

PARSHAS VAYISHLACH

by Rabbi Dr. Meir Tamari

'I have an ox and a donkey, flocks and men and maidservants' (Bereishit, 32:6). The midrash teaches that the ox is the Messiah ben Yoseph and the donkey is the Messiah ben David.

Rabbenu Tam in Sefer Hayashar explains that every individual has two parts, body and nefesh and these pursue two different directions; the body to the material and physical and the nefesh to spiritual grandeur and glory. In this regard the Master Menachem Mendel of Kotsk, taught that the essential part of the desire for glory can come only to a person who has already cleared themselves of appetites and desires. In its Galut, Israel sinks into material desires and is overcome by physical lusts, and the only way that they can be transformed is through their observance of the covenant, the personification of which is Yoseph. Therefore the first redemption comes through the Messiah of the House of Yoseph. Now they can enter the field of grandeur and glory. However, here there is the ever-present danger of arrogance and pride that can only be avoided or cured through the humility and modesty that characterize David. So, in order to be redeemed from this danger, Israel requires the Messiah of the Bet David. Then they may become like the sheep who have only one common voice and like the servants whose only task and pleasure is to serve their Master.

Shabbat represents the amalgamation of the role of the two messiahs. The nefesh yeteirah that we possess on this day, lusts after sanctity and desires kedushah, so that it is the opposite of material desires and appetites. Shabbat itself is Joseph, [just as the other festivals are represented by the Patriarchs, Moshe, Aharon and David], and therefore through the messiah of Ben Yoseph, Israel is able to divest themselves of worldly matters and physical needs on Shabbat. However, when this additional soul is elevated by this redemption, there is the danger of spiritual arrogance and self-delusion. It must be borne in mind, that this danger of self delusion and arrogance that often accompanies religious observance, is a major motive throughout the whole School of Pshyscha. Much of their teaching is geared to eradicate the danger and the Shem Mi Shmuel is no exception. Since on Shabbat there is shevut, a cessation of work and the diminishing search for material existence, it brings with it the humility of the Messiah of David. So on Shabbat these two concepts, humility and the divesting of material matters, can be achieved simultaneously..

Chazal tell us that Yaakov wanted to bring Eisav to Teshuvah and Yaakov believed that that this could be done through the two messiahs: ox and donkey. Yoseph is the Shor-Ox. By pulling the plough the ox breaks up the hard ground and turns over the soil thereby preparing it for the new crop. In the same way, the Messiah of Yoseph will destroy material evil, the arrogance of Eisav and

prepare the world for redemption. He will destroy the power of Amalek as we know that he will only be defeated by the sons of Rachel [Yehoshua, Shaul and Mordechai], thereby he will break down the partitions that Amalek creates between Israel and God. This Messiah will shatter the heart of stone that lies over Israel. Since the Yetzer Hara is the Nachash that is Eisav, the destruction of Amalek will remove the Yetzer Hara from the world. Then, as we read in the midrash, the whole world will shelter beneath the Shechinah and a new spirit will rule in Heaven and over the kings on earth. (midrash Shir HaShirim, chapter 8). Then, like the seed sown in the furrows, it will be possible for the Messiah the son of David riding on the donkey, to spread great heavenly light over Israel, give them a new heart and through humility spread Torah throughout the world so that all mankind would acknowledge the rule of God. By the Messiahs of Yoseph and of David the world will be so changed that Eisav will be able to rejoin his roots. This is why Yaakov sent to tell him that he has the ox and the donkey of the two messiahs.

The messengers-angels had to be sent to Har Seir, the homeland of Eisav. The Master, Menachem Mendel of Kotsk said that a person's spiritual roots express themselves in the place he chooses on earth. Eisav- Edom is arrogance and egoism, fixated with the power of his own glory. We saw this when Edom answered Moshe's request for permission to cross their territory (Bamidbar, 20: 18-20). He said, 'You tell me of the promise you received from your Father and I answer you with the one I received from mine, 'By your sword shall you live' (Bereishit, 27:40). You tell me how Hashem heard your voice of Yaakov but the hands are the hands of Eisav '(Rashi). He is red with the bloodshed that follows arrogance and belief in one's own power and his inheritance is Edom, Red. Har Seir- Edom is that part of Eretz Yisrael that is temporarily given to Eisav and it is from here that he derives his arrogance and gasut ruach. Gasut ruach cannot be rectified by doing mitzvot as the arrogance is only enhanced by its performance. Therefore the gasut ruach of Eisav, cannot be corrected but needs to be destroyed and eradicated. Then Har Seir will become part of the Nachlah of Israel, as promised to Avraham. So the angels had to be sent to Har Seir with the message of the two messiahs.

However, there is a further reason for the message of the angels. This is a reflection of the angels of Eretz Yisrael, who ascended the ladder of Yaakov's dream, and those of Chutz La Aretz who descended in order to accompany him on his way to Haran. Now the roles were reversed when at Machanayim at the end of Vayeitzei, Yaakov saw the two camps of angels; one to greet him on his return and the other to say farewell. Those of Chutz La Aretz are Sur Mi Rah, cleansing the desires and needs of the body for material thing and achievements, while the angels of Eretz Yisrael are the striving for spiritual grandeur and glory through Asei Tov. The Talmud (Nedarim, 20a) and (Sanhedrin, 72a) tells us that the angels sent to Eisav relate to the scholars of Eretz Yisrael and to those of Bavel, who differed from each other in the manner of their holy service, a difference that reflected itself in their scholarship and interpersonal attitudes. The scholars of Eretz Yisrael whose whole worship flowed from love and ecstasy, in turn made their relationships with each other and their interpersonal communications, one of love and tolerance. The scholars of Bavel whose worship was

constantly aimed at Sur Mi Rah, even at their own shortcomings, developed a critical and contentious relationship with each other, thereby stressing their halakhic differences.

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