

Lessons from the Chassidische Parsha

The teachings of the Alter Rebbe in Torah Ohr and Likkutei Torah

Uniting Eisav and Yaakov

ד"ה וישלח יעקב מלאכים

פרשת וישלח
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Yaakov and Eisav were two brothers who were worlds apart. Chassidus explains that Yaakov and Eisav were worlds apart, because they represent two completely different world orders; the world of Tohu (chaos) and the world of Tikkun (rectification).

These worlds are two phases within the Divine process of bringing the created worlds into being. They are discussed extensively in Kabbalah and Chassidus.

Eisav who was the firstborn, was rooted in the higher world of Tohu. Yaakov, the younger brother, is the embodiment of the world of Tikkun.

The world of Tohu is characterised by "greater lights and lesser vessels" - אורות מרובים וכלים מועטים. In Tohu, the Sefiros possessed immense G-dly light. But they were too powerful and lofty and could not be contained within the limited vessels of that world. The lights of Tohu were in a state of *Histalkus*, escaping the *Keilim* and withdrawing upwards.

This dynamic led to the spiritual collapse of Tohu, described as *Shviras HaKeilim* (lit. "shattering of the vessels"). In Chassidus there is a paradigm that whatever comes from a higher source spiritually, falls lower in its descent. This is why when the loftier world of Tohu "fell", it came down as Eisav.

The world of Tikkun is the opposite, possessing "lesser lights and greater vessels" - אורות מועטים וכלים מרובים. Tikkun, where the *Keilim* are dominant, is about containing the light and channelling it downwards so that it can be directed in a constructive manner. But it is only able to do so because its light is limited.

The advantage of Tohu is its greater lights. The advantage of Tikkun is that the light can be contained and drawn down.

When Yaakov approached Eisav, he was trying to unite these two worlds, to elicit and draw down from the lofty lights of Tohu into his *Keilim* of Tikkun and from there into the world.

This is the secret behind the 'gifts' that he sent to Eisav. The Torah records that he sent them "before him" לפניהם, which can also mean "above him". This is because Tohu (the source of Eisav) is higher than Tikkun.

Kabbalah describes this as the "elevation of feminine waters" - העלאת מיין נוקבין, the offering from the receiver (*Mekabel*) to arouse a flow (*Hamshacha*) from the giver (*Mashpia*). This is

like giving a gift to a king when coming before him to make a request.

The elevation has to be similar to the flow that it seeks to elicit. When trying to elicit from the world of Tohu, Yaakov's gift had to be like the world of Tohu.

Our Torah is from the world of Tikkun. Therefore, there are very set and defined rules about what qualifies as a valid offering. Korbanos are limited to four species of kosher animals that must be slaughtered.

But the world of Tohu is beyond these limitations. In Tohu כחשיכה כאורה, light and dark, pure and impure are the same. Therefore Yaakov's offering to Eisav included non-Kosher animals like camels and live animals.

In Avodah, Eisav, the lights of Tohu, represent a state of *Ratzo*. This is the powerful desire of the Neshama to escape the world and unite with Hashem. Yaakov, the lights within the vessels represents *Shov*, a downward 'return' into the world, surrendering (*Bittul*) to Hashem's will that we live in the world and illuminate it through Torah and Mitzvos.

The ultimate perfection, which will be realised in the times of Moshiach, will be the fusion of the two together. Where the loftiest of lights are drawn down into the lowest of spaces; the synthesis of Tohu and Tikkun, *Ratzo* and *Shov*. This is what Yaakov was trying to achieve.

This union is alluded to in the verse "and he brought wine to him". The sages explain that Yaakov mixed water into the wine (to dilute it). Wine represents *Ratzo*, below to above. Water represents the *Bittul of Shov*. This act is like Yaakov seeking to unify *Ratzo Veshov*, Tohu and Tikkun. The word *Vayavei* (and he brought) has a double musical note, alluding to the combination of wine and water.

The ultimate reunion of Yaakov and Eisav will take place in the times of Moshiach, when the "saviours shall ascend Mt. Zion to judge the mountain of Eisav and Hashem will have the kingdom". Then the loftiest of lights (Tohu) will be revealed all the way down in the *Keilim* of the world (Tikkun) in a lasting way.

Perhaps this is the reason why when the Rebbe gave us the mission to do everything we can to bring Moshiach to us, he qualified that what we do should be in a way of "lights of Tohu but in *Keilim* of Tikkun". Since this is what Moshiach is all about, this is how we can make it happen.