



A Tzaddik Untested

THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTOR: ALTER RAUBVOGEL

Yaakov was left, alone. A “man” wrestled with him until dawn. When [the angel] saw that he couldn’t beat him, he touched the socket of [Yaakov’s] hip. Yaakov’s hip was dislocated...

Therefore the Children of Israel may not eat the *gid hanasheh* (literally, “the displaced sinew”—the sciatic nerve)... to this very day. (32:25–33)

THIS IS THE FIRST OF MANY MITZVOS IN THE Torah which remind us of miracles. But Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (“Rav Moshe”), in *Darash Moshe*, points out that this one is different. Generally speaking, commemorative mitzvos involve performing symbolic acts, such as eating matza and bitter herbs, or sitting in a sukkah. But the mitzvah of the *gid hanasheh* is *pasive*—we are told *not* to eat it.

Why is that, and what should we learn from it?

Back in Parashas Tol’dos (25:27), the Torah described Yaakov as “a simple man, who dwelled in tents [of Torah].” Our Sages call Yaakov *b’chir sheb’avos*, the choicest of our forefathers. They describe how Yaakov’s face is depicted on Hashem’s heavenly throne, something unique among our ancestors.

Asks Rav Moshe (again in *Darash Moshe*), what about Avraham, who passed the famous Ten Tests, or Yitzchok, who allowed his father to offer him as a sacrifice? What makes Yaakov greater than them?

Rav Moshe answers that it’s wonderful when people face up to challenges and show how righteous they can be. But if a person can become holy and fill his life with Torah and mitzvos without the help of external stimuli, that is even

greater. In fact, it’s something we pray for every day in *Birchos haShachar*, the Morning Blessings:

“May it be Your will... that You make us familiar with Your Torah and attach us to Your mitzvos. Don’t bring us to sin... or to any test...”

(It’s worth pointing out how remarkable this interpretation is. In that prayer, we ask Hashem to help us avoid something undesirable. Rav Moshe, though, says that we are also asking Hashem to help us reach a fantastic level of spirituality!)

This aspect of Yaakov’s greatness, his ability to become our Holy Forefather while staying “in the tents of Torah” (actually, *because* he stayed there), is

something we should also aspire to.

Now, Yaakov did, in fact, face tests. But they were different from those of his predecessors. Avraham, for example, had to overcome challenges posed either by the hand of Hashem (e.g., two families) or by Hashem’s word itself (e.g., the commandments to leave his homeland and to sacrifice his son). Yaakov, on the other hand, was confronted, repeatedly, by the actions of other people.

These experiences, such as dealing with Eisav and Lavan, represent (and foreshadow) the difficulties the Jewish People has endured among the nations. Yaakov’s ability to overcome those challenges lays out the framework by which we’ve survived thousands of years in exile. The struggle between Yaakov and the “man,” who was really Eisav’s

— CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE →

Not a Penny Extra

THE TORAH ONLY RECORDS TWO CONVERSATIONS between Yaakov and Eisav, and both of them serve to highlight the differences between them. In this week’s Torah portion we see how each of them related to material wealth.

[Yaakov told Eisav that he’d sent gifts] “to find favor in the eyes of my master.”

Eisav replied, “I [already] have plenty!”

Yaakov said, “...Please accept my offering... for Hashem has been generous to me, and I have everything I need.” (33:8–11)

K’li Yakar explains—and this is the takeaway many people see here—that a righteous man is satisfied with whatever

Hashem sends his way, whereas Eisav, like many greedy people, felt that, while he was certainly well-off, he’d love to have even more.

Rashi, on the other hand, simply criticizes Eisav for boasting: “I’m so rich that I’ve got much more than I need!”

We know that Eisav was wicked. Whatever he said and did is open to criticism. But is it wrong to feel like one has more than he needs—especially if he thanks Hashem for it?

In *Darash Moshe*, Rav Moshe Feinstein says “Yes!”

Rav Moshe explains what in his words is “obvious:” Let’s say someone believes in Hashem and His Torah, believes that everything he owns comes from Hashem and that Hashem gives him

— CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE →

At the Kollel

Every Day

👉👉 “Dirshu” Gemara Shiur

(Maseches Sota)

Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....

Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM

Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

👉👉 Kollel Yisgaber K’ari

(amud-a-day of Mishnah B’rurah)

Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....

Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

👉👉 Kitzur Shuchan Aruch

Live video conference!

Rabbi Dani Schon.....

Monday–Friday 12:05–12:20 PM

👉 Daf Yomi

Rabbi Meir Minster.....

Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM

Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

👉👉 Nightly Halacha Chabura

Rabbi Dani Schon

& Binyamin Teitelbaum.....

Monday–Thursday 9–9:45 PM

Chavrusa Learning

(private & small groups).....times vary

Sunday *Free brunch!*

👉👉 America Runs on Torah

(Jewish Law & Parasha)

Rabbi Dani Schon

and Yisroel Kaufman.....10 AM

Grand Deluxe breakfast served

Tuesday

👉 Mishnah

Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....8:10–9 PM

👉👉 Partners in Torah

at the Mayerson JCC

Rabbi Binyamin Teitelbaum.....8 PM

👉👉 Around the Table

(Parasha & Pirkei Avos)

Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9 PM

Wednesday

👉👉 Torah Treasures for

Seniors at the Mayerson JCC

Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....10:30–11:15 AM

👉👉 Downtown Lunch-n-Learn

at Strauss & Troy

Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....12–1 PM

Thursday

👉👉 Halacha (based on the parasha)

Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9:10–10 PM

Homemade refreshments served.

Minyanim for Standard Time

Shacharis

Sunday.....8:15 AM

On Sundays when the Kollel is not

in session, Shacharis is at 8 AM

Monday–Friday.....7:20 AM

Mincha

Sunday.....1:15 PM

Mon.–Thurs. thru January.....2:30 PM

Sun.–Thurs., Feb.–Mar.....5:45 PM

Shabbos.....2:40 PM

Ma’ariv

In the Beis Midrash:

Sunday–Wednesday.....9:45 PM

Thursday.....10 PM

KEY: 👉👉 Beginners

👉 Intermediate

👉👉 Advanced

👉👉 for men and women

Looking for a chavrusa? See Coordinator Rabbi Chaim Heinemann!

Chavrusos are available noon–1 PM on weekdays, and 8–9:45 PM Sun.–Thurs.

A Tzaddik Untested CONTINUED

representative angel, symbolizes the challenge of serving Hashem faithfully when people try to stop us.

But the Torah tells us to commemorate that struggle by *avoiding* the *gid hanasheh*. It’s wonderful when people overcome adversity, but that form of Divine service is not what we aspire to. As Rabbi Chiya bar Abba put it,

“[I want] neither suffering nor its reward!” (Talmud, B’rachos 5b)

We want to be able to show our devotion to Hashem through self-motivation, just like Yaakov did whenever he had the chance. With the mitzvah not to eat the *gid hanasheh*, Hashem tells us that this is also what He wants of us. 🥂

Not a Penny Extra CONTINUED

exactly what he needs, no more and no less. This means that even if the wealth Hashem doles out to him is much more than he requires to cover his expenses, *it is, nonetheless, something he needs*—otherwise, Hashem wouldn’t be giving it to him!

The question is: What need is this money meant to cover?

The answer: The cost of performing more mitzvos, which he would otherwise be unable to afford.

That is the attitude of a righteous man, like our forefather Yaakov.

A wicked man like Eisav, on the other hand, prefers to feel entitled—both to his wealth and to the right to spend it as he pleases. To him, anything beyond the

amount he’s determined to be necessary is extra. He can save it for a rainy day, or he can spend it now on life’s pleasures.

Of course, Hashem won’t necessarily approve of that “discretionary spending.”

[Israel] didn’t [contemplate to] know that *I* gave her grain, wine, and oil, that *I* multiplied her silver and gold; and she used it for the Baal (idolatry). (Hoshea 2:10)

This is true of material wealth, and it’s also true of every blessing—time, intelligence, talent, friendship, freedom. It’s all meant to furnish our *needs*. Our *spiritual* needs.

And Hashem gives us exactly what we need. 🥂