



PARASHAT VAYISHLACH

לעשות את המצוות בהתלהבות

כתוב בפסוק (לב:ה) "עם לבן גרתי", ורש"י מפרש "ותר"ג מצוות שמרתי ולא למדתי ממעשיו הרעים". הרב מאיר שפירא זצ"ל ביאר את הרש"י באופן מיוחד. יעקב אבינו התאונן ואמר: אמנם תר"ג מצוות שמרתי, אבל לא למדתי מלבן לקיים את המצוות במידה כזו של התלהבות ומסירות, כפי שהיה הוא עושה את מעשיו הרעים.

Double Danger

This week's Parashah, begins with Yaakov's preparations to meet his brother Esav. Fearful of this encounter, Yaakov prepares in three ways. He prays to Hashem to save him, he sends Esav gifts and he prepares for the possibility of battle. Interestingly, when he prays he asks Hashem, "hatzilainee na miyad achi, miyad Esav (32:12)" – please save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav. Being that he only had one brother, why was there a need for this redundancy of "the hand of my brother, the hand of Esav"? The Beit HaLevi explains that Yaakov was worried about two different, dangerous aspects – the 'brother' aspect and the 'Esav' aspect. Yaakov realized that this meeting would presumably lead to one of two situations. Esav would either remain angry and try to kill him, or he would calm down and want to build a brotherly relationship. Yaakov's prayer was not redundant at all – he was asking to be saved from both of these possibilities. The 'brotherhood' of Esav was filled with danger because the influence of a close relationship with Esav would have affected Yaakov's level of service to Hashem.

Not Totally And Not Forever

In this week's Parashah we learn about the struggle between Yaakov and the Malach of Eisav. When the Malach of Eisav saw that he was not going to be able to win the battle, he attempted to cripple Yaakov and struck him in his thigh. Yaakov emerged from the fight with a limp, injured but victorious. The Sefer Hachinuch explains that the purpose of the commandment of not eating the Gid Hanasheh, is in order for us to remember that no matter how many hardships we have in Galut, Hashem is always watching over us and we will always end up on top. There is a story about the Ponovitzer Rav Zt"l (1886-1969) who happened to be in Rome

for one night. Late at night he called his attendant and told him he must go right now to see Titus's arch before he left the next day to return to Eretz Yisroel [Titus was the Roman general who destroyed the second Beit Hamikdash and tried to kill the Jews]. When he arrived at Titus's arch he got out of his car pointed his finger at it and He said, "Titus yes it's true at one point in time you were on top of the world, but now look what remains of you and the Roman Empire, only this arch made of stone. But on the other hand look at us, the Jewish nation. We still exist stronger than ever still serving Hashem and doing his Mitzvot. So I ask you the question, in the end who won, us or you?!? The Nations of the world try to destroy us but in the end we always come out on top!