

פרשת ויצא

"וידר יעקב נדר לאמר וכו' ונתן לי לחם לאכל ובגד ללבש ושבתי בשלום אל בית אבי והיה ה' לי לאלקים"

"And Yaakov vowed saying etc. and (Hashem will) give me bread to eat and garments to wear. So that I come back to my father's house in peace. **Then shall Hashem will be for me as G-d**".

Yaakov Avinu was on his way to meet his wicked uncle Lavan, and made a vow to Hashem in hopes that this would help him emerge from his stay with Lavan unharmed.

In his vow Yaakov said: "והיה ה' לי לאלקים"-"And Hashem will be my G-d". What did Yaakov mean by this? Rashi explains "שיחול שמו עלי מתחילה ועד סוף, שלא ימצא פסול בזרעו"-"His name should be upon me from beginning to end, that there should be no defect in my descendants".

Rashi is telling us that the words "והיה ה' לי לאלקים" was a prayer by Yaakov, that Hashem's name be upon him throughout, thereby insuring him that his children and future descendants will be pure.

How did Rashi know that the words "והיה ה' לי לאלקים" was a prayer for children? All Yaakov said was "Hashem will be my G-d", where in these words is there any indication that he was referring to children??

[There is no other commentary like Rashi Hakadosh. Rashi purified himself and fasted 613 fasts before he started writing his commentary on the Torah!

The grandson of Rashi, Rabeinu Tam said that what his grandfather Rashi wrote on the Gemarah, perhaps he could have done himself, but the commentary he wrote on the Torah would've been **impossible** for him to do!

Rabbi Shimshon Miastropoly wrote a very deep and mystical commentary on the Torah. When it was completed, they came to him in a dream and told him that the Sefer revealed *too* many secrets to the people and it needed to be cut down. Rabbi Shimshon edited it, and took out a lot of it. Again, he was told in a dream that it was still too revealing. He cut it down again and again, until finally he was told that it was ok to distribute. When he looked at his final version he found, that it was *word for word* the commentary of Rashi! We see how much is hidden inside the words of Rashi! The words of Rashi are filled with depth. There are many different ways to explain them, and Rashi intended for each and every one of them!]

There are several ways of explaining how Rashi knew that the words "והיה ה' לי לאלקים" was a prayer for children.

One explanation is that Yaakov Avinu used the word לי (to me). The word לי is a word that is used for something everlasting and perpetual. For example, Hashem gave the Kohanim everlasting holiness as the Pasuk says; "ואתם תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים". Hashem gave the Leviim their holiness forever as the Pasuk says "והיו לי הלויים". Hashem sanctified the Jewish people eternally as the Pasuk says "והייתם לי סגלה". We also find this by marriage, when a man sanctifies his wife unto him he says; "הרי את" "והיה ה' לי" - showing that this is a perpetual bond. When Yaakov said "והיה ה' לי לאלקים" - he was asking that Hashem *forever* be for him a G-d, meaning; that he, his children, and all future descendants forever should keep the Misvot of Hashem. It was from the word לי - that implies something continuous - that Rashi knew Yaakov was praying for his descendants.

Another understanding of how Rashi knew that Yaakov was praying for his children, is a deeper understanding of what parents and children represent. "איש ואשה שכינה שרויה בניהם". When a man and woman get married Hashem is "among them". When a couple maintains their purity and harmony Hashem is found with them. The יוד from the word איש, and the ה' from the word אשה, form ה-י-ה (part of the holy name of Hashem of ה-ו-ה-י). When they do not have purity and harmony, Hashem withdraws his presence. The י' leaves from איש and the ה' leaves from אשה and they are left with אש אש (fire of strife)!

The man and woman comprise the ה-י-ה as mentioned, but what about the second half of Hashem's name the ה-ו-ה? Where are those letters found in their marriage?? It is found in the כתובה (marriage contract where a man promises to support and respect his wife). The word כתובה is a unique word, found only by a marriage contract. Any other

contract is called a שטר. Technically speaking, this marriage contract should be called a שטר or a כתב (document) like other documents, why is it called a כתובה?? The word כתובה can be broken up to spell כתב-וה. Showing that this כתב (document), is where the ו-ה is found! This completes the name of Hashem for the couple, and this is why it is forbidden for a married man and woman to be together without a כתובה! The man and woman (י-ה) plus the כתובה (ו-ה) complete the name of Hashem, and cause his presence to be upon them.

Another way that the letters ו-ה is found in the marriage is through the children. The Misvah of פרו ורבו (to have children) is fulfilled only when one has a boy and a girl (if he only has children of one gender, he fulfills the Misvah through his grandchildren - בני בנים כבנים). The boy represents the letter ו' and the girl represents the letter ה'. When a man and woman unite and have children they “complete” the name of Hashem (the husband and wife are the י-ה and the son and daughter are the ו-ה).

We now understand how Rashi knew that when Yaakov said "והיה י-ה-ו-ה לי לאלקים", he was praying for his children. Children represent the completion of the name of Hashem. When Yaakov was praying that Hashem (י-ה-ו-ה) be for him, he was praying for the *complete* name of Hashem to be upon him and this is only through his children. Without children, the ו-ה of the name of Hashem is “missing”. It is from here that Rashi knew that Yaakov’s prayer was for his children.

Now that we know that children represent the ו-ה of the name of Hashem, we understand the significance and symbolism of one of the most important moments of a wedding. Our custom is that the Chatan marches down the aisle first, and afterwards the Kallah walks down the aisle with her parents. Midway up the aisle they stop, the Chatan approaches them and “takes” the Kallah from her parents. The Chatan and Kallah then march down the aisle together. This is a pivotal moment; it is when all four letters of the name of Hashem come together! The parents of the Kallah are י-ה (as mentioned, every married couple represent י-ה) and the children - the boy and girl - represent ו-ה. At the moment when the brides parents “transfer” their daughter to the Chatan - the four of them standing there together- symbolize the “coming together” of all four letters of the name of Hashem! What a holy moment!

We can also use this concept to explain a deeper understanding in a blessing that is customarily given to a bride and groom. We wish them "שהזיוג עולה יפה"-the marriage should “go up nicely”. What is the meaning of this blessing? Hacham Baruch

z'l explained that after the Shema of the morning we say, "ויציב ונכון" and we proceed to say 15 different descriptions of how proper and just the words of the Shema are. The 15th word is ויפה. When we wish the couple that their marriage should be עולה יפה, we are alluding to the 15th description in the ויציב and we are wishing them all the 15 different descriptions of goodness that the ויציב lists.

In addition to this, the 15th word (ויפה)-in the list of ויציב represents the letters יה-יה (which equal 15), showing the couple, that now that they have married, they should merit the יה-יה (15) that as mentioned, joins a husband and wife in a pure marriage.

Another meaning of this blessing "שהזיוג עולה יפה", alludes to the future time of the Mashiach. Currently, Hashem's name is יה-וה, in the future it will become יה-יה-יה. This is why we say "ביום ההוא יהיה ה' אחד" - *on that day* (when Mashiach comes) Hashem's name will be יהיה. This is also the meaning of the Pasuk that says Hashem will redeem us "אחרית כראשית" (the "end like the beginning"). When Hashem redeems us, the end letters of his name (וה) will be like the first letters (יה) and it will spell יהיה. At the moment described above - when the Chatan approaches the bride and her parents, and takes her from them - it symbolizes a Messianic moment. The children (bride and groom) represent וה (as mentioned above). When they merge in marriage they become יה-יה (as mentioned, every husband and wife are the יה-יה of Hashem's name). The children getting married signify the וה transforming into יה-יה and this is exactly what happens when Mashiach comes. The וה turns into יה-יה and Hashem's name becomes יהיה!

The higher level of kindness of Hashem occurs when the two names of Hashem (יה-וה & אד-ני) merge. This is called a מיתוק. The two names of Hashem total 91 (אד-ני=65 + יה-וה=26 = 91). In the future the name אד-ני will merge with יה-יה and will instead total 95 (אד-ני=65 + יהיה=30 = 95). This is why we end many prayers; **אמן**. The word **אמן** totals 91 and **סלה** totals 95. We are asking Hashem to accept our prayer now - at the time when the two names total 91 - and in the future when it will total 95. 95 is the Gematriyah of the word **יפה**. This is what we mean when we tell the couple **שהזיוג עולה יפה** - we are actually praying to Hashem that just like the bride and groom merged in marriage and - while doing so - turned וה into יה, so too Hashem's holy names should merge and it should be with Mashiach when Hashem's name is יה-יה-יה and the total is 95 (**יפה**). **יפה-95** - should equal, **עולה**-the combination, **זיוג**.

Another interpretation of what Rashi meant in his commentary of the words "והיה" is based "שיחול שמו עלי מתחילה ועד סוף, שלא ימצא פסול בזרעו" when he said; "ה' לי לאלקים"

"סור מרע" upon a fundamental approach in serving Hashem. The Pasuk in Tehilim says "סור מרע- rid ourselves of our sins and do Teshuvah, and only after this; עשה טוב- do the Misvot. If someone does Misvot while he still has sins on his "record", it is like someone serving the king food on a dirty plate! We must first "clean the plate" by repenting and only afterwards do Misvot and serve Hashem. This is also what David Hamelech meant when he wrote in Tehilim; "שוא לכם משכימי קום מאחרי שבת" (lit; "it is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late"). The Misvot are referred to as; "קום ועשה"- "get up and do". When it comes to Averot we say "שב ואל תעשה"- "sit and don't do them". The Pasuk is now understood; "שוא לכם משכימי קום" (קום is the reference to Misvot), מאחרי שבת when you've delayed Mastering control over the sins (שב ואל תעשה is like שבת- a reference to sins)!

This is the meaning of a statement in the Gemarah "כל שאינו יודע בטיב גיטין וקדושין" "whoever is not well versed in the laws of divorce and marriage should not involve himself with them". Simply understood, the Gemarah is advising one who is not well versed in the laws of marriage not to involve himself with them, lest he error and permit illegal marriages. The depth of this statement is; whoever does not know the "system" of גיטין וקדושין- divorce *than* marriage, meaning; first *divorce* the Satan (גיטין)- *than* only afterwards *sanctify* (קדושין) yourself with Misvot. if you don't know this, then don't get involved with doing Misvot!

When we perform Misvot while we are still stained with sins, this causes the "take" them and benefit from them, and through our Teshuvah we are able to take it back (Teshuvah comes from the word "תשוב"-"to return").

This was the intent of Yosef Hasadik when he set up his two sons Menashe and Ephraim for a Berachah from Yaakov his father (in Parashat Vayechi). Menashe represents refraining from עברות- לא תעשה, he was named "כי נשני אלקים-מנשה" "Hashem caused me to **forget** my suffering", and sins are what we try to "forget". Ephraim represented Misvot "כי הפרני אלקים"- "Hashem caused me to be **fruitful**"- Misvot are what we want to increase and multiply. Yosef set them up as Menashe (signifying avoiding sin) at the primary hand of Yaakov- the right hand, and Ephraim (signifying doing Misvot) on the secondary hand of Yaakov- the left hand. This was Yosef's way of symbolizing the proper approach to serving Hashem. First comes avoiding sin then comes doing Misvot.

The only problem is, if we keep to this rule - that we may serve Hashem *only* after avoiding sin and doing complete Teshuvah - there would be nobody to serve Hashem!! "אין צדיק בארץ אשר לא יחטא" - "there is no perfectly righteous person who has never sinned"! We all have sins, and we all struggle with our evil inclination, if we had to wait until we obliterated it, we would never be able to serve Hashem!

It was because of *this* that Yaakov switched his hands! "שכל את ידיו" (lit; changed his hands) the word שכל-switch comes from the word שכל-wisdom. Yaakov switched his hands and placed his primary hand on Ephraim and his secondary hand on Menashe! He placed his primary hand on Ephraim showing that we should start with the Misvot (that Ephraim represents) and afterwards we will do Teshuvah on our sins (that Menashe represents). By doing so, he imbued in us the ability to do Misvot even though we are not perfect! It's ok if you have Averot on your record, just do Misvot!! If we keep filling ourselves with Misvot, the bad will wither away. This is why we bless our children "ישימך אלקים כאפרים וכמנשה" - "you should be like Ephraim and Menashe" placing Ephraim (Misvot) *before* Menashe (Aveirot).

We now understand the Pasuk mentioned above; מרע סור-stay away from bad. How do we do this? ועשה טוב-by doing good! Keep doing Misvot and studying Torah and **that** is how we will defeat our evil inclination!

This is why when it comes to lighting the Chanukah Menorah; there is a Machloket between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel. Beit Shammai says to start by lighting eight candles, then each subsequent night light one less candle. Beit Hillel says start with one, then be מוסיף והולך- add one more candle each night. Beit Hillel's opinion typifies our approach to serving Hashem. It's ok to Start with just one candle (Misvah). One little Misvah will culminate into many many more! "A little light pushes away a lot of darkness"!

With just a small beginning we can become totally righteous. The key is that we *have to start*. A little התערותא דלתתא (movement down here on this world) will cause much התערותא דלעלא (movement in the upper world)!! A little bit of good takes us much further than we could ever imagine!

This is what Yaakov was instituting when he said "והיה ה' לי לאלקים". The word והיה is composed of וה then יה. The letters וה correspond to Misvot (positive commandments) and the letters יה correspond to Averot (negative commandments).

From where do we know this? Man has 365 tendons and ligaments corresponding to the 365 Averoṯ (לא תעשה). Man has 248 bones corresponding to the 248 Misvoṯ (עשה). The Pasuk says "זֶה שְׁמִי לְעוֹלָם וְזֶה זְכוּרִי לְדוֹר דָּר"-"this is my name forever and this is my remembrance for the generations". The word שְׁמִי equals 350. 350 is 15 short of the לא תעשה count (365 – 350 =15). 15 equals י-ה. The word זְכוּרִי equals 237. 237 is 11 shy of the 248 Misvoṯ עשה (248 -237=11) 11 equals ו-ה. From here we see that י-ה stands for the Averoṯ and ו-ה stands for the Misvoṯ.

Hashem's name is י-ה-ו-ה. The י-ה comes *before* the ו-ה showing the riddance of Averoṯ (י-ה) comes before the performance of Misvoṯ (ו-ה). Yaakov Avinu said וְהִיא ה' the word והיא spells the ו-ה *before* the י-ה. By saying והיא, Yaakov placed the ו-ה (Misvoṯ) *before* the י-ה (Averoṯ). This enabled his children, the Jewish people to serve Hashem even though they are not perfect!

This is why it says "אֵין וְהִיא אֵלָא לְשׁוֹן שְׂמֵחָה"-"the word והיא is a happy term". This is because the word והיא is the example of the ו-ה coming before the י-ה, and encourages us by showing us that we can always begin serving Hashem no matter how far we are!!

There are 12 months in the year; Hashem's name of הויה has 12 different configurations. Each month represents a different configuration of the name of הויה. In the month of תשרי (which is the month of the high holidays and the month of repentance) the name is configured וְהִיא. The configuration of the month of Teshuvah shows us the path how to return to Hashem! Just start and Hashem will help you "take care" of the rest!

This is what Rashi is telling us on these words וְהִיא ה'. "שִׁיחֹל שְׁמוֹ מִתְחִילָה וְעַד סוּף"-"his name should be upon me from beginning to end". This means that Yaakov was praying that Hashem's name should be as if the beginning is the end (meaning; the beginning (י-ה) should be in the end, thus spelling ו-ה! This symbolizes the permission to start doing Misvoṯ, even though we are stained with Averoṯ! Why was this necessary? Rashi continues; "שְׁלֵא יִמְצָא פְסוּל בְּזַרְעִי" so that it should not be a פְסוּל-defect in my children. Meaning; if I don't change the system, than my children won't stand a chance! It will be a פְסוּל for my children, they will all be defective ח'! Therefore Yaakov prayed to switch the system where the Jews would be able to serve Hashem no matter what!

We find that Hashem acquiesced to Yaakov's request. The Pasuk says **והיה** "your children will be like the dust of the earth". **זרעך כעפר הארץ** "your children will be under **והיה** meaning they will be able to serve me through the system of **והיה** by doing Misvot anytime.

We must always keep this in mind. The Yeser Hara tries to convince us that we are lost, and it is useless to try and begin to serve Hashem. We must know that there is nothing further than the truth! Every small step that we take towards Hashem shakes the heavens! With this we will strengthen ourselves and always be motivated to serve Hashem no matter where we stand. Amen.