בס"ד

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

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The Angels sent Before Yaakov and the way He Spoke in Prayer

וַיִּשְׁלַח יַעֲקֹב מַלְאָכִים לְפָנָיו אֶל עֵשָׂו אָחִיו אַרְצָה שֵׂעִיר שְׂדֵה אֱדוֹם. וַיְצַו אוֹתָם לֵאמֹר כֹּה תֹאמְרוּן לַאדֹנִי לְעֵשָׂו: (לב ד–ה)

"And Yaakov sent messengers before him to Esav his brother, to the land of Seir, the field of Edom. And he commanded them, saying: Thus shall you say to my master, to Esav." (32:4–5) We are now at the most troubled moments in Yaakov Avinu's life. After twenty years in the house of Lavan, he is finally returning home, and standing between him and the Land is his brother Esav, who had once vowed to kill him. Yaakov answers this danger in two ways: he sends messengers ahead of him, and he turns to the Ribbono shel Olam in prayer. Yaakov did not rely on his messengers alone. He also turned to Hashem in heartfelt prayer: הַצִּילֵנִי נָא מִיַּד אָחִי מִיַּד עֵשָׂו "Please save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav." (32:12)

The question is the word ,לְפָנָיו" before him," seems superfluous. Messengers who are sent to someone are naturally sent ahead of the sender. Why does the Torah need to tell us that they went "before him"? Second: Rashi tells us that these were ,מַלְאָכִים מַמָּשׁ actual angels. If so, how can the Torah say "וַיְצַו אוֹתָם and he commanded them"? How could a human being, even one as great as Yaakov, give orders to heavenly angels, as a master instructs his servants? The Sefer Ateres Tzvi, Rabbi Meshulem Gross answers both questions with one beautiful idea. These angels were not strangers sent down from heaven. They were created by Yaakov himself, brought into being through the mitzvos and good deeds he had performed. Our Sages teach that every mitzvah a person does creates an angel. As the Mishnah says: הָעוֹשֶׂה מִצְוָה אַחַת קוֹנֶה לוֹ פְּרַקְלִיט אֶחָד "One who performs a single mitzvah acquires for himself a single advocate." (Pirkei Avos 4:11)

He connects this to the verse said of our forefathers' work in Charan: וְאֶת הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ בְחָרָן "And the souls that they had made in Charan." (Bereishis 12:5) In Charan, too, Yaakov brought people close to the Ribbono shel Olam. All of this, his Torah, his mitzvos, his kindness, and the souls he drew near, gave rise to angels of holiness. Now the word לְפָנָיו becomes clear. Of such angels it is fitting to say that they go "before him," as it says: צֶדֶק לְפָנָיו יְהַלֵּךְ וְיָשֵׂם לְדֶרֶךְ פְּעָמָיו "Righteousness shall walk before him, and shall set his footsteps on the way." (Tehillim 85:14)

The good deeds he performs go out before him and clear the path ahead. The word וַיְצַו is explained as well. Since Yaakov himself was the cause of their creation, they were created to serve him. Their existence was to serve the one whose deeds brought them into being. So Yaakov could indeed command them, for they were, his own.

Yaakov did not rely on his messengers alone. He also turned to Hashem in heartfelt prayer: הַצִּילֵנִי נָא מִיַּד אָחִי מִיַּד עֵשָׂו "Please save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav (32:12) Here too we must ask: why does Yaakov say both "my brother" and "Esav"? Everyone knows that Esav is his brother? The holy Shelah answers with a foundational teaching about prayer. The holy Zohar (vol. I, 169b) learns from this very verse: מַאן דְּצַלֵּי צְלוֹתָא בָּעֵי לְפָרְשָׁא מִלּוֹי כַּדְקָא יָאוּת "One who prays a prayer must state his words explicitly, as is fitting." The Shelah explains that a person should not think: "Hashem searches all hearts and already knows what I mean, so I need not say it in full." On the contrary, a person must say out loud everything he is asking for. The reason is that the holy letters of prayer cut through all the worlds and rise upward. So Yaakov spelled out his request completely and clearly: "Save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav." He named the danger in full.

The holy Chida adds a further point. We know that the angels carry our prayers up to the Throne of Glory. Therefore a person should say everything plainly, so that the angels understand exactly what is being asked, and can then stand as good advocates, מְלִיצֵי יֹשֶׁר, on our behalf. (Sefer Ir Miklat, by the Gaon Rabbi David Lida, Av Beis Din of Amsterdam; printed by the holy Rabbi Hershel of Liska, zt"l)

Bringing this lesson together: There are the deeds that go before us, and the words that rise above. In the first, Yaakov's deeds become angels that go before him, created to serve him and ready to carry out his command. In the second, Yaakov's words of prayer rise up through the worlds, borne by angels who must understand them clearly in order to plead his case.

The two sources of a Yid's protection: מַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים, good deeds, and תְּפִלָּה, prayer. Yaakov Avinu used both. He sent forth the angels born of his mitzvos, and he poured out his heart in clear, explicit words before his Creator. Yaakov prepared himself for Esav in three ways: with a gift, with prayer, and for battle (Rashi on Bereishis 32:9). Behind all of them stood the spiritual power of his deeds and his words. Let us follow in his ways. *(Yehuda Z. Klitnick)*

STORY OF THE WEEK (*By Yehuda Z. Klitnick*)

***** ***The Professor of Anipoli that didn't exist!*****

Rabbi Mordechai of Neshchiz (5504 – 8 Nissan 5560), was born to his father Rebbe Dov Ber of Tolchin, a descendant of the Megaleh Amukos. He was a student of Rabbi Yechiel Michel, the Maggid of Zlotchov, who was a disciple of the Baal Shem Tov, and other sources also call him a talmid of the Maggid of Mezritch, Rabbi Dov Ber,. After serving as Rabbi in Leshnev, in the province of Brody, he settled in Neshchiz, near Kovel in Volhynia, around 1790. Among his students were the famous tzaddikim Rabbi Uri of Strelisk and Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Epstein, author of Sefer Maor VaShemesh. He became famous as a man of miracles and wonders a Baal Mofes. It was said that in his entire life he never spoke evil of a fellow Jew. His yahrzeit is. He was buried in his hometown, and his successor was his son, Rebbe Yitzchok of Neshchiz, author of Sefer Toldos Yitzchok.

Once a Chosid came weeping to the heilige Rebbe of Neshchiz, "Rebbe, help me! I need a great healing! I've already gone to the best doctors, and not one of them can find a cure for my terrible illness. They all agree that, Heaven forbid, there is no remedy for it. They've given up on my life. "I beg you, Rebbe, help me! What else can I try so that I'll be healed of this awful sickness?"

The Rebbe listened with deep compassion. Then he asked, "Tell me, have you been to the Professor of Anipoli yet?"

-[Anipoli was a small town in Volhynia, in today's western Ukraine. The Maggid of Mezritch, successor of the Baal Shem Tov, is buried there 19 days of Kislev 5532. It was also home to the Rebbe Zusha of Anipoli, brother of Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk. He passed away there in 2 days of Shvat 5560.-]

"I've never even heard of a professor in Anipoli," the Chosid answered. "Go down to the Professor of Anipoli," said the Rebbe. It was a clear command, and from the way he said it, the man understood that his salvation depended on it. The Chosid left the Rebbe's room smiling. Now he knew what to do. He hired a wagon at once, settled on a price with the driver, and set off for Anipoli.

The road was long, hard and exhausting, but the Chosid hardly felt it. He was full of happy expectation. Soon he would reach the great doctor, the specialist, the Professor of Anipoli, whom the Rebbe himself had recommended. Surely, with God's help, this professor would be the messenger of his cure. At last the wagon rolled into the little town of Anipoli. The man was very ill and worn out from the long journey, but he jumped down from the wagon anyway and stopped the first person he met in the narrow streets. "Excuse me, could you tell me where the Professor lives?" "Professor?!" The man looked at him in surprise. "Yes, I'm looking for the famous Professor of Anipoli. I've come a long, hard way just so he can heal me of my terrible illness. Please, tell me where he lives." "A professor? Here in Anipoli? We don't even have an ordinary doctor in our town, and you're looking for a famous professor?!"

The man stood there completely bewildered, unable to believe what he was hearing. The Rebbe had told him so clearly! He could still hear the holy voice ringing in his ears: "Go down to the Professor of Anipoli."

He spotted someone else and tried again, a little hesitantly this time. "Excuse me, is there a great professor who lives here in Anipoli?" "I've lived in this town for many years," the man answered, puzzled. "For as long as I can remember there hasn't been a single doctor here, and certainly no professors." Now the Chosid saw that they were telling him the truth. There was nothing left for him to look for here. Crushed and broken, he started back on the long road to Neshchiz, to the holy Rebbe Reb Mordechai. He was bitterly disappointed that he had dragged himself all the way to Anipoli for nothing, and he still saw no hope of a cure.

When he arrived in Neshchiz, he burst into the Rebbe's room. "Rebbe, there isn't even an ordinary doctor in Anipoli, let alone a professor! I wore myself out traveling all the way there, and I've come back empty-handed." "Is that so?" said the Rebbe. "Then tell me: what do the Jews of Anipoli do when someone, Heaven forbid, falls ill and needs a doctor?" The Chosid thought for a moment and answered: "They have no other choice. They pray, and they rely completely on Hashem, the Healer of the sick of His people, that He Himself will send them a complete recovery. "Ah! That is exactly the Doctor of Anipoli I sent you to!"

Oncece the Chosid had learned to rely completely on Hashem alone, he was granted a complete recovery. And so the Doctor of Anipoli can help all of us. He can heal us completely and send a full recovery, even when a sharp sword rests upon one's neck, teach us our sages in Gemara Berachos 10a אֲפִילוּ חֶרֶב חַדָּה מֻנַּחַת עַל צַוָּארוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם, אַל יִמְנַע עַצְמוֹ מִן הָרַחֲמִים Pray and Hashem will help.

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