

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ויחדר יצחק חרדה גדולה עד מאד ... ויאמר בא אחיך במרמה ויקח ברכתך וגו' (בר-ג, לה)

For more than four years, **R' Shloime Halberstam ז"ל**, his young son Naftulche (**R' Naftoli Halberstam ז"ל**), and a large number of family members, had been continuously on the run from the dreaded Gestapo who were looking for them since their escape from Poland. In mid-1944, through constant miracles, R' Shloime and his son managed to reach Rumania, and found themselves hiding out in the city of Arad. R' Shloime urgently needed to reach the capitol, Bucharest, to obtain legal residency papers and focus on helping his family trapped in Rumania and Hungary. The problem was getting there.

Late one night, the *Rebbe* sat with his host, Reb Mottel Farkash, to discuss the limited options. "There are two ways to get there," Mottel said. "One is impractical and the other one is impossible!" The *Rebbe* looked at him puzzled. "You mean by train or by ... air?" asked the *Rebbe*. Mottel nodded. It was well known that the Rumanian police were avid Nazi sympathizers who patrolled every train headed to the capital. At every approaching stop, they would board to check every passenger's papers and examine every person's face. Papers can lie but a Jewish face tells it all; and they were experts in this sort of determination.

Traveling by train was truly impractical, but the other alternative - flying on an airplane - was even more dangerous and virtually impossible. How would the *Rebbe* get on an airplane? Every air field was controlled by the Nazis. To board an airplane, one would need a special government permit, which was impossible for a Jew to attain. Only military officials, Gestapo agents and wealthy German businessmen were allowed to fly the decidedly "unfriendly" skies.

But the *Rebbe* began pacing, his mind working furiously, a plan forming. A few days later, a "gentleman" arrived at the government airfield with an airplane ticket in hand. While the technicians checked the military craft, the controller announced in guttural German, and then in his native Rumanian: "Flight from Arad to Bucharest, leaving Airstrip 14 at 17:20 hours."

All the passengers prepared to board their flight. A number of Army officials in full dress regalia, and some others dressed in civilian clothes, milled about. Yet, they were all most obviously Nazis. Who could fail to notice their arrogant strut or their steely blue eyes? After the customs official checked their permits he left. The "gentleman" - clean-shaven and dressed in a crisp civilian suit, found a seat on the small aircraft and breathed a sigh of relief. Obtaining the gentile papers and permits had been difficult, but that was nothing compared to what would come next. Here, literally inside the lion's den, sitting among the very officials he has been hiding from, the *Bobover Rebbe* felt an urge to *daven* to *Hashem*, but he was afraid to draw attention to himself. Putting a cigar between his lips, he began to murmur silent prayers with all his heart and soul.

The turbulence of the flight did little to calm the *Rebbe's* nerves. Since the *Rebbe* could not possibly procure a military pass for the child, Naftulche had to travel by train, escorted by a gentile woman. He sat tensely for the duration of the flight and it took all his composure to maintain a calm and even casual exterior. Stealing a furtive glance at the other passengers, R' Shloime noticed that one was staring at him. Slowly, he turned back towards the window, his heart pounding furiously. Ostensibly to stretch his legs, he left his seat and wandered down the narrow aisle. Sure enough, the man's gaze remained fixated on him. R' Shloime tried to stay calm as he returned to his seat. Along the way, the plane made a short stop and the watchful Gestapo officer disembarked. A few minutes later, out of the corner of his eye, the *Rebbe* noticed a crew of policemen boarding the plane. Were they coming to arrest him? Incredibly, the police boarded the plane, chatting congenially among themselves. They found seats, settled down, and thankfully paid the gentleman with the cigar no heed.

Finally, the plane touched down in Bucharest. Just as planned and right on schedule, *Hatzoloh* activist Sammy Baraf was waiting with his car to whisk the *Rebbe* away to safety. Not until they arrived at his pre-arranged lodgings, did the *Rebbe* discard his disguise and relax. It was a truly terrifying ordeal, but one that only a man with the courage and audacity of the *Bobover Rebbe*, would be able to pull off. Not until 1947, after great self-sacrifice, did R' Shloime finally leave the blood-soaked shores of Europe for America, where he was reunited with his son, Naftulche, and other members of his family.

ואמרתם כמה אהבתנו להיות אה עשו ליעקב נאם ה' ויחבי את יעקב (מלאכי א-ב)

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY R' TZVI HIRSCH HOFFMAN

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

In the *HafTORah*, *Malachi HaNavi* exclaims in the name of *Hashem*, "Is not Esav the brother of Yaakov? For I love Yaakov and hate Esav..." Malachi extolls the tremendous love *Hashem* harbors for *Klal Yisroel* and the utter derision and contempt He has for the children of Esav – the two protagonists in this week's *parsha*.

The **Ksav Sofer, R' Avraham Shmuel Binyamin Sofer ז"ל**, makes a brilliant observation which clarifies a key difference between Yaakov and Esav. He explains that there are two types of *tzaddikim*. The first is one who is a complete *tzaddik* in his own right, and the second is a *tzaddik* who is only considered righteous when measured against those who live around him. While it is clear that the basic difference

between Yaakov and Esav is *Hashem's* profound and unconditional love for one, and pure unadulterated hatred for the other, it actually goes deeper than that. *Hashem's* love for *Yaakov Avinu* and his children runs so deep that there is nothing in the world that would ever change that. In fact, even when *Klal Yisroel* commits egregious sins and is deserving of punishment, *Hashem* goes out of His way to compare us to the children of Esav which automatically places us in a better light since Esav and his children are thoroughly evil to the core.

Thus, no matter where we stand, we always have an opportunity for redemption since in the Almighty's eyes, we are always better than Esav – a key idea to remember when a Jew occasionally falters in his *avodas Hashem*.

ויתרצו הכנים בקרבה ותאמר אם כן למה זה אנכי ותלך לדרוש את ה' ... (בר-גב)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPMAN ז"ל

מחשבת הלב

From a very young age we are taught the famous words of *Chazal* that when *Rivkah Imeinu* would pass by a *Beis Medrash*, Yaakov would kick, showing his urge to exit, and when she would pass by a *beis avoda zara*, Esav would do the same. The question arises: we know that an angel teaches every baby *Torah* in the mother's womb. So why would Yaakov want to forgo the opportunity to learn with such an exalted and distinguished *chavrusa*?

There are two answers to this question - one more famous than the other. The first is that *Torah* without toil, without the *מוש*, just isn't the same as one who puts all his effort into it. *Yaakov Avinu* felt that being "spoon-fed" the *Torah*, albeit with a silver spoon, wasn't the way he wanted to acquire the *Torah*. His aspiration to be a *ישב אהלים* came to fruition. The *velt* says that we're not obligated to stand up for an expectant woman even though the baby she's carrying is a *Talmid Chacham*, (having learned *Kol haTorah* from the *malach*) because that is *Torah* that is acquired without any *גייעה*.

There is a second *pshat*. In truth, it is not worth learning, even with a *malach* when the *chavrusa* next to you is a *rasha* like Esav. On the topic of *chaveirim*, I saw a beautiful *remez* from the **Shlah Hakadosh**. The word "חבר" has multiple combinations. He says a person must be "בחר" - he must choose a *chaver*, a friend. If he's a *chaver tov* then he should be "רחב" - he should expand their relationship. If, however, he's *ch"v* like a "חרב" - a sword, then "ברח" - run away from him.

I have a cousin who told me that in the morning, after his mother would drop him off at his *yeshivah*, she would pull over and with a great deal of "irrerren" (tears), she would *daven* to *Hashem* that her son should be successful in finding the right type of friends and *chaveirim*. May Hashem bear all of our tefillos and grant us all the right hashpaos and much nachas.

משל למה הדבר דומה

ויאכל וישת ויקם וילך ויבן עשו את הבכרה ... (בר-לה)

משל: There was once a renowned professor who traveled the world, preaching his thesis on atheism. Whenever he came to a new city, scores of people would listen to his speeches. Tickets sold out very quickly and large auditoriums were filled to the brim. Everyone wanted to hear his impressive ideas and theories about this rather challenging subject. After many years of traveling the world, reaching far ends of the globe, he finally retired, and within due time, passed away.

His son, by then a renowned speaker himself, began having doubts about his father's thesis. Maybe there was a G-d after all, he thought. How could he be so certain that everything his father said was indeed correct? He decided he was going to ask none other than his father himself! With his abundance of connections, he procured a meeting a man who knew how to conduct a *séance* (a purported way of communicating with

spirits in the nether world). He started by asking his "father" a few questions and when he was convinced it was really him, he got straight to the point. "Father, how are things there?" he asked. "Good," came the reply.

"Dad, what do you eat for breakfast?" "Salad," was the reply. "Really? What about lunch?" Again the reply, "Salad."

"OMG! And supper?" "Salad, maybe carrots too."

"I can't believe this," the son exclaimed, "it must be awful there! How do you manage where you are?"

"Well, my dear son," came the reply, "it is not like you think. I am actually a kangaroo in Australia!"

ממשל: The *posuk* describes in detail how Esav ate lentils and then on the way out, spouted some mocking remarks about the importance of *בכורה*. Perhaps the vivid illustration is for us to paint the image. When someone "casually" shoots off a line regarding an action he observed by another, or worse, a *mitzvah* someone did, he shall know he just imitated Esav!

ויהי עשו איש ידע ציד איש שדה ... (בר-כז)

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

דרגה יתירה

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 אבררם יצחק ויעקב" are found in the midst of the *Tochacha*, the harsh punishment that will befall *Klal 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* and *Zechus Avos*? So now, if that is the case, the punishment will be even worse!"

Especially, in today's day and age, 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 Einekeli" 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 on our own, rather than just rely upon.