

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

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VAYISHLACH

14th Kislev 5775

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 32, verses 4 -13

- ✚ Not wanting to enter the land of Edom unannounced, Yaacov sends out emissaries to Esav who was dwelling in Seir seeking permission to pass through on his way back home.
- ✚ Upon delivering the message that Yaacov had been sojourning with Lavan until now and had acquired much wealth; the emissaries returned informing Yaacov that Esav had gathered four hundred men and was now making their way out to meet him.
- ✚ Fearing the worst Yaacov divides up his entourage, herds, flocks and camels into two camps; so that if Esav attacked one camp the other camp would survive. He then prayed to Hashem to come to his aid once more and help him

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 32, verses 14 - 30

- ✚ Yaacov sends out his servants laden with gifts to try and appease Esav.
- ✚ In order to keep his family safe, Yaacov takes them across the Yabok River.
- ✚ Once alone, an angel of Esav came and wrestled with Yaacov but as both of their defences were strong the fight lasted all night.
- ✚ The angel injures Yaacov's thigh, but still Yaacov does not yield. Admitting defeat the Angel sends Yaacov on his way, but Yaacov refuses to go until the Angel blesses him.
- ✚ The Angel changes Yaacov's name to Israel.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 32, verse 31 - Chapter 33, verse 5

- ✚ In recognition of Yaacov's bravery, despite his injured thigh, we are commanded not eat the 'gid hanasheh' (the hind quarter's) of any animal.
- ✚ Looking up Yaacov sees Esav in the distance, approaching with four hundred men.
- ✚ Yaacov then arranges his family so that Bilha and Zilpah along with their children lead the field, with Leah and her children following behind, leaving Rachel and Yoseph a short distance behind in the rear.
- ✚ Yaacov then prostrates himself in front of his brother seven times, before Esav rushes up and embraces him kindly.

R'VI'I - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 33, verses 6 - 20

- ✚ Yaacov introduces his family to Esav who then grants them a safe passage through the land of Edom
- ✚ Yaacov and family continue their journey until they reached the land of Canaan and settled down in the city of Shechem.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 34, verse 1 - Chapter 35, verse 11

- ✚ Yaacov's daughter Dinah is abducted by the King's Son who desires to marry her.
- ✚ Enraged her brothers convince the king and his son to circumcise themselves along with the rest of the men in the city. On the third day after their mass bris, Shimon and Levy loot the city, killing every male in the process.
- ✚ Hashem sends Yaacov and his family to Beit El asking him to build an altar there.
- ✚ Hashem then officially changes Yaacov's name to Yisrael and blesses him, saying his descendants will become a great nation and will one day receive the land that he promised Avraham and Yitzhak.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 35, verse 12 – Chapter 36, verse 19

- ✚ While journeying from Beit El to Efrat, Rachel gives birth to Binyamin but she unfortunately dies in childbirth. Yaacov buries her in Beit Lehem.
- ✚ Yaacov finally reaches his childhood home in Hebron and is reunited once more with his father Yitzchak.
- ✚ Yitzchak passes away aged 180. Esav returns and along with Yaacov buries Yitzchak in the cave of machpelah.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 36, verses 20 - 43

- ✚ .The Chronicles of Esav and his descendants are recorded here.

Haftorah—Ovadia chapter 1, verses 1 - 21

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Ovadia the prophet foretells what fate will be bestowed upon the nation of Edom.
- ✚ All the nations of the world will unite and wage war against them, leaving Edom no choice but to engage in a battle which they know deep down they would never win.
- ✚ Once Edom is defeated, Israel's survival is secured as Hashem's kingdom and will be established forever.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ True to the blessing given by his father 'Yitzchak' Esav becomes the father of a great nation. (The Edomites) who live and die by the sword, constantly oppressing us and our faith.
- ✚ In the Haftorah, Ovadia warns Edom just as Yaacov triumphed over Esav; with Hashem's help the Jewish nation will ultimately triumph over you.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

Throughout life, we all have to wrestle with many things; but, at times, we also need to wrestle with ourselves, and emerge as a new, wiser person. This week's Sedra begins with Yaacov meeting for the first time with Esav since the 'deception of the beracha's'. Expecting a battle to happen, Yaacov prepares for the worst. The Torah tells us that the night before Yaacov meets Esav, a man/ angel wrestles with him all night. Victorious Yaacov refuses the man/ angel to leave until he had blessed Yaacov. When Yaacov and Esav do finally meet, instead of fighting they embrace and forgive each other for their past misdemeanors.

This portion has been interpreted in many different ways. For example; Nachmanides sees the battle as a symbol for the struggles that Israel faces as a nation and will have to go through. Rashi sees the man as Esav's spirit, trying to weaken Yaacov before the confrontation.

I believe that Yaacov was wrestling with himself. On one side there is a Yaacov who feels he should avoid the confrontation and run away from his troubles, and the Yaacov that knows deep down that's the wrong course to take. Yaacov knows he will have to face the conflict he created and left behind if he wants to move forward. The night he wrestled with the angel, Yaacov was discovering who he truly was. He goes into the fight as Yaacov, a weak and scared man and emerges from it as Israel, a stronger man who is prepared to face anything his brother might do to him. He looked inside himself and managed to find the better person he is able to be.

The maturing of Yaacov relates a lot throughout my personal journey in life. Over the years, I have learned an amazing amount about being Jewish and what it represents. Sometimes I still don't know for sure who I truly am but wrestling with myself has helped me discover who I really am and who we are as a Jewish nation.

Our inner Jewish selves should not run and hide from who we truly are and should have the belief and courage to show the world, as a nation we are not afraid and will fight for what is rightfully ours. I'm sure most of us don't want to be cowardly like Yaacov anymore, but want to be strong and more mature like Israel.

May Hashem bless us all with the physical, and spiritual strength to not walk away from all the recent tragedies and anti-Semitism happening all around us both locally and globally as though there is nothing anyone can do about it, but to take action and fight for what is right in order to bring everlasting peace back in Israel with no-one threatening our way of life or making us afraid to live as Jews.

