



Parashat Vayishlach 5771

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On the Parashah...

"And He Limped on His Hip" (Bereshit 32:31)

[Tal Chermon]

Yaakov's limping is an essential element of his makeup and we, the Jewish People, suffered similar woes throughout our history. The Nation of Israel has had to struggle with heavenly and human forces throughout the long dark night of human history. We cannot be vanquished, we are victorious, but we pay a price. His and our stalwart erect stance is undermined and stoops throughout history. But we have not sunk to the level of Esav around whose thigh a snake is wound (See Targum Onkelos on Bereshit 25:27). Yaakov's thigh remains pure but is weakened and limping throughout his, our, history we have been subjected to ghastly tortures in successful attempts to subdue us, "But the Holy One Blessed Be He delivered us from them." The Ramban (on Bereshit 32:26) described it as follows: "This even [the dislocation of his hip] is a hint to Yaakov's offspring that there will be a generation when Esav [Rome] will prevail over us and will almost obliterate us, G-d forbid. This occurred in the generation of Rabbi Yehudah ben Bava, who suffered martyrdom for continuing the Rabbinic chain by giving Rabbinic ordination to his students, despite the Roman prohibition, and his companions who were Rabbis of the Mishnah... 'In this generation of religious persecution they would take iron balls, heat them until they were white hot and then place them under the arm-pits [of their torture victims] and thus burnt them to death.' And there are other generations in which they have done such things to us and even worse (a hint to the times of the Christian Inquisition)." Also in our final revival, the birth of our modern State of Israel which illuminates our horizons after 2,000 years of exile was preceded by a horrific "limp" and satanic outrages unparalleled in history.

We, however, are not frightened by these blows because we are an indestructible Nation. This is intimated by the verse concerning the attacking angel which states: "And he [the angel] saw that he could not defeat him [Yaakov]" (ibid. 32:26). The eternal Jewish People can be injured and maimed, but we are invincible and even eventually return to our perfectly healthy state. As the abovementioned Ramban concludes: "However, we have endured and come through it as hinted in the verse: 'And Yaakov came in peace'" (ibid. 33:18).

Rav Aviner on...

Eat Little

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Vayetze 5771 – translated by R. Blumberg]

Question: I eat without end although I am not hungry. I tried a diet and it didn't help, because I eat obsessively. I want to stop but I don't succeed, and my weight increases from day to day.

Answer: You're not alone. It's a pervasive plague. There are a billion people on earth who weigh too much (by the way, a similar number of people are undernourished, and each day 25,000 die of hunger). 350 million overeaters are classed as having an eating disorder. Money spent on abnormal overeating in the U.S. each day equals 250 million dollars. Daily expenditures in the U.S. on various weight-lowering programs equal 110 million dollars. Overeating really is a plague. In Israel, 39% of people are overweight. Of these, 60% are adults, 20% are boys and 19% are girls.

Obesity can cause heart problems and many other illnesses, and the reason is simple: The body is taking in more calories than it is burning off. The cure is thus simple: Don't eat fattening foods. Don't eat sweet foods like chocolate, cake or sweets, or fatty milk products. Break out of the cycle of overeating: Taking in calories creates a need. It's not real hunger but artificial hunger.

And what is the ultimate cause of that uncontrollable desire to eat? There are various causes: psychological factors, loneliness, sadness, or depression, as well as hormonal irregularities and imprecise functioning of the brain, indicating, only after a delay, that a person is already sated, thus leaving an inaccurate feeling of hunger. In any event, the solution is not crash diets that require strong discipline and a great effort, but which generally fail. Rather, a different approach is needed.

Various Strategies

1. Eat a good breakfast, which our sages called "Pat Shacharit" -- one's "morning bread".
2. Eat a meal once every three hours, so that one will not be hungry and will not attack the food. Such was the custom of Jews from Germany, and it is linked to their custom of waiting three hours between meat and milk. Then, that three-hour habit will become second nature.
3. Prepare yourself something healthy in your bag in case you feel hungry during the day, like a piece of fruit, a vegetable, or a healthy cracker.
4. Prepare yourself healthy, tasty food at home with which to start your meal, like salad or vegetable soup.
5. Avoid fast food. Usually it's not healthy.
6. Don't drink sweet drinks.
7. If you slip, make amends quickly. Keep matters in hand. If someone makes a mistake and suffers for it, should he then make the same mistake and suffer more?
8. If there is healthy food on the table, wait ten minutes before eating so as overcome the strong desire to eat it. It's like the Chinese saying: Who is brave? He who eats one peanut." Rabbenu Yona of Gerundi wrote in his book, "Yesod HaTeshuva" in the name of Ra'avad, that in serving G-d one should harness one's resolve and forego one delicious food every meal. I only said that one should wait.
9. Don't store unhealthy food at home. We don't house terrorists.
10. Sometimes a person thinks he is hungry when he is really only thirsty. Watch out for that.
11. Eat enough food to satisfy yourself and wait twenty minutes. That's how long it takes for the brain to relay the message that you're satisfied. It's the time it takes to walk a kilometer.
12. Do a half hour of physical exercise each day. That, too, will take off a bit of weight, but the main thing is that it's very healthy.
13. Before participating in a large banquet, decide precisely what you are going to eat. It's like the instructions a soldier receives before battle.
14. Enlist family support and the supervision of another human being.

Deriving Blessing from Eating Less

Here's a rule of thumb. The Torah says, "Eat your fill" (Vayikra 25:19), and Rashi comments, quoting Torat Kohanim, that this refers to "eating little and finding blessing in it." Eat daintily. "One shouldn't eat voraciously, but the way one eats before a king, for a blessing only rests on one who does not eat voraciously... as when Esau said, 'Pour that red, red stuff down my throat' (Bereshit 25:30). Just as the ministering angels eat in holiness and purity, so should Israel" (Torat Kohanim 25).

Turn to Overeaters Anonymous

If all the above advice doesn't help, turn to Overeaters Anonymous (O.A.). O.A. was founded 50 years ago (5720) to help people with an obsessive, uncontrollable urge to eat, by way of a twelve-stage program. (The same that was used by Alcoholics Anonymous, but with several differences). It includes a personalized program, and treats the various causes of overeating, such as emotional disappointment. They take no medical steps (In case of need, go to a dietician), but work on the person to change himself internally. In Israel there are 130 groups that hold weekly meetings, and such meetings work on a principle of changing one's character. This approach is both free, and the most beneficial. Call the national hotline at 03-5745799, or check out: OA-ISRAEL.ORG

See a slimmer you soon.

Kitzur Tefilat Amecha - #18

[adapted for middle-schoolers by Rabbi Shmuel Jablon from Rav Aviner's three-volume commentary on the siddur "Tefilat Amecha"]

In the beginning of Baruch She-Amar, we say blessed is the One who says (Omer) and does, blessed is the One who enacts (Gozer) and fulfills. What is the difference between Omer and Gozer? Omer is when He says things that are logical. Gozer is when He decrees things that don't have a logical explanation. Many times we think things are not possible. How could there still be a Jewish People? How could there be an Israel? The list goes on and on. But for Hashem everything is possible. Whether something is logical or not, Hashem can do it all.

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Coping with Expulsion

Question: How can we cope if there is an expulsion from Yehudah and Shomron?

Answer:

- a. It is forbidden to speaking about it. The very discussion about such ideas is unhealthy. It once happened in Russia that Stalin said in the Kremlin: I am suggesting two new laws: 1. To kill all of the red-heads. 2. To kill all of the Jews. They said to him: Why should we kill all the red-heads?! What did they do? We understand that there was no dispute regarding killing the Jews. The same applies here: What are we going to do if there is an expulsion? The entire discussion is what are we going to do if..., but the discussion needs to be how do we prevent an expulsion in the first place. This is the question. Discussing what we will do if... accustoms people to the idea that there can be an expulsion, and there is the small matter of how we will cope with it.
- b. What caused the expulsion from Gush Katif? It is quite simple: The Nation wanted it. The majority of the Nation wanted it. It is not only because of Arik Sharon or the media or the courts. The majority of the Nation wanted it. And if was the majority of the Nation, no one t

could do anything to change it. The Nation said: We do not understand. There are two million Arabs and 8000 Jews. Free us from two million Arabs and it will be a little difficult for 8000 Jews. We'll try to help them. We don't want another two million Arabs. Let's at least free ourselves from them. This is what the Nation thought. And these were the Zionists who thought from a demographic, political, democratic and military perspective, this would be good. They were wrong. It happens that the Nation sometimes errs. Since the return to Zion, on the whole we have not erred, but sometimes we do. There is no completely righteous Nation who does good and does not sin (based on Kohelet 7:20). It was a major mistake. Many people who supported the expulsion now admit that it was a mistake. Nonetheless, the key is the Nation. The one who decides here is the Nation. We must therefore convince the Nation. It does not matter who the Prime Minister is, he does want the Nation wants. Everything that happens here is because of the Nation. The Return to Zion was done by the Nation. Building the Land – the Nation. Establishing the State – the Nation. The War of Independence the Nation. The Six Day War – the Nation. The Yom Kippur War – the Nation. Building the economy – the Nation. Returning the Torah to the Land of Israel – the Nation. The Nation is the boss here. We must therefore convince the Nation. Each of us must convince a small part of the Nation. A five year old girl asked: How can I convince the Nation? Convince a five year old girl. It is possible to convince others. Herzl once said: We need to establish a State. They said: He is completely crazy. But they convinced, convinced, convinced... until we established a State.

Family Matters - Ha-Rav writes weekly for

the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships

Do not get angry

From the moment that a baby is born, we must express love to him, the same applies when he is older. We must show him great love, physical and non-physical, loving words and presents, all age appropriate. This is not always easy. For example, sometimes a baby cries, and all attempts to avert his attention or pacify him fail. In such a case, there is a concern that the parents will lose patience, yell and be angry with him, threaten and sometimes even hit him, even though by doing so, he will certainly continue to cry.

When a baby cries, one should never response with anger. Anger destroys him and breaks his character. It serves no educational benefit. If he cries, he should be calmed. In general, it is forbidden to punish a young child and forbidden to get angry with him.

This obviously does not mean that the baby should cause chaos in the house. He does not control the parents' life. The parents establish the norms, but without anger or an anger face. Even withheld anger damages. The child senses it even if the parent smiles. He feels that the parents relates to him as a burden, a nudnik, causes sleepless nights, takes away his rest, makes noise, crying endlessly, and is a yoke on his parents.

While this may be true to some extent, but if a parent expresses this through speech, facial expression or in his heart, it destroys the baby. He is certainly a burden, but a very pleasant burden. This is the general principle: The education of the parent precedes the education of the children.

Text Message Responsa

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a week. Some appear in the parashah sheets "Ma'ayanei Ha-Yeshu'ah" and "Olam Ha-Katan." Here's a sample:

Talkbacks

Q: After reading a "Kosher" article, is it permissible to look in the talkbacks?

A: No, there is a major concern for Lashon Ha-Ra, embarrassing others and nonsense.

Parrot

Q: I was told that I am having a hard time getting pregnant because we have a parrot in the house.

A: Nonsense.

Changing a Child's Clothing and Sefarim

Q: Is it permissible to change a child's clothing in a room with holy books?

A: It is permissible up to age 9. Shemirat Shabbat KeHilchata, 5770 edition, chap. 24 note 116.

Affection between a Couple

Q: During the time when a wife is in Nidda, what is permissible for a husband and wife to say to one another? I love you?

A: Loving words are permissible, but nothing that will entice one's inclination (Eruvin 63b. It once happened that a newly-married young man came to our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, and told him that it was difficult for him, since only half of a month is "a time to hug," while half of a month is "a time to distance from hugging" (when a woman is a niddah - menstruating and counting the clean days before she is able to immerse in a mikvah - a husband and wife are not allowed to have any physical contact). Our Rabbi said to him: Look what is written [in the Sheva Berachot]: "Who created joy and happiness, a groom and a bride etc." - You see, marriage is not just hugging and kissing, but before all else a soulful connection of love, brotherhood, peace and friendship, which apply equally at all times).

Repentance

Q: What benefit is there in repenting for a sin that I will fail in again?

A: It is true that this is not complete Teshuvah (Rambam, Teshuvah 2:1), but it is Teshuvah, and we continue to wage war.

Single Woman immersing in a Mikveh

Q: Is it permissible for a single woman to immerse in a mikveh?

A: Single women do not immerse.

Q: What if it is to lessen the prohibitions violated?

A: Then it is certainly a severe prohibition (Be'er Heitev, Orach Chaim 303:1. Yoreh Deah 183:6. See Shut Ha-Rivash #422).

Army for Women

Q: Is it permissible for a woman to go to an officers' course in the army in the educational department – and not in a combat unit?

A: The entire army is inappropriate for women. For education – National Service, on condition that it is in a "Kosher" place.

Retreats in Redemption

Q: Doesn't the destruction of Gush Katif show that this is not Redemption?

A: There will not be another exile, but there can be retreats and crises (Ramban on Shemit 5:22-23).

Maaser Kesafim

Q: My parents gave me a large sum of money for laser eye surgery for my wife. Do I have to separate Maaser Kesafim?

A: Yes, if it is in your financial ability (Ahavat Chesed of the Chafetz Chaim).

Honoring Parents

Q: My parents want me to break all relations with my sister following a disagreement between them. Should I listen?

A: If one's parents tell him to commit a transgression, one does not listen, including hating another person. Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (143:11).

Painting Doorposts

Q: When one paints the doorposts, what does one do with the Mezuzah?

A: Cover the Mezuzah to protect it. If one removes for Mezuzah for a short period, he does not recite a blessing when it is put back (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 11:7).

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