Moshe YD 2:37. 12 Since these animals are used for work or play and not for food - Shach YD 117:1. 13 Darkei Teshuva 117:10. 14 Darkei Teshuva 117:12. 15 Rama YD 117:1.

16 Shach YD 117:11; Chochmas Adam 69:8. See Kaf Hachayim 117:40 for more details. 17 Bach, Taz YD 117:4; Pri Chadash 117:5; Shu"t Mahrsha"m 1:126; Aruch Hashulchan 117:26. 18 Aruch Hashulchan 117:27. 19 Consensus of the Poskim - Darkei Teshuva 117:46; Shu"t Mishpatei Uziel YD 2:15; Igros Moshe YD 2:38; Minchas Yitzchok 3:93; Kaf Hachayim 117: 67 - unlike the Aruch Hashulchan 117:26 who attempts to justify those who conduct their business in this manner. 20 Rama YD 117:1; Shach 12. 21 Shach YD 117:3. 22 Rama YD 117:1; Pri Chodosh 3; 23 Aruch Hashulchan 117:19. See also Shu"t Mahram Shick 136 who says we may not object if one who is lenient, although a G-d fearing person should not be lenient. 24 Shach YD 117 in Nekudos Hakesef. 25 Yuma 76b. 26 Pri Chodosh 117:4, Aruch Hashulchan 117:29; Kaf Hachayim OC 326:45; Yechave Daas 4:43. 27 Biur Halacha 326:10. This is also the ruling of Darkei Teshuva 117:33.

HALACHA is published L'zchus Haya'el Doniel Meir ben Hinda.

THIS WEEK IS SPONSORED: In memory of Benyamin ben Berel-Brian Lutch on his first Yartzeit, Kislev 21 by his son Joseph Lutch

<http://www.ou.org/torah/ti/>

Torah Insights for Shabbat Parshat Vayishlach November 30, 1996

The suspenseful story of Yaakov and his family's escape from Lavan and their journey to Eretz Yisrael continues to unfold in the opening verses of Parshat Vayishlach. On the verge of a confrontation with his brother Eisav, whose terrible anger at Yaakov for intercepting the blessings intended for him still burned, Yaakov sends him messengers.

The message is addressed: "the land of Sei'ir, the fields of Edom;" and it states: I lived with Lavan and tarried until now. I have material wealth, which I send to my master to find favor in his eyes.

Rav Yosef D. Soloveitchik, zt"l, finds Yaakov's message perplexing.

Why does the Torah repeat Eisav's location, first as Sei'ir, then as Edom?

Second, why does Yaakov need to tell him he was with Lavan all these years? Moreover, Rashi explains that within Yaakov's message that he lived ("garti") with Lavan, is the encoded message that he kept all 613 (taryag) commandments of the Torah. Why the need to employ this anagram? Of what relevance is Yaakov's Torah observance? Finally, why does Yaakov conclude with a list of his material blessings? How do these points serve the goal of his message-to assuage Eisav's anger and to find favor in his eyes?

The Rav reconstructs Yaakov's stream of consciousness in light of the events of the brothers' last encounter twenty years previous. For a score of years, Eisav's angry words rang in Yaakov's ears. "You deceived me-" "vayaakveini"-twice, "first taking my bechorah and then taking my berachah.

Eisav plays on Yaakov's name to imply that he is the very essence of deception!

In truth, Yitzhak blessed Yaakov twice. Posing as Eisav, Yaakov intercepted the berachah, intended for his brother, for material wealth and comfort. But Yaakov received another berachah - to serve G-d and inherit the Land of Israel - given to him openly and freely by Yitzhak, who knew at that point which son he was blessing. Furthermore, Yaakov knew that Eisav thought the blessing for the Land of Israel was contingent upon his not marrying a Canaanite woman. Hence, Eisav's marriage to Yishmael's daughter. The Rav reconstructs Yaakov's message to incorporate these ideas.

"You may be wondering if I still qualify to inherit the Land of Israel," Yaakov is saying to his brother. "Let me first remind you, your address is still the land of Sei'ir. The fields of Edom. I repeat so that you make no mistake. "Furthermore, I have fulfilled the contingency to serve G-d. I may have lived with the evil Lavan, but I nevertheless observed the taryag mitzvot. "I fulfilled the other stipulation by marrying into my mother's family and not Canaanites. And yes, while the material blessings have also arrived, they mean nothing to me. I give them to you freely."

Yaakov continues this line of thinking when Eisav offers to escort him back to the land of their father. Knowing he must keep his distance from Eisav, Yaakov declines, explaining that his children are weak and slow. "Let us go at our own pace," Yaakov is saying. "You return to Sedei Edom and allow me to achieve my destiny as I bring my family home to Israel." In our times as well, the temptations of Eisav's world are powerful and dangerous. Our children are also young and vulnerable. The modern house of Jacob needs to strengthen itself through Jewish education in the home, the school and the shul.

We must fortify ourselves and our children with yirat Shamayim and shemirat hamitzvot. We must avoid the insidious influences of Eisav's world and involve ourselves in tikun olam. We must remind ourselves that even when G-d bestows upon us material blessings, they are not the essence of life, for as a nation, our goal is to be worthy of the birkat Avraham - to be ovdei Hashem and heirs to the land of Israel.

Mrs. Rookie Billet Mrs. Billet is Assistant Principal at the Stella K. Abraham High School for Girls, Hewlett Bay Park, NY.

©1996. Orthodox Union All rights reserved. Comments to webmaster@ou.org

(Bereishit 32:7-8)

What caused Yakov, when he heard of the approaching army of Esav, to fear for his life and the welfare of his family? Hadn't Yakov been promised divine protection when he fled from his hostile brother decades earlier?

[Yakov saw in his dream that Hashem was standing over him.] Hashem said, to him, "I shall be with you and watch you wherever you go; I shall return you to this land. I shall be with you until I have fulfilled all that I have told you."

(Bereishit 28:13,15)

How can Yakov's seeming lack of faith be accounted for? The Gemara (Berachot 4a) asks this very question. Its answer: Yakov was concerned that he may have sinned after the promise was issued, making himself unworthy of the Divine assistance previously promised him. The implication of this statement is that a person's sins can even bring about the cancellation of a Divine promise.

II

The Rambam (in the introduction to his commentary on the Mishnah) asks a striking question on this supposition from a verse in the Torah:

If you wonder, "How can we know if a prophecy was not spoken by Hashem?" -- when a prophet says something in the name of Hashem and it does not take place nor come about, Hashem did not speak that prophecy.

(Devarim 18:21-22)

If the word of Hashem can always be retracted, how can one be sure that a given prophecy is not the word of Hashem if it does not come true? Perhaps the prophecy was indeed a true one, but it was rescinded!

The Rambam answers that Hashem need not be bound to carry out a promise of reward to someone who exercised his right of free choice and became undeserving. However, in order to make it possible to discern the true prophet from the charlatan, Hashem promised that He will *unconditionally* fulfill the words of the true prophet. In this way it will be possible to apply a foolproof test to a prophet's veracity.

If so, continues the Rambam, Hashem will only fulfill a prophecy unconditionally when He relays it to man through His prophets. When Hashem speaks *directly* to a prophet and promises him personal reward, there is no need to ignore that man's future sins. Doubt cannot be cast on the prophecy if it does not come true. Yakov was issued his promise of protection by Hashem Himself, not through a prophet. Hence, the promise was subject to possible cancellation if Yakov's piety would be found wanting! (The Rambam's opinion is discussed at length in Drashot ha'Ran, #2. See Maharal, Gevurot Hashem sec. 7, for a different approach to the Rambam's question.)

III

Hagaon Rav Elchanan Wasserman (Chiddushei Aggadot, end of Kovetz He'arot, #5) points out that the Rambam seems to contradict himself elsewhere in his works. In the seventh chapter of the Rambam's Shmoneh Perakim (his introduction to Avot), the Rambam notes that a prophet does not necessarily have to be perfect in all respects. After all, he continues, the patriarch Yakov, was lacking in faith, as it says "Yakov became very frightened and distressed." Presuming this to be a failing in Yakov's faith would seem to be at odds with the Gemara in Berachot and the Rambam's own words in his introduction to the Mishnah. If Hashem rescinds a

From: "kornfeld@netmedia.net.il"

The Weekly Internet

P A R A S H A - P A G E

--- ---
by Mordecai Kornfeld
of Har Nof, Jerusalem
(kornfeld@jer1.co.il)

The Vayishlach Parasha-Page has been dedicated to Zachary Jason and Rebecca

Lauren Burack by their grandparents, Seymour and Bella Burack.

*** Would you like to dedicate a Parasha-Page? Spread Torah through the farthest reaching medium in all of history!

Parshat Vayishlach 5757 - "Prophecy and faith"

The messengers returned to Yakov and said, "We reached your brother Esav, and he is in fact coming towards you with four hundred men." Yakov became very frightened and distressed....

promise when a person is found wanting, why shouldn't Yakov have feared?

To solve this apparent contradiction, Rav Elchanan cites the Vilna Gaon's commentary to Mishlei (14:26). Faith in Hashem can be expressed in two ways, explains the Gaon. "Bitachon" means placing one's trust in Hashem's promise. "Chisayon," means trusting in Hashem's protection even when it has *not* been promised.

The Gaon explains a verse from Hallel based on this distinction (Tehillim 118:8): "It is better to take refuge ("Lachasot," from "Chisayon") in Hashem than to trust ("B'toach," from "Bitachon") in man." It is safer to trust in Hashem even when he has given us *no* explicit guarantee of protection, than to trust in man even when he *has* guaranteed us protection!

Rav Elchanan uses this dichotomy to resolve the apparent contradiction in the words of the Rambam. The statement of the Gemara in Berachot explains why Yakov did not want to depend upon Hashem's *promise* of protection. This only accounts for Yakov's apparent shortcoming in *Bitachon*. Nevertheless, Yakov should still have exhibited the quality of *Chisayon* and trusted in Hashem even if the Divine promise was not in effect! This is the lack of perfection to which the Rambam refers in Shmoneh Perakim.

IV

The Rambam's distinction between a prophesy given directly by Hashem and one passed down through a prophet can grant us a better understand of yet another passage in the Torah. At the Brit Bein Habetarim, Hashem promised Avraham the land of Israel:

Hashem said, "I am Hashem Who took you out of Ur Casdim to give you this land to inherit." [Avram] replied, "Lord, Hashem, How can I know for sure that I will inherit it?.." Hashem said to Avram, "You may be assured that ("Ki") your descendants will be strangers in a land not their own... but the fourth generation will return here." On that day Hashem sealed a covenant with Avram saying, "I have given this land to your descendants....." (Bereishit 15:7-8,13,18)

"I have given" -- The past tense is used because the word of Hashem is so certain, it is as though it was already done. (Rashi ad loc.)

Here too one is amazed to see what appears to be a lack of faith on Avraham's part. If Hashem told Avraham that he was to receive the Land as an inheritance, there is no need for further proof for the truth of the statement!

With the words of the Rambam in mind, we can better understand Avraham's dialogue with Hashem. Avraham was afraid that he would sin in the future and prove insufficient to warrant the fulfillment of the Divine covenant. Since Hashem had promised him Eretz Yisrael in a direct communication, the promise could be rescinded.

Hashem reassured Avraham, saying, "The fourth generation of your descendants will return to Israel... I have given this land to your descendants." The promise to Avraham's descendants was one of prophesy, given to Avraham as a prophet to pass down to his descendants. As a prophesy, the promise would no longer be revoked even if Avraham or his descendants would sin!

(This interpretation is especially fitting if we translate the word "Ki" as "because," rather than "that." Hashem told Avraham, "You may be assured [that you will indeed be given Eretz Israel], *because* ("Ki") your descendants will be strangers ... and the fourth generation will return here." Since this prophesy is given to you to pass down to others, it is certain to come about.)

This is why the Torah tells us that Hashem said, "I have *given* this land to your descendants." Since the covenant consisted of giving the land "*to_your_descendants*," it was certain to be fulfilled. The covenant was transformed from a Divine promise into an irreversible prophecy!

From: "jr@sco.COM" To: "mj-ravtorah@shamash.org" Date: 11/29/96 12:12am vaysihlach.96

Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZT"L on Parshas Vayishlach

There are 2 different Haftoros associated with Vayishlach. The first is Chazon Ovadiah and the second is Vami Teluim. The content of Chazon Ovadiah matches closely the content of the Parsha as both discuss the battle between Yaakov and Esav, past, present and future. In fact, Vayishlach is thought of as the Parsha of Esav, therefore reading Chazon Ovadiah is readily understood.

The choice of Vami Teluim requires further explanation. The Navi refers to the battle between Yaakov and Esav in-utero and then discusses the battle between Yaakov and the angel, and how the angel pleaded with Yaakov to let him go to sing Shira and Yaakov's refusal unless he blessed him. The Psukim in the Navi support the statement of Chazal that the angel did not want to bless Yaakov with changing his name at that point, however Yaakov insisted. The angel, despite his initial refusal to do so, revealed to him that Hashem would be the one to change his name later in Beis El.

The Rav asked why Vami Teluim, with a more limited connection to Vayishlach, might be selected over Chazon Ovadiah, which has a more easily discernible connection to the battle between Yaakov and Esav.

The Rav explained that the verses in Vayishlach that refer to the battle between Yaakov and the mysterious stranger, the Ish (Vayayavek Ish Imo), characterizes the essence of the continuing battle between the Jewish People and the nations of the world. (Midrash Rabbah relates that before Rabi Yehuda Hanasi would travel to Rome to visit Antoninus he would study Parshas Vayishlach beforehand. Once it happened that he did not study Parshas Vayishlach prior to his trip and that mission was unsuccessful.)

Even though the story of Yaakov and Esav begins in Parshas Toldos, the central description of their embattled relationship is related in Vayishlach, particularly in the story of the encounter between Yaakov and the Ish, the battle that the Navi in Vami Teluim describes. But the question remains: what is there in these few Psukim that causes many to give it precedence as Haftoras Vayishlach over the entire section of Ovadiah that deals at length with the battle between Yaakov and Esav?

Yaakov knew that his true enemy was Esav. He knew that Esav had 2 complaints: the first the birthright that Yaakov took from him and the blessings that were intended for him that Yaakov received from their father. Yaakov tried to convince Esav that the blessings were not fulfilled, as Rashi comments that Yaakov explained to Esav that he had acquired cattle and not the blessings of the heaven and earth that their father gave him. Also, the Kehuna, based on the birthright, implies personal sacrifice that is inconsistent with the blessing of Gevir Lachecha, to master over all his brothers. However in this case, Yaakov knew this enemy, Esav, well, and recognized that perhaps he could be bought off. He therefore sent the present of cattle to bribe him. He knew that the way to deal with Esav was to insist that he accept his gift, which he finally did.

However the night before he was to encounter his known enemy, Esav, he was attacked by a mysterious stranger, described simply as Ish. Yaakov attempted to learn the name of his opponent, but was not successful. He remained nameless. This encounter was symbolic of all the subsequent battles throughout the generations when the Jewish People were confronted by mysterious, nameless enemies who make outrageous demands on us that we can not comprehend. At times the troubles of the world are blamed on the Jew. We have been accused of being at the center of socialism, communism, capitalism etc. and we are forced into life and death struggles, yet we often do not know why they attack us. Yaakov and the Ish struggled and kicked up

dust in their battle, yet in the end Yaakov did not know what his opponent wanted from him and why he attacked him. Yaakov must have compared his opponents to each other, thinking to himself that he understands what Esav wants and how to work around him, but what does this nameless foe want from him? The Torah says that when the Ish realized that he could not defeat Yaakov, he dislocated his thigh. The Midrash says that this is a reference to the generation of Shemad and assimilation. Even though we don't understand why the battle was forced on us, the end result can be, Gd forbid, Shemad.

The struggle with the nameless Ish extends all night till the dawn as the Torah says, Ad Alos Hashachar. This is symbolic that our battle with the nations of the world and our nameless foes will continue till the coming of Moshiach. This is the most important part of Parshas Vayishlach. Vami Teluim was chosen over Chazon Ovadiah because it does not refer specifically to the battle with Esav, the known enemy, but to the Ish, the nameless foe of the Jewish People throughout the generations.

This summary is Copyright 1996 by Dr. Israel Rivkin and Josh Rapps, Edison, N.J. Permission to reprint and distribute, with this notice, is hereby granted. These summaries are based on notes taken by Dr. Rivkin at the weekly Moriah Shiur given by Moraynu V'Rabbeinu Harav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveichik ZT'L over many years. You can subscribe electronically to receive these Divrei Torah by sending mail to listproc@shamash.org with the following message: subscribe mj-ravtorah yourfirstname yourlastname.
