Vayishlach

THE WEISS EDITION

Light Dints

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints

לזיכרון ולעילוי נשמת הרה״ח הרה״ת

הר"ר ישעי' זושא

ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם

נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט ה'תשפ"ב

תנצב"ה

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וישלח Vayishlach

לב:ה-ו | 32:5-6

עם לָבָן גַּרְתִּי... וַיְהִי לִּי שׁוֹר וַחֲמוֹר צֹאן וְעֶבֶד וְשִׁפְּחָה

I have sojourned with Lavan...

And I have acquired oxen and donkeys, flocks,
manservants, and maidservants.

Don't Make Yourself at Home

After living with Lavan for 20 years, Yaakov and his family finally left for the land of Canaan. To announce their arrival, Yaakov sent a message to his brother, Eisav: "I have sojourned (בַּרָהִי) with Lavan and I have tarried until now."

The literal meaning of the word בֵּרְתִּי is "I stayed there as a foreigner." Yaakov used these words to emphasize that despite spending 20 years in Lavan's company, and amassing much material wealth there—"oxen and donkeys, flocks, manser-

^{1.} Bereishis 32:5-6.

ספר

vants and maidservants—" he continued to view himself as a stranger in Charan. It never became his natural home.

Yaakov's view of himself as a stranger to Lavan and everything Lavan represented was the secret behind the other interpretation that Rashi suggests for the word בְּרְהֵי: "בַּרְהֵי: has the numerical value of 613. That is to say: I lived with the wicked Lavan, but I kept the 613 commandments, and I did not learn from his evil deeds." Yaakov's success at maintaining his observance of הרי"ג, the 613 mitzvos, was due to his firm resolve to keep his relationship with his material affairs in a state of בְּרְהֵי, foreignness. He therefore never allowed it to disturb his worship of G-d, and could proudly say, "Despite 20 years of Lavan's company, I kept the 613 commandments."

-Likkutei Sichos, vol. 1, pp. 68-69

^{2.} Rashi ad loc.

32:33 | לב:לג

עַל פֵּן לֹא יֹאכְלוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת נִּיד הַנָּשֶׁה אַשֶּׁר עַל פַּף הַיָּרֵדְ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזָּה

Therefore the Bnei Yisrael may not eat the gid hanasheh, which is on the socket of the hip, until this day.

It's Not Petty When it's Your Child

In the middle of the night Yaakov encounters an angel of G-d, wrestles with him and wins. But the angel, who is Eisav's spiritual source and advocate on high, wounds Yaakov's sciatic nerve. In commemoration, the Torah prohibits eating this nerve in any animal.

The significance of this mitzvah is explained in the Sefer Hachinuch:

This mitzvah serves as a reminder to the Jewish people that though they will suffer many hardships in their exiles at the hands of the nations and at the hands of the children of Eisav, they should be confident that they will never be wiped out.³

The prohibition of eating the sciatic nerve seems to be a mere technicality in the laws of *kashrus*, applicable only to the specific nerve that the angel wounded, which is itself only a minor detail in the story of Yaakov's miraculous salvation. Why do we commemorate such a crucial aspect of Jewish faith—our eternal hope of survival—with a law so narrow in scope?

^{3.} Mitzvah 3.

The emphasis that this mitzvah places on one detail is, in truth, extremely significant. It highlights that G-d's providence and concern for the Jewish people extends even to the most minor details in their lives!

Although the Baal Shem Tov taught that every aspect of creation is orchestrated by Divine Providence and serves a specific role in the Divine plan, the *significance* of every detail before G-d still varies, depending on how central a role it serves in the ultimate purpose of creation.

When it comes to details that affect the life of a Jew, however, there are no such distinctions; a nerve in a Jew's hip is as significant to G-d as the entire creation. Since every Jew is uniquely chosen and cherished by G-d, and imbued with a soul that is essentially one with G-d Himself, even the seemingly minor details in the life of a Jew are of infinite significance before G-d.

-Likkutei Sichos, vol. 30, pp. 148-154

34:1 | לד:א

וַהַצֵּא דִינָה בַּת-לֵאָה אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה לִיַעֵקֹב לְרָאוֹת בִּבְנוֹת הָאָרֵץ

Dinah, the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Yaakov, went out to see the daughters of the land.

You Should Really Get Out a Bit

The Torah's account of Dinah's abduction begins, "Dinah, the daughter of Leah... went out to see the daughters of the land." Rashi notes the Torah's emphasis on Dinah being Leah's daughter, and explains that Dinah inherited her social nature from her mother:

She is identified as "the daughter of Leah" because she ventured out. For Leah too was an "out-goer," as it is written, "Leah went out to greet him [Yaakov]".⁴ Regarding her it has been said, "Like mother, like daughter."

On the surface, it seems that the Torah views these two "out-goers" disapprovingly—their excursions are considered excessive by the Torah's standards of modesty. But would the Torah really go out of its way to disparage not only Dinah, but Leah too, when we know that "the Torah avoids disparaging even a non-kosher animal"?⁵

It must be that the Torah associates Dinah's conduct with Leah's as an indication of praise, rather than criticism. Just as Leah's motives were admirable when *she* "went out" ("she

^{4.} Bereishis 30:16.

^{5.} Bava Basra 123a.

6

desired and was seeking means to increase the number of tribes"),⁶ Dinah's intentions were noble too.

What were Dinah's intentions?

When Yaakov prepared his family to meet Eisav, he hid Dinah in a crate so that Eisav would not see her and desire her. Yaakov was later punished for doing so, because had they married, Dinah might have positively influenced the wicked Eisav. Certainly, if Dinah's chances of affecting Eisav were slim, Yaakov would not have been punished for hiding her! Evidently, Dinah's remarkable character meant that she was more than likely to succeed in transforming the wicked Eisav, had she only been given the opportunity.

As such, we can understand that Dinah's excursions were likewise motivated by her ability to affect people outside the pure environment of her family. She did not go out "to see the daughters of the land" in order to see and be seen among them, or to acquaint herself with their ways, but to attract them to hers—the righteous path of Yaakov.

Indeed, like her mother, Dinah went out with the purest of intentions.

-Likkutei Sichos, vol. 35, pp. 150-151

^{6.} Rashi, Bereishis 30:17.

^{7.} Rashi, Bereishis 32:33.

34:25 | לד:כה

וַיִּקְחוּ שְׁנֵי בְנֵי יַעֲקֹב שִׁמְעוֹן וְלֵוִי אֲחֵי דִינָה אִישׁ חַרָבּוֹ וַיַּבֹאוּ עַל הָעִיר בָּטַח וַיַּהַרְגוּ כָּל זַכֶּר

Two of Yaakov's sons—Shimon and Levi, Dinah's brothers—each man took his sword, and they came upon the city with confidence, and they slew every male.

The Jewish Way in Responsible Adulthood

Shimon and Levi are each referred to in this verse as איש, a man. The Midrash⁸ calculates that this story took place just 13 years after the birth of Levi, the younger of the two brothers, and yet Levi is called a man, indicating that at the age of 13 he had the emotional maturity of an adult. This is one of the sources from which Jewish law establishes 13 years as the age of maturity, whereupon a boy becomes bar mitzvah—biblically responsible to observe the mitzvos.

Ironically, the context in which the 13-year-old Levi is called a man is not an instance in which he acted with the levelheadedness that comes with maturity: he and Shimon react heatedly to Shechem's exploitation of their sister, attacking the city, putting their own lives in grave danger.

This unusual source for the age of bar mitzvah highlights the true definition of mitzvah responsibility. Certainly, we can be held responsible for the mitzvos only when we have the capacity to understand and appreciate their importance. That is why the obligation to observe mitzvos begins only when

^{8.} Bereishis Rabbah 80:10.

one becomes intellectually and emotionally mature— a "man." But understanding and discernment are only the tools—not the foundation—with which to serve G-d. The foundation of Divine service is *kabbolas ol*, "accepting the yoke of Heaven," submitting oneself to G-d's will with a commitment that transcends understanding and reason.

The Torah alludes to Levi and Shimon's adulthood in the episode of Shechem, for their actions demonstrated that their capacity for critical judgment stood firmly on foundations of *kabbolas ol*, submission to a higher cause. Thus, when defending their values necessitated personal risk and self-sacrifice, they readily put their own interests aside, and "each man took his sword..."

-Likkutei Sichos, vol. 15, pp. 289-292





לזכות

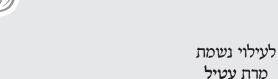
הנערה שיינא בת חנה שיחי

לרגל הגיעה לגיל שתים עשרה שנה היא עונת בת מצוה בשעטו"מ ביום כ' כסלו ה'תשפ"ו

יה"ר שתקבל על עצמה עול מלכות שמים ועול מצוות בלבב שלם, ותצליח בקיום המצוות מתוך יראת שמים טהורה לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע תכה"י







מרת עטיל בת ר' ישראל יוסף ע"ה בריסקי נפטרה י"א כסלו ה'תשפ"ג

תנצב"ה

נדפס ע"י בני משפחתה שיחיו









לעילוי נשמת הרה"ת זיסא בן ציון ב"ר לוי ע"ה ליבערמאן נלב"ע ביום ח"י כסלו ה'תשע"ג

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