



Parshat Vayishlach: Healed Hip

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles
Summary by Channie Koplowitz Stein

Our Sages tell us that the underlying struggle between Yaakov and the angel of Esav was Yaakov's demand that the angel acknowledge that the blessings of Yitzchak were rightfully his. If so, why did Yitzchak not initially give them to Yaakov? Further, asks Rabbi S. Kluger, why is Yaakov so impressed when he sees the angel that he names the place in his merit. He had already encountered angels when he left Lavan, and camps of angels accompanied him. Then he named the place Machanayim/Camps without invoking God's name. Finally, the Torah implies that the sun rose specifically for Yaakov, and Rashi comments that it rose to heal him even though technically the sun rises for all earthly creatures.

The Shvilei Pinchas cites an incident in the Gemara. Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yehoshua were accompanying Rabban Gamliel to buy meat for his son's wedding when they were discussing this verse. Rabbi Yitzchak notes that the sun rose here prematurely to offset the lost hours when it had set early so that Yaakov would sleep at Har Hamoriah. Why does it matter whom Rabbi Akiva was with and where they were going? The Shvilei Pinchas explains that the experiences of our forefathers are harbingers of future events in the history of their descendants, the Jewish people. He notes that Hashem tests His people with two opposites, wealth and poverty. When one is wealthy, the tendency is to attribute what one has accumulated to one's own strengths and forget about Hashem. On the other hand, poverty is also challenging and can cause one to rebel against his Creator. Citing the Chasam Sofer and the Ktav Sofer, Rabbi Friedman posits that the challenge of wealth is easier than the challenge of poverty, and Hashem always tests the person with the easier challenge first.

When Yaakov fled Esau's wrath, he convinced Eliphaz to take his belongings rather than kill him, for a poor man is considered as if dead. Yet Yaakov throughout his sojourn with Lavan remained true to Hashem and withstood the challenge of poverty. Now, however, upon his

return, Yaakov was prosperous. Esau's angel mistakenly thought that Yaakov was so infatuated with material things that he couldn't even leave his miniscule jugs behind. He thought Yaakov would fail the test of wealth, and therefore he fought him. But Yaakov prevailed. When the angel saw that he would not be swayed in his belief, he shifted his focus to his descendants, symbolized by Yaakov's thigh, and in fact, many Jews failed the test of wealth and became assimilated.

The Shvilei Pinchas explains why Yitzchak initially refused to give Yaakov the blessing of wealth. Esau was already corrupt, so giving him additional wealth would not cause much damage. But for the pure Yaakov, it might indeed be a tremendous stumbling block. However, now that Yaakov has withstood the test of wealth, he is justified in demanding to be acknowledged as the worthy recipient of his father's blessing. Therefore, the angel blesses him by saying he will no longer be the lowly, heel-like Yaakov, but a *sar*, a prince of wealth and power. And now the rising sun represents his rise in station. Homiletically, Hashem first had the sun set, alluding to the trial of poverty that would befall future generations, and then the sun rose, alluding to the trials of wealth his descendants would face. Future generations would struggle with wealth, would limp along, but if they remained steadfast in their faith, the sun would shine upon them and they would be healed. Rabbi Akiva related this to Rabban Gamliel to hint to him that although marriage changes a person's circumstances and often presents financial hardships, he should encourage his son to continue learning Torah in spite of any obstacles along the way.

Rabbi Moshe Breslaver points out that while *an Ish*, a Man fought with Yaakov, Yaakov later recognized the "face" of Elohim, of God Himself as the source of this battle. Indeed, the struggle with Amalek is constant. Amalek always tries to cloud our vision of Hashem. Yaakov recognized the purpose of this "Man," that it was a trial sent by God, and he was successful in defeating him and keeping his vision of God clear. Therefore the Torah

changes the name of the place where he fought from Pniel to the plural Pnuel, to remind all of us who are called *Bnei Yisroel*, not *Bnei Yaakov*, to recognize Hashem's presence in every challenge we face. We are to be encouraged, that just as Yaakov defeated the power of evil, writes Rabbi M. Shapiro, so too will we defeat the powers of evil that confront us.

Esau was meant to inherit the external beauty and physical skills, while Yaakov inherited the inner essence, the *tzelem Elohim*. Rivka understood that if Esau got the blessings of the outer world, he would destroy Yaakov. Therefore she clothed Yaakov in Esau's clothing. Yaakov's mission is to bring the inner essence of the *tzelem Elohim* onto the outer, physical world. When we can do that, we merit the blessings of both the inner and outer worlds. While it is true that sometimes we limp along on our journey, ultimately the sun will shine on

Yaakov saw God "face to face". He saw the reflection of God within himself, and recognized that the outer world of the angel/man had nothing to offer him. It is with this understanding, writes Rabbi Schorr, that he can take the outer world and use it to serve God. The *yetzer horo* uses the confusion generated by constant busyness to keep us from seeing God clearly. Within the Hebrew letters of Yisroel is an anagram for *li rosh*; when my head is on straight and I can think clearly, I can recognize Hashem in all aspects of the physical world in addition to the spiritual world.

Yitzchak was afraid to give Yaakov the blessing of wealth, but Yaakov can be successful. He may struggle, but he uses his head and sees through the evil angels, and the sun can shine on him and on the whole world. He sees clearly *Hashem Echad ushmo Echad*, that He is One. May we also merit that the sun of clarity and healing shine upon us.



Chanuka Drops of Inspiration for Night 2

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shoshie Nissenbaum

One of the main goals of the *Yevanim* (Syrian Greeks) was "*L'hashkicheh Toratecha*," to make us forget the Torah. This seems puzzling. The *Yevanim* were the ones who took 70 Jewish sages and commanded them to translate the Torah to Greek so that it would be openly accessible to all. Did they want to obliterate the Torah or did they want it to become the common language of the people? Rav Hutner points out that the war of the *Yevanim* was a war against our very essence. They wanted to take away our holiness and purity and our identity as the chosen nation. They commanded the Jews to write on the horns of their oxen, "*En lanu chelek b'Elokai Yisrael*." (We have no share in Hashem.) In ancient times these horns were used as baby

bottles. They wanted the Jewish babies to imbibe these words with their milk. The battle of *kedusha* was the battle of Yaakov against the angel of Esav. Only after he defeated the angel was he called Yisrael. So too Klal Yisrael is called *Yisrael* when we defeat the angel of Esav. It's when we refuse to bow to any decrees against the Torah and when we reach the level of feeling that we are the chosen nation. The Syrian Greeks let us stay in our land. They did not exile us. But they desired to take away our identity and this is a manifestation of what the *yetzer hara* wants to do constantly to us. He doesn't want us to believe that we can do better, that we are special. All the darkness in the world is the *yetzer hara* trying to steal our identity. The *Yevanim*

allowed us to have a *beit hamikdash* as a ceremonial edifice lacking meaning or depth. They allowed us to learn Torah as an intellectual pursuit, but not that it should penetrate our hearts.

Chanuka is called *yemei binah*. It's a holiday with depth that is meant to build us, a time for us to reflect on who we really are. The custom is that women do not do any work for 30 minutes after the candles are lit. It's a time to sit and look at the candles and see all of the light in our life. It's a time of healing and renewal as we contemplate and gaze at the holy flames.

Three Essential Attributes of Being a Dayan

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Yitzchak Cohen

In Avos D'rav Nosson we learn that there are three essential attributes needed to be a *dayan* (judge): 1. *misunim b'din* 2. *hemidu talmidim harbeh* 3. *vasu syug l'Torah*. *M'sunim b'din* refers to a law in the Torah that one must not be too quick to decide halachic rulings. One should examine the matter slowly and thoroughly. Perhaps a source for this can be found in the first verse in Parshat Mishpatim, "*V'eila hamishpatim asher tasim lifneihem*, And these are the ordinances you shall set before them." This is preceded by the last verse in Parshat Yisro which says, "*Lo saaleh b'maalot al mizbachi*, You shall not go up with steps upon my altar." Rashi explains that this would make one widen one's step. One shouldn't run up fast but rather unhurriedly. So too, when *beit din* must decide a case they should not do so quickly but think it through thoroughly so that they should not come to make any mistakes. *Misunim b'din* can also mean making a compromise. If one

party claims that the other owes him a thousand dollars and the other denies it and each gives proof to their claim, how should *beit din* rule? One would think a compromise could solve it. Let each one lose \$500. But the Gemara in Sanhedrin tells us, don't be so quick to make a compromise. Work a bit harder to find the truth. So too in our daily life, we need to look carefully at our actions and ask ourselves, will it lead to more *mitzvot*, will it make me a stronger individual? That is why directly after *nesunim b'din*, it mentions *hemedu talmidim harbeh*, one should see to have many students and try to influence as many people as possible. What is the connection? The Gemara in Makot says, "*U'mtalmidei yoser m'kulam*, I learned more from my students." To really examine a law properly is to be able to explain it and give it over and answer the questions of one's students. This makes the *halacha* clearer to the Rebbe as the student sharpens his mind.

The commentators explain that one should not become angry or resentful if one's students ask questions that are inappropriate or unintelligent. By being patient with them one will be able to understand and investigate the halachot better.

The sons of Moshe did not fill his place. The Midrash explains that it was not because they were not intelligent enough but that they didn't have the same *hargashat halev*, feeling for Klal Yisrael as Moshe and Yehoshua did. Moshe taught his faithful student Yehoshua everything he needed to know including how to relate to Klal Yisrael and in this way he merited to become his spiritual heir. "*V'limadetem otom et baneichem*," refers to higher learning, to a spiritual father who teaches Torah to his students. But it has to be *mesunim b'din*, with feeling and understanding and with the goal to elevate his students.