

דרכים בפרשה וישלה

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**ויהי-לי שור וחמור צאן ועבד ושפחה ואשלחה להגיד
לאדני למצא חן בעיניך**

I acquired oxen, donkeys, sheep, servants and maidservants. I have sent [these messengers] to tell my master, to find favor in your eyes.

Yaakov Avinu sent ahead a message to Esav that he acquired oxen, donkeys, sheep, servants, and maidservants. These were sent to find favor in his eyes.

Rabbeinu Bachye asks about the order of the items, that he should have first mentioned the sheep, being that the category called sheep is the choicest from all animals. We see this by Avrohom (12:16), Yitzchak (26:14) and Yaakov (30:43). [Additionally, Rabbeinu Bachye does quote the midrash's reason for starting with oxen, so as to him to Esav the Yosef who was going to be known as an ox (33:17), had already been born. Yosef would be the natural enemy of Esav as the navi tells us והיה בית יעקב אש ובית [יוסף להבה ובית עשו לקש]

So why was sheep not mentioned first? ומה שלא הקדימו בכתוב הזה לפי שלא רצה לפתוח לו בצאן לפי שע"י הצאן נתרוקן עשו מן הברכות וזכה יעקב בהן כענין שכתוב לך נא אל הצאן Rivka had prepared two sheep for Yaakov to use in order to procure the brochos. Upon hearing about the sheep Esav would recall this and get angry.

The obvious question is, if so, why afterwards when he sent the animals did he first send the sheep? Why wasn't he worried about provoking Esav?

The meforshim explain that before Yaakov davened to Hashem, he was scared to provoke Esav. But after davening, he was no longer scared and therefore, he sent the sheep first. By the Avos, the power of tefilla is so strong that after they daven it is as if the matter has already been done. Therefore, for Yaakov Avinu it was as if he was already victorious over Esav.

We find in the words of the Chizkuni (35:26) the same idea regarding Binyamin. The possuk says of his birth ארם - אשר ילד לו בפדן ארם - that it was in Padan Aram. Of course, we know that this was not so. The

Chizkuni explains that Rochel Imeinu said a tefilla in Padan Aram that Hashem should give her another child. After her tefilla she was certain that it would be fulfilled so the possuk already notes his birth from then.

This also explains the Mishna in Brochos (9:1). הרואה מקום שנעשו בו נסים לישראל, אומר ברוך שעשה נסים לאבותינו הזה - במקום הזה - The mishna is discussing the different places where nissim occurred, that there is an obligation to make a brocha upon seeing those places. One of the places mentioned in the gemara is the stone that Moshe sat on during the war with Amalek. But wasn't the nation on the battlefield? The answer is (Maharsha) as we have said the nes occurred at the place of davening that is where the outcome of the battle is determined. What happened at the battlefield is a direct result of the tefilla.

Eretz Yisroel is at war. The battle is happening in Gaza, we must realize that the wars' outcome is a direct result of the tefillos that take place in our shuls and yeshivos. Therefore, (this also means that when we daven we are doing our part)

Another item we can learn from here is with regard to provoking the goyim. If we are davening properly and conducting ourselves as a Yid is meant to, we need not worry that by walking around as a Jew wearing a yarmulka in public that this will cause issues. They may get angry, but Yaakov Avinu teaches us that we must only worry about that before tefilla, not after.

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפּעל