

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ויותר יעקב לבדו ויאבק איש עמו עד עלות השחר וגו' (לב-כה)

The *Gemara* (חולק צא) relates that *Yaakov Avinu* crossed the river to retrieve "פכים קטנים", the small jugs which had been left behind. From here, we learn: "*For the righteous, their money is more precious than their bodies since they never stretch out their hands in theft.*" The **Arizal** explains the *Gemara* in a different manner. A *Tzaddik* recognizes that nothing which comes his way is coincidental. Each and every item found in his possession is there for a specific purpose and must never be squandered. *Yaakov Avinu* understood that if in addition to his riches, *Hashem* also made him the owner of these small jugs, he must use them for *avodas Hashem*, too. It is for this reason that the *Gemara* connects this concept to the idea of refraining from theft. Just as all which was given to me was predestined, so too, anything which was given to my friend is exactly where it ought to be.

One day, a man called up the office of a particular *Yeshivah* in Israel. Explaining how he had seen an ad for the *Yeshivah* in a newspaper and was quite impressed, he asked if he could come down and make a donation. While the *Rosh Yeshivah* assured the man that they had placed no ad in any newspaper, the man remained undeterred. "I will be down at the *Yeshivah* a bit later today," he said. Sure enough, later that day, the man pulled up in front of the *Yeshivah* in a fancy, expensive car. Entering inside, he looked around for a bit until he located the *Rosh Yeshivah*.

"Rabbi," he said, "I was taken aback by your ad. Would you mind if I take a look at the *Yeshivah* premises?"

Well, which *Rosh Yeshivah* wouldn't jump at the opportunity? Gladly complying with his request, he went on to provide a tour of the building. After doing so, the rich man said, "Rabbi, I initially had in mind to give you \$80,000, but I am in fact so impressed with your entire system of operations, that I have decided to raise the amount to \$100,000."

Taken aback by this stranger's beneficence, the *Rosh Yeshivah* asked again. "Tell me again, what brought you here?"

"Don't you know?" said the unknown benefactor, "It was the ad you placed in the newspaper!" And with that, the man wrote out a check for \$100,000 on the spot. After a few more complimentary words, the man walked back to his car.

Quite surprised to be the unexpected recipient of such a large endowment, the *Rosh Yeshivah* called over the man in charge of the day to day operations and asked, "Moshe, did we submit an ad for any newspaper recently?"

Without a moment's thought, Moshe replied, "Not that I am aware of." The mystery deepened.

Without any explanation for how such a check ended up in their possession, the *Rosh Yeshivah* went on to investigate the matter. He finally was forced to ask the rich man where he had seen the ad for the *Yeshivah*. He told him it was in a paper he had picked up in his local barbershop! Now, he was really confused and he doubled his efforts to learn the truth.

And sure enough, the true story was uncovered. Fifteen years earlier, a religious newspaper had just begun its publication in Israel. Desperately wishing to break into the market, they struggled to meet any significant success. After two weeks and two editions released, they were running out of funds. And so, they turned to various organizations for support to stabilize themselves. Asking *yeshivos* if they would be willing to submit an ad into their paper in lieu of a donation, this particular *Yeshivah* consented. It yielded a few donations and was quickly forgotten. One newspaper wound up in the local barber shop. And for fifteen years it did not move! The newspaper remained sitting in the same barber shop for a decade and a half.

And then the day finally arrived. Fifteen years later, in walked a man to get a haircut, grabbing a newspaper as he took a seat. And what did he see inside? An ad for this particular *Yeshivah*. He liked what he saw and decided to make a donation!

Just imagine the likelihood of a newspaper sitting in the same spot for fifteen years and a rich man being motivated to donate thousands of dollars as he sits on a barber's chair getting a haircut. That is what it means to have *Hashgacha Pratis* in our day and age. *Hashem* closely watches over us every moment of every day and every night. And what is meant to be yours will eventually come to you. Even if it takes fifteen years to get there! (**Torah Anytimes: Tishrei Companion 5779**)

אשר בחר בנביאים טובים ...

וזה בית יעקב אש ובית יוסף להבה ובית עשו לקח (עובדיה א-ח)

Predicting destruction is not easy for a prophet, especially the destruction of his own people. As an Edomite convert, *Ovadia HaNavi* was given the unenviable task of prophesying the destruction of Edom - one of the greatest and longstanding enemies of the Jewish Nation.

The *Navi* tells us that *Yaakov Avinu* will be like "fire" to the "straw" of Esav, while Yosef will be a "flame." **R' Yeshaya Pinto ז"ל (Rif on Ein Yaakov)** asks: Yosef is a product of Yaakov. Since the fire of Yaakov will burn the straw of Esav, why do we need the flame of Yosef to battle as well? Is the fire of Yaakov not enough to destroy Esav completely?

The **Maharsha** (ב"ב) explains that Yaakov acquired the firstborn rights from Esav and passed them on to his beloved son, Yosef. Since the destinies of Yaakov and Esav are wholly intertwined, as we see from the *Birchas Yitzchok*, when Yaakov goes up, Esav will go down, and vice a versa.

Yosef's destiny, on the other hand, is completely separate and has nothing to do with either Yaakov or Esav. Thus, when *Klal Yisroel* studies the *Torah* diligently and behaves in the manner of *Yaakov Avinu*, the "Pillar of Torah," then only a small fire will be needed to battle Esav successfully.

However, at a time when the *Torah* is not being learned and the Nation as a whole will cast off the yoke of *Torah*, then only Yosef's raging flame will be able to fight Esav.

מחשבת הלב

קח נא את ברכתי אשר הבאת לך כי חנני אלהים וכי יש לי בל ויפצר בו ויזקח (לא-כו)

When a man and woman get married, on top of all the joy and bliss, they each add their spouse to the "הרחמן" in *Birchas Hamazon*: "*The Merciful One, bless me, and my spouse just as You blessed Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov in everything, by everything, with everything.*" (בכל, מכל, כל) Let us understand this *beracha*. *Avraham Avinu* went through ten *nisyonos*. Plus, he had to deal with Yishmael. Yitzchok had the *Akeida*, had no children for twenty years, finally having twins, one of which was Esav. Yaakov had to deal with a crooked *shver* for 20 years and had severe issues with his brother. He gave birth to twelve sons, who also had issues with one another. His favorite son, Yosef, disappeared, seemingly without a trace. Let me ask you: Is there any part of these lives that one would want to wish upon his spouse?

All this notwithstanding, *Avraham Avinu* looked at the years of his life as "בכל" - despite all the problems, he felt he had everything and nothing was missing from his life, even if life came along with many trials and tribulations. Yitzchok said, "*I ate everything (מכל) and became satiated,*" in every way, despite all my difficulties. In our *parsha*, *Yaakov Avinu* was thankful to *Hashem*, "כי חנני אלקים וכי לי כל" - thank You *Hashem* for showing me grace and giving me "everything."

We, too, thank *Hashem* for blessing us "בכל, מכל, כל" - in everything, by everything, with everything. We can now understand the *beracha* that a husband and wife wish for each other. To have the perception that they have all that they need and be "שמח בחלקם". That truly is a most beautiful wish. We should be like the *Avos*. Having that constant feeling of "יש לי כל" - I have everything I need. No matter how hard life may become, we trust *Hashem* gives us all we need and the strength to handle it. We therefore conclude "ברכה שלמה... כי יבדך אמתנו". May *Hashem* bless us with a perfect blessing ונאמר אמן.

משל למה הדבר דומה

אך בוצאת נאות לכם אם תהיו כמנו להמל לכם כל זכר ... (זר-טז)

משל: The **Chazon Ish**, **R' Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz ז"ל**, was once honored with *Sandek* at a *bris* in *Bnei Brak*. After the ceremony, many people swarmed to the *shul* to get a *beracha*, ask a *shailah*, or glimpse his holy countenance.

The *Chazon Ish* received each person with a smile, carefully listening to their requests, patiently deciding and advising them. Only his close family members and students were able to discern a slight difference in his mannerisms, and the fact that he was so pale worried them. When the last person had finished, the *Chazon Ish* slowly stood up and proceeded to the automobile that was to take him home.

As the car began to move, the *Chazon Ish* asked to go to the hospital. "But drive slowly," he said, and the driver who was one of his students slowed down almost to a crawl. After they reached a turn in the road, the *Chazon Ish* said he could now go faster. The driver handed the *Chazon Ish* a pill that the

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON
THE MIDDAH OF ...

התאבקות ...

דרגה יתירה

כי שרית עם אלקים ועם אנשים ותוכל ... (לב-כט)

What is in a name? The *Torah* tells us that after *Yaakov Avinu* wrestled with the Guardian Angel of Esav and overcame him, *Hashem* changed his name to *Yisroel* - "כי שרית עם אלקים ועם אנשים ותוכל" - "*For you have fought with (an angel of) G-d and with men, and you have prevailed.*" At a family *simcha*, I heard **R' Mordechai Friedlander שליט"א** deliver a very important message to the *Baal Simcha*. He asked, "Why did *Hashem* change Yaakov's name to Yisroel from the word 'שרית' - 'you fought'; why didn't He change it from the word 'ותוכל' - 'you prevailed'? Shouldn't Yaakov be recognized for the fact that he overcame the שר של עשו, rather than the fact that he simply fought with him? Many people fight - but only the victors are remembered for posterity!" He answered that the greatness of Yaakov is that he persevered in the fight! The outcome, the fact that he won, was irrelevant. *Hashem* wants us to fight; He will take care of the result. It's NOT up to us!

In life, we all have our challenges. We all have our own "שר של עשו" that we need to contend with. Each one of us is being pulled and pummeled by our *yetzer hara* from within, or by social pressure from the outside world! The bottom line is that we need to FIGHT! What the outcome will be is not our concern or in our control - our goal is to persevere!

The **Chasam Sofer ז"ל** writes that the name "ישראל" contains the same letters as "ראש לי" - I have a head. The word "יעקב" by contrast, refers to the heel. By changing Yaakov's name to Yisroel, *Hashem* was, in fact, giving *Am Yisroel* the ability to raise themselves up from the lowest point - the heel - to the highest point - the head - and to achieve tremendous spiritual heights by constantly fighting the evil forces within and without that forever try to pull us down. May we all see our struggles as opportunities to grow and may we have continued *siyata d'shmaya* to succeed in this neverending battle!

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV
FROM R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN

On behalf of thousands of Shomer Shabbos Jews - www.chickensforshabbos.com - The charity that simply feeds & clothes Shomer Shabbos Jews in Pretz, Yisroel with zero overhead