

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ויעקב נתן לעשו לחם ונייד ערשים ויאכל וישת ויקם וילך ויבו עשו את הכברה וגו' (כה-לד)

The **Gerrer Rebbe, R' Yisroel Alter ZT"l** (Beis Yisroel) once commented: “When I was a young child growing up in Ger (Gora Kalwaria), my *Cheder Rebbe* used to teach us the story of how Yaakov gave his brother Esav a soup made of lentils in exchange for the *Bechorah* (birthright). He would explain the *posuk*, ‘*And Yaakov gave Esav bread and a soup of lentils, and he ate and drank and arose and left,*’ as follows: ‘וַיֹּאכַל’ - and he ate, without washing his hands for *Netilas Yadayim*; ‘וַיִּשַׁךְ’ - and he drank, without making a *beracha* on his drink; ‘וַיָּקָם’ - and he got up, without reciting *Birchas Hamazon*; ‘וַיֵּלֶךְ’ - and he left, without kissing the *mezuzah*. This is the correct way to teach children for it instills in them an aversion to following the wicked ways of Esav, and draws them to the proper manner of *mitzvah* observance.

Every year, a special emphasis is placed on the *mitzvah* of preparing and baking *matza*, by righteous groups of *Yidden*, who devote days, weeks and even months toward the process of ensuring complete *Shmura matza*. Attention to detail and expending great amounts of effort is essential to ensure that the process is done in the best possible manner. In Satmar, this is especially true. The **Satmar Rebbe, R’ Yoel Teitelbaum ZT”L** himself, would sit on *Erev Pesach* and separate by hand the kernels of wheat to be used for baking *matza*. When he was asked why it was necessary to go to such great lengths for individual kernels of wheat, he would relate the following story.

The *Rebbetzin* of the first **Belzer Rebbe, R’ Shalom Rokeach ZT”L** (Sar Shalom) was a pious woman who was very meticulous in her performance of *mitzvos*. On one occasion, she saw a person reciting the blessing, “בורא מיני מזונות” on a piece of cake in a hurried and rough manner. Instantly, she walked over and said, “Do you know what you just did? Think about it. How much did this tiny kernel of wheat have to go through before it ended up here, in your piece of cake? What sort of adventure do you think it went on until it reached your mouth? Well, let me tell you. While this stalk of wheat was still swaying silently in the gentle breeze together with all the other stalks of wheat, it was praying a silent prayer before the Master of the World, that it should grow properly and become a source of nourishment for the world. It should not get drenched by heavy rains, nor dried out by a blistering heat and hot winds. It beseeched the Master of the World and begged that He should watch over the little kernel of wheat so that it could grow to its maximum size and not be cut down before its time, and *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* watched over it, sending a specific angel to protect it and tell it to ‘grow’ when it was the right time to grow. So when this stalk of wheat is finally reaped in its proper time and became the kernel it was meant to be, it was filled with such happiness that it praised and thanked *Hashem* for all the good He had done with it.

“But at this point,” continued the *Rebbetzin*, “the kernel once again turned to the Almighty and prayed. ‘Please *Hashem*, protect me and save me so that I am not overlooked at the harvest or fall through the cracks of the mill.’ And once the wheat is processed, the kernel - as well as all the other kernels - continued to plead before the Almighty that no harm should come to it, that it should produce fine pure flour, with no bugs or worms to infest it. Throughout the entire process, the wheat never stopped praying to *Hashem* that it should turn out the way it was supposed to turn out, and that *Hashem*, its Founder and Creator, should continue to watch over it and protect it from any sort of ruination. And finally, the kernel makes one last request: that it should produce a tasty meal that will be served on the table of a pious Jew, who will recite a proper blessing over it and eat it, thereby infusing it with holiness and bringing it to its ultimate purpose in this world - to praise and exalt the Name of *Hashem* and bring Him a great deal of *nachas ruach*.”

The *Belzer Rebbetzin* finished her lengthy and vivid description and turned to the person one last time. “Don’t you think,” she asked, “that you should take into consideration the pleading prayers of this little kernel? Are its prayers worth nothing in your eyes? Do they not make you want to say a blessing on this piece of cake with a real and proper *kavana* - to have intense concentration on the words of the blessing as per the *halacha* dictates?” (**Hamevarech Yisbarech, R’ Yaakov Meir Shechter Shlit’a**)

משל למת הדבר דומה

ויהי כי זקן יצחק ותבהין עניו מראת ויקרא את עשו בנו הגדל ויאמר אליו בני ויאמר אליו הנני וגו' (כו-א)

משל: Two young men came to study at the *yeshivah* of the **Alter of Slabodkah, R’ Nossan Tzvi Finkel ZT”L**. The first was diligent in *Torah* study, while the second had a tendency to be lazy and inattentive. The *Alter* showered an inordinate amount of attention on the second boy, praising him with all sorts of honor. At the same time, he hardly bestowed any extra attention on the first at all, who was among the most outstanding *talmidim* in the entire *yeshiva*.

The first student was hurt that the *Alter* was seemingly ignoring his presence in contrast to the other, inferior student.

When he asked why he was being neglected, the *Alter* replied, “According to my evaluation, you are capable of tremendous heights due to your talents and diligence alone. When you seek attention, however, you are motivated by your *yetzer hara*, your evil inclination. You want me to boost your ego, to hear me tell you words of praise that will feed your arrogance, which I am not willing to do. The other fellow is drawn to distractions outside the *yeshiva*. So, when he comes to me for attention, he is seeking to bolster his *yetzer tov* and to motivate himself. I am willing to do this!”

הן עשו אחד איש שעד ואנכי איש חלק אולי ימשני אבי הדיחי בעיניו כמתקען וכו' (כו-א)ים

The *posuk* tells us that Yaakov was afraid to impersonate his brother Esav. He told his mother, “How will I fool my father? Maybe he will touch me (אולי ימשני) and see that I am not hairy like Esav. I will bring upon myself a קללה (curse), not a *beracha*!”

In last week’s *parsha*, when Eliezer said “אולי לא תאבה האשה”, Rashi says that the word “אולי” (maybe) can also be read “אלי” (to me). In other words, Eliezer, who had a daughter he wished to marry off to Yitzchok, tried to intimate to his master, “Let him come ‘to me’ and marry my daughter.” The **Vilna Gaon ZT”L** explains that according to דקדוק, there are two ways to say “maybe” in *lashon kodesh*: “אולי” and “פן”. The word “פן” is used when we are unsure about something, but deep down, we don’t really want it to happen. For example, in *Shema* we say, “השמרו לכם פן יפתה לבבכם” - “*Beware, maybe your heart be misled.*” The word “אולי” is used when we DO want something to happen. Since Eliezer said “אולי לא תאבה” - “*maybe she will refuse,*” it proves that he really DID want her to refuse, for then his daughter would have a chance to marry Yitzchok.

Based on the *Gaon’s pshat* in Rashi, there is an obvious question here: Had *Yaakov Avinu* not wanted his father to touch and recognize him, shouldn’t he have used the word “פן ימשני” and not “אולי ימשני”? His statement doesn’t seem to fit with Rashi.

My *machshava* here is that indeed, Yaakov said it correctly. *Chazal* tell us (שבת נה): “חומתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא אמת”. Thus, in order for the *Ribono shel Olam* to ratify the *berachos* that Yitzchok would give, they could not be received through trickery. Yaakov, the ultimate “איש אמת” - “*man of truth,*” understood this and said, “אולי ימשני” - *Ribono shel Olam*, הלא, I wish my father would expose me - and still feel that I am worthy to receive the *bechorah*! For then, they would have a greater impact and last forever!” This was Yaakov’s ultimate test - and *Hashem* answered his pure *tefillah* granting him the blessing of “ויתן” - as per the *Medrash*: “יתן ויחזור ויתן” - the *berachos* should be continuous, over and over again throughout our lives.

DRUSH V’CHIDDUSH

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל רִבְקָה אִמּוֹ ... וּהְבֵאתִי עִלִּי קֶלֶחַ וְלֹא בִרְכָה (כו-יב)

One might wonder at the expression Yaakov used when telling his mother that he was uncomfortable with her idea. Since Yaakov said, “*I will bring upon myself a curse,*” it necessarily follows that he will not merit a blessing. If so, why did he add, “*and not a blessing*” to his words?

Chacham Yehudah Elbaz ZT”L (Shvut Yehudah) answers by citing a teaching from the *Gemara* (מועד קטן ט): *Rabi Shimon bar Yochai* sent his son to receive a blessing from *Rabi Yochanan ben Asmai* and *Rabi Yehuda ben Gerim*. They gave him the following blessing: “May it be (His) will that you sow but do not reap; what you bring in does not go out; what goes out you do not bring in; your house be desolate,” and other such “blessings.” When the son returned home, he told his father: “Not only did they not

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE MIDDAH OF ... חיצוניות

There is a fascinating *Yerushalmi* in *Nedarim* (3-8), that describes how in future times, Esav will wrap himself in a *talis* and sit with the *Tzaddikim* in *Gan Eden* until *Hashem* comes and pulls him out. Why would *Esav Harasha*, the quintessential paragon of evil think that he belongs in *Gan Eden*, and why would *Hashem* let him enter, only to throw him out?

The **Pnei Moshe** provides an amazing insight, quite an eye opening message for us all. He explains that Esav believes that because he has *Zechus Avos*, and comes from such an illustrious family, he can simply cover himself with a *talis* and PRESTO, he will become an automatic *Tzaddik*! In fact, the *talis* and the *Zechus Avos* both have the same quality - they lend themselves to the “חיצוניות” - externalism, of a person! They are ways for a person to be considered righteous, even pious, without doing anything at all! So, *Hashem* comes along and throws Esav out of *Gan Eden*, in order to teach all the externally righteous people that this method simply doesn’t work! It is *sheker*, falsehood, a life of lies, which often only becomes apparent after 120 years on this world, when one realizes that the lofty place in *Gan Eden* that he thought belonged to him, really does not!

It is interesting to note that the words, “אלקי אברהם יצחק ויעקב” are found in the midst of the *Tochacha*, the harsh punishment that will befall *Clal Yisroel* if they do not follow the *Torah*. The **Shlah Hakadosh** explains that after describing all the evil decrees, *Hashem* looks at His Nation and says, “Wait, you are the children of Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov? You have such incredible *yichus*? So now, the punishments will be even worse!” Being a member of an illustrious family is not a ticket to *Gan Eden*. One cannot cover himself in a *talis* and rest on his laurels, because he is a “*Rebbisha Einikel*” or a descendant of a great *Rav*. It is an awesome responsibility to have *yichus* and *Zechus Avos* is what we must live up to rather than rely upon.

מחשבת הלב

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN

ויהי עשו איש ציד איש שדה ... (כה-בז)

“These are all blessings: ‘You sow but do not reap’ - means you will father children and they will not die. ‘What you bring in does not go out’ - means you should bring home daughters-in-law and your sons will not die.” In this manner, he gave explanations for all the blessings that his son had received. We therefore see, says the Chacham, that some “curses” are filled with love, which is what Yaakov was thinking of when he said: “*I will bring upon myself a curse.*” I will bring upon myself something that might be interpreted to be a blessing, but really it is a terrible curse. He was not referring to a curse which embodied a blessing, as in the case of Rashbi’s son. Rather, Yaakov was referring to a complete cure that contained no blessing whatsoever.

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R’ GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

ויהי עשו איש ציד איש שדה ... (כה-בז)

דרגה יתירה

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