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בראתי יצד הרע ובראתי לו
תורה תבלין

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TORAH TAVLINSM

MONSEY
EDITION

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EDITION**

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Dedicated by Yankee Hirsch & Family
לענין משה יהודה ב"ר יוחנן הירש ז"ל, י"ז כסלו
תשס"ח, ור' יצחק מנחם ב"ר יעקב מרגלסטערן
ז"ל, י"ז כסלו תשע"א * תנצב"ה

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ויאמר יעקב אל שמעון ואל לוי עברתם אתי להבאישני בישב הארץ בבנקני ובפרדו' (לד-)

Rashi tells us that after Shimon and Levi decimated the male population of Shechem, Yaakov was cross with them. He told them, “You have troubled me.” The word “עכרתם” is an expression denoting murky water, meaning that Yaakov’s mind was not clear or without worry. He told them, “The ‘barrel’ was clear, but you have made it murky. The *Canaanim* had a tradition that they would fall into the hands of my sons, but they believed that this would only happen after *Bnei Yisroel* inherit the land. For this reason, they were silent and did not battle me. But now, I am unsure if they will come after me and my sons, after what you’ve done.” Yaakov was teaching his sons that they must take control of their thoughts, emotions and actions, and one cannot just do or say whatever he wants simply because he feels it is correct in his mind.

“*Der velt hut ah glantz,*” (the world sparkles) was a common refrain of **R’ Chaim Segal zt”l**, the legendary *Mashgiach* of *Mesivta Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin*, in Brooklyn, NY. He viewed his job as making his *talmidim* realize that the spark of *Torah* burns brighter and that they must be in control of their minds and hearts in order to properly learn *Torah*. Different decades required dissimilar tools, but with fierce idealism and clear realism, he reached his *talmidim*, leaving an indelible imprint upon them. He would stress the message that if your relationship with *talmidim* boils down to who is in class and who is absent, then you have no relationship. A *mechanech* should create a culture where he maintains control, while empowering his *talmid*. By knowing *talmidim* rather than only “taking attendance,” *talmidim* feel valued. By giving *talmidim* control over themselves and not suppressing them, these same students learned to know themselves.

A story is told about one young boy who was taking a *bechina* - an entrance exam - to get into the *Mesivta*. Avery was a sharp and intelligent boy who hadn’t put that much time and effort into preparing for the *bechina*. He figured it would be a breeze, but now, as he sat in the office of the *Mashgiach*, he found himself sweating, wising he was better prepared. He was asked to read a piece of the *Gemara* and as he was struggling though it, R’ Chaim Segal asked him a question. Avery attempted to respond, but he had been relying on the fact that he was a bright kid who usually did well. He had thought he would ace the entrance exam without much effort, but now, he realized suddenly, that this did not seem to be the case. R’ Segal asked him to go into more detail on the section of *Gemara* that he was reading. Avery thought for a moment and tried to give a better answer but the *Mashgiach* corrected him with a vaguely similar but more correct explanation.

“That’s what I meant” Avery responded, a bit defensively. R’ Segal patiently repeated what Avery had said the first time and explained exactly how it differed from the correct explanation. “Do you see the difference?” he asked.

Caught, Avery thought to himself. I’m finished. There is no way I’m getting accepted based on my performance. Then he begrudgingly admitted that the two explanations were in fact different and the *Mashgiach’s* was the correct one.

R’ Chaim Segal leaned back in his chair and peered closely at the young boy. Then, with a big smile, he announced, “The *bechina* is over. You are accepted. Welcome to the *Mesivta*!”

Avery was stunned. He was totally not expecting this response. He had not done that well on the test and the *Mashgiach* even went so far as to point out how his explanation was different than the correct one. And still he was accepted. Avery let out a sigh of relief and smiled. But R’ Chaim could see in the boy’s eyes that he was puzzled over the surprise decision.

R’ Chaim smiled back and said, “It was more important to me that you were honest enough to admit your mistake than to have known the *Gemara* perfectly!” Already at the entrance *bechina*, the type of *talmid* R’ Chaim Segal was looking for to mold, teach and encourage in his *Mesivta*, was one who would excel in his honesty-based system. He saw this in the small interaction he had with Avery and knew he belonged in his *Mesivta*. Just as he expected boys to “own up” when giving an incorrect answer, he expected them to do the same when he confronted them about being absent, coming late to *davening*, or not working hard enough to succeed in their learning. And his students appreciated this lesson. (Rabbi Chaim Segal, by D. Glicksman)

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

חזון עבדיה בה אמר לפני ה' לאדם (עבדיה א-א)

In this week’s *Haftorah*, *Ovadiah HaNavi* went to great lengths to detail the utter destruction of the Edomite Nation. Though we see that many times in *Tanach*, prophecies were directed at foreign nations or their leaders, it still needs to be explained why prophets were given specific prophecies.

Chazal explain that Ovadia was tasked with foretelling the destruction of Edom because he originally hailed from Edom but converted to Judaism later on. Even though it seems sensible for Ovadia to predict his former nation’s downfall, it also seems a little insensitive to his feelings. Thus, was that the only reason Ovadia was given that prophecy?

The **Medrash Tanchuma** says that in the times of *Moshiach*, Esav will attempt to infiltrate the inner circle of *Tzadikim*. He will don *Tzitzis* and sit next to his brother, Yaakov, to pass as a righteous member of the Jewish Nation, but *Hashem* will drag him away from there and take him to his rightful place in *Gehinnom*. Esav understood that he hailed from a place of *Kedusha* and yet he rejected it completely which ultimately underscored his true intention of “returning” to his roots.

Ovadia was tasked with detailing Edom’s downfall because unlike his ancestor Esav, whose intentions to return to purity was murky at best, Ovadia had truly wished to be a member of the Jewish people for the right reasons which made him the perfect person to expose and admonish his former nation.

ויאמר לא יעקב יאמר עוד שמך כי את ישראל
כי שרית עם אנקים ועם אנשים ותוכל (לב-בט)

The *Zaida zt”l* asked: Why was *Yaakov Avinu* called “Yisroel” based on the word “שרית” which means “you fought”? Why is our nation named for a fight? Shouldn’t he have rather been called by a form of the word “ותוכל” meaning “You were capable” - you won the battle, to celebrate his triumph?

In his masterful way, the *Zaida* explained that the *malach*, the *Sar shel Esav*, and ultimately the *Ribono shel Olam*, were imparting an important life-lesson: The *ikkar* is not necessarily the victory, but rather the unwavering determination to battle all forces of evil. Yaakov ended up winning the battle but it wasn’t about his victory. It was about his struggle to persevere. Hence, the name Yisroel, derived from “שרית” - you fought (העיקר) and not ותוכל - you won (הטפל).

With this we can now understand the later *posukim*. As *Rachel Imeinu* was dying during childbirth, she named her newborn child “*Ben Oni*” - the son of my mourning. Immediately, in the same *posuk*, *Yaakov Avinu* switched the name to “Binyamin” - the son of my right, my strength. The **Ramban** says that *Yaakov Avinu* wanted to keep the name that Rachel gave, so instead of *Oni*, meaning *aveilus*, he used that same word, but with a positive connotation, with *Oni* meaning strength.

My *machshava* here is that Yaakov understood the *malach’s* message and realized that the *Oni* - suffering, pain and *aveilus* - is, in essence, his strength. We can grow from our trials and tribulations; but only if we learn from them properly. So it wasn’t a revised name, but rather, the same name, albeit with *Yaakov Avinu’s* positive outlook!

May we all be *zocheh* to unwavering *emunah* in *Hashem*, as we battle the evil that surrounds us and tries to overtake us, utilizing all occasions to grow stronger and use our name Yisroel to its fullest, as it says, “ישראל אשר בך אתפאר”.

משל למח הדבר דומה

ואמר נגש יוסף ורחל וישתחוו (לב-ז)

משל: The city of Sanz in Poland did not have a contemporary *yeshivah* for *bochurim*. Instead, the holy **Sanzer Rav, R’ Chaim Halberstam zt”l**, would gather a small group of exceptional minds from in and around Sanz, and deliver a daily *shiur* on *Gemara*, *Rashi* and *Tosfos*.

One day, a delegation of the honorable laymen of Sanz came to R’ Chaim and requested that he open a *yeshivah* and they will find the resources to fund it. They were sure he would accept this generous offer and were surprised and terribly shocked when he turned them down.

One man spoke up. “Holy *Rebbe*, if you can teach to a small group, why not to one hundred students? After all, does it not say, נר לאחד נר למאה, - a light to one is a light to one hundred? This will increase *Torah* greatly in our city.”

R’ Chaim looked at them and replied, “How can I take responsibility for the education of 100 students?”

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE MIDDAH OF - לבנו

The *Medrash* tells us that just as *Hashem* is Alone, so too, Yaakov was alone. This *middah* is a great emulation of *Hashem*. With this beautiful attribute, a person can truly become great. The **Daas Torah** quotes the *mishna* in *Pirkei Avos* that asks 4 questions. Who is wise? One who learns from everyone. Who is rich? One who is happy with what he has. Who is strong? One who can overcome his evil inclination. Who is honored? One who honors others! What all of these have in common is the *middah* of *Levado*. A person is not dependent on anyone in this world for his wisdom, his wealth, his strength, or his honor. It is about the way he treats others, not about the way they treat him. It is the way he views himself and strives to overcome his own challenges that will determine his success as a person. It is also the way he relates to *Hashem* and how he accepts what *Hashem* gives him that will allow him to truly be happy in this world. The *middah* of *Levado* is the *middah* of privacy and oneness with *Hashem*. It is the ability to find inner peace and wholeness rather than seeking the approval of others. One who is constantly concerned about “what others will say” can never be truly happy with himself; he is too busy worrying about what others think.

Due to technology, *Torah* learning is readily available today to everyone at any time in any place. But so is everything else! Everyone’s vacation, their new boots, pictures of their *simchos*, is available to all with the press of a button. The beautiful dinner that a wife makes for her husband is suddenly in everybody’s kitchen, up for comment. It is fun and certainly keeps people who are bored very busy, but it is causing serious problems in our community. Privacy, the beautiful *middah* of *Levado*, is being thrown to the wind leaving a world of *frum Yidden* who are unhappy with themselves, their lives, and their wives. They live for the approval of others and have lost the most important relationship of all and that is their *kesher* with *Hashem*.

מחשבת הלב

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN ZT"L

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