

בעזהשׁי״ת

Parshah Insights

Pertinent Inspirational
Insights on the Parshah

פרשת וישלח

Translated from the outstanding Lev Shomaya Parsha series that contain highlights of the lectures and deroshos given by:

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The purpose of this publication is to make these wonderful Divrei Torah and chizuk available to the English speaking public. We are very grateful to Harav Low shlita for allowing us to glean selected inspiring thoughts.



וַיֵּאבֶק אִישׁ עִמוֹ - עַד עֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר

וַיֹּתֵר יַעֲקֹב לְבָדּוֹ וַיֵּאבֶק אִישׁ עִמוֹ עַד עֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר (לב כה)

And Yaakov was left alone, and a man wrestled with him
until the break of dawn

The Start of a War

In this week's parshah Yaakov is on his way to meet his brother Eisav. En-route, he is confronted by an angel, who Rashi states is שָׂרוּ שָׂל עֵשָׂו, the minister of Eisav disguised as a human being. The malach fights him all night, desperately trying to destroy him. Until, at the break of dawn, seeing that he will not conquer him, וַיַּגֵּעַ בְּכֶף יָרְכוֹ he touches his hip socket and dislocates it. וְהוּא צִלַּע עַל יָרְכוֹ and Yaakov is left limping in pain.

Although the malach managed to inflict pain on Yaakov, he was far from victorious. More so, the possuk says וַיֵּרָא כִּי לֹא יָכוֹל לוֹ and he saw that he could not prevail against him. Despite the malach's continuous wrestling with him, Yaakov emerged victorious and undefeated, yet battle-scarred. Therefore, after dawn had broken, and the malach wanted to return to the Heavens, he blessed Yaakov and changed his name to Yisroel, וַתִּזְכָּרְךָ אֱלֹהִים וְעַם אַנְשִׁים וַתִּזְכָּרְךָ אֱלֹהִים וְעַם אַנְשִׁים וְעַם אַנְשִׁים וְעַם אַנְשִׁים for you have overpowered G-dly angles and men and you have prevailed.

As with all the other narratives of our Avos' lives, this too must be viewed with the concept of מַעֲשֵׂה אֲבוֹת סִמְּן לְבָנִים. Chazal famously say that the Torah relates all our Forefathers' experiences because they are

a blue print for our lives; all that occurred to them will manifest in our lives too. Therefore, we must learn how our Avos faced their challenges, in order to know how to react when facing these same challenges.

For this reason, we have the mitzvah of גִּיד הַנֶּשֶׂה, the command of abstaining from eating an animal's hip sinew, because the malach struck Yaakov there. In this way, we will remember this struggle between Yaakov and the Malach.

Seforim Hakdoshim tell us that this wrangle is a reference to Klal Yisroel's constant struggle, both physical and spiritual. Physically, we are suffering at the hands of the nations of the world; spiritually, we are engaged in a constant struggle with the Yetzer Hara. Thus, we must look at how Yaakov fought - and prevailed - to know how we too can overcome this continuous battle.

Not Defeated

The Sefer Hachinuch (מצוה ג) explains one reason for the mitzvah of גִּיד הַנֶּשֶׂה. While Klal Yisroel suffers tremendously at the hand of the nations and the children of Eisav here in golus, they should comfort themselves that they will never be eradicated. Their lineage and name will endure forever and, finally, the Redeemer will come and liberate them from their suffering.

By adhering to this mitzvah they will remember that though Yaakov suffered, his aggressor did not manage to conquer him, and with the coming of dawn the battle ceased. Thereby, they will remain steadfast in their Emunah and righteousness, hoping for the day when their struggle too will cease, and the promised Geulah will come.

This is noted from the fact that although the malach ultimately tried to eradicate Yaakov, he was unsuccessful. So too, Eisav also didn't manage later to destroy Yaakov's children. When noticing his defeat, he inflicted pain upon Yaakov by dislocating his hip. Likewise, the

descendants of Eisav will cause the children of Yaakov tremendous pain. However, with the coming of dawn, the salvation will come. As the posuk says וַיִּזְרַח לוֹ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ and the sun arose and shone for Yaakov. The Sefer Hachinuch concludes that, similarly, Hashem will rise וַיִּשְׁוֶה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לוֹ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ הַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי the sun of Moshiach, which will heal us from all our suffering and redeem us forever.

For the Duration of the Night

Seforim tell us that the same is in the realm of the spiritual battle with the Yetzer Hora. The מְלַחֶמֶת הַיָּצֵר will continue until the coming of Moshiach, when Hashem will finally slaughter the Yetzer Hara. If we acknowledge that this is an ongoing battle, meant to be fought until the time of the geulah, we can gain great comfort from that. For sometimes we are disheartened that after we have finally conquered our Yetzer Hara in one battle, immediately we must engage him again in another struggle. We thus feel that perhaps we cannot win this war, or perhaps that we are lacking and deficient, and therefore we must continuously fight the Yetzer Hara.

However, looking at the fight of Yaakov we learn that this ongoing battle is actually the plan and purpose. It is not abnormal. It is simply a continuation of the battle our father Yaakov fought **all night** with the angel of Eisav, and will only cease with the coming of Moshiach - when the Yetzer Hara will finally be eliminated.

Even though this battle is exhausting, and sometimes we too, like Yaakov, can be hurt in the process, the goal still remains to simply continue fighting. We should not let our injuries demoralize us, and even if we are left limping, should take heed of the fact that the struggle is the goal, and therefore continue to fight courageously.

From Yaakov to Yisrael

The posuk says וַיִּתְּנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהִים וְעַם אֲנָשִׁים וַיִּתְּנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהִים וְעַם אֲנָשִׁים וַיִּתְּנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהִים וְעַם אֲנָשִׁים for you [Yaakov] have campaigned with angels and men and have triumphed.

Regarding this, the Sifsei Tzaddik asks, why did the Malach changed Yaakov's name to Yisroel? Why did he not name him תּוֹכֵל, as a reference to him winning their struggle?

The Sifsei Tzaddik answers that וְתוֹכֵל, the triumph, is not in our hands; only Hashem decides the outcome. It is not the victory that is praiseworthy, rather the struggle itself, which is our active choice, which is the true sign of our strength. The choice to continue wrestling, to never give up, that is our praise. That is the trademark of Klal Yisroel.

After the struggle between Yaakov and the malach, the malach asked him to release him for his turn to sing Shira has come and therefore he must return to the Heavens. Yaakov answered him כִּי אִם בְּרַכְתָּנִי I will only allow you to go after you bless me. Rashi says that Yaakov told him here "I will only let you go after you admit that the brochos my father gave me are legitimately mine".

The Malach said לֹא יַעֲקֹב יֵאָמֵר עוֹד שְׂמֵךְ כִּי עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי שְׂרִית your name will no longer be Yaakov, which means you were מַעֲקֵב, you deceived your brother when you seized that which was his. It will be Yisroel, כִּי שְׂרִיתָ, for you have fought and prevailed. Thus, the brochos are now rightfully yours.

The malach also told him that "Hashem too will agree that the brochos are yours later when you come to לֵא-ל and sacrifice korbonos there. And then I too will be there, and I too will concede that the brochos are rightfully yours". This proves that at the end of the struggle the Malach himself acknowledged that Yaakov was the victor.

Correspondingly, at the end of our struggle the Yetzer Hara will admit that we have triumphed, and the brochos are legitimately ours. He will surrender, declaring Klal Yisroel the victors.

Mission Accomplished

As mentioned, the malach wanted to go sing Shira. Rashi tells us that this was actually the first time that the angel of Eisav was singing Shira. The Koznitzer Maggid explains that this was no coincidence. A malach can only sing Shira when he has accomplished a mission that was assigned to him. Up until now this malach had not accomplished his mission.

What had he now accomplished that afforded him the opportunity to sing Shira before Hashem? The malach had fought a spiritual battle with Yaakov all night. He attempted to take away his level of Kedusah, but Yaakov ultimately triumphed. That indeed was the mission of this malach: to give Yaakov the opportunity to fight him and win him. Now that Yaakov had remained spiritually intact despite his fierce battle, the mission of the malach was accomplished, and he was allowed to go and sing Hashem's praises before Him.

So too, the mission of the Yetzer Hora is not to defeat us. It is to give us the opportunity of fighting him and emerging victorious, stronger in our belief and connection to Hashem. (עבודת ישראל ד"ה ושמעת)

The Gemara (סוכה נב.) tells us that when Moshiach will come, Hashem will bring out the Yetzer Hora and publicly slaughter him. The tzaddikim will witness it and they will cry. The Maharshah explains that the cries will be cries of hesped, eulogy. He quotes a Midrash in Bereishis that says וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹקִים אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה טוֹב מְאֹד - and Hashem saw all that He had done, and behold, it was very good - this refers to the Yetzer Hora.

Why is our greatest enemy, the Yetzer Hora, טוֹב מְאֹד? The Maharshah explains that the Yetzer Hora is a tzaddik's greatest opportunity. Because when we fight him, and continuously win him, we merit Olam Haba. He is not really our enemy, but rather the

medium through which Hashem seeks to grant us everlasting reward. Therefore, when he will finally be vanquished, the tzaddikim will cry, for the opportunity to defeat him, and the ensuing rewards will no longer exist.

A Constant Campaign

In this way we once again learn what our mindset in view of the Yetzer Hora should be. We should not be discouraged by our constant battles, for that is the G-dly plan. The inherent nature of this battle is its constancy; it is not by accident, or misfortune, that we are continuously engaged in an ongoing battle, rather it is the Divine Plan. Though the battles are fierce, and we can get hurt, we will never be vanquished. And as long as we actively continue the struggle, our continuity is guaranteed.

Furthermore, though we may get injured from time to time, it is for our ultimate benefit because every new battle which is fought and won will bring us everlasting reward. For this reason, we will actually mourn the Yetzer Hora's eventual slaughter.

Another important lesson we must glean from this battle is the crucial need never to let our defenses down. For in an ongoing battle, one cannot afford to be caught unaware or unprepared.

Waiting in Ambush

In Parshas Bereishis the possuk tells us (ד ז) לְפִתַּח חֲטָאֵת רוֹבֵץ at the entrance, the evil inclination is lurking. It sits at the door ready to pounce on its unsuspecting prey. The K'lei Yakar quotes a Gemara (ברכות סא.) that says that one of the names of the Yetzer Hara is a זבוב, a fly. A fly has very weak teeth and cannot penetrate a robust piece of meat. Therefore, it searches for a break, a crack or imperfection in the meat, and then utilizes this crack to gain entrance into the meat. It widens its point of entry and eventually eats its way through, completely spoiling the meat.

So too, the Yetzer Hora searches for a weakness, an unguarded spot where it can gain entrance into our hearts. It looks for an area in which we are weak, where we have not put up the right defenses, and can then overtake us completely from there. For this reason, it is crucial to remember *וַיִּאָבֶק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ עַד עֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר*, we need to continue wrestling him until the dawn of time. We cannot be complacent, thinking, we have won many battles so now we can rest. Rather, we must remember that we are in the midst of a war and there are always additional battles bound to break out at any given moment.

Guarding All our Camps

Though we must guard our weaknesses with heightened awareness, we must simultaneously ensure that we do not lose sight of the entire battlefield. One must work on strengthening himself in areas which are challenging to him, however, never to the exclusion of other areas of Avodas Hashem. Like Yaakov, we must prepare ourselves in different ways, guarding all our camps.

Earlier, when Yaakov prepared to approach his brother, he split his family into *שתי מחנות*, two camps. For if Eisav were to strike one camp, at least the other one could try and save itself. So too, when the Yetzer Hora wears us down ceaselessly in one area, we should indeed battle him, however we should not neglect to try and save all other areas of Avodas Hashem.

The Divrei Yisroel brings a mashal in the name of his grandfather, Rabbi Yechezkel of Kuzmir, which demonstrates this concept. He says that a gang of robbers planned to loot a store. They strategized that they would first send in one robber. As the shopkeeper would try to fight him, he would be distracted, and then the rest would be able to cunningly enter and make off with all the spoils. However, the clever shopkeeper noticed the rest of the group lying in ambush, and though he tried to fight the single robber, he did not let his defenses down. He still kept vigil over the entrance of his store rather than channeling

all his energy to defeating the single thief. In this way, though he might have lost a little to the lone thief, he averted a much greater disaster by preventing the entire gang of bandits entry to his store.

Likewise, the purpose of the Yetzer Hora is to make a person stumble with one aveira in order to make him lose his focus altogether. One can become distraught and broken over the fact that he has stumbled and overburden his mind to the exclusion of all else.

We must be aware of this tactic, hence not allow him to engage us fully in one area to the detriment of other areas of Avodas Hashem. We must remain constantly on our vigil to see where he is trying to attack us, and not neglect to safeguard other areas of Avodas Hashem, while simultaneously focusing on the mitzvah in which he is actively challenging us presently. We must have a multi-faceted strategy to defeat the Yetzer Hora in many different areas, and in this way we will B'eizras Hashem merit the עליות השחר in which we will witness the slaughter of the Yetzer Hora and reap the unimaginable rewards of the long war we have successfully waged.

And certainly, we must bear in mind that the most powerful weapon against the Yetzer Hara is to serve Hashem with simcha. Thus, we should not let him take this away from us and whatever happens, we should continue with our Avodas Hashem with an upbeat and cheerful fashion. (דברי ישראל ד"ה אם יבא)

The Yetzer Hara - Several Versions

There is a famous vort told by the Chasam Sofer which was related by his youngest daughter, Rebbetzin Simcha Leihman. Her saintly father would repeat this occasionally to his children and house-maids.

Once upon a time the Yetzer Hora used his original name. However, when people became weary of him and his evil intentions, he started using a different name, Satan. All the same, people became weary of the Satan, so he declared bankruptcy and used a new name

"heintige tzeiten", today's modern world. The Chasam Sofer would explain that whenever contemplating doing something good and then bypassing it because it feels inappropriate for "contemporary times", one should know that they're dealing with the same old Yetzer Hora. It is the original struggle, which is ongoing. Hence, one should keep waging the continuous struggle which simply appears through different faces and strategies.

Let us always remember that as descendants of Yaakov Avinu we are tasked with continuing this ongoing battle. We will courageously keep fighting until the last day, עַד עֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר, when the sun will rise and the light of moshiach will shine forth! במהרה בימינו אמן!

גוט שבת



