

whY I Matter

בשבילי נברא העולם (סנהדרין לז)

Edited by Yedidye Hirtenfeld

יג' - יט' כסלו ה'תשפ"ד לפ"ג
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Vayishlach וישלה

וישלה יעקב מלאכים לפניו אל-עשו אחיו
ארצה שעירי שדה אדום

And Yaakov sent angels before him to Esav his brother. (32:4) Rashi says Literally, angels. The **Midrash** says There were six hundred thousand angels dancing before Yaakov as he came back to Eretz Yisroel. It was from these angels that Yaakov sent to Esov. One must wonder why Esov wasn't impressed with the angels that Yaakov sent. And why would Esov attempt to fight the angels with a mere four hundred people? And if we answer that they appeared before Esov as people, then why did Yaakov bother to send angels? Esov grew up in Yitzchak's house. He knew what a Tzadik was. That's why he sought the Brachos from Yitzchak. He knew to be impressed with a Tzadik and respect one. He recognized Yaakov's greatness by the fact that Yaakov sent angels. But Esov was overcome with the desire to take revenge against Yaakov. Even though he saw that Yaakov had six hundred thousand angels, Esov could not control his desire. We see from here that the desire for revenge outweighs any logical argument. Esov had to take revenge against Yaakov. (Taam Vodaas)

ויצו אתם לאמר כה תאמרן לאדני לעשו כה
אמר עבדך יעקב עם לבן גרתי ואחר עד עתה
ויהי לי שור וחמור צאן ועבד ושפחה ואשלחה
להגיד לאדני למצא חן בעיניך

At the beginning of this week's Parashah, Yaakov sends a message to his brother Esav: "**Im Lavan garti / I have sojourned with Lavan.**" Based on the fact that "Garti" (Gimmel-Reish-Tav-Yud) has the same Hebrew letters and Gematria (613) as "Taryag," Rashi z"l explains Yaakov's message: "I kept the Taryag / 613 commandments and did not learn from Lavan's evil ways." Why would Esav care if Yaakov kept the Mitzvot while living with Lavan?

R' Nachum Mordechai Friedman z"l

(1874-1946; Tchortkover Rebbe in Vienna, Austria and Eretz Yisrael) explains: Esav maintained that this world belongs him and only the World-to-Come belongs to Yaakov. By what right then, does Yaakov enjoy this world also? The Mishnah (Pe'ah 1:1—recited every morning following the blessings over Torah learning) teaches: There are Mitzvot whose "fruits" we "eat" in this world, though the primary reward is reserved for the World-to-Come. Yaakov was saying, explains the Tchortkover Rebbe, "I performed those Mitzvot, too, so I am permitted to enjoy this world." **Alternatively**, the Tchortkover Rebbe explains, there are multiple ways to defeat the Yetzer Ha'ra. One way is to deprive oneself of the pleasures of this world. A higher level, however, is to sanctify the pleasures of this world. When one truly enjoys this world for the sake of Heaven, the Yetzer Ha'ra is fooled: it sees a person enjoying this world, so it is satisfied, but it does not realize that this pleasure is actually an expression of holiness. [Yaakov was saying: "True, I keep enjoying this world, but I kept all 613 Mitzvot. My enjoyment of this world is actually an act of sanctity, which does not infringe on your rights."] (Doresh Tov)

Brotherly love? Sure?

וירץ עשו לקראתו ויחבקו ויפל על צוארו
וישקהו" - אמר ר' שמעון בן אלעזר: מלמד
שנכמרו רחמיו של עשו באותה שעה ונשקו
בכל לבו. אמר לו ר' ינאי: אם כן למה נקוד על
"וישקהו"? אלא מלמד שלא בא עשו לנשקו
אלא לנשכו, ונעשה צוארו של יעקב אבינו של
שיש, וקהו שיניו של אותו רשע. ומה תלמוד
לומר "ויבכו"? אלא זה בוכה על צוארו וזה
בוכה על שיניו...
[בראשית רבה ע"ח, י"ב].

So said your servant Yaakov, I have Garti/sojourned with Lavan and I have lingered until now.

(32:5) Rashi says the word Garti has the numerical value of six hundred and thirteen as if to say, I have sojourned with Lavan the evil one, yet I kept the six hundred and thirteen Mitzvos and have not learned from Lavan's evil actions. Yaakov is lamenting about himself. I lived with Lavan all these years and I did not learn from his evil deeds. I was supposed to learn from the enthusiasm that Lavan should from bad and developed the same

לכבוד האי גברא וב"ב הרוצים בעילום שמם
על הסיוע שמושיטים לי בעין יפה
להמשיך את הגליון עוד הפעם בשנה זו
שיהיה לזכותם ולזכות כל משפחתם
הקב"ה יברך אותם בכל מילי דמיטב
בעושר ואושר ואריכות ימים בבריאות
מיט יידישע נחת בזה ובבא עבגנב"ב

enthusiasm for good. I should of learned to do good with same dedication and devotion that Lavan uses for bad. (Chofetz Chaim)

Yaakov sent a message to his brother Esov I have lived by Lavan

(32:5) and Rashi adds the word is the numerical value of six hundred and thirteen, I lived by Lavan and yet kept the six hundred and thirteen Mitzvos and did not learn from his evil ways. Why did Yaakov send a message to Esov that he didn't learn from Lavan's evil ways? Why would Esov care if Yaakov fulfilled the Mitzvos or not? Yaakov was afraid that Esov would agree to forget the past and become friends. Live near each other, let their children be friends, share their lives with each other. Yaakov sent the message to Esov - we can be friends and everything that goes with it - but remember, I fulfilled all the Mitzvos. I will agree to any peace treaty you wish as long as it doesn't compromise Torah and Mitzvos. (Rabbi Moshe Feinstein)

ויירא יעקב מאד ויצר לו ויחץ את העם אשר
אתו ואת הצאן ואת הבקר והגמלים לשני
מחנות

"Yaakov became very frightened . . ."

(32:8) **Midrash Rabbah** teaches: There were two people whom Hashem promised to protect, but they still expressed fear. One of those people was the choicest among the Patriarchs—Yaakov Avinu; the other was the choicest among the Prophets—Moshe Rabbeinu. Regarding Yaakov we read (Tehilim 135:4), "For G-d selected Yaakov." And, Hashem made a promise to him, as we read (Bereishit 28:15), "Behold, I am with you. I will guard you wherever you go." Nevertheless, Yaakov was afraid, as we read in our verse. Likewise, we read about Moshe (Tehilim 106:23), "Moshe, His chosen one." And, Hashem made a promise to him, as we read (Shmot 3:2), "I will be with you." Nevertheless, we read (Bemidbar 21:34), "Hashem said to Moshe, 'Do

not fear him'." Since Hashem said, "Do not be afraid," we know that Moshe was afraid! [Until here from the Midrash] **R' Avraham Eliyahu Meizes z"l** (1901-1961; Rosh

It's a Hit!!

"ויאמר מי לך כל המחנה הזה אשר פגשתי" - כל אותו הלילה נעשו מלאכי השרת כותות-כתות וחבורות-חבורות, והיו פוגעים בחילותיו של עשו ואומרים להם: משל מי אתם? והם אומרים: משל עשו. והם אומרים הכו הכו! ונותנים להם מכות. אחר כך הם אומרים: משל בנו של יצחק אנחנו, והם אומרים: הכו והכו! ונותנים להם מכות. שוב אומרים: משל בן בנו של אברהם אנחנו, והם אומרים "הכו, הכו"! - ונותנים להם מכות. כיון שהיו אומרים: משל אחיו של יעקב אנחנו - אמרו: הניחו להם, משלנו הם! ובבקר אמר לו עשו ליעקב: "מי לך כל המחנה הזה אשר פגשתי"?

[בראשית רבה ע"ח, י"ד]

Yeshiva in the Soviet Union, France, and Israel) writes: In truth, Yaakov and Moshe had nothing to fear. But, we see here a difference between the righteous and the wicked. The righteous do not sin, but they worry that they may have sinned. The wicked do sin, but they do not worry about it. There are several other things we can learn from here about the behavior of the righteous, R' Meizes continues. First, even when a Tzaddik sees that his enemy's downfall has begun and salvation seems to be approaching, he does not take for granted that he has merited salvation. For example, even after Haman was humiliated leading Mordechai around Shushan on a royal horse, Mordechai returned to his fasting and prayer (see Esther 6:12 and Megillah 16a). The righteous understand that any enemy is merely an agent of Hashem's Justice. Hashem has an unlimited supply of agents; thus, even if Haman was not destined to be Hashem's agent to punish the Jewish People, someone else might be, unless the Jewish People fasted and prayed. Likewise, even after Yaakov defeated Esav's guardian angel in battle, he did not take for granted that he was safe, and he continued to fear the consequences of any sins he may have committed. Also, R' Meizes writes, Yaakov and Moshe may have been afraid because they did not want "favors" from Hashem. Our Sages teach that Hashem would ideally have created the world with the Attribute of Strict Justice, but He

knew that such a world could not survive, so he added a measure of Mercy. Tzaddikim, however, prefer to live in the ideal world of Strict Justice. This is what Yaakov meant when he said (Bereishit 28:21), "Hashem will be Elokim to me"—i.e., Hashem—the Divine Name that represents the Attribute of Mercy—should act toward me as Elokim—the Divine Name that represents the Attribute of Strict Justice. (Ben Avraham Al Ha'Torah)

קטנתי מכל החסדים ומכל האמת אשר עשית את עבדך כי במקלי עברתי את הירדן הזה ועתה הייתי לשני מחנות

"I have been diminished by all the kindnesses . . ." (32:11) Our Sages teach that Yosef was taken away from his father Yaakov for 22 years (beginning in next week's Parashah) to punish Yaakov for the 22 years that he was away and did not honor his own parents. **R' Meir Hakohen Popperos z"l** (1624-1662; Poland and Eretz Yisrael; arranger of the writings of the Arizal's students and a prolific author in his own right) writes: True, Yaakov was honoring his parents when he listened to them and went away. However, our Sages say that Esav excelled at honoring his parents, and he was actively honoring his parents for all the years that Yaakov was away. Thus, said Yaakov, "I have been diminished by all the kindnesses [that Esav performed in my absence]."

Alternatively, Yaakov meant the following: My parents sent me away to find a wife, which took me seven years. I stayed away another seven years to marry a second wife, and another six years after that to amass large herds of sheep and goats. As such, I cannot really argue that my absence—even the first seven years—was to honor my parents. Rather, "I have been diminished by all the kindnesses [that Hashem has performed for me—giving me a second wife and many animals.]" (Tal Orot)

וילן שם בלילה ההוא ויקח מן הבא בידו מנחה לעשו אחיו

He spent the night there, then he took, from that which had come in his hand, a tribute to Esav his brother (32:14) Yaakov was about to meet the brother he had run away from 20 years earlier and he was afraid for his life and the safety of his family. Although he had G-d's

assurances, he made an effort to protect his family. He decided to do this with a gift. The **Alshich** comments that the most effective gift is one that someone has earned himself through his own hard work, which Yaakov did. There are two lessons here. One is that we should always try to appease our enemies by 'killing them with kindness'. When we have a choice, then appeasement is better than rivalry and strife. Furthermore, when we give a gift either to our enemies or our friends we need to put effort into it. We need to consider our gifts carefully, put thought into them, give the fruits of our own efforts and make sure that we give them in a considerate fashion. Giving something we worked hard for or even made ourselves is bound to be more appreciated than something picked up at the last minute. A friend of mine has a misanthropic neighbor. She directs her misanthropy primarily to religious Jews and looks for every opportunity to confirm their deserving of her antipathy. What does my friend do? She goes out of her way to be extra nice to her, killing her with kindness whenever she sees her. It does thwart her efforts to hate, which is very frustrating for a misanthrope. If we can't actually love our neighbors, maybe we can at least dislike them kindly. (Partners in kindness)

A look Ahead

"ותמת רחל ותקבר בדרך אפרתה היא בית לחם" - מה ראה אבינו יעקב לקבור את רחל בדרך אפרת? אלא צפה יעקב אבינו שהגלויות עתידו לעבור שם, לפיכך קברה שם, כדי שתהא מבקשת עליהם רחמים, והוא שנאמר: "כה אמר ד' קול ברמה נשמע, נהי בכי תמרורים, רחל מבכה על בניה" [ירמיהו ל"א, י"ד].

[בראשית רבה פ"ב, י"א].

ויותר יעקב לבדו ויאבק איש עמו עד עלות השחר

And Yaakov was left alone and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. (32:25) Who was this man? Rashi says he was the ministering angel of Esav. Chazal say that he is like Amalak. In each and every generation there is a physical Amalak fighting Benai Yisroel as well as a spiritual Amalak tempting Benai Yisroel. So where was this Amalak during the times of Avraham and Yitzchak? How come we don't find any reference to him before this? Chazal tell us that sometimes

Hashem will look away at the sins of idol worship, illicit relations and murder but Hashem will not look away at the sin of not learning Torah. Why? When two nations go to battle anything can happen. Even if one day it seems one nation is winning, the other nation can rebound and win the next day. The tide of battle can always turn - with one exception. If one nation destroys the armor, tanks, planes and ammunition of the enemy, then the war is over. The second nation has no chance to recover. The armor and ammunition of Benai Yisroel is Torah. No matter what Benai Yisroel does wrong, Torah gives the ability to rebound. But if Benai Yisroel abandon Torah, there is no chance. Therefore Hashem will not look away at the sin of not learning Torah. Avraham was the symbol of kindness - the Angel of Esav didn't bother fighting. Yitzchak was the symbol of service to Hashem - the Angel of Esav didn't bother fighting. Yaakov was the symbol of Torah - the Angel of Esav attacked where it matters. (Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman)

יירץ עשו לקראתו ויחבקו ויפל על צוארו וישקהו ויבנו

And Esav ran toward him, and he embraced him and fell upon his neck and kissed him. (33:4) The Midrash says Esav did not come to kiss Yaakov, but rather to bite Yaakov. But the Pasuk says to kiss him? A kiss from a person like Esav, is in reality a bite to Yaakov. Yaakov doesn't need friends like that. Friendship and love from Esav, causes pain and hardship to Yaakov. (Chidushei Hori"m of Gur)

Esav ran toward him, and he embraced him and fell upon his neck and kissed him. (33:4) For thirty six years the hatred that Esav had for Yaakov remained. He still yearned for the day when he would be able to take revenge and kill Yaakov. Yaakov sent a messengers to Esav and the hatred remained. Yaakov sent a gift to Esav and the hatred remained. So much so that the messengers returned with the information that Esav is approaching with an army of four hundred men. What changed Esav's attitude? When Yaakov called him master and bowed down to him, Esav changed fell on his neck and kissed Yaakov.

We see from here how much flattery serves to influence a person. (Melitz Yosher)

ויאמר אליו אדני ידע כי-הילדים רכים והצאן והבקר עלות עלי ודפקום יום אחד ומתו כל הצאן

My lord knows that the children are tender (33:13) Why did Yakov make a point of mentioning the children in response to Esau's invitation to join him? Because being in Esau's proximity was much more of a threat to his impressionable children than it was to himself. Unpleasant as it might have been for him, maintaining his children's spiritual purity was his number one priority. (Rabbi Yehoshua Rokeach of Belz)

יעבר-נא אדני לפני עבדו ואני אתנהלה לאטי לרגל המלאכה אשר-לפני ולרגל הילדים עד אשר-אבא אל-אדני שעירה

Now, let my master go ahead before his servant, and I will move at my own slow pace, according to the pace of the work that is before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my master, to Seir. (33:14) Jacob promised to visit Esau at his home in Seir. However, he never went to Seir. Did Jacob lie? No. For he will go in the days of Moshiach, as it is says (Obadiah 1:21): "And saviors shall ascend Mt. Zion to judge the mountain of Esau." (Rashi)

Let my master go ahead of his servant; I will make my way at my slow pace (33:14) The midrash says: Esav asked Yaakov, "Are you not afraid of the powerful and frightful individuals that you will meet along your way?" Yaakov answered, "I will go along gently and softly." **Rav Henach Lebowitz** (son of Rav David Lebowitz) says that this midrash teaches us the Jewish way in exile, where the gentiles have the upper hand. We do not challenge our enemies; we go about our business quietly and in an unobtrusive way, and then we need not be afraid. (Chidushei Halev)

ויאמר עשו אציגה-נא עמך מן-העם אשר אתי ויאמר למה זה אמצא-חן בעיני אדני

And Esau said: Please let me leave with you some of the people that are with me (33:15) Esau suggested that he leave special teachers with Yakov and his family, to teach them

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the finer points of "civilization" - social conventions, foreign languages and popular fashions - so that they could quickly climb the social ladder, but Yakov refused his brother's offer. "What need is there?" Yakov replied. "I have no interest in assimilating, to find favor in your eyes or the eyes of the nations." (Chasidic Sages)

ייעקב נסע סכתה ויבן לו בית ולמקנהו עשה סכת על-כן קרא שם- המקום סכות

But Yaakov journeyed to Succoth and built himself a house, and for his livestock he made shelters (succoth); he therefore called the name of the place Succoth.

(33:17) Why would a person name a settlement after the building he builds for his animals? It would be like calling a town Barnsville or Stable Heights. The **Ohr HaChaim** suggests that this may have been the first time anyone worried about shelter for their animals. Yaakov named the place in such a way as to highlight the compassion he was showing to his livestock, an act that was heretofore unheard of. This was an act of hakaras hatov as well as preventing tza'ar baalei chayim. There are many halachos regarding compassion to animals. These are meant to teach us compassion that we will hopefully later extend to people as well as to remind us that all of G-d's creatures

belong to G-d. He has given them to us to use in our service to Him, not to abuse. In other words, not to bite the paw that helps feed us. Our world is full of G-d's creatures and most people will come into daily contact with at least a few of them. If we own animals, we are meant to take care of them. In fact, halachah requires that we feed our animals before ourselves. If we allow our children pets, we have to teach them responsibility but not at the cost of the animal's discomfort. Some people use their children's pets to demonstrate what happens when you don't remember to feed them. If we have to leave pets overnight or for a few days, we have to give them over to the care of people who will be as sensitive to their needs as we are. People who work in agriculture or on farms have to make sure the animals are cleaned, fed and housed according to their needs. And mothers should teach their children respect and consideration for the insects and animals that inhabit their neighborhood and homes. (Partners in kindness)

ויבא יעקב שלם עיר שכם אשר בארץ כנען
בבאו מפדן ארם ויחן את-פני העיר

Our Parashah describes Yaakov's return to Eretz Yisrael after his exile in Aram. We read (33:18), "**Yaakov arrived whole at the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, upon arriving from Paddan Aram, and he encamped before the city.**" Rashi z"l comments, citing a Midrash, that this occurred on Friday afternoon, moments before the onset of Shabbat. **R' Yehuda Leib Mintzberg** z"l (1943-2018; rabbi and Rosh Yeshiva in Yerushalayim and Bet Shemesh, Israel) writes: This event, returning to the Promised Land with his family, was a turning point for Yaakov. The Torah emphasizes the significance of this moment with the words, "Yaakov arrived whole," i.e., Hashem's promise (Bereishit 28:15), "I will guard you wherever you go, and I will return you to this soil," had been fulfilled. Yaakov was meant to find restfulness and tranquility in the Land; therefore, he arrived at the onset of Shabbat, the day of rest and tranquility. (As it turned out, the hoped-for tranquility was not realized, as the continuation of the Torah's narrative relates.) R' Mintzberg continues: Many important events in

Jewish history have occurred on Shabbat or in the last moments of Erev Shabbat. Most notably, the Torah was given on Shabbat. Though the Exodus itself did not occur on Shabbat, separating an animal for the Korban Pesach, a crucial precursor to the Exodus, did occur on Shabbat and is commemorated by Shabbat Ha'gadol. Likewise, commentaries state that Yaakov's dream of angels ascending and descending the ladder, representing the future Bet Hamikdash, took place on Shabbat. (Ben Melech Al Ha'Torah)

Rabbi Yisrael of Shklov z"l (1770-1839) was a student of R' Eliyahu z"l (1720-1797; the Vilna Gaon) and one of the leaders of the Aliyah to Eretz Yisrael by students of the Gaon and their families. The following is an addendum to R' Yisrael's introduction to Pe'at Ha'shulchan, his work on the Halachot specific to Eretz Yisrael, and, with it, we conclude our excerpts from that work. This printing of this book was delayed from [the year] [5]593 until [5]596 [1833-1836 C.E.] . . . Though our holy Sages say in the first chapter of [Tractate] Shabbat that, even if we tried, we could not write down all the miracles and wonders that Hashem performs for us at all times and all hours . . . [nevertheless,] it is a Mitzvah to record [what one can]. Therefore, I have written something to include in this printing so future generations will know what occurred in our day, when His Chessed / kindness overpowered us. In the year, "Tzidkat Hashem Asah . . ." / "carrying out Hashem's justice" [the Gematria of "Tzidkat" is [5]594, corresponding to 1834 C.E.], in the third month, Sivan, on the afternoon of the eighth day, we, the Jewish residents of the holy Galilee, experienced the verse [Tehilim 30:8], "Should You but conceal Your face, I would be frightened." He [Hashem] concealed that part of His Hashgachah / providence which causes people to fear their rulers, which, in turn, protects human life [see Avot 3:2], and we became frightened. Savage gentiles, the bad neighbors in our city [Tzefat, Eretz Yisrael] and the surrounding villages . . . cast off their fear of the [Ottoman] ruler and attacked the city with swords and spears, intending to destroy, slay, and exterminate young

and old, children and women, in a single day, and to plunder their possessions (paraphrasing Esther 3:13). [This event is known to history as the Syrian Peasant Revolt.] Give thanks to Hashem, for His kindness endures forever! Even when He hid His face, He shone light and placed a "thread of kindness" over us . . . We fled for our lives over the mountains, many of us to the village of Ein Zeitim, near the graves of the Sage of the Mishnah Rabbi Yehuda ben Ilai [the "Rabbi Yehuda" mentioned frequently in the Mishnah] and his father, and the grave of [the Talmudic Sage] Rabbi Krospedai; there we sat, we also wept and cried out to the G-d of the Land that He save us in their [these Sages'] merit. . . The looting [of Tzefat] continued for 33 days . . . and we were left with nothing. Blessed is the G-d of thanksgivings who saved our lives, and we must thank and praise His great and holy Name for the miracles and wonders that He did for us in those days and in this time! (Hamaayan)

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