

פרשת וישלח

This week's Parasha begins with Yaakov Avinu sending messengers to his brother Eisav, to inform him that he was approaching. Yaakov Avinu prepared himself for his meeting with Eisav by: A) sending gifts to Eisav (as a bribe) to appease him. B) Praying to Hashem to be saved from Eisav. C) Preparing to go to war with Eisav.

"מחזיק באזני כלב עבר, מתעבר על ריב לא לו"

"He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own, is like one who takes a dog by the ears"

The Midrash wonders - based on this Pasuk in Mishlei- why Yaakov would alert Eisav to his approach? Why even approach Eisav at all? This is like "grabbing a dog by its ears"! Why didn't Yaakov just leave the "sleeping dog" (Eisav) alone?! It seems as if Yaakov **wanted** to confront Eisav in order to subjugate himself before him. Why was this necessary??

This Parasha is a classic example of "מעשה אבות סימן לבנים" - "The actions of our forefathers are a sign for the children". Everything that happened to the Avot, are meant as a lesson for us. Yaakov Avinu in this Parasha, was giving guidance and advice to all the future generations on how to deal with the Goyim in Galut (exile). Yaakov surely was not physically afraid of Eisav. This was the same Yaakov that pulled a gigantic rock off a well, and emerged victorious from a fight with an angel! Yaakov specifically wanted to teach us how to interact with the Goyim in Exile.

This Parasha is known as "Parashat Galut". The Ramban advised, to study this Parasha before any dealings with the Goyim because this is the Parasha in which Yaakov Avinu teaches us exactly how to deal with them. The great Rabbis would study this Parasha very closely before they had meetings and interaction with the Goyim. Even today, when dealing with the Goyim we must emulate Yaakov by A) sending gifts (bribes) to them. B) Praying to Hashem to be saved from them. C) Prepare for political war by lobbying and being active to try and secure our needs with the government.

Rebbi Yehudah Hanasi was once dictating a letter to his student Rav Afes. This letter was going to be sent to the Caesar Antoninus (Marcus Aurelius). When Rebbi was proof reading the letter, he realized that his student had started the letter with the words; "from Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi (the prince) - to the Emperor Antoninus". When Rebbi read this, he immediately ripped up the letter. He wrote instead; from your *servant* Yehudah to the Emperor Antoninus. "Why do you treat your honor so lightly?" asked Rav Afes. "Am I better than my ancestor Yaakov?!" answered Rebbi. By Yaakov it says "כה אמר עבדך יעקב" - "so says your *servant* Yaakov". I too will refer to myself as a servant when addressing the emperor.

This explains an apparent redundancy in the Pesukim. The Pasuk in which Yaakov is instructing his messengers says; "ויצו אתם לאמר כה תאמרון לאדני לעשו" - "and he commanded them **saying** so shall you **say** to my master Eisav". Why does it say "saying" and then again "say"? Seemingly, the Pasuk should be written; "he commanded them; so shall you say to my master Eisav". Why the "Extra" word לאמר (saying)??

Whenever the Torah uses the word לאמר, it is in order for it to be repeated and said over. For example; "ויאמר ה' אל משה לאמר" - "Hashem said to Moshe *saying*" Hashem said something in order for him to tell it over to the people. Here too the Pasuk says לאמר, to show us that this is something that Yaakov was conveying to his descendents. He was instructing us on how to handle our dealings with the Goyim, and to be successful in securing our needs.

In addition to the basic instructions on how to survive in Galut, Yaakov Avinu was also "planting the seeds" of a major salvation for the Jewish people. He was securing the Torah Shel Baal Peh (oral Torah), and thereby insuring that both the written and oral Torah will never be forgotten.

In order to understand how Yaakov Avinu accomplished this through his meeting with Eisav, we must refer back to a concept that we introduced two weeks ago in Parashat Toldot. This is the connection that we've learnt about, between Rabeinu Hakadosh and Yaakov Avinu.

Rabeinu Hakadosh was deeply connected to Yaakov Avinu. The Ben Ish Chai explains that Rabbi was actually the Gilgul (reincarnation) of Yaakov. This is hinted to

in his name **הנשיא** ר' יהודה, the word נשיא stands for "הוא נצוץ של יעקב אבינו" (he is the spark of Yaakov Avinu).

We find this connection hinted to in several places. For example; Rebbi stated the Mishnayot with the laws of Shema of *Arbit* (מאמתי קורין את שמע בערבין), and Arbit was the Tefilah established by Yaakov Avinu. In addition, we see that the first three Berachot of the Amidah correspond to the three Avot. The first Berachah corresponds to Avraham Avinu, as it ends "Magen Avraham". The second corresponds to Yishak Avinu, it ends with "מחיה המתים" because Yishak was "revived" from the dead upon being taken down from the alter at the time of Akeidat Yishak. The third Berachah corresponds to Yaakov Avinu, it ends with האל הקדוש. Rebbi was also called רבינו הקדוש.

Rabeinu Hakadosh was the one who insured the perpetuation of the oral Torah. He was the first rabbi to write down the oral Torah. Until his time the laws of the Torah were strictly oral from father to son. It was *not allowed* to be written. Rebbi realized that if he did not compile and write down the oral Torah in his time, the Torah would be forgotten forever! The Pasuk says "עת לעשות לה' הפרו תורתך"-"there are times that one must *transgress* for the sake of Hashem". Rebbi realized that he had to be the one to permit the writing of the oral torah in order to preserve it for the future generations. Without Rebbi, the Torah would have been forgotten 'in !

Antonenus on the other hand, was connected to Eisav Harasha. Eisav was *almost* entirely evil. He did however have a little bit of good in him. The good in Eisav finally materialized in his descendant Antoninus. Antoninus was the Gilgul of Eisav, and in him the *good* of Eisav came out!

Rabeinu Hakadosh wrote the Mishnayot while Antoninus was the emperor of Rome. Antoninus gave Rebbi full permission and authorization to write and release the six orders of the Mishnayot (this was *essential* in Rebbi's producing the Mishnayot. In those days - and even in recent times -any religious publication, needed to be approved and in many cases censored and edited by the government. Antoninus gave Rebbi the ability to produce the Mishnayot unimpeded). It was therefore slightly to Antoninus's credit that the Mishnayot and subsequently the Gemarah came to be.

Moshe Rabeinu, with his Ruach Hakodesh realized that a time would come when the Torah would have to be written down. The Megaleh Amukot explained 250 different ways to understand Moshe Rabeinu's prayer, when he prayed; "ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההיא" "לאמר". One explanation of Moshe Rabeinu's prayer was that at the right time,

someone would have the courage to write down the oral Torah. The first step of which was to compile the 6 orders of the Mishnah.

ו-אתחנן; for the six (ו) orders of the Mishnah- אתחנן (he beseeched).

בעת ההיא - for that עת - which refers to the Pasuk 'עת לעשות לה' - there comes a time when the Torah must be transgressed in order to strengthen it. (This was the Pasuk Rebbe used in order to justify his writing of the Mishnah.)

לאמר - לימות אנטונינוס מלך רומי - "in the days of Antoninus king of Rome". It was with his permission, that Rebbe wrote the Mishnayot.

This is also what is meant by the next word of Moshe's prayer ; "אעברה" - "may I pass". The word "אעברה" stands for: "אנטונינוס עשה ברית רבינו הקדוש" - "Antoninus made a covenant with Rabeinu Hakadosh". This enabled him to produce the Mishnayot.

Moshe was praying that Rebbe be successful in his writing of the Mishnah, and be successful in securing permission from Antoninus to release it to the people. This was a crucial step in preserving the oral Torah forever.

This was one of the intentions of Yaakov Avinu in his desire to meet up with Eisav. He was setting in motion this subjugation to Eisav in order to gain permission from his grandson Antoninus (who, as mentioned, was Eisav's Gilgul) to produce the Mishnayot. This answers the question asked above concerning the "extra" word לאמר. He was sending messengers to Eisav; "לימות אנטונינוס מלך רומי" = לאמר, to gain appeasement and permission in the times of Antoninus to preserve the oral Torah, by writing the Mishnayot.

Yaakov was subjugating himself, and directing this request to the small bit of good that was contained in Eisav. This good was found in Eisav's mouth. The פה - mouth represents the oral Torah "תורה שבעל פה" that Eisav's descendants permitted to be released. This is why it was the *head* of Eisav - which contains the mouth - that merited burial in the Mearat Hamachpela. This also explains how Yishak was "fooled" by Eisav into attempting to give him the blessings. Yishak realized that Eisav possessed some goodness, as the Pasuk says "כי ציד בפיו", Yishak understood Eisav's goodness in his mouth and therefore desired to bless him. This is why the Pasuk says; וישלח יעקב מלאכים לפניו (lit; face) Yaakov sent the angels to connect to the good in Eisav's mouth to obtain this authorization to write the Torah Shel Baal Peh.

At the end of the previous Parasha (Vayetzeh) the Torah describes Yaakov's reaction upon seeing angels coming down towards him. "ויאמר יעקב כאשר ראו מחנה" "And when Yaakov saw them, he said; this is Hashem's camp, and he called the place Mahanaim (camps)". The word ראו (saw) is a unique word not found anywhere else in the Torah (it normally says ראה as opposed to ראו). The Zohar explains that the word ראו stands for the angels that Yaakov saw: גבריאל מיכאל, רפאל אוריאל, and the word זה in the Pasuk represents גבריאל.

Yaakov Avinu saw these four angels come down to him, and he named the place מחנים (camps). Why did he name it *camps* (which are plural)? Why not name it *camp* (in the singular)? The explanation is that every time a Jew performs a Misvah, he creates a good angel that will accompany him. Yaakov Avinu - through his many Misvot and good deeds - had multitudes of angels that had already been with him. The angels that came down from heaven however, were angels that were created from ששת ימי בראשית and were *always* in existence. This is why Yaakov called the place Mahanaim (camps). He now had *two* camps, the ones he created through his Misvot and also the angels מיכאל גבריאל אוריאל רפאל that came down from Shamayim to be with him.

This is why Rashi in this week's Parasha describes the messengers that Yaakov sent as "מלאכים ממש"-"literal angels". Literal angels means, that these angels that Yaakov sent were angels that have *always* been angels from the beginning of time. They were *not* the kind of angels that are created through Misvot- they were *literal* angels that were always around. This is another way of understanding the Pasuk; וישלח יעקב מלאכים לפניו, the word לפניו can also mean "before". Yaakov was sending the angels that were angels even *before* Yaakov was around!

These "literal angels" מיכאל גבריאל רפאל אוריאל were the angels that Yaakov sent to Eisav. Why did Yaakov choose these angels specifically?? It is because these angels represent the Gemarah and the Torah Shebeal Peh. Rebbi wrote the Mishnayot. Ravina and Rav Ashi expanded the Mishnayot and produced the Gemarah. In the Gemarah is found the reasoning and the logic of the Mishnah, and it thereby explains the written Torah as well. Yaakov Avinu, as mentioned, was trying to insure the existence of the oral Torah, and it was for this reason that he sent angels to Eisav. The word גמרא stands for מיכאל רפאל אוריאל. Yaakov was insuring the Gemarah's coming into existence- the Gemarah being the primary source of Torah Shebeal Peh today. He therefore sent these four angels that stood for Gemarah.

The **בני יששכר** adds that these four angels surround the throne (**כסה הכבוד**) of Hashem, **מיכאל** in the front, **גבריאל** in the back, **אוריאל** to the right, and **רפאל** to the left. When a person studies the Gemarah these four angels come down to him - since they are the four angels that stand for **גמרא** (**אוריאל מיכאל רפאל אוריאל**). When a person prays to Hashem after studying Gemarah, these angels bring his prayer back up all the way to the throne of Hashem with them! We see the amazing affect of studying Gemarah before we pray!!

There is a **קליפה** that exists which causes forgetfulness. The name of this **קליפה** is **ריב**.

This **קליפה** is hinted to in a story in the Gemarah about Rebbi Elazar Ben Arach. Rebbi Elazar Ben Arach was one of the primary students of Rav Yochanan Ben Zakai and was a tremendous scholar. At one point, he had moved to an island for a “retreat” from the Yeshiva. One Shabbat, the Shul on the island invited the rabbi to read from the Sefer Torah. The portion he was to read was; "**החדש הזה לכם**" (“this month is to you”). Rebbi Elazar mistakenly read it; "**החרש היה לבם**" (Lit; “their heart is mute”)! This was a mistake that even a child would not make! It was a sign from Shamayim that Rebbi Elazar needed to get back to the Yeshiva.

It is no coincidence that the letters that Rebbi Elazar erroneously switched were the letters; **ב-י-ר** (from **חדש** to **חרש**, from **הזה** to **היה**, and from **לכם** to **לבם**). His error was in the very letters of the **קליפה** of **ריב** that caused him to forget them!!

It is due to this **קליפה** that Rabeinu Hakadosh was forced to write down the Mishnah since he realized that the students were starting to forget the laws. The name of this **קליפה** is "**ריב**". Rabeinu Hakadosh reversed the effects of this **קליפה**; he was therefore called "**רבי**", which is the same letters as **ריב**.

This is why the Midrash brings the Pasuk in Mishlei, when it wonders why Yaakov started the confrontation with Eisav. "**מתעבר על ריב לא לו**" - “meddling in a quarrel not his own”. It was **precisely because** of **ריב** (the **קליפה**) that Yaakov was compelled to approach Eisav, and appease him. Since **קליפת ריב** would cause forgetfulness of Torah in the future generations, and that would necessitate Rebbi to write the Mishnah in order to preserve the oral Torah, and this had to be done under the auspices of Antoninus, therefore Yaakov needed to “lay the groundwork” in order to help and teach Rebbi how to gain the permission of Antoninus to write the Mishnah. This would

culminate into Gemarah, and thereby insure the continued existence of the Torah forever.

Yaakov Avinu had all this in mind when sending the angels that represented Gemarah. He was subjugating himself to his evil brother in order to save the Torah and thereby always be supreme over him!

We see from here how awesome, and far reaching the consequence of every single action of our forefathers. Everything that we have today is to their credit. We also see the powerful effect of learning the Gemarah. It solidifies the oral Torah, and causes our Tefilot to be brought all the way up to the כסא הכבוד to be accepted!!