

וישב

YOSEF REPLACES EISAV IN THE MASTER PLAN

Hashem had intended that there be a special relationship between Yaakov and Eisav in establishing the *Am Segulah*. Hashem preferred:

ורב יעבד צעיר

“and the older shall serve the younger” (*Bereishis* 25:24).

The prophetic formula issued by Hashem for the future success of *Klal Yisrael* was that the two brothers must work within an unequal partnership. Yaakov was to be “a plain man dwelling in tents” (*ibid.* 27), while Eisav was to be the “man of the field” (*ibid.*). When Eisav rejected this partnership, Hashem had to provide a suitable new partner for Yaakov.

At this point in time, Eisav epitomizes the archetypal enemy of Israel for all time (*Gittin* 57:), as Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai stated:

הלכה בידוע שעשו שנא ליעקב

It is a matter of *halachah* that Eisav hates Yaakov (*Sifri, Beha'aloschah* 69).

Yaakov spent many years at Lavan's home before considering a confrontation with Eisav. It was only after the birth of Yosef that Yaakov suggested to Lavan:

שלחני ואלכה אל מקומי ולארצי

“Send me back to my place, to my land” (*Bereishis* 30:25).

When Yosef was born, Yaakov understood that Yosef was to be his new associate in bringing about the Redemption. (*Zohar, ibid.*). The *Gemara* in *Bava Basra* (123:) quotes the Prophet Ovadya (1:18):

והיה בית יעקב אש ובית יוסף להבה ובית עשו לקש

The house of Yaakov will be a fire, the house of Yosef will be a flame, and the house of Eisav will be straw.

Yaakov together with Yosef was now able to forge a relationship that would shape the destiny of *Klal Yisrael*. Providence sent Yosef to Egypt to rule over *Klal Yisrael*, to prepare them for *Kabalas Hatorah*. Yosef was to be the longest reigning Jewish monarch (80 years; *Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer* 11) and it was only his iron-fisted rule that prepared *Klal Yisrael* for the *Galus Mitzraim* and ultimately *Kabalas Hatorah*.

The Torah relates (*Bereishis* 33:1) that Eisav encountered Yaakov with a four hundred man army. The *gematria* (numerical value) of 400 is עין רע — *ayin ra*. The power of Eisav is actually

the power of the Evil Eye. This is the same power with which Bilaam attempted to confront *Klal Yisrael* (*Bamidbar* 24:2). Similarly, after Avraham insisted on paying Efron for the rights to the *Me'aras Hamachpeilah* (*Bereishis* 23:16), the agreed-upon price was four hundred silver shekels. This number represented the 'ayin ra' displayed by the children of Heth toward Avraham. Additionally, the 'ayin ra' directed by the brothers toward Yosef symbolically resulted in the "four hundred years" of *Galus Mitzraim*. Furthermore, when David prepared to wage war against Naval *Hakarmeli* (*Shemuel* I 25:13), David outfitted four hundred troops. The number four hundred symbolized the spiritual battle against Naval's Evil Eye (*Kli Yakar, Bereishis* 23:16). At his encounter with Eisav, Yosef was rewarded with the blessing of "alei ayin" — "immunity from the Evil Eye" (Rashi, *Bereishis* 33:7). This came about because Yosef protected his mother Rachel, Yaakov's beloved wife, from the gaze of Eisav (*Zohar Bereishis* 33:5). This set the stage for the ultimate battle with Eisav.

כיון שנולד יוסף נולד שטנו של עשו...מסורת היא שאין עשו נופל אלה ביד בניה של רחל
 Once Yosef was born, the adversary of Eisav was born; it is a tradition that Eisav will only fall to the hand of the son of Rachel (*Bereishis Rabbah* 73:7).

Our Rabbis have a saying:

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים
 the acts of the Fathers are prophetic signs concerning the destiny of their descendants (*Sotah* 34•; *Bereishis Rabbah* 70:6).

It is worth noting that in *parshah* Vayeitzei, the Torah uses the word אבן — "stone" eleven times. The only previous time we find the word "stone", is in relation to the *Dor Haflaga* (*Bereishis* 11:3). Suddenly, in the *parshah* prophesying the beginning of the future *galus* of *Klal Yisrael*, the word "even" is mentioned eleven times. The word אבן — stone — is uniquely symbolic of Yaakov's holy quality of unity (Maharal *Gur Aryeh Bereishis* 28:11; *Ner Mitzvah*). The term "even" — "stone" or "harim" — "mountains" is also a general appellation of all the *Avos* (Rashba, *Berachos* 54:; see Ramban *Bereishis* 49:24).

קום ריב את ההרים
 Arise, contend before the mountains (*Micha* 6:1);
 הביטו אל צור הצבתם...הביטו אל אברהם אביכם ואל שרה תחוללכם
 Look unto the stone from which you are hewn...look unto Avraham your father, and unto Sarah that bore you (*Yeshayah* 51:1,2).

This is a special gift bestowed by Hashem upon His beloved ones, for this appellation originally referred to Hashem:

ואין צור כאלקינו
 Neither is there any rock like our Hashem (*Shemuel* I 2:2).

"A stone is independent of other matter. It is not influenced by the rest of creation, and it initiates its own course of action [spiritually]" (Maharal, *Nesivos Olam* 8 and 13). Therefore the Torah was not written on sheets of gold or silver, but on stone (*Shemos Rabbah* 41:6). Hence, the level of holiness of the *Avos* is connoted by the term 'stone': unique and independent.

Upon Yaakov's arrival at *Har Hamoriah* Hashem prevailed upon him to spend the night there (*Bereishis* 28:11). Yaakov selected twelve stones from the area which also happened to be the stones from the *mizbei'ach* upon which Avraham offered Yitzchak as a *korban*. Yaakov placed these twelve stones as a pillow under his head. This was a prophetic gesture indicating that he would sire twelve illustrious sons. The twelve stones coalesced into a single stone to indicate that the twelve *Shevatim* would blend into a single nation. Twelve diverse areas of greatness would now unify into a singular greatness (*Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer* 35).

In mentioning the eleven stones, in *Parshas Vayetzai*, the Torah is symbolizing the passing of this strength from the *Avos* to the *Shevatim*. Each stone in the *parshah* signifies a different *Sheivet* (*Beis Hamidrash Yalink*, Yerushalayim 1698 I 112). The twelfth stone, and the corresponding twelfth *Sheivet*, is mentioned later in *Parshas Vayechi*, in Yaakov's blessing to Yosef, designating him as the "*Ro'eh Even Yisrael*" — "Shepherd of the Stones of Israel," (*Bereishis* 49:24; see *Tehillim* 80:2), symbolizing that Yaakov was sharing with Yosef the responsibility of guiding the other eleven *Shevatim* (see *Sotah* 36:). It was Yosef's duty to watch over and teach *Klal Yisrael* the lessons they were supposed to learn in Egypt, so that they would ultimately be worthy of receiving the Torah. The term "Shepherd of the Stones of Israel" also alluded to the fact that the unity inherent in Yosef's designated leadership of the other eleven stones was the necessary factor in achieving the final *ge'ulah*. *Klal Yisrael's* adversaries, the four Kingdoms, are depicted by Daniel as an image whose "Head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass. His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay" (*Daniel* 2:32, 33) (see page 459). In order to overthrow this archenemy, *Klal Yisrael* represented by *Mashiach* ben Yosef will employ the 'stone' metaphor:

חזה היות עד די התגורת אבן די לא בידין ומחת לצלמא על רגלוהי די פרזלא וחספא והדקת
המון...ואבנא די מחת לצלמא הות לטור רב ומלאת כל ארעא

You will see that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces... and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (*Daniel* 2:34,35) (see *Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer* 33).

In fact, Yehoshua established an eternal memorial of twelve stones from the river Jordan to serve as a monument to Hashem's power and to remind people to fear Him always (*Yehoshua* 4:7, 4:24).

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