



Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Parshas Vayishlach

December 13, 2019

A Taste of Torah

Focus on the Negative

by Rabbi Chaim Yeshia Freeman

Some things are best avoided. In this week's parsha, the Torah relates (Vayishlach 32:25-26), "Yaakov was left alone and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. When [the man] perceived that he could not overcome him, he struck the socket of his hip; so Yaakov's hip-socket was dislocated." Rashi cites a Medrash that the man in the verse was the ministering angel of his wicked brother Eisav, who is none other than Satan himself.

Later, the Torah tells us (Vayishlach 32:31-33) "So Yaakov called the name of the place Peniel - 'For I have seen the Divine face to face, yet my life was spared.' The sun rose for him as he passed Panuel and he was limping on his hip. Therefore, the Jewish people are not to eat the *gid hanashe* (displaced sinew) on the hip-socket to this day."

The commentators are bothered with the way the Torah chose to commemorate the miracle that occurred with Yaakov. Typically, we commemorate a miracle by performing some sort of positive mitzvah. For example, there are a number of positive mitzvos on Pesach that commemorate the miracle of the Exodus from Egypt, and the mitzvah of sukkah on Sukkos commemorates the Divine clouds that protected the Jewish People in the desert. Here, however, we commemorate the miracle with

only a negative prohibition of not eating the *gid hanashe*.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986) sees a very fundamental concept in the prohibition of *gid hanashe*. Although a rewarded greatly for overcoming spiritual trials and tribulations throughout life, nevertheless, one should endeavor to avoid these challenges whenever possible. In fact, points out Rabbi Feinstein, we actually pray for this everyday in the blessings recited at the start of the morning prayers, where we ask Hashem that we should not come to any spiritual tests.

This may be the reason, suggests Rabbi Feinstein, that the Torah commands us to commemorate this event with a negative commandment. Yaakov had to struggle with Eisav's angel, who is none other than Satan himself. While a person is, sometimes, forced to struggle with evil as Yaakov did, one should seek to avoid these encounters. Refraining from eating the *gid hanashe*, rather than doing something positive in relation to Yaakov's struggle with evil, shows that we prefer to avoid these kinds of situations. It is better to create a fence and a barrier against our temptations rather than being faced with a struggle between good and evil.

Stories for the Soul

Parental Advisory

Rabbi Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam, the Shinover Rav (1813-1898), was the son of Rabbi Chaim Halberstam, the Divrei Chaim of Sanz (1797-1876). The two great men often discussed Torah subjects in a lively and animated fashion.

The Divrei Chaim once asked his son to explore a particular halachic issue and share his findings upon his next visit to Sanz. Reb Yechezkel Shraga looked into the matter thoroughly, and prepared to present his conclusions to his father.

Upon his next trip to Sanz, Reb Yechezkel Shraga made an unexpected detour in a local *bais medrash* before seeing his father. Later, he was asked to explain why he had suddenly decided to stop and learn Torah at that juncture.

The Shinover Rav explained that he was concerned that when he would discuss the matter with his father, there would be disagreement, which would likely lead to heated argument over the truth of Torah, as often occurs during Torah conversations. Reb Yechezkel Shraga wanted to make sure that he would treat his father with the proper honor and respect a child is obligated to give a parent. He therefore stopped for several hours to study the laws of honoring and respecting one's parents before proceeding to his father's home.

In this week's parsha, the Torah details the many descendants of Eisav, some of whom became mighty

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Kollel Happenings

FAMILY FUN AT JEWISH FAMILY EXTRAVAGANZA ON DEC. 25TH

Join the Kollel for family fun at the annual Jewish Children's Extravaganza on Wednesday, Dec. 25th, from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. The event will be held at South Suburban Family Sports Center, 6901 S. Peoria. Cost: \$15 per child, \$7.50 per adult; discounted group rates are available before 12/21. Admission includes laser tag, ice skating, Lollipop Park rides, ferris wheel, carousel, and Chanukah activities. For general information, call 303-820-2855 or email info@denverkollel.org.

REB SHALOM SOMMERS SEFER TORAH CAMPAIGN

A Sefer Torah is being dedicated in memory of Reb Shalom Sommers, father of Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers. Dedication opportunities for the Sefer Torah at all price levels are available. Proceeds from the campaign will fund the continued growth and expansion of the Southeast Kollel Torah Center/ Ohel Yissachar. For dedication opportunities or more info, visit www.denverkollel.org, email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

A DEEPER LOOK AT THE PARSHA WITH RABBI SHACHNE SOMMERS

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers as he discusses a number of difficulties encountered in the weekly Torah portion, and develops a comprehensive approach to resolve the issue, simultaneously conveying a deeper understanding of the material being discussed. Tuesday nights at the Southeast Kollel Torah center, 8-9 pm, for men and women.

Parsha Quizzers

The six items below can be found in Rashi's commentary to this week's parsha. Can you figure out where they are? (Answers on bottom.)

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|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Boxed | 4) Reversal of conditions |
| 2) Time to sing | 5) Quiet death |
| 3) 400 deserters | 6) Rome |

Lives of Our Torah Leaders Rabbi Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk III

The story is told that one Friday afternoon, a person appeared at the door of young Meir Simcha's home, and warned his mother that the *chappers* (lit., "grabbers"), people who were hired to kidnap young boys to fill the Czar's quota, were planning on taking Meir Simcha that Shabbos night. The boy was hidden away. Sure enough, that night, the *chappers* barged in and ransacked the house, searching for the child. Miraculously, they did not discover the hiding place and left empty-handed, sparing Meir Simcha this terrible fate. In 1860, at the age of 17, he married Chaya, the daughter of the wealthy Reb Tzvi Paltiel Makovsky of Bialystock, who supported the young couple for a number of years. After some years, Chaya opened a store, and this provided them with their needs as the young man spent his days and nights engrossed in the study of Torah. It is said that Chaya would cite the verse that discusses

Pharaoh's decree to kill newborn boys (Shemos 1:22), "Every male who is born shall be thrown into the river, and every female let live," and explain it homiletically to mean that the man should cast himself into the sea of Torah, while the wife should provide "life," or sustenance. (The Satmar Rav, Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum, generally encouraged most of his followers to work rather than study Torah full time. It is told that Rabbi Teitelbaum once had a debate with another great Torah personality who advocated the latter approach. When the Satmar Rav asked his colleague what the family would subsist on, the man replied that the wife would work and support the family, and cited the above interpretation of the verse discussing Pharaoh's decree. The Satmar Rav, who was famous for his sharp wit, replied, "And who is the one in the Torah who is advancing this approach?! Pharaoh himself!")

Stories for the Soul

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and successful nations, including Rome. Our Sages teach us that Eisav merited material success in this world because he was very scrupulous in honoring his father Yitzchak.

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| 1) Boxed 32:23 s.v. v'les | 4) Reversal of conditions s.v. v'les |
| 2) Time to sing 32:27 s.v. ki | 5) Quiet death 35:8 s.v. tachas |
| 3) 400 deserters 33:15 s.v. vayashav | 6) Rome 36:43 s.v. Magdial |

Parsha Quizzers - Answers