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Oh – To Be Like an Angel!

Sometimes, when someone does us a huge favor or saves us from unpleasant circumstances, we call that person an angel. We might employ that appellation because the deed went beyond the call of duty or what we might have expected from a fellow human being.

So we might then ask why our Parsha begins by telling us – upfront, as it were – that Yaakov sent ahead to Eisav messengers (*Mal'achim*) that, according to Rashi, were angels '*Mamash*' – the real thing!

The explanation for the “Kometz Hamincha” is that only angels, with their supernatural attributes, could fathom Esav's true face when they encountered him. Thus, if Esav intended to wage war against Yaakov, they would confront him aggressively, countering that if Yaakov could overcome Lavan, he would have no trouble dealing with Esav.

On the other hand, if Esav's intentions were peaceful, the angels would know how to address him with words of conciliation.

For the “Chomat Ha'esh,” Yaakov needed to send angels rather than men because even the most righteous of human messengers could yet be deceived and corrupted by Esav in one singular meeting. Only angels could withstand Esav's shenanigans.

The Noam Elimelech offers an explanation from a more profound, inner perspective. When a tzaddik is involved in even the most banal activity, his thoughts and actions are sourced in a higher spiritual plane.

First, note that Yaakov tells the *Mal'achim* to address Esav as “*Adoni*” – ‘My lord.’ We might then construe, at first glance, that Yaakov is lowering himself in subservience to Esav. But no! The opposite is true, for the term “*Adoni*” is being addressed to Hashem.

Following the Midrash, Yaakov intentionally sent the angels Micha'el and Gavriel – who always spoke up for Yisrael – so that they would beseech Hashem to bless Yaakov and his fateful meeting with his long-vengeful brother, Esav.

Moreover, Yaakov's seemingly straightforward message contained “hidden” missives for Esav. For instance, Yaakov proclaimed modestly: “*Garti Im Lavan*,” intending to say that he sojourned with Lavan as a *Ger*, a mere stranger – not as a prince or nobleman.

But should Esav disdain his younger brother, Yaakov adds: “*Vayehi Li Shor VeChamor*” – ‘I acquired oxen and donkeys,’ the *Shor* traditionally signifying the powerful Mashiach ben Yoseph, and the *Chamor*, the donkey, the kingship of Mashiach ben David!

Oh! – If only our thoughts and intentions could rise to such heights! ■

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