

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit" a of Gur

Power of Yaakov

וּיֹאמֶר אֱלקים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמַרְאֹת הַלַּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר וַעֵּקֹב יַעַקֹב

G-d spoke to Yisrael in night visions, and He said, "Yaakov, Yaakov." (Bereishis 46:2)

The Gemara (Berachos 13a) says that one who calls Avraham by the name Avram transgresses a positive and a

Although Yaakov won his struggle with Esav's malach, the war was not over; the clashes would continue throughout our long history of exiles

negative mitzvah: וְהָיָה שְׁמְק אַבְרָהָם your name shall be Avraham and וְלֹא your name shall be Avraham and יִקְרָא עוֹד אֶת שִׁמְק אַבְרָם your name shall no longer be called Avram (17:5). The Gemara challenges this: If so, the same should be true of anyone who calls Yaakov by the name Yaakov, since the pasuk says (35:10), וּאָמֶר לו אָלקים שָׁמְף יַעֲקֹב, לא יִקְרֵא שָׁמְף עוֹד יַעֲקֹב אָלקים שָׁמְף יַעֲקֹב, לא יִקָרָא שָׁמְף עוֹד יַעֲקֹב *G-d said to him, "Your name is Yaakov. Your name shall not be called Yaakov, but Yisrael shall be your name."* The Gemara answers that Yaakov is different, since the pasuk subsequently refers to him as such: וַיּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים לְיִשְׁרָאֵל בְּמַרְאָת הַלִיְלָה וַיָּאמֶר יֵעַקֹב יַעֵק

Ohr Hachaim asks: Why don't we extrapolate from the case of Yaakov to that of Avram? Just as Hashem said. "Your name shall not be called Yaakov," yet nevertheless He later called him Yaakov; so too one may call Avraham 'Avram' even though Hashem said "Your name shall no longer be called Avram." Ohr Hachaim answers that besides our pasuk which refers to Yaakov again by that name, in the very pasuk where Hashem names him Yisrael, Hashem begins, "Your name is Yaakov." This statement doesn't seem to be necessary to the narrative; clearly, it is to teach us to derive from our pasuk that Yaakov is to remain a permanent name.

cont. on page 2

Revealing the Hidden

וְהָיָה בַּתְּבוּאֹת וּנְתַתֶּם חֲמִישִׁית לְפַרְעֹה וְאַרְבַּע הַיָּדֹת יִהְיֶה לְכֵם

At the ingathering of the harvests, you will give a fifth to Pharaoh; the [other] four parts shall be yours. (Bereishis 47:24)

In Kedushas Levi,⁹ the Berditchever applies this pasuk to the *avodas* Hashem of a Yid. The Gemara (Berachos 10a) explains that David Hamelech said ברכי נכשי -Praise, my soul, five times, corresponding to five attributes of Hakadosh Baruch Hu and of a person's neshamah. Just as Hashem fills the world, so the *neshamah* fills the body; just as Hashem sees but is not seen, so too does the *neshamah*; just as Hashem sustains the entire world, so the neshamah sustains the entire body; just as Hashemis tahor, so is the neshamah; just as Hashem is concealed, so is the *neshamah*. The Gemara concludes, "Let one who has these five characteristics praise One Who has these five characteristics."

Why must Hashem be praised by one who shares His characteristics? *Noam Elimelech*¹⁰ writes that if a person does not understand himself – if he sees himself as merely a machine running the way it was programmed – he can have no understanding at all of Hashem. The Gemara is teaching us that for a person to

S.v. U'b'ofen acher

¹⁰ Va'eschanan, s.v. Hishamer

Power of Yaakov

cont. from page 1

The context of our pasuk - where the name Yaakov is given permanence - is Yaakov's nevuah that he will go down to Mitzrayim. אַל הִירָא מֶרְדָה מִצְ רַיִמַה כִּי לְגוֹי גַּדוֹל אַשִׂימָך שֵׁם, אַנֹכִי אָרָד עַמָּך מְצְרַיִמָה וְאָנֹכִי אַעַלְךָ גַם עָלה Have no fear of descending to Mitzrayim, for I shall establish you as a great nation there. I shall descend with you to Mitzrayim, and I shall also surely bring you up (46:3-4). Why specifically here was Yaakov informed that that name would remain?

The name Yaakov is representative of his ongoing battle with Esav: ויִדו אחֶזֶת בַּעֵקב עֲשָו – and his hand was grasping onto the heel of Esav. Although Yaakov won his struggle with Esav's malach,¹ the war was not over; the clashes would continue throughout our long history of exiles. Thus, before Yaakov embarked on this first exile, to Mitzrayim, Hashem gave permanence to the name Yaakov, so that he could actualize his potential of וידו אחזת בעקב עשו.

But why did Hashem repeat Yaakov's name twice: ויאמר יעקב יעקב? After Yosef revealed himself to his brothers in Mitzrayim, he introduced five of them to Pharaoh.² Rashi cites Chazal³ that he presented the weakest of his brothers – Zevulun, Gad, Dan, Naftali and Asher. The names of these shevatim were also repeated twice when Moshe blessed them, in order to give them added strength.⁴ We may suggest that likewise, Hashem repeated Yaakov's name twice before his first galus would begin, in order to fortify him for his struggle with the nations.

At this juncture Hashem told Yaakov, אַנֹכִי אָרָד עִמָּך מִצְרַיִמָה וָאַנֹכִי אַעַלָ גם עלה. The Berditchever interprets אַנֹכִי ה' אֵלקיך as a reference to אַנֹכִי ה' (Shemos 20:2), the opening phrase of the Aseres Hadibros. The message was: The purpose of your descent to Mitzrayim is your coming redemption and kabbalas haTorah. To achieve this, Bnei Yisrael would need to preserve their lifestyle: to retain their characteristic speech, dress, and names, and to guard against the depravity of Egyptian culture. All this, so that they could continue the struggle against Esav and ultimately accept the Torah.

וְעַתַּה לא אַתֵּם שָׁלַחָתֵם אֹתִי הַנַּה כִּי – And now: It was not you who sent me here, but G-d (45:8). The Slonimer Rebbes explained⁵ that this is a declaration we all must make: It was not you, the physical and mundane distractions I face, that sent me down to this world; I was not sent here to engross

myself in such matters. I was sent here by Hashem, for Hashem; to reveal His Presence in this world. This is what we must remember as we battle our way through galus.

The Midrash⁶ relates that Hashem told Avraham, צא וכבוש את הדרך לפני בניך - Go prepare the way for your children. Whatever Avraham experienced would be experienced by his descendants. It feels like just yesterday that I heard the Beis Yisrael's remark on this;⁷ his words still ring in my ears: צא וכבוש - את הדרך, איזהו גבור הכובש את יצרו In what way would the Avos prepare the way for their children? By conquering their yetzer hara, so that their children could do the same!⁸

The struggle with Esav's evil ways is difficult and ongoing, and will only conclude with the fulfillment of ועלו את הַר עָשָו – And – מושָׁעִים בָּהַר צִיּוֹן לְשָׁפּט אֶת הַר עֲשָו saviors will ascend Mount Tzion to judge the Mountain of Esav (Ovadyah 1:21). In the meantime, every Yid has within him the power to withstand any nisayon he faces throughout the galus: the power of "Yaakov, Yaakov."

(ויגש תשפ"ג – ס"ג מאמר א)

3 Baya Kamma 92a

See Beis Yisrael, Vayishlach 5737 and other locations 7

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⁻ כי שרית עם אלקים ועם אנשים ותוכל - For you have striven with the Divine and with man and have overcome (32:29). - אַקצָה אָחָיו לָקח חֲמִשָּׁה אֲנָשִׁים וַיִּצָגֵם לִפְנֵי פַרְעֹה - Of his brothers he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh (47:2). 2

See Rashi, Devarim 33:18; Maharsha, Bava Kamma ibid, in his second explanation. 4

⁵ See Divrei Shmuel

⁶ Bereishis Rabbah 40:6

For the same reason, as Yaakov got ready to descend to Mitzrayim, he sent Yehudah ahead to prepare, as the pasuk says (46:28), יאָת יְהוֹיָה שֶׁלָח לְפָנָיו - He sent Yehudah 8 ahead of him.

Revealing the Hidden

cont. from page 1

gain understanding of Hashem, he must study himself first, and realize that his *neshamah* is a *chelek Elokah mima'al*, a piece of Hashem. Only then can he reach a level of perception of Hashem.

The *Zohar hakadosh* says¹¹ that Hashem is both hidden and revealed. In truth, we have no grasp of Hashem at all, but from His conduct we can discern His traits, some of which are open and some of which are hidden. That Hashem "sees but is not seen"; "sustains the entire world";

When a person keeps silent of this world's temptations, not asking for a share in them – it can be said of him נַבְרָכוּ ה. כַּוֹלְאָכָיו

"is *tahor*"; and "is concealed" – all these are hidden traits. Only that Hashem "fills the world" is revealed to be seen. Just as it is observable that a person's body is filled with his *neshamah*, which unifies it and keeps it alive, so it is clear that Hashem fills the world, providing everything in it with life.

This, says the Berditchever, is what our pasuk alludes to: וּנְתַשֶּׁם חֲמִישִׁית לְפַרְעֹה

The Gemara doesn't identify which alludes to which trait of Hashem and the neshamah. The Maharsha, however, states that the trait of filling the world (or the body) is represented by ברכו ה' מַלאַכֵיו גּבּרִי כֹחַ עֹשִׂי דְבַרוֹ לשׁמֹע בּקוֹל דְבַרוֹ, בַּרְכוּ ה' כָּל צְבָאָיו מְשָׁרְתָיו עֹשֵׂי רְצוֹנוֹ, בָּרְכוּ ה' כָּל מַעֲשָׂיו '- בְּכָל מִקֹמוֹת מֵמִשַׁלְתּוֹ, בָּרְכִי נַפְשִׁי אֱת ה Bless Hashem, His angels; the strong warriors who do His bidding, to obey the voice of His word. Bless Hashem, all His legions, His servants who do His will. Bless Hashem. all *His works, in all the places of His dominion.* Bless Hashem, my soul! (Tehillim 103:20-22) In fact, that Hashem reigns over the entire universe is explicit: מַלְכוּתָךָ מַלִ כוּת כָּל עֹלָמִים וּמֵמְשֵׁלְתָך בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדֹר - Your kingdom spans all the worlds, and Your dominion is throughout every generation (Tehillim 145:13).¹⁴ It is the *avodah* of each generation to reveal Hashem's glory through the unique nisyonos of that generation.

The Midrash¹⁵ teaches that הְרָכוּ הֹ מַלְאָכָיו גִּבֹרֵי כֹחַ עָשֵׁי דְבָרוּ לְשְׁמֹעַ בְּקוֹל דְבָרו refers to those who keep *Shemittah*. Typically, a person may perform a mitzvah for a day, a week or a month. But who practices a mitzvah for an entire year? Those who keep *Shemittah* watch their fields lie fallow, while they continue to pay taxes, for an entire year – and they remain silent, never voicing a complaint. Can there be a stronger warrior than this?

The Sfas Emes asks:¹⁶ Granted, asking a farmer to put his livelihood on hold for a year is a very tough *nisayon*. But there can be greater tests than this; a person's yetzer hara can hound and seduce him with harsh nisyonos continuously. The Sfas Emes explains that the Midrash is not only referring to farmers. The "field" the Midrash mentions alludes to Olam Hazeh; when a person keeps silent of this world's temptations, not asking for a share in them – it can be said of him בָּרְכוּ ה' מַלָאַכַיו גָּבֹּרִי כֹחַ עֹשֵׂי דְבַרוֹ. As the Mishnah (Avos 4:1) teaches, איזהו גבור הכובש את יצרו – Who is strong? He who defeats his *yetzer hara*. Such a person reveals *kevod* Shamayim throughout the world, as the pasuk says further, בָּרָכוּ ה' כָּל מַעֵשָיו בְּכָל 'מִקְמוֹת מֵמְשַׁלְתּוֹ בָּרְכִי נַפְשִׁי אֶת ה'.

שלא כל הארץ כבודו – Hashem's glory fills the world. This is true even in a place of nisayon. Actually, Hashem's glory can be found even more in such a setting, because a person has the opportunity to illuminate the darkness and reveal Hashem's Presence. As the Baal Shem Tov taught, there is no existence at all other than Hashem – even in a place of darkness and evil. It is our task to demonstrate this by revealing that what seems bad is only a concealment of Hashem's omnipresent kingship – בְּכָל מְקמוֹת מֶמְשָׁלְתוֹ

When a person prevails over a *nisayon* by remembering that Hashem's glory fills the world, he has fulfilled אָמָשָׁית This is the *avodah* of a Yid – to light up the world with *kevod Shamayim*.

(ויגש תשפ"ג – ס"ג מאמר ב)

3

¹¹ Vol. 3, 73a

¹² Since the letter *hei* hints to *Olam Hazeh*; see Menachos 29b.

¹³ ברעה can mean 'revealed,' see Shemos 32:25.

⁻ the fifth, a reference to this world,¹² is revealed¹³ - since Hashem's permeation of the world can be seen. But וְאַרְבַּע הַיָּדֹת - the other four characteristics of Hashem are to Him alone, since they are concealed from us.

¹⁴ *Minchas Shai* writes that the first TT is written 'full,' with a vav, and the second is written without. This alludes that the earlier generations were full – proper and upright – and the latter generations are lacking.

¹⁵ Vayikra Rabbah 1:1

¹⁶ See Behar 5663

Guaranteed Marriage

כִּי עַבְדְּךָ עָרַב אֶת הַנַּעַר

For your servant guaranteed the youth. (Bereishis 44:32)

The Gemara (Kiddushin 6b) states that a woman can accept *kiddushin* in a manner similar to a guarantor (*arev*). Just as a guarantor can become responsible without receiving any benefit by the transaction, a woman can become married by instructing a man to pay a third party.

How, in fact, is this *kiddushin* effectuated? The Yerushalmi explains that when money is given to the party the woman specifies, one of two things is seen as happening: either that party accepts the money on behalf of the woman (so that she actually does receive the money) and then takes it back for himself; or the giver (the future husband) acquires the money on her behalf and then gives it to the party she requested.

However, the *mefarshim* explain our Gemara differently. R. Akiva Eiger¹⁷ cites the Rashba and Rambam who understand that when the recipient benefits from the money, the woman herself is seen as benefiting from it. R. Akiva Eiger takes another approach. The man's expending funds on the woman's instruction is considered a monetary endowment to her, as if he had given the money to her.

R. Akiva Eiger's approach, that the man's disbursal of money on her request is seen as if it were given to her, sounds similar to the Yerushalmi's understanding, that the woman did in fact receive the money. In truth, however, these approaches are not the same. According to the Yerushalmi, the woman actually received the money in question, which then left her ownership for the third party. According to R. Akiva Eiger, it is *as if* she received it; she gained *hana'ah* (benefit) from it as if it were given to her.¹⁸

This distinction has a halachic ramification. Many *Acharonim* write that one cannot perform *pidyon haben* by providing a *kohen* with *hana'ah* worth five *sela'im*; the payment must be with a moveable, valuable item, if not actual money. Following R. Akiva Eiger's approach, if a *kohen* would tell the father of a firstborn son, "Give five *sela'im* to so-and-so, by which your son will be redeemed," the *pidyon* would not be valid. The *kohen* did not receive the money; he only benefited from it. According to the Yerushalmi, however, the *pidyon* would be valid, since the money entered the *kohen*'s possession before going to the third party.

As above, in the case of *kiddushin* learned from *arvus* the Rashba explains that when the third party benefits from the money, the woman is seen as benefiting from it as well. The Rashba also writes that when the man gives the money to the recipient, he must tell the woman, "Accept *kiddushin* from me with this *hana'ah.*" R. Akiva Eiger asks: Why doesn't the Rashba explain the workings of the *kiddushin* as R. Akiva Eiger does, according to which the woman is seen as accepting the actual money? For if this is what the Gemara means, the man wouldn't need to reclassify the *kiddushin* as occurring with *hana'ah*, since it occurs with the money the woman is seen as receiving.

This question is difficult to understand. It is likely that even had the Rashba understood the Gemara like R. Akiva Eiger, still, he would have required the man to classify the *kiddushin* as occurring with *hana'ah*. As we have seen, even following R. Akiva Eiger's reasoning, the woman has not received the actual money, but it is *as if* she has, in that she gained full *hana'ah* from it.¹⁹

In a separate *teshuvah*,²⁰ R. Akiva Eiger quotes a question posed by his son, R. Shlomo Eiger. If a woman made a *neder* to prohibit herself from gaining any benefit from a specific loaf of bread, and then she told a man, "Give this loaf to soand-so, by which I will be married to you" – is the *kiddushin* valid? The *teshuvah* does not elucidate the reasons it would or would not be valid.

To start with, according to the Yerushalmi's understanding of *kiddushin* learned from *arvus*, the *kiddushin* would certainly not be valid. *Kiddushin* cannot be performed with *issurei hana'ah* (objects prohibited for benefit). According to the Yerushalmi, the woman actually receives the money (or object), and since she is prohibited from benefiting from it, she would not become married.

The question is relevant, however, according to R. Akiva Eiger's own understanding of *kiddushin* learned from *arvus*. After all, the woman is not receiving the actual loaf whose *hana'ah* is prohibited to her, so perhaps the *kiddushin* would be valid.

The question hinges on the following: In R. Akiva Eiger's approach, when the man follows the woman's directive and gives the loaf to the party she has named, does the woman benefit from the loaf itself, or only from the man's act of giving it? If her *hana'ah* is from the loaf, she would not be married, since it is *assur b'hana'ah* to her. If, however, she derives *hana'ah* only from the man's giving, the *kiddushin* would be valid.²¹ To me, this second line of reasoning seems more correct.

The Rambam²² rules that (as above) one cannot perform *kiddushin* with items of *issurei hana'ah*. This is true even if they are prohibited only to this woman. Ohr Same'ach asks: Granted, a woman cannot be married through the actual object of *issurei* hana'ah, but why isn't the fact that the man expended his resources on her request itself enough for *kiddushin*? At first glance, this would seem to depend on the above: does the *hana'ah* come from the actual object, or from the man's payout?

However, it is not so. Even if we suppose that in R. Shlomo Eiger's scenario the *kiddushin* is valid, that is because the woman specified that she would be married by such a *hana'ah* – not by the loaf itself. In *Ohr Same'ach's* case, however, the woman intends to be married by receiving the actual item of *issurei hana'ah*. She cannot be married by this item because it is prohibited to her, and she is also not married by the *hana'ah* of the man's outlay, since she did not have this *hana'ah* in mind.

(בנאות דשא – ויגש תשפ"ג)

17 She'elos U'Teshuvos, vol. 8, E.H. 67

- 20 Printed in She'elos U'Teshuvos R. Shlomo Eiger, vol. 2, Kesavim, 36
- 21 After all, the man is permitted to benefit from the loaf.
- 22 Hilchos Ishus 5:1

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¹⁸ This seems to be the proper understanding of R. Akiva Eiger's approach.

¹⁹ According to the Yerushalmi, however, the woman did receive the actual money, so the kiddushin would not be classified as being enacted by hana'ah.