IN CONTROL OF HIS FATE

What is added by the words “before him”? Lev Eliyahu explains that we are taught in Avos (4:13): “One who does a mitzvah acquires one advocate. One who commits a sin acquires one prosecutor.” In other words, from every mitzvah that a person does, a “good” angel is created. For example, it is well-reported that Rabbi Yosef Karo was regularly visited by an angel who identified himself as “The Mishnah”. (Rabbi Yosef Karo had undertaken a special study of Mishnah, and, after a time, this angel began to speak to him on a regular basis.) The good angels that are created by a person’s mitzvos go before the Divine Throne and lobby on the person’s behalf. On the other hand, from every sin that a person commits, an impure angel is created who attempts to harm the person.

This sheds light on the meaning of the words “before him”. Yaakov did not want “trouble” angels from Heaven to go to Eisav. He therefore chose his own angels, who were “before him” as a result of the mitzvos that he had performed, to send to Eisav.

Eisav, too, had angels that were created as a result of his deeds – in his case, bad deeds. It was from these that he chose the 400 “men” who were traveling with him to meet Yaakov.

From the above, a person should realize that his fate is in his own hands. A person has the ability to create good angels to assist him in his spiritual and material endeavors and he has the ability to create impure angels to harm him. Each person can make this choice for himself.

The Gemara (Berachos 15b) says: “If one reads Shema and is meticulous in pronouncing its words, Gehinnom is cooled down for him.” What would a person not do to escape from even a moment in Gehinnom? Here the Gemara demonstrates to us that one’s fate is within his own control.

YAAKOV WAS CONCERNED

Yaakov had been assured by God that he would always be protected and that he would be saved from Eisav. Nevertheless, his fear was that his merits had subsequently been depleted. - Rashi, based on Brachos 4a

This concern on the part of Yaakov must be understood. Parashas Derachim explains that there are many mitzvos whose rewards are to be realized in this world, yet the full amount of reward is reserved for the World-to-Come (see Mishnah Pe’ah 1:1). In other words, even if a person does benefit from his mitzvah performance, he has no reason to be anxious or worried, for the entire degree of reward is still maintained and is not affected by that which he has already enjoyed. Since Yaakov had fulfilled all of the mitzvos (see Rashi 32:5), and had certainly excelled in the area of Torah study, which tops the list of mitzvos that fit into this category, we must examine the nature of his concern at this point.

The only guarantee that the reward for a mitzvah is preserved is when a person benefits from it in a manner which appears to be within the confines of nature. When one’s experiences are clearly supernatural, then the reward is diminished and is not guaranteed to remain complete. Yaakov said that he felt at risk due to the great kindnesses which God had provided. In particular, he noted that he had crossed the Jordan River with his staff (v. 11). Chazal tell us (see Rashi 32:11) that this means that when Yaakov approached the river, the waters miraculously split as he touched
his staff to them. This was typical of the type of divine guidance and assistance which he had been afforded, and it was precisely for this reason that he feared that his mitzvah observances no longer served as a reservoir of merit from which to draw.

ATTRIBUTING CREDIT

When Yaakov Avinu makes this humbling statement, he thanks Hashem for all of the kindness that was done for him, implying that the chesed was done in his merit. Rabbi Eliezer from Vilna comments that this statement of Yaakov seems atypical of his humble character. We would have perhaps expected Yaakov to attribute all of the kindness done for him to his father and grandfather, Yitzchak and Avraham, rather than to his own merit.

We see from this, says Rabbi Eliezer, that in regard to kindnesses already received from Hashem, a person should attribute them to himself in order to diminish himself through realizing the greatness of Hashem. It is only when a person is asking Hashem to help or save him from something that is taking place or going to take place that a person should mention the merits of the Avos as a merit for being saved. This is how Shlomo HaMelech spoke when the pasuk says (Divrei HaYamim II 6:42): “Remember the pious deeds of David, Your servant.” It was only when Shlomo mentioned his father David’s honor that he was saved.

Additionally, he says, this is what the Gemara in Sota (5a) means when it says: “Rabbi Chiya the son of Ashi said in the name of Rav that a talmid chacham must have one eighth of an eighth [of haughtiness].” This is alluded to by our pasuk which is the eighth parshah in the parsha, which is the eighth parsha of the Torah. This comes to teach us that only in this manner is a person allowed to take credit and say something happened because of him.

LINGERING DOUBTS

In Oznaim LaTorah, Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin discusses the famous point that despite this promise that Hashem made to him, Yaakov was afraid that due to his sins he would lose those favors (see Rashi on Verse 11). Rambam, in his introduction to the Mishnah, cites the Gemara (Shabbos 55a) which states that once a promise of good is proclaimed by Hashem it is never rescinded. If so, why was Yaakov afraid?

An answer to this question is given by the first Rosh HaYeshiva of Telz, Rabbi Eliezer Gordon, in the name of Rabbi Yisroel Salanter. He gives an example of two hired workers. One was hired to do a job and the other was hired to be a watchman over the employer’s property. For some reason, the first worker was not able to do the job. Yet, since he was a poor man, the employer decided that as a charitable act he would pay the worker his wages as if he had done the job. The second worker was negligent in his job as watchman, and some of the employer’s property was damaged. Halachically, the watchman should pay for the damage. Since he too was a poor man, the employer applied the watchman’s wages to cover the damages that he had caused. However, as an act of charity, the employer declined to collect further damages from the watchman.

Mitzvos are divided into two categories, positive mitzvos (חזקה чזק), things a person must keep himself from doing. Chazal tell us that if a person intends to do a mitzvah but is prevented from doing it, Hashem still rewards him as if he had done it. However, if a person was not careful, and he stumbled by doing a forbidden act, Hashem’s attribute of mercy comes through with the person’s teshuva, Hashem will dismiss the wrongful act. The promised payment balances out the debt owed for the damage. Yaakov was afraid that he might have unintentionally violated a negative commandment, and even though Hashem had promised him reward, perhaps the reward would be dispensed to balance out the debt he would owe for violating the negative commandment.

DINAH WAS MISSING

And where was Dinah? (Since Yaakov actually had twelve children at the time, one is missing.) He put her into a chest and closed it up so that Eisav couldn’t see her. Therefore, Yaakov was punished later by having her fall into the hands of Shechem, since he withheld her from his brother. - Rashi, from Bereshis Rabba 76:9
The Vilna Gaon asks how it was clear to the Midrash, quoted by Rashi, that Dinah was the missing child. How do we know that it was not one of the sons?

Chazal tell us (Sefer Aggadata on Esther Ch. 1) that the Beis HaMikdash was built on land belonging to the tribe of Binyamin, since Binyamin was the only son of Yaakov who did not bow down to Eisav. Thus, those who showed subservience to their evil uncle would not merit having the location of the Shechina in their territory. From this fact, the Midrash deduces that it must have been Dinah who was missing, since, had it been one of the brothers, then there would have been a second son of Yaakov who had not bowed down to Eisav, and he, too, would have had a portion of the holy Temple in his midst.

However, we might say that, in fact, it should be obvious that Dinah was the one missing. Wouldn’t Yaakov want to protect her from Eisav? The answer appears in the second part of Rashi’s explanation. Yaakov must have been aware that Dinah had the ability to bring Eisav to do teshuva if there was still a spark left in him. It would have been a great act of chessed to bring him back. Still, the fact that Yaakov shut her up in a chest indicated that he had totally given up hope of bringing Eisav close to the family of Yaakov. Perhaps this is why the punishment came in the form of Dinah’s abduction by Shechem.

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RETURNING THE GIFTS

A simple businessman once said to Rabbi Hoshia: “If I tell you something interesting, will you repeat it in the academy in my name?” When the rabbi agreed, the man said, “All the gifts that Yaakov sent to Eisav will be returned by the nations of the world to the Mashiach in the Days to Come. Thus it is written (Tehillim 72:10), ‘The kings of Tarshish and the islands will return gifts.’ It does not say that they will give gifts, but that Yaakov had given Eisav five hundred fifty animals. Why would this gift be brought to the Mashiach, who will be the greatest king of all time?

Rabbi Shmuel Primo explained it in the following way: The Talmud (Taanis 25a) relates that a man once stopped in the home of Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa. He went on his way, but forgot to take a number of chickens with him when he left. Rabbi Chanina took care of them, and in a short time the chickens began to lay eggs. When the eggs hatched, Rabbi Chanina was able to sell the chickens, and before long he had enough money to buy some goats and sheep. In time these flocks also increased under the care of the rabbit. When the man finally returned, Rabbi Chanina was able to give him a number of large flocks of goats and sheep.

The same is true of the gifts that Yaakov gave to Eisav. When the Mashiach comes, Eisav’s descendants will have to return everything that these gifts yielded in the course of thousands of years. This will be a huge amount. Yaakov therefore was careful to give Eisav a gift containing many species. He knew that ultimately all would be returned with abundant interest. In the Days to Come, however, these gifts will be returned to the Mashiach, and Eisav’s descendants will admit that “we are secondary; you are the true firstborn. Yaakov legally and honestly bought the birthright from Eisav”.

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SHABBOS PROTECTS US

We have a hallowed duty to call out to Hashem in times of adversity. Klal Yisrael is facing threats, both spiritual and physical, and the situation demands our response. The need to strengthen the observance of Shabbos is a world-wide national concern and priority.

In his introduction to The Laws of Shabbos, the Mishnah Berurah writes that the merit of observing Shabbos according to halachah will have the effect of granting one forgiveness for all his sins. As the Talmud says, “Whoever keeps Shabbos according to its law will be forgiven of his sins even if he has sinned as much as the generation of Enoosh, as it is written (Yishayahu 56:2) ‘Fortunate is the one who keeps Shabbos as it is written (Yishayahu 56:2): ‘Fortunate is the son of man who will take hold of it. Whoever keeps Shabbos as it is written (Yishayahu 56:2): ‘Fortunate is the son of man who will take hold of it. Whoever keeps Shabbos as it is written (Yishayahu 56:2): ‘Fortunate is the son of man who will take hold of it. Whoever keeps Shabbos as it is written (Yishayahu 56:2): ‘Fortunate is the son of man who will take hold of it. Whoever keeps Shabbos as it is written (Yishayahu 56:2): ‘Fortunate is the son of man who will take hold of it. Whoever keeps Shabbos as it is written (Yishayahu 56:2): ‘Fortunate is the son of man who will take hold of it. Whoever keeps Shabbos as it is written (Yishayahu 56:2): ‘Fortunate is the son of man who will take hold of it. Whoever keeps Shabbos as it is written (Yishayahu 56:2): ‘Fortunate is the son of man who will take hold of it. Whoever keeps Shabbos as it is written (Yishayahu 56:2): ‘Fortunate is the son of man who will take hold of it. Whoever keeps Shabbos as it is written (Yishayahu 56:2): ‘Fortunate is the son of man who will take hold of it. Whoever keeps Shabbos as it is written (Yishayahu 56:2): ‘Fortunate is the son of man who will take hold of it. Whoever keeps Shabbos as it is written (Yishayahu 56:2): ‘Fortunate is the son of man who will take hold of it.

The point of the words “according to its law” mentioned in the above Talmudic
questions is as follows: It is well-known that there are 39 major categories of Shabbos labors and that each category contains numerous talados (sub-categories). In the Talmud Yerushalmi, Chapter Klal Gadol, it is said: Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish analyzed the law of Shabbos to the extent that they discovered 39 sub-categories for each major category. Thus, it is to this that the Talmud alludes when it says that one should keep Shabbos “according to its law” - that one should not violate it in any single detail.

Yet, how may one reach this level of piety where Shabbos will be observed in all its details? The best advice for this is that one be sure to undertake the effort of studying the laws of Shabbos and, after studying them, to constantly review them, in order to know what is forbidden and what is permitted. It would be fitting for anyone who fears and dreads transgressing the word of God to form groups for the study of the laws of Shabbos in order that no one will stumble in any of them.

It is well-known that observing Shabbos properly hastens the arrival of the Redemption. As the Sages have said (Shabbos 118b): “If the People of Israel would observe two Shabbos days, they would be redeemed.”

Questions for Thought and Study
1. Regarding the gifts that Yaakov sent to Eisav, the אֶבֶן (sheep) are mentioned last of the cattle. Why did Yaakov reverse the order, as אֶבֶן were always considered the finest of cattle (as listed in other places)?
2. Which two merits did Eisav have that caused Yaakov to be afraid of him?
3. What did Yaakov ask for when he prayed to Hashem with the words "אֲרַעְנִי" ("rescue me, please")?
4. Why does the Torah need to tell us (Pasuk 34:1) that Dinah was born to Leah and Yaakov?
5. By telling Rachel "וְיָדוּ יֵדְתֶּךָ מְרֹדֹת אֶלָּבָּה" - “also, this one will be a son for you” – how did the midwife assuage the pain that she felt in childbirth?
6. How did Binyamin’s name indicate that he was special to Yaakov?

Halachic Corner
Is it permissible for children to drink milk after meat? The Gemara says that after eating meat, a person should wait six hours before drinking milk or eating any dairy products (תור השלים). This applies to an adult. The Talmud (Chulin 105a) explains that children, who digest food faster than adults, and in whose mouths food does not remain in the teeth as long, need not wait the full six hours. Nonetheless, this leniency should be limited to milk after fowl rather than after meat since fowl can be consumed faster.

Questions for Thought and Study
1. How did Binyamin's name indicate that he was special to Yaakov? See Radak 35:14
2. What did Yaakov ask for when he prayed to Hashem with the words "אֲרַעְנִי" ("rescue me, please")? See Daas Zekeinim 32:8
3. By telling Rachel "וְיָדוּ יֵדְתֶּךָ מְרֹדֹת אֶלָּבָּה" - “also, this one will be a son for you” – how did the midwife assuage the pain that she felt in childbirth? See Ohr HaChaim 35:17
4. How did Binyamin’s name indicate that he was special to Yaakov? See Radak 35:14

This Week Likutei Peshatim is Sponsored

- By Hebrew Theological College extending heartfelt condolences to FYHS student, Coby Kamish, and his family on the loss of their wife and mother, Simone Kamish, מ"ס, and to Sue Klein & HTC Board of Governors member Jordan Klein on the loss of her father, Mr. Larry Heyman, מ"ס.
- Hebrew Theological College’s Gourmet Torah at Shallots Bistro will take place this Thursday, December 19, 12:35-1:15. Rabbi Zvi Zimmerman will speak on “Peaceful Life In a Hurried World”.
- Complimentary appetizers as well as a discounted menu available for shiur participants. Men and women invited to attend. For more info: Rabbi Joshua Zisook at 847-982-2500 or jzisook@htc.edu.
- Yeshivas Hakayitz 2020 enrollment is now open. Eligibility: Boys entering grades 6 through 11. Camp dates: June 30 - July 27. Join the 200 campers & counselors from coast to coast for the 41st year of summer camp’s most unique experience. We offer exciting Torah Studies, competitive sports leagues, electives, bunk activities, awesome daily trips, & the most inspiring Shabbosos. For application, related camp media, and more info: please visit yhk.htc.edu.
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- TAG Chicago is here to help! Now selling kosher email, talk and text, and talk-only phones. We offer free volunteer assistance to keep your devices safe. Visit tagchicago.org. Call 847-920-8245 or email Help@TAGChicago.org to book your appointment. 8150 Central Park, Skokie. Remember - “Call before you buy!” We will help guide you.
- Security and awareness: Please join us at KJBS, 3701 Devon Avenue, as members from the Chicago Police Department will present a workshop on safety, security and awareness. Open to all members of the community, this Tuesday night, December 17th, at 7:00 PM.
Women & Girls 14+: Join No Shame On U & Keilim, Sat. night, Dec 14, 7:30, at Chicago Torah Network for a free screening of Angst, a documentary, not available on streaming platforms or DVD, designed to raise awareness among kids, teens, educators, experts & parents. The 60-minute film will be followed by a panel of mental health professionals from our community addressing issues raised in the movie & answering your questions. Info: Helena Cohen 773-456-7050 or Miriam Ament 773-398-8488.


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Become a more confident speaker and leader! Toastmasters has over 16,000 clubs worldwide to help people improve their public speaking skills. We are trying to gauge the interest in creating a new Toastmasters Club in the Chicago Jewish community. If you may be interested in joining 90-minute meetings 1-2 times per month, please contact Ari Siegel at publicspeakerschicago@gmail.com.


State Representative Yehiel Kalish and Illinois Department of Revenue Director David Harris invite the community to a Town Hall, this Monday, December 16, 6:30-8:00 PM, at Lincolnwood Public Library, 4000 Pratt, Lincolnwood, to discuss the current fiscal challenges facing the State of Illinois, as well as the impact of the proposed Fair Tax on the state's budget as well as on the community.

Yachad seeks a full-time Chicago Chapter Director to add to its dynamic team. Some responsibilities include the supervision of all programming and related activities, strategic initiatives, and stewardship of existing and future organizational partnerships. Works closely with local staff and national team. Please send a résumé with a cover letter to hermann@ou.org or to cohene@ou.org. No phone calls, please.

Congregation Ezras Israel Family Chanukah party, this Sunday, December 15, 6:00-8:00 PM. Children: Scales and Tails (no fur) Zoo. For adults: Art project – Iris folding, led by Reena Sakols. Easy yet sophisticated art. No talent needed. Successful outcome guaranteed. Light dinner included. Call for cost and reservations 773-764-8320 or online: EzrasIsrael.com. 7001 N. California. Chicago.

Following last week's tragic car accident in Israel that claimed the lives of former Chicoans Tzipi Rimel 77, and 3-week old daughter Noam Rachel 7, and caused terrible injuries to Rabbi Efraim Rimel and his son Ira, the community of Neve Tzuf, where the Rimels now live, has created a crowdfunding campaign to raise money for both the short-term & long-term needs of the family. To contribute to this effort, please visit tinyurl.com/rimel-fund or the KINS website www.congkins.org.

Last chance to RSVP for the Event of the Year! The Q2, Midwest NCSY's ultimate trivia experience, is just one week away, on Saturday night, December 21, at the Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center. The event will honor Noah & Suzanne Mishkin and Yossi & Shuli Tsadok and feature guest host Meir Kay. Doors open at 7:30 PM with a Dinner Reception, and the Game begins at 8:15. RSVP now at midwest.ncsy.org/theyq.

Looking for ideas to build confidence and cooperation in your children while enhancing family relationships? Attend the ATT’s 33rd Annual Rabbi Isaac Mayefsky Memorial Lecture this Motzaei Shabbos, December 14, 2019, at the ATT, ICJA entrance - 8233 Central Park Avenue, Skokie – 8:00 PM, featuring Rabbi Levi Feldman, who will present the topic: “Inspiring Our Children in 2020”. There is no charge for admission. For more information, call the ATT at 773-973-2828.

Chanukah Bash at Bernard Horwich JCC! Kick off your family Chanukah celebrations with this community-wide event. See the lights glow at our family Glow Party! Enjoy music by DJ Ariel, inflatables, crafts, sufganiyot bar, and squeeze your own olive oil with YU Kollel Torah Mitzion, the community of Neve Tzuf, where the Rimels now live, has created a crowdfunding campaign to raise money for both the short-term & long-term needs of the family. To contribute to this effort, please visit tinyurl.com/rimel-fund or the KINS website www.congkins.org.

The Chicago Center expresses its gratitude and appreciation to Congregation Or Torah, Kehilat Chovevei Tzion, and to Young Israel of Skokie, as well as the entire Skokie community, for the warm reception and participation throughout last week’s Shabbat Refuah Shabbaton with Rabbi Dr. Aaron Glatt.

The Ner Foundation and Ohel Shalom Torah Center are pleased to announce the next lecture of Rabbi Daniel J. Raccah’s Personalities in the Bible series, titled: “Reuven: The Peril of Impetuoseness”, to be held this year at Shabbat, December 14th, at 7:30 PM, at Ohel Shalom, 2949 W. Touhy. Please join us. The next Shiur will be on December 21st.

ATT thanks the community for its support of its Annual Dinner. Nearly 350 people came to celebrate Jewish education & honor Northside Community for the Aged Park Plaza with the Barney Goldberg Pillar of Education Award for its generous endowment of $5 million to ATT’s Reach Program & to recognize 3 outstanding educators: Sari Kravitt (HT) - top award sponsored in memory of Gayle Anne Herwitz, Betty Hainsfurther (ACHDS), & Breindy Miller (JDBY), recipients of the Hartman Family Fdn Educator of the Year Awards.

The 7½ year cycle is nearly complete! Celebrate this historic Torah event with men, women, and children across our community on Sunday, January 5, at the Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center. Order tickets at TheChicagoSiyum.org or call 773-279-8400. You can receive your tickets by mail if ordered by December 22. Mincha by Wednesday, December 18. Mincha at 2:45 PM. Join a magnificent celebration of Torah study. Make a memory you will long cherish.

CMC is honored to have Dr. Esther Shkop as our special guest speaker for our next weekly woman’s class. The topic will be “Rachel Finds Her Voice”. This week, woman of all ages are invited to attend. Please join us at no charge on Wednesday, December 18th, 1:30 PM, at 2939 Touhy Avenue. Transportation available for seniors.
Yachad thanks the KJBS community and Hillel Torah for partnering with us this Shabbos on our Juniors Shabbaton. We look forward to a Shabbos filled with ruach, friends and fun! We also can’t wait to see our friends of all ages at our Chanukah Carnival with Or Torah, this Sunday at 12:30 PM at Or Torah. #BecauseEveryoneBelongs.

*Beginning this Monday morning, December 16, & continuing for 36 hours, Yachad is celebrating its 36th anniversary (16 years in Chicago) by raising $100,000. All funds raised through our site at https://upreaching.com/yachad/chicago-yachad-giving-day-2019 support our operation in Chicago. For maximum impact, make your annual contribution &/or fulfill your outstanding pledge during this campaign. Join our WhatsApp/texting squad and enjoy gourmet treats. Info: cohen@ou.org; 844-4-YACHAD.

Hillel Torah’s Early Childhood Program welcomes current and prospective families to our Sunday Funday this Sunday, December 15, from 10:00-11:30 AM! Preschool and Kindergarten children and their parents are invited to a fun-filled morning at our preschool campus, 8825 East Prairie in Skokie. Join us for a morning of experiential and interactive Chanukah-related activities, led by our engaging and talented teachers. Info: margot.parnass@hilleltorah.org.

JDBY-YTT seeks qualified candidates for lead & asst. teachers for our licensed childcare program that we are planning. Lead teachers need minimum of 60 credits of which 6 must be in early childhood; assistants need h.s. diploma. Full-time & part-time positions available. For info or to apply: Mrs. Malka Wachman 773-465-8899 x636 or email hr@jdbyytt.org. Part-time primary grades teacher asst. in JDBY for immediate employment - 12:15-4 PM. Call Mrs. Rana Wechsler 773-583-5329 x402 or email rwechsler@jdbyytt.org.

JDBY-YTT is also seeking an Executive Assistant for our very busy business office. The ideal candidate will possess a passion for organization, ability to multitask, excellent verbal and written communication skills, and advanced computer skills, including complete familiarity with Microsoft Office. Submit résumé by email only to hr@jdbyytt.org—include several references.

JDBY-YTT seeks as well an Assistant Tuition Manager to join the tuition management team and assist in the financial aid and tuition process. The position is 25-30 hrs/wk. The ideal candidate will be highly organized, financially literate, with good communication skills, and attention to detail. Send résumé to hr@jdbyytt.org with “Assistant Tuition Manager” in the subject line. Include several references.

This Monday & Tuesday! Chicago Women Charity Players presents Les Misérables, a CWCP adaptation benefiting the Sharlene Levinson Bikur Cholim, Chicago. Don't miss your chance to see one of the most popular musicals in the history of theater. Tickets will be available for sale at the door! Monday, Dec. 16, & Tuesday, Dec. 17, 7 PM, at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts. Sponsorship opportunities still available. Contact cwcpickettsgmail.com or call 773-465-6576. Women & girls only.

By Nachie & Marci Siebzener wishing mazal tov to our son, Ari Siebzener, on becoming an NASM certified personal trainer, and wishing him much hatzlacha in his personal training business helping men in our community to a healthier more fit lifestyle. He can help you too – be in touch with him.

By the Paris and Neuman families in memory of beloved father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Rabbi Dr. Nachmun Paris, z”l, on the occasion of his yahrtzeit on 22 Kislev. (Or Torah)

By Max and Mary Sutker and Louis and Lillian Klein, z”l. May their memory be for a blessing.

Likutei Peshatim is endowed by Les & Ethel Sutker in loving memory of Max and Mary Sutker and Louis and Lillian Klein, z”l. May their memory be for a blessing.

Answers:

1. Yaakov thought that Eisav would be sensitive to ḥesed, as Yaakov obtained the blessings of the firstborn by serving ḥesed to Yitzchak.
2. Eisav had honored his mother and father for the years that Yaakov was away, at a time when Yaakov did not do so. Additionally, Eisav lived in Eretz Yisrael during the time that Yaakov was living outside of Eretz Yisrael once he left for Charan.
3. Yaakov was pleading with Hashem to save him, using the term ḥayah (please). The term ḥayah also indicates a sense of urgency. Yaakov pleaded with Hashem to save him now, so that he would not have to recoup his possessions from Hashem (as promised) and he should not lose them in the first place.
4. The Torah is first telling us that Dinah was a full sister of the children of Leah and they would exact vengeance for her (as Shimon and Levi did). Afterwards, the Torah mentions that she was a daughter of Yaakov and all of her brothers would avenge her if necessary.
5. Binyamin, unlike all the other tribes, was born with two twin sisters. The midwife was telling Rachel that the “two” (”also”, or “extra one”) is an extra sister, which will also be a blessing for you. Another explanation is that in those days a woman was in more danger of dying giving birth to a girl than giving birth to a boy (see Niddah 31a). In order to allay those fears, the midwife was reassuring Rachel that she was a daughter of Yaakov and all of her brothers would avenge her if necessary.
6. The name ṣimʿanah is a contraction of ṣimʿanah ḥayah (the son of my right). As “right” is indicative of importance to a person, Yaakov was indicating Binyamin’s importance to him as he was to be his youngest son.

Prepared by Rabbi Ben-Zion Rand, Editor, and Mrs. Naomi Samber, Managing Editor
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