

A LOVE BASED ON NOTHING

by Rabbi Dovid Green

*"And G-d Spoke to Moses saying: Speak to the Israelites and have them bring me an offering.
(Parshas Terumah 25:1,2)*

The Medrash Tanchuma says: "And have them bring me an offering". That is what the Posuk (Passage) says: "I love you says G-d..... and I love Yaakov, (However) I hate Aisov...." (Malachi 1:2,3)

Turnus Rufus (A Roman nobleman) once asked Rabbi Akiva; "Why does your G-D hate us, as the Posuk (Passage) says, "And I hate Aisov"?

Rabbi Akiva asked him to allow him time to answer him until the next day. In the morning Turnus Rufus snidely asked Rabbi Akiva, "What did you dream about and what did you see?" (A sarcastic remark meaning, did you dream up an answer to my question yet?) Rabbi Akiva told him he dreamed he had two dogs, one was names Rufus and the other was called Rufina. Turnus Rufus became incensed and yelled "You called your two dogs by my name and the name of my wife? You are certainly deserving to die for such insolence!" Rabbi Akiva replied; "What difference is there between you and them? You eat and drink and they eat and drink. You procreate and they procreate. You will die and they will die! Do you want to kill me just because I called them by your name! Just imagine G-d's anger with you. G-d has created the heavens and the earth and you take a stick or a stone and you call it "God" Isn't it a valid reason for him to hate you? That is why the Posuk (passage) says And Aisov I hate."

As with any Medrash we must understand what the Posuk (Passage) in Malachi has to do with our Parsha. What does the love for Yaakov versus the hate for Aisov have do with Parshas Terumah and the taking of money, jewelry etc for the building of the Mishkon/Tabernacle?

Rabbi Yehuda Aszoud (He was a Rabbi in Serehell, Hungary, in the 1800's) explains this Medrash by quoting another Medrash that explains the Posuk (Passage) in Malachi. The Medrash says: "I Love Yaakov and I hate Aisov" Aisov said to G-d Why do you love Yaakov? He married two sisters? (Rachel and Leah were sisters and they were both married to Yaakov at the same time. This is considered a forbidden relationship) Aisov continues by saying "Do you want to say *I* am at fault? Then why do you protect him under the shade of your Succah?"

This set of questions posed by Aisov to G-D need explaining. What does Yaakov's seemingly illegal

marriage have to do with anything? What did Aisov mean "Am I at fault?" and to what is he referring when he says to G-d "why protect him under the shade of your Succah". Finally what "Succah" is Aisov referring to?

There are two kinds of love, explains Reb Yehuda. One is when a person loves another for no reason other than an intrinsic love. There is no objective reason for it. He just loves him. The other kind is when a person loves someone because of some other situation. For example, when everybody else in a community lacks in Middos, good character. However one person, although not of sterling character himself is so much better than anyone else that he is befriended by a good person. However, If the former were to get worse than that, the relationship would end. This person is not loved for who he is, rather he is loved because of the comparison to everyone else around him.

The love G-d has for Yaakov is baseless, not relative. G-d just loves Yaakov and the Jews for **who** they are, "not" for **what** they do. This is in contrast to the hate G-d has for Aisov. The explanation for this could be, G-d saw our forefathers and saw the purity of their devotion for him and to what extent they were committed to serving him. Because of the commitment shown by Avrohom, G-d made a **bris**, a "treaty" with him choosing his children as his own chosen people for eternity. This commitment was continued by Yitzchok and G-d renewed his Bris with him. Again Yaakov demonstrated his continued commitment and because of that G-d extended the Bris of Avrohom and Yitzchok to Yaakov's family **only**. By the power of three generations of commitment to G-d, our national character has been formed into one that is committed to serve G-d. Even when the Jews veer away from the "straight and Narrow" path it is just an aberrance, it is **not** a character fault in the Jewish character. By virtue of the Middos, the character instilled in us by our forefathers, we are good.

Aisov on the other hand had rejected the good character displayed by his parents. He abandoned the ways of his fathers and he began his **own** path and national character. That character however is one that is not intrinsically good. The "personality" of a nation as is ingrained in it by its forefathers is also demonstrated by the different mitzvos that G-d offered Aisov, Yishmoel and Moav, and their subsequent refusal of Torah. When offering the Torah to the Jews G-d offered it to the other nations. The Medrash specifically tells us about the offer to nations of Aisov, Yishmoel and Moav. G-d asked Aisov, "Will you accept the Torah?" Aisov asked, "What does it say?" "You shall not Murder" G-d answered. Aisov said "our entire existence is based on killing" The same dialogue went on with Yishmoel, The difference being G-d Told he "You shall not steal" and to Moav "You shall not commit adultery". Their answer was the same, "We cannot accept that it goes against our very being" (Moav was born from an incestuous relationship. The angel informed Hagar about Yishmoel's future "On the face of his brothers will he dwell"). What stopped the nations from accepting the Torah was: accepting the Torah would mean a commitment to change its personality to keep G-d's bidding. Each nation refused. The Jews, on the other hand were willing to accept **anything** G-d requested from them.

Getting back to the explanation of the Medrash. The love for Yaakov is baseless, That is proven by the hatred that G-d has for Aisov. Why does G-d hate Aisov? That is very clear from the story of Rabbi Akiva and Turnus Rufus, we quoted earlier, because Aisov and his children are Idol worshipers. They deny G-d's existence and his authority over everything. However, even though the Jews also had worshipped idols, as they did by the sin of the Golden Calf, G-d **still** loves them and he forgives their transgressions. (Because as we explained earlier the idol worship was just an aberration. *not* a national character) This we see from the Medrash Tanchuma later in the Parsha that says "Have them bring an offering of *gold* for me to cause forgiveness for the gold they gave towards creating the golden calf." We see G-d gave the Jews a way to attain forgiveness for idol Worship. Historically, during the times of the first Bais Hamikdosh (Holy Temple), the Jews did sin by worshipping idols. However, G-d did not destroy the Jews, he took out his wrath upon the wood and stones of the Bais Hamikdosh, The Holy Temple. That is why the Mishkon/Bais Hamikdosh (The Holy Temple) is called the Mishkon because it was taken for the debt of the Jews. (Note: A **mashkon** is a item taken to guarantee repayment of a loan. The letters for Mishkon and Mashkon are the same)

That is what Aisov was complaining to G-d about. Why do you love Yaakov in spite of his transgressions in marrying two sisters? Is it a love **only** in comparison to me, (Hence the words, "am I the cause?") that you love him? However, it is not an intrinsic love? If that is the case then why protect him in the shadow of your Succah, i.e. Why do you grant them forgiveness for the sins of Idol Worship by giving them the protection of the Bais Hamikdosh, the Holy Temple? Therefore it **must** be that the love that G-d has for the Jews is an intrinsic love. This love is not based on **what** we do, rather on **who** we are.

Now we can understand the connection between the Posuk (Passage) of: "And have them bring me an offering" and the Posuk (passage) where G-d Contrasts his love for the Jews versus his hate for Aisov. His Love for the Jews is measured by G-d's desire to forgive the Jews for the sin of Idol worship by building the Mishkon.

May we all merit to see the rebuilding of the Bais Hamikdosh soon.

Good Shabbos!

***This Dvar Torah is dedicated to the memory
Chaya Malka Bas Reb Yaakov Yitzchok, whose Yarzeit is 2 Adar***

Text Copyright © 1996 [Rabbi Dovid Green](#) and **[Project Genesis, Inc.](#)**
