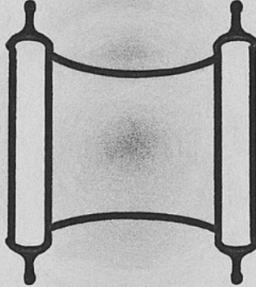


ב"ס"א

Reb Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir

Parshas Toldos



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וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לְהָ שְׁנֵי גּוֹיִם בְּבָטְנֶךָ כִּי־הָ כִּי

And Hashem said to her, "Two nations are in your womb" (Bereishis 25:23)

In Parshas Toldos — "Two nations are in your womb" etc. And in Rashi: "Goyim" is written like "Goi'im" (proud ones), these are Antoninus and Rabbi, whose table never lacked neither radish nor lettuce, neither in the summer days nor in the rainy days.

And Rabbi Meir of Premishlan, of blessed memory, said that the meaning is: the complete person subdues and breaks all physical desires, to the point that even regarding things necessary for the body's sustenance — which of necessity he does — he cools himself, and even for eating he is not driven and desirous, but eats only in order that he will be able to serve Hashem, may He be blessed. Furthermore, in his eating the tzaddik elevates the holy sparks and returns them to their source through his intention and unifications.

And behold, while a person is in his youth, then it is easier for the holy man to think holy thoughts — and also to elevate sparks through his intention, for his mind is clear — but it will be difficult for him to break himself from every bodily desire in the heat of his blood. And on the other hand, in the time of old age, it is easier for him to subdue the desire, but sometimes due to the weakness of his strength he will not be able to have intention in his eating and does not return the sparks to their source.

But Antoninus and Rabbi, due to the greatness of their level, never ceased from their table neither radish — cooling of desire, nor lettuce — returning the sparks to their source, not in the summer days — the days of youth, and not in the rainy days — the days of old age.

פרק'ת תולדות ישני גוים בבראשית' לג'. וברש"י ג'ים' כתיב כמו אחים, אלו אנטונינוס ורבי שלא פסקו מעל שלחנם לא אנון ולא חזרה לא בימות חתמה ולא בימות הגשםים.

ואמר קרב רבי מאיר מפרמיישלאן ז"ל שהכוונה שהאדם השלם מכנייע ומישבר כל מאות גשמיות, עד כי גם לזכרים המקרחים לקיום הגוף שבחכמתו הוא עוזה, מצון הוא, וגם לאכילה אין להוט ומתחאה, אך אוכל הוא בקדוי שיוכל לעבד להשם יתברך, ועוד זאת שהצדיק באכילתיו מעלה הגזוץין הקדושים ומחייבו לשרשון בכונתו ויחוריו.

והנה בעוד שהאדם בוגריו או מהגkal לדהיש הקדוש לחתוב מחותבות, וגם להעלות נצוץין בכונתו, שמהו צלייל, אבל יקשה עליו לשבר עצמו מפל תפאה גופנית ברתיחה דמיו. ולהפק לעתה הנזקנה מהגkal לו הכנעת התאוה, אבל לפעם מיל לריפוי פה לא יוכל לבנו באכילתיו ואינו מחייב הנצוץין לשרשון.

אבל אנטוניניס ורבי לא גזל מזרקתם לא פסק מעל שלחנם לא אנון — קרירות לתאוה, ולא חזרה — חזרה הנצוץין לשרשון, לא בימות חתמה — ימאות הנער, ולא בימות הגשםים — ימי חתמה.

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir

Parshas Toldos

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan explains the verse “Two nations are in your womb” (Bereishis 25:23) as interpreted by Rashi to refer to Antoninus and Rabbi, whose table never lacked radish or lettuce all year round. The radish symbolizes coolness towards physical desire, and the lettuce symbolizes the return of holy sparks to their spiritual source through eating with intention. A truly complete person subdues all bodily desires, eating only to serve Hashem and to elevate sparks through mindful intention. In youth, it is easier to maintain clear thoughts and focus on spiritual intentions, but harder to subdue physical passion. In old age, it is easier to control desire but harder to maintain the same level of mindful concentration due to diminished strength. Antoninus and Rabbi, however, reached such greatness that they never lacked either quality — the coolness toward desire and the spiritual elevation of eating — whether in the “summer days” of youth or the “rainy days” of old age.

Practical Takeaway

Spiritual growth requires both the control of physical desires and the sanctification of necessary physical acts, such as eating, through holy intention. Each stage of life presents its own challenges — youthful passion or the waning strength of age — but a person can strive to cultivate both discipline and mindful holiness at every stage.

Chassidic Story

It is told that once, during a meal, Rabbi Meir of Premishlan paused for an unusually long moment before taking a bite. A student asked why. Rabbi Meir explained that before each mouthful, he would “cool” his personal desire for the food until his only thought was, “May this bite give me strength to serve Hashem.” Only then would he eat. He added, “If you cannot do this for every bite, at least try for the first — for that one can sweeten the rest.” This story echoes his teaching that eating should not be an act of indulgence, but an act of avodah that elevates sparks and returns them to their source.

Source: *Otzar Sipurei Tzaddikim*, entry on Rabbi Meir of Premishlan. **END NOTE]**

וישלח יצחק את יעקב וילך פדנה אֶרְם אֶל בְּנֵו בְּתוּאֵל הָאָרָם אֶחָיו רַבָּה אֶם יַעֲקֹב וְעַשְׂוֹ כ"ה, ה'

And Yitzchak sent Yaakov, and he went to Padan Aram, to Lavan son of Besuel the Aramean, the brother of Rivkah, mother of Yaakov and Eisav (Bereishis 28:5)

Regarding the verse “mother of Yaakov and Eisav,” Rashi, of blessed memory, wrote: “I do not know what this teaches us.” And the commentators wrote that it informs us of the reason why Eisav was born from these tzaddikim — because she was the sister of Lavan, and most children follow the brothers of the mother (Bava Basra 110a).

בפסוק “אֶם יַעֲקֹב וְעַשְׂוֹ”. כתוב ר'ש'י ז"ל: “אַנְיִי יוֹדֵעַ מַה מְלָאָכָנִי”. ומהפרשים כתבו והודיעו לנו הפסה שגולד עשו מצדייקים הלו, יען שהיתה אחות לבו, נירב בנים הולכים אחר אחיו קאם (ב"ב קי).

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir

Parshas Toldos

And as a form of proof — that they are excluded from the category of Bnei Noach — for in their case we do not follow the father. And the holy Rebbe Rabbi Meir of Premishlan, of blessed memory, brought this into the words of Rashi, of blessed memory: “I do not know what...” meaning — what is this, that she gave birth to such a wicked one? It teaches us — because she was the sister of Lavan.

וכקומות ראה דיצאו מכלל בני נח, דלדיrho לא אולינו במר רב. וקרב הקדוש רב מאיר מפראימישלאן זיל הכניס זה בזבורי ריש"י זיל איני ידע מה — רצה לומר: מה זאת שילדה רשות בנה, מלעננו משום שקיימה אהות לבן.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan explains the verse “mother of Yaakov and Eisav” (Bereishis 28:5) in light of Rashi’s comment, “I do not know what this teaches us.” The commentators explain that the Torah reveals here why Eisav, a wicked person, was born from such righteous parents — because Rivkah was the sister of Lavan, and many children follow the character of the mother’s brothers, as taught in Bava Basra 110a. Rabbi Meir reads Rashi’s words as: “I do not know what... it teaches us” — meaning, what is this, that she gave birth to such a wicked one? It teaches us that the reason was her connection as the sister of Lavan.

Practical Takeaway

Even the most righteous lineage does not guarantee righteous offspring, for external family influences can impact a person’s character. One must be mindful of the environments and connections that shape the next generation, and work to cultivate holiness and good influence within the family circle. **END NOTE]**