

SCHEDULE

שבת קודש

Mincha Erev Shabbos	→	4:25 PM
Friday Night Learning		7:30 PM
Daf Yomi		7:30 AM
Shacharis-Followed by Kiddush		8:30 AM
-Sof Zman K"ס-	9:31 א"ג <	8:49 א"מ
Mincha - Followed by Shalosh Seudos		4:25 PM
Maariv -		5:34 PM
Father/Son Learning		6:30 PM

Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Sunday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman	7:30 AM
Shacharis	8:30 AM
Mincha / Maariv	4:30 PM

Monday - Friday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman	5:45 AM
Shacharis	
Monday, Thursday	6:40 AM
Tues., Wed. , Friday	6:45 AM
Mincha (Mon-Thur)	1:45 PM
Daf Yomi (Take II)	9:00 PM
Maariv (Mon-Thur)	9:45 PM
Maariv (Tuesday and on)	תן טל ומטר

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Issue#261

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Who Is That Knocking at My Door?

Esav is overwhelmed by his brother Yaakov's largesse. Seeking to respond in kind he generously offers to escort Yaakov and assist him on his journey home. Esav even volunteers to slow down and travel at the family of Yaakov's pace.

(אחרי שישב עמו, נסעה ונלה האלה לנגדך (בראשית לג יא), *Travel on and let us go- I will proceed alongside you.* Yaakov puzzlingly, responds by restating the obvious:

... אדני יודע כי הילדים רכים והצאן והבקר עלות עלי דפקום יום אחד ומתו כל הצאן (שם שם ג) *My lord knows that the children are tender, and the nursing flocks and cattle are upon me; if they will be driven hard for a single day, then all the flocks will die.*

Esav was quite aware of the nature of Yaakov's large and young family as well as his cumbersome possessions. It was precisely with that reality in mind that he preempted with the offer to "proceed alongside" Yaakov, intimating his willingness to walk at their speed. How then did Yaakov's response convincingly deter Esav from participating in the journey? The Midrash (ילקוט תולדות ק"א) reveals that there was much more going on between the lines here.

Apparently already in the womb, Esav and Yaakov agreed to split the pot, with Yaakov taking *"The World to Come"* and Esav *"This World"*. Upon Esav having now discovered Yaakov's evident "this worldly" successes, he exclaims to Yaakov in bewilderment, "Where did you get all these possessions from?" It wasn't part of the deal! The Midrash goes on to relate how Esav calculates to himself that if these physical benefits are what is in store for the one who rescinded the pleasures of "this world", how much greater must be the reward in "the world to come" that was duly Yaakov's.

It was in this vein that Esav sought to "accompany" Yaakov. It wasn't merely a brotherly gesture of help, but rather Esav suggesting they now divide both worlds evenly.

The Midrash continues that Yaakov responded that the "tender nature of the children" disqualify them from undertaking the requisite "suffering" this agreement would entail. It is not clear as to what suffering Yaakov is referring to. Certainly not having any entitlement to "this world" should be even more difficult and painful than having fifty percent rights to the benefits of this world?

The key to resolving this dilemma lies in a careful reading of Esav's initial inquiry as recorded in the Midrash.

Esav pointedly questions Yaakov, *Where did you get all these possessions to rejoice with?* מנין לך כל המנוח שתשמח?

Esav has plenty of material bounty, what he pines for however is happiness.

Esav considers the emptiness of a life in the pursuit of corporeal success alone. He wants meaning that only striving for "otherworldly" values can bring. He seeks this as an additional objective he believes can bring him joy.

What Esav fails to comprehend is that "material gain" is never an "objective". It is a benefit that accompanies the goals of the spirit if G-d so deems it suitable for one's spiritual benefit. Only when the primary objective is closeness to G-d can it be possible to live happily with the gains G-d chooses to dispense to us on that journey.

One who views these two as separate goals will never be happy. When material wealth is perceived as an independent objective, it brings only misguided expectations, disappointments and ultimately frustration. One can not devote oneself to a 50/50 relationship with G-d.

Esav is incapable of relinquishing his objective of success. He is ready to devote himself "part-time" to Heavenly service, but only as detached from his personal striving for success. Furthermore, Esav sees a relationship with G-d as "another" worthwhile pursuit, failing to understand the value in the bond, not just in the value of future "dividends".

Life is about seizing the "moments" we face. Happiness is not contingent on "achieving" objectives. We must certainly set real and meaningful goals and strive for them, but the joy lies in the pursuit as well. Every day is an independent adventure to grab at morsels of eternity.

This is what Yaakov is emphasizing in his reference to the "tender children" and "nursing flocks" who need to travel (שם שם טז) *slowly, following the pace of the work.*

We must approach life one step at a time, for in each step lies greatness.

The words Yaakov uses to explain to Esav the deficiency in his philosophy is most fascinating.

Yaakov tells Esav that with his skewed notion of success, *if they*

will be driven hard for a single day, then all the flocks will die.

The root **דפק** appears only two other times in all of TaNaCh.

It appears once in Neviim during the harrowing episode of the Concubine in Giveah. A certain Levite lodged there and the debase inhabitants of the city came **מדפקים** על הדלת (שופטים יז כב), *beating on the door*, demanding the host give his guest over to them so they may commit indecent acts of immorality with him.

In Kesuvim it makes its appearance in the touching metaphor of the Beloved, G-d, seeking to get the attention of his bride, the Jewish nation.

קול דודי דופק (שה"ש ה ב), *A sound! My Beloved knocks.*

A דופק, is also a heartbeat. Our hearts "pound" away consistently. The ultimate question is; what makes our hearts race?

Is it the base passion for comfort, pleasure and physical satisfaction that pulses within us or do we hear the longing of Heaven knocking desperately at our door?

The former is the primary cause of anxiety and despair, the latter the life force that can assure us happiness in life.

Yaakov instructs Esav that unless one is ready to submit one's personal expectations and goals to a Higher authority the heart will overload with stress that will eventually bring one's doom. When a heart pounds with a desperation for material happiness, it will take its toll.

Perhaps I may take the liberty to homiletically translate this verse; *דפקים יום אחד ומתו (the heart) will "beat" (unhealthily) in one day and bring about its death.*

The Zohar (רעיא מהימנה אמור) indicates that this episode took place on Yom Kippur itself.

The Midrash (ב"ר ב ג) teaches on the verse (בראשית א ה) *And there was evening and there was morning, one day*; evening refers to Esav, morning to Yaakov and "one day" is the Day of Atonement.

Yom Kippur is what anchors each day of the year. The reality that becomes so clear to us on that day gives definition to the meaning of each day. It is the focal point and compass we set our lives to. **אחד**, It unifies everything we do into one seamless unit, inspiring us to hear the knocking on the doors of our hearts by our Beloved. If we respond to His call we will live each moment with joy.

At the end of our portion there is a listing of the eight kings that ruled over the nation of Esav, Edom. It records how each reigned and died, except for the last king, **Haddar**, where it only mentions his rule but not his death.

We are taught by the Kabalists that this is a mystical allusion to the coming of the Moshiach who will live forever. Haddar, meaning beauty, glory, hinting to those wondrous days.

In Divrei HaYamim however, that was written by Ezra, it indeed states that he died.

The Mahari Saruk a disciple of the Holy Arizal reconciles this contradiction by stating that Moshe who did not record his death sensed life, a **דופקא דליבא**, *the pulse of the heart*, whereas Ezra couldn't pick one up.

Rav Shimshon Pincus explains this to mean, that in the days prior to Moshiach it will appear as if the **דוד**, the beauty and joy of Yiddishkeit will be dead. But Moshe assures us it pulses deeply within each one of us. We must rediscover it.

This is the ultimate showdown between Yaakov And Esav. We will be lured into distractions and objectives that will deafen us from hearing the knock from Heaven on the doors of our hearts.

We have to reprioritize our goals. We must allow the blood of inspiration to course through our veins. We have to unify all that we do to the common goal of getting closer to G-d.

This is what Yaakov meant in his response to Esav, for to adopt Esav's plan would mean inevitably enduring much pain. If we live with artificial objectives we are doomed to suffer from frustration and despondency.

We must restore the joy in our service of Hashem by setting our compass straight and responding to His loving call that pulsates within each one of us.

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צבי טייכמן

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Avos U'Banim

6:30 PM Motzei Shabbos

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After 7:30 PM