

SCHEDULE

שבת קדש

Mincha Erev Shabbos	→	4:28 PM
Friday Night Learning		7:30 PM
Daf Yomi		7:30 AM
Shacharis-Followed by Kiddush		8:30 AM
-Sof Zman K"Z-	9:44 א"ג <> 9:01 א"ז	
Mincha - Followed by Shalosh Seudos		4:30 PM
Maariv -		5:38 PM
Father/Son Learning		6:30 PM

Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Sunday עשרה בטבת

Fast Starts	5:57 AM
Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman	7:30 AM
Shacharis	8:30 AM
Mincha	4:25 PM
Maariv	5:10 PM
Fast Ends	(42min) 5:29 PM

Monday - Friday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman	5:45 AM
Shacharis	
Mon., Thursday	6:40 AM
Tues., Wed., Fri	6:45 AM
Mincha (Mon -Thur)	1:45 PM
Daf Yomi (Take II)	9:00 PM
Maariv (Mon-Thur)	9:45 PM

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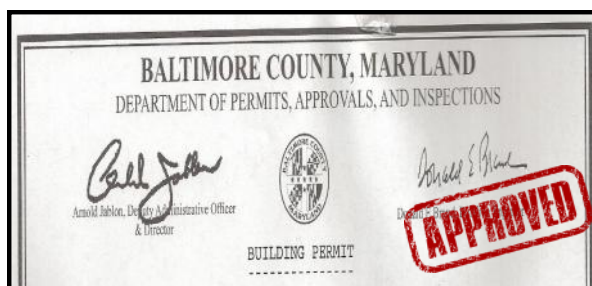
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Shalosh Seudos

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Issue#264

RABBI'S MESSAGE

You Can't Take the Country Out of Salem!

This week we read about the most pivotal moment of our entire history, the descent of Yaakov to Egypt, that set into motion the long series of *Galut*os, exiles we have yet to recover from.

In just a little over three months from now we will be sitting once again at the Seder table recalling how Yaakov Avinu fatefully went down to Egypt, *forced* by G-d's word, continuing to quote the verse that asserts, *ויגר שם (דברים כו ה), and he sojourned there, and adding: This teaches us that Yaakov our father did not go down to settle permanently, but merely to sojourn. (הגדה של פסח)*

We will then recite the verse in our portion that describes this most critical juncture:

ויאמר אלפרעה לגור בארץ באנו כי יראן מרעה לצאן אשר לעבדך כירכב הרעב בארץ כנען ועתה ישכרנו עבדך בארץ ויאמר אלפרעה *sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for the sheep of your servants, for the famine is severe in the Land of Canaan. And now, may your servants please live in the Land of Goshen.*

This first detail sets the tone for all ensuing exiles. In an application of the principle of *מעשה אבות סימן לבנים*, the actions of our Patriarchs are a portent for their children, the key to survival in *galus* is to emulate Yaakov in our intention never *להשקיע שם*, to settle permanently there. The moment we do, we are doomed.

Yet in examining more closely this verse there seems to be an evident contradiction.

The brothers initially affirm their purpose in merely *לגור*, to "sojourn" here, implying impermanence, yet conclude their remarks with a request *ישכרנו* to "live" in the Land of Goshen, utilizing the verb *שב*, which generally signifies "dwelling", connoting a more settled and enduring existence. Wouldn't it have been more appropriate to maintain the theme by sticking to the same verb and asking that they may *יגורו*, to please "sojourn"? Was there already perhaps a weakening in their resolve?

The Talmud tells us that yet from the times of the Patriarch Avraham and on, *"Yeshiva"* never ceased from functioning among the Jewish nation.

The Midrash adds that Yaakov's dispatching of Yehuda ahead of the family to prepare for their impending arrival in Goshen, was primarily to set up a place of learning, a "Yeshiva".

The concluding verse in our portion portrays the happy and successful settlement of the family of Yaakov in the land of Goshen:

Thus Yisroel settled in the land of Egypt in the region of Goshen; they acquired property in it and they were fruitful and multiplied greatly.

The *Targum Yehonson* interprets the term "ישב" used here, as an allusion to their "שיבה", a reference to their having established Houses of Learning in Egypt. Why is a center of learning called a "Yeshiva"? Is it simply because they "sit" for long periods of time in devotion to their studies? Is this an affirmation of that derisive title the Maskilim so mockingly foisted on *Yeshiva Bochurim* as proverbial "beynk kvetchers", bench warmers?

Yaakov Avinu is actually presented for the very first time as a "beynk kvetcher", a *ישב* אהלים (בראשית כד כב), an "abider" of tents. There is no emphasis on the purpose of his sitting merely that he sat!

Twenty two years after taking a vow, Yaakov is instructed by G-d to finally travel back to Beth-el in order to fulfill it. He is commanded however, that prior to his constructing an Altar there, he must first *and dwell there*.

The Ramban and Seforno both understand this as a directive "... לכוין דעתך", "כוון את לבך למקום" laboratory where one who is fortunate, learns how to recede from a maddening world of distraction and trains oneself to be attentive to and absorbed in the word of G-d.

ישב means much more than to just sit. It implies calmness, concentration and purposeful thought. The skill one attains in his sojourn through the Halls of Study is hopefully the ability to take that quality and implement anywhere one may find oneself. One who is able to disengage from the cacophony of diversions that assault us constantly, isolating oneself in an island of thoughtful contemplation at any given moment in devotion to Torah and its message, is one who has attained the quality of "Yeshiva".

Years ago there was a popular commercial slogan for Salem cigarettes, which was advertised as "country fresh", that went more or less as follows: "You can take Salem out of the country but you can't take the country out of Salem!"

In the same vein we may avow; "You can take the person out of the Yeshiva but you can't take the Yeshiva out of the person!"

The exact wording in the Talmud is instructive. *מימיו של אבותינו לא פרשה ישיבה מן*, from the days of our Patriarchs, "Yeshiva" never separated from them. Shouldn't it have read *מישיבה* *להם*, they never parted from the "Yeshiva"? Evidently it is a much greater talent to be able to take the "Yeshiva" with you, rather than be able to merely escape within its walls!

Their declaration to "sojourn" in Egypt was a testament to their awareness of the need to remain detached from a culture that sought to captivate them. Their entreaty of *ועתה ישכרנו*, and please let us "live", was their expressing the desire to emulate the illustrious Avos, who taught how one can calmly envelop oneself in the insulation of the walls of the "Yeshiva", even as we walk among society!

Yaakov Avinu represents the pillar of Torah. It wasn't the years in the Bais Medrash of Shem and Ever that symbolized his greatness but rather in his ability to take the Yeshiva wherever he went. He was the penultimate "ירוש" who embodied the ability to radiate the inspiration and calmness of the message of Torah even while facing the greatest challenges and diversions.

The Rambam writes:

כל איש מישראל, חייב בתלמוד תורה בין עני בין עשיר, בין שלם בגופו בין בעל יסורים, בין בחור בין שהיה זקן גדול שתשש כחו, אפילו עני הממור על הפתחים, ואפילו בעל אישה ובנים חייב לקבוע לו זמן לתלמוד תורה ביום ובלילה... **רמב"ם** הלכות תלמוד תורה לא 48

Every man from Israel is obligated to study Talmud: whether rich or poor, of whole body or one who suffers afflictions, whether a young man or an elders whose energy has waned, even a poor beggar who knocks on doors, and even the husband of a woman with children, he must dedicate time for the study of Torah during the day and night...

It seems odd that specifically regarding the command to learn Torah the Rambam finds it necessary to emphasize that it applies universally, despite the excuses one may find to exempt oneself. Would I think that one is free of any other *mitzvah* due to hardship or distraction?

Perhaps the Rambam wants to teach us that it is possible to bring the thrill of Torah, the light of learning and its inspiration to any circumstance one may face in life. One can bring the "walls of the Yeshiva" along one's sojourn in this world wherever one goes.

May I suggest that the model for the Rambam's teaching is Yaakov Avinu himself.

Rich or poor... Didn't Yaakov face abject poverty when he was stripped of all his possessions by Elifaz, and attained great wealth after his arduous sojourn in the House of Lavan? Yet he remained steadfast in his being the *ירוש* אהלים at all times.

Whole of body or one who suffers affliction... Yaakov endured much pain after his "wrestling match" with the angel of Esav, limping and ailing, though in victory. He nevertheless maintained his same to devotion to Torah study as when he was the mighty Yaakov upon his return from the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever, who could flip boulders like the cork of a bottle.

Whether a young man or an elders whose energy has waned... Whether as a young boy of thirteen who is already known as the "Abider of Tents" or the elderly Patriarch who looks much older than his years due to his unusually hard life, Yaakov is the ultimate "Yeshiva Bochur" to the end.

Even a poor beggar who knocks on doors, and even the husband of a woman with children...

In the early days of his family during his "employment" under the crooked Lavan, Yaakov was treated like a beggar at every step, with his evil father in law taking advantage of him at every turn. Later even after achieving financial success, Yaakov was encumbered with several wives and the challenges associated with it, as well as dealing with a large family and its unique dynamic. He nevertheless never waned, despite these many distractions, in his utter devotion to Torah study.

We must each make a personal *Cheshbon HaNefesh* in evaluating how clearly we view our travels in this world as merely a "sojourn". Or are we perhaps anchored to the forces of gravity of worldly pleasures and goals. Although we have taken ourselves out of the "Yeshiva" but how much have we excised the "Yeshiva" from ourselves?

If we are to be as successful as Yaakov in this world, we must follow his lead in living inspired by Torah, accepting the reality that it can be achieved despite the challenges we each face, if we commit to be *kovea itim*, regularly setting aside meaningful time, allowing the warmth of Torah to enrich our families lives.

באהבה,
צבי טייטלבוים



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Avos U'Banim

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FRIDAY NIGHT LEARNING

After 7:30 PM

