

Then he said, “Let me go, for dawn has broken.” And he said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me”... he said, “No longer will it be said that your name is Yaakov, but Yisrael.” (32:27, 29) - Then G-d said to him, “Your name is Yaakov. Your name shall not always be called Yaakov, but Yisrael shall be your name.” (35:10)

At first glance the above *pesukim* seem to convey the same message. After some perusal, however, we are confronted with a number of questions. First, Yaakov *Avinu* asked Eisav's angel for a blessing. The blessing turned out to be a name change for the Patriarch; a name change which denoted his spiritual stamina in besting the angel. Yet, when the angel gave the blessing, he began, “No longer will it be said that your name is Yaakov.” Who cares about his original name? It is the new name that is important. Why does the angel introduce the new name with a negative mention of his previous name? Second, when Hashem confirms the name change, He begins, “Your name is Yaakov,” but it will not always be so. Your name will change. It seems as if the angel sought to underscore that the Patriarch will forever lose the name Yaakov. On the other hand, Hashem is emphasizing the complete opposite: Yaakov's name will be Yaakov, but he will not always be called by his original name but, rather, by his new name, Yisrael.

The **Chasam Sofer, zl**, offers a penetrating explanation based upon a statement made in the *Talmud Berachos* 12b. *Chazal* say that Hashem was telling Yaakov, “Your name will continue to be Yaakov, but Yisrael will be your principal name, with Yaakov serving as a secondary name.” The Patriarch would have two names: Yaakov/Yisrael, with Yisrael serving as the primary name.

Eisav's angel had an agenda when he said, “No longer will it be said that your name is Yaakov.” He wanted to extirpate Yaakov's name permanently from the equation, so that only the name Yisrael would remain. Why? The *Chasam Sofer* explains that the dual name Yaakov/Yisrael has the same *gimatria*, numerical equivalent, as *kra Satan* – 729. *Kra Satan* is a reference to the *Satan's* decrees. We implore Hashem to tear, annul, the harsh decrees that *Satan* seeks to have imposed on us.

Eisav's angel was none other than the *Satan*. He was acutely aware of the power of Yaakov/Yisrael; thus, he sought to rid the Patriarch of his original name. Yisrael alone was not enough of a threat to him. Both names together were more than he could handle.

Why are both names necessary to impugn *Satan's* accusations against us? Why is Yisrael – a name that denotes strength, leadership, and the ability to overwhelm – not sufficient for our nation? The *Chasam Sofer* notes that Yaakov is derived from *eikav*, heel, which the Patriarch grasped on Eisav as they entered into the world. Yaakov symbolizes humility, as the heel is the lowest part of

the body. It is also the first part of the body that is stepped upon when a person walks.

I think that Yisrael is not enough. Strength alone, unless tempered by humility, can be dangerous. How many great people have fallen because they lacked humility; because they always thought they were right; because, in their arrogance, they refused to listen to the advice of a “lesser” person? To triumph over Eisav and his minions, we must maintain the power of *ki sarisa*, “for you have striven” (and emerged triumphant) and *eikav*, the lowly heel. Only then will we see success in “crushing” Eisav’s influence upon us.

The *Steipler Gaon*, **Horav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, zl**, exemplified the profound connotation of his two names. He was a *gaon* of unparalleled brilliance, a *tzaddik* who shunned the limelight, despite being the unofficial successor to his brother-in-law, the *Chazon Ish*. Most of his time was spent studying Torah in his modest apartment. He was the address to which Jews from all over the world turned for blessing, guidance and solace. There is no dearth of stories about the *Steipler*. I have chosen two that are probably well-known by some and worth repeating for the others. These stories underscore his fiery passion for Torah observance, as well as his outstanding humility.

At the age of nineteen, the *Steipler* was dispatched to the city of Rogatchov to establish a branch of the *Novhardok Yeshivah*. While he was there, he was drafted into the Russian Army to fight the Bolshevik Revolution. His unyielding determination to observe *mitzvos* despite being in an environment that was harshly anti-Semitic and antithetical to anything Jewish is legendary. The first *Shabbos* of his conscription set the tone for his entire stay in the army. On *Erev Shabbos*, he marched into the commander’s office and notified him that, under no circumstances would he desecrate *Shabbos*. He was willing to make up the work during the week. *Shabbos* remained sacrosanct.

The officer was so taken aback by this unprecedented insolence that he agreed. There was, however, one stipulation. It was a suicidal gambit, but if he emerged alive, he could have his *Shabbos*. The *Steipler* said that he agreed to any condition. In fact, he did not even care what the stipulation was, since, regardless, he was not going to work on *Shabbos*.

“As a result of your taking ‘time off’ to observe *Shabbos*, you will be placing a greater work load on your co-workers. Therefore, they will be allowed the ‘privilege’ of beating you to their heart’s content.” We must understand that these men were young, strong Russians whose anti-Semitic feelings were no secret. The opportunity to kill a Jew was a treat for them. The *Steipler* miraculously lived to tell about these special moments of suffering. As his bones were broken and his body shattered, he was able to say that he was infused with a special feeling of closeness to the Almighty. This is how he approached every *mitzvah*.

The second story demonstrates his unusual humility. Because of his distinction, everyone sought to have the *Steipler* attend his *simchah*. A joyous occasion becomes that much more gratifying with the presence of a Torah luminary. Understandably, the *Steipler* could not possibly attend each

simchah to which he was invited. Especially in his old age, it was a rarity when he would attend a *Shabbos bar-mitzvah*. Indeed, he could easily spend the entire *Shabbos* trudging from one *simchah* to another.

He did, however, make one exception. A young boy was *bar-mitzvah* and the *Steipler* entered the *shul* and wished *mazel tov* to the father and *bar-mitzvah* boy. He then bent over to whisper something into the ear of the boy. The interchange took a few minutes – much longer than the average blessing of wishing that the boy grow in Torah and be a *nachas* to his parents and *Klal Yisrael*. The boy listened to the *Steipler* and then declared, “No! No! It is not a problem!” Then the *Steipler* left.

Anyone who observed the conversation wondered what had occurred. Later on, the *Steipler* explained that six years earlier, the *bar-mitzvah* boy, who was seven-years old at the time, was *davening* in the same *shul* as the *Steipler*. The boy was reading out of a very large *siddur*, causing the *Steipler* to think that the boy was learning *Gemorah* during *davening*. He went over to the boy and mistakenly criticized him for learning when he should be *davening*. The boy respectfully showed the *Steipler* that the volume in his hand was a *siddur* – not a *Gemorah*. The *gadol hador*, preeminent Torah giant of the generation, was very apologetic and asked the boy’s forgiveness. The boy, of course, forgave him.

The *Steipler*, however, placed the incident on the back burner for six years until the time at which the boy would legally become an adult. He waited this entire time to once again ask for *mechillah*, forgiveness. It was concerning this request that the boy replied, “No problem. I did it already.”

This is what Yaakov /Yisrael exemplifies, and it is with such qualities that we will render *Satan* powerless.