

Menachem Persoff

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 Eisav's true face when they encountered him. Thus, if Eisav intended to war against Yaakov, they would confront him aggressively, countering that if Yaakov could overcome Lavan, he would have no trouble dealing with Eisav.

On the other hand, if Eisav'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 right-

eous of human messengers could yet be deceived and corrupted by Eisav in one singular meeting. Only angels could withstand Eisav's shenanigans.

The Noam Elimelech offers an explanation from a more profound, inner perspective. When a tzadik 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 Eisav as "Adoni" - 'My lord'. We might then construe, at first glance, that Yaakov is lowering himself in subservience to Eisav. 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, Eisav.

Moreover, Yaakov's seemingly straightforward message contained "hidden" missives for Eisav. For instance, Yaakov proclaimed modestly: IM LAVAN GARTI, intending to say that he sojourned with Lavan as a Ger, a mere stranger - not as a prince or nobleman.

But should Eisav disdain his younger

brother, Yaakov adds: VAYHI LI SHOR VACHAMOR - 'I acquired oxen and donkeys', the SHOR traditionally signifying the powerful Mashiach ben Yosef, and the CHAMOR, the donkey, the kingship of Mashiach ben David!

Oh! - If only our thoughts and intentions could rise to such heights! **MP**