



The Wolf, the Lamb, and Future Coexistence

A TASTE OF MOSHIACH

While the waters of the *mabul* covered the earth, the *teiva* floated untouched, an oasis of tranquility in the raging waters. Miraculously, all of the animals inside the *teiva* harmed neither each other, nor Noach and his family, who took care of them.¹

Chassidus explains that life in the *teiva* was a taste of Moshiach's time, when the wolf shall live with the lamb and a child shall play with a snake. For a full year, Noach, his family, and all the animals on the *teiva* lived the Days of Moshiach.

THE WOLF SHALL LIVE WITH THE LAMB

The Torah tells us, "And I shall remove harmful beasts from the land."²

The *novi* Yishayahu tells us, "And the wolf shall live with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid goat. And the calf and the lion cub and the fattened cow together, and a young boy shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall graze together, their young shall lie, and the lion shall eat straw like cattle. And an infant shall play over the hole of an old snake and over the eyeball of an adder, a weaned child shall stretch forth his hand. They shall neither harm nor destroy on all My holy mount, for the land shall be full of knowledge of Hashem as water covers the sea bed."

THE FIGURATIVE MEANING

According to the Rambam, no change will happen to the animals when Moshiach comes, and these words are only a *mashal*—"The Yidden will dwell peacefully with the non-Jews, who are compared to the wolf and the leopard... and [the non-Jews] will not rob or harm, but rather eat permitted foods in harmony with the Yidden, as it says, 'And the lion will eat straw like cattle.'"

In *Iggeres Techiyas Hameisim*, the Rambam explains this to be partially literal; that the produce will be so rich that carnivores won't need to eat as much meat. But he still says that the *possuk* is not to be taken fully in its literal sense, as Chazal say, "The Torah speaks in exaggerated terms."

לזכות החייל בצבאות ה'
צבי הירש שי'
לרגל יום הולדתו השלישי ביום
ד' סיון ולרגל ה'אפשערניש' שלו
ביום א' יו"ד סיון ה'תשע"ז
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו
מרת ח' מושקא שיחיו שם טוב

When a person is a tzaddik, permeated with knowledge of Hashem, wild animals will not harm him or his possessions

The Ramban explains these *pesukim* to mean that there will be abundant food, the cities will be filled with inhabitants, and harmful animals will not enter civilized areas.

The Radak explains that when a person is a *tzaddik*, permeated with knowledge of Hashem, wild animals will not harm him or his possessions. This is the connection, The Radak explains, between “for the land shall be full of knowledge of Hashem” and “the wolf shall live with the lamb.”

THE LITERAL MEANING

What all of the above explanations have in common is that the animals’ way of life will remain unchanged. There are those, however, who are of the opinion that these *pesukim* will be fulfilled literally; that the very nature of animals will change. The Rambam writes, “If it is literal, it will only happen on Har Habayis, as it says, ‘On all My holy mountain,’ and it will be like [the *chachamim* said], ‘No snake or scorpion harmed in Yerushalayim.’”³ Radvaz explains that this can apply to all of Eretz Yisroel, as the *possuk* says, “For the **land** will be filled,” and, “I will remove harmful beasts from the **land**.”

The Ramban also explains that these *pesukim* will be fulfilled literally, for “It is not the snake that kills, but the sin that kills.” When Yidden will be free of sin, the animals will not harm them.

The Rebbe explains⁴ that according to all of these opinions, there will be a period during which eventually these *pesukim* will be fulfilled literally; the differences of opinion are in regard to the earlier period.

THE DEEPER EXPLANATION

Chassidus⁵ gives us a new and different perspective: “The wolf shall live with the lamb” will be fulfilled literally because “the land shall be full of knowledge of Hashem.” How so?

Anger is a result of a lack of intelligence; while a child may easily become enraged, an adult, whose mind is more developed, will remain calm. So too, wild animals lack intelligence, and so they are usually vicious and harmful. When Moshiach comes, knowledge of Hashem will permeate the world to such a degree that some of it will be absorbed by the animals, and they will cease being vicious.

There is also another reason that the animals will become tame. Harmful animals are given *chayus* from the *mida* of *gevurah*. When Moshiach comes, the world will be influenced only by *chessed*, so the harmful animals—agents of *gevurah*—will cease being harmful.

THE LION SHALL EAT STRAW

We can now understand why animals will stop harming others.

But why will they stop eating their customary diet of meat? Why will “the lion eat straw like cattle”?

The Tzemach Tzedek explains that the lion will be satisfied with only a little. The revelation of *Elokus* present in the world will make every creature—even the animals—understand that worldly desires have no value. They will therefore no longer desire meat, but will instead be satisfied with straw. (This change in diet may also be the cause for their ceasing to be vicious, as Abarbanel says,⁶ “Eating meat gives the animals viciousness... therefore the *novi* prophesied that in the time of Moshiach the lion will eat straw like cattle, meaning that it will eat [straw], not meat, and will therefore not be vicious.”)

The Rebbe explains⁷ the Rambam’s words, “And all the delicacies will be as common as dust” in a similar vein: There will indeed be many delicacies, but in this time of *giluy Elokus*, they will be as worthless as dust.⁸ **T**

1. With the exception of the incident when Noach brought the lion’s food late and was injured by the lion.

2. Bechukosai 26, 6.

3. Iggeres Techiyas Hameisim

4. Likkutei Sichos vol. 27 Bechukosai sicha 1.

5. Sefer Halikkutim Dach Tzemach Tzedek p. 645.

6. Abarbanel on Yishayahu 11, 7.

7. Likkutei Sichos vol. 27 p. 237.

8. Some of the ideas in this article can be found in the sefer *Hinei Yomim Ba'im* Kfar Chabad