



פרשת וישלח

There are certain Pesukim throughout Tanach that have the Mazel to be widely known. One of those in the Haftorah of Parshas Vayishlach from the Sefer Ovadia. The Navi Ovadia was a Ger from Edom who worked for Achav and Eizevel, and was Zocheh to Nevuah by his actions when Eizevel declared her crusade to murder the שבטים . Ovadia hid them in two caves, sparing their lives. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 39b) explains that he hid the one hundred שבטים in two separate caves, mimicking this weeks Parsha as Yaakov split his camp in two so that the המחנה הנשאר לפליטה . Ovadia's Nevuah centers on his origin – Edom – and what will befall them at the אחרית הימים when Yisroel will emerge from Galus (Radak 1:1). The Gemara (ibid) uses an analogy of a forest that provides the wood that will be used for the ax that will chop down the very same forest. We unfortunately know this too well from our brothers and sisters, the self-hating Jews, the card carrying members of J-Street – Hashem should have mercy on them and us.

The Pasuk reads: והיה בית יעקב אש ובית יוסף להבה ובית עשו לקש ודלקו בהם ואכלום – the house of Yaakov will be fire, the house of Yosef a flame and the house of Eisav for straw; and they will ignite them and devour them. The rest of the Pasuk is not so famous: ולא יהיה שריד לבית עשו כי ה' דבר – there will be no survivor to the house of Eisav, for Hashem has spoken. Certainly, part of our familiarity comes from learning the Rashi (30:25) that as soon as Yosef was born, Yaakov felt confident leaving Lavan and confronting Eisav; because Yosef is the nemesis of Eisav, based on the above Pasuk. Yosef has the capability to overcome the power of Eisav. I always describe the Rashi to my

Talmidim, at the risk of revealing how I spent my youth: Yosef is Eisav's kryptonite. The Radak (Ovadia 1:18) explains the Pasuk in light of the Gemara (Bava Basra 123b) שאין עשו נופל אלא ביד יוסף או ביד זרעו של יוסף. The Medrash Rabbah (73:7) had a slightly different wording: מסורת היא שאין עשו נופל אלא ביד בניה של רחל; that it is NOT JUST Yosef that can overpower Eisav, but it is an energy that is vested in the descendants of Rochel. We wonder; what "Ruchnius'dikeh" force are they endowed with that can make the seemingly invincible Eisav fall at their feet?

The first clue comes from the Gemara (Megilah 13b) that lists Rochels strength as being צניעות – usually used to describe a mode of dress – but not here. It is evident from the Gemara that this צניעות means to be silent, to be unobtrusive, to be unnoticed. Long ago, I heard the Mashgiach Reb Nosson Vachtfogel explain (not sure if he meant to explain Rashi there – forgive me it was many, many moons ago) that during the entire Chasuna, where Leah was in the white gown (my modernizing the Vort), where was Rochel (during the smorgasbord etc.)? She was so under the radar, nobody noticed her, as Rashi points out: שלא יתפרסם הדבר שמסר לה סימנין. The words of Chazal (BR"R 71:5) are that Rochel was תפסה פלח השתיקה , she perfected the art of remaining silent. Therefore, she was Zocheh to have Shaul as a descendant , who also had the same talent. After the Navi Shmuel told Shaul that he would be the king, he never told his father of the news. Therefore, Shaul was Zocheh to have Esther, who also remained silent despite all of Achashveirosh's pleading to divulge her origin – אין אסתר מגדת.

The Ksav Sofer ('ויצא עמ' רסג') explains that Yaakov





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(before Matan Torah) allowed himself to marry two sisters, even though the Torah says that two wives will become צרות to each other, and two sisters should not be put into such a predicament. However, since he saw the love and devotion that Rochel and Leah had for each other, he was confident that these two sisters would not have the problem. Adds the Darash Mordechai (R' Druk pg. 212) how much this was brought out when Rochel asked for the flowers and Leah's response was: המעט קחתך את אישי ולקחת גם דודאי? בני? - was it not enough that you took my husband, and now you want my sons flowers? (This dialogue deserves its own article, whatever it may mean.) BUT ROCHEL DOES NOT EVEN RESPOND TO THAT, indicating that the חשש of לצרור did not apply to them. But to me, that is the ultimate שתיקה - hearing something like that, anyone of us would have vehemently responded, probably shouting at the top of our lungs: You mean the husband that I gave you, along with an assortment of other compliments, the kind that would make the protestors in Portland blush. Rochel says nothing. She does not respond to that and she only says let's make a deal etc. What power! What control!

Yosef is the proud recipient of that ירושה. There is a very enigmatic Ramban in Parshas Mikeitz (42:9) that raises the question which literally begs itself: Why, in all those years - working for Potifera and as the Viceroy of Mitzrayim - did Yosef not send a message to Yaakov, who continually mourned for him, that he is alive and well? The Ramban posits that Yosef had some sort of a Cheshbon that his dreams HAD TO COME TRUE - undoubtedly "Himmeldigeh Zachen" - and that, it seems, outweighed Yaakov's anguish which otherwise would have been considered a "חסא" חסא "וה' יאיר עינינו - גדול". But to be able to remain silent,

despite his love for his tormented father, required that level of שתיקה.

There is another Ramban (Vayigash 45:27) that teaches us a phenomenal Chiddush and adjusts what we thought we knew. What every Cheder Yngel knows about the selling of Yosef - Yaakov Aveinu NEVER KNEW. Yaakov never knew that the brothers had sold Yosef. He thought that Yosef had gotten lost on the road, abducted and sold, ending up in Mitzrayim. The Ramban puts forth the logical reasoning: WHO should have told him? Certainly not the brothers, who were undoubtedly afraid that their confession would end with a קללה from their father. And Yosef, using an expression you have to love - "במוסרו" - "ויוסף במוסרו" - with his honorable Middos, did not want to tell him! How much depth, how much majesty, how much of his unrivaled character are all conveyed in the words במוסרו הטוב! Let us ponder this for a moment. I have a world class piece of Lashon Hara about my siblings - that's already two strikes - and I'm in a position where I fear no retribution on their part, and I STAY SILENT. What גבורה! Not only that, see Daas Zikainim (48:11) that the beloved, long lost son did not spend the amount of time we would have expected with his father, because he feared the inevitable question of how he ended up in Mitzrayim, and that would subject his brother's to a קללה; and therefore Yosef had to be told by a שליח (see Rashi) of his father's sickness.

So we have learned that Yosef had developed an excellence in the מדת השתיקה with admirable control. We should also note that whenever Yosef got into trouble, it was when he was not silent. He told about his dreams, he told the extra words to the שר המשקים, bringing him צער. There is a Sfas Emes (ויגש תרמ"א ד"ה עיני) that always astounds me, even though my

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understanding of it is minimal. The Pasuk describes the background where where Yosef finally ends his charade for his brothers לכל הנצבים ולא יכל יוסף להתאפק - Yosef could NOT ENDURE in the presence of those that stood before him. The inference of להתאפק is that Yosef would have wanted it to continue, and almost against his will, his better judgment, he could not keep silent any longer. Says the Sfas Emes, the connection between the tears he shed ((45:14) as he kissed Binyomin, were for both the Batei Mikdash that were destroyed in Binyomin's share of Eretz Yisroel. Because IF Yosef could have held out more, there would HAVE NEVER BEEN A חורבן. Yosef felt that, and at that moment his mind was directed to the Churban, and he cried. Astounding ממש. The little that I may understand is that if he could have maintained his שתיקה, it would have forever overcome the power of Eisav to destroy the Mikdash. Let me try and explain.

We know that Eisav's weapon is his mouth – כי ציד – and can convince you of anything – the ultimate con-man. He can sell you the proverbial Brooklyn Bridge twice on the same day and convince you that you really got a good deal the second time. His insincere "Shailos" about Maaser, his bogus כיבוד persuaded some to count him as a credible Tzaddik. His was the כח הדיבור, he owned it. So much so, as the Gemara (Sotah 13a) relates, he was able to indoctrinate the שבטים that he had the right to the Kever in Mearas Hamachpeilah that they intended to bury Yaakov in, until חושים בן דן could not tolerate the delay and decapitated Eisav. The עומק of the Gemara, based on a Shmooz I once heard from Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, is that חושים was deaf and therefore immune to the power of Eisav's mouth – his power only worked on those that could hear his הדיבור.

Based on the above, we suppose its accurate to say that the superiority that Rochel and her descendants have over Eisav is because the כח השתיקה has supremacy and can overpower the כח הדיבור. Maybe that is the point of the Sfas Emes, continuing with that power of שתיקה would have once and for all removed the strength of Eisav to destroy the Mikdash.

There are other chapters to this idea – especially regarding Binyamin – אי"ה we hope to learn them in the future. So what does all this teach me – besides that there is still much Chumash for me to learn and explore? A wise man once said: "It is very rare that you regret something that you DID NOT SAY, it is, however, very common to regret things that WE DID SAY". As a rule, דיבור overrules שתיקה, as the classic dictate from the Gemara (Megillah 18a) מלה בסלע a word is worth a סלע, but משתיקה בתרין, silence is worth two סלעים. The Gaon in Mishlei (11:2) translates ואת צנועים חכמה and the צנועים have חכמה which means "שעיקר החכמה היא ששותקים". It was the צניעות that Rochel bequeathed her children and enabled her and them the כח to defeat Eisav.

We are still in Galus EDOM, Eisav's Galus, and it would be beneficial to use our weapon and bring the Geulah speedily בב"א.

Among those who are לישועה

אמני דאופרה
חיים טובים איתן

