

SICHA SUMMARY

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 25

Vayetze, Sicha 2

The Context:

As Yaakov departed Charan and his uncle Laban's home toward the Land of Israel, the Torah relates that "angels of G-d encountered him." (Bereishis 32:2) Rashi comments, "angels of the Land of Israel came to greet him to escort him to the Land." Meaning, the angels of Israel left the boundary of the land to escort Yaakov.

The Question:

In the beginning of the parshah, as Yaakov, fleeing Eisav's wrath, left Israel for Charan, he beheld his famous vision of angels ascending and descending a ladder. Rashi commented: "Ascending first and afterwards descending. The angels who escorted him in the Holy Land do not go outside the Land, and they ascended to heaven, and the angels of outside the Holy Land descended to escort him."

How, then, can Rashi comment here that the angels of Israel left the land to escort Yaakov, if he previously established that the

angels of the Land of Israel do not leave the land?

The Explanation:

Being that the angels of the Land of Israel only departed in order to escort Yaakov into the Land, this journey is not considered a true departure. This is why when the Talmud mentions three justifications for leaving the land of Israel (to study, to marry, to pursue a livelihood), it does not mention escorting a friend to the Land, since that is not considered leaving at all, since the purpose of the journey is to return.

The Inner Dimension:

Yaakov's departure from Israel to Charan represents the Jewish people's journey into exile. The angels of the diaspora's role is to protect us during our sojourn. But if we fulfill our task of transforming the diaspora into the Land of Israel, then as we complete our work, the angels of the Land of Israel join us in exile to accompany us back to the Land of Israel. This is not considered a departure, since we have expanded the spiritual territory of the Land of Israel.

This idea, that the angels of the Land of Israel escorted Yaakov after the completion

of his work in exile, adds insight to the unique role these angels played.

The Torah describes the angels as “encountering” Yaakov, as if it was unintended. This language echoes the beginning of the parshah, where Yaakov “encounters” the place where he beholds his vision of the angels. “Encountering” alludes to the Divine arousal that is not a response commensurate with human effort. Because this divulgence of Divine grace is not connected to the individual, it is described as an unintended encounter, not a deliberate, measured response.

Yaakov’s first encounter alludes to his establishing the evening prayer which is classified as an optional prayer. The discretionary status of this prayer illustrates that it is a Divine arousal unconnected from human effort. It cannot be “obligatory” because there is nothing a human being can do to activate this Divine response. But this is a form of Divine arousal which is intended

to elevate and empower the individual as they begin their Divine task. Thus, prior to Yaakov embarking on his life’s mission in Charan, he “encountered” the angels who provided him with Divine assistance, beyond his efforts, for the work which lay ahead.

But the angels who greet Yaakov, and us, at the conclusion of the work provide an even deeper Divine arousal, one which is not meant to equip the person with awareness they need for their mission, but a gift that follows the completion of one’s work.

The lesson to be drawn from this is simple: Even when we find ourselves in exile, there is no reason to be despondent or discouraged. G-d sends angels with us to protect us and equip us with the inspiration and Divine arousal we need to fulfill our mission. And He sends us angels of the Land of Israel to escort us back to our home at the successful conclusion of our work.
