



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrzeits this week:

Mon, 1st Kislev - Robert Berman for his father

Fri, 5th Kislev - David Newman for his father

ותן טל ומטר

Reminder that we start saying ותן טל ומטר from Maariv on Wednesday night

Judaism Wherever We Are

Rabbi J Rubinstein

This week, Shabbos is also Erev Rosh Chodesh, and instead of the Haftorah which usually goes with the Parshah of Toldos, we read a Haftorah which describes an event which began on Erev Rosh Chodesh. It was in the era in which שאול המלך (King Saul) considered דוד (the future King David), to be a challenge to his throne and had expressed threats against him. The son of שאול המלך called יהונתן (Jonathán), was a devoted friend of דוד. They met on Erev Rosh Chodesh, and made the following plan. The king always had a public banquet on Rosh Chodesh. דוד would absent himself from the banquet and יהונתן would give an explanation for his absence. If שאול המלך would accept the explanation, that would mean he did not really hate דוד. But if he flew into a temper and threatened to kill דוד, that would prove he intended to carry out his threats. They arranged that the day after Rosh Chodesh, דוד would find himself a hiding place near a stone called אבן האזל (the marker stone). Then יהונתן would come with a young boy. He would fire some arrows and tell the boy to collect them. If he said to the boy, "Behold the arrows are on this side of you" that would be a signal that דוד that he was safe and could come out of hiding. If however יהונתן said to the boy, "Behold the arrows are beyond you" that would be a signal to דוד that he had to flee, the words יהונתן used were ה' שלחך - "Go for Hashem has sent you". In the event שאול המלך did fly in to a rage. And the next day יהונתן gave the signal to דוד to escape.

Thousands of years later, this episode and the words יהונתן used, were invoked at a turning point for a major Jewish institution. In the years from 1875 until 1940, the Yeshiva in Telz Lithuania, had become one of the leading institutions of Jewish learning in the world. But in the summer of 1940, the Russians took over Lithuania including Telz and commandeered the Yeshiva Building. When the Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Bloch came, accompanied by the Pupils of the Yeshiva, to remove the last Sefer Torah from the Ark he flung his arms open in prayer and pleaded that one day he would be able to return the Sifrei Torah to their rightful place. But Hashem ordained otherwise. Rabbi Bloch and his colleague Rabbi Mordechai Katz were sent by the Yeshiva to America, to try and find help there. The Nazis invaded Telz, and most of the Jews there, were murdered in the spring of 1941. After many trials and tribulations, Rabbis Bloch and Katz restarted the Yeshiva in America in Cleveland Ohio. Rabbi Bloch then quoted the above story, and commented on the phrase שאול had used "Go for Hashem has sent you". Although it was שאול's persecution which had compelled דוד to run away, יהונתן did not say, flee because my father wants to kill you, he said, go because Hashem has sent you. He recognised, there must be a divine plan

which required דוד to flee at that time, and Hashem had just used דוד's evil intentions as an agency to bring that about. Hence the phrase "Go because Hashem has sent you" Similarly, said Rav Bloch, Hashem has orchestrated events that we should find ourselves in Cleveland but it is still "Hashem has sent you", we still have a divine mission to fulfil. He went on to build the world famous Telz Yeshiva in Cleveland.

This teaches us, we must always try and live in the best possible place we can (from a Jewish point of view), but ultimately wherever we find ourselves, we must not say "If only I were somewhere else, I would be a good Jew". Instead, in the place where we are, we must do whatever Judaism requires us to do in that place, ה' שלחך - "For Hashem has sent you there".

Yaakov Maintained The Enthusiasm Of "Day One"

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

I saw the following interesting observation in Rabbi Buchspan'ssefer. The pasuk says, "The lads grew up, and Eisav became a man who knows trapping, a man of the field; but Yaakov was a wholesome man, abiding in tents." (Bereshis 25:27).

Chazal say that the expression "abiding in tents" indicates that Yaakov learned in yeshiva. He learned in Yeshivas Shem v'Ever. This pasuk ostensibly describes Yaakov and Eisav. However, shouldn't the pasuk say that Yaakov yashav b'ohalim (i.e. - he sat in the yeshiva), in past tense? Yoshev ohalim means he is sitting there, in the present.

There are two other places in Sefer Bereshis where the Torah uses the word yoshev instead of yashav, both times indicating something significant. For instance, the pasuk in Parshas Vayera says, "And the two Angels came to Sodom and Lot was sitting (yoshev) in the Gates of Sodom." (Bereshis 19:1). The fact that the present tense was used rather than the historical past teaches us (as Rashi comments) that it was specifically that day that Lot was appointed to a judicial position in Sodom. Yoshev means that today was his first day.

A second example is in last week's parsha: Efron was sitting (yoshev) in the midst of the children of Ches." (Bereshis 23:10). Rashi there as well comments that it was just that day that Efron was appointed as a judge over the children of Ches. Thus, when the pasuk writes yoshev rather than yoshav, it means that he just started today.

So, what are we going to do about the pasuk "Yaakov ish tam, yoshev

Davening Times

זמן שבת & Candle Lighting	3.39pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	3.44pm
15 Minute Parsha Shiur	Following
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.59am
Mincha	1.30pm / 3.31pm
Seuda Shlishis	Following Mincha
Motzei Shabbos	4.51pm
Ovos uBonim/Bonos	5.51pm
ראש חודש	7.00am / 8.00am / 9.30am
ראש חודש	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	3.40pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

ohalim"? It can't mean that this was his first day! The Medrash (on the pasuk "and the lads grew up" (Bereshis 25:27)) writes that this is reminiscent of two flowers that sprouted up next to one another – a myrtle and a thorn-bush. At the beginning of their sprouting, they look similar. However, when they grow up, one emits its beautiful aroma and the other one gives off thorns. So too, the first thirteen years of their lives, both Yaakov and Eisav attended school each day. After thirteen years, this one went off to the house of study and this one went off to the house of idolatry. They both went to the same cheder, but after their Bar Mitzvahs, Yaakov took one path and Eisav took another path.

So what does it mean "yoshev ohalim"? After all Yaakov was in cheder since age three or perhaps age five. The answer is that the special attribute of Yaakov was that it was as if it were his first day in yeshiva. Yaakov's quest for learning was such that each day felt like it was "day one." Each day feeling like "day one" indicates a special level of enthusiasm and excitement.

Rashi says on the pasuk "And these words that I command to you today shall be upon your heart." (Devorim 6:6) – that they should not be upon you like an old edict but rather like a new one. This is one of the great challenges of life. It is one of the great challenges of every yeshiva bachur and of everything we do in life. It is very common that everything we do becomes "Same old; same old." It is just another day.

If a person had this ability to treat every day as if it were new, like the first day, then our attitude would be quite different. This is a very appropriate message to any Bar Mitzvah boy. On the first day that a boy wears tefillin, it is amazing how carefully and meticulously he wraps the retzuos around his arm and puts the shel rosh on his head. The same is true on the first day of a new school year or of attending a new yeshiva. I remember the first day that I attended Ner Yisrael. It is seared into my memory for the rest of my life.

Unfortunately, that original enthusiasm wears off. It does not take too long to become "Same old; same old. Day in, day out." The greatness of Yaakov Avinu was that he was a yoshev ohalim. Each day was a new day, like day one in yeshiva! It is hard for us to duplicate that, but the more we can appreciate every day in yeshiva (which does not last forever), the more successful we will be in yeshiva.

The Power of the Voice

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This week we read the parsha of Toldos. "V'aileh Toldos Yitzchak ben Avrohom {And these are the generations of Yitzchak the son of Avrohom}. [25:19]" The parsha then goes on to tell us about the birth of Yaakov and Esav.

During pregnancy, Rivkah was experiencing much difficulty, as the child seemed to be trying to run right out of the womb. As this was her first pregnancy, she asked other women who had already experienced pregnancies if this was normal [Even Ezra]. Upon being told that it was certainly not typical, she approached the prophet Shem to find out what was happening. Shem told her that she was carrying twins who would each father a nation. These two nations would be engaged in a constant struggle throughout history and ultimately, "V'rav ya'avod tza'ir," the older will serve the younger.

This prophecy that was revealed to Rivkah (but not to Yitzchak) proved to be a guiding light for Rivkah in understanding her sons. She was not fooled by the superficial righteousness of Esav. She understood that the continuity of Avrohom and Yitzchak would be through Yaakov. This understanding continued throughout their development but reached its climax when Yitzchak wanted to give the brachos {blessings} to Esav.

Upon hearing Yitzchak instruct Esav to prepare a meal during which he would confer upon him the blessings, Rivkah quickly called Yaakov. "Go and bring to me two goats and I'll prepare them for your father. You will bring them to your father in order that he'll bless you before his death. [27:9-10]"

Yaakov was afraid that Yitzchak would realize that he was being deceived. "My brother Esav is a hairy man whereas I am smooth (skinned). Perhaps my father will feel me and I'll be in his eyes as an imposter. I'll bring upon myself a curse in the place of a blessing! [27:11-13]"

Rivkah confidently responded to Yaakov's worries: "A'lai {upon

me} kil'lascha b'ni {will be your curse, my son}. [27:13]" The simple meaning being that any curse that might be given will fall upon me. I'll absorb it instead of you. However, the Targum Onkelos explains that Rivkah was actually revealing to Yaakov the reason why she was so confidently sending him to receive the blessings. "A'lai" – to me it was said through prophecy that there would not be – "kil'lascha b'ni" – a curse upon you, my son. The Rashbam explains that her confidence was based on the fact that she had already heard, while she was pregnant with them, that "V'rav ya'avod tza'ir," the older would serve the younger. The blessings therefore were clearly meant for Yaakov and not Esav.

When Yaakov brought the food to Yitzchak in order to receive the blessings, Yitzchak was a bit unsure. "Draw close so that I may feel you, [27:21]" he demanded. Rivkah had anticipated this and had placed woolly hide on Yaakov's hands and neck. Yitzchak felt the hands and exclaimed: "Ha'kol kol Yaakov {the voice is the voice of Yaakov} v'ha'yadayim y'day Esav {and the hands are the hands of Esav}. And he blessed him. [27:22-23]"

On a simple level, Yitzchak decided that the hands were a clearer indicator than the voice and he therefore went ahead and gave the blessings.

The Medrash explains that these words were actually a prophecy that came unknowingly from the mouth of Yaakov. When the voice of Yaakov is strong in his learning of Torah and t'filah {prayer} then the hands of Esav are weak and useless against him. However, if Yaakov's voice becomes weak (the first word, ha'kol, is spelled without the letter vav, thereby assuming the additional meaning of hakail, meaning light and weak) then the hands of Esav have the ability to rule over him.

The Medrash also offers an additional meaning. The power of Yaakov lies in his voice. The voice is that of Yaakov. Esav's power, however, lies in his hands.

This is illustrated very clearly later on in the Torah. As we were on our way to Eretz Yisroel, Moshe sent messengers to Edom (the descendants of Esav) asking for permission to pass through their land. He told them a bit of history, that they had been afflicted in Egypt and when they had called out to Hashem, "He heard our voices [Bamidbar 20:17]." Moshe was impressing upon them the fulfillment of our blessing/prophecy that our power lies in our voices uplifted in prayer.

Edom's response was not long in coming. "Do not pass or else we'll come out against you with our swords." You're flouting your blessing, we'll flout ours. The hands are the hands of Esav.

When I was a teenager, I was once walking along a main street near my neighborhood when a guy sitting on the stoop gave me a look. I returned the look, which prompted him to look even harder. When I didn't back away with my eyes he stood up and sauntered over to me. "I see you want to fight," he said to me. "Tell you the truth, I'd just as well pass," I responded. "No, you really want to fight," he said drawing closer. "No, I'm really quite fine without fighting," I answered. "No, we're going to fight," he prophesized, and started swinging. Well, we stood there like two idiots for about ten minutes, punching each other in the face until I guess he realized what I had realized right from the start – there was really no point in punching each other in the face for ten minutes.

What really amazed me and gave me a glimpse into a whole different mindset was what happened afterwards. It seems that during our slugfest, his ring had slipped off his finger. Realizing that, he turned to me with a friendly smile, congratulated me on a good fight and asked me to help him find his ring. I was incredulous. "Do you really think I could care less about you and your ring?" I told him in French and stomped away.

I thought it out and realized that for him fighting was a sport. It was fun. The same way my friends and I would enjoy really going at it in a tough game of basketball, he enjoyed punching and getting punched in the face.

Ha'yadayim y'day Esav {the hands are the hands of Esav}. An entirely different mindset. An entirely different blessing. An entirely different nation.

Let's remember who we are and where our power lies.