Parshas Toldot · 5784

THE FINAL ACT OF EXILE - PULLING THE MASK OFF “PIOUS” EVIL

BEGIN WITH A GRIN

A Chinese doctor can’t find a job in a hospital in America, so he opens his own clinic and puts up a sign outside. It reads: GET TREATMENT FOR $50 – IF NOT CURED GET BACK $100.

A local lawyer thinks this is a great opportunity to earn $100 and goes to the clinic.

Lawyer: I lost my sense of taste.

Doctor: Nurse, bring medicine from box No. 22 and put 3 drops in patient’s mouth.

Lawyer: Ugh, this is kerosene!

Doctor: Congratulations, your sense of taste is restored. Give me $50.

The annoyed lawyer goes back after a few days to recover his money.

Lawyer: I have lost my memory. I cannot remember anything.

Doctor: Nurse, bring medicine from box no. 22 and put 3 drops in his mouth.

Lawyer (annoyed): This is kerosene. You gave this to me last time for restoring my taste.

Doctor: Congrats. You got your memory back. Give me $50.

The fuming lawyer pays him and then comes back a week later determined to get back $100.

Lawyer: My eyesight has become very weak. I can’t see at all.

Doctor: Well, I don’t have any medicine for that, so take this $100.

Lawyer (staring at the note): But this is $20, not $100!!

Doctor: Wonderful, your eyesight is restored. Give me $50.

IT'S ALL AN ACT

At the end of parshas Toldos, the Torah tells us of (yet another) marriage of Eisav. "And Eisav saw that the girls of Canaan were bad in his father Yitzchok's eyes and Eisav went to Yishmael and took Mochalas, the daughter of Yishmael, the son of Avrohom, the sister of Nevayos, in addition to his wives, as a wife." Why should we care who Eisav marries? And what can we learn from this, thousands of years later?

It's interesting to note that in the Medrash, there is a difference of opinion whether this marriage was something positive or negative. "Rabi Yehoshua ben Levi said: He considered converting. Mochalas – that Hashem was moichel (forgave) him for all his sins." According to R' Yehoshua ben Levi, this marriage represents Eisav's repentance. "Rabi Elozor says: If he would have gotten rid of the first wives, fine; but he married her in addition to his wives, a sorrow upon a sorrow." The first ones were bad and so was this one.

We always have disagreements among the sages but the problem this time is that it seems that Rashi, the great commentator, agrees with ... both of them!

On the one hand, at the end of this parsha, it seems that Rashi agrees with R' Elozor, because he explains the words, "in addition to his wives" by saying, he added wickedness on top of his wickedness, for he did not divorce the previous ones. That means that Rashi considers this marriage very negative. On the other hand, at the end of Vayishlach, on the verse (36:3), "Bosmas bas Yishmael," Rashi says that the reason that Eisav's wife was named Mochalas (at the end of Toldos) when her real name was Bosmas, is to teach us "his sins were forgiven," which fits with Rabi Yehoshua ben Levi's view, that this marriage expressed Eisav's repentance. So, what happened here? Teshuva or adding wickedness upon wickedness? How can it be both?

In a deep sicha, with a powerful message which pertains so much to the times we are living in, the Rebbe sets things straight and teaches us a thing (or two) about the nations of the world around us. According to the Rebbe's extraordinary explanation, Rashi has a novel approach which says that Mochalas (or Bosmas, her real name) was a fine woman and not at all wicked. After all, the reason that Eisav married her was because "he saw that the girls of Canaan were bad in his father's eyes." He decided, finally, to marry someone his father would like, a fine woman, from a good family, etc. a woman who would be the absolute antithesis to his first wives who were "a vexation of the spirit to Yitzchok and Rivka." Therefore, "his sins were forgiven" because Mochalas was truly a fine woman.

However, the reason he married her was wicked; additional wickedness which was similar to the wickedness in his first marriages. What does this mean?

The wickedness of Eisav in his first marriages wasn't only because he married unworthy women but mainly because of his hypocrisy and deception. Eisav married at forty but not because he was celibate until that age. "Eisav is likened to a pig. The pig, when it lies down, puts its [split] hooves out in front to say, see I am pure. All forty years, Esau kidnapped wives from their husbands and violated them. When he was forty years old, he said: 'My father married at forty; I, too, will do the same.'"

IF IT ACTS LIKE A PIG...

Eisav was a pig, a swindler and a liar, and the greatest of hypocrites. His first marriage was full of lies as was his second marriage. The real reason that Eisav married Mochalas was to fool Yitzchok, to pretend that he had done teshuva. This is why Rashi explains, "He added wickedness to his wickedness." The wickedness wasn't the woman Mochalas, who was a fine person; the wickedness was the marriage which was hypocritical (just like the first ones) and full of deceit, as though his intentions were pure.

We see a major difference between Eisav's behavior in parshas Toldos and his behavior in parshas Vayishlach, between his behavior with his father and his behavior with Yaakov. In Toldos, with Yitzchok, Eisav is charlatan and a seasoned liar. In Vayishlach, toward Yaakov, he is a bloodthirsty terrorist who seeks revenge. These two modes of conduct represent two types of evil, open evil and evil hidden under whipped cream and chocolate. Just as everyone understands that one needs to firmly stand against open evil, so too, we need to stand strong against hidden evil. But this is harder, much more complicated.

The Alter Rebbe (in his short maamarim) addresses the fact that Yaakov spent twenty years in Lavan's house while his "war" against Eisav in Vayishlach took just one day! That's because in order to overcome Lavan the trickster, it took twenty years! Fighting someone who came to murder him took just one day! Indeed, overcoming concealed evil is longer and harder.

The Alter Rebbe explains that this is the reason for the length of our exile. The present exile is a war against hidden evil, against hypocrisy and lies, and this is hard, complicated and... long!

This is the allusion in the Gemara, "The early ones, whose sin was revealed, the endpoint [of exile] was revealed. The latter ones, whose sin was not revealed, the end of the exile was

not revealed."

From here we learn a deep lesson. We are facing evil on two fronts now, a war against open evil, Islamic terror, and a war against lies and hypocrisy on the part of the world who seemingly are in favor of freedom, human rights and freedom. We need to know that both are Eisav, the same pig and faker. Both in Toldos and Vayishlach, both out in the open and hidden. We are talking here about evil which is hidden deep within this exile, the double evil, those who want to annihilate us and those who demonstrate for human rights; they're they same wickedness, the same evil. This is the face of Eisav the Rasha who makes himself seem as though he repented, as though he is peaceful, as though he is a tzaddik like his father Yitzchok, when he is actually "the boar from the forest gnaws on it," a wild pig (if not worse than that).

They don't speak in favor of humanity but against the existence of the Jewish people. They are not freedom seekers and peace lovers but murderers. They aren't innocent people "who only want good," but cursed fakers who only want evil.

The real problem in this exile is that sometimes, even they are unaware of it! And this is the message which is so important to us in our daily lives, to beware any hypocrisy and lies, thus sifting out, once and for all, the hidden evil which makes itself seem good!

TO CONCLUDE WITH A STORY

We will end with a short story about the importance of integrity and the blessing that comes from it.

Two men who wanted to start a business together, went to Rabbi Nota of Chelm and asked him to write a partnership agreement for them.

R' Nota took a piece of paper and on the four corners of the page he wrote the letters alef, beis, gimmel, dalet.

"Here's your partnership agreement," he said to them.

They looked at him in astonishment.

"This is the contract?!"

The Rebbe explained. "These four letters allude to the way you need to choose. Alef is for Emes and then Beis is for Bracha. But if there's Gimmel, Geneiva (stealing) then Dalet is

Dalus (poverty).

Good Shabbos!