

בעזהשׁי״ת

Parshah Insights

Pertinent Inspirational
Insights on the Parshah

פרשת ויצא

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.



פרשת ויצא

לא עָלֶיךָ הַמְּלָאכָה לְגֹמֵר

וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיְלֵן שָׁם כִּי בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְגו'

And he arrived at the place and lodged there because the sun had set.

One Small Step from Man

This week's parshah begins with Yaakov Avinu heeding his parents' directive and leaving his hometown of Be'er Sheva en-route to the home of Lavan. The Torah proceeds to tell us that on his way there, at the המוֹרֵיָה, the sun set early, thus forcing Yaakov to remain in that place overnight.

The Gemarah teaches that, whilst travelling, Yaakov first passed by Har Hamoria but did not stop to daven there. Only once he reached Charan Yaakov thought to himself, 'is it possible that I passed by the place where my fathers have davened and I did not stop to daven there?' Upon comprehending what had transpired he immediately decided to head back there. Noting Yaakov's reaction, Hashem performed a special miracle for him, saving him the journey and bringing the המוֹרֵיָה to where he was (חולין דף צא.).

Upon arrival, Yaakov established and davened the tefilla of Maariv. Thereafter, Hashem said צַדִּיק זֶה בָּא לְבֵית מְלוֹנִי וַיִּפְטֹר בְּלֹא לִינָה? This Tzaddik came to my abode, and I should let him leave without sleeping there? Hence, Hashem made the sun go down before its time so that Yaakov should be forced to sleep there, an elevated sleep,

where he merited lofty revelations and received prophecy from Hashem with blessing for him and his future generations.

Rav Dessler zt"l identifies a very important lesson from this episode of kefitzas haderech. Often, one may be inspired to reach out to Hashem, but seeing how far he is from reaching his goal, gets discouraged at the same time. However, one should know that once he shows his sincere desire to draw close to Hashem, he could experience his personal *קפיצת הדרך*. Hashem will extend His hand and bring the person's destination closer, enabling him to reach his goal easier than he thought it to be. As we see by Yaakov Avinu who merited this form of Divine assistance for simply intending to go back. All these miracles and revelations were brought about through Yaakov's initial intentions. (מכתב מאליהו מאמרי התשובה עמוד תנ"ה)

Chazal mention this concept in numerous places. To cite one of many, the Mishna says *לֹא עָלֶיךָ הַמְּלָאכָה לְגַמֹּר* - [Rabbi Tarfon said] it is not up to you to finish the work, [however], *וְלֹא אַתָּה בֶּן חַרְיִן לְהַבְטִיל* (אבות פרק - you are not 'a free man' to exempt yourself from it *מִמְּנֶה* - *ב' משנה ט"ז*). The Mishnah is referring here to Man's obligation in This World, of performing as many Mitzvos as possible. True, the sheer magnitude of a person's obligations could seem overwhelming at times. Therefore, the Tana says, it is not up to you to 'finish the job'. You only have to do your part, as much as is within your reach. However, along this statement the Mishna also cautions us not to take this as an excuse to be lax in our work. We have to do our part and Hashem will do the rest.

Hashem's Assistance in Reaching our Goals

The Sefas Emes elaborates on the same idea in next week's parsha, Parshas Vayishlach. He incorporates it in the pesukim which relay an anecdote that occurred later on in Yaakov Avinu's life - Yaakov's meeting with his brother after twenty-two years of separation. A significant detail recounted is the many gifts Yaakov sent through his

slaves to appease Eisav. Yaakov Avinu instructed his messengers that if, upon meeting them, Eisav inquires לְמִי אַתָּה וְאַנְהָ תֵּלֵךְ וּלְמִי אֵלֶּה לְפָנַי, whose are you, where are you going, and whose are these that are before you? They should answer לְעַבְדְּךָ לְיַעֲקֹב מִנְחָה הִיא שְׁלוּחָה לְאֹדְנִי [we are] your servant Yaakov's [slaves], it is a tribute sent to my lord Eisav, and behold he [Yaakov] himself is behind us (בראשית ל"ב, י"ט).

The שפת אמת quotes his grandfather, the חידושי הרי"ם, who explains these three questions based on a Mishna in Pirkei Avos (פרק ג' משנה א'). This mishna famously states that to keep oneself from sinning, one should bear in mind וּלְאֵן אַתָּה, מֵאֵן בָּאתָ, where does Man come from? הוֹלֵךְ, where will one end up? In the grave. וְלִפְנֵי מִי אַתָּה עֹתִיד לִתֵּן דֵּין, and before Who will he have to account for his time Down Here?

Accordingly, says the Chidushei Hari"m, the Yetzer Hara also makes a person ponder these three questions, with a different purpose, to dissuade him from progressing in his Avodas Hashem; he mocks one's spiritual levels saying they are nothing compared to that of the previous generations etc.

To this one must proudly answer that he will continue advancing in his avodas Hashem, because לְעַבְדְּךָ לְיַעֲקֹב, we come from greatness, we are part of Klal Yisrael who are the beloved people of Hashem. As the pasuk says כִּי נָעַר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאוֹהֲבָהוּ [Hashem says] when Klal Yisreal was young [at the time of Yetzias Mitzrayim, when we became His people] I loved him (הושע י"א א').

The Meagre Mincha offering

The חידושי הרי"ם also elaborates on the statement מִנְחָה הִיא שְׁלוּחָה, it is an offering sent [to Eisav], as follows: Chazal note that by the mitzva of a מִנְחָה, קֶרֶבֶן מִנְחָה, which comprises of a little flour, the Torah uses the term נַפֶּשׁ - a soul - rather than אָדָם or אִישׁ which are more commonly used in the Torah to refer to an individual. This reference

teaches us that a Korban Mincha is especially beloved by Hashem since it is typically the offering of a poor person who has little else. Despite this appearing to be a very poor-quality offering, for this individual it is a large sacrifice, which thus gets considered On High as if the person had actually sacrificed his soul for the sake of Heaven.

Similarly, the Torah uses the term מנחה here to teach us that one should be confident in the knowledge that every little 'sacrifice' in his Avodas Hashem has tremendous value in Shomayim.

One should also be aware that the Yetzer Hara sets obstacles which are difficult to overcome. Thus, although he may not reach far, every bit of effort he invests is greatly valued by Hashem. All the more so, because of these barriers, every effort is so significant. This is hinted in the words לְאֵדוּנִי לְעֵשׂוֹ, which is also a reference to the Yetzer Hora. Precisely because we have such a powerful evil inclination every bit of over coming it is extremely cherished on High.

The Sefas Emess adds to this idea, explaining the end of the pasuk cited above - וְהָיָה גַם הוּא אַחֲרֵינוּ - and behold he [Yaakov] himself is behind us. He uses it in reference to Hashem in this case. Namely, not only is our every effort greatly valued in Heaven, but even Hashem Himself is 'behind us'. This means, that when one does his bit to reach out to Him, he will merit Divine assistance and backing, which enables him to reach ever higher in his quest towards Him (שפת אמת וישלח תרל"ה ד"ה אא"ז מו"ד).

These words once again emphasize the idea above, that in order to merit Siyata d'Shmaya one must first exert himself a little bit. However, once we take the first step in reaching out to Hashem, He will respond in kind, paving the way for us.

Stretching his Hand

Chazal recount a story which illustrates this idea beautifully. The great Tana, Rabbi Chaninah ben Dosah, once saw his villagers offering up נְדָרִים וְנִדְבּוֹת (both, pledged offerings and offerings of free will).

Witnessing this, he wished to emulate them. He went to the outskirts of the city and located a certain stone. He then chiselled it and smoothed its surface until it was fit to be used for the maintenance of the Beis Hamikdash . He intended to take it up to Yerushalayim and donate it to the Beis Hamikdash. Due to its heavy weight, though, he was unable to transport it himself, so he requested local porters to carry it for him. Understandably, they demanded payment for this work, however he could not afford it. Rabbi Chaninah was now faced with this dilemma again.

Seeing his distress, Hashem sent angels who appeared as people, to help him out. When he saw them, he asked them if they would take it for him. They agreed to do it for a small fee but stipulated that he must assist them. He readily complied and gave his hand to help, when, wonder of wonders, he suddenly found himself in Yerushalayim. He looked around, wanting to thank the people who so graciously assisted him, but they were nowhere to be found (מדרש א' א) (קהלת רבה א' א).

This story reinforces the notion that if one is sincere in his desire to draw close to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, he will merit special assistance from Above to reach his goal, provided that the person himself does his bit and starts the process himself.

Starting the Mitzvah

In fact, it is not only the act of doing something through which one could merit Divine assistance, but even the intention of doing a Mitzvah could bring spiritual protection upon a person. Rav Chaim Volozhiner zt"l writes: הַנִּהּ יָדוּעַ כִּי בְּעֵת יַעֲלֶה עַל רַעֲיוֹנָי אִישׁ לַעֲשׂוֹת מִצְוָה: וְהוּא לֹא נִעְשָׂה רְשׁוּמוֹ לְמַעַלָּה וּמִתְעוֹרָר עָלָיו אֹר מִקִּיף מִהַקְדָּשָׁה וְסוֹכֵף בְּאַבְרָתוֹ... והוא לו לַעֲזֹר וּלְסַעֵד לְגִמְרוֹ כִּי הוּא יוֹשֵׁב כְּמוֹ בְּגִן עֵדֶן מִמָּשׁ בְּמָקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ Behold it is known that when [one has] the desire to perform a Mitzvah, [it] leaves an impression On High, and the person wishing to do the Mitzvah is enveloped in a great spiritual light that shelters over him which, in turn, assists the person to actually perform the Mitzvah... for, [by

Nevertheless, Dovid bought the plot of land where the Beis Hamikdash was to be built (see דברי הימים א', כ"א, כ"ב). Additionally, he informed his son Shlomo Hamelech that he had gathered the materials needed for building; וְהִנֵּה בְעֵינַי הִכְיִנּוֹתִי לְבַיִת ה' זָהָב כְּפָרִים מֵאָה; אֶלֶף וּכְסָף אֶלֶף אֶלְפִים כְּפָרִים וְלִנְחָשׁוֹת וְלִבְרֻזָּל אֵין מִשְׁקָל כִּי לְרֹב הָיָה וְעֵצִים וְאֲבָנִים אֶלֶף וּכְסָף אֶלֶף אֶלְפִים כְּפָרִים וְלִנְחָשׁוֹת וְלִבְרֻזָּל אֵין מִשְׁקָל כִּי לְרֹב הָיָה וְעֵצִים וְאֲבָנִים, I have prepared for the Temple of Hashem a hundred thousand talents of gold, a million talents of silver, and an amount of copper and iron which is not weighed because of its abundance, and I have prepared timber and stones (דברי הימים א, כ"ב, י"ח).

Though Dovid knew that he would not build the Beis Hamikdash, nor would it be built in his lifetime, he still invested as much effort and resources he was able to, in preparation for it.

In fact, he was so dedicated to this lofty task, that the Beis Hamikdash is called in his name. Chazal comment on an apparent contradiction between two passukim. One passuk says שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת - a song at the steps, of Shlomo Hamelech. If Hashem will not build a house [the Beis Hamikdash] its builders have toiled in vain (תהלים קכ"ט א'-ב'). It seems from here that Shlom Hamelech built the Beis Hamikdash. The second passuk says מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת לְדָוִד - a song of praise in honour of the inauguration of the House [the Beis Hamikdash], composed by Dovid Hamelech (תהלים ל' א'). This, on the other hand, seems to imply that Dovid built it, which was not actually the case.

Chazal explain, it was indeed Shlomo Hamelech who actually built and inaugurated the Beis Hamikdash, as is indicated by the fact that the passuk uses his name in this regard. Nevertheless, since Dovid Hamelech invested such great effort in founding it, the passuk uses his name in relation to its actual dedication (פסיקתא זוטרתא לקח טוב, שיר השירים א).

Similarly, there were forty-eight ערי מקלט in Eretz Yisrael. Six of these were aligned - there were three in עֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן which were directly

opposite Eretz Yisrael. The three in הַיַּרְדֵּן only operated once the three in Eretz Yisrael were designated. As such, one might have thought that there would be no point in preparing the three in הַיַּרְדֵּן before the three in Eretz Yisrael were standing. Yet, Chazal tell us, Moshe Rabeinu devoted much time during his final months preparing the Arei Miklat in הַיַּרְדֵּן, although they would only be effective after the Yidden enter Eretz Yisrael, after Moshe's passing. Thus, all his hard work may seem in vain. Still, Moshe Rabeinu saw it necessary to set them up since מִצְוָה שֶׁבָּא לְיָדֵי אַקְיָמָנָה 'let me' do my part in this Mitzvah, although it may not seem 'sufficient' (מכוח דף י.).

Based on this idea, the כלל יקר explains the flow of the passukim quoted above: וְשִׁמְרַתְּ אֶת חֻקֵּי וְאֶת מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֶנְכִּי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם, meaning that if one has the opportunity to perform a Mitzvah, he shall do so immediately, even though it will only be completed at a later point in time and thus he will not see it through to the end. More so, even if the Mitzvah will only be completed after one's lifetime, he should still do all he can now.

The passuk then continues אַז יבְדִּיל מֹשֶׁה שְׁלֹשׁ עָרִים בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן. After imparting this message to כלל ישראל, Moshe Rabeinu immediately implemented this idea by designating three sites which will eventually serve as Arei Miklat. Because, despite knowing full well that these עָרֵי מְקַלָּט would be ineffective on their own until the other three in Eretz Yisrael were set up, Moshe Rabeinu wished to do his part in building them, thus setting a real-life example of the idea he had just preached to the Yidden (כלל יקר דברים ד' מ"א).

This instills another aspect in the importance of one doing his part in reaching out to Hashem. Namely, while the desired outcome seems distant, so much so that one might not even live to see it, one must still do his bit in taking the first step necessary to attaining the aim, even if it seems futile in the meantime.

Taking the First Step

The following fascinating story, which was recently told, vividly underscores this idea. There was a Yid, let's call him Reb Dovid, who would often travel abroad for business. He had a relative in a certain town whom he would visit every time he happened to be in that area. Although this relative was unfortunately not frum, he would cover his head with a Kappel in Reb Dovid's honour every time he came. Of course, from the way it sat on his relative's head, Reb Dovid was able to tell that he didn't wear a Kappel consistently. Once, though, he noticed that the Kappel seemed quite in place on his relative. Intrigued, he gently inquired what had brought about this transformation.

In response, the relative recounted the following: "A few months ago, I was sitting out on the porch with my wife late afternoon, when suddenly we noticed throngs of people walking down the street. At first, we were mesmerised by this. Then, it dawned in me that it was Rosh Hashanah, and these people were on their way to Tashlich. On a whim, I decided to join them. Whilst I was there, a fellow came over to me, introduced himself as Ahron Katz and asked if I had heard Shofar yet, to which I obviously replied in the negative. Then and there, he blew the Shofar for me, and then offered that if I ever feel the need, I could reach out to him.

Upon returning home, I related to my wife what had transpired. While we found this incident quite bizarre, my wife was particularly moved by the fact that this person was called Ahron Katz since, remarkably, she had a grandfather by exactly that name who served as the בעל תוקע in his shul.

We agreed that this must be a sign from Above, calling for us to return. The message penetrated and we immediately devoted ourselves fully. After a few weeks, I started wearing a Kappel regularly, and we are currently in the process of becoming fully observant."

Reb Dovid was moved by this story, though there was something that still bothered him. So the next time he was in Eretz Yisrael, he went in to Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l and presented his question. If Hashem had wanted this relative to come back to his roots, why didn't he send this shaliach, Ahron Katz, earlier?

Rav Chaim answered that while Hashem surely had wanted the relative to return, he needed the relative to take his first step. Only once the relative had shown his interest, through joining the people in reciting Tashlich, did He send Ahron Katz to blow Shofar for him, thus igniting the spark that ultimately brought him and his wife onto the right path.

Let us glean inspiration from our father Yaakov and do our bit to reach our goal. In doing so we will be accomplishing, if only in a very small way, the words of Chazal חִיב אָדָם לִזְמַר מְתֵי יְגִיעוֹ מַעֲשֵׂי לְמַעֲשֵׂי חִיב אָדָם לִזְמַר מְתֵי יְגִיעוֹ מַעֲשֵׂי לְמַעֲשֵׂי (תנא דבי ר' יוחנן) - one must say 'when will my deeds reach the deeds of my forefathers Avraham, Yithchak and Yaakov?' (תנא דבי ר' יוחנן) (תנא דבי ר' יוחנן). Through trying our utmost to perform the mitzvah - without worrying about the final outcome - we will bez"h merit much success in fulfilling our mission Down Here, with special, loving assistance and support from our Father in Heaven.

גוט שבת

