



בסייעתא דשמיא / פרשת וישלח תשפ"א / Parshas Vayishlach

“הצילני נא מיד אחי מיד עשו כי ירא אנכי אתו פן יבוא והכני אם על בניים”

“ואתה אמרת היטב איטיב עמך ושמתי את זרעך כחול הים אשר לא יספר מרב” בראשית לב:יב-יג

“Please save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Eisav for I fear him, lest he come and hit me, mother and children.”

“Now You have said that You shall surely do great good with me and that You will cause my offspring to be like the sand of the sea which is too numerous to count.” Bereishis 32:12-13

The Bais Halevi asks that if Hashem had previously promised Yaakov Avinu that no harm would befall him, what exactly was Yaakov afraid of? What's more, if Yaakov was scared that he may be held accountable for a sin that he had committed, the Gemara in Brachos (ד.) teaches us that in this situation, Hashem's promise would no longer protect him, so what was Yaakov relying on and what did he gain by mentioning the promise here?

As a result of these questions, The Bais Halevi explains these pasukim in a different light. He says that when Yaakov Avinu said “כי ירא אנכי” he was anxious for the fulfillment of Hashem's promise of “ואתה אמרת”. Yaakov's fear was not for his own personal wellbeing, rather he feared for the honor of Hashem. Yaakov was scared that if he had committed a sin that would allow Eisav the chance to be successful in his murderous quest, then the will of Hashem would be left unfulfilled, as Hashem wanted to grant goodness to Yaakov and his children.

In accordance with this new understanding, the Bais Halevi goes on to explain the Mishnah in Pirkei Avos (ד' ב'), which states “שכר עבירה עבירה ושכר מצוה מצוה” – “The reward for committing a sin is another sin, while the reward for completing a mitzvah is another mitzvah.” Says the Bais Halevi, the punishment that befalls a person as result of his sin is also considered a separate sin. This is because Hashem only wants to do good for us. By sinning, this person causes Hashem to go against His will by punishing him. This is considered another sin. On the flip-side, when a person performs a mitzvah, the positive reward that he receives for his good actions are considered a separate mitzvah because he is also fulfilling the will of Hashem which is to give him good, and he will receive a separate reward for this.

Yaakov Avinu's list of priorities always had the will of Hashem on top. Even in the face of danger Yaakov remained calm and knew what was truly important. According to the Bais Halevi we can learn from Yaakov as well a double emphasis on the importance of performing mitzvos properly and the double danger of sin.