



Parshas Vayishlach 2022, they will not succeed

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna and Shaul Ben Berta.

This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parsha begins with Ya'akov Avinu returning home to Canaan after over twenty years of absence. Still fearful of Esav, Ya'akov sent messengers a message of reconciliation to him. However, they returned with a grim report; Esav was preparing to "greet him" with 400 men.

In response, Ya'akov sent him an extravagant gift of hundreds of cattle, donkeys, and camels. He split his family into two camps so if one were attacked, the other could escape. Finally, he turned to G-d to pray and begged for mercy.

The night before he met Esav, he moved his family and belongings across the Yabok River. After everyone had crossed except for him, Ya'akov met an angel; they wrestled and fought until dawn when the angel wanted to go. But Ya'akov refused to let him go until he blessed him, so the angel gave Ya'akov a new name, Yisrael, the prince of G-d.

After 20 years apart, Ya'akov and Esav finally meet once again. Ya'akov bowed seven times and embraced Esav as they cried together. Esav asked

Ya'akov, "*who are all these people with you*"? He replied, "*these are the children whom G-d has gifted your servant.*" (meaning himself)

Esav then asked, what were all the herds of cattle I saw before we met? Ya'akov answered that they were all gifts for you. Esav responded I have more than enough; I don't need them, but Ya'akov pleaded with him, and Esav ultimately accepted the gifts. They eventually parted ways on good terms, Esav went to Mt. Seir, and Ya'akov traveled back to Israel.

However, a question comes to mind: Before Ya'akov met Esav, he sent him a message. (32:5) "*You shall tell Esav, thus says your servant Ya'akov, I have stayed with Lavan and was with him until now.*" Rashi writes that Ya'akov was hinting to his brother that he has kept the Torah and its 613 Mitzvahs. **But why would Esav care?!** What does keeping the Torah matter to an idol-worshiping pagan who was wicked and immoral? Why did Ya'akov send that message to his brother?!

The Rashbam (*Rav Shmuel Ben Meir, one of Rashi's grandsons*) gives his opinion on what his grandfather meant. He writes that Ya'akov wanted to let Esav know that he followed his parent's directive to flee from home after he got the blessings.

The Rashbam explains that Ya'akov knew that the one commandment Esav kept was honoring his father, and he fulfilled that Mitzvah to the utmost extent. Therefore, Ya'akov sends this message hoping to awaken Esav's kindness and compassion.

However, the Sifsei Chachamim (*a super commentary on Rashi*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. They write that Ya'akov sent this message to his brother Esav to draw a line in the sand. To proclaim and state categorically that although Esav may have the numbers, **he will not prevail**, for G-d is not on his side. No matter what he does or how hard he tries, Esav will not conquer Ya'akov.

The Sifsei Chachamim continues that Esav was blessed by his father *"that he will live by the sword."* His survival and existence will rely solely on his brutality and physical strength.

But Ya'akov's life is precisely the opposite; **his reality is innately G-dly and spiritual.** The Torah and its commandments are the secrets to his energy, consistency, and continuity. Ya'akov was telling Esav that his ability to adapt, survive, and endure is due to him surrendering to G-d and submitting to His will.

This powerful lesson from the Sifsei Chachamim is even more prevalent as we rapidly approach the holiday of Chanukah. As the story of Chanukah is an example of physical strength being defeated by a spiritual and G-dly force. **A demonstration to those who seek to destroy us, you will never succeed,** for G-d, His Torah, and love are on our side.

In our daily life, it is imperative that we realize that although anti-semitic rhetoric is becoming mainstream and popular, **they don't stand a chance.** They may be intimidating and frightening, but there is no way they will succeed in destroying the Jewish Nation.

They are not the first, nor will they be the last, who will attempt and try to eliminate the chosen people. Although we must stay vigilant and prepared, we must not live in fear, for **G-d is on our side.**

מְסַרְתָּ גְבוּרִים בְּיַד חַלְשִׁים - You delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak

וְרַבִּים בְּיַד מְעַטִּים - Many into the hands of the few

וְטַמְאִים בְּיַד טְהוֹרִים - Defiled people into the hands of the pure

וְרָשָׁעִים בְּיַד צְדִיקִים - The wicked into the hands of the righteous

וְזוֹדִים בְּיַד עוֹסְקֵי תוֹרָתְךָ - Insolent sinners into the hands of those who keep Your Torah

בְּיָמֵים הָהֵם בְּזְמַן הַזֶּה - In those days and in these times!

-Part of the special prayer we say during Chanukah

Have a meaningful Shabbos!

Rabbi Sholom Yemini