

# Pri Ha'eiz

## Menachem Mendel of Horodaka

### Parshas Vayishlach:

בְּמִדְרָשׁ (בראשית רבה עו, א), אָמַר רַבִּי פִּנְחָס בֶּן רַבִּי רֵאֲוִי:

*In the Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 76:1), Rabbi Pinchas ben Rabbi Reuven said:*

מִצִּינוּ בְּחֹר שְׂבָאֲבוֹת בְּחֹר שְׂבָנְבִיאיִם שְׁהִיוּ מִתִּירָאִים

*We find that the choicest among the patriarchs and the choicest among the prophets were afraid,*

(שְׁנָאֲמַר: "וַיֵּרָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד" (תהלים קלה. ד.

*as it is said: "And Jacob was greatly afraid" (Tehillim 135:4),*

וְכָתִיב (תהלים קלה, ד): "כִּי יַעֲקֹב בָּחַר לוֹ יְהוָה" וְכֵן

*and it is written (Tehillim 135:4): "For Jacob chose God for himself," etc.*

וְיִמְשָׁה רַבֵּנוּ עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם כְּתִיב (שם קו, כג): "לֹאִי מֹשֶׁה בְּחִירוֹ עָמַד" וְכֵן

*And regarding Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, it is written (Tehillim 106:23): "If not for Moses, His chosen one, who stood in the breach," etc.,*

(וְנֹאֲמַר בְּמִלְחַמַּת סִיחוֹן וְעֹג: "אַל תִּירָא אֹתוֹ" (במדבר כא, לד

*and it is stated concerning the war with Sihon and Og: "Do not fear him" (Bamidbar 21:34),*

מִשְׁמַע שְׁהָיָה מִתִּירָא.

*implying that he was indeed afraid.*

הִנֵּה בְּמִדְרָשׁ הַזֶּה מְנִיחַ כָּל הַקְּשִׁיּוֹת וּמַסְלֵק כָּל הַתְּמִיחוֹת שֶׁכִּנְגַד הַבְּטָחוֹת הַתּוֹרָה עַל צְדִיק וְרַע לֹ

*Behold, this Midrash resolves all the difficulties and removes all the astonishments regarding the Torah's promises to the righteous, who still face hardship.*

"שְׁהָרִי הֵן הֵמָּה שֶׁהִבְטִיחָם הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּעֶצְמוֹ (בראשית כח, טו): "וְהִנֵּה אֲנִי עִמָּךְ וּשְׁמַרְתִּיךָ בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵךְ

*For these are the very ones whom the Holy One, blessed be He, personally promised, as it says (Bereishit 28:15): "And behold, I am with you and will guard you wherever you go,"*

(וְכֵן מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם בְּכַמָּה הַבְּטָחוֹת (שמות ג. יב וְעוֹד

*and likewise, Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, with several promises (Shemot 3:12 and elsewhere),*

(וְנִתְיָרְאוּ שֶׁמָּא יִגְדֵם הַחַטָּא, כְּמוֹ שֶׁמְבִיא רַשִׁ"י ז"ל (בראשית לב, יא

*yet they were afraid that sin might cause harm, as Rashi explains (Bereishit 32:11).*

וְהִנֵּה עֵינֵי שֶׁמָּא יִגְדֵם הַחַטָּא, בְּכַדִּי לְהַבְיִנוּ עַל עֵינֵי הָעֲבוּדָה אֲמִתִּית הִיא שֶׁכָּל צְדִיק וְצְדִיק עֹקֵר תֵּכֵן כּוֹנֵנוֹ בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂי רְצוֹנָיו בְּכַדִּי

*("lest sin cause harm," to understand it regarding true service, means that every righteous individual focuses their intent in all their actions on fulfilling the will of their Creator, "to bring satisfaction to their Creator, who spoke, and His will was done" (Rashi on Zevachim 46b).*

וְאַפְלוּ אִם הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְבַטֵּחַ לוֹ כָּל הַטּוֹבוֹת וְהַשְׁמִירָה מַעֲלָה

*Even if the Holy One, blessed be He, promises them all good and supreme protection,*

מִתִּירָא שֶׁמָּא יִגְדֵם הַחַטָּא גִּסּוֹת לְבוֹ בְּהִבְטָחָה זוֹ בְּעֶצְמוֹ

*they fear that sin may arise from arrogance of heart due to this very promise,*

וְיִתְרַחַק מֵאֲתָו יִתְבָּרַךְ

*and that they might become distanced from Him, may He be blessed.*

מִמִּילָא יִסְתַּעֲפוּ שְׁאֵר הִירָאוֹת הַתַּחֲנוּנוֹת לְהַתְעוֹרֵר עָלָיו

*Consequently, lower fears arise and awaken upon them.*

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ומעתה יש להתירא לעולם יותר שהוא צדיק ובטוח מאתו יתברך אליו נאם ה' והבטחתו שלא ירחיקוהו.

*From this perspective, a righteous person should forever maintain fear, even while trusting in God's promise that He will not distance them.*

**פחדתו**

*Their fear*

"והנה על ענין "וישלח יעקב מלאכים אל עשו",

*And regarding the matter of "And Jacob sent messengers to Esau,"*

ומבאר בזהר הקדוש (וישלח קסו, א) גדל החכמה והתבונה בכונת מעשה זו

*it is explained in the Zohar (Vayishlach 166a) the great wisdom and strategy in the intent of this action,*

ובמדרש (בראשית רבה עה, ג) משמעותו אפכא שהיה לו לילך לדרך

*whereas the Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 75:3) implies the opposite—that he should have gone on his way,*

(ובזה [שששלח] היה כ"מחזיק באזני כלב עבר מתעבר" וכו' (משלי כו, יז

*and by doing this [sending messengers], it was as if "he grabs the ears of a passing dog and provokes it" (Mishlei 26:17).*

(אבל תכן הענין הוא "עדות ה' נאמנה מחכימת פתי" (תהלים יט, ח

*However, the essence of the matter is: "The testimony of the Lord is faithful, making the simple wise" (Tehillim 19:8).*

שעקר עסק התורה והמצוות צריכות כננה להבין פחיתותו ופחיתותו איך קשור בחמירות

*For the essence of engaging in Torah and mitzvot is to understand one's lowliness and simplicity, and how one is bound to materiality,*

אדם מאדמה (בראשית ב, ז) הולך אחר ההבל ויהבל

*a person formed from the earth (Bereishit 2:7), who follows vanity and futility:*

גשמי חמר מעכר בכל השגותיו ורצונותיו ומדותיו ונחת רוח שלו

*Physicality, the material obstructs all his perceptions, desires, attributes, and sense of satisfaction,*

הכל הבל אחר הידיעה גדל האין סוף מאתו

*all of it is vanity after realizing the greatness of the Infinite One,*

וכל מאויו וחפצו ורצונו להתדבק בו יתברך

*and all his longing, desire, and will is to cleave to Him, may He be blessed.*

- ואינו יכול, בהבינו גדל ההרחק מאתו

*Yet he cannot, for he understands the vast distance from Him—*

(והשגתו כי הוא פתי חסר לב (משלי ט, ד

*and his comprehension is as one who is simple and lacking understanding (Mishlei 9:4).*

באין מבין חכמתו יתברך ויתעלה העליונה

*He cannot grasp His wisdom, may He be blessed and exalted above all,*

לכן כל מגמתו להתחבט בעסק התורה והמצוות

*therefore, all his intent is to engage himself in Torah and mitzvot,*

(שהם מועצות ודעת אלקים "פן יראה בעיניו ולבבו יבין" (ישעיהו ו, י

*for they are the counsel and knowledge of God, "lest he see with his eyes and understand with his heart" (Yeshayahu 6:10),*

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(על ידי עסק המצות שהם עטין כמובא בזהר (יתרו פב, ב).

*through the engagement in mitzvot, which are strategies, as explained in the Zohar (Yitro 82b).*

ובאמת כי עסק מצות כזה, היא הנותנת חיים לעושה

*Indeed, such engagement in mitzvot is what gives life to those who perform them,*

(וה' יתן חכמה מפיו דעת ותבונה" (משלי ב. ו')

*"And the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Mishlei 2:6),*

(להבין ולהשכיל "שכל טוב לכל עשיהם" (תהלים קיא, י

*to understand and attain wisdom, "A good understanding have all who do them" (Tehillim 111:10).*

וזהו: "עדות ה' נאמנה מחכימת פתי" פתי דיקא,

*And this is: "The testimony of the Lord is faithful, making the simple wise"—specifically the simple,*

מי שמחזיק את עצמו לפתי בעיניו ודורש ומבקש עצות לנפשו

*one who regards themselves as simple in their own eyes and seeks advice for their soul,*

(שהם המצות שישכילו אותו "משכלים כזהר הרקיע (דניאל יב, ג

*for the mitzvot enlighten them, "And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament" (Daniel 12:3),*

(וידע דעת עליון" (במדבר כד, טז).

*and they will know the knowledge of the Most High" (Bamidbar 24:16).*

וזהו: "עדות ה' נאמנה" - שהם אותיות דעות ה

*And this is: "The testimony of the Lord is faithful"—they are the letters of "the knowledge of the Lord,"*

כי המצות הם הדעת שמחבר מחברת הקדש

*for the mitzvot are the knowledge that connects and unites the holy.*

מה שאין כן מי שהוא חכם בעיניו אין המצות מחכימות אותו,

*However, one who is wise in their own eyes will not gain wisdom from the mitzvot,*

שאין מחכימות רק מי שהוא פתי בעיניו ומבקש חכמה

*for they only provide wisdom to one who considers themselves simple and seeks wisdom.*

- אבל מי שהוא חכם וצדיק בעיניו ואינו חסר מכלום

*But one who regards themselves as wise and righteous and lacking nothing—*

אם כן אינו מבקש בעסק התורה והמצות להאירו ממכלותו

*such a person does not seek in their engagement with Torah and mitzvot to illuminate themselves with His kingship,*

כי לאורו ילך, ואם כן מה תאיר לו

*for they believe they already walk in His light, and if so, what can illuminate them?*

ומה העצה היעוצה על ידי המצוה, אם אינו שואל בעצה מה יתן ומה יוסיף לו המצוה, שאין נותנין עצה אלא למי ששואל כהגן.

*And what is the advice offered through the mitzvah, if one does not seek advice? What benefit or addition will the mitzvah provide him? For advice is only given to one who asks properly.*

והנה הענין יעקב ועשו האמורים בפרשה הם על דרך זה

*Now, the matter of Jacob and Esau mentioned in the parasha is along these lines,*

כי ענין עשו הוא ענין התנגדות - שעומד כנגד כל קרבת אלקים

*for the concept of Esau represents opposition—standing against any closeness to God,*

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"יִחְפֹּץ לְהַפְרֵ עֲצָתוֹ בְּגִדְלוֹת הַפָּסוּלָה, כְּמֵאֲמָר (בראשית כז, טו): "עֲשׂוּ בְנֵה הַגָּדֹל  
*seeking to disrupt His counsel with vain grandeur, as it says (Bereishit 27:15): "Esau her elder son,"*

וְאַחֲרָיו כִּי כְשֶׁמְפִילֻ בְּגִדְלוֹת נֹקָם הוּא וּבִעַל חֲמָה אַחֵר כִּי לְהִנָּקֵם מִמֶּנּוּ.  
*and afterward, when he falls from his greatness, he becomes vengeful and wrathful, seeking revenge.*

"וְזֶהוּ שְׂצוּהָ יַעֲקֹב לֵאמֹר לַעֲשׂוּ (שם לב, ד): "כֹּה תֹאמְרוּן לְאֲדֹנִי לַעֲשׂוּ וְכוּ' עִם לְבֹן גְּרָתִי וְאַחֲרָיו עַד עֵתָהּ,  
*And this is why Jacob commanded [his messengers] to say to Esau (Bereishit 32:5): "Thus shall you say to my lord, to Esau... I have sojourned with Laban and stayed until now,"*

וּפֶרֶשׁ רַשִׁי"י ז"ל: וְתָרִי"ג מִצְוֹת שֶׁמִּרְתִּי,  
*and Rashi explains: "And I kept the 613 mitzvot,"*

פְּרוּשׁ: שְׂכַל הַמִּצְוֹת שֶׁשִּׁמְרָתִי עִם לְבֹן הָיָה שֶׁהוּא הֵיכָר שֶׁרָצִיתִי לְהִנָּצֵל מִמֶּנּוּ,  
*meaning that all the mitzvot I observed while with Laban (representing the evil inclination) were to protect myself from him,*

וַיְהִי לִי שׂוֹר וְחֹמֹר צֹאן וְעֶבֶד וְשִׁפְחָה - שֵׁהֵם הָיוּ עוֹלָם כָּל הָאָדָם,  
*"And I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, servants, and maidservants"—these are worldly possessions, like any other person,*

וְלֹא נָעֲשִׂיתִי שָׂר וְחָשׁוּב - כְּפֶרֶשׁ רַשִׁי"י ז"ל.  
*"But I have not become a prince or notable," as Rashi explains.*

(וְהִנֵּה לְהָיוֹת "יַעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֹהֶלִים" (בראשית כה, כז)  
*Now, since Jacob was "a simple man, dwelling in tents" (Bereishit 25:27),*

הָיָה מִשְׁמַעוֹת הָיוּ מְלָאךְ אֱלֹקִים וְחָשׁוּב גָּדוֹל,  
*it would imply that he was an angelic figure, a significant and lofty individual,*

לְכֹן הִשְׁפִּיל עַצְמוֹ וְהָיָה שֶׁפֶל בְּעֵינֵי עַצְמוֹ כִּי לֹא הִגִּיעַ עַד עֵתָהּ אֶל הַמְנוּחָה,  
*but he humbled himself and considered himself lowly, for he had not yet attained true rest,*

אֲבָל "עִם לְבֹן גְּרָתִי" שְׂכַל מֶה שֶׁשִּׁמְרָתִי וְעָשָׂה וְלָמַד, הִכָּל עִם לְבֹן עַדִּין, לְהִנָּצֵל מִמֶּנּוּ וְלִשְׁתִּי עֲצוֹת בְּנַפְשׁוֹ.  
*but rather "I have sojourned with Laban"—all that he observed, did, and learned was still with Laban, to protect himself from him and to devise strategies for his soul.*

וּבִזָּה נִיחָא תְּמִיחָה הַמְּפָרְשִׁים שֶׁשִּׁלַּח יַעֲקֹב לַעֲשׂוּ דְּבָרִים מִהֶפְכִּים הַכֹּנֵעַ וְגִדְלוֹת שֶׁהוּא "עִם לְבֹן גְּרָתִי", וְלִפִּי זֶה הִכָּל אֶחָד.  
*This resolves the question of the commentators as to why Jacob sent Esau contradictory messages of submission and greatness, for "I have sojourned with Laban," and according to this, it is all one matter.*

And behold, it is known that Jacob, the choicest of the patriarchs, and Moses, the choicest of the prophets, embody the concept of the "chosen" (*bachur*), which signifies something intermediary that reconciles between two opposing sides. The third element comes and resolves the opposition between them; this is the "chosen," the one who unites opposites, referred to as *da'at* (knowledge), which connects and integrates everything into simple unity.

For truly, "From the Most High, evil does not emerge" (Eichah 3:38), for He is good and bestows goodness. However, all evils that appear to arise or measured attributes—all lead to a singular place, achieving the ultimate good. It is only man who does not understand, for "My people go into exile for lack of knowledge" (Yeshayahu 5:13). Knowledge (*da'at*) is the force that connects the conduct of attributes through higher wisdom.

Thus, the earlier sages understood and connected, as in the case of Nachum Ish Gamzu, who said, "This too is for the good" (Ta'anit 21a), and the story of Rabbi Akiva (Berakhot 60b), where every event ultimately worked out for his

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benefit. This understanding—that connection or faith in simple unity amidst all transformative circumstances—is the sweetening of judgments.

Therefore, Jacob and Moses, who were called "chosen" (*bachur*), embodying *da'at* (knowledge) and the power to connect, experienced fear. This was because they needed to navigate both extremes, as is the way of the one who resolves and connects, integrating strength (*gevurot*) with kindness (*chasadim*)

And in truth, if there had been only kindness without any fear, one would surely proceed confidently on their way, as explained in the Midrash regarding "And Jacob sent [messengers]." However, in truth, Jacob was the choicest of the patriarchs, holding both extremes, as mentioned above. Therefore, great wisdom was involved in "And Jacob sent [messengers]," as explained in the Holy Zohar. He experienced fear and elevated and sweetened the fear to higher and higher levels, a fear of "lest sin cause harm," as mentioned earlier. Through this, he subdued the external strengths and fears.

Similarly, Moses, our teacher, peace be upon him, who was the "chosen one" (*bachur*) and embodied the unifying knowledge (*da'at hamechaber*), was also inclined to fear. However, his fear was rooted in humility, a fear born of lowliness. May God merit us to be among the perfect ones who fear Him. Amen.