

Emuna & Chizuk For Life

PARSHAS CHAYEI VAYISHLACH • 5782 • VOL. 2 NO. 6



A Fight to the Finish

By Yossi Katz

THE DRAMA HAS been simmering for a lifetime. Twin brothers who grew up in the same home to the same parents could not have been more different. One was destined to become the father of the Twelve Shevatim and the Jewish people, the other to be the patriarch of mighty nations like Rome. In our *parsha*, Yaakov, on the run for years, is finally forced face his brother, his own survival questionable. But before they meet, Yaakov faces a major struggle with a mysterious “man.” Our Sages reveal his identity as Esav’s guardian angel, the embodiment of his very spirit.

Although the angel tries to physically assault Yaakov, the essence of their fight and Yaakov’s struggle is really about the underlying spiritual warfare that will take place until the end of days. The Jewish people would rise to awesome heights and build the Beis Hamikdash in Yerushalayim, but this would seem like only a moment in time compared to the lengthy exile at the hand of the Romans.

Each of us faces daily troubles, hardships and struggles, causing us tremendous pain and suffering. The prophet says, “In all of your troubles, He suffers” (Yishayahu 63:9). We experience so much pain precisely because of the exile; our discomfort is a sign of Hashem’s exile from our nation. We share part of His pain and exile through these tribulations.

By fighting with the root of the Jewish people – Yaakov – the angel had the power to affect our future. Therefore, he prolonged the struggle throughout the long, dark night. He hoped to terrify Yaakov’s descendants by forcing them into a lengthy and dark spiritual exile. He thought that when they experienced Hashem’s great distance, they would submit themselves to sadness and depression. This state is the greatest threat to one’s spirituality, as it brings a person to lose himself and try to find fulfillment in ulterior

evil passions and lusts. Since a person can never truly be satisfied by these, a cycle is created in which he feels even more despondent and then sinks even lower in his quest for fulfillment.

This is the situation we find ourselves in today. Overwhelmed by our own personal struggles, we are then besieged by society’s ideas and false solutions, yet often we feel too weak and distressed to search for real answers. But Yaakov’s characteristic was truth. No matter how much darkness surrounded him, he was always able to struggle and continue on because his inner point of truth shone forth and declared, “I know that I am the chosen one of Hashem. I know that I have been given a heavenly soul. I know that the redemption will eventually come and, by standing strong, Hashem’s plan will be revealed to all and the truth will be known.”

This point of truth is also embodied in each one of us, the descendants of Yaakov. By remembering who we came from and how special we are, we can raise our spirits and perform every mitzvah with great joy. We can always remind ourselves, “I am the son or daughter of the King of all kings. How fortunate am I!”

Some of us may have been injured in this process. There is still hope. Yaakov’s sciatic nerve was damaged in his fight with the angel. This nerve travels all the way down into the feet and is symbolic of our times, the period before the arrival of the Mashiach called *ikvesa d’meshicha*, the “heel of the Mashiach.” Esav launches his last-ditch assault at the darkest time in order to thwart the arrival of the Mashiach. However, by bringing ourselves to great joy through our inner truth, we can leap to victory and will ultimately be healed.

Thus Yaakov was named Yisrael – the first three letters, *yud*, *sin*, *reish*, can be rearranged to spell *SHIR*, song. Through feeling great joy in our connection to Hashem, we can begin to sing and defeat Esav once and for all. Amen!

Based on Likutey Halachos, Birkas Hodaah 6



One Problem at a Time

By Shmaya Gestetner

EVERYONE EXPERIENCES DIFFICULTIES in life, and we all deal with them in our own ways. Some people overcome the obstacles they encounter with *emuna*, *bitachon*, and overall optimism, while others struggle to maintain a positive attitude.

The above may be true when it comes to specific, individual problems. But what happens when we're faced with a host of problems simultaneously? Many of us go through periods when we find ourselves struggling with issues such as work, children, marriage, and spiritual growth all at the same time. We might end up getting into an accident, losing our job, and giving in to anger, all in the same week. When things like this happen, even if we are normally strong in our *emuna*, it can feel like everything is stacked against us.

What practical advice can help us to deal with our problems without becoming completely overwhelmed and falling into despair?

Categorizing the Issues

There is a unique prohibition in the Torah called *klei beheima*, which forbids us to combine or cross different species of animals.

Reb Noson explains this mitzva as follows: Each individual animal represents a different bad quality, obstacle, or challenge in life. With enough wisdom and faith, a Jew can find Hashem in each of these situations and realize its original source in the goodness and oneness of the Creator. Rebbe Nachman teaches (*Likutey Moharan* 1:195) that Hashem places a little relief into every individual situation, as it says: "In my distress You have relieved me" (*Tehillim* 4:2).

However, when a person mixes two separate challenges together, this prevents him from being able to decipher the obstacles and find Hashem in them. Consequently, it becomes difficult for him to come to a healthy understanding of their true source.

Therefore, the most important way to approach a multitude of challenges is to categorize them and make sure to face them individually. When we are dealing with one problem, we need to completely remove the other problems from our minds lest they confuse or overwhelm us, causing us to feel helpless. By categorizing our issues very clearly, we can strengthen ourselves in one area at a time and find Hashem within each one.

The Lesson in the Parsha

When Yaakov Avinu sent different groups of animals to his brother Eisav, the *pasuk* says: "And place a space between each flock" (*Bereishis* 32:17).

Chazal teach us that the different species of animals Yaakov sent hinted at the different periods of oppression his children would face under various nations. Yaakov was conscious of these distinct challenges we would face in the future, and he therefore commanded his children to space out each flock. By isolating each individual flock—i.e., difficulty—Yaakov was teaching us the secret to dealing with our problems: making sure not to allow them to combine with each other and overwhelm us.

Let us have the strength to never lose hope when we encounter difficulties, to be able to face each of our troubles individually, and to find Hashem's salvation and relief within them.

Likutey Halachos, Klei Beheima 4

Dedicated i'ilui nishmas Yonina Hall and Yosef Moshe ben Yehuda Leib HaKohen

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