Parshas Toldot · 5783

THE TRUE HOME OF A JEW IS IN THE HOLY LAND OF GEULA

BEGIN WITH A GRIN

A national poll showed that 97% of fathers don't know simple math!

I guess I'm one of the lucky ones, since my father is from the 4% that know it.

DON'T LEAVE HOME IN TOUGH TIMES

There is the famous statement, "The deeds of the Fathers are a portent for the children," a principle that Ramban repeats every week as he relates, teaches and shows how the stories of the Torah in the book of Bereishis have, as their main purpose, to teach the nation, we Jews, what will happen in the near and distant future. There is no repetitive story, no old story. Every incident has deep meaning for us.

Let us take as an example from the story of the famine in Yitzchok's time. What is the message for us? What does it teach us for our avodas Hashem on the eve of the Geula?

The Rebbe derives a lesson from this story for us that is both energizing and promising, which is all the more relevant in our times of upheaval, and he does so in a manner of genius simplicity.

G-d warns Yitzchok (26:2-3), "Don't go down to Egypt... Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and I will bless you..." We can all relate to the difficult challenge that lies in these words. How can Yitzchok live in a place with no food, no income, the economy collapsing, and who knows what tomorrow will bring?

Rashi explains the reason behind this challenging command, "Yitzchok, you are [as] a perfect burnt offering, and being outside the Holy Land is not fitting for you." As for us, every Jew is a "perfect burnt offering," and the true place for every Jew cannot be exile (outside the Holy Land). Jews cannot be in a state of "children exiled from their father's table," wandering among the nations. One cannot feel comfortable in exile. One can't reassure oneself by saying, "I did my part and now I can sleep ..." A Jew must hope, anticipate and

pray to be restored to his true state, “a perfect burnt offering,” whose place is the Geula in Eretz Yisrael!

The Gemara (Shabbos 89b) tells us of a conversation that will take place in the future between G-d and Yitzchok. G-d will come with a complaint to Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov that their children, that’s us, sinned, and we deserve…

Avrohom and Yaakov will respond with an answer you wouldn’t have expected to hear from them, so that even G-d himself will turn up His nose and say, “Elders have no reason and children have no counsel.” G-d then asks Yitzchok what he has to say and Yitzchok will give a math lesson. After a bit of some subtraction and division, it turns out based on Yitzchok’s calculation that… since he sacrificed himself at the Akeida, he has the ability to cancel all the sins. The Jewish people in the future will announce to Yitzchok, “Avrohom we do not know and Yisrael (Yaakov) we do not recognize; Yitzchok, you are our father!”

The Rebbe explains that it is Yitzchok who is the father who connects us to the Geula. He is the one who gives us the strength to recognize and internalize where we truly belong. Not to run away or back down from our true nature, from our “Eretz Yisrael.”

Avrohom was born outside of Eretz Yisrael, went to Eretz Yisrael, and left it again and again. Yaakov, who was called the “select of the Avos,” was born in Eretz Yisrael but had to leave it for Lavan. The only one who stayed put, in the place he truly belonged, was Yitzchok!

Yitzchok instills in us the chayus not to budge, not to withdraw from our “Eretz Yisrael.” The concept of “Eretz Yisrael” symbolizes the inner truth of every Jew. Each of us has a deep inner reality and we all have within us the absolute truth. It is the same truth which burns inside all of us; we just need to receive it and internalize it.

Yitzchok was called a “perfect burnt offering,” and we too are called “tmimim.” Every Jew is a “tamim,” and in the Geula the quality of tmimus and simplicity that is inherent in every Jewish soul will be revealed, because only through absolute sincerity and simplicity can we express the wonderful qualities which Yitzchok bequeathed to us.

YOUR FATHER IS CALLING YOU HOME

The Rebbe connects the name of a parsha with its content. Actually, the name of any object teaches, represents and symbolizes its content. This is because “a name given in Lashon HaKodesh” is a channel for the G-dly energy of a thing. Since the name of something in

Lashon HaKodesh is the divine pipeline for its G-dly energy, it also teaches us about the true essence of a thing.

This is all the more so when it comes to names in the Torah. In the Torah, everything is precise, every letter, every verse, every crown and vowel. Everything has significance and an explanation. (Even if with our limited understanding we don't understand the reason, everything has a reason!). Some will say that the names of the parshiyos are just the first word (or a word from the first verse) of the parsha, just an insignificant indicator so we can refer to and differentiate one parsha from another.

The truth is that the parsha of Toldos proves otherwise. Toldos demonstrates that there is something deeper in the names of the parshiyos and the names are not based merely on an initial word of the parsha.

If the name of a parsha is no more than a simple means to differentiate one parsha from another, it would have made more sense for parshas Nosach to be called Toldos ("Eileh toldos Noach") since the word "toldos" is the first significant word of the parsha, and then to call parshas Toldos "Yitzchok" ("V'eileh toldos Yitzchok"), in order to differentiate it from parshas Toldos/Noach. Why then, did Chazal name the earlier parsha, Noach and this week's parsha, Toldos?

It comes to teach us that the name of a parsha contains the inner meaning of that Torah portion and the content of parshas Noach is expressed in the name "Noach" while the content of parshas "Toldos" is expressed in the name "Toldos!"

What is the clear, compelling and eternal lesson that each of us needs to extract from the name of the parsha, and how does it teach us about the coming of the Geula?

Each of us is "Toldos Yitzchok." He is the father and we are the children. He is the parent and we are the descendants. Toldos Yitzchok is divided into two: "Yaakov and Eisav mentioned in the parsha" (as Rashi says at the beginning of the parsha). As it pertains to us, the significance is that the Jewish people is divided into two groups. One group is called "Yaakov" and it refers to those who one can see on them and in them the direct connection to Yitzchok. They live in his ways and perpetuate his legacy. The other group, called "Eisav," refers to those Jews within whom the eternal connection to Yitzchok is, as of yet, not openly revealed in them and they live lives of "men of the field," material lives without spiritual, inner, Jewish meaning.

Some will say that those “Eisav Jews” lost their connection with Yitzchok. They “left the country,” left the truth, abandoned the legacy, lost the tmimus, and we have no connection with them.

The deep message from the name of the parsha is “Toldos” - in the plural! Yitzchok has two sons till this day! He has Yaakov and he has Eisav. There is the one who follows his way and the one who (as of yet) doesn’t, but the latter is also a son of Yitzchok! One just needs to reveal his dormant inner truth, his “Eretz Yisrael,” his G-dly soul, through learning Torah and fulfilling mitzvos. After we will reveal to him and within him his connection to Yitzchok, we will see how he too is a “perfect burnt offering,” whose true place is Geula!

TO CONCLUDE WITH A STORY

We will end with a story from the Rebbe about the prohibition of leaving the Holy Land. Rabbi Nachum Zevin, grandson of Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin, learned in Tomchei Tmimim in Lud and in Ponovezh. Under the influence of Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook, he went on Kevutza toward the end of 5725. During his stay, he had yechidus three times.

In the second yechidus, the Rebbe asked him: What are you doing here when it is forbidden to leave Eretz Yisrael?

R’ Nachum said it was permissible in order to learn Torah.

The Rebbe responded that we need to analyze what that means, whether it’s that when a person leaves he is asked why he is going and since he says he is going to learn Torah, then the leaving is permissible, and even if afterward he doesn’t learn, that’s not a problem. Or, is it that every single day he is asked anew, “You are from Eretz Yisrael. What are you doing outside of it?” The person then says he left to learn Torah which means that that day he learned outside Eretz Yisrael more than he would have learned in Eretz Yisrael. The next day, he is asked again and it won’t be enough to say that he learned as he did the day before. Every day it has to be more than the previous days!

The provides a powerful lesson for us regarding what we discussed above. The question, “What did you today to bring the Geula” is not a one-time question; it’s a daily question which G-d asks every Jew. “You are an Eretz-Yisrael-Jew. Your real place is the true and complete Geula. What did you today to achieve that?”

Good Shabbos!