

## פרשת ויגש

ויגש – When Yaakov saw the wagons that Yosef sent, he was uplifted and believed Yosef was truly still alive. What is so special about עגלות (wagons), that convinced Yaakov that Yosef was still alive? The last thing that Yaakov taught Yosef was the topic of ערופה, the calf that is brought by the town closest to a dead body found out in the open. When Yaakov saw the עגלה, he realized that this was a hint from Yosef that he still remembered the last thing that they learned together. So Yaakov knew that Yosef was **spiritually** still alive, which is obviously more important than anything else. So with this he was uplifted. On a deeper level, these עגלות represented something even more profound. If we analyze the story that we read in Parashat Vayishlach about Yaakov crossing over the stream of יבק before he had the confrontation with the angel of Eisav, the Pesukim say: ויעבר את מעבר. יבק ויקחם ויעברם את הנחל ויעבר את אשר לו. Firstly, the Torah deems it necessary to let us know the name of the stream יבק. Then, in the next Pasuk, it refers to it simply as נחל (a stream). We also see several mentions of the word ויעבר - three times in total. Why is this so? A simple reason is that most likely, Yaakov had to make several trips across the stream in order to bring over all of his possessions; therefore it says ויעבר - he passed over several times. On a deeper level, these Pesukim also hint to us a crucial lesson that Yaakov was giving to his family. This was a time that Yaakov was running away from Lavan and heading towards Eisav, it was like he was between two wars. It was a very difficult time for Yaakov and his family, and it was a perfect time to teach them this lesson. The lesson is that whatever a Jew is going through, no matter how difficult, he has to know that it is all from Hashem and it really is very good for him. Rabbi Akivah used to say כל מאי דעביד רחמנא לטב עביד - whatever Hashem does is for the good. Like it says in Pirkei Avot הוא היה אומר (literally: he used to say) we can also understand it to mean -הוא היה **was**, then he would say. First he would master the trait, and then he would teach about it. So Rabbi Akivah mastered this concept and attitude that whatever Hashem does is the best thing for him. As illustrated in the story about when Rabbi Akivah went to a town and was denied lodging, so he was forced to spend the night in a forest outside the town with only his donkey, rooster, and a lantern. A lion came and ate his donkey, but Rabbi Akivah remained optimistic and said this is for the good. Then a cat came and ate his rooster and a wind came and extinguished his

lantern, but he still remained positive and said "this too is for the good"! In the morning when he awoke, he was told that the town he was trying to say in was attacked by bandits and they killed everyone in the town. His donkey, rooster, or light would have alerted the bandits of his presence, and he too would have been killed. "You see" exclaimed Rabbi Akiva just like I said; everything Hashem does is for the best! Rabbi Akivah was explaining, that it was precisely because he had this positive attitude that things worked out good for him. The first letter of rooster, donkey, and lantern- **נר**, **תרנגול**, **חמור** spells out the word **נחת** like it says, **דברי חכמים בנחת נשמעין**, (literally; the words of **חכמים** are listened to when spoken gently) when you go with this attitude, hinted by the word **נחת** that everything is for the good, then your words will be listened to by Hashem and man. Optimism brings positive results and pessimism brings negative results. We see this happen with people, when they **know** things are going to be good, it actually does turn out good, and vice versa. How does this concept work? When a person is going thru difficulty he is under the name of Hashem of Din, and that is the name of **אלקים**. This is why he is experiencing the difficulty, however if he "brings in" the name of Hashem of Hesed, (the name of **י-ה**...) then he sweetens the judgment by creating a combination of **אלקים** & **י-ה**... (as the Rabbi mentioned many times that the combination of **י-ה**... and **אלקים** creates an even **higher** level of Hesed than the name of Hesed-**י-ה**... on its own). How do we "bring in" the name of **י-ה**... into the Din? By saying that this is really **good**, and that Hashem loves me, and he is doing this because it's the best possible thing for me. We are showing that Hashem's kindness is also at work here. We "**bring in**" the name of Hashem of Hesed into the difficulty and we create a tremendous level of Hesed, and things actually **do** work out very well for us! But if a person ח'ו' says to himself how difficult things are, then he is right, he is only dealing with the name of Hashem of Din and things remain difficult. Rabbi Akivah learnt this from his Rebbe, **נחום איש גז** - who always said: **גם זו לטובה** - this too is for the best. Who was the inventor of this concept? Yaakov Avinu. Rabbi Akivah was a **גלגול** of Yaakov Avinu, as is hinted in his name **רבי עקיבה** is the same letters as **אביר יעקב**. So he was the master of this optimistic attitude. Where is it alluded that Yaakov had this trait? In this story, where he crossed his family over the stream. How so? The stream was called **יבק**, the word **יבק** is numerically 112, and the numerical value of **י-ה**... and **אלקים** combined is 112 ( $26+86=112$ ). So the Pasuk says **ויעבר את מעבר יבק** - the word **ויעבר** also means to "give over" so this is one of the ways he gave over to his children the lesson of bringing in the Hesed of Hashem during a time of Din, at this difficult time for Yaakov and his family. This combination of **ה' אלקים** that totals 112, is hinted to in the name of **י-ה**... itself, since **י-ה**... = 26 which is the letters **כ ו** - if we spell out the **כ** it

is: **קף** which equals 100. If we spell out the letter **ל** it is ' **ל' ו'** - which equals 12.  $100+12=112$ . So in the name of Hashem of Hesed **י-ה**, there is an allusion to this even greater level of Hesed. Yaakov Avinu established the Tefilah of Arvit, which we pray at night. Night represents darkness and lack of clarity, not understanding the kindness of Hashem. It begins with the 3 Pesukim of **ה' צבאות עמנו** and the last 3 words are **יעננו ביום**, **קראנו**, the **ר'ת** of **יבק**. We read the **שמע** at night because we say **ה' אלקנו אחד**, that when it seems as if Hashem is sometimes strict with us **ה' אלקנו** really it is **all** kindness **ה' אחד**. After Shema we say **ואמונה**, because even though we don't understand we believe.

There are several groups of Jews; **צדיקים**, **חסידים**, **ותיקים** there is a group called **אלפים**, what are they? They are people who go with the letter **א**. How so? By saying that whatever happens to them is for the best. What does that have to do with the letter **א**? The letter **א** represents Hashem's kindness, since Alef is comprised of 2 letter Yud's and the letter Vav, (the center of an Alef is like the letter Vav, with a Yud above and below it) which total 26 ( $10+10+6=26$ - the **גמט'** of Hashem's name of kindness ...**י-ה**.) So this group always attach themselves to the letter **א** by saying everything is good and is coming from Hashem's kindness. As is hinted to when it says **נצר חסד לאלפים** Hashem does Hesed to this group of **אלפים** who go with the letter **א**. The first letter of these words **נצר חסד לאלפים** makes up the word **נחל** - a stream. This being another allusion to the lesson Yaakov was giving over to his children, **ויעבר את הנחל**. He gave over to them the way **how to** connect the Hesed with the Din, and that is by saying that everything is for the good, its all from the **א**, from Hashem's kindness. The letters **נחל** is also the **ר'ת** of **חנוכה** hinting to how the **מכבים** won the war against the Greeks, by being part of these **אלפים** and knowing that Hashem was going to give them success in the war. Rabbi Akivah had this trait from Yaakov as is hinted in his name **יעקב-א' = עקיבא**. So the letter **א** represents the kindness of Hashem, and the further we drift from the **א**, the further away we are from the kindness that it represents. What's the furthest letter from the **א**? The **ת**, so the **ת** represents the darkest of times by being the furthest away from the Hesed of Hashem. Even so, a person must still bring the **א** to the **ת**, and turn even the **ת** into Hesed. That is why Rabbi Akivah was the Rabbi who **דורש** all the **א**'s in the Torah, like it says **את לרבות** - the word **את** is an **א** and **ת** together. He was showing that even the **ת** was connected to the **א**, in that even in the most difficult situations, the kindness of Hashem is present.

During the week our minds are full of distractions, it is hard to "see the **א**" and we drift further and further away from it, as illustrated during the Tefilah when we say **אל ברוך** .... **גדוך דעה** the letters get progressively further from the **א**. On Shabbat however, when

our minds are clear from the distractions, we reconnect with the א and realize how much Hashem loves us and everything is for our good, so we get **closer** to the א . As illustrated in the Shabbat Tefilah ...קרבותה... where the letters get progressively closer to the א. This concept of connecting the ת to the א, is hinted in the third mention of the word ויעבר in the Pasuk by Yaakov, as it says ויעבר אשר לו he gave his sons over (ויעבר), the lesson of את that he had. So it was during this time that Yaakov taught his family the concept of connecting the ת to the א, to "bring in" the Hesed of Hashem in the darkest of times, to be a part of the אלפים. Thereby connecting ...ה-ה... and generating an even higher level of Hesed.

There is another place in the Torah that speaks of נחל (of ר'ת) and that is by the portion of עגלה ערופה in chapter דברים the Pesukim say:

והורידו זקני העיר ההוא את העגלה אל נחל איתן ..  
וערפו שם את העגלה בנחל..  
על העגלה הערופה בנחל

So in the portion of עגלה ערופה there are 3 mentions of נחל, representing this lesson of נצר חסד לאלפים, and Hashem caused this to be the last topic that Yaakov taught Yosef, to fortify him in his upcoming Galut. So by sending the wagons- עגלות - Yosef was actually showing Yaakov **how** he was able to endure the difficulties and tests of being away from his family and being in the טומאה of Egypt, being thrown in jail etc, and that was through this lesson of נחל hinted in the parasha of the עגלות. When Yaakov saw the wagons he understood that indeed, his son Yosef was able to stay pure and complete in his Emunah in Hashem.