Points to Ponder

Vayishlach 5782

**וַיִּשְׁלַ֨ח יַֽעֲקֹ֤ב מַלְאָכִים֙ לְפָנָ֔יו  Yaakov sent Malachim to Eisav (32:4) – Ramban** compares Yaakov’s actions here to a person with a fear of dogs who grabs the dog by the ear in order to stay on top of the dog. The only reason the dog noted him and wanted to attack him was that he tugged on the dog provoking him. Ramban suggests this is what happened by Yaakov’s sending a message to Eisav. **Rav Chaim Greineman ztl.** asked how Yaakov was supposed to know that Eisav was not going to attack him? Why does Ramban castigate him for taking protective measures? Rav Greineman explains that we rely on miracles every day. We just have a responsibility to take efforts (hishtadlus) that are normal to keep things moving. When one can rely on normal courses of events and s/he takes herculean efforts in the name of Hishtadlus, we hold them accountable for it. **Rav Schachter Shlita** noted that throughout Jewish history Jews in other countries needed to engage in Hishtadlus but in reasonable Histadlus. In Israel, the government also needs to do Hishtadlus too. But we need Tefillah first.

**עִם־לָבָ֣ן גַּ֔רְתִּי I lived with Lavan (32:5) – Rashi** cites 2 explanations of Yaakov’s comment. The first was that he lived with Lavan and did not become some great officer or politician. The second was that he kept the 613 Mitzvos. Is there a way to reconcile the 2 approaches? **Rav Bernard Weinberger ztl. (Shemen Hatov)** explains that when a person is humble enough NOT to make himself an officer or a lord, he has the ability to keep the entire Torah.

**שׁ֣וֹר וַֽחֲמ֔וֹר צֹ֖אן  I had a ox, donkey sheep etc. (32:6**) – It is interesting to note that the sheep that we read so much about in the last Parsha are relegated to the third spot in this message to Eisav. Why? **Rabbeinu Bachaya** explains that Eisav lost his Bechora because of the goats (so similar to sheep) and Yaakov did not want to remind Eisav of what caused the great schism between them. But if this is the case, why does Yaakov send the goats first in the gifts he sends to Eisav? **Rav Mordechai Druk ztl.** explained that in the interim Yaakov davened. When the Avos Davened, they were able to see that things would be ok. Since that was the case, he had no reason not to let the Eizim go first. **Rav Yisrael Reisman Shlita** noted that he knew a person who just had incredible faith in his davening and when he had that faith, the davening was a different davening. It came through.

**עַל־כֵּ֡ן לֹא־יֹֽאכְל֨וּ בְנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֜ל Therefore Bnei Yisrael should not eat the Gid HaNashe (32:33)** – Why is this the reason not to eat the Gid HaNashe? **Rav Nebenzahl Shlita** quoted the Zohar which notes that the words Et Gid contain the letters for Tisha B’Av (Alef Tav) Tzom Gedaliah (Gimmel) Asara B’Teves (Yud) and the Gematria of the word Gid is 17 alluding to Shiva Asar B’Tammuz. Rav Nebenzahl explained that the message here refers to the fact that the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash comes about because of the Tumah that the Malach injected into Yaakov which would affect his future generations.

**וַיִּפְצַר־בּ֖וֹ וַיִּקָּֽח He urged him and he took it (33:11) – Rav Gamliel Rabinovitz Shlita** noted that while initially demurring to accept a gift from his younger brother, Yaakov pushes him and he accepted it even without saying thank you. The wicked think that everything they have is coming to them and so when someone gives something to them, they do not say thank you. But a Tzaddik thinks that everything he has is a gift and that he was not entitled to it. Thus the Tzaddik is careful to be grateful under all circumstances.

**וַתֵּצֵ֤א דִינָה֙ בַּת־לֵאָ֔ה  Dina the daughter of Leah went out (34:1) – Rashi** quotes the midrash that since Yaakov hid Dinah in a box so that she not be taken by Eisav, she was taken by Shechem. **Rav Dovid Povaksky ztl.** asks what was Yaakov to do? Should he have allowed Dinah to be taken by a Rasha or was this an action of withholding her from Chessed? He answers that Yaakov, at his level, took unnecessary precautions. We might not be able to explain those precautions but Yaakov was able to know them and went too far. **Rav Schachter Shlita added that Mesilas Yesharim** adds that part of Zehirus is not to do too much. Exaggerated actions of protection can lead to strong anti-protection.

**ה֥וּא עֵשָׂ֖ו אֲבִ֥י אֱדֽוֹם: He is Eisav the father of Edom (36:43)** – Why do we need to know the Sarei Eisav? **Rav Frand Shlita quoted Rav Hutner ztl.** who explained that Eisav’s children received a portion in Eretz Se’ir so they are only interested in destroying the physical Jewish people. Bnei Yishmael didn’t get a portion in the land and thus continue to fight us for it.

**Haftara:**

**וּבְהַ֥ר צִיּ֛וֹן תִּֽהְיֶ֥ה פְלֵיטָ֖ה And for Mount Tzion there will be a refuge (Ovadiah 1:17) – Rav Dov Lior Shlita** noted that in the incredible times we live in after the founding of the state and the wars we have endured and emerged victorious miraculously we have seemingly achieved the Nevuah of Ovadiah here. Rav Lior added that it is imperative for us to realize the Hashgacha of Hashem in these events.