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A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

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פרשת וישב

וַיֵּשֶׁב יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִגְוָרֵי אָבִיו בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן. אֵלֶּה תִּלְדוֹת יַעֲקֹב וְכוּ'. (בראשית לז, א-ב)

Yakov settled in the land of his father's sojourning's, in the land of Canaan. These are the offspring of Yakov ...
(Bereishis 37:1-2)

After devoting just a brief chapter to the genealogy of Eisav and his descendants, the Torah returns in this week's *Sidrah* to the story of Yakov and his family. While the Torah only briefly mentions less significant individuals and generations, it elaborates on important figures. We learn that Yakov returned to settle in the land of his father, Eretz Yisroel, and we also encounter the troubling incident where Yosef was nearly killed and subsequently sold into slavery.

The Meforshim point out that the term used to describe Yakov's dwelling differs from that used for his father, Yitzchok. Regarding Yakov, the *possuk* states: וַיֵּשֶׁב יַעֲקֹב, using the expression of יְשִׁיבָה, meaning to settle. In contrast, it states regarding Yitzchok: בְּאֶרֶץ מִגְוָרֵי אָבִיו, using the term גְּרוּת, meaning to sojourn. This contrast implies that Yakov wished to settle in Eretz Yisroel in a permanent manner, while Yitzchok merely sojourned in the land.

The Midrash, as cited by Rashi, explains that after enduring the suffering and anguish caused by Lavan and Eisav, as well as the incident involving Dinah, Yakov longed to settle down and live in peace and tranquillity. However, this desire was erroneous, and the tranquillity he sought continued to evade him, especially with the anguish of Yosef's disappearance pouncing upon him. Accordingly, the Torah is relating how because of יַעֲקֹב וַיֵּשֶׁב – Yakov's desire to live in tranquillity, it led to יַעֲקֹב וְכוּ' - the incident with Yosef.

Chazal explain the error of Yakov wishing to finally settle down after his long exile and struggles:

צדיקים מבקשים לישוב בשלום, אמר הקב"ה, לא דיין לצדיקים מה שמתקן להם לעולם הבא, אלא שמתקנים לישוב בשלום בעולם הזה!

The righteous seek to dwell in tranquillity, but Hashem said, "Do the righteous not consider that which is prepared for them in Olam Habah to be enough for them that they expect to live in peace in this world as well!"

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* emphasises that the *tzaddikim* should be completely satisfied with simply knowing what awaits them in Olam Habah. They should find contentment in this awareness, which will help eliminate any sense of lack, or feelings of entitlement to peace in this world.

This concept is further elaborated by Rabbeinu Yonah. The *possuk* in Mishlei (2:4-5) states: אִם אָז תִּבְקֹשׁ שֶׁנָּה כַּכֶּסֶף וְכַמְטְמוּנִים תַּחֲפֹשֶׁנָּה. אִז תִּבִּין יְרֵאת ה' וְדַעַת אֱלֹקִים תִּמְצָא, *If you seek it as if it were silver, if you search for it as if it were hidden treasures – then you will understand the fear of Hashem, and*

discover the knowledge of G-d. Rabbeinu Yonah explains that this *possuk* outlines two methods (in addition to others) for genuinely acquiring Torah.

Firstly, one should seek knowledge as one *seeks silver*; this means putting in the effort required to attain it. One must toil to achieve knowledge in the same manner as one seeks to obtain silver. Secondly, one should *search for it as if it were hidden treasures*. This emphasises that the quest for Torah should not be viewed as a burden, but rather as an enjoyable and endearing pursuit. When a person hears about a great treasure hidden in a specific location, the toil and labour required to find it are not seen as inconveniences. Instead, he approaches it with happiness, confident that this treasure will bring him significant wealth and goodness.

Similarly, how can a *tzaddik*, who understands the great rewards and treasures awaiting him in Olam Habah, not feel joy and satisfaction with his immense spiritual wealth? The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 11a) recounts how King Munbaz distributed enormous sums to the poor during years of drought, depleting his personal treasure houses and the wealth accumulated by his ancestors. When asked about this, and why he had not only failed to amass greater wealth but had also diminished what he already possessed, he explained, “Although I may not be accumulating physical wealth, I am gathering treasures in a much better place – Olam Habah. I am creating storehouses safe from danger, in a manner that produces spiritual fruits, for myself and not for others!”

A person searching for treasures is eager and joyful to work diligently, even in challenging, dark and damp conditions. This is because he understands the incredible benefits that will come from his efforts. If this applies to material gain, where there is a risk of losing what one has worked for, it is even more applicable when considering the immense reward for learning Torah and performing *mitzvos*, which are secure from loss and danger. How can someone engage in Torah and *mitzvos*, acquiring incredible goodness in Olam Habah, and not feel fortunate?

Let us internalise this lesson from Chazal: recognising the goodness awaiting us in Olam Habah should inspire feelings of happiness and satisfaction with our current fortune. We should appreciate the immense value of our Avodas Hashem and the reward we will receive, allowing us to shift our focus away from what we lack. By embodying this ideal, may we merit living a life filled with true *simchah* and satisfaction!

This Devar Torah is adapted from ספר וענפיה ארזי אל and is presented by the Gateshead Yeshiva Alumni Association. To receive by email, please register your interest by sending an email to parshasheet@gyalumni.org.