Parshas Toldot · 5782

MOSHIACH = YAAKOV'S BLESSINGS WITHOUT DISGUISE!

BEGIN WITH A GRIN

The wagon driver asked the town rabbi for a blessing that the gentiles not start up with him.

The rabbi paused for a moment and then said, “Whenever you have a problem with a gentile, tell him the verse, 'Through the might of Your arm they are still as stone,' and they will turn into stones!”

The wagon driver was pleased and he went off.

On one of his trips through the forest, a gang of criminals attacked him and began pelting him with stones. Without hesitating, he said the verse and … nothing happened!

He went back to the rabbi with a swollen eye and broken ribs.

“Rabbi, I did what you told me and the verse didn't help …”

“What can I do when, apparently, they're deaf!”

BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

One of the highlights of parshas Toldos is the story of the blessings that Yitzchok Avinu wanted to bestow on his oldest son, the wicked Eisav. In the end, with the intervention and wisdom of Rivka Imeinu, he blessed Yaakov. It wasn't easy to convince Yitzchok or, to be more precise, “to do a job on him” in order to get those wondrous blessings. Yaakov had to disguise himself as his older (hairy) brother by putting goat skins on his arms. He had to act with pretense and find the right time to go to his father and serve him a meal, all without his brother finding out.

Aside from the organizational and practical difficulties, Yaakov had another, more disturbing, problem, the need to disguise himself and play a role. The need to lie or twist the truth, the need to fool someone beloved to him, his father! After all, Yaakov is referred to in the Torah as an “ish tam yosheiv ohalim,” a straight man who doesn't allow even a scintilla of

falsehood to issue from his mouth, a man of pure truth. He is sincere, straight, honest, upright, not someone who says one thing and means something else; on the contrary, what you see is what you get. We can assume that this was the first and only time in his life that Yaakov had to do something like this, be deceptive and sly. And to whom? His father!

Things like this, wearing the clothes of the wicked Nimrod, the one who led the world in rebellion against G-d, were in the category of “mesirus nefesh” for a Jew like Yaakov. Picture the chief rabbi of Israel or a respected Admor dressing up like a soccer player or rock-n-roll star … But what wouldn't he do in order to obtain the blessings …

The main problem is that after all that, the blessings were not fulfilled! Yaakov received the blessings, ten in all, lofty and wondrous blessings, holy and rarefied blessings, of the “dew of the heaven and the fat of the land,” blessings of success, wealth and honor, and … nothing! The nations of the world do not serve us and the nations don't bow down to us. We aren't all rich and not necessarily do those who curse us curse themselves.

So what happened to the blessings? Where's the wealth and happiness? Where is the success?

If that wasn't enough, when we continue to read the verses, we discover that Yitzchok kept some blessings for Eisav. B-level blessings, made-in-China blessings, but these blessings were fulfilled! Eisav, who was supposed to be the loser, turns out to be the winner. He is the one who becomes the great warrior king (“you will live by your sword”), it was he and his descendants who inherited “the fat of the land – this is Italy of Greece,” the famous Roman empire that ruled the world for centuries.

Either no blessings should have been fulfilled or all blessings should have been fulfilled, but that the blessings for the tzaddik should be rent to shreds while the blessing of the wicked one were fulfilled sounds bizarre, even upsetting, no?

BLESSINGS IN THE SKIES

This question was asked nearly two thousand years ago and is documented in the holy Zohar. Rabbi Yosi b'Rabi Shimon asks his friend and rebbi, Rabbi Elozor, the son of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, “Why weren't the blessings of Yitzchok to Yaakov fulfilled while Yitzchok's blessings to Eisav were completely fulfilled?”

Rabbi Elozor answered succinctly. “Yaakov took up above, Eisav took down below.” All the blessings were fulfilled. What the tzaddik says is eternal. Every utterance, letter or syllable

that comes out of the mouths of the Avos, the prophets, tzaddikim and sages, are fulfilled. The difference is where; the question is where. Eisav receives his blessings one by one, here in this material, physical world. Yaakov wanted to receive the blessings in a different way. He wanted to receive them in the upper realm and on the spiritual plane and that is precisely what he got!

But then Rabbi Elozor changes direction and begins speaking about what will happen any minute.

“When the king Moshiach arises, Yaakov will take [the blessings] both above and below while Eisav [and his kingdom] will be lost from the world and nothing will remain of him.”

How are the blessings of Yaakov connected with Moshiach? And why will they be fulfilled then, both materially and spiritually? The Rebbe refers to this Zohar in one of his farbrengens and explains it and the practical lesson derived from its meaning.

As we explained, Yaakov received ten blessings, a complete number, a number that is reminiscent of the Aseres HaDibros (Ten Commandments) and the Asara Maamaros (Ten Utterances) with which the world was created. This is not merely that they share the same number; there is deep inner meaning here.

The creation of the world was and is for the sake of Torah. The creation and existence of the world is contingent on receiving the Torah. That the Dibros and Maamaros are the same number teaches us the purpose of the Torah is to illuminate the world in all its parts and details. There is no nanoparticle in the world that exists without Torah. There is no peripheral detail in creation that lives without Torah. The avoda to reveal this connection is ours, Yaakov's and all his descendants', the Jewish people throughout the generations.

When a Jew does his avoda, when he reveals the profound connection between Torah and the world, the connection that is rooted in the number ten, he receives the ten blessings of Yaakov. He receives “the dew of the heavens and the fat of the land and much grain and wine.” The blessings exist now too, but they exist up above, on the spiritual plane, as in the well known aphorism in Chassidus, “it's all lying in the box,” it's all above, in the upper world.

The Torah and mitzvos that we do increase light in the upper worlds and sefiros, which is why we don't see the fulfillment of the blessings in the physical world, here below. Those lofty revelations, those wondrous blessings, are like diamonds and pearls in a chest. In the future, in Yemos HaMoshiach, the box will be opened and the truth will emerge, above and

below. Then all will see how the blessings are fulfilled here (too), below, in the physical world.

Then, Yitzchok won't have failed and Yaakov won't lose out. The blessings will be fulfilled and will continue to exist. The difference is that until now they existed up above. Momentarily, they will exist below (too)!

We are moments before the hisgalus and the time has come for us to get a taste of those blessings, both materially and spiritually!

TO CONCLUDE WITH A STORY

We will end with a story about the Maggid of Mezritch which explains how up above it is all already prepared.

The Baal Shem Tov sent regards to the Maggid with a simple Jew who visited him. This Jew went to Mezritch and was surprised to see that the house of the great Maggid was located on a block of hovels, one more run-down the next. The street was full of mud even in the summertime. Desolation could be seen everywhere.

When he entered the Maggid's house, there was no table because they used planks of wood to make a kind of bed for the members of the household to sleep on. There wasn't even a chair. The Maggid sat on a block of wood and looked into a sefer. The Maggid was very happy to see the guest and was even happier with the regards from his rebbi.

He suggested that the guest sit on what looked like a sort of bench which was supported by blocks of wood. The Jew could not contain himself and said, “I'm not a rich man but at least I have a chair and table in my house and a bed for the children and other household items ...”

The Maggid said, “Yes, at home it's different. At home there's everything, a bed, table, a lamp.”

When the Rebbe Rayatz told this story he said, “Here, in this world, this is not the home. At home, indeed, everything is different!”

We will soon be home and all the blessings will be visibly fulfilled!

Good Shabbos!