KING DAVID KABBALAH
SICHOS SHABBOS

FROM THE KABBALISTIC TEACHINGS OF RABBI SHEPHERD SHLIT''A



1 MEAL

Angels on a Mission: Yakov's Strategic Approach to Eisav

Verse:

וַיִּשְׁלַח יַעֲקֹב מַלְאָכִים לְפָנָיו, אֶל עֵשָׂו אָחִיו, אַרְצָה שֵׂעִיר, שְׂדֵה אֱדוֹם.

"Yakov sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Eisav, to the land of Seir, the field of Edom."

Translation and Commentary:

1. Why "לפניו" (Ahead of Him)?

The Or HaChaim addresses the phrase "לפניו" (ahead of him), questioning its necessity. He explains that Yakov's decision to send angels (malachim) rather than human messengers required justification. By stating "לפניו," the Torah emphasizes that these angels were already present before Yakov, making their use appropriate for such a significant task.

Yakov sent angels for two reasons:

- **Eisav's Status and Potential Threat:**

Eisav's reputation as a powerful adversary necessitated messengers who would command respect and ensure safe communication. Human messengers might have been dismissed or harmed by Eisav without delivering Yakov's message.

- **Fear and Awe Through Divine Messengers:**

The appearance of heavenly beings—described in Midrashic sources as "clothed in fire and riding horses"—would instill fear in Eisav, potentially deterring him from aggressive actions against Yakov.

2. Why Mention "אחיו" (His Brother)?

The Torah explicitly identifies Eisav as Yakov's brother, which seems redundant. The Or HaChaim provides multiple interpretations:

- **A Plea for Brotherhood:**

The term emphasizes Yakov's intention to appeal to Eisav on the basis of their familial bond, seeking to remind Eisav of their shared lineage and history.

- **Dual Nature of Eisav's Relationship:**

The use of both "Eisav" and "his brother" reflects the duality of Eisav's character. Yakov instructed the angels to tailor their approach based on Eisav's behavior:

  - If Eisav appeared as a "brother" (friendly), they would deliver one type of message.
  - If Eisav acted as an adversary, the angels would deliver a more guarded message.

Only angels, with their divine perception, could discern Eisav's true intentions and adapt accordingly.

3. Why Specify "ארצה שעיר" and Not "לארץ שעיר"?

The Or HaChaim notes the unusual phrasing of "ארצה שעיר" (to the land of Seir) instead of "לארץ שעיר." He explains:

- **The Angels' Unique Ability:**

Unlike human messengers, angels did not need to travel physically. They could project their presence spiritually, carrying out their mission instantaneously. The phrase "ארצה שעיר" reflects their ability to fulfill the task without physical movement.

- **Symbolizing Eisav's Elevated Status:**

The open patach vowel under aleph in "ארצה" hints at Eisav's elevated power during this period, reflecting his dominance over Yakov's descendants after the destruction of the Temple.

4. What is the Significance of "שדה אדום"?

The term "שדה אדום" (the field of Edom) adds geographical and symbolic depth:

- **Locational Precision:**

"Field of Edom" refers to Eisav's home base, ensuring the message would reach him even before he left his territory.

- **Three Historical Phases of Eisav and Yakov:**

The Or HaChaim identifies three stages in the relationship between Yakov's descendants (Israel) and Eisav's descendants (Edom):

- Brotherhood (Early Period): Initially, Yakov and Eisav maintained a tenuous familial bond, represented by the phrase "עשו אחיו" (Eisav his brother).
- Eisav's Dominance (Exile Period): From the destruction of the Temple until the Messianic era, Edom (Eisav's descendants) dominates politically and economically, reflected in "ארצה שעיר."
- Israel's Redemption (Messianic Era): In the future, Edom will be subdued, symbolized by "שדה אדום," a plowed field ready for harvest.

Spiritual and Mystical Insights:

- **Strategic Use of Angels:**

Yakov's choice to send angels reflects his understanding of the balance between divine intervention and human effort. He combined practical strategy with reliance on Hashem's support.

- **Dynamic Relationships:**

The dual description of Eisav as "brother" and "enemy" mirrors the complexities of human relationships. It teaches the importance of adaptability and discernment in dealing with others.

- **Three Historical Eras:**

The progression from Eisav's initial brotherhood to his dominance, and finally to his submission, symbolizes the broader narrative of Jewish history and the eventual triumph of righteousness.

Moral and Practical Lesson:

Yakov's encounter with Eisav offers timeless lessons:

- **Balance Between Effort and Faith:** Just as Yakov relied on both strategic action and divine assistance, we must combine our practical efforts with trust in Hashem.
- **Hope in Redemption:** The stages of Eisav's relationship with Yakov reflect the ebb and flow of Jewish history, ultimately leading to the fulfillment of divine promises.
- **Adapting to Complexity:** Relationships and challenges are rarely black-and-white. By navigating them with wisdom and faith, we can turn adversaries into allies or, at the very least, prevent harm.

2 MEAL

"Yakov or Israel? The Mystery of Two Names"

Verse:

"לֹא יִקָּרֵא שִׁמְךָ עוֹד יַעֲקֹב, כִּי אִם יִשְׂרָאֵל."

"Your name shall no longer be called Yakov, but Israel."

Translation and Commentary:

Why Is Yakov Still Called by His Original Name?

The Or HaChaim addresses a critical distinction between Yakov (יעקב) and Abraham (אברהם). After Abraham's name was changed from *Abram (אברם)* to *Abraham (אברהם)*, it became forbidden to refer to him by his original name, as this is considered a violation of a positive commandment (*Berakhot 13a*). In contrast, although Yakov's name was also changed to Israel, the Torah and subsequent texts continue to refer to him as Yakov, and there is no prohibition against using this name.

Two Key Questions Explored:

1.-Why does the Torah continue to use "Yakov" even after the name change?

The Or HaChaim explains that Yakov's original name represents a distinct aspect of his soul, which remains relevant even after the addition of the name Israel. Names in the Torah reflect the spiritual essence of a person. Yakov's identity as *יעקב* represents the first stage of his spiritual mission, while *ישראל* signifies an elevated state. Both aspects coexist, and therefore, both names remain valid.

2.-Why is the rule different for Abraham?

Unlike Yakov, the name *אברהם* subsumes *אברם*. The change from Abram to Abraham reflects a transformation in spiritual status, where the original name is fully included in the new, expanded identity. Thus, Abraham's name change signifies a complete evolution, making the use of *אברם* redundant and inappropriate.

The Significance of the Name Yakov (יעקב):

The Or HaChaim emphasizes that the name יעקב is not discarded because it represents an integral part of Yakov's spiritual journey:

- יעקב symbolizes his initial struggle and his ability to overcome challenges ("he who grasps the heel").
- ישראל reflects his elevated status as a leader and one who has "struggled with Hashem and man and prevailed" (Bereshit 32:29).

Since both stages of his journey are essential, Yakov retains both names, with each name reflecting a different dimension of his character and mission.

The Torah's Language: "לא יקרא שמך עוד יעקב":

The phrase *"לא יקרא שמך עוד יעקב"* is phrased differently than the change for Abraham (*"לא יקרא עוד שמך אברם"*) to highlight this distinction:

- For Yakov, the Torah does not say his name will no longer be "Yakov" but rather emphasizes that he will also be called *Israel.*
- For Abraham, the original name is entirely replaced by the new name.

Moral and Spiritual Insights:

- **Dual Identity as a Reflection of Growth:**

Yakov's dual names remind us that growth does not erase the past but builds upon it. Our struggles and successes are both integral parts of who we are.

- **Evolving Spiritual Roles:**

The name *יעקב* represents the personal, earthly struggle, while *ישראל* signifies divine elevation and leadership. This duality highlights the balance between human effort and divine grace.

- **The Power of Names:**

Names carry profound spiritual significance, reflecting both identity and destiny. The Torah's nuanced treatment of Yakov's name illustrates the importance of recognizing and embracing all aspects of one's journey.

- **Practical Lesson:**

Yakov's story teaches us to embrace our complexities. Even as we strive for growth and spiritual elevation, we must honor the struggles that shaped us. Both our "Yakov" and "Israel" identities are vital parts of our journey toward fulfilling our divine mission.

3 MEAL

"The Kings of Edom: A Prophecy of Redemption"

Verse:

"וְאֵלֶּה הַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר מָלְכוּ בְּאֶרֶץ אֱדוֹם, לִפְנֵי מְלֹךְ מֶלֶךְ לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל."

"These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel."

Translation and Commentary:

1. The Enumeration of Edomite Kings:

The Or HaChaim explores why the Torah lists the kings of Edom and what this signifies for the future. He explains that these kings symbolize all the nations and powers aligned with Edom. Their ultimate downfall is assured, as their fate is tied to Edom itself.

- Betrayal of Allies:

Even the cities and allies of Edom, such as Bozrah, which supported Edom by providing kings, are destined for destruction. This is based on the prophecy in *Isaiah 34:6*: *"A sacrifice for Hashem in Bozrah."* These alliances will not save them from divine judgment.

- A Foreshadowing of Israel's Redemption:

The list of Edomite kings serves as a marker of the lengthy exile Israel would endure. However, it also provides a promise: just as the reign of Edom was finite, so too will Israel's suffering come to an end. The eventual triumph of Israel is assured.

2. A Parallel to Israel's Kings:

The Torah emphasizes that Edom had kings "before any king reigned over the children of Israel." This temporal precedence hints at a divine plan:

- **The Role of Edom in History:**

Edom's temporary dominance foreshadows Israel's eventual rise. Just as Edom had its kings, Israel will have its kings, symbolizing divine justice and symmetry in history.

- **Length of Exile:**

The Or HaChaim suggests that the number of Edomite kings listed in the Torah corresponds to the stages of Israel's exile. Each stage reflects a distinct period of foreign domination, leading up to the ultimate redemption.

3. The Promise of Redemption:

The Or HaChaim ties the enumeration of Edomite kings to the Messianic era:

- Divine Justice Will Prevail:

Just as Edom's reign ended, so too will the reigns of all nations that oppress Israel. The prophecy assures that even if Edom's allies temporarily gain control of Israel's land, Israel's claim as the divinely chosen nation will prevail.

- Extended Days of Redemption:

Quoting the Talmud (Sanhedrin 99a), the Or HaChaim notes that the world will last 6,000 years, but the Messianic era may extend well beyond this period. The ultimate redemption will not only restore justice but also usher in a prolonged era of divine blessing and peace.

Moral and Spiritual Insights:

- **The Cyclical Nature of History:**

The rise and fall of Edom's kings remind us that all earthly powers are temporary. While injustice and exile may seem prolonged, they are part of a divine plan leading to ultimate redemption.

- **Hope in Difficult Times:**

The detailed enumeration of Edom's kings is not merely historical but a source of encouragement. Just as Edom's dominance ended, so too will Israel's suffering. This reminds us to hold steadfast in faith during challenging times.

- **The Inevitability of Divine Justice:**

The downfall of Edom and its allies underscores the principle that no alliance or power can protect those who oppose divine will. Justice may take time, but it is inevitable.

Practical Lesson:

This passage calls us to trust in the divine timeline. Even when exile or challenges seem insurmountable, history demonstrates that no power lasts forever. The ultimate redemption will come, bringing justice, peace, and the fulfillment of Hashem's promises to Israel. As we wait, we are reminded to remain steadfast in faith and hope, knowing that every challenge is part of a greater divine plan.