Parashas Vayishlach
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The Sweetness of Shabbos

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◆ From the Talks of Our Teacher, the Gaon and Tzaddik shlit"a ◆

The Sweetness of the Man Who Became an Angel

"Vayishlach Yaakov malachim lefanav." Rashi says: "malachim mamash" (actual angels); and according to the plain meaning of the verse, Yaakov sent human messengers, and as the Targum says "izgadin," whose meaning is messengers. And when Yaakov was on the way to Charan, he saw in his dream "v'hinei malachei Elokim olim v'yordim bo." And as is known, tzaddikim become angels after their passing, as brought in the Midrash that Chanoch became the angel Mitatron; and every Jew who does the will of Hashem — and even children who listen in the home to words of faith and say "Shema Yisrael" every day — merits to become small angels, and each one, according to his level, becomes a greater angel. And the angels who ascend the ladder hint to tzaddikim who, after they descended to the world and overcame their yetzer and withstood trials, resemble, after their passing, the angels, who have only ascents without descents.

And the fact that the angels in Yaakov's dream were ascending and descending hints to the rains, which are also called angels, as it is written: "oseh malachav ruchos," for Hakadosh Baruch Hu evaporates the waters of the salty sea, and they "ascend" to the heavens, and afterwards they "descend" to the world when they are sweet, to give us life. And this is hinted in "malachei Elokim olim v'yordim bo" — that, so to speak, the angels as well ascended to the heavens when they were broken, and descended when they were repaired and whole.

Angels of Torah

And in every person there is, within his body, the great workings that resemble the waters of the rains: the waters of the eyes are salty; the waters of the ears are fatty; the waters of the nose are foul; the waters of the mouth are sweet (Tanchuma, Chukas 9) — and Hakadosh Baruch Hu heals and creates all these wondrous waters. And so too at the Giving of the Torah, the matter of "olim v'yordim bo" was fulfilled, like the matter that is fulfilled with the rains: for the Torah was given to Moshe Rabbeinu the first time, and then the Tablets were broken, and afterwards Moshe Rabbeinu ascended to the heavens and descended again with the sweet Tablets, which remained forever.

And so too it was made in the creation of man: a person eats, and the food ascends to his brain and descends to his entire body, and from him are created sweet children, full of good content.

The Advice for a Weak Son

And Hakadosh Baruch Hu fulfilled with Yaakov "ki va hashemesh," for Hakadosh Baruch Hu, so to speak, "extinguished" the light so that Yaakov would sleep there and dream this dream, in which Hakadosh Baruch Hu hinted to Yaakov Avinu regarding his descendants that every person also has deficiencies, and there is no reason to despair of this; rather, one raises the child upward, and he is in the category of "olim" — and then afterward all the deficiencies are completed and repaired in him, "v'yordim bo": that he descends with a new spirit, pure and wondrous.

And when a person opens for Hakadosh Baruch Hu an opening like the eye of a needle, in that he strives to ascend upward, Hakadosh Baruch Hu opens for him an opening like the opening of a hall, so that he merits a new spirit and good from Heaven, and merits great closeness to G-d.

The Sweetness of Miracles

Letters to the Editor

The Saving of Lives

To the honorable editorial board of the important leaflet "The Sweetness of Shabbos": in light of the story you published last week, I want to send my story and the story of my friend.

My name is Yosef; I am a young man of thirteen and a half. About a month ago, my parents planned a trip for us from Wednesday until Motzaei Shabbos. On the day of the trip, they asked me to travel by bus to Shechunas Ramot in order to bring from there several items needed for the trip.

I boarded the bus, and when I needed to get off, I was unsure whether I needed to get off here or at the next stop; and when I realized that this was indeed the stop where I had to get off, the doors had already begun to close, and then I did something unwise — I jumped off the bus step toward the sidewalk.

At that very moment, the driver apparently opened the doors again, but I slipped and fell in such a way that my head hit the sidewalk and my legs remained inside the bus. Of course, I was in a terrible state of danger: if the driver had closed the doors on my legs, then — Heaven forbid, Heaven forbid — the bus would have dragged me, and the end is bitter and clear.

I was in great pain in my head, so much so that I still did not understand that I needed to quickly pull my legs out of the bus; but without paying attention, I removed my legs before the bus closed the doors, and the bus drove off; and in addition, in Hashem's mercy, the wheels of the bus did not go over my legs. In those days I had severe pains from the blow to my head, and today, baruch Hashem, I have recovered.

» The story continues on page 4

Tribes of Angels

And regarding the children of Yaakov Avinu, the holy Shevatim themselves — Hakadosh Baruch Hu hinted that they would ascend and descend and be likened to the malachei Elokim, for tzaddikim are greater in their level than the angels (Sanhedrin 93a). And Yaakov Avinu himself was tested with difficult trials through which he was elevated above all the angels, to the point that the officer of Esav called him "Yisrael," because "ki sarisa im Elokim v'im anashim."

For Yaakov withstood very difficult trials, in that Leah was put in place of Rachel, and he was careful about her honor and did not become angry at her over this; and afterward he married Rachel too. And it is written (Pesachim 119b) that in the future, when Yaakov comes, he will decline to recite the blessing over the cup of blessing at the feast of the Shor HaBar and the Livyasan, because he married two sisters in their lifetime, which the Torah was destined to forbid; and there are those who explain that despite all this he married two sisters because before the Giving of the Torah, not marrying two sisters was only a protective practice (geder) of the generation, and Yaakov did not want to be stringent at the expense of Rachel, to whom he had promised that he would marry her. And since both of them were his wives, he showed great honor to both of them.

Hidden Services

And so too Leah and Rachel themselves possessed very great good traits, and it is explained in the Zohar HaKadosh (vol. 2, 29b) that Leah is called 'alma d'iskasya' (the hidden world) and Rachel is called 'alma d'isgalya' (the revealed world). And the explanation of this is that the virtues of Leah were hidden from people's eyes, such as that she had a great virtue in that she had trials of the terrible humiliations that she had when it became clear that she had been brought in through deceit with Yaakov, and she overcame these humiliations with fear of Hashem and great submission. Whereas with Rachel, her service of Hashem was in the open, in that she relinquished to her sister and gave her the signs [and to be put to shame in the wedding hall].

And these holy sisters, who conducted themselves with such good traits, merited and raised children all of whom were mighty servants of Hashem, and they called each one by names reflecting their service of Hashem: such as Reuven, on account of the good traits of Reuven, who was distinguished from Esav (see Berachos 7b); and Shimon, on account that Hashem hears prayers; Levi, on account of the desire to accompany Yaakov the tzaddik; Yehudah, on account of the thanks to Hashem, etc.

The Advice for Times of Crisis

And the angels who were ascending and descending the ladder hint to the descents and the ascents of a person, and in it is hinted to us that when a person descends, he needs to see the tzaddikim — that is, to seek from the tzaddikim the knowledge of Hashem, so that they will teach him the path on which he should walk; just as, so to speak, the angels who descended the ladder found below that Yaakov was asleep, so a person needs to know that what he sees in the tzaddikim is still only in the category of sleep. That is to say, that the tzaddikim in his eyes are like sleepers, in that he does not discover and does not truly recognize their level, for their virtues are hidden from people's eyes, like Leah, whose virtues were hidden from the eyes of the creatures.

The Sweetness of the Completeness of Yaakov Avinu

Behold, each one of the Avos publicized Hashem in his own way, as explained in the Gemara (Pesachim 88a) and in the Midrash (Pesikta Rabbasi 39) with a difference of wording: that Avraham Avinu called the place of the Mikdash "mountain," as it is said: "b'har Hashem yera'eh." Yitzchak called it "field," as it is written: "re'eh rei'ach beni k're'ach sadeh." Yaakov called it "house," as it is written: "ein zeh ki im beis Elokim."

Avraham Avinu served Hashem in a manner of self-sacrifice, like the difficulty of climbing a mountain, in that he exerted himself greatly to conquer his compassion in order to do the will of Hashem in completeness, at the time that he brought up Yitzchak on Har HaMoriah; and he publicized Hashem for the kindness of giving him a child, to the point that he was prepared to give his son over for the honor of Hashem. And in this is included also the appreciation for the eishes chayil whom he received, for through this, in that he gives over his son, he also gives over his wife for the honor of Hashem, for the son is the fruit that was given to him through his wife; and in actuality, through the Akeidah he gave over his wife for the honor of Hashem, for Sarah passed away as a result of hearing about the Akeidah.

Sums to Lose for the Honor of Hashem

And with this, Avraham Avinu made the Beis HaMikdash the first time, with the service that he served Hashem on Har HaMoriah; and with this it is called "har" (mountain) of the Beis HaMikdash — that is, that he raised up the Name of Hashem like a high mountain. And Avraham Avinu was the first who called Hakadosh Baruch Hu "Adon" (Master), for he taught the sons of men to crown Hashem over them, and to be toward Hashem like a servant who is prepared to lose for the sake of his master; so too they should be prepared to lose much money in order to serve Hashem, just as he was prepared to lose his son and his wife for the honor of Hashem.

Yitzchak served Hashem in the field, as it is said: "Vayeitzei Yitzchak lasuach basadeh," and so too he engaged in the matters of the field and sowed in the field, and Hashem blessed him so that he found a hundredfold; and he also dug wells of water, and everything he did in order to bring merit to the many — to give them to eat and to drink, and to teach them to give thanks to Hashem, like the mitzvah of bikkurim, whose matter is to give thanks to Hashem for the fruits that Hashem gave us.

The Grandson Who Saved His Grandfather

In our parshiyos it is related that Yaakov Avinu served Hashem mainly within the home, and in essence the shidduch of Yaakov Avinu went with very great changes — how Lavan misled him and gave him Leah in place of Rachel. And Yaakov withstood this trial and all the great trials that he had within his home, and this is the greatest level, more than the levels of mountain and field; that is, Avraham and Yitzchak left a place for Yaakov to be strengthened in it and to merit the great level — to serve Hashem in the utmost level — through Hakadosh Baruch Hu causing him to be compelled to marry two sisters. And through this he was tested with very difficult trials: to honor each one of them without weakening the mind of either one; and he stood through this in the utmost completeness, and in his way he also educated his children to honor one another. And indeed Reuven honored Yehudah and Yosef, even though he was the firstborn and the eldest.

Therefore it is brought in the Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 63:2) on the verse (Yeshayah 29) "Yaakov asher padah es Avraham,"

that Yaakov Avinu redeemed Avraham from the fiery furnace — that is to say, that on account of Yaakov Avinu, Avraham Avinu was saved from the fiery furnace. And it is explained that the merit of Yaakov Avinu was that he withstood all the trials of honoring his two wives properly, and this merit is what stood for Avraham Avinu to be saved from the fiery furnace, so that Yaakov Avinu would come forth from him. And in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 19b) they said on this verse that Yaakov Avinu redeemed Avraham from the toil of raising the twelve Shevatim; and it is explained that the toil is that Yaakov educated the twelve Shevatim to honor one another just as he honored his wives — for this service his forefathers left to Yaakov as a merit in which to distinguish himself.

The Sweetness of the Revealed and the Hidden

"Vatamas Rachel vatikaver b'derech Efrasah hi Beis Lachem." It is brought in the Zohar HaKadosh (vol. 2, 29b): Rachel and Leah are two worlds — Rachel is 'alma d'isgalya' (the revealed world) and Leah is 'alma d'iskasya' (the hidden world); therefore Leah was buried in the Me'aras HaMachpelah, which is a covered place, and Rachel was buried at the crossroads, which is a place revealed to every eye. Until here [the words of the Zohar].

And it is explained that the virtue of Rachel was in a manner that is revealed to the eye; and just as the Torah emphasizes that Rachel was "yefas to'ar v'yefas mar'eh" — that is, that she was beautiful in her inner self and in her outer self, in that she possessed very good traits — just as we see that she did the deeds of Rivkah, in that she came to the well and she possessed good traits like Rivkah. And Yaakov Avinu saw the revealed, that Rachel possessed good traits, and therefore he wanted to marry her.

A Hidden Sweetness

But the virtue of Leah was covered and hidden, for at that time she did not possess traits like Rachel; and it is written: "v'einei Leah rakos," for she was praying about her future, that she would merit virtues like those of Rachel, so that through this she would be fit to marry Yaakov; and Hakadosh Baruch Hu heard her prayer and brought it about that Yaakov would marry her. For only Hakadosh Baruch Hu, the Knower of hidden things, knew that hidden within Leah was a greater future than that of Rachel, and that hidden within her were very great virtues.

And the great future of Leah is her children: Reuven was great in level, in that he had the humility to give up the birthright to two of his brothers — to Yosef, who would be king over the whole world, and to Yehudah, who would reign over the brothers. Shimon brought trials upon the family in the quarrel with Shechem, and in that he advised to kill Yosef the tzaddik; and these trials weakened them and brought them great completeness. Levi at first was attached to Shimon in the counsel against Yosef, and afterward he separated from him, and from him came forth Leviim and Kohanim, Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon HaKohen. From Yehudah came forth the kingdom of the House of David, and from him will arise our righteous Moshiach. Yissachar sits in the tent of Torah, and Zevulun engages in commerce with faithfulness, and through him Yissachar can engage in Torah.

From Where Will You Receive the Great Nachas?

It turns out that Yaakov Avinu saw what was good for him for that time; but Hakadosh Baruch Hu looked from afar at what is good for the future of the people of Yisrael. And as the Midrash says regarding the sale of Yosef: "You are busy with the sale of Yosef, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu is busy establishing great children." So Yaakov Avinu saw that Rachel was preferable for him, for she was more complete for the moment, and therefore he was busy guarding his faithfulness to her; and indeed, so he needed to do, for "a judge has only what his eyes see." But Hakadosh Baruch Hu says to Yaakov: you are busy guarding your faithfulness to Rachel, and I am busy doing good for you with the greatest benefit — to give you Leah, from whom you will succeed most of all.

And the episode of Yaakov with Leah and Rachel teaches us that precisely the virtues that are hidden from a person's eye are the most beneficial for him, and that which appears to a person as a lack of success — from this can come forth for him the greatest successes in his life, just as precisely Leah raised for Yaakov the most elevated Shevatim.

The Sweetness of Self-Nullification to the Will of Hashem

Since Yaakov Avinu saw that Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants him to marry Leah, he worked on his traits to love Leah and overcame his nature, and was faithful to her; and from her he raised six great and important Shevatim, and lived mainly with Leah, for she continued to be with him even after the passing of Rachel.

And Yaakov Avinu was compelled to marry Rachel as well, because at the time of the promise to marry the woman, the matter was equivalent to complete kiddushin; and since Yaakov promised Rachel to marry her, he was compelled to marry her, and about this the prophet says: "Vaya'avod Yisrael b'ishah uv'ishah shamar." And it is explained that Yisrael — that is, Yaakov Avinu — served the service of Hashem with a woman, that is, with Leah, whose merit brought the Shevatim, the greatest servants of Hashem; "uv'ishah shamar" — that is, that he kept faith to Rachel to marry her too, since he had promised her.

To Love What Hashem Loves

And when Yaakov married Rachel, it is written: "Vaye'ehav gam es Rachel mi'Leah," and the wording "gam es Rachel" implies that Rachel was added to his love only as an addition, "mi'Leah" — that is, as an addition upon Leah; but Leah was the one loved by him mainly, for he understood that Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants her to be his wife, and he loved her even though at first, of his own will, he preferred Rachel.

And what is written: "Vayar Hashem ki snuah Leah" — that is, because in the revealed, outwardly, Yaakov showed greater love to Rachel, since he wanted her from the outset; but in the hidden, regarding his inner service, the verse hints: "Vaye'ehav gam es Rachel," that he himself completed his main love for Leah, since he understood that Hakadosh Baruch Hu brought about that he would marry Leah — though it is possible that still, outwardly, it was recognizable that Rachel was the main one.

And even though, in truth, Leah was already beloved

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by Yaakov, nevertheless, since outwardly she appeared as less beloved than Rachel — and especially since Leah was hated for many years because everyone assumed that she would marry Esav the wicked, and she knew that Yaakov wanted Rachel from the outset — these feelings still remained with her, that she is hated, and from this came to her a broken heart. Therefore Hakadosh Baruch Hu now opened for her the gates of success, and she merited many children; whereas Rachel, who was beloved all the years, since everyone said that she would marry Yaakov — now Hakadosh Baruch Hu closed for her the gates of success and she was barren, so that she would feel the feelings of lowliness and submission, so that she would merit to serve Hashem also with the taste of a broken heart.

There Is Nothing Like Hashem's Plan

And Hakadosh Baruch Hu brought it about that Yaakov would marry Leah first, so that the great Shevatim would arise from her children; and if Yaakov had married Rachel first, then he would no longer have married Leah, and we would have lost the children of Leah — for precisely from Leah could they attain the desired completeness. For example, that David our king and his descendants increased in prayers and thanksgivings to Hashem; and this trait they were able to merit precisely in the footsteps of their mother Leah, who had a nature of speech, as brought in the Midrash (Tanchuma Vayeitzei 4) that she would pray much; whereas Rachel's trait was the trait of silence (Bereishis Rabbah 73:4), and so too her son Binyamin, who was silent when they suspected him of having stolen the goblet. And this nature was good for perfecting in Binyamin, but for Yehudah the nature of speech was needed, for the sake of David our king, who would speak the many prayers of Sefer Tehillim, etc.

The Sweetness of Competitions

Chazal say (brought in Rashi 35:17) that each one of the Shevatim was born with a twin sister; and it is explained that the reason for this was so that not one of the Shevatim would be without his designated partner, but rather each one would have a mate. And this was so that he would be tested in his traits and learn to honor others. And so too among the Shevatim themselves, we find that when a son was born to Rachel — Yosef — Hakadosh Baruch Hu added to her another son, Binyamin; and so too with Bilhah and Zilpah, not one of them had a solitary son.

And Yosef too had a competition with Binyamin: at first the Mishkan was in Shiloh, which was in the portion of Yosef, and afterward the Beis HaMikdash was in the portion of Binyamin. For Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants to test a person with competition with other people, so that through this he will acquire good traits — to be good to the creatures and to be glad for others who succeed like him and even more than him.

The Trial That Accompanies You at Every Time

For the trial of jealousy accompanies a person always and in every place: also within the home between the brothers, also in the beis midrash with his friends, and in the marketplace with the rest of the people. For the trial of jealousy is an inseparable part of a person's life; and the wise one overcomes it and is glad for each one who succeeds, even more than he, and so he rejoices in his portion and through this becomes the richest and happiest.

Therefore each one needs to know, and every father needs to teach his children to know, how to withstand trials of jealousy: that the son can always feel that the parents value one son more than him; and sometimes it is possible that this is true, that the parents relate more to one child than to his fellow. But the wisdom of the second child is to know that this is his trial right now; and now they love another son more than him, and soon he himself will be a father, and he too may continue to love one child more than the other — and there is no reason to be broken by this. For in the end, the vitality of a person does not come from the attention that is given to him, for a person's foundation is from dust and his end is to dust; and the true vitality is precisely from the fact that we withstand trials and acquire the completeness of a good eye and gladness for others' success. And instead of being broken and becoming embittered, a person should find nachas in the fact that he merits to engage in Torah and mitzvos, and to rejoice in this.

Continued

The Sweetness of Miracles

On the first Sunday after the vacation, I asked the maggid shiur for permission and told about this miracle that Hakadosh Baruch Hu performed for me. When I finished my story, one of the bachurim asked to tell a similar story as well, which happened to him, and so he told:

About two years ago, when I was eleven and a half, during the winter zman, I wanted to board the bus. The driver had already closed the doors, and I put my leg in so that the driver would open the door for me; but the door closed on my leg. I tried to pull out my leg and did not succeed, because I had big boots on my leg, and the bus began to move!!!

Immediately I grabbed the pole that was next to me, so that the bus would not drag me along in its travel; and then, in Hashem's mercy, people who were on the bus noticed this and shouted to the driver to open the door; and indeed he opened it, and my life was saved from actual death, and I escaped for my life.

The maggid shiur devoted a few minutes to explain to us and to all the bachurim how careful one must be not to do actions such as these, which cause dangers, for it is enough that one time a miracle does not occur for a person, and he is liable to lose his life, chas v'shalom. "V'hu rachum yechaper avon" and "Hodu laHashem ki tov ki l'olam chasdo."

Y. K., Jerusalem

A Sweet Counsel

In Parashas Vayeitzei we read that Yaakov Avinu was the "ushpiz" (guest) of the Creator of the world in the place of the Beis HaMikdash; and each one of us must host himself in the dwelling of Hakadosh Baruch Hu — that is, to be a guest in the House of Hashem, by bringing Hashem into his heart. And our year is the year 5787 (Tashpaz), and it is from the word "tashpiz" (you will host), hinting to us that each one must host himself in the dwelling of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

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