

In Memoriam 3rd Yahrzeit for Rabbi Emanuel Gettinger

In the 1800's, the Napoleon passed by a Shul in the Jewish Quarter in France. The day happened to be Tisha B'Av. He heard the sounds of weeping and wailing coming from within. He summoned over one of the Jews and asked, "What is everyone crying about?" "We are mourning the destruction of our Holy Temple/Bais Hamikdash in Yerusalayim." "When did this happen," asked Napoleon, aghast, "I didn't hear anything of this and my ministers report to me twice daily of all the current news and events around the world." "Sire, our Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. by the Romans" Said Napoleon, "A people – that passionately mourns a national tragedy that took place over 17 centuries ago – is ETERNAL."

We are good at mourning, we have ritualized it into our calendar on a national level, but so too on a family level, when we gather to memorialize our beloved departed. How much greater when the person was a public figure as well as a family member, when both aspects, the public and private, coalesce.

In 1967, Jews from all over the world flocked to Israel to see the Kotel, which had been off limits to Jews for many years. The Israeli army set up guards near the wall. During one particular shift there were two soldiers standing guard, watching the steady stream of people of all Jewish backgrounds pouring their hearts out at the Kotel. One of the soldiers started crying. The other soldier asked, "*Lamah atah bocheh?*" "Why are you crying?" "I can understand all of these people being emotional over the Kotel for they are religious Jews; but, you and I were brought up on a nonreligious kibbutz. Religion has no meaning or significance to us. So why are you crying" The first soldier answered, "*Ani bocheh al mah she'ani lo bocheh.*" "I am crying over the fact that I am not crying." "As I see these people, I realize that there must be something very special – something very deep and profound – about the Kotel and about the whole religion. I know that there is something very beautiful that I am missing. It is for this that I cry."

The tincture of time sets in and we are grateful for memory and even more grateful for the slow decay of memory to ease the burden and the pain of loss. We too cry for the fact that we are not crying enough, knowing intellectually the giant of Torah we lost how irreparable is his loss.

My shver was very hard on himself. Yet he never felt defeated. He understood the process the path and the goal. He

understood the difficulty and the internal struggles the *seor she beeeisa* and the *shibud malchius* out there and inside.

He was thoroughly immersed in modernity intrigued by advances in science technology and medicine. He understood politics and the destiny of Klal Yisroel on the world stage. He understood the importance of the land of Israel and the Defense Forces protecting it.

In the third passuk of Vayishlach, Yaakov sends a message to his brother Eisav:

צֵאן וְעֶבֶד וְשִׁפְחָה וְאֶשְׁלָחָה לְהַגִּיד לְאֲדֹנָי לְמִצְאָה חֵן שׁוֹר וְחֲמֹר וַיְהִי לִי בְּעֵינָיךְ

“I have an ox and a donkey” (32:6)

What was Yaakov conveying by informing Eisav that he possesses an ox and donkey?

According to Midrash Breishis Rabbah 75, Yaakov was not speaking about the material possessions he had amassed, but about something of far greater significance. The ox refers to Mashiach ben Yoseph, the precursive Messianic leader descended from Yoseph. The ox is a symbol of the tribe of Joseph (*“bechor shoro hadar lo”*), as both Yaakov and Moshe use the imagery of an ox when blessing Yoseph (Breishis 49:6; Devarim 33:17).

The donkey on the other hand, is a reference to Mashiach ben Dovid; the ultimate Messianic king descended from Dovid HaMelech, who will arrive as *“a pauper riding on a donkey”* (Zechariah 9:9).

Why do we need two Messianic leaders? And why are they represented specifically by these two animals?

Rav Kook explained the concept of two Messiahs in a eulogy delivered after Theodore Hertzl's death in 1904. Rav Kook articulates his views on the secular Zionist movement and the tragic rift between the religious and secular sectors of the Jewish people. Hashem created us, he says, with both body and soul. We have forces that maintain and strengthen the body, and forces that protect and develop the soul. Ideally, we should have a vigorous and resilient body together with a strong and healthy soul.

The Jewish people function in an analogous fashion to the body and soul. There are forces within the nation that correspond to the body, working to meet its material and physical needs, and there are forces in the nation that work directly toward developing Klal Yisrael's special spiritual qualities.

Every nation (theoretically) wants to promote security and protect the welfare of its people, just as all creatures have bodily and physical functions. But the higher aspect of furthering our spiritual aspirations on the national level is unique to the Jewish people; *"It is a nation dwelling alone, not counted among the other nations"* (Bamidbar 23:9).

These two tasks were divided between two tribes: Yosef and Yehudah.

Yoseph looked after the material needs of his family in Egypt. Chazal tell us that Yoseph spoke 70 languages, indicating that his task of caring for the welfare of his constituents was a universal one, common to all nations. He protected the Jewish people in Egypt, and the Gemara in Bava Basra 123b says that the offspring of Eisav are only defeated by the offspring of Yosef quotes the Navi Ovadya 1:18:

וּבֵית עֵשׂוֹ לְקֶשֶׁת וְדִלְקוּ בָהֶם וּבֵית יוֹסֵף לְהִבָּהּ וְהָיָה בֵּית יַעֲקֹב אֵשׁ
וְאֶכְלוּם וְלֹא יִהְיֶה שְׂרִיד לְבֵית עֵשׂוֹ כִּי ה' דִּבֶּר
And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Eisav for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them, and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Eisav, for the Lord has spoken.

Judah, on the other hand, was responsible for cultivating the special holiness of the Jewish people.

בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לֵעַז
יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשֻׁלֹתָיו הֵיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקֹדֶשׁ
“Judah became His holy nation” (Tehillim 114:1-2)

Ultimately, both of these qualities were to be combined in the Davidic monarchy. Dovid was a skilled warrior who vanquished many enemies of Israel. But he was also the unrivaled poet and songwriter – a warrior, but also a *yodea nagein*. See Samuel I 16:18:

וַיָּבֹן דָּבָר וְאִישׁ יָדַע נֶגֶן וְגִבּוֹר חֵיל וְאִישׁ מִלְחָמָה בֶּן לְיֹשֵׁי בֵּית הַלְחָמִי
תֹּאֵר וְה' עִמּוֹ

Yeravam's split from the southern kingdom of Judah, precipitates the tragic divide between these two forces of the material and the spiritual.

Throughout history, we have witnessed the ongoing conflict between these two forces: secular movements that exclusively work towards improving the nation's material condition, and religious movements that exclusively promote its spiritual nature.

Rav Kook says that redemption of the Jewish people can only be attained when both of these forces are functioning. Only when we are working toward both strengthening the nation's spiritual health while bolstering the necessary material foundations.

Returning to Yaakov's choice of ox and donkey, the powerful ox is used to plow the ground, preparing the area to be planted. This corresponds to the mission of Mashiach ben Yoseph — to defend the nation from enemies and clear the path for the revelation of Mashiach ben Dovid. (We also see this in the fact that the Mishkan — a preparation for the Temple — was established in Shiloh, in the territory of Yoseph, while the Temple itself was built in the inheritance of Judah, in Yerushalayim.)

The donkey, on the other hand, is a simple animal, used to carry produce from the field. This corresponds to the mission of Mashiach ben Dovid, who brings the final fruits of redemption.

Yaakov tells his brother, *“I have an ox and a donkey,”* alluding to Yimos HaMashiach when he/we will no longer fear Eisav’s sword.

Finally, we find a second hint in the text later on in the parsha: After the two brothers meet, Yaakov promises that he will visit Eisav on Mount Seir. Breishis Rabba (78:14) says that nowhere in the remainder of Tanach do we find that Yaakov visits Eisav on Har Seir. Yaakov wasn’t leading him on, so to speak, setting up a phantom lunch date on Har Seir. So when will Yaakov go to Eisav? This will take place in the future, in the time of Mashiach, as it says in this week’s Haftorah, in Ovadya, *“Saviors will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Eisav”* (Ovadya 1:21).

Through his interactions with Eisav, Yaakov Avinu hints to his progeny what tools will be needed to ultimately defeat Eisav — physical strength through our human efforts, coupled with spiritual devotion and recognizing Hashem’s omnipotence.

Rabbi Gettinger understood the need for a strong defense force to protect the homeland, as well as the need for strong torah institutions. He was a unique blend whose fervor for Klal Yisroel secular and sacred was unmatched.

As the tincture of time progresses I miss most of all his advice and guidance on matters that still challenge me.

May his memory continue to be a blessing for klal Yisroel.

