GETTING THROUGH THE END OF DAYS

by Community Contributor

"Yaakov called for his sons and said, gather together and I shall tell you what will befall you in the End of Days…"

Rashi says that Yaakov wished to reveal the conclusion of all the exiles of the Jewish people, but the Divine Presence departed from him and he was unable to do so. The *Gemara* states, "*Yaakov* said to his sons: Perhaps, Heaven forbid, there is a blemish among the issue of my bed like the case of *Avraham*, from whom issued *Yishmael* or like the case of my father *Yitzchak*, from whom issued *Eisav*. His sons answered him reassuringly: Hear, O Israel, *Hashem* is our G-d, *Hashem* is One. They explained their response: Just as there is only One G-d in your heart, so there is only One G-d in our heart…"

Why did the *shevatim* say to Yaakov, "Just as there is only One G-d in your heart, so there is only One G-d in our heart?" The answer is unity.

What is Judaism's definition of *unity*?

Associating with the righteous… and keep away from evil men in order not to learn from their behavior. Rabbi Yosef Mizrachi explains that one must not live amongst them and dine with them etc. For Dovid HaMelech says that one should not sit in the company of scoffers, sinners or walk in the counsel of the wicked. Rabbi Mizrachi says that the best we can do – if we are righteous – is to try to get the wicked people to join our side. The unity that Hashem wants is between the righteous. In the words of Rav Shimon Schwab zt"l:

"During *Golus,* the Jewish people are split, not only physically-geographically but also ideologically. One group does not see eye to eye with the other. This disparity exists not only in that the non-religious segment of our nation does not understand those who are religious, but even the people who keep the *Torah* and*mitzvos* are divided and subdivided many times among themselves.

However, over 150 years ago, the disciples of the *Vilna Gaon* and the disciples of the *Baal Shem Tov* had made peace with each other. While both groups maintained their differences, both developed great respect and eventually a mutual love for each other.

So why should we be different today? The *talmidim* of our great *yeshivos* and *kollelim* who follow their *Roshei HaYeshivah* and devoted *Chassidim* who follow their *Admorim* are all united in their absolute loyalty to*Hashem's Torah.* Why can't we tell the other, 'I am deeply convinced that my

outlook is true. So, are you? We honor each other's conviction and sincerity without any yielding an inch of our own sacred territory.'"

What's *sinas chinam* in our day in age? Jewish racism towards other Jewish groups in our nation [i.e. *Sephardim, Ashkenazim* and *Chasidism* etc.]

When the *shevatim* said to Yaakov, "Just as there is only One G-d in your heart, so there is only One G-d in our heart," they were telling us that we are one nation with one *Torah*. We might have different sects of Judaism, yet we all are learning from the same Torah that was given to us at *Har Sinai*. As the Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai says, "*Hashem,* the *Torah* and *Yisrael* are one." Thus, all three vital components united in the desert fulfilling the dictum, "and the three-ply cord will not be severed easily."

If the producer of a movie plans on making a sequel, he will give hints towards the end of it that the plot isn't over yet. Before the Divine Presence departed from *Yaakov*, was there any hint that he gave us about how to bring this last exile to a close? It's two words: gather together.

The *Medrash* says, "The Jewish people are like a bundle of reeds: A single reed can be broken even by a child, whereas a bundle of reeds cannot be broken even by an adult. [Although each individual may be unworthy of a certain spiritual level, together they are worthy of that level]. So too, the Jewish people will not be redeemed until they become a single group."

Elsewhere, the *posuk* says, "He was King over *Yeshurun* [*Yisrael*] when the leaders of the nation gathered and the tribes of *Yisrael* were unified." *Rashi* explains, "When is He King over *Yeshurun*? Only when the tribes of*Yisrael* are unified and not when they are divided into separate groups – which, we know, happens as a result of *loshon hora.*

How strong is unity?

The *Medrash* states that if Jews are worshipping idols, but they live in peace, then in Heaven, the Accuser is not able to prosecute them. For *Hashem* states, "The Holy One Blessed be He says to the Jewish people: My beloved children, do I lack anything that I need to ask it of you? What do I, *Hashem*, ask of you? Only that you love one another, honor one another and revere one another." As *Dovid HaMelech* said, "Indeed, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers, moreover, in unity." The Belze Rebbe said that the salvation of the Jewish people rests on unity during times of trouble.

With Hashem's help, in the merit of becoming one like our Creator, with our brethren – through speech and action – may He soon gather us out of the lands to which we were scattered and bring us to the Land that our forefathers possessed!

Dedicated in memory of Rivka bas Rav Eliyahu, Shlomo Avraham Moshe ben Yechezkeil Yosef,

Rochel bas Menachem Mendel Boruch, Eliyahu ben Mordechai, Mashah Tzivyah bas R' Shlomo Zalman, Altah Soshah Devorah bas Aryeh Leibush, Chaim ben Shmuel Efraim Zalman, Tuvyah Shlomo ben Naftali Tzvi HaKohein, Leah bas Leib Yehudah, Esther Perel bas R' Shlomo, Miriam bas Zelig Shaul, Menachem ben Shimon, Menachem ben Zev, Sarah bas HaRav Yisroel, Zushe Yosef ben Shmuel Tzvi, Yosef ben Moshe HaLevi and all the other departed souls of our nation.

For the complete recovery of Chayah Malka bas Bas-Sheva, among the other sick ones of our nation.

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