

Chesed L'Avraham Avraham Hamalach

Parshas Vayishlach

And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau, his brother (Genesis 32:4). For the sparks of holiness that had fallen into Esau's domain through the sins of Adam and the generations that followed could be rectified through Jacob and his deeds. Therefore, Jacob sent messengers, who were actually angels, to elevate these sparks and bring them to rectification.

This elevation occurred through two pathways: the direct influence of holiness, which shines without opposition, and the indirect, oppositional path, in which sparks are refined from within a place of concealment and spiritual challenges. The first is symbolized by Rachel, representing direct light, and the second by Leah, representing hidden effort. Both these paths were required to rectify the fallen sparks.

Jacob, through his deeds, operated on both these pathways. He sent the angels to teach Esau's descendants to refine their ways and repair their spiritual flaws. Moreover, Jacob's actions themselves demonstrated this dual rectification process, working to elevate not only his own soul but also the surrounding world. This was an ongoing process, advancing step by step, to illuminate and refine every spark, even those deeply concealed. Through this method, Jacob prepared the path for future generations to follow and complete this mission of rectification.

And they bowed seven times (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayishlach 10). The seven bows correspond to the seven attributes that transform harshness and anger into kindness and mercy, enabling rectification and elevation of the sparks of holiness. This process continues until reaching the highest level of holiness, symbolized by the supreme crown that returns all things to their source according to their spiritual root.

The Ketonet Passim (the striped coat) (Genesis 37:3) symbolizes the levels of mercy that Jacob transmitted to his children, drawn from the attribute of smallness (Katnut) as described in the writings (Etz Chaim). For Jacob, smallness represented the ability to refine and elevate sparks through humility, contrasting Esau's pride. The levels of mercy were given to all the tribes to guide them in the process of rectifying their respective sparks.

And Jacob said to his house (Genesis 35:2): He instructed them to remove all foreign gods and purify themselves. This act symbolized the process of rectification, where one ascends from the lower worlds to the higher spiritual realms, extracting sparks of holiness trapped in the material world. The sages taught that this corresponds to the seven lower attributes, each of which contributes to the rectification of the world and its ultimate perfection.

The ultimate goal is to transform darkness into light and bitterness into sweetness, refining the material world and elevating it to its divine source.

The revelations to the world, they have no beginning or end, as the spirit of purity is not bound by worldly levels.

This is also the meaning of the statement in the Talmud (Ta'anit 10a), which teaches that the revelation of wisdom begins from below and ascends to rectify the sparks of holiness that are scattered throughout the world (Zohar, Vayehi 249b). By doing so, they elevate the sparks to their source, bringing light and vitality to the entire creation. Through this process, everything returns to its original place in holiness.

And so it is written (Genesis 28:12): "A ladder was set on the earth, and its top reached the heavens." This ladder is a metaphor for the spiritual levels that ascend from below to above. These levels symbolize the service of the soul as it continuously refines and elevates itself. In this process, even the physical world is uplifted to reveal its hidden sparks of holiness.

It is explained (Midrash Tehillim, Psalm 25:3) that just as the ladder ascends from below to above, it also descends from above to below. This reflects the dual process of drawing divine light into the world and refining the material world to elevate it toward holiness. This interplay of ascent and descent is central to the spiritual journey.

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The path is one of constant effort, as one ascends level by level. Through Torah study and prayer, one can reach even higher levels of wisdom and spiritual refinement. This dynamic process connects the individual with the infinite light, illuminating all aspects of life with divine clarity and purpose.

The thought in speech, and through this, it ascends. And the voice of a soft breath, as the voice is heard breaking through in speech. Through this, the thought is revealed in speech, and through this, it ascends above, as is stated in the verse (Proverbs 15:4): "A healing tongue is a tree of life." This shows that speech refines and elevates thought according to its level.

And Rachel weeps for her children (Jeremiah 31:15), for Rachel is associated with the external wisdom (Chitzoniyut HaChochmah), while Leah is connected to the inner wisdom (Pnimit HaChochmah). The external wisdom, revealed in speech and in deeds, has the power to elevate sparks and bring them back to their root. Thus, it is written, "I have written for you a scroll with truth" (Proverbs 23:23), which refers to the power of speech and action to draw the sparks of holiness into revelation.

This is also the significance of the ladder (Genesis 28:12), which represents the spiritual ascent and descent. Just as the ladder connects heaven and earth, so does thought connect with speech and action, enabling the continuous elevation of the soul and the refinement of the physical world.

Jacob said, "I have become small from all the kindnesses" (Genesis 32:11), which corresponds to the level of Rachel, called the smallness of Israel (Katnut Yisrael), as Jacob himself referred to himself as small, in humility. Rachel's attribute is the external dimension of holiness, which serves to refine the world from below upward, step by step. Through Rachel, Jacob's work is revealed as an intermediary in the rectification process.

And this is what the sages conveyed in their wisdom (Midrash): That the levels of refinement are called vessels, which house wisdom, and through which all can ascend to wisdom. And this is referred to as the "House of God," where vessels of refinement are purified, ascending to greater understanding and divine connection.

And this is why Jacob sent angels, as the level of "Rachel" represents external wisdom, which acts on the level of refining and elevating the concealed sparks. Through compassion and the attribute of mercy, Jacob sent angels to elevate and reveal the sparks of holiness. These angels are referred to as refined entities, called "angels" due to their role in the refinement process.

Refined ones, like those who heal through spiritual remedies, guide the process of purification. And thus, a pure and bitter substance transforms into sweetness and refinement. Through these stages, they reflect the level of perfection, aligning opposite forces to balance and elevate [everything] toward ultimate rectification.