

RABBI AHARON ZIEGLER - PARASHAT VA'YISH'LACH- 2021, 5782 "WHAT IS REALLY OURS?"

Note, in Lashon Kodesh, Hebrew, there is no expression for "I have". What we say instead is, "Yesh Li", but that is not exactly the same. For "Yesh Li" means "there is to me" , or , I am holding on to something. In our parasha, Yaakov and Eisav use different expressions to describe what they possess. Yaakov states "yesh li Kol"-I have everything [33:11], whereas Eisav says "Yesh li Rov" ,I have a lot [33:9]. What is the significance of the two different phrases that each one chose to use? Rav Moshe Feinstein explains that each one was illustrating his understanding of the world in which he lived.

A person who truly believes in HaShem and knows that everything which he has is from HaShem above, realizes that whatever he has is exactly what he needs. A rich person has no more money than he should have, and a poor person has no less than he needs to provide the basics for his family. While it may appear that the rich person has much more than he needs to provide for the family basics, we must realize that this is not the case. If HaShem blessed him with wealth, then that money is accompanied with more obligations. Supporting the poor and supporting Yeshivot are not optional, but they are rather obligatory responsibilities which come with financial success. For this reason, the believing person understands that he has "kol"-everything he could possibly need to fulfill his many obligations. He needs no more. The poor person may have less but he also has less responsibilities.

However, one who does not believe in Hashgacha Pratit, that GD watches and decides how much wealth each person should have, such a person believes that his wealth came to him solely because of his own efforts. Therefore, he does not feel that wealth brings with it any obligations. Such a person will say "Yesh Li Rov", I have plenty, but I could always use a little more.

We must learn to see the world through the eyes of Yaakov Avinu. We must realize that having been blessed with Parnasah and prosperity that comes with an obligation to help those less fortunate, those whose homes have been destroyed by raging fires and those who unfortunately, cannot make ends meet. There are many in Yerushalayim that eat meat [chicken] only on Shabbat because they cannot afford more than that.

In parashat VaYeitzei, Yaakov says to HaShem, "If You will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear...I will give You Ma'aser from everything [28:20]. Knowing there are no unnecessary words in the Torah, why does Yaakov refer to bread, whose only purpose is to be eaten, as "bread to eat"? Also, why are garments, which are used only for clothing, referred to as "garments to wear"? He could have asked for bread and clothing! Rav Alexander Friedman, author of Ma'ayanei Shel Torah, answers, that there are many people who own large amounts of food and clothing, but they are too sick and cannot benefit from their wealth. Therefore, Yaakov Avinu told HaShem, that if he is granted bread and clothing, and the ability to enjoy them, he will give Ma'aser to HaShem. So too when we ask for "Chayim Aruchim", Long Life, we should be specific and ask for long life together with "good health" so that we can enjoy those longer years. And if we do have the health in our golden years then our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren will enjoy our presence ever more.

Shabbat Shalom from Yerushalayim

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

QUESTIONS FOR PARASHAT VAYISHLACH:

- 1-What food has become forbidden to us because of Yaakov?
- 2-In what city does Yaakov purchase a plot of land?
- 3-Who was eventually buried there?
- 4- What does Yaakov do to improve the welfare of the city? (see Shabbat 33a)
- 5-What do you think is the connection between the burial of Devorah the new name
"Yisrael" –that HaShem gave to Yaakov?

This weeks' Bonus Question:

All 613 Mitzvot given to us come from Moshe Rabbeinu. However, some are introduced by the Avot. Avraham Avinu introduced the Mitzvah of Brit Milah.

QUESTION: What biblical Mitzvah did Ya'akov Avinu introduce? (Tefillat Arvit is not one of the 613)