

Vayishlach 5777

BS"D Parashat Vayishlach 5777

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When will Ya'akov Exact Revenge?

Twenty years have passed, and Ya'akov and Aisav will meet once again in a spellbinding drama where two worlds are about to collide, with no way of predicting the outcome.

Ya'akov prepared for every eventuality. He sent Aisav substantial gifts, he prayed, prepared for war and divided his family and wealth into two camps so that, at the worst scenario, one half of his family and possessions would survive.

Aisav did not send gifts nor did he pray. He prepared for one thing – war.

As things evolved, the impending collision did not occur at that time but was postponed well into the future. Rashi explains Ya'akov's reaction to Aisav's "magnanimous" gesture to join together on Ya'akov's return to Eretz Yisrael (Beraishiet 33,14):

יְהוָה אֵלֵינוּ יָבוֹא וְנִסְתַּחֲפֵז אֵת יְהוָה אֵלֵינוּ
:וְנִסְתַּחֲפֵז אֵת יְהוָה אֵלֵינוּ וְנִסְתַּחֲפֵז אֵת יְהוָה אֵלֵינוּ

"Let my lord (Aisav) go on ahead of his servant (Ya'akov), while I move along slowly at the pace of the flocks and herds before me and the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir."

The meaning of “Until I come to my lord in Seir”, as elaborated by the prophet Ovadia, is that eventually Ya’akov will take revenge on the evil Aisav (1,21):

וְהָיָה כִּי יֵרָדוּ מְשִׁיחַי מִצִּיּוֹן לְשִׁבֵּת עַל הַר אִישָׁב וְהַמְּלָכּוּת יִהְיֶה לַיהוָה

“Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Aisav and the kingdom will be the Lord’s.” In other words, Aisav will receive his just punishment at the hands of the Jewish nation during the time of the Mashiach.

What Kind of Kippah will Mashiach Wear?

The Mashiach is an intriguing personality; so much so that, in the early stages of the redemption, he himself will not be aware of the role HaShem has placed upon him in Jewish and world history.

When the Mashiach first appears, will he be donning a knitted kippah, a black velvet one, a shtreimel or perhaps no kippah at all?

Will he espouse a liberal, laissez-faire economic doctrine? Will he respect the religious status quo that exists in Israel? Will he upset all the systems presently accepted among “enlightened” peoples? Will he be an imperialist war-monger or will he dismantle all the world’s armies and reduce the weapons of mass destruction to pruning hooks?

There is a way to imagine what the Mashiach will look like and his plan of action by the list of functions he will have to

carry out, as stated by the Rambam (Hilchot Melachim chap. 11):

מלך משיח יבנה בית המקדש ויגבש את ישראל ויחייבם לעבודת ה', ויחייבם לשמור את כל מצוות התורה, ויחייבם לשמור את כל מצוות התורה, ויחייבם לשמור את כל מצוות התורה.

,ויחייבם לשמור את כל מצוות התורה, ויחייבם לשמור את כל מצוות התורה, ויחייבם לשמור את כל מצוות התורה, ויחייבם לשמור את כל מצוות התורה. ויחייבם לשמור את כל מצוות התורה, ויחייבם לשמור את כל מצוות התורה.

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In the future, the messianic king will arise and renew the Davidic dynasty, restoring it to its initial sovereignty. He will build the Temple and gather the dispersed of Israel. Then, in his days, the observance of all the statutes will return to their previous state. We will offer sacrifices, observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to all their particulars as described by the Torah...

If a king will arise from the House of David who diligently contemplates the Torah and observes its mitzvot as prescribed by the Written Law and the Oral Law as did David, his ancestor, and will compel all of Israel to walk in (the way of the Torah) and rectify the breaches in its observance, and fight the wars of God, we may, with assurance, consider him the Mashiach.

If he succeeds in the above, builds the Temple in its place, and gathers the dispersed of Israel, he is definitely the Mashiach.

He will then improve the entire world, motivating all the nations to serve God together, as Tzeplianiah 3:9 states: 'I will transform the peoples to a purer language that they all will call upon the name of God and serve Him with one purpose.'

From here we learn that the tasks incumbent on the Mashiach will be to:

- 1- Renew the Davidic dynasty, build the Temple and gather the dispersed of Israel
- 2- Return the observance of all the Torah statutes to their previous state – offer sacrifices, observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to all their particulars as described by the Torah and compel all of Israel to walk in the way of the Torah
- 3- Fight the wars of Am Yisrael.
- 4- Motivate all the nations to serve God together

A man who has these enormous tasks placed on his shoulders must be possessed of a multi-faceted personality.

Renewing the Davidic dynasty will require advanced scientific methods and tools to carry out a thorough genealogical search.

Rebuilding the Temple implies that Mount Moriah will no longer have a Moslem presence and will require, among other things,

the dismantling of the gold dome and the Al Aksa mosque. The Mashiach will dismantle a hostile Moslem world either by their acknowledging his and Am Yisrael's spiritual superiority or through military means.

The Mashaich will be accepted by all walks of life in the Jewish nation, and all Jews will return to Eretz Yisrael to be under his sovereignty.

The Jewish nation will return to the Torah in all its dimensions. Adherence to the Torah will be imposed on those Jews who do not believe or do not know about Torah and Judaism (just as King Chizkiyahu forced the nation to return to the Torah and to become erudite in its teachings).

The Mashiach will fight the Jewish wars, implying that he will be a military man or at least one who is well versed in military strategy and tactics of modern warfare. It also implies that he will not have a magic wand, but his very presence will bring about world change.

The Mashiach will be a religious figure to all humanity, and he will bring about the end of organized religions as we know them today. The gentiles will abandon the falsehoods of their traditions and live according to the seven Noachide laws.

When taken together, the Rambam paints a picture of an enlightened, educated Torah scholar and military man. His will not be a "democratic" society as we know it today. He will be a king; and in the Jewish monarchical system, there are no elections (except perhaps for the shamash in the local bet kneset).

The Supreme Court of Israel will turn into a prep-school for young dayanim (judges in the religious courts). The Knesset will be a museum dedicated to the efforts made by the Jewish people when establishing the Medina in pre-Mashiach times.

What kind of a kippah will he wear? Well, let's leave some

things for the near future.

Disproportionate Response

In our parasha, the brothers Shimon and Levi wipe out the entire population of the city of Shechem.

What was HaShem's intention in bringing about this seemingly excessively aggressive and disproportionate reaction by nice Jewish boys?

I suggest.

Avraham Aveinu arrived in Eretz Yisrael at a time when the land was occupied by the pagan descendants of Cham, son of Noach, with cultures and sub-cultures of avoda zara (idolatry).

Avraham began to advance the teachings of monotheism with much success. He established a yeshiva and a hotel-restaurant where many people gathered to hear the word of God.

This was obviously not to the liking of the religious and political establishment of the times, for Avraham was undermining the core beliefs of the people by introducing God and morality that touched on matters such as family, law, treatment of slaves, and much more.

But now the charismatic Avraham and his wife Sarah are long gone. Yitzchak is old and unable to see. Ya'akov, the ben Torah, has not been seen in Eretz Yisrael for over twenty years. The only relevant descendant of Avraham is Aisav, with whom the idolaters can get along fabulously, since Aisav is one of their own.

So for all intents and purposes, Yiddishkeit is no longer present in the holy land; and the natives can return to their

old ways, uninterrupted by pangs of conscience brought about by those “holier-than-thou” Jews.

Then one day, Ya’akov reappears in Eretz Yisrael with his family and possessions. His arrival could have been like that of the chassidim and chalutzim 100 and 200 years ago, when they bought “a dunam here and a dunam there,” a house here and a house there, with no great message signaling their arrival.

However, HaShem speaks to people in the language that they understand. To us, HaShem speaks as a father teaching Torah to his children. To gentiles, He speaks in the language that they appreciate – the language of strength and war.

Ya’akov and Judaism have returned home, and the occupiers have to learn that it is no longer “business as usual”. HaShem, as the ultimate playwright, brings about Ya’akov’s return on the stage of history in an explosive manner – the city of Shechem is decimated. Ya’akov explodes upon the stage of history – this is what gentiles understand.

Later in Ya’akov’s life, when he and his 69 relatives leave the holy land to join Yosef in Egypt, the land is once again devoid of Judaism. Four hundred years later, the nation returns under the leadership of Moshe and Yehoshua. Moshe defeats the two superpowers of Og King of Bashan and Sichon King of Emori, and Yehoshua continues to destroy 31 city states in Eretz Yisrael.

We again enter the land, not by a “dunam here and dunam there,” but in the way that the gentiles understand – by strength and conquest.

For two thousand years, the vast majority of the Jewish nation was in exile with only a small number of Jews remaining in the land, so that Judaism was not the dominant force here.

Then came the Holocaust, and the enemies of our people were certain that it was only a matter of time until the world would be “free” from the shackles of Judaism as the Jewish people dwindled and vanished.

In 1948, we again leaped onto the stage of history with an eruption that has caught the attention of the world until this very day. We drove back seven standing Arab armies in the War of Independence. And we have been victorious in the most dramatic way in all our other wars. In those conflicts where Tzahal did not excel, it was only because we imposed self-restraint on the fighters.

Because of Israel’s military successes, there is no place on earth where Israel, Jews and Judaism are unknown. Our dramatic past and present are HaShem’s declaration to the world that all should know Him through His chosen people.

Shabbat Shalom,

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