REBBETZIN SHIRA SMILES
Faculty, OU Israel Center

Angelic Awareness

*"Vayishlach Yaakov **malachim** lefanav el Eisav achiv artzah Se'ir sedeh Edom*—Yaakov sent **angels** ahead of him to his brother Eisav, to the land of Se'ir, the field of Edom." *(Bereisheet* 32:4*)*

Many commentators grapple with defining the word *malachim*—angels. Radak, as well as others, follow the interpretation of Onkelos —these were human emissaries that Yaakov sent with gifts to appease Eisav. Rav Sorotzkin *zt"l,* in *Oznayim La'Torah* contends that not one of Yaakov's servants wanted to approach Eisav since they saw the mission as too dangerous, hence, Rashi teaches that Yaakov employed actual divine angels for the task.

Rabbeinu Bachya combines both approaches; Yaakov Avinu sent his men to appease Eisav, and he also sent angels to protect them from danger or harm. Here, Yaakov Avinu models the need to exercise reasonable precaution before embarking on a serious undertaking, not simply to rely on the maxim, *"shluchei mitzvah ein-an nizokin*—Those on the path to perform a mitzvah are not [susceptible to] harm [throughout the process of performing the mitzvah]." *(Pesachim* 8a*)*

Rav Sorotzkin notes that we see the greatness of Yaakov Avinu that he had command of heavenly beings. Further, in *Machshevet Mussar,* Rav Shach comments that a tzaddik's ability to utilize the service of angels for his own needs is based on a fundamental principle, *"b'shvili nivra haolam"*— the entire cosmos, including the spiritual and well as the physical world, was created to serve man. The Gemara relates, "Ben Zoma once saw a multitude of people while standing on a stair on the Temple Mount. [He immediately] recited: Blessed…Who knows all secrets and Blessed…Who created all these to serve me." *(Brachot* 58a*)* This was not an expression of haughtiness, rather a statement of truth — we are all here to serve and help each other. Moreover, even angels are created to serve people; we are taught that two



angels escort a person to his home every on Friday night as we sing *"sholom aleichem malachei hashareit*—Peace upon you, o' ministering angles."

Rav Elya Lopian *zt"l* in *Lev Eliyahu* explains that the angels sent by Yaakov Avinu were created from the mitzvot that he performed. *(Avot* 4:*11)* We first meet these angels in Yaakov Avinu's dream when he saw them ascending and descending a ladder. Likewise, one who stands firm in his convictions and values and refrains from sin, also creates special protective angels. The angels that we create with our mitzvot and good deeds ascend upwards and descend in times of need to envelop us with a spiritual energy and protect us from harm. Yaakov Avinu sent angels "*lefanav,* before him," this refers to his "mitzvah angels" that preceded him to protect him.

Although we may not be on the level to see these angels or direct them, we can be cognizant of their presence. We can heighten our awareness that our *avodat* Hashem creates spiritual energy that not only protects us but bolsters us to continue doing good deeds. We can use our power of imagination to see the many angels, even thousands! that we have created on any given day to feel a surge of exaltedness and be empowered to increase our closeness to Hashem. ■



GOOD VIBES DEAD SEA KAYAKS

DEAD SEA KAYAKING EXPERIENCE

One of a kind, away from the crowds

Salt crystals · Freshwater springs · Dead Sea mud

Ovnat · Only one hour from Jerusalem!

CHANUKAH & YESHIVA WEEK ALMOST SOLD OUT

Ages 10+ · Groups of up to 22
Kosher food options nearby
WhatsApp 054-332-0611
goodvibeskayaks.co.il

SCAN TO BOOK