

SEDRAH SELECTIONS PARSHAS VA'YISHLACH 5775 BS"D

Ch. 32, v. 3: "Va'yishlach Yaakov malochim l'fonov el Eisov ochiv" – And Yaakov sent messengers ahead of him to Eisov his brother – When these messengers returned to Yaakov they said, "Bonu el ochicho el Eisov," reversing the mention of "brother" from after the mention of Eisov to before Eisov. Yaakov hoped that when they encounter Eisov they would find him acting as a brother. They unfortunately came back with the news that the brother was still very actively an Eisov, bent on harming Yaakov. (Holy Alshich)

Ch. 32, v. 3: "Va'yishlach Yaakov malochim l'fonov el Eisov ochiv" – And Yaakov sent messengers ahead of him to Eisov his brother – Our Rabbis have two opinions. One is that Yaakov sent actual angels and the other is that he sent human messengers. Both are true. To encounter Eisov face to face here on earth he sent humans and to counter the spiritual forces that represent Eisov above he sent actual angels. (Holy Shalo"h)

Ch. 32, v. 3: "Va'yishlach Yaakov malochim l'fonov el Eisov ochiv" – And Yaakov sent messengers ahead of him to Eisov his brother – Rashi cites the words of our Rabbis that Yaakov incited Eisov by sending him messengers. He should have just entered Eretz Yisroel quietly, not announcing to Eisov that he had returned, akin to the folk saying, "Do not grab the ears of a resting dog." Ramban writes that similarly, when the Chasmono'im made a covenant with the Romans it was instrumental in bringing the Romans to lord over Eretz Yisroel.

Ch. 32, v. 4: "Im Lovon garti vo'eichar ad otoh" – With Lovon I have sojourned and was delayed until now – Yaakov tells Eisov that he should not misinterpret his extreme delay in returning to Eretz Yisroel because he felt that it would take so many years until Eisov would cool off sufficiently. Rather, he had no choice but to stay there with Lovon. He was an indentured worker under contract. (Chizkuni)

Ch. 32, v. 13: "Va'yikach min habo l'yodo" – Yaakov sent from what came into his hand means that he was very reluctant to give Eisov anything that came to him as a result of his father Yitzchok's blessing, but he sent an offering to Eisov anyway because among his cattle there were some that were a result of his own work. (Kli Yokor)

Ch. 32, v. 13: "Minchoh l'Eisov ochiv" – An offering to his brother Eisov – The offering was for Hashem with the hope that Eisov would act as a brother. (Chozev of Lublin)

Ch. 32, v. 15: "G'malim mei'nikos uvneihem shloshim" – Nursing camels and their offspring thirty – Rabbeinu Bachyei says that the camels and their offspring combined totaled thirty, while the Ohr Hachaim Hakodosh, citing his grandfather says that it means thirty of each.

Ch. 32, v. 22: "Va'yikach es shtei noshov v'es shtei shifchosov v'es ached ossor y'lodov" – And he took his two wives and his two maidservants and his eleven sons – Yaakov put his wives and concubines out of harm's way ahead of protecting his children. This seems akin to Eisov's behavior when he protected his wives first, and he was soundly criticized for this. Why did Yaakov do what seems to be the same? Had Yaakov crossed the body of water with his sons first he would have left his wives and concubines alone with his servants, a very risky proposition. (Tosfos Brochah)

Ch. 32, v. 24: "Ad alose hashochar" – Until the morning star rose – The wrangling with the angel represents the bnei Yisroel's history of challenges from Eisov until the morning star heralds in the eternal light at the end of days. Just as the end of the night is darker than the earlier part, so too, before the end of days the challenges will be the greatest.

Ch. 32, v. 29: "Va'y'voreich oso shom" – And he blessed him there – What was the blessing? Medrash Avkir says "Y'hi rotzone she'yi'h'yu bo'necho tzadikim k'mos'cho." Medrash Agodoh says that he agreed that Yaakov rightfully received the blessings of his father Yitzchok.

Ch. 32, v. 31: "Va'yizrach lo hashemesh kaasher ovar es P'nu'el v'hu tzo'lei'a al y'reicho" – And the sun shone upon him when he passed P'nu'el and he was limping on his hip – He limped from the moment he was smitten on his hip. It was only noticeable to the onlooker when daylight came. (Chizkuni)

Because he was limping he only got as far as P'nu'el when the sun rose. (Rabbeinu Tam)  
The latter explanation fits better with the syntax, placing passing P'nu'el in the middle.

Ch. 33, v. 2: "V'es Rochel v'es Yosef acharonim" - Rashi comments that "acharon acharon choviv." The idea that "the best is saved for last" cannot be derived from here, since in this situation Yaakov wanted to distance his beloved Rochel as far as possible from Eisov. This has nothing to do with setting an order of speakers for example, and saying that the best is saved for last. However, there is a source for the best is saved for last from Shmos 12:35. There is a list of the objects that the bnei Yisroel took from the Egyptians: silver vessels, golden vessels, and garments. The Mechilta comments that this is listed in the order of "acharon acharon choshuv."

Ch. 34, v. 13: "Va'yaanu vnei Yaakov" - On 24:15 where Lovon answered ahead of B'suel, Rashi comments that Lovon was a rosho for doing this. Why then did the bnei Yaakov answer ahead of Yaakov?  
1) The Moshav Z'keinim answers that they feared that Yaakov might agree with Chamor's proposition, so they answered with their conditional offer.  
2) Possibly, it is only wrong to answer ahead of one's father. Here Yaakov did not respond at all.  
3) The Emes L'Yaakov, in a more detailed explanation of many difficult matters in this incident, says that Yaakov also wanted them to circumcise themselves, but since his midoh was "emes," he did not want to be the one to offer a false proposition, since he had no intention of allowing them to intermarry with his family. That is why he waited for his sons (34:5) and had them make the proposition.

Ch. 35, v. 14: "Bamokom asher di'beir ito" - Rashi says that he doesn't know what these words teach us. This is extremely difficult. If not for these words we would not know where Yaakov built his altar. The answer is that there is a printing mistake, and these words of Rashi belong in verse 13 on the exact same words, "bamokom asher di'beir ito." Here it says that Hashem ascended from Yaakov "at the place that He spoke with him." It is obvious that Hashem left from the place at which He was, in front of Yaakov. Here Rashi's difficulty is understood. Some Chumoshim have this printed properly, indicating that these words of Rashi are on verse 13.

Ch. 36, v. 3: "Bosmas" - Rashi says that this is Mochlas (28:9). The name "Mochlas" comes from the source word "m'chiloh" to indicate that Eisov was forgiven for his sins when he married. Is this a freebie? The Breishis Zuto, the Medrash Breishis Rabboh 67:13, and the Medrash Rabboh Shmuel ch.17 all say that Eisov was forgiven because at the time of his marriage to Mochlas the idea of repenting entered his mind. Possibly, Hashem is very magnanimous with forgiveness at the time one marries, to allow the person to truly be b'simchah. As happy as he feels, if his n'shomo is not happy because of sins, there is a lack of true happiness. This might be what is meant with the words "samei'ach t'samach rayim ho'ahuvim," that Hashem should give happiness to the chosson and kallah. His forgiveness is their true happiness, "k'sa'meichacho y'tzircho," just as you gladdened Odom and Chavoh, who were without sin at the time of their marriage.

#### OROH V'SIMCHOH - MESHECH CHOCHMOH ON PARSHAS VAYISHLACH

Ch. 34, v. 29: "V'es kol tapom v'es n'shei'hem shovu" - The Rambam hilchos m'lochim 9:14 tells us why the people of Sh'chem were deserving of the death penalty. He writes that included in the seven mitzvos incumbent upon bnei Noach is the mitzvoh to set up a court system and to properly administer the laws for those who have transgressed any of the seven Noachide laws. The punishment for transgressing any of the laws is the death penalty. Since Sh'chem held Dinoh against her will he was guilty of theft. The people of the community did not react by taking Sh'chem to a court and holding him accountable for this sin. They therefore also sinned and were deserving of death. The Ramban in his commentary on verse 13 disagrees with the Rambam and posits that although administering a court system is indeed one of the seven Noachide mitzvos, not fulfilling this particular mitzvoh does not carry the death penalty, in contradistinction to all the other Noachide mitzvos. He proves that the people of Sh'chem were idol worshippers and as such deserved the death penalty. In truth, other communities as well served idols and deserved the same. However, the bnei Yaakov did not have to carry this out at the risk of their own lives. When it came to the city of Sh'chem, where their sister was violated and the whole population seemed to go along with it, they were willing to act.

The MESHECH CHOCHMOH feels that our verse is a strong indication to the opinion of the Rambam. Our verse tells us that the women of this community were captured and not killed. According to the Rambam this is correct, since the gemara Sanhedrin 57b says that even though it is enough to have but one witness to judge a ben Noach guilty, but a woman's testimony is not accepted. Therefore the women were not guilty of not administering justice, since their testimony would not be accepted. However, according to the Ramban who posits that their sin was idol worship, why didn't Shimon and Levi also kill the women, as we find in Bmidbar 31:17 and Shoftim 21:11, and as is explained in the Rambam hilchos avodoh zoroh 4:6?

Perhaps the opinion of the Ramban can be answered as follows: The Moshav Z'keinim and Paa'nei'ach Rozo ask the opposite of the MESHECH CHOCHMOH's question. Why were the women and children not left alone? They answer that this was done as a strategy to safeguard the bnei Yaakov. After killing out the city of Sh'chem there was a very real fear of the neighbouring peoples attacking the bnei Yaakov, as was indeed very strongly voiced by Yaakov in verse 30. By capturing the women and children who were relatives of the people of the surrounding area they gained leverage to strike a peace deal with them, as otherwise, if the bnei Yaakov were to be attacked there was a fear in the minds of the attackers that their relatives would be killed. They bring a proof for this by pointing out that otherwise how would Yaakov dare send out Yoseif to Sh'chem (37:13), a place of mortal danger.

Thus the question of the MESHECH CHOCHMOH is answered. Although according to the Ramban the women also deserved to be killed, one is not required to carry this out at the risk of his life if instead he could capture them and strike a peace treaty, as mentioned in the Moshav Z'keinim and Paa'nei'ach Rozo. A slight indication for the insight of these two commentators might be found in the order of the verse, mentioning the children before the women. If the intention of taking them as spoils of a battle was for their intrinsic value, the women who were of greater value than children, as servants and for procreating a new generation of servants, should be mentioned first, in the order of the greater down to the lesser. If however, the intention was to take them hostage to work out a treaty, then mentioning the children first is logical, as there were probably more children than grown women.

#### CHAMISHOH MI YODEI'A – FIVE QUESTIONS ON THE WEEKLY SEDRAH – PARSHAS VA'YISHLACH 5775 – BS"D

1) Ch. 32, v. 4: "Artzoh Sei'ir" – To the land of Sei'ir – How is it that Yaakov sent a message to Eisov who was in Sei'ir? In 36:6-8 we see that Eisov still resided in Canaan, and only left to Sei'ir a while after Yaakov's return because of their each having large flocks and limited grazing locally?

2) Ch. 32, v. 7: "Bonu el ochicho el Eisov" – We have come to your brother Eisov – Why doesn't the verse say that they also did Yaakov's bidding, namely to relate Yaakov's message of verses 5 and 6?

3) Ch. 32, v. 33: "Gid hanosheh" – The dislocated organ – Does the prohibition to consume "gid hanosheh" apply to a human "gid" as well? Targum Yonoson ben Uziel says "divira v'cheivosa," of a domesticated or undomesticated animal, seemingly excluding that of a human.

4) Ch. 33, v. 10: "Ro'isi fo'necho kirose pnei Elokim vatirzeini" – I have seen your face as if viewing the face of Elokim and you have become appeased with me – After many years of separation it would seem only decent that Yaakov should make strong eye contact with his brother. However, our Rabbis tell us, "Ossur l'hista'keil bifnei rosho," it is prohibited to stare into the face of a wicked person (gemara Megiloh 28a). Although there is a prohibition against "l'hista'keil bifnei rosho," this only means to not STARE at his face, but a glancing look is permitted, which is what Yaakov did.

Yaakov therefore excused himself for this by comparing looking at Eisov with having a vision of Elokim. The great sanctity does not allow one to stare at such a vision as per the gemara Yerushalmi Megiloh chapter #4, that we may not look upon the hands of Kohanim when they pronounce their priestly benediction because there is some level of "Sh'chinoh" present. Why indeed did Yaakov even bother to look at Eisov at all?

5) Ch. 34, v. 27: "Asher timu achosom" – Which defiled their sister – Why are all the residents of the city held responsible for Dinoh's being violated?

---

---

ANSWERS:

#1

The Ramban answers that although Eisov moved to Sei'ir much earlier, he left his sons with the majority of his livestock in Canaan. It was only after Yaakov returned and settled into Canaan with his vast flocks that Eisov left. Rabbeinu Chaim Paltiel answers that Eisov himself still resided in Canaan, but his wives were from Sei'ir and resided there. Yaakov assumed that Eisov often went there.

#2

Yaakov sent his messengers to get an understanding of Eisov's attitude. He reasoned that if Eisov would be found in Sei'ir, the place of his residence (contrary to the opinions in the previous offering), then his ire was not aroused and Yaakov could feel secure. If however, they would find Eisov on the road to Canaan, and possibly with a sizeable army in tow, then it was obvious that Eisov was ready to do battle. It was only if they would find Eisov relaxed that they should relate the words of appeasement. If it seemed that he was coming for a confrontation it would be counter-productive to speak kindly to him, as this would indicate weakness on Yaakov's part. When they saw that Eisov was on his way to meet Yaakov, having left his residence to enter Canaan, and with 400 men in tow, they said nothing to Eisov, and quickly returned to report to Yaakov. (Abarbanel)

It does seem that a bribe/appeasement was in place as we find in verses 14-21.

#3

There is no additional prohibition on the "gid hanosheh" of a non-kosher animal. It would seem that the answer to our question is in direct correlation with whether human flesh is a Torah prohibition or not. The Mishneh L'melech hilchos maacholos asuros 8:1 cites the Rashb"a who posits that the "gid hanosheh" of a human carries this prohibition. The Shaar Ha'melech (ibid.) agrees, and bases this on the Rashb"a following through on his opinion that human flesh is permitted on a Torah level, as mentioned in the Magid Mishneh hilchos maacholos asuros 2:3. The Rambam, who posits that human flesh is prohibited for consumption on a Torah level (ibid.) in tandem posits that "gid hanosheh" does not apply to eating this part of a human. The Minchas Chinuch 2:3 expands on this.

#4

Rabbi Yonoson Eibeschitz in Yaaros Dvash 1:7 writes that even an evil person sometimes has "sparks of sanctity" in him. They are trapped in a sinner's body. When a very holy person looks at his face he draws out these "sparks" and sets them free. At times this can even bring about the demise of the evil person, as there is absolutely no sanctity left in him. Such a story is related in the gemara Shabbos 34a. Since Eisov had some sanctity in him, as evidenced by his illustrious descendants Shmaya, Avtalion, and Rabbi Meir, Yaakov wanted to draw these souls under his influence to a greater degree.

#5

This is because they were all witness to Sh'chem's forcibly taking her into his home. (Rada"k) We now understand why the bnei Yaakov took spoils. Since all the residents were held responsible for Sh'chem's act, it is proper to take compensation for Dinoh's embarrassment. Even though the property of a whole city seems to be an extravagant payment, embarrassment payment is judged by the level of shame. A greater person, especially a member of a regal household, suffers greater shame. (Ohr Hachaim Hakodosh)

FEEL FREE TO COPY AND/OR TO DISTRIBUTE. TO SUBSCRIBE FOR WEEKLY EMAIL PLEASE SEND ONE WORD REQUEST – SUBSCRIBE – TO [sholom613@rogers.com](mailto:sholom613@rogers.com)