

## התייחסות באומות העולם הרב שעפטל נויברגר

Many years ago, when Ariel Sharon was being very strong about things, R. Shach zt"l gave a very pointed *schmuess* about how we really should interact with the *Umos HaOlam*. He based it upon a Sforno in this week's *parsha*. When Yaakov met Esav, the Torah tells us that he assembled his children in a specific order and he went out in front of them and, as the *posuk* says, (בראשית לג, ג) "...ווישתחו ארצה שבע פעמים עד גשתו עד אחיו". Rabbeinu Bachye explains the reason he bowed down seven times was to be *meramez* to the idea that *tzaddik* can fall seven times and still get up.

The Sforno writes that changed Esav his mind about destroying Yaakov in a second because of the *הכנעה* demonstrated by Yaakov Avinu in bowing down to him. And, had the *Baryonim* of *Bayis Sheini* gone about their business with the *הכנעה* as well, the *Beis HaMikdosh* would not have been destroyed. We all know that instead, they provoked confrontation with the *Goyim* by burning down all the storehouses of food, thereby forcing the rest of the *Yidden* to fight for their lives. They could have pursued a more diplomatic route, or at the very least used those supplies which the Gemara in *Gittin* says could have lasted for twenty-one years of siege. R. Shach cited this Sforno to show how important it is to comport ourselves with the *הכנעה* when dealing with the *Umos HaOlam*.

From this *parsha* of Yaakov Avinu's interaction with Esav, I would like to understand what the *הכנעה* means. Clearly, it does not mean giving in on any issue. We see that when Esav attempts to return the gifts to Yaakov, Yaakov begs him to keep them because it will bring him *ritzuy*. He doesn't give in to Esav's will, but he says by way of supplication, entreating Esav to keep the gifts. (Esav says, (לג, ט) "יש לי רב", and Yaakov responds with "יש" (לי כלי" (לג, יא).

Then, Esav invites Yaakov to come live alongside him- (לג, יב) "נסעה ונלכה ואלכה לנגדך". He promises that Yaakov can live his own lifestyle and he won't *chepper* him at all. Yaakov's reply is that his children are young and his cattle are too much. If they were to travel at Esav's pace, they would all die. Rather, you [Esav] travel at your pace, and we will go at ours, and we will meet you at *Say'ir*. We have to live separately, you at your pace with your way and me with mine. Yet, he says it in a nice, cordial way. Of course, *Say'ir* is a reference to "ועלו מושיעים" "...בהר ציון לשפוט את הר עשו והיתה לה' המלוכה". That is the only time Yaakov says he can live with Esav.

For us, this *posuk* tells a *gevaldigge* story in how Yaakov begged out of Esav's offer to live as neighbors. The Esav of the United States (Western Civilization comes from Esav) over the last 150 years or so, invited *Yidden* to come to America with no governmental restrictions on living as *Yidden*. In fact, this *malchus shel chessed* even supports our *chinuch* to a certain extent. (Hopefully that support won't go away.) There are numerous other items in which *Yidden* are beneficiaries from this government. But, look at the price we paid to come live next door to Esav. Look what it cost us. Look at how many *doros* we lost and how we continue to bleed.

Baruch Hashem, we have an *Olam HaTorah*, and *Olam Chassidim*, there are *ehrllicher Yidden*. We have found ways how to function as proper *Yidden* in this world. But if we look at the whole body of Klal Yisroel, this is what Yaakov Avinu was afraid of. He told Esav that going Esav's pace to live with him would yield "ודפקום יום אחד", losing his whole legacy in one day. Esav knows that if Yaakov comes to live him, he'll win the war. We are witnesses to this reality.

Again, let us see how Yaakov handles this pressure. He employs הכנעה in dealing with Esav. Even in Esav's third request and final request this is how Yaakov composes himself. Esav offers to leave some of his men behind to assist Yaakov, yet Yaakov responds by saying, (לג, טו) "למה זה אמצא חן בעיני אדני" - please, no thank you.

The *limmud* is הכנעה does not mean giving in any issue or any principle. It means how we talk to *Umos HaOlam*. It means we show them the proper respect and communicate courteously. It is only in *how* we say it, not in compromising our values or beliefs. If we have any success with *Umos HaOlam*, it lies with listening to Yaakov Avinu's instructions that the way to deal with the is with הכנעה. We can give them things and give them money, but to go against them with forceful *shtark-keit* in our speech will not work. It didn't work with Esav then, and it still will not work today either. Just as the Sforno says, confrontation does not work for us. Yet, הכנעה does not mean giving in on any principle, it is only a question of how we phrase our situation. This *limmud* is immediately relevant to a number of issues we are facing, both in Maryland as well as in New York and elsewhere. We must understand that we do not give in on any issue, yet at the same time we carry ourselves with הכנעה towards them.

One other *nekuda* on this week's *parsha* is that we see a sea-change. In the middle of the *parsha*, when Yaakov Avinu beats the *sar shel Esav* and earns the name Yisroel, he completes his *avoda* as an *Av* of Klal Yisroel. His *hanhaga* as an *Av* stops here. We see in the ensuing episode, that of Dina's abduction to Shechem, that Yaakov is already out of the front lines. Yaakov finds out about her abduction while his sons are out tending the flocks, and his reaction is to wait quietly until they come home and Shimon and Levi take over the situation. From here until the end of *Sefer Bereishis* is *Sefer Yetziras Bonim*. This is an important *inyan* to understand in viewing the rest of the *sefer*.

*Im yirtzeh Hashem*, we have the Yeshiva's Annual Dinner this upcoming Sunday night in Baltimore. There is still time, even until the last minute, to participate with us. Certainly, those in Baltimore are wonderfully welcome to attend and even if you are out of town, you can be *mishtateif* with us in a very significant way. Everything is available online and we look forward to it. We are quite impressed and very happy that so many of you keep in touch by watching and downloading these Alumni Shiurim online and appreciate it to no end. We also offer you the opportunity to be *mishtateif* with us in our *avodas hakodesh*.