

# Kindler Torah

## Parashas Vayishlach

### Not Today

"Oy, I just heard some unpleasant news, Zaidy."

"Nisht heint gidacht."

"Zaidy, you always use that expression when someone mentions bad news. What do those words mean?"

"Chaim, 'nisht heint gidacht' is a Yiddish expression which literally means, 'Don't think about it today.' When we mention terrible things, we wish that they would not happen today. Then we will not have to think about them."

"Just today?"

"Not really. We prefer that tragedies will never happen. However, today we ask for today. Tomorrow, we will ask for tomorrow, and so on."

"These types of sayings always express things in such an interesting way. Zaidy, I have another question."

"Go ahead, Chaimelch."

"The Baalei Mussar (those who stress character perfection through Torah) speak about the benefits of suffering. They portray it as an opportunity to come close to Hashem. If so, why do we wish that it should not come?"

"Ahhh. . . Chaimelch. You are a very thoughtful boy. That is a good question. Rav Moshe Feinstein discusses this issue in connection to this week's parasha."

"Where?"

"Bereshis 32:25-33. Yaakov Avinu wrestled with the guardian angel of Eisav all night and was not defeated. This was a great miracle, for an angel can very easily kill a man. To remember this miracle, we have a mitzvah in the Torah. 'Therefore the Bnei Yisrael do not eat the *gid hanoshe* on the hip socket to this day' (Bereshis 32:33). Rav Moshe points out that all other mitzvos whose purpose is to remember a miracle require a positive action. This mitzvah is the opposite - we must refrain from eating the *gid hanoshe*."

"What is the difference, Abba?"

"Rav Moshe answers that this mitzvah commemorates a *nisayon* (test). It was a big struggle for Yaakov to wrestle the entire night. We have a negative mitzvah to remember this because we do not want *tsorus* (trouble) of this type, or any type to come upon us. That is why we ask Hashem, 'Do not bring us tests' every day in the morning blessings. We do not want these tests of suffering, and therefore we pray for the redemption every day."

"I see, Zaidy. What about the Baalei Mussar?"

"I will answer you with a statement that is attributed to Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, when he emerged from a bomb shelter after the six-day war. He said that he would never wish for these *yissurin* (the suffering of huddling in the shelter). However, he would not exchange them and the spiritual elevation gained during those days for anything in the world. We

do not want troubles to come. However, when they do come, we must realize that they are for our own good, accept them with love, and grow from them."

"Zaidy, I hope that every moment of my life is as sweet as the time I spend with you."

"Amen."

*Kinderlach . . .*

*There are two ways to grow - through pleasant experiences, and through unpleasant ones. We would all much rather get close to Hashem by learning Torah, enjoying Shabbos, gemilus chassadim (performing acts of loving kindness), marrying, and raising families. These are the pleasures of life. Sometimes, however, Hashem wants to draw us closer in a different way. Poverty, sickness, war, and natural disasters all humble a person. They make him realize how dependent he is upon The Almighty. He cries out to Hashem, begging for rachmonus (mercy). We would all prefer the first way, kinderlach. Therefore let us all try to do the positive mitzvos with all of our hearts. Do not give Hashem any reason to send the troubles. Not today - or any day.*



### Think Small

"Avi, this is absolutely beautiful."

"Chaim, I am speechless. Have you ever seen so many stars?"

"Never. The night air is so clear. The stars fill the sky."

"Hashem's heavens are magnificent."

"Just awesome."

"Can I share an insight with you, Chaim?"

"I am always anxious to hear your insights, Avi."

"Our forefathers were all shepherds. They were alone in the fields much of the time, tending the sheep. This gave them time to contemplate."

"Contemplate what, Avi?"

"Hashem's greatness, among other things. When we look up at this breathtaking view of the stars, we are in awe. This world is magnificent. How glorious is the One Who created it. Yaakov Avinu was in the field at night. He had the opportunity to think about Hashem's glory."

"You are so right, Avi. The Almighty created this beautiful world, a tremendous act of kindness. He continues to perform

millions and billions of acts of kindness every day, sustaining the world and all of us who live here. How do we deserve all of this kindness?"

"Those were Yaakov Avinu's words and thoughts, Chaim."

"Really?"

"Yes. He was on his way to meet his brother, Eisav. He stopped on the road to offer up a prayer to Hashem. His words were, 'I am small (undeserving) of all of the kindness and truth that You have done for Your servant' (Bereshis 32:11). Rabbeinu Bechaye explains that this is a model of how we should introspect during prayer. A person should consider his faults and shortcomings. If Yaakov Avinu, one of our holy forefathers, considered himself small, then what can we say about ourselves?"

"So true, Avi. Don't we also have to think about Hashem and His greatness?"

"Yes. Rabbeinu Bechaye continues to explain that we should contemplate the majesty of Hashem's rule over the universe. He constantly bestows goodness upon His creations. He is not obligated, rather He provides for us out of kindness."

"I understand. Before we ask The Almighty to grant our requests, we must realize to Whom we are speaking (His greatness) and how totally dependent we are upon Him (our smallness)."

"Avi, we should all pray to Hashem with more sincerity, and He should grant all of our requests."

"Amen."

*Kinderlach . . .*

*Do you remember the last time that you fell down and hurt yourself? You see how fragile you are, how easy it is to get hurt. That is an example of our smallness. Contrast this with the greatness of Hashem. Can we possibly list all of the things that He does for us? He provides us with air to breathe, food to eat, water to drink, sunshine, and shelter, just to name a few. He healed your bruise when you fell down. He sustains every creature on this earth, and every star and planet in the universe. His Greatness is totally beyond comprehension and description. How small are we, in comparison. That is the thought to have in mind when you humbly stand before Him in prayer. Know Who you are addressing. . . the Creator of the universe. Know who you are. . . His creation. Humbly praise Him and ask Him to continue to shower you with kindness.*

### Parasha Questions

- Who were experts at farming? (36:20 and Rashi)
- Where did Eisav settle? (36:8)
- Who were Eisav's wives and children? (36:1-5)
- How old were Yitzchak and Yaakov when Yosef was sold? (Rashi 35:29)
- How was Yosef considered Yaakov's bechor? (Rashi 35:23)

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