

Parshas Vayishlach

This week's Parsha is Vayishlach, the Parsha that has in it some influential stories that shape the way for the future, specifically, the spiritual conquering of Yakov over Esav. One lesson I think we can take away from the Parsha is that we must make ourselves a vessel to receive Hashem's blessings, and we must plan within nature what to do, but Hashem will take care of the rest, and we must believe it.

Although Yakov could have acted entitled and done no work to shape his life, he nevertheless planned and worked to shape his life within Teva, and Hashem ultimately brought about the outcome we know needs to happen. For example, at the beginning of the Parsha, Yaakov split his family into two, in case, b'teva, Esav would try to wipe them out. In the end, and after the battle with Esav's angel, the spiritual fate of Esav was concretized, and Yaakov's place as the spiritual forefather of our nation was confirmed, in all ways.

Ramban explains that the battle between Yakov and Esav's angel represents the Golus, which is accurate in the dichotomy between Yakov and Esav. When one is "up," the other is "down". Yitzchak promised Esav "Italy," which is how we know Esav is our enemy even in Golus. It was the Romans (i.e., Italy) that destroyed the second Beis Hamikdash (when we were up and went 'down'), and we have been in Golus since. Within Golus, we will also be continuously overpowered by all sides, who will try to break us spiritually and annihilate the Jews. Our goal will be to remain steadfast with Hashem and do our part to ensure the spiritual end remains connected to

and with Hashem. Then we will merit the outcome of Ovadiah: that Mashiach will come, and we will overpower Esav. More specifically, the older will serve the younger, as was said to Rivka.

Since we know the outcome, we can act entitled, not do the work, and rely on the fact that if we believe the prophecy, the outcome will happen. But we must also take a lesson from Yakov not to do that, and still prepare and do our work here, and Hashem will do the rest. The act of being blessed and ensuring our safety won't necessarily come from acting entitled; instead, we must do our part, plan our safety, which in this case is the spiritual safety, and we must do our part to ensure that we are staying spiritually safe and on top of everything we need to. Then we know Hashem will do his part. From this Parsha, we can understand why the Lubavitcher Rebbe was so hellbent on ensuring we light up the world with spiritual light by doing Mitzvos, and, more than that, on ensuring that we get others to do Mitzvos.

In this way, we will conquer Esav's angel, and we will merit the coming of Mashiach, and this will happen in our time.

Good Shabbos