



## SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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During these Shabbatot of *Chodesh Kislev*, it is interesting to note that many *meforshim* suggest that the various *parshiyot* of this time of year are somehow each connected with, or meant to prepare us for Chanukah.

*Parshat Vayishlach* contains within it, the powerful account of *Yaakov Avinu* wrestling with the mysterious *Ish*, on the night before he is to re-engage with his brother *Eisav*. The *pasuk* tells us:

*Vivateir Yaakov Levado, VaYaaveik Ish Imo, Ad Alot HaShachar- And Yaakov was alone, and a man wrestled with him, until the light of dawn.*

There are many questions and powerful messages that are connected to this verse, but I'd like to specifically address, how could it be, that *Yaakov*, who is traveling with a large entourage of people and herds of cattle and sheep, is suddenly left alone?

**Rashi**, quoting the *Gemara* in *Chulin*, says that *Yaakov* had forgotten some small jars or canisters, and he left his entourage to retrieve those jars.

**Rabbeinu Bechaya** takes this idea a step further. He says our verse could be read

or understood slightly differently, *al tikra levado, eleh lekado*- Do not read that *Yaakov* was alone, rather that he went to retrieve a specific jar or canister that he possessed.

What exactly was this specific canister that *Yaakov Avinu* suddenly went to retrieve?

**Rebbe Meir Horowitz**, the ***Imrei Noam of Dzhikov, zy'a***, offers a very novel explanation. The Rebbe explains that this special container was a jar of olive oil, but not just any jar of olive oil.

*Noach* sent forth a *yonah*- a dove to see if the waters of the flood had subsided. Of course, this *yonah* returned to the *teiva*, with an olive branch in its beak. The olives from the branch that *Noach* received from the dove were made into **pure olive oil**. The oil was given to *Noach's* first born son, *Shem*. *Shem*, otherwise known as *Malchitzedek*, whom the Torah describes as a **Kohein to the Almighty Hashem!** *Malchitzedek/ Shem* sealed this little jar of oil and gave it to *Avraham* as a gift. *Avraham*, in turn, handed it over to *Yitzchak* who passed it down to *Yaakov*. **According to our sages, *Yaakov* forgot some small jars and returned to retrieve them. One of these jars was the oil from the dove that returned to the *teiva*. *Yaakov* prophetically hid this oil at the site of the *Beit Hamikdash* and laid the foundations for the miracle of *Chanukah*.** This is the oil that originated with the dove, the symbol of peace. The Rebbe concludes that *Noach's* name, which comprises the letters *nun* and *chet*, is actually



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an allusion to the words **Nes Chanukah....**

*Yaakov Avinu* , even as he feels alone, as he is about to encounter his brother *Eisav*, with great trepidation, realizes through his *ruach hakodesh*, that he has arrived at the sacred space where the future *Beit HaMikdash* will stand, and he suddenly realizes that he must place that small jar of oil that has been handed down to him, that very jar of oil that *Noach* passed onto *Shem*, and hide it safely away, so that one day, the *Chashmonaim*, will find this oil, and miraculously restore the light of *Torah* in the world, through the *nes pach hashemen*.

The great *Yerushalmi Mekubal*, **Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch**, *shlita* suggests that the entire episode of the *nes pach hashemen* is beyond human comprehension. The *Chashmonaim* find that tiny jar of oil which clearly is barely enough oil to burn for one night, and yet they do not despair! If *Hashem* provided them with that tiny amount of oil at that moment, then clearly it was meant to be that at that moment they should indeed use that oil and kindle those lights; and as result of that determination, they merited to experience and witness the miraculous occurrence of the oil lasting for eight days!

May each of us aspire to emulate *Yaakov Avinu*, to have the capacity in trying times to look inward rather than feeling alone. May we merit to discover our innate spiritual strength, to follow in the footsteps of the *Chashmonaim*, and begin to see the potential light we might bring forth to the world. May we have the fortitude to overcome fear and despair, and to push forward and bring light and continued goodness into our lives and the lives of others, and for subsequent generations. ■




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