



The Donkey of Moshiach

READY FOR MOSHIACH

In the beginning of Parshas Vayishlach the Torah tells us of the message that Yaakov sent to his brother Esav in anticipation of their impending reunion.

“ויהי לי שור וחמור צאן ועבד ושפחה ואשלחה להגיד לאדני למצא חן בעיניך...”

“...I have acquired oxen and donkeys, flocks, manservants, and maidservants, and I have sent to tell [this] to my master, to find favor in your eyes.”

The Midrash¹ opens our eyes to the deeper meaning contained in this message. Yaakov was telling Esav that his *avodah* was complete and he was thus prepared for the coming of Moshiach.

This is alluded to in the words “I have acquired...donkeys.” As the Midrash says, “This refers to Moshiach as it says, ‘עני, ורוכב על החמור—[Moshiach will arrive as] a poor man riding on a donkey.’”²

The Gemara³ tells us that Moshiach can appear in one of two ways, depending on the level of the spiritual readiness of the generation. If the generation is meritorious Moshiach will come on a cloud, however if the generation is not meritorious then he will come on a donkey.

Why then does Yaakov refer to Moshiach using specifically the word “donkey”? Why refer to Moshiach using the term that refers to a generation that is not meritorious?

This is especially puzzling since Yaakov himself was on a very high spiritual level, having already completed his *avodah*, and was certainly meritorious.

THE SAME DONKEY

In Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer⁴ it says that the donkey that Moshiach will arrive on is the same donkey that Moshe Rabbeinu used to bring his family from Midyan to Mitzrayim, and it is the same donkey that Avraham used by *akeidas Yitzchak*.

What is the significance in it being the same donkey?

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' אליהו שיחי
סאפאטשקינסקי
והכלה מרת שיינא רוחמה שתחי'
אלבסקי
לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכין
י"ד שבט ה'תשע"ז
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' חיים ברוך וזוגתו מרת
שטערנא שרה שיחיו אלבסקי
הרה"ת ר' יצחק זאב וזוגתו מרת
ברכה שיחיו סאפאטשקינסקי



He was referring to the tremendous spiritual heights that the Neshamah will attain in the future by virtue of refining the physical and material world which is not overtly spiritual and G-dly.

Avraham, Moshe, and Moshiach are all links in a chain, all part of a progression toward the time of Moshiach. Avraham began the process of preparing the world for the giving of the Torah. Moshe was the one who brought the Jews out of Mitzrayim to receive the Torah at Har Sinai. The giving of the Torah was the beginning of the process of refinement of the physical world which will ultimately bring about the coming of Moshiach.

THREE MODES OF TRAVEL

However, there is a difference in how Avraham, Moshe, and Moshiach actually use the donkey.

Avraham did not ride on the donkey, he merely put his supplies on the donkey, while he and Yitzchak both walked alongside.

Moshe also did not ride on the donkey, rather he put his family on its back. A person's family is much closer to him than his possessions; a wife is considered as one's own body, and a child is literally a part of the father.

Moshiach, however, will be riding on the donkey himself.

What do these differences represent?

Riding on a donkey is necessary to reach a destination that one could not reach on his own.

The word for donkey, "*chamor*," has the same root as the word for

physicality, "*chomer*." Spiritually, riding on a donkey represents the capacity of the physical world to carry a person to a level that he could not reach on his own.

Through engaging the physical and working on refining our part in this world, we are raised to a level that we could not have reached on our own.

However there are different degrees to which this capacity is revealed.

In the times of Avraham the physical world was stuck in its physicality. Eloikus could not penetrate the physical and make it holy. Therefore the physical lacked the capability to bring the person to a higher spiritual state. Only Avraham's possessions, which were used to fulfill Hashem's command, were elevated to a higher level.

In the times of Moshe Rabbeinu the process of refining the physical world began. The boundary between heaven and earth was broken, and Eloikus was able to penetrate the material world. Through doing mitzvos with physical objects, the world becomes refined and holy. By engaging and refining the physical world a person is elevated to a higher spiritual level. Nevertheless, until the coming of Moshiach this is limited to one's outer faculties, the lower levels of the soul that are manifest in his body.

It will be revealed how the lowest physical creations have the deepest source in *Eloikus*. Therefore, by way of refining the physical, the *neshamah* reaches heights unattainable until then.

YAAKOV IN THE HOUSE OF LAVAN

Yaakov had spent a long time in Charan in the house of Lavan where he had to deal with the physical, materialistic world. This is where he had to do his *avodah* of working to refine the physical world.

This is why Yaakov chose to refer to Moshiach specifically using the term "donkey." He was referring to the tremendous spiritual heights that the *neshamah* will attain in the future by virtue of refining the physical and material world which is not overtly spiritual and G-dly.

By refining the physicality of the house of Lavan, Yaakov was ready for the highest revelation of Moshiach, where Moshiach himself is riding on the donkey.⁵ ①

1. Bereishis Rabbah 75,6.

2. Zechariah 9,9.

3. Sanhedrin 98a.

4. Chapter 31; quoted by Rashi, Shemos 4:20.

5. Adapted from Lekutei Sichos vol. 1 Vayishlach p. 70-73.