

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

וירא בני לא יכל לו ויגע בכף ירכו ותקע כף ירך יעקב בהאבקו עמו ... (לב-כ)

Esav's guardian angel assaulted and assaulted *Yaakov Avinu* when he crossed the river and fought with him all through the night. Yaakov is no youngster - he is close to 100 years of age. Dawn had broken and the only way the angel can prevail is by aggressively kicking Yaakov in the thigh, to the point that he dislocated his hip. Yaakov is in a great deal of pain. Yet, he limps wearily towards his twin brother who is standing across the plain accompanied by 400 strongmen. Something changes in Esav and when they meet, Esav generously offers to accompany him to his home, but Yaakov refuses. *Chazal* tell us that the reason Yaakov declined Esav's offer was because he knew that this reunion could only be short-lived and that soon enough, Esav would return to type. Yaakov wanted to conclude the meeting as soon as possible, rather than fight the inevitable evil that would emanate from Esav. Yaakov was a man whose every action would be reflected in the behavior of his decedents. At this critical moment in his and our history, despite his terrible pain and weariness, he knew which choice to make and how this would impact his progeny for years to come.

R' Moshe Mordechai Biderman zt"l was the sixth-generation *Rebbe* of Lelov. He was born in Jerusalem around the turn of the 20th century and lived in *Tel Aviv* for many years, later moving to *Bnei Brak*, before passing away in 1987. He was well-known for his fervent *avodas Hashem* and many *chassidim* flocked to him. He was not only the *Rebbe* of Lelov; he was also accepted by many *Karliner Chassidim* as their new *Rebbe* after the passing of the previous **Karlin-Stolin Rebbe, R' Yochanan Perlow zt"l**, in 1956. In the final years of his life, the *Lelover Rebbe* suffered a tremendous amount of pain. His doctors could not understand how he could bear it silently, without ever crying out. When asked, his explanation was quite simple. "If one keeps in mind that everything comes from *Hashem* and that everything which happens reflects His will, then one can learn to tolerate anything." Another time, he told a group of *chassidim*, "I wholeheartedly believe that *Mashiach* will arrive at any moment and at that time, all pain in the world will disappear. Since I know that my suffering will last only a few seconds longer, it makes it easy for me to bear."

In 1948, R' Moshe Mordechai was invited to participate in a *Pidyon Haben* [Redemption of a First-Born Son] ceremony and festive meal in Jerusalem. The *Rebbe* left his home in *Tel Aviv* early in the afternoon, in order to arrive at the *seudah* on time. But the hour to begin the celebration came, and there was still no sign of the guest of honor.

The guests waited an hour, and then another hour. The *Lelover Rebbe* had still not arrived. Three hours passed before R' Moshe Mordechai finally arrived, his face beaming with joy as he rushed inside to wish *Mazel Tov* to the father of the month-old baby boy. Nobody asked him why he had arrived so late, nor did he offer an explanation.

After the meal was over, the *Rebbe* remained a while longer, giving *berachos* and dispensing pearls of wisdom. Eventually, he slipped away quietly and instead of going straight home, he made his way to a nearby doctor's office. He told the doctor that several hours earlier, while he was en-route to Jerusalem, the bus in which he was traveling was involved in an accident. The bus had rolled over and several passengers had fallen on the *Rebbe*, crushing him beneath them. There were many injuries. The doctor examined him and discovered that several of his ribs were cracked.

The doctor stared at the *Rebbe* in amazement. "Why didn't the *Rebbe* come to me sooner?"

R' Moshe Mordechai calmly explained that he was expected at a special *seudah* for a *Pidyon Haben* and he couldn't get away until after the meal. The doctor looked at him incredulously. "How could you sit calmly through a meal, acting as though nothing was wrong? Broken ribs cause excruciating pain!" he exclaimed. "How could you bear it?"

The *Rebbe* simply shrugged. To R' Moshe Mordechai there was no other way to behave. Unwilling to detract from another person's joyous occasion, he had chosen to ignore the pain and suffer in silence. (Adapted from "Ascent of Safed" by R' Y. Tilles)

תורת הצבי על הפטרות

Despite being his birth nation, *Ovadhah HaNavi's* one and only prophecy was of Edom's destruction. But why was he tasked with relaying the message and not another prophet?

R' Yonason Eibschutz zt"l (Yaaros Devash) explains that *Chazal* tell us: "צדיקים לבם ברשותם" - the righteous have their hearts in their possession. This means that despite the inherent nature of the heart to steer a person's thoughts, *tzaddikim* take control of their hearts and don't allow it to dictate their thoughts and actions. After *Ovadhah's* death, his wife was left with a large debt to King *Yehoram* who threatened to take her children to his palace. In truth, she had no money to support her family. *Yehoram* was clear that she could visit her children often. And besides, in this manner at

least her children would be given food on a regular basis. Yet, it is so much deeper than the bare physical needs of the woman and her children. In fact, *Ovadhah's* wife's concern was with her children's spirituality. She was afraid that if they lived amongst the king and his people, they would eventually throw off the yoke of *Torah*. This ideal was ingrained in her family by her husband *Ovadhah*, who as a person with a pagan background living amongst terribly wicked people like King *Achav* and Queen *Izevel*, he remained steadfast and did not become influenced by them. In fact, he did the opposite and risked his life repeatedly to ensure the survival of the prophets and the *Torah*. His *Mesiras Nefesh* made him the perfect prophet to relay the message of Edom's destruction.

מחשבת הלב

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPFMAN ZT"l

אל נא אם נא מצאתי הן בעיניך ולקחת מנחתי מדי כי על כן ראיתי פניך כראת פני אלקים ותרגני ... (לב-ג)
Yaakov attempted to persuade Esav to accept his gifts. Esav balked at the idea, saying "יש לירב". Yaakov responded with the above *posuk*, translated literally and loosely, "For just seeing your face, like one who comes to see and greet the king and brings a present; you too should take mine." **R' Gavriel Zev Margolis zt"l** of Vilna explains "כראות פני אלקים" as alluding to the הרגל. Yaakov told Esav, "I know you don't need the money, as you said לירב. *Hashem* doesn't need our money, but yet He commanded us: "ולא יראה את פני ה' ריקם" - not to come empty-handed, each time we are עולה רגל. Obviously, the point of gifts is to show that we cherish the relationship and the opportunity to "see" each other. To that argument Esav finally conceded.

This *machshava* pertains to our entire *avodas Hashem* and is a pivotal concept of the *neis* of *Chanukah* הבה עלינו לטובה. We have 613 *mitzvos*. Does it really make an iota of a difference, if for example we *shecht* the animal from the front or the back? Nevertheless, *Hashem* provides "geleigenheiten" - opportunities through *dikdukei hamitzvos* to get closer to Him.

Regarding the upcoming *Yom Tov*, there's a *pshat* from the **Pnei Yehoshua** that complements this idea. Many *meforshim* ask what was the whole point of looking for a pure untainted *pach shemen* if the *halacha* is *בציבור* (according to many opinions)? Why then didn't they simply use one that was טמא? He answers that despite the fact that it was halachically permissible, the *Yidden* went above and beyond, due to their *ahavas Hashem*. When *Hashem* saw their efforts, He, too, out of love, unveiled that lone jug and enabled it to last for eight days.

It's interesting to note that there is a *shitta*, albeit an enigmatic one, who maintains that the פכים קטנים Yaakov went back for in the *parsha*, were the very same jugs found by the *Yidden* for the *Neis Chanukah*! יהי רצון ... שכשם שעשה ניסים לאבותינו! so too, במהרה בימינו אמן ואמן - we should merit many miracles and be able to light the *heilige Menorah* in the *Bais HaMikdash*!

משל למה הדבר דומה

שכם בני השקה נפשו ככתכם תנו נא אתה לו לאשה ... (לד-ה)
משל: There was once a king who had the most beautiful diamond in the world. He kept it in a box with some other special diamonds, and only took it out on rare occasions.

On one such occasion, as he was taking it out, his beautiful diamond received a deep scratch from one of the other jewels in the box. The king was heartbroken and invited all the jewelry experts in his kingdom to see what could be done. All the experts told him that the only way to remove the scratch would be to recut the diamond. Unfortunately, this would reduce the stone in size considerably and it would not be the prized jewel it once was.

Just as the king was about to give up hope, a master jeweler from a distant land appeared in the palace. "Your Majesty," he said, "I can fix the scratch, and the diamond will be even more beautiful than before."

The king gave his assent, and one month later, the expert returned with the king's diamond. The king took it in his hands and gave a cry of great joy. The expert had carved a flower of exquisite beauty into the diamond, incorporating the scratch into the design as the stem of the flower. The diamond was now even more precious and beautiful than ever!
נמשל: When a person takes a negative *middah* or reprehensible act and attempts to disguise it by building something apparently positive around it, the consequences are terrible. Yet this was precisely what Shechem and Chamor intended to do. They came to *Yaakov Avinu* and in effect said, the episode with *Dinah* has already taken place, let us turn it into something that is good for both of us - let's move on. This approach is anything but a proper *Torah* approach and it is one of the great lessons we can learn from this story!

דרגה יתירה

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

The *Torah* tells us that when *Yaakov Avinu* heard that his brother Esav was coming to greet him with an army of 400 ferocious fighters, he was very afraid. This seems to contradict the tremendous *emunah* that Yaakov, the great and pure *tzaddik*, had in *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. Do we not read clearly that *Hashem* Himself promised Yaakov that He will be with him and protect him wherever he will go (כח-טו)? So what did *Yaakov Avinu* have to be afraid of?

R' Simcha Sheps zt"l makes an interesting observation. For his own personal safety, Yaakov was not worried. He knew that *Hashem* would not allow any harm to come to him. But he looked off to the distance and "saw his brother Esav coming." In other words, Yaakov looked into the future and saw how Esav would act towards his descendants. He would act as if he was a "brother" to them - and this is the most dangerous behavior of a *goy* to a Jew!

Rav Shimon bar Yochai tells us: "הלכה בידוע שעשו שונה ליעקב" - It is a known fact that Esav hates Yaakov, and when Esav puts on a facade and doesn't outwardly show the hatred that is in his heart - it always blows up in the face of the Jew!

For this reason, Yaakov immediately cried out: "הצילני נא מיד אחי מיד עשו" - Save me from my brother, from Esav. Since he acts like a brother, I need extra protection from him for all the future generations of *Yidden* who might fall for the trap of the nations of the world. They will pretend to be friendly and act with brotherly love, showing great interest in the participation of the Jews in business, social circles and family life; only later to stab their Jewish brothers in the back.

Millions of Americans are assimilated with absolutely no connection to their rich Jewish heritage because of the play-acting and "brotherly-love" of Esav. A Jew must live with the *middah* of "לכבדו" - he must stand apart from the nations of the world and not fall for their phony displays of brotherhood. Yaakov saw this millenium ago - and is warning us still!