



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד **מרדכי מלכא שליט"א**
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
ישיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel MORDECHAI MALKA, Founder & President of Institutions "Or Hamelech"



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Parashat Vayishlach

A View of Pre-Messianic Times [Ikveta De'meshicha]

The World's Perspective and Western Culture

In this week's *parasha* we read about Yaakov's struggle with Eisav's ministering angel and the preparations for his encounter with Eisav shortly thereafter. We will attempt to explain these episodes by beginning with the following thought: We presently live in a society that is defined by modern, Western culture. It is an accepted principle in today's society that to lead a country one must have received a university education as well as degrees, titles, and leadership experience. Only then will he become fit to lead a country. However, lacking this, it is totally impossible for him to be a leader of a country since he is responsible for the country's economy, security, and the like. This is a very fundamental error. We know that Tanach is the most reliable book in the world. This is not only the view of religious Jews, who believe that the Torah is sent from Heaven and is the Torah of Hashem. Rather, even the gentiles understand that the Tanach is the most reliable source of history that exists. The Tanach teaches that throughout history, from the time that the Jewish Nation was established, it was the *gedolei ha'dor* who led them in all aspects of life. This began with the *Avot*, the founders of our Nation. It continued with Moshe and Aharon, who were called upon by Hashem to lead the Nation. Afterwards, Moshe asked Hashem to appoint a leader for the Jews, and he was told (*Bamidbar* 18), "Take Yehoshua ben Nun, a man of spirit, and place your hand on him." He would be the one to fight all of the Nation's wars to conquer the Land of Israel. Subsequent to Yehoshua, in the days of *Shoftim*, Prophets, Kings, *Anshei Knesset Hagedolah*, *Tanaim*, *Amoraim*, *Geonim*, *Rishonim*, *Achronim*, throughout all the generations, all the Jewish leaders, in all aspects of life, were all righteous and pious men, servants of Hashem who observed the Torah and mitzvot. It was only because of their greatness in Torah and mitzvot that they merited leading the Jewish Nation. Those Kings who succeeded in leading the Jewish Nation were servants of Hashem. There were other kings who lost the proper perspective because of their positions of power and stumbled, veering from the Torah path. Their ultimate demise proved that they had gravely erred. So it was for thousands of years, in all generations, until the founding of our state, the State of Israel. **Much to our sorrow, only since the establishment of our state, following the exile and harsh decrees, did leadership switch to the hands of individuals who do not observe Torah and mitzvot. They strengthen the Greek and Western culture, which preach that only intellectualism is the dominant force, and that it is the defining factor in making an individual deserving of leading the State and the Nation.** However, it is without a doubt that the Jews did not err for thousands of years nor live incorrectly until the light finally shone in our times. Rather, the opposite is true; our generation is one of darkness and lowliness. We are saddened to see that we are in the hands of a government that does not observe Torah and mitzvot, and that they are the leaders of the State, in every sense of the word. Their primary interest is to be similar to the leadership of the Nations of the World. However, they have forgotten that the Jewish Nation is different from all of the nations of the world. The Torah teaches in numerous places that the Jews are Hashem's holy, chosen People, to whom He gave the Torah and mitzvot. Without the holy Torah, the Jewish Nation is not superior to the other nations. For the Torah is our life and our very foundation upon which we continue to exist. By observing the Torah we are transformed into an *Am Segulah*, a unique people, more than the other Nations, believing, as we do, that Hashem controls the world. Therefore, it is specifically Jews who observe Torah and mitzvot who receive special Divine assistance, and not those who trample on the Torah, *rachmana litzlan*. However, our present day predicament has already been depicted in the Torah in our *parasha*, as we will soon explain.

What Occurred to the Forefathers is a Sign for the Children

Our Sages state that our *parasha* is a preview to the future of the Jewish Nation. The Midrash Rabbah (*Bereishit* 78) relates the R' Yehudah Hanasi, whose day of passing is this week, was accustomed to read this *parasha* each time he had to meet with the gentile rulers. By reading the *parasha*, he knew how to act, because what



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occurred to the forefathers is a sign for their children. Therefore, we must contemplate and learn how to derive lessons from the actions of Yaakov Avinu.

Teaching of the Vilna Gaon on the *Ikvita De'meshicha*

In his *sefer, Ikvita De'meshicha*, R' Elchanan Wasserman writes that the description of Yaakov's meeting with Eisav alludes to the life of the Jewish Nation amongst the nations of the world. The first *parasha* is the *parasha of galut*. There it hints to the way the Jews must act while in the *galut* of the children of Eisav. The second *parasha* tells about Yaakov returning to his homeland after being in exile in Padan Aram. The Vilna Gaon stated that this is the *parasha* that alludes to the *Ikvita De'meshicha*. The *parasha* states, "And he put the maidservants and their children first." The Gaon said that the children of the maidservants at the head alludes to that fact that prior to the coming of Mashiach, the heads of the Nation will be the descendants of the *Eirav Rav*, the mixed multitude of Egyptian converts who left Egypt together with the Jewish Nation. The Rambam writes in his letters that there is guarantee in the Torah that the Jews will eternally cling to their faith in the Torah (see *Shemot* 19:9). Yet if we nevertheless see heretics amongst the Jewish Nation, it is a sign that the feet of their fathers did not stand by Har Sinai, and they are not from the Jewish Nation. Rather, they are from the *Eirav Rav*. Therefore, if we see leaders in present times who are heretics, based on the words of the Vilna Gaon, we can be certain that they are the descendants of the *Eirav Rav*. When the *pasuk* later states, "And Leah and her children afterwards," it hints to the masses of observant Jews who will be subservient to the *Eirav Rav*, such as in Russia, etc. When the *pasuk* states, "And Rachel and Yosef afterwards," it refers to the *talmidei chachamim* who are denigrated more than everyone else. Despite this, R' Elchanan writes that we are nevertheless witness to the fact that there is still a remnant of *talmidei chachamim* who are disgraced and trampled upon. You see, then, that the Vilna Gaon states that this *parasha* speaks about Messianic times, about our present time when leaders from the *Eirav Rav* rule. We have seen how there was never a time when Jews who did not observe Torah and mitzvot led the Jewish Nation. Rather, the leaders were always *tzaddikim*, and in our times we are witnessing a fulfillment of the words of the Gaon.

As stated, the children of Leah hint to the observant Jews who are led after the *Eirav Rav*. This is as we see in our times as well, that there are many Jews who guard the sacred tradition but still vote for these leaders, for various different reasons. The children of Rachel are the *talmidei chachamim* who are denigrated by them. Woe to our eyes that have seen in our days government leaders who simply wish to uproot anything in the spirit of the Torah. They disgrace those who study Torah and establish laws to pull *bnei Torah* away from their Torah study and draft them into the army. They discriminate and generate hatred in a manner that is unlike any generation prior. For while this was exhibited by the gentile enemies of the Jewish Nation, it did not come from within. These are the words of the Vilna Gaon, which indicate that the redemption is soon to come.

Yaakov's Struggle Against the Angel Alludes to the Discrimination Against the Torah World

The *parasha* continues by depicting Yaakov's struggle against Eisav's ministering angel. We must contemplate who fought with Yaakov – Eisav's ministering angel, and why he fought him – on account of the blessings that Yaakov took with trickery. This is truly unbelievable: how could Eisav's angel complain about Yaakov, as if Eisav's hands were totally clean? Eisav did not only resort to trickery, he even stole, murdered, and threw off the entire yoke of Torah and mitzvot. How could he fight Yaakov to such an extent; Yaakov could simply tell him that Eisav is guilty of far worse?

A Parable to Eisav's Behavior

There is a well-known parable of a lion who was very hungry due to a famine which raged that year. Due to his hunger, he was near death. He met a fox and sought his advice about how to rectify the situation. Since the fox was scared for his life, he suggested announcing in the name of the king, the lion, that all of the animals must make a spiritual accounting as to why this famine has struck. They should organize a gathering where each animal confesses his wicked deeds. They would then repent and the decree would be nullified. Before the lion,



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came all types of animals. The leopard began to confess by saying that one time he saw a man in the forest and devoured him. Perhaps because of this sin the famine struck. The king and his fellow judges said that this could not be. For man is the enemy of the leopard, they exclaimed, and the Sages state that if one comes to kill you, you must kill him first. The wolf came forth and said that he once saw a girl picking flowers. He was hungry and therefore devoured her. The lion responded that he was a *tzaddik* and not a sinner; Hashem had created him a predator in order to dispel his hunger. Then came the elephant, who said that he was once extremely joyful. Infused with joy, he lost his good sense and entered a small village. In cheerful glee, he started to frolic and destroyed the village. He answered that it is a great mitzvah to always be in a state of happiness, and it was not a sin. Next came the sheep, who confessed that one time his owner forget to give him food, and he was very hungry. He placed the sheep in his pen, but it was able to jump and successfully take a small amount of straw, which he then ate to dispel his hunger. The judges jumped up and exclaimed, "Our master, the king. This is a severe sin, on account of which has come the crises." Therefore the lion immediately grabbed, killed, and devoured the sheep in order to dispel his hunger.

Eisav and Those Who Follow Him Act Similarly

This is the behavior of Eisav's ministering angel, and all the more so, Eisav himself. He defends his wicked ways and offers various reasons for acting as he does. He is like the lion that devours the sheep and claims that it is not a sin. Rather, it is the sin of the unfortunate sheep which took the straw that was intended for it, so that it could abate its hunger; it is the one who is guilty. So too, do our enemies from the other countries look at the Jewish Nation. Even though our enemies murder, fire missiles and bombs, and send suicide bombers to kill Jews, but when the Jewish Nation protect themselves, everyone screams that they are spilling blood. You can be sure that if this was a different country, the ruling country would mercilessly wipe out their attackers, as we see all across the world. It is truly amazing – why does this only happen to the Jewish Nation? The answer is that this is the way of Eisav's ministering angel, and of Eisav himself, as well as his descendants. They always voice a denigrating protest against the Jew's attempts to protect themselves and maintain a normal way of life. **Yet much to our sorrow, this is not only the position of our enemies from the outside, but also of those from the inside as well**, consisting of a portion of Jews who wage war against our Torah observant brethren. They voice the same protest as that of Eisav, who complains against Yaakov in the name of justice and uprightness. So too, do they issue protests against the entire Torah world, claiming that they are stealing from the state and ruining the economy. The truth is that no one truly knows what goes on with the governmental allotments, just how much various segments of the population are receiving without any investigation or complaint against the massive waste of government money. About this, no one says a word. The reason is because the media is of the same perspective as that of those who protest against the Torah world; they therefore support and encourage this perspective. Yet against the poor sheep, they rant and rave, as if they have robbed the State. This is one of the signs of the *Ikvetza De'meshicha*, when things are run in a way that defies logic, and the Torah world suffers greatly. This has also made it very difficult to raise money for Torah institutions nowadays, because the anti-Torah perspective has influenced the wealthy benefactors as well.

Our Parasha's Advice How to Save Oneself From the Birth Pangs of Mashiach

Yet despite all this, our *parasha* also contains the advice how to be saved from the birth pangs before the coming of Mashiach, and what is incumbent upon us in our times. We have already stated the principal that the events experienced by the forefathers is symbolic of what will be experienced by their children. Therefore, we must fulfill that which is stated in the continuation of the *pasuk*, which teach us about Yaakov's actions to prepare for war against Eisav. Our Sages teach that Yaakov prepared himself in three ways: he prepared to wage war, he prayed, and prepared a gift for Eisav. [See *Midrash Zuta Kohelet* 9, as well as Rashi's commentary on *pasuk* 32:9]. In the very same manner that Yaakov prepared a gift, prayed, and prepared for war, so too, do we do in present times. The strength of the Jewish Nation lies in their mouths; we pray to Hashem in times of distress. To wage war against the nations of the world is not practical for us. However, we wage the war of



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Torah. By toiling in Torah study with all our might and by the political activists exerting the necessary efforts to stand fiercely before the government officials and exert every effort to help the Jewish Nation. Even though they are greeted with angry faces and are sent away, they nevertheless return. This sustains us and is our pillar in exile; for this *parasha* is meant for all generations until the coming of Mashiach. Gifts are the *tzedakah* contributions that are given by our people. This will continue until we see a fulfillment of Yaakov's words, "I will come to my master in Se'ir" (*Bereishit* 33:14), which our Sages teach will be in the times of the Mashiach. About this time the Navi prophesies, "And the saviors will ascend the mountain of Zion to judge the mountain of Eisav" (*Ovadiah* 1:21). It will be in the merit of three things: in the merit of performing *teshuvah*, repentance, as the *pasuk* states (*Yeshaya* 59:20), "And to Zion comes the redeemer and to those who return from sin"; in the merit of *tzedakah*, as the *pasuk* states (*ibid.* 1:27), "And those who return to her through *tzedakah*"; and in the merit of prayer, as it states (*ibid.* 56:7), "I will bring them to My holy mountain, and I will gladden them in My house of prayer."

Words of Mussar

We learn from the *parasha* and from the episodes of Yaakov Avinu with Eisav that the government will be run by individuals who do not observe the Torah and mitzvot, and the Torah world will even be persecuted in the name of justice and equality. Even though any intelligent person understands that these claims are nothing more than taunts. For in every country religion is respected, and those who are religious are exempted from the army. Therefore the proper way to act in our present times, the *Ikveta De'meshicha*, in order to be saved from all the harsh decrees and the birth pangs of Mashiach is to strengthen ourselves in three things: 1- War: this refers to the war of the Torah; toiling in Torah study. We must guard the holiness of our community as well, and the activists must fight, convince, and exert every effort to strengthen Torah study and those who study it. 2- Prayer: We must strengthen ourselves in prayer, and pray for the predicament of the Jewish Nation and that we should be saved from the pursuit of our enemies – from both the outside and from within. 3 – Gifts, i.e., *tzedakah*: Everyone is required to be a partner in strengthening Torah according to his capabilities. He must contribute physically and monetarily to this cause. These are the three pillars upon which the world stands, as Shimon HaTzaddik taught in Pirkei Avot, that the world stands on three pillars – Torah, *avodah*, and *gemillut chassadim*.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Mordechai Malka