

Emunah is a cornerstone of our religion. Someone who has *emunah* that Hashem knows all of our actions, and deals with us based on our actions, will be careful with the *misvot* and try to avoid sin. He will be strong as a lion to serve Hashem with fear, love, and great happiness, trusting that Hashem rewards a person for all of his good deeds according to the effort that he put into them, and punishes him for all of his misdeeds. Only Hashem is capable of calculating the value of a person's deeds, taking into accounts the person's thoughts, actions, effort and his level of happiness.

Another aspect of *emunah* is to know that Hashem controls everything in this world, and a person does not even stub his toe unless it has been decreed in Heaven. Such a person will never attempt to become rich through improper means nor will he be jealous of others. He will not seek to take revenge on someone who caused him damage because he understands that the person is only a messenger of Hashem, and Hashem is totally fair and righteous. He will know clearly that everything Hashem does is good, and with this knowledge, he will be able to accept any harsh decrees with happiness.

Sight Unseen

The Sultan once asked the *Rambam* to heal a child, the son of a close friend, who had been sightless since birth.

"If the child had been struck blind on some occasion after birth, there would have been some hope of my restoring his sight," the *Rambam* regretfully explained. "It is, however, impossible to heal one who has been born blind."

Upon hearing this, the *Rambam's* enemies decided to prove his incompetence to the king.

"Your Majesty," they said, "here is a young man, blind from birth. Maimoni claims it is impossible to heal someone who has never seen. We will heal him."

The King called for the *Rambam* and told him to examine the man to see if he was truly blind.

The *Rambam* examined the patient and found him to be sightless. One of the doctors then applied some ointment to his eyes. A few minutes passed in quiet anticipation. The silence was broken by an exhilarated cry from the blind young man.

"I can see! I can see!"

The *Rambam* turned to the doctor with admiration in his eyes. "Amazing! A medical miracle!"

To the young man, the *Rambam* said, "Do you really see? Tell me, what color is this kerchief?"

"Green."

"And how about this sheet of paper?"

"That's white."

"Absolutely unbelievable. I have to see this one more time. What color are the walls?"

"Yellow."

"Liars! Frauds!" the *Rambam* shouted. "This man was not blind from birth! Almost anything can be described to a blind man, but how would he recognize and be able to name a color he never saw before? He knew these colors because he remembered them from before he was struck blind!"

The physicians fell to their feet and admitted to paying the young man to say he was blind from birth. (Brilliant Gems)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לְאָה בַּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

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שַׁבַּת וַיִּשְׁלַח * שְׁמַת וַיִּשְׁלַח

Haftarah: Obadiah 1:1-21

DECEMBER 9-10, 2022 16 KISLEV 5783

Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **4:01 pm (upstairs)** Shahrith: **6:10, 6:45, 8:25, 8:30, 9:00 am**

Minhah: **4:11 (main shul)** Morning Shema by: **8:55 am**

Candlelighting: **4:11 pm** Shabbat Minhah: **1:30 & 3:50 pm**

Evening Shema after: **5:09 pm** Shabbat Ends: **5:09 pm, R"Y 5:41 pm**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area. Shabbat Class: **3:40 & 5:09 pm**

Weekday Shahrith: **6:45, 7:10 am**, Sundays: **8:15 am**, Weekday Minhah: **4:15 pm**

Mabrook to Steven & Elaine Beyda on the birth of a baby boy. Mabrook to the grandparents, Benny & Sylvia Seruya, and to the great-grandparents, Abe & Elaine Serouya.

A Message from our Rabbi

(Bereshheet 34:30)

"עֲכַרְתָּם אֶתִּי לְהַבְאִישׁנִי בְּיֶשֶׁב הָאָרֶץ"

"You have troubled me to discredit me among the inhabitants of the land."

When Shimon and Levi killed out the inhabitants of Shechem, Ya'akov reacted with dismay, and Shimon and Levi defended themselves.

The *Seforno* explains Ya'akov's fear. The *goyim* will say that we do not keep our word. They were going into exile. Ya'akov, the man of truth, needed his family to conduct themselves with *emet* (truth) so that the non-Jews, our hosts throughout the long bitter exile, would not view us as deceptive people.

Rabbi Yaakov Bender tells a story about a prominent New York lawyer. The lawyer recalls the day when his firm, one of the finest in the country, signed up a prestigious Canadian client. Olympia and York had just broken into the Manhattan market, and spirits were high in the law firm boardroom as they prepared to welcome the legendary Olympia and York leadership.

Paul Reichman came in, and after introductions and handshakes, he made a short speech to his new team of attorneys.

"In Canada, the government knows that our returns are precise, that we never cut corners. You will be representing us here, so I urge you not to do anything to jeopardize our reputation, even to save money. Our reputation is worth more."

That was the entire speech, a plea for integrity. It was quiet in the boardroom as the group of hardened, battle-weary lawyers nodded, moved by the unusual request.

A Jew has to go the extra mile. That was the source of Ya'akob's pain, and we still suffer in the way that we are perceived. Each Jew represents a whole nation and if he takes advantage of a customer or vendor, he just ruined it for hundreds of other Jews.

Once a visibly religious man was driving through the tolls of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel one morning, racing to the Manhattan hospital where his wife was to give birth. It was in the days before barricades and E-Z Pass, and he could not even stop to pay the toll because his wife was in too much pain.

They reached the hospital, and she gave birth to a healthy baby. Late that night, he went back to Brooklyn, and as he passed through the tunnel, he pulled over and approached the toll booth. He handed the money to the clerk on duty and started to recap what happened that morning. The woman interrupted, "We know, we know. Our colleague told us, and she assured us that you would come back and return it, because that is what you people do..."

Rabbi Reuven Semah

Looking to the Future

In the beginning of *Parashat Vayishlah*, *Rashi* says that Ya'akob instructed his messengers to tell Esav, "I have been living with Laban, and I tarried until now." *Rashi* famously elaborates: During this time, I did not become a distinguished officer but I have been a mere stranger. There is no justification for you to hate me based on jealousy of the blessing my father gave me that "You shall be a ruler over your brother."

"I know you still hate me for taking the *Berachot* that our father thought he was giving to you. But listen, they did not help me at all. Thirty-four years later, I am still a stranger living on the road. All these years later, and I have no dominion whatsoever over my brother. I am a nobody, and you have no reason to be jealous of the blessings I received."

There are several problems with this *Rashi*. For instance, Rav Moshe Feinstein asks that the *Berachot* that Yitzhak *Abinu* gave to Ya'akob were a *nebuah* (prophecy). Is *Rashi* suggesting that Ya'akob is saying that Yitzhak was wrong? *Rashi* cannot be saying that Ya'akob was suggesting that these prophetic *berachot* were worthless.

Second, *berachot* are never fulfilled instantaneously. The fact that Ya'akob has not yet seen the benefit of these blessings in no way diminishes their value or significance. The truth of the matter is that it took hundreds of years for them to be fulfilled. Ya'akob's descendants were in Egypt for 210 years, and they were in the Wilderness for another 40 years. The Blessings were really not fulfilled until the time of Shelomo *haMelech*. What is Ya'akob telling Esav – the blessings are worthless because they were not fulfilled? Wait! They will yet be fulfilled in full!

When someone starts a business, he should not expect to make his fortune within the first six months of opening the business. It takes time. It is only in our generation that we expect instantaneous results. Cooking is too slow, so we need to microwave our food. Postal services are too slow, so we need to send faxes. Faxes are too slow so we need to send email. Everything needs to be this instant. But that is not the way all of life works, and it is certainly not the way *ruchniyut* works.

So, we have two questions: 1) Theologically, how could Ya'akob say that the prophetic blessings were not fulfilled, and 2) Of course they were not fulfilled YET – give them time to reach their historical moment of fulfillment!

The explanation is that Ya'akob knew exactly with whom he was dealing—Esav. The *Seforno* in *Parashas Toledot* shares a very important principle, not only about Esav, but about wicked people in general. The *Seforno* interprets the *pasuk* "Sell to me like the day (*ka'yom*) your birthright" as follows: You, Esav, live for the day—for today. You put so much effort into today's work that you are now so exhausted so you can't even tell

the difference between a bowl of soup and the color red. There is no doubt that you will not be able to perform in the function of the firstborn to minister before the L-rd Almighty, to do that which is appropriate for a *bechor*.

Ya'akob tells his brother, "This job is not for you. You are a "*ka'yom*" man! You are a man that lives for today." The difference between *sadikim* and *reshaim* is that *reshaim* live for the moment. They want instant gratification. They don't have the long view. Ya'akob, on the other hand, had a long view of life. He knows that some things take time. If you take the view that the *bechora* will eventually entail the Service of Hashem and a permanent job in the *Bet HaMikdash*, then it means something. Ya'akob tells Esav "I know you have no interest in being the *bechor*, because you are only a "*ka'yom* man."

This is the general approach of virtually all *reshaim*. They trade an *Olam Kayam* (a permanent world) for an *Olam Over* (a transitory world). When people are faced with the dilemma of choosing the pleasure of the moment or choosing the long-term view at the cost of deferring instant gratification, people that don't possess a sense of spirituality always choose the TODAY. They don't look at the long view.

Ya'akob knew this facet of Esav. He certainly knew very well that the *berachot* would take hundreds of years to be fulfilled. But that did not make a difference to him. He was willing to wait. On the other hand, he knew that if Esav still did not see fruits of this blessing after 34 years, he would consider them worthless.

Ya'akob was talking Esav's language when he sent the message to Esav: I am just a *ger*. I have no land. I have received neither blessings of heaven nor earth these past 34 years. However, Ya'akob himself understood that he was in it for the long haul, and was in no way denying the value or validity of these blessings. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

That's Impressive

"And I have acquired oxen and donkeys." (*Beresheet* 32:6) "וַיְהִי־לִי שׂוֹר וַחֲמֹר"

Ya'akob set a message to Esav informing him of his vast wealth in order to impress him, so that he may thereby gain favor in his eyes. There is a *Midrash* which says that in this *pasuk*, when Ya'akob said "oxen" he was referring to Yosef, and when he said "donkeys" he was referring to Yisachar. This seems puzzling. Ya'akob's intention is to impress Esav with his strength and power. Why then does he set forth the two sons who represent to him the spiritual dimension of the twelve tribes? Yosef, who is famous for being a great *saddik* and Yisachar, who represents the epitome of Torah study, should not be the ones who should impress Esav, the great warrior. He should be impressed by seeing those sons who are physically strong and outwardly impressive.

This *Midrash* teaches us that when one wishes to impress the wicked by being pretentious and acting like them, speaking their language, dressing in their fashion, feigning agreement with their misguided philosophies, he is fooling only himself. The most corrupt individual will not be impressed by an impostor. On the contrary, these actions will only alienate him. Ya'akob is showing how one speaks to a wicked person. He says to Esav, "My lifestyle is very different than yours. It is guided by the Torah, its values and heritage. I have raised my children to follow in the paths of their ancestors whose every movement was spent serving Hashem and fulfilling His *misvot*. I therefore hope that by being honest and straightforward with you, I will find favor in your eyes." With self-respect, one achieves the respect and admiration of others. (*Peninim* on the Torah)

Weekly Pele Yoetz

Each week we will offer a brief excerpt from the *sefer Pele Yoetz*. **This week's topic is: *Emunah* – Faith in Hashem (Part I).**