

Vayishlach

December 5th 2020
19th of Kislev 5781

880



Paris • Orh 'Haïm Ve Moché

32, rue du Plateau • 75019 Paris • France
Tel: 01 42 08 25 40 • Fax: 01 42 06 00 33
hevratpinto@aol.com

Jérusalem • Pninei David

Rehov Bayit Va Gan 8 • Jérusalem • Israël
Tel: +972 2643 3605 • Fax: +972 2643 3570
p@hpinto.org.il

Ashdod • Orh 'Haim Ve Moshe

Rehov Ha-Admour Mi-Belz 43 • Ashdod • Israël
Tel: +972 88 566 233 • Fax: +972 88 521 527
orothaim@gmail.com

Ra'anana • Kol 'Haïm

Rehov Ha'ahouza 98 • Ra'anana • Israël
Tel: +972 98 828 078 • +972 58 792 9003
kolhaim@hpinto.org.il



Hilula

19 - Rabbi Dov Ber, Maggid of Mezeritch

20 - Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner

21 - Rabbi Rafael Bardugo

22 - Rabbi Eliezer Ashkenazi, author
of 'Ma'asei Hashem'

23 - Rabbi Ben-Zion Alfes, author of
'Ma'ase Alfes'

24 - Rabbi Massod Shitrit, the 'Baba
Sidi'

25 - Rabbi Avraham Harari-Rafal, a
Sage from Aram-Tzova

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

Published by Mosdot "Orot Chaim U'Moshe" in Israel

Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a



MASKIL LEDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

The Battle of Light Against Darkness Will Continue Until Mashiach's Arrival

"A man wrestled with him until the break of dawn"

(Bereishit 32:25)

Ya'akov Avinu's struggle with the angel of Esav did not terminate then and there. The battle of the Chashmonaim against the Greeks at the time of the Chanukah miracle was a direct continuation. The essence of this battle is light against darkness. As Chazal say, the verse "with darkness upon the surface of the deep" (Bereishit 1:2) refers to the Greeks who wished to darken the eyes of Yisrael and diminish the light of Torah with their culture. This continued until the Chashmonaim came and fought a valiant battle against them, returning the crown to its former glory and allowing the light of the Holy Torah to shine once again.

This is a battle that continues in full force throughout the generations and will endure until the arrival of the Mashiach, as the verse says, "a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn". The struggle will continue until the arrival of dawn, referring to the light of the Mashiach. In every single generation, the Greek culture continues to spread spiritual darkness among Am Yisrael and destroy every good particle. However, in different periods this cursed culture changes its guise and disseminates its spiritual poison in a different form. Our generation today experiences this venom in the form of technological progression. The internet and the various non-kosher cellphones destroy every remnant of good. At the mere touch of an innocent button, man can bring upon himself a dreadful spiritual holocaust and lead his soul down to the grave. Indeed, to our great sorrow, "she has felled many victims; the number of her slain is huge" (Mishlei 7:26), and man is obligated to wrestle with this darkness, to guard himself closely from it and illuminate his soul with the light of life, the light of the Holy Torah.

The Ran writes: "Some say that the reason why Chanukah (חנוכה) is called so is that they rested on the twenty-fifth (חננו) (כ"ה)". On contemplation, it is clear that our Sages zt"l preferred to mark the day of cessation and resting from the battle and not the actual battle and its victory. This is something that requires clarification.

One can say that on the contrary, only now, once the Chashmonaim rested from their enemies, did the main and most significant battle begin. Although they had conquered and destroyed the Greeks, the great tragedy that the Greeks had wrought on the Jewish people was still present in a most tangible way. For most of them had Hellenized, assimilated and forsaken the path of the Holy Torah, and while the physical battle had come to an end, the spiritual battle was far from over. The battle of light against the darkness which prevailed inside the souls of the Jewish people had only just begun, and it was now necessary to fight against the Greek culture that had implanted their deep roots in the vineyard of Yisrael. This is the reason why the Chashmonaim did not publicize their victory with tambourines and cymbals at the close of the battle, for they knew that much hard work still awaits them, and a more difficult, spiritual battle looms on their doorstep. Therefore, they immediately began to search for pure oil with which to kindle the Menorah. The Menorah symbolizes the light of our Holy Torah, through which they wished to rekindle the souls of Yisrael so as to bring them closer to our Father in Heaven and thereby return the crown of Yisrael to

its original glory. And indeed they found a jug of pure oil with the seal of the Kohen Gadol intact and through lighting the Menorah with this pure oil, they merited restoring the light of the Torah to Am Yisrael.

The word 'Chanukah' is derived from the expression 'ch-nuch', education. The world is accustomed to thinking that education only applies to young children, for as long as they are tender in years one educates them and accustoms them to follow in the correct path. But once they grow older and mature, they no longer require education for seemingly they are following this path on their own as they have become accustomed to doing, in line with the verse (Mishlei 22:6), "Train the youth according to his way; even when he grows old, he will not swerve from it". But one must know that a Jew must always place himself within the definition of 'being educated', and even if he has become accustomed to the straight path of Torah which is his life, he must still educate himself and increase his level in Torah and mitzvot. Even once he grows old, he is still required to educate himself and it is his obligation to strengthen himself at all times with further holiness and purity, for there is no limit to the lofty levels that one can attain. However much a person elevates and sanctifies himself, he can never reach perfection, on the contrary, the more he rises spiritually and comes closer to Hashem, this will reveal how deficient he still is and how far he is from true perfection.

The Chanukah lights teach us the correct approach to education. On the first day we kindle one light, on the second day, we add another light, and so every day we add another light and go from strength to strength with more light and more Torah. One must be careful not to soar to the heights of spirituality like an eagle in one quick leap, for just as he rose quickly, so he can fall quickly, G-d forbid. Rather, he should proceed with slow and sure steps. If each day he adds another stage, then his spiritual growth is ensured. But on the other hand, he must not feel satisfied with his standing, saying that what he has achieved is enough, but he must constantly add to his level and experience spiritual progression every single day, just like we keep adding to the number of lights.

In differentiation, the Greeks, who wished to make Am Yisrael abandon the Torah, also took a calculated step-by-step approach, with moderation rather than swiftness and rashness. They did not command them to leave the Batei Midrash at once and forsake Torah, for they knew that Am Yisrael will resist and then their evil plan will not succeed, therefore they approached them cunningly. At first, they built gymnasiums and theatres for them next to the Beit Midrash, enticing them with the conviction that working out and strengthening themselves will 'benefit their service of G-d'. And so in this way, with winning words, they slowly drew them over to their damaging culture. Each day they added slightly more impurity until the Jewish people became deeply enmeshed in their evil ways and forgot Hashem and His Torah. This same strategy must be used for the aspect of holiness. Just as they added impurity to impurity day by day, conversely, we too must keep adding daily, purity upon purity. Every single day man should enhance the holiness of his soul and improve his Avodat Hashem, rather than feeling satisfied with what he has achieved. He should go from strength to strength in establishing regular study times for Torah and fortifying his unadulterated fear of G-d.



Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu
Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Dreams of Improvement

Often, a person is sent Heavenly signals in the form of dreams, and the purpose is to strengthen one's Avodat Hashem. He must listen to the messages and reinforce his Torah and mitzvah observance.

A woman once told me that she dreamed that all her teeth had fallen out.

Since this type of dream portends bad tidings (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 288:5) for which one is required to fast in atonement, the woman asked what she should do. I instructed her to study the laws of taharat hamishpachah and improve her observance of them. She did as I told her, but the story does not end here.

The dream repeated itself, and once again the woman felt all her teeth falling out. She returned to me, agitated to the core. "What should she do now?" she wondered. I tried giving her various pieces of advice but nothing helped. Her dream kept returning, as frightening as ever.

Finally, I told her the matter lay in her hands. She had to do some serious introspection and find the area which demanded improvement. This would surely cause her frightening dreams to cease.

That was what happened. After some time, the woman came back to tell me, "Honored Rav, my awful dream is long gone. Since the Rav advised me to improve, and I followed his instructions, I am no longer disturbed by my frightful dream."

"And in what area did you choose to improve?" I asked, curiously.

"I undertook to improve my love for Torah. Likewise, I encouraged my husband to set fixed times for Torah study. Every evening, I joyfully send him off to learn."

Chazal teach (Berachot 5a): "If a person is met with suffering, he should search his deeds, as the verse says (Eichah 3:40), 'Let us search and examine our ways and return to Hashem.' If a person searched but found nothing wrong, he should attribute his suffering to bitul Torah, as the verse says (Tehillim 94:12), 'Praiseworthy is the man whom G-d disciplines, and whom You teach from Your Torah.'"

The Haftarah

"The vision of Ovadiah" (Ovadiah 1)

Some Ashkenazim have the custom to read from **"And yet My people waver"** (Hoshea 1)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah speaks about Esav's constant hatred of Ya'akov. This hatred is described at length in the Parsha, when Esav headed towards Ya'akov with four hundred men, intending to harm him.

Guard Your Tongue

He is a Ba'al Teshuva

An additional area of forbidden speech is reminding the past. Therefore, it is forbidden to expose someone's past if the speaker or listener regards it as something negative, even if in actual fact it is not so. Chazal tell us, "In a place where ba'alei teshuva stand, the completely righteous cannot stand" (Berachot 34b). It follows from this that there is nothing at all disparaging about being a ba'al teshuva. Nevertheless, it is forbidden to tell someone that so and so is a ba'al teshuva, if the speaker or listener deride ba'alei teshuva.



In Our Father's Path

Only a Jew is Capable of Considering Another's Benefit!

Harav Shlomo Zalman Friedman shlita, the Av Beit Din of Santov, relates the story of a ba'al teshuva who described the chain of events that caused him to come closer to a Torah way of life:

"I was brought up as an absolute gentile, knowing nothing else. My first work stint was in a non-Jewish restaurant. One day the owner approached me and told me that he was going on vacation for a few days. He handed me the keys of the restaurant with the following instructions: Every night after the last of the customers have left, I was to clean the entire place and dispose of any leftover food.

The first evening I noticed that there was a great deal of leftover food and thought to myself, why should people not enjoy this food? Not having the heart to throw it all in the garbage, I decided to pack it up and distribute it to needy people.

On that street, right opposite the restaurant, there was a non-Jewish old age home. So that evening, I took all the food, went over to the home and began distributing the food to the elderly gentiles. Of course, they were all delighted to be treated with tasty food from the upscale restaurant.

However, there was one gentleman who would not agree to accept any food from me. The first day I thought this was by chance, but when the same story repeated itself over the next few days, I asked him why he doesn't want to partake of the food. All the others are enjoying the food, there is no reason to feel uncomfortable! There is so much food left, it's a pity that it should end up in the garbage.

The gentile told me something that shook me up completely: "I don't want to benefit from you, because you are a Jew". When I heard his words I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. I retorted, "Are you normal? I – a Jew? Who better than me knows that I was born to gentile parents who raised me all these years. I am a complete gentile!! Why are you talking nonsense?" But the gentile insisted: "Heed my words! These kinds of thoughts, feeling bad for food that goes to waste, distributing it to others and not disposing of it in the garbage, is something that only a Jew is capable of. It would not come into question for a gentile! That is why I don't want to take anything from you."

The ba'al teshuva continued: "On hearing these words I immediately called my father and asked him about my origins. Maybe in fact I am a Jew? But my father just said that I should stop making him crazy and disturbing him with irrational ideas. A few days later, I decided to once again 'bother' my father, and this time forcefully ask him to tell me the truth about my origins. My father began stammering which made me pressure him even more, until one day my father broke down and admitted that indeed, "You are a Jew because your mother is Jewish, and if your mother is Jewish, you are considered a genuine Jew".

I was completely astounded! It was now clear to me where these thoughts of 'unbiased love', of feeling compassion for others, stemmed from. For indeed the elderly gentile defined it well, only a Jew is capable of feeling compassion towards others for no obvious reason or benefit. This was the beginning of my return to my roots and after some time I merited doing complete teshuva. Baruch Hashem today I am a kosher Jew who is particular to observe all the mitzvot.

This story imparts a wonderful lesson. Even a gentile understands that the main essence of a Jew is his love for others, unconditional love with no calculations!



Pearls of the Parsha

Proof that the Hatred Still Existed

"Then Ya'akov sent angels ahead of him to Esav his brother to the land of Seir, the field of Edom" (Bereishit 32:4)

The question is, why did Ya'akov send messengers to Esav to appease him for the theft of the blessings and the birthright? Thirty-four years had passed since then, fourteen years in the academy of Shem and Ever and another twenty years in Lavan's house. It could very well be that Esav had already forgotten about all these events, so why wake up the bear from its hibernation?

The sefer 'Padah Nafshi' explains that Ya'akov had a sign that Esav still held a grudge against him, for Esav possessed two lands, both of which he named for Ya'akov's stratagem: 'Seir' (which can be translated as hairy) was named for Ya'akov taking the blessings since he approached Yitzchak with hairy hands, and Edom was called so because of the birthright, in exchange for which Ya'akov gave Esav to eat "some of that very red (אדום) stuff".

The verse itself reconciles this question: The reason why "Ya'akov sent angels ahead of him to Esav his brother" was that he lived in "the land of Seir, the field of Edom", which made it clear that Esav still hates Ya'akov.

Worldly Pleasures Are Passing Futilities

"He put in his servants' charge each drove separately and said to his servants, 'Pass on ahead of me and leave a space between drove and drove" (Bereishit 32:17)

Rashi writes: He instructed his servants to keep a distance between the various droves so that the greedy Esav would see animals coming toward him from clear across the horizon. This would make the gift seem even larger and more impressive.

Hagaon Rabbi Yechezkel Levenstein zya"a points out something fascinating:

Let us note what satisfied the eyes

of that rasha! Nothingness! Air, space! And so it is with all the temptations of This World. It only seems as if they have substance, while really they are empty!

In this vein, we can explain why we place our hand on our eyes when reciting the Shema. The reason is so that we should understand that the only genuine thing is faith in Hashem. Whatever else you see with your eyes is only a temporary reality and does not have real substance. It is simply air space that serves to mislead man...

The Degree of Protection in Accordance with the Degree of Love

"He put the handmaids and their children first, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Yosef last" (Bereishit 33:2)

Rashi explains, "The last is the most desired", meaning that Ya'akov distanced the various members of his family from Esav, according to the degree of his affection for them. The holy Rav of Shinov zt"l questions: How was Ya'akov permitted to do this? Is there not a ruling (Ohalot 8:6) that 'One does not push away one soul in favor of another soul'?

The Divrei Yechezkel answers that there is a well-known rule that "G-d always seeks the pursued" (Kohelet 3:15). The Midrash writes that even if a tzaddik pursues a rasha, here too Hashem will seek the pursued.

It follows that since the handmaids and their children were pursued by their mistresses, Ya'akov knew that Esav can do them no harm, for Hashem will protect them closely. That is why he put them first, followed by Leah and her children who were more vulnerable than the families of the handmaids but still did not have the same status as Rachel, for they were not pursued like the handmaids' families but were also not as beloved as Rachel and her son. Due to his great love for them, Ya'akov put Rachel and her son last, as in "the last is the most desired" since they would have no protection at all. For the degree of affection affects the degree of protection required.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon
Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya
Pinto, shlita



The Goal of the Meeting a Message for Future Generations

Ya'akov Avinu sent messengers to his brother Esav and prepared for the meeting with him using three strategies: tribute, prayer and battle.

Seemingly, why was it necessary for Ya'akov to meet his brother Esav and thereby put himself in danger? Why did he not prefer to ignore him and continue on his way without meeting up with him at all?

The answer is because it was important to Ya'akov Avinu that his household should witness this historical meeting with their own eyes, so that the following message will be passed on for all future generations: Anyone who engages and toils in Torah has no need to be afraid of Esav the rasha! As Chazal say, as long as the voice of Ya'akov can be heard in the Batei Knessiot and Batei Midrashot, we are promised that the hands of Esav will have no power over us. Therefore, Ya'akov specifically wished to meet Esav so that his offspring should see that he is not afraid of him.

This is the implication of Ya'akov's words to Esav (ibid 32:5) "I have sojourned (גרתי) with Lavan", on which Rashi expounds, "Though I have sojourned with Lavan, I have observed the 613 Divine Commandments (the numerical value of גרתי equals 613) and have not learned from his evil ways". This being the case, Ya'akov was not afraid of Esav at all for he possessed the power of Torah, and if he wages war with him he will certainly emerge victorious in the merit of the Torah, just as he was victorious over the angel of Esav.

This teaches us a lesson that if one wishes to defeat the Yetzer Hara, one has a holy obligation to distance oneself from the pleasures of This World and sacrifice oneself for the sake of the Holy Torah just like Ya'akov Avinu a"h about whom it says, "ויותר יעקב לבדו", Ya'akov was left alone". He relinquished (ויותר) all that This World has to offer and surrendered all his personal wishes. He remained alone, not joining and becoming friendly with the other nations and not allowing himself to be ensnared by their immoral conduct and beliefs. In place, he sat and toiled in the Holy Torah inside his tent.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

The environment in which we live and engage in our occupations, is full of challenges, tasks, duties and missions. There is no person who is not involved in some matter, trying to implement this or that policy, bearing a certain role. From the highest-ranking person to the simplest, each feels that he has some mission to carry out, a task that he wishes to accomplish, a target towards which he strives throughout his life.

In the center of all mankind, where each person is engaged in his specific role, we too have our place, as the Chosen People of the King of Kings, the troop that belongs to Hashem. In worldly terms we are a relatively small congregation, but we have a clear, chosen calling, a joint goal. What is our role here in This World? What is the unique mission that we have been given? What is that exclusive calling that is incumbent on each one of us?

Knowing the answer to this question is essential and of critical significance. No one wants to spend 120 years in this world without knowing why he came here. No one wants to go through life without knowing what to focus on and how to carry out our mission, without knowing what we are supposed to do here.

Harav Asher Kovalski shlita, clarifies this concept with the example of a job-seeker who turns up for an interview. The most important thing for him to know is what the employer expects of him, what role he is expected to fulfil so that he can perform his job appropriately. This also allows him to focus on fulfilling his tasks and carrying out his role in the best possible way, without getting confused and mistakenly getting involved in matters that are not his concern. Every worker or appointed associate strives to understand the exact definition of his role, for this knowledge is the basis for being able to carry out his task in the most competent matter.

We too, on arriving in This World, also aspire to understand our mission. We want to carry it out in the best possible way and strive to make it our focus. We wish to perform all our actions, including all the details of routine life, in a way that leads to this goal. If so, the initial issue is to discover what in fact is expected of us, what is our mission and calling in This World?!

Every Jewish person has his own unique purpose; a special mission that Heaven designated for him alone. But, without a doubt, the main purpose of every Jew is to perform Hashem's will and give joy and pleasure to our Father in Heaven through our deeds and conduct. It makes no difference if the Jew is elderly or young, rich or poor, one who works for his living or one who studies in the tents of Torah. This is the obvious purpose of every Jew, at every age and stage, in every place and time. To give nachat to our Creator!

When the essence of this role is clear, when the calling is resolute and the goal is focused, then every act that we carry out is meant to serve this goal. It is that which sanctifies it and decorates it with a spiritual halo. Even when a Jew eats or sleeps or performs any other act that all creations do, if the goal is to actualize his mission, if his desire is to strive to attain to his goal in life of giving pleasure to his Creator, then he transforms this routine act and it becomes a tool that leads to longed-for spiritual success, and he is elevated to a level that brings him closer to Hashem.

This is the insight that stands behind the stirring words that Ya'akov Avinu uttered when returning from his stay with the deceitful Lavan, "I have sojourned with Lavan" and Chazal expound, "Though I have sojourned (גרתי) with Lavan, I have observed the 613 Divine Commandments (the numerical value of גרתי equals 613) and have not learned from his evil ways"! However, would it really enter the mind of Ya'akov Avinu, the choice of the Avot, to do bad deeds? Could it be that the deceitful Lavan would succeed in influencing him and diverting him from his good and straight ways?

Rather, the intention is that with these words Ya'aakov wished to point out to us a penetrating lesson: "Though I sojourned with Lavan", my life proceeded alongside Lavan, we worked and cared for the sheep together. We performed the same deeds, carried out the same acts, yet despite this, while Lavan's goal was his personal pleasures, the thoughts behind my deeds were essentially different! They were acts that lead to my true calling, to my goal in life, to spiritual elevation!

A Wise Investment

An eminent accountant once came to visit the Gaon Rabbi Aharon Leib Shteinman zt"l. He looked around at the old, dilapidated, house, at the extreme poverty, at the simple bed that served Rav Shteinman his entire life and could not stop himself: "The Honorable Rav should move to a different apartment for a few days and I will organize deluxe renovations. I will turn this home into a beautiful abode, as fitting the status of a Torah leader!"

Harav Shteinman smiled. This was not the first time that people were astounded at the simplicity of his home. He asked the notable gentleman to take a seat and then asked him, "In the capacity of your work as a senior accountant, please tell me. If I am offered a deal that will yield ten percent profit and a deal that will yield one hundred percent profit, which should I choose?"

He smiled and answered, "Nu, an easy question. Of course, you should go for the deal that promises a profit of one hundred percent!"

"This is what I am doing", Harav Shteinman replied. "Investing in the house where I am spending my short life is an investment with low profit, too low to be worth the investment. I invest only in things that will generate one hundred percent profit; eternal life. Spiritual investment is one that insures one hundred percent profit, for eternity. I only go for choice investments!"