

By Rabbi Avrohom Lipszyc

Safety in an Antiemetic World

In this week's Torah-portion (33:12-14), after their meeting and returning to brotherhood, Esau offers Jacob, "Travel on and let us go, and let me proceed alongside you." To which Jacob declines, saying, "let my master please go on ahead of his servant, while I move on at my own slow pace, at the pace of the workforce that is ahead of me, and at the pace of the children -until I reach my master at Se'ir." Being that the verses then go on to say (-verse 17), "Jacob traveled to Sukot," hence, Rashi needs to define Jacob's, "until I reach my master at Se'ir": "He (Jacob) mentioned to him (Esau) a much broader journey, for he intended only to travel to Sukot. He (Jacob) said to himself: 'If (Esau) wishes to harm me, let him wait until I come to him (to Se'ir),' but he did not go (to Se'ir). And when will he (Jacob) go (to Se'ir)? In the time of the Messiah, as it says: 'Saviors will then ascend Mount Zion to wreak judgment on the Mount of Esau (i.e., Se'ir).'"

The Rebbe explains different approaches to the law of (-Avodah Zorah 22b), "And any person may not seclude himself (with gentiles) because they are suspected of bloodshed... (-25b) a person may not seclude himself (with gentiles)... A Jew who encounters a gentile on the road (and continues his travels with him) should position the gentile to his right, (so that the Jew's dominant hand is closest to the gentile, which will enable him to defend himself against a potential attack)... Furthermore, if the gentile asks him where he is going, (the Jew should extend the journey when relating his destination) to him, (i.e., he should claim that he is traveling to a place beyond his actual destination,) in the manner that Jacob our father did to the wicked Esau. As it is written that 'until I come unto my lord unto Seir'" :

(i) The gentile displays a desire to harm the Jew, (ii) the gentile does not display, which leads to the difference whether (i) the Jew should outright lie to the gentile, stating a destination to which the Jew is not going, or (ii) to just give, "a much broader --time of-- journey," "while I move on at my own slow pace." And with this, the Rebbe explains the nuances in the difference of wording between the Talmud (book of laws) Rashi on the Talmud (book of laws), Rashi on the Torah ("Simple meaning of the Scripture"), and Maimonides (book of laws).

The Rebbe then moves on to the mystical meaning, and from it, the lesson for us in our service to G-d:

The rule is that when we learn "A" out of "B", it is that "A" is the cause to extrapolate and add-on to that which is learned by "B". So too, it is, on a mystical plane, concerning our case. The "savior" of the Jewish people throughout the duration of exile, when a gentile, "Asks him, where are you going?" comes from that which, "He (Jacob) mentioned to him (Esau) a much broader journey," "until I reach my master at Se'ir." Meaning, The gentile can only have dominance over the Jew when the Jew behaves in a fashion that "his place" is in exile, with the gentile. Thus, the gentile "truly" believes that the Jew, living in the gentile's place, is "truly" under his dominance.

However, there is when the Jew, "mentioned to him (Esau) a much broader journey," meaning that the Jew knows and tells the gentile, that he, the Jew, is in exile only as a stop in middle of his journeys, in which the Jew's journey is, "until I reach my master at Se'ir," to the redemption, when it will be, "Saviors will then ascend Mount Zion to wreak judgment on the Mount of Esau, and to G-d will be the kingdom." Meaning that the Jew's existence in exile is but a preparation and path to his greeting the redemption. The Jew is occupied with the spiritual service of refining, breaking the darkness of the world through the, "Candles of Mitzvot and the light of Torah." This preparation is for the final redemption, when (Isaiah 60:19), "but the L-rd shall be to you for an everlasting light," (-ibid, verse 3), "And nations shall go by your light," and (-ibid 40:5), "And the glory of the L-rd shall be revealed, and all flesh together shall see that the mouth of the L-rd spoke." Then, even during the preparation to redemption, the power and the dominance of the gentile over the Jew is lost. Rather, the Jew, on his journey, even before he reaches the redemption is (-Genesis 33:18; Rashi), "And Jacob came safely [to] the city of Shechem," "whole... in his body... whole with his money... whole with his Torah."

And through this, we hasten the arrival of Moshiach, when we will fulfill the, "until I reach my master at Se'ir," in the fulfillment of the promise of, "Saviors will then ascend Mount Zion to wreak judgment on the Mount of Esau."