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## ACTIONS ARE STRONGER THAN WORDS

Parshat Vayeishev

“LO HAMIDRASH IKKAR ELAH HAMAASEH”

*“Vayeishev Yaakov Be’eretz megurey aviv, be’eretz Canaan. Eleh Toldot Yaakov Yosef be me’ah esreh shanah hayah roeh et eichav batzonve’hu na’ar et benei Bilhah ve’et Bnei Zilpah nesheih aviv, vayaveh Yosef et dibatam ha’raah el avihem”. (37:1-2)*

The famous **Rashi** says that Yaakov wanted to sit in tranquility and Hashem says “no, I will not let you sit in tranquility” and the turmoil with Yosef started. Tzaddikim want to live in tranquility in Olam Habeah *and* Olam Haze?

What does that mean that he wanted to sit in shalvah. To play tennis? Of course he wanted to learn Torah in peace, not have any worries. If the Satan sees that he’s too good for you, then he goes to Hashem to try to start some trouble.

**Rav Yonasan Eibshitz** says in the Tiferes Yonasan that what caused the whole problem with Yosef? Because Yaakov favored Yosef, his brothers were jealous of him. But why was he favoring Yosef? The Zohar explains that the person that Yaakov really wanted to marry was Rochel, and the first born of Rochel is Yosef. So in Yaakov’s mind, Yosef was a bechor and deserved to be treated like one. If we follow thought, then Yosef is the bechor. If we follow action, then Reuvein is the bechor. What do we follow the thought or the action. So why did Yaakov want to sit in peace? Because he got the bracha from Yitzchak to have a good life. He says “look, I got the bracha, so I should now sit in tranquility”. Yitzchak’s machshava when he gave the bracha, was towards Eisav and not Yaakov. If you are following machshava, then Eisav really got the bracha and you are going to suffer. If you follow action, then you got the bracha, but YOU are following machshava by giving Yosef a preferential treatment, and that’s why he gets punished. Harav Blech said that how do we pasken? By the fact he suffered for Yosef, we hold by action. That’s a big yesod, of course we should always have good intentions, but bottom line, in this world you have to have actions, you have to work. We will be judged on our maysim. “I had in mind to call you...I had in mind to come to shiur”. So call him, if you had it in mind! Bottom line- put your thoughts into action!

(**Rav Moshe Feinstein** says that Yaakov wanted to sit in tranquility because he thought that his obligation of chinuch was finished because his kids were older.) Reuvein tells the brother that we won’t kill Yosef but we’ll throw him in the pit. Ok, that’s better than killing him, but he shouldn’t be praised for that. So the famous chazal says, when you do something, you should do it fully. If you are doing a ma’aseh don’t do it half-baked...DO IT!! If Reuvein would have known that the whole story would have been reported in the Torah le’doros. He would have taken Yosef, put him on his shoulders, and took him home. Because he didn’t know this, he didn’t do a full ma’aseh. Anytime you do something, it is written in shamayim and it is signed by Hashem’s name. You will be judged if you really did the ma’aseh or not.

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**Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky** says that they didn't realize that their actions were not just a sibling rivalry and that it had a lasting impression on klal yisrael, they would have done much more of a maaseh. If you're going to do a ma'aseh, do it fully.

It's very nice to speak about different mitzvas, but the ikkar is DO that mitzvah. "Ein hamidrash ikkar, eleah ha'maaseh". That's what it says in maseches kiddushin. What's greater- maaseh or learning? Learning is greater because it brings you to do maaseh. The Gemara in Nedarim says that the beis hamikdash was destroyed because they were not making birkas hatorah.

The **Pirkei Avos** says why is this the reason the beis hamikdash was destroyed? For them, Torah was not always the beginning. It wasn't a stepping stone for ma'aseh. They didn't emphasize that the point of learning was that it brought you to do ma'aseh.

Another reason why Yaakov suffered for 22 years for Yosef was because of the 22 years he didn't do kibbud av for his own parents. There's a famous Yerushalmi which says that if a person who was mekadesh a woman and makes a deal that if he doesn't do the chuppah by a certain time, then the kiddushin will not work. What if this time comes around, and he wasn't able to marry her. So all the excuses in the world, but bottom line you didn't do it. You could have all the excuses in the world about why you didn't learn, but bottom line is that you're not a talmid chacham. So bottom line Yaakov didn't do kibbud av.

The **Meshech Chochma** says that there is a chiyuv to check tefillin/ mezuzos periodically. The Mishkenos Yaakov says that we see from here that we have to check lungs for treifos. The chiyuv of checking tefillin and mezuzah is de'oraisa but checking an animal that's not reif is de'rabanan. Because if you didn't check and foolowed rov and ate treifah you are an anos. But when it comes to tefillin and mezuzah, bottom line you didn't do the mitzvah, even if you are an anos.

That's why we learn out that Gadol Hama'aseh. A person could have a lot of machshavos to do great things, but he must do it. The mitzvah of Channuka is a very special mitzvah. You should sell your shirt to get money to do neris channuka. But normally you are patur if you don't have money. (R' Schechter- we go out of our way on Channuka, so Hashem should do the same for us.) The Avnei Nezer says normally if you don't have a lulav, you don't have to sell your shirt. Because bottom line- your patur. But on channuka, the bottom line is pirsumei nisa. So it's very nice that you have an excuse, but the bottom line is that there is no pirsumei nisa, so you have to do it! Reuvein was a minimalist, do big ma'asehs! R' Yisroel Salanter- crying on death bed because he can't do tzizis anymore.