

G-D WILLING!

by Shlomo Katz

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Vayeitzei

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Today's Learning:

Bava Batra 1:3-4

Orach Chaim 547:1-3

Daf Yomi (Bavli): Bava Metzia 2

Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Kilayaim 14

Once, on Thursday of the week in which Parashat Vayetze was read, a chassid came to take leave of R' Chaim Hager z"l of Kosov (the "Torat Chaim"; 1795-1854). Before leaving, the chassid mentioned that he planned to be in the town of Zablutov, where R' Chaim's brother lived, for Shabbat Parashat Vayishlach. "So you plan to be in Zablutov for Shabbat Parashat Vayishlach?" the rebbe repeated, but he made no other comment.

The trip did not work out as the chassid planned, and he was forced to return to Kosov. He appeared before R' Chaim, and he asked: "If you knew that I would not make it to Zablutov, why did you not say anything?"

R' Chaim responded, "You had to learn a lesson. We read in Parashat Vayetze (28:20), 'Then Yaakov took a vow, *laimor*, "If G-d will be with me . . ." What is added by the word, *laimor*? It means, 'to say.' Yaakov took a vow that wherever he went and whatever he did, he would say, 'If G-d will be

with me.' Since you did not say, 'I hope to be in Zablutov, if G-d will be with me,' I had a feeling that your trip would not succeed." (Quoted in Otzrot Tzaddikei U'geonei Ha'dorot)

"Yaakov departed from Beer Sheva vayeilech Charanah / and he went toward Charan." (28:10)

Rashi writes: Any word that requires a "lamed" at the beginning may instead have a "heh" at the end. [Here, for example, instead of "le'Charan," the Torah says, "Charanah."]

R' Zvi Elimelech Shapira z"l (1843-1924; the "Bluzhover Rebbe") asks: Why is the form with the "heh" better than the form with the "lamed"? Also, what is added by the word, "vayeilech / he went"? The verse would mean the same thing without that word!

He answers: Our verse was written with four extra letters: vav, yud, and kaf of "vayeilech" and heh of "Charanah." (The lamed of "vayeilech" is needed to convert "Charanah" to "le'Charan.") These four letters are the ending letters of the phrase (Tehilim 91:11): "Ki malachav yetzaveh lach" / "He will charge his angels to you, [to protect you on all your ways]." This is precisely what Yaakov experienced!

(Quoted in Otzrot Tzaddikei U'geonei Ha'dorot)

"He became frightened and said, 'How awesome is this place . . .'" (28:17)

Rashi writes that when Yaakov reached Charan he said, "Is it possible that I passed the place where my father and grandfather prayed, and I did not pray there?" He then returned to Bet El and prayed and slept there.

R' Eliyahu Meir Bloch z"l (1894-1955; founder and Rosh Yeshiva of the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland) observes that Yaakov was distressed because he had passed Bet El and had not taken advantage of being there, more so than he would have been had he never been in Bet El. This teaches, says R' Bloch, that a person is responsible for getting the greatest spiritual advantage out of his present circumstances; the failure to take advantage of one's favorable situation damages the soul.

We see this about Moshe, as well. When he said (Shmot 33:14), "Show me Your glory," Hashem responded (according to Chazal), "When I wanted, you did not want. Now that you want, I do not want." When Hashem first appointed Moshe to lead Bnei Yisrael, Moshe resisted. By not accepting the spiritual gifts which Hashem offered, he damaged his soul. Therefore, when he wanted to "see" Hashem's glory, he was unable to fathom it.

(Peninei Da'at)

"If He will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear." (28:20)

When the first winter arrived after R' Pinchus David Horowitz z"l (the "Bostoner Rebbe"--see page 4) had settled in Boston, he had only the clothes on his back to keep him warm, and no coat. There was an old Jew (Mr. Rosenblatt) in Boston who had been a chassid in Europe of R' Pinchus David's great-grandfather, R' Moshe of Lelov. One night, R' Moshe appeared in a dream to Mr. Rosenblatt and rebuked him, saying, "My descendant is cold, and you are sleeping?!"

After this dream repeated itself, Mr. Rosenblatt sought out the recently arrived immigrant from Yerushalayim. "Who are you?" he asked.

"A Jew from Eretz Yisrael," R' Pinchus David responded humbly. Only after he was pressed did he admit that he was a great-grandson of R' Moshe of Lelov.

Mr. Rosenblatt bought the Rebbe a warm winter coat, which he wore until it disintegrated. But he never threw it away. "If my ancestor came all the way from heaven to bring me this coat, I cannot throw it away," he explained.

(Shoshelet Boston)

"Rachel saw that she had not borne children to Yaakov, so Rachel became envious of her sister; she said to Yaakov, 'Give me children -- otherwise I am dead'." (30:1)

R' Saadiah Gaon z"l (Egypt and Iraq; 882-942) writes: Why did the early generations desire children? It was so that they would have someone to whom they could teach the faith, so that they (the parents) would achieve merit through them. Thus is it written (Yishayah 38:19), "A father can make Your truth known to children." The Torah, too, states (Devarim 11:19), "You shall teach them to your children to discuss them." It also is written regarding Avraham (Bereishit 18:19), "For I have loved him, because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem . . ."

We know, continues R' Saadiah, that parents enjoy the fruits of their descendants' righteousness for up to four generations. The good deeds of those descendants actually lessen any punishment which the parents themselves may deserve. This is the meaning of the verse (Bemidbar 14:18), "[R]ecalling the iniquity of parents with children to the third and fourth generations." [Apparently R' Saadiah means that Hashem recalls the iniquity of the parents together with the good deeds of their descendants, and thus does not punish the parents.]

But the opposite is not true, concludes R' Saadiah. If one of the first four generations of descendants is wicked, this is not held against the parents, so long as the parents had spared no effort to educate their children properly. That being the case, are not children the best investment, for one can only profit and cannot lose!

(Perushei Rabbeinu Saadiah Gaon Al Ha'Torah p.46)

R' Pinchus David Halevi Horowitz z"l (The First "Bostoner Rebbe") Part II

R' Pinchus David arrived in New York in June, 1915. While still living in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, R' Pinchus David designed what may have been one of the earliest Shabbat-clocks. Before long, he was recognized for the tzaddik and scholar that he was, and he was offered several rabbinic posts. He chose Boston, in gratitude to a Bostonian Jew who had helped him settle his immigration status.

In Boston, R' Pinchus David found a motley group of chassidim of various geographic backgrounds and different "styles" of serving Hashem. However, R' Pinchus David had no trouble catering to the needs of all of them. Eventually, he adopted the title "Bostoner Rebbe." Explaining why he did not choose the more distinguished title of one of his ancestors, R' Pinchus David said that this way, if he failed in his mission, people would say, "Well, what can you expect of an American rebbe?!"

As in many American cities, Boston in the 1920's had large congregations made up of elderly people, but very little religious participation by the youth. To remedy this situation, R' Pinchus David founded a talmud Torah in Boston. He later realized that a few hours of Torah study in the afternoon would not overcome the public school influence, and he therefore proposed a day school with a joint religious-secular program. However, this proposal was rejected by his rabbinic colleagues, who felt that there was no place in a talmud Torah for secular studies.

R' Pinchus David never stopped acting and dressing like a Yerushalmi Jew. He introduced to the United States several customs which we take for granted, most notably shemurah matzah. He also introduced the idea of chalav Yisrael. R' Pinchus David frequently spoke out on family purity, telling people who found its laws irrational that ritual purity, just like the invisible force of electricity, is no less powerful just because one doesn't understand it. The Rebbe's work on behalf of kashrut even brought him death threats from the Mafia, which controlled many aspects of food production.

R' Pinchus David never stopped longing for Eretz Yisrael, and he made aliyah three times. Each time, however, the Hand of G-d brought him back to Boston. Eventually, he moved to Williamsburg (Brooklyn), becoming one of the earliest chassidic rebbes to settle there. (Source: Shoshelet Boston)

Please see above for a story about R' Pinchus David

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