



Ohr Yerushalayim News

14th January 2016 - Volume 9 - Issue 24 - יחי - ט"ז טבת תשע"ז

News This Week

Seuda Shelishis

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The Angel Who Redeemed Him

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

"Yaakov Invokes Heavenly Blessings for His Grandchildren From "The Angel Who Redeemed Him"

"And he blessed Yosef and said 'the L-rd before whom my fathers walked, the L-rd who has taken care of me until this day, the Angel who redeems me from all evil, He shall bless the young lads...' [Bereshis 48:15-16]. This pasuk [verse] is familiar those who say it with our children at night before they go to bed. However, if we think about the pasuk, we will discover a basic difficulty.

Yaakov began giving this blessing to Yosef by referring to the L-rd (haElokim) with whom his forefathers traveled. We would expect that Yaakov would invoke the help of G-d in the blessing of the children. However, in the middle of the blessing, Yaakov suddenly switched and started talking about "the Angel". Yaakov invoked the blessing of the Angel rather than the blessing of G-d. Wouldn't G-d's blessing be better than an Angel's blessing?

I saw a beautiful explanation in the Limudei Nissan (Rav Nissan Alpert). There was a very big difference between the relationship that G-d had with Avraham and Yitzchak and the relationship that He had with Yaakov. The first two generations of Patriarchs merited a relationship with G-d that was built upon open miracles. Avraham, even amongst his peers, was crowned: "a Prince of G-d are you in our midst" [Bereshis 23:6]. Everyone appreciated who he was. Likewise, Avimelech initiated a peace covenant with Yitzchak because he realized who Yitzchak was. They merited a treatment by G-d that was apparent to everyone.

Yaakov is the Patriarch who symbolizes the Jew in Exile. He existed and lived in exile and passed on to his children and his descendants the ability to survive in exile. The providence that Yaakov had was one in which G-d always saved him, but the salvation came in a way which was much more hidden than that experienced by Avraham and Yitzchak.

Look at Yaakov's life. He had troubles from Eisav. Then he had troubles with Lavan. Then he had troubles with Dena. Then he had troubles with Yosef. Then he had troubles with Shimon. Then he had troubles with Binyamin. Yaakov literally lived a life of troubles. But G-d was always there. In all of these instances, in the final analysis, goodness sprouted from what was perceived as evil.

The twenty years spent with Lavan were the twenty years in which Yaakov built the future Tribes. The incident with Yosef is what eventually sustained them in the years of famine. All of these things

eventually had a silver lining – but as they were happening, they were all highly traumatic situations. It was certainly true that at all times G-d was "pulling the strings", but it was not necessarily apparent that this was the case.

This typifies Jewish life in the Exile (Galus). In Galus, we live a life in which the Divine Face of G-d is Hidden (Hester Panim) from us. This means that G-d is there, calling the shots, but He is behind a cloud. It is often difficult to identify the "Hand of G-d" in that which transpires around us. It is difficult to perceive that what occurs to us is "for the best" rather than sometimes calamitous. This is our life in Exile.

Yaakov is about to bless his grandchildren, Menashe and Ephraim, who are the first Jews born into Exile. Their experience in the Egyptian Exile would foreshadow the Jewish experience in many future countries of exile. Yaakov wanted them to realize that the "Hand of G-d" would not always openly intervene on their behalf. At times, G-d's presence would not be apparent to them at all.

Therefore, precisely for this reason, Yaakov gave them the blessing of "the Angel who redeemed me from all evil..." In Galus, G-d does not deliver the salvation Himself in an open and apparent way as it was with the earlier patriarchs. Rather, "the Angel (Malach) who redeems" delivers the salvation. In Galus, G-d has his representatives (Malachim, literally Angels) who come to deliver salvation.

The entire blessing can be understood in this light. "The L-rd before whom my forefathers Avraham and Yitzchak walked" – openly basking in His Salvation. "The G-d who shepherds me" – this is the same G-d who is like a shepherd to me. [The sheep do not know that the wolf is lurking in the background, but it is the shepherd who is always there to make sure that nothing happens. This is the type of Providence that I merited to have in Exile.] And this same Providence – that G-d should watch out for you in Exile even in hidden and indirect ways – is my blessing to you: "The Angel who redeems me from all evil, he too should bless these young boys..." And if you can see this hand of G-d in all that occurs and you will remain upright and steadfast,

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת יחי

Candle Lighting	4.02pm
Mincha	4.07pm
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.18am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	3.25pm
2nd Mincha	3.55pm
Seuda Shlishis	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	5.15pm
Ovos uBonim	6.30pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	4.10pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

then "... my name will be called upon you, as well as the names of my forefathers..." – eventually you will merit to have the open Providence of G-d which was experienced by Avraham and Yitzchak.

Pick An Angel

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

G-d Who shepherds me from my inception until this day: may the angel who redeems me from all evil bless the lads...

Who was this angel? Did Yaakov really beseech its assistance – in violation of every Jewish sensibility that demands that we never pray to anyone of anything other than Hashem Himself?

Yaakov did not pray to an angel. He did not entreat some heavenly figure to shower his grandchildren with blessing. We turn in prayer to Hashem alone; we do not admit to any other object of veneration. Praying to an angel would be all the more objectionable after beginning a prayer with a reference to Hashem Himself, as Yaakov does here! We will unravel this mystery only if we first understand the two elements in Yaakov's prayer. He speaks of sustenance, of Hashem "shepherding" him, giving him what he needs just as a shepherd leads his flock to the pasture land and the water they need. Yaakov also speaks of redemption, of deliverance from destructive forces that rise against him.

Our first instinct is to assume that redemption means critical intervention at moments of extreme urgency. For most people, those moments are few and far between – a handful or two in a lifetime.

Chazal thought differently. R. Eliezer reasons that by bringing these two themes together in Yaakov's tefilah, the Torah implies a strong comparison between them. Redemption is wondrous and miraculous. Therefore, says R. Eliezer, we must know that parnasah, sustenance, is miraculous as well. Furthermore, not a day goes by in which we are not given parnasah. We must therefore conclude that Yaakov refers to a redemptive deliverance that is also continuous and ever-present.

Neither parnasah nor geulah comes "simply" through laws of Nature, fixed into the fabric of Creation. Both, rather, come about through hashgachah, through Hashem's special providence over the lives of individuals.

It is easy to see this in reference to parnasah. In a brutally competitive world that does not stop to ask questions about right and wrong, the parnasah of the honest citizen is indeed miraculous. Only a miracle can account for the food that a person of sterling character, of integrity and scruples, manages to put on his table. It is indeed a gift from G-d each day.

More subtly, his survival each day is also miraculous. So very much can go wrong! So many pitfalls, so many kinds of physical and social evils threaten to overcome and overwhelm him! Only Hashem's geulah, His redemptive deliverance, allow him to survive. (Chazal remark that it is to our advantage that we cannot see the myriad mazikim, demonic forces, which physically surround us. This is certainly true in the social world as well. We would lose

our sanity if we had to worry about all that we could reasonably worry about! We live in blissful ignorance of all the hazards that threaten us – all the envy and intrigue and disease and evil that could snuff out our existence. Our survival in spite of these challenges to our existence is the result of geulah, the constant, protective involvement of Hashem in our lives.

R. Shmuel bar Nachman observes that parnasah is of greater consequence than geulah. In our pesukim, the latter is attributed to an angel; the former is associated with Hashem Himself, apparently unwilling to delegate the task to one of His messengers.

Perhaps we can explain his teaching in the following way. This daily geulah, the bubble of protection that surrounds the fortunate person chosen by Hashem to make it to the finish line, is part of an entire pattern. Some people call it fate or destiny. At its core is the undeniable fact that an individual cannot emerge from the maze of dead-ends and pitfalls without serious protection. This protection is so basic to existence, that it must precede parnasah. For an individual (or community or nation, for that matter!) to survive, it needs to be endowed from the very beginning with a complement of protectors.

From the moment that Hashem determines that an individual will survive, or a nation will exist – that it is their "destiny" or "fate" to remain functional – He provides it with the proper conditions and tools to escape fatal disturbance. Seen this way, parnasah fuels the activity of something, but geulah insures the very existence of the thing that needs to be fueled.

When we step back and contemplate how fortunate we are to simply exist – how improbable our existence really is – we gratefully acknowledge His decision to have created us. We acknowledge as well all the protection we have needed to have made it to a given moment. We call it a malach, which means in this context a messenger sent by Hashem. We acknowledge that the source of our bundle of protective elements is G-d Himself; whatever is working for us does so not randomly, but because He engineered it.

The malach, then, is the entire pattern of how Hashem has ordered our survivability. Yaakov notes here the contrast between his life-pattern and that of his brother, Esav. For Esav to survive, much was required of him. He was called upon to rely upon his own strength and sword. Yaakov, by contrast, was allowed by His Creator to contribute minimally, but to be carried through the difficulties of life by Hashem's agents.

This, then, is Yaakov's prayer for his grandchildren, directed at Hashem and no other. "May the malach that guides your futures be the same as guided mine. May your fate and destiny be similar to mine – living through all moments of life, the good and the not so good, with G-d doing the heavy lifting, and you gratefully acknowledging His protection as you do more coasting than pedaling.