



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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Thoughts on VAYECHI Year 24

by Dayan Abraham David

Yaacov Avinu after blessing the sons of Yosef, Efraim and Menashe, turns to Yosef and gives him an extra portion, Shechem. '*Asher lakachti miyad haemori becharbi vubekashti*' which I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow. The Midrash explains this in Parashat Vayishlach; Levi and Shimon were about thirteen years old when they attacked Shechem '*Vayabo'u el ha-ir betach*' they came to the city with faith feeling secure., '*Betuchim hayu al kocho shel hazaken*' depending on the strength of their father Yaacov. Yaacov even though he was against what they had done went out to defend them from the neighbouring tribes who came to attack them with his sword and bow at the gates of Shechem. The Targum throws a new light to this statement '*Becharbi vubekashti*', translating this '*Betseluti Vubebauti*' with my prayers and my beseeching, that Yaacov's sword was really his prayers and his bow his beseeching. The success of Yaacov's defence in Shechem

was not the physical sword and bow but his prayers and beseeching. The Sefer Meshech Chochmah explains that '*tseluti*' refers to the prayers that have been established. These are the tefillot we pray daily, Shaharit, Mincha, Arbit with the text set out by our great Rabbis of the '*Anshei Keneset Hagedolah*, and '*beBauti*' my beseeching refers to the private prayers a person adds on himself or prays at any time in his own words. The prayers we pray in the Tzibbur with the liturgy of our great Rabbis are like a sword effective even if only aimed in the general direction, as a sword at close quarters. So those tefillot, even if we do not have complete kavanah right through, can be effective. For the words have been established and dedicated with kedushah which helps us along. But the private beseechings and prayers of our own, need complete concentration and kavanah, otherwise they are lost, as one who shoots an arrow from a bow. If he does not aim then it will go wide. This type of prayer is compared to a bow. The victory of the Jew is not fought only with a sword and bow but with the prayers and beseeching of Am Yisrael, its Tzaddikim and those

who learn the Torah. We find that the blessing Yaacov gave Yehudah '*Yadcha beoref oiybecha*', your hand should be on the neck of your enemies, who will turn to run away from you. This was because Yehudah had lowered his head in shame to save Tamar when he admitted that she was pregnant from him, when he might have found some other excuse to save her. But he admitted the guilt of his action and was praised for it. This blessing was seen to be fulfilled by King David as it says '*Veoiibe tatu li oref*', and my enemies have given me the back of their neck, David and his descendant also merited this as he too admitted his sin. We see that it is not the power of the sword or bow that wins battles for the Jewish People but the prayers and their worthy deeds as with Yaacov, Yehudah and David who went to war not only with weapons but with prayer and their faith in G-d.

TORAH GEMS

Ya'acov Avinu gathers his sons together just before he dies. It would seem that it was to bless them as he had blessed Yosef's sons, Efraim and Menashe, and as Moshe Rabenu did before his death in '*VeZot haBeracha*' having learned from Ya'acov. But in fact Ya'acov seems to be giving criticism and praise to the '*shevatim*'. Yes, Ya'acov was telling them their faults and their virtues so that they would learn to correct their faults and strengthen their good characteristics for the future. No

flattery or words of blessing just from the mouth but a sincere message from the heart for their good so they should be worthy of the blessings of Abraham, Yitzhak and Ya'acov. He tells Reuben: you are my first born and from you should have come the Kehuna and the Malchut '*yeter se'et veYeter az*', but for the fact of your '*Pachaz Kamayim*' your quick reaction in anger to given events without enough thought and restraint. This was when you took up the cause of what you mistakenly thought was the honour of your Mother and disturbed the spiritual arrangements of my conjugal efforts, '*Ki alita mishkeveh avicha az chillalta yetzuee alah*'. Even though Reuben had done teshuva for it, that only helped to eradicate the effects of the actual deed but he could not be Cohen or King because he did not have control over such a fault.

Yehudah and his descendants merited the '*malchut*' kingship. As the passuk tells us '*Ata yoduchah achecha yadcha beoref oiybecha yishtachavu lecha bene avicha*'. Yehudah, your brothers accept and admit to your being king and they bow down to you. You will merit (as David Hamelech did) to subjugate your enemies with your strong hold on the nape of their neck. Yehuda merited the acceptance of his brothers to the extent that all Jews are called '*Yehudi*'. As the Midrash says: Why? This is because he publicly admitted to the embarrassing episode of Tamar, his daughter-in-law. This would have seemed the worst possible PR for someone

aspiring to be a King and leader to admit publicly to the circumstances of having made Tamar his daughter-in-law pregnant thinking she was a harlot. But it was just this characteristic of admitting the truth at whatever cost to himself which brought him the respect of his brothers. This combination of strength and humility merited Yehuda the kingship. The same characteristic was displayed by David Hamelech when he was faced by the Navi in the episode of Bathsheva.

We see the opposite with Yerabam ben Nabat whose arrogance destroyed him from this world and the world to come, when he refused to go up to the Temple for the festivals. This was because only the seed of David could sit in the Beth Hamikdash and he would have to stand thus giving up some Kavod. He feared that this would affect his kingship so he took the path of stopping the Bene Yisrael from being '*Olei Regel*', pilgrims, and corrupted them to worshipping the calves he set up on the paths to Jerusalem. He became a '*Choteh*', sinner, and '*Machte Harabim*', causing others to sin, instead of being a great King. Yehuda also became a great leader in Torah and his descendants filled the Sanhedrin because of his humility and the quality of taking responsibility. As the Rambam explains "*lo bashamayim heh lo besgasi ruach*"; the Torah will not be found among the haughty and proud hearted only among the humble who give of themselves.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

Rabbi Chaim of Brisk once solicited the community for funds for a worthy cause. He knew that one wealthy man was reluctant to part with his money, and he sought some method to obtain a reasonable donation. He therefore sent a messenger to the man, asking him to promptly appear in his study.

The wealthy man, anxious because of the urgent tone of Rabbi Chaim's request, dropped everything and responded immediately, whereupon Rabbi Chaim told him of the need for funds for this particular project.

The wealthy man became quite agitated. "Was that any reason for you to send for me? Is it not simple courtesy that when you want something from me you come to me rather than calling me to come to you?"

"You are right," Rabbi Chaim said. "But if I had come to you and you had refused, I would have wasted my time." "Well isn't my time valuable too?" the man asked. "Why didn't you consider that you would be wasting my time by calling me here?"

Rabbi Chaim responded, "Because if you donate properly, your time will not have been wasted. You have the option to make your time well spent. Had I come to you, I would not have had such an option."

The man appreciated Rabbi Chaim's reasoning and contributed properly.

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT

ISSUR OF CHADASH

1) According to the Shulhan Aruch (Maran) it is forbidden from the Torah to eat '*Chadash*' – any of the five cereals planted after Pesach until after the 16th Nisan of the following year. This '*issur*' applies even outside Israel and even cereals cultivated and belonging to non-Jews are forbidden until the 17th of Nissan outside Israel.

2) Where there is a doubt if the cereals were planted before or after Pesach of the previous year, there are opinions that make a '*sofek sofeka*' to allow it. There are still others who rely on the opinion that it is only an '*issur de Rabanan*' outside Israel and does not apply to those lands far away from Israel nowadays. But the majority of Poskim say one should not rely on this and should be '*machmir*' on himself. Anyway according to Maran whom we follow it is '*asur*'.

3 Even though there is no spring wheat in this country but for some years now spring wheat from Canada is imported and used in bread. This problem begins to affect us from about this time of the year until Pesach. There are a number of bakeries who have decided not to use '*Chadash*' such spring wheat, so one should enquire at the bakery he buys bread from. With cereals there is also some '*Sofek Chadash*' and some authorities give out notices to this effect. Please look out for this. There is a problem with strong flour for baking bread this contains spring wheat, so dates and makes should be checked by Notices of relevant Kashrut Authorities.

**We have a regular Youth
Minyan organised by
David Douer followed by a
kiddush**

***Avot vu banim is one and a half
hours after Shabbat
Please try to attend***

***If you wish to sponsor a
Kiddush***

***Please contact
Nathaniel Bendayan
07825 871749***

***For Seuda Shlishit
or to rent the
Nancy Reuben Hall
for a Simcha***

***Please contact
Yanky David 07725 408724***

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences	3:37 pm
Shabbat terminates	4:53 pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat	3:20 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat	
Shacharit	8:30 am
Mincha on Shabbat followed by Seuda Shlishit & Arbit	3:20 pm
Shacharit Weekdays with netz	7:30 am
Shacharit Sundays with netz	7:30 am
Mincha	1:30 pm
Arbit	7:30 pm