



## “Eisav went to Yishmael and took Machalat, the daughter of Yishmael” ב'יטול ק'ליפות ע'שו י'שמעאל in Reverse Is an Acronym for Yaakov Avinu Possessed the Power to Abolish the Union of Eisav and Yishmael

### Great Is the Lamb that Stands Amidst Seventy Wolves Great Is the Shepherd Who Rescues Them and Destroys Their Foes

From this week's parsha, parshas Toldos, we can draw strength and support to help us through the current, trying situation that is unfolding in Eretz Yisrael and throughout the world. Our fellow Jews in Eretz Yisrael are surrounded on all sides by our enemies, the evil descendants of Yishmael, the son of the maidservant. They take every opportunity to brutally attack Jews, killing men women and children—may Hashem avenge their blood—both in Eretz Yisrael and in the diaspora. The incredible hatred that has surfaced from the hearts of the descendants of Eisav is beyond belief and comprehension. They consider themselves justified and upright and cannot refrain from expressing their hatred for Yisrael and their encouragement and support of Yishmael.

Seeing this deep-seated hatred gushing forth from the hearts of the nations of the world toward the people of Yisrael, should cause us to reflect on the dialogue that ensued between the Roman Emperor Hadrian and the holy Tanna, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananyah. The Emperor was aware that the extreme hatred of the nations of the world for Yisrael had existed for thousands of years. As such, he could not help but express his amazement that despite being persecuted and being subjected to pogroms, this fragile, solitary lamb had managed to survive despite being surrounded by seventy vicious, bloodthirsty wolves. Here is an excerpt from the Midrash Tanchuma (Toldos 5):

**Hadrian (the Roman Emperor) said to Rabbi Yehoshua: “Great is the sheep that can survive among seventy wolves.” And he replied: “Even greater is the shepherd who rescues and destroys the wolves surrounding her.” Therefore, it is written (Yeshayah 54, 17): “Any weapon formed against you will not succeed.”**

As we will demonstrate, this union between the people of Eisav and the people of Yishmael began as far back as the initial conflict between Yaakov Avinu—the father and first of the holy lineage of **Yisrael**—and his wicked brother Eisav—the first of the bitter root of the evil enemies of Yisrael throughout the generations. In fact, this historic, age-old struggle began while they were still in their mother's womb, as described at the beginning of this week's parsha (Bereishis 25, 22): **“וַיִּתְרוּצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקֶרֶב”**—**the boys wreaked havoc within her**. Rashi comments: **When she would pass by doorways of places of Torah-study of Shem and Eiver, Yaakov would run and kick, trying to exit (the womb); when she would pass by doorways of places of idol-worship, Eisav would kick, trying to exit.**

Thus, when the wicked Eisav realized that he could not defeat Yaakov alone, he sought a partner in crime; he joined forces with Yishmael. This is the significance of the passuk at the end of this week's parsha (ibid. 28, 9): "וילך עשו אל ישמעאל ויקח את מחלת בת ישמעאל"—**so Eisav went to Yishmael, and he took Machalat, the daughter of Yishmael** (as his wife). He figured that by joining forces—as the two leaders and heads of the nations of the world—they would be able to defeat Yaakov Avinu and the people of Yisrael. Nevertheless, in the merit of diligent Torah-study and acts of "chesed," Yaakov Avinu was able to thwart this unholy union. As the pillar of Torah, the kedushah of his Torah annuls the forces of Eisav and Yishmael—the heads of the two klipos who refused to accept the Torah.

This teaches us a vital lesson! Just like Yaakov Avinu thwarted the union of Eisav and Yishmael by means of Torah-study and acts of "chesed" in his times, it is incumbent upon every Jew today, especially those who study Torah regularly in the houses of Torah, to increase their efforts both in quantity—studying more hours on a regular basis—and in quality—learning in greater depth and with greater intensity. In this merit, we will successfully defeat the union of the two klipos of Eisav and Yishmael, and the following will become a reality (Tehillim 75, 11): "וְכָל קִרְנֵי רָשָׁעִים אֲגַדֵּעַ תְּרוֹמַמְנָה קְרֹנוֹת צְדִיק" —**all the pride of the wicked I shall cut down; exalted shall be the pride of the righteous!**—led by our righteous Mashiach, at the time of the total geulah, swiftly, in our times! Amen.

### Yaakov Was Born Grasping onto the Heel of Eisav

We will begin this essay by focusing on pesukim describing the births of Yaakov Avinu and the wicked Eisav (Bereishis 25, 25): "וַיֵּצֵא הָרִאשׁוֹן אֲדָמוֹנִי כֹלֹו כְּאֶדְרֵת שֵׁעַר" וַיִּקְרָאוּ שְׁמוֹ עֵשָׂו. **The first one emerged red, all of him was like a hairy mantle; so, they called his name Eisav. After that, his brother emerged with his hand grasping onto the heel of Eisav; and he called his name Yaakov.**" Rashi comments that the wording of the passuk implies that HKB"H Himself named the child Yaakov. The fact that HKB"H Himself named him Yaakov, because he emerged latching onto Eisav's heel, suggests that this fact is extremely significant. (Translator's note: The Hebrew word for heel is "akeiv"; hence, the name Yaakov.)

We will endeavor to explain and comprehend why the very first thing Yaakov Avinu did in this world was to grab onto Eisav's heel. Additionally, why wasn't he named "עקב", the Hebrew word for heel? Why did HKB"H add a "yud" to his name, transforming it into "יעקב"?

I thought of a wonderful way to answer all of these questions. We will refer to the conclusion of this week's parsha. The Torah chronicles at length how Yaakov

managed to receive the Berachos from his father, Yitzchak, by following his mother Rivkah's instructions. We learn that Yitzchak initially intended to bestow them upon Eisav, who was a hunter and was adept at trapping and deceiving his righteous father Yitzchak. Upon realizing that Yaakov had managed to undermine him with his kedushah (ibid. 28, 9): "וַיִּלֶךְ עֵשָׂו אֶל יִשְׁמָעֵאל וַיִּקַּח אֶת מַחְלַת בִּתּוּלַת בֵּת יִשְׁמָעֵאל"—**Eisav went to Yishmael, and he took Machalat, the daughter of Yishmael** (as his wife).

The Megaleh Amukos (beginning of Vayeitzei) explains his rationale. Eisav HaRasha realized that he could not overcome the kedushah of Yaakov Avinu by himself. This prompted him to associate with Yishmael. He figured that by marrying Yishmael's daughter, Machalat, the united forces of these two major klipos—the heads of the nations of the world—would possess the power to defeat Yaakov Avinu. The Megaleh Amukos explains the matter by introducing several precious sources. Hence, we will elaborate on his sacred remarks.

### Do Not Plow with an Ox and a Donkey Together

We will begin by focusing on a mitzvas "lo ta'aseh" that appears in parshas Ki Seitzei (Devarim 22, 10):

**“you shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.”** According to the Zohar hakadosh (Beshalach 64b), there is a deeper meaning to this mitzvas “lo ta’aseh.” It aims to prohibit the union of the two forces of tumah that all the nations of the world are affiliated with—namely the ox and the donkey. When they unite, the world is doomed.

The Megaleh Amukos explains the matter based on a teaching in the Zohar hakadosh (Pinchas 246b). Yishmael, who was fathered by Avraham, is the corrupted version of Avraham’s midah of chesed; he is the chesed of the klipah, the refuse and impurities of the chesed of kedushah. He is the klipah of the donkey. Eisav, on the other hand, who was fathered by Yitzchak, is the corrupted version of Yitzchak’s midah of gevurah; he is the gevurah of the klipah, the refuse and impurities of the gevurah of kedushah. He is the klipah of the ox.

Now, at the Bris bein HaBesarim—the Covenant of the Parts—it is written (Bereishis 15, 10): **“ויקה לו את כל—אלה ויבחר אותם בתוך—he took all of these to Him, and he split them in the center.** In parshas Lech Lecha, the Megaleh Amukos teaches us that the seventy nations of the world are divided into two groups. Thirty-five are on the left side of kedushah led by **סמאל**, the guardian angel of Eisav; they represent the klipah of gevurah. Opposite them, there are thirty-five on the right side of kedushah, led by **רהב**, the guardian angel of Yishmael; they represent the klipah of chesed.

Thus, we have seventy nations, **אלה** opposite **אלה**. In other words, we have **ל**, thirty-five nations on the right led by their leader, their **א** (the guardian angel of Yishmael), opposite **ל**, thirty-five nations on the left led by their leader, their **א** (the guardian angel of Eisav). The holy people of Yisrael stand in the middle, between the two groups of **אלה**. This is the allusion in the passuk cited above: **“ויקה לו את כל אלה”—he took the two sets of אלה, comprising the seventy nations and their leaders—“ויבחר אותם בתוך”—he split them into two halves and placed Yisrael between them.** This is also alluded to in the passuk (Tehillim 20, 28): **“אלה ברכב ואלה בסוסים.”** Here, too, the passuk refers to the two corresponding sets of **אלה** representing the seventy nations of the world led by Eisav and Yishmael; **“ואנחנו בשם ה’ אלקינו נזכיר”—refers to Yisrael, the people devoted to Hashem.**

We can now explain the teaching in the Zohar hakadosh apropos the “lo ta’aseh” of: **“לא תחרוש בשור ובחמור יחדיו.”** The union of these two forces of tumah—the klipah of Eisav, the ox, and the klipah of Yishmael, the donkey—poses a grave danger. For, they are the source of all the forces of tumah of the seventy guardian angels of the nations of the world. In relation to this fact, we are taught in the Mishnah (Sanhedrin 71b): **“פיזור לרשעים הנאה להן והנאה לעולם ולצדיקים רע להן ורע לעולם, כינוס לרשעים רע להן ורע לעולם ולצדיקים הנאה להן והנאה לעולם.”** **Dispersal for the wicked is beneficial to them and beneficial to the world, but for the tzaddikim, it is detrimental to them and detrimental to the world. Assembly for the wicked is detrimental to them and detrimental to the world, but for the tzaddikim, it is beneficial to them and beneficial to the world.**

### Eisav Joined with Yishmael to Combas Yaakov’s Midah of Tiferes

With this understanding, the Megaleh Amukos explains Eisav’s rationale for joining forces with Yishmael. We learn from the Zohar hakadosh (Vayishlach 172b) that the midah of Yaakov Avinu—“Tiferes” from the aspect of kedushah—combines aspects of Avraham’s midah of “chesed” and Yitzchak’s midah of “gevurah.” Thus, when Eisav saw that Yaakov bested him and succeeded in taking the Berachos from him, he concluded that Yaakov’s power of kedushah was superior to his power of tumah. After all, Eisav’s power stemmed solely from the klipah of “gevurah,” whereas Yaakov’s power combined both “chesed” and “gevurah.”

Hence, Eisav devised a clever plan. He would join forces with Yishmael by marrying his daughter. So: **“ויילך עשו אל ישמעאל ויקח את מוחלת בת ישמעאל.”** By doing so, he thought that they would form the klipah of “Tiferes,” which would enable them to defeat Yaakov and his “Tiferes” of kedushah. After all, Yishmael represented the klipah of “chesed”; so, by marrying his daughter, he would also possess a combination of “chesed” and “gevurah,” albeit from the aspect of the klipah.

Notwithstanding, Yaakov Avinu with his power of kedushah still prevailed over the united klipos of Eisav and Yishmael. For this reason, Yaakov sent emissaries to Eisav saying (Bereishis 32, 5): **“עם לבן”**



**"I have dwelled with Lavan.** Rashi comments: **The gematria of "גרתי" is six hundred and thirteen ("taryag"). In other words, "I dwelled with Lavan HaRasha, yet I observed the taryag mitzvos and did not learn from his evil deeds."** Thus, Yaakov informed Eisav that the union of the klipos of Yishmael and Eisav—the klipos of chesed and gevurah—did not frighten him or concern him.

In fact, he added the following (ibid. 6): **"ויהי לי שור"**—insinuating that he possessed the power to overcome even the union of the two forces of tumah of the ox and the donkey. On the side of kedushah, he had Yosef, of whom it was said (Devarim 33, 17): **"בכור שורו הדר"**—**a firstborn, his ox, glory unto him.** He also had Yissachar, of whom it was said (Bereishis 49, 14): **"יששכר"**—**Yissachar is a strong-boned donkey.** Thus, Yaakov informed Eisav that he possessed the powers of the ox and the donkey on the side of kedushah, which would enable him to overcome the klipos of the ox and the donkey. This is the gist of his sacred remarks.

### Eisav Went to Yishmael to Unite the Two Legs of the Klipah for Walking

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, it appears that we can embellish the insight of the Megaleh Amukos—that Eisav went to Yishmael to unite their two klipos. We will begin by introducing an important concept from the teachings of the Arizal in Likutei Torah (Ki Seitzei). He asserts that the four galuyos—**Bavel, Madai, Yavan, and Edom**—represent the structure of a human body from head to toe: **Now, galus Bavel corresponds to the head . . . Madai (Medea) and Paras (Persia) correspond to the arms, which are two; Yavan (Greece) corresponds to the body, which is one; and Edom and Yishmael correspond to the thighs, which are two and long.**

Thus, we learn an incredible chiddush: The last galus, the one we are currently in, represents the two legs of the klipah—namely, the galus of Edom and the galus of Yishmael. In essence, they support the body of the klipah. Clearly, it is impossible to walk on a single leg; one can only jump or skip. In order to walk, two legs are required. Now, returning to the passuk under discussion: **"וילך עשו אל ישמעאל"**—it specifically employs the

term **"וילך"**, connoting ambulation. In other words, Eisav united with Yishmael to unite the two legs of the klipah. Theoretically, this would enable him to ambulate with two legs to combas Yaakov Avinu.

This provides us with a very nice interpretation of a passuk related to the future geulah (Devarim 32, 35): **"לי נקם ושלם לעת תמוט רגלם"**—**Mine is vengeance, and it will repay at the time their foot will falter.** The Ohr HaChaim hakadosh interprets this passuk as follows: **"At the time their foot will falter" refers to the mystical ter "the heels of the Mashiach."** This refers to the extraction of the sparks (of kedushah) from the feet of the **"samech-mem."** When they are extracted, **"the foot of the evildoers (the klipah) will falter."** Because its contact with the thing that supported it will end, as is known to those who are proficient in the hidden wisdom (kabbalah). In other words, when all the sparks of kedushah will be removed from the feet of the klipah, the time of the geulah will arrive, when HKB"H will exact vengeance from the enemies of Yisrael.

According to what we learned from the Arizal, we can interpret this as a reference to the final geulah which joins the two legs of the klipah—Eisav and Yishmael. To them HKB"H says: **"לי נקם ושלם"**—I will exact vengeance from all the nations of the world in the future for all the blood of my servants that was spilled; **"לעת תמוט רגלם"**—when I extract the sparks of kedushah from the two legs of the klipah—Eisav and Yishmael—who rule the seventy nations of the world. Then, **"their feet will falter."**

### Yaakov Avinu Subjugated Eisav and Yishmael with the Power of the Torah

Following this line of reasoning, we will now endeavor to explain how Yaakov Avinu with his kedushah succeeded in abolishing the union of Eisav and Yishmael—the klipos of the ox and the donkey. Let us refer to the Mishnah (Avos 1, 2): **"על שלשה דברים העולם עומד, על התורה, על העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים"**—**the world stands on three pillars—on the Torah, on religious service and on the performance of acts of kindness.** Furthermore, the Zohar hakadosh (Vayeitzei 146b) asserts that these three pillars are none other than the three Avos: **התורה**

**Yaakov is the pillar of Torah; Yitzchak is the pillar of religious service; Avraham is the pillar of acts of kindness.** This coincides with the passuk (Bereishis 25, 27): **“ויעקב איש תם יושב אהלים”**—**and Yaakov was a wholesome man, abiding in tents.** Rashi explains that this refers to the tents of Shem and Eiver. Similarly, we learn that on his way to Charan, Yaakov spent fourteen years studying in the Beis Midrash of Eiver without sleeping in his bed.

Now, we are taught in the Gemara (A.Z. 5b): **תנא—דבי אליהו לעולם ישים אדם עצמו על דברי תורה כשור לעול וכחמור למשאו**—**Tanna of the academy of Eliyahu taught in a Baraisa: A person should always apply himself to the words of Torah like an ox to a yoke and like a donkey to a burden.** In the Chiddushim of the Chasam Sofer (Chullin 7a), he interprets this as follows: “An ox to a yoke” refers to learning in depth in order to clarify the precise nuances and details of a given halachah; “a donkey to a burden” refers to learning diligently and repetitively in order to remember the halachos that have been learned. A similar interpretation is provided by the great author of the Ben Ish Chai in his sefer Ben Yehoyada (ibid.); it is important to learn in-depth and also to be comprehensive.

We can now better appreciate how Yaakov Avinu managed to thwart the union of Eisav and Yishmael—the klipos of the **“ox and donkey.”** He subdued them by studying Torah **“like an ox to a yoke and like a donkey to a burden”**; he learned in-depth and comprehensively. This then was the message he sent to Eisav: **“ויהי לי שור וחמור”**—**I have acquired ox and donkey.** Yaakov was intimating to him that by studying Torah **“like an ox to a yoke and like a donkey to a burden,”** he possessed the power to subjugate and abolish the union of the klipos of the ox and donkey.

This explains magnificently the elucidation in the Tanna D’Vei Eliyahu Zuta (Chapter 1) related to the passuk in the Navi (Yeshayah 32, 20): **“אשריכם זורעי על כל מים משלחי רגל השור והחמור, משום דבי אליהו אמרו, לעולם יהא אדם כשור לעול וכחמור למשא, וכבהמה שחורשת בבקעה ובשדה, כך יהא אדם עוסק וחורש בדברי תורה בכל יום תמיד, שנאמר אשריכם זורעי על כל מים, ואין מים אלא דברי תורה, שנאמר הוי כל צמא לכו למים.”** **“Fortunate are you who sow upon all waters, who send away the feet of the**

**ox and the donkey.”** Those from the Academy of Eliyahu taught: A person should always be like an ox to a yoke, and a donkey to a burden, and like an animal plowing in the valley and in the field. Thus, should a person engage in and plow words of Torah every day, constantly. For it is stated: **“Fortunate are you who sow by all waters.”** And there is no water other than words of Torah, as it is stated (ibid. 55, 1): **“Ho! Everyone that is thirsty go to the water (Torah).”**

Based on what we have discussed, this implies that if a person studies Torah **“like an ox to a yoke and like a donkey to a burden,”** he is able to subdue the two klipos of the ox and the donkey. As explained, they are the two legs that support all of the klipos. This then is the message of the navi: **“Fortunate are you who sow upon all waters”**—who study Torah which is compared to water—**“like an ox to a yoke and like a donkey to a burden.”** For, in this merit, they **“send away the feet of the ox and the donkey”**—they send the klipos of Eisav and Yishmael, the feet of the ox and donkey, to Azazel.

We can suggest that it is for this reason that the study of Torah is associated with “walking.” For instance, it says in parshas Bechukosai (Vayikra 26, 3): **“אם בחוקותי תלכו”**—**if you walk with My decrees.** Rashi interprets this to mean **that you should labor in the study of Torah.** Similarly, it is written (Tehillim 119, 1): **“אשרי תמימי דרך ההולכים בתורת ה'”**—**praiseworthy are those whose way is wholesome, who walk with the Torah of Hashem.** This association alludes to the fact that by studying Torah, which implies walking on the two legs of kedushah, we subdue and abolish the two legs of the klipos that are operative in the final galus—galus Edom and galus Yishmael.

### Yaakov Latched onto Eisav’s Heel to Eliminate the Foot of the Klipah of Eisav

We now have cause to rejoice! We wondered what was so significant about Yaakov coming into this world while grasping onto Eisav’s heel: **“וידר אווזת בעקב עשו”**. It was so profound that HKB”H named him **“יעקב”** on account of this act with the addition of the letter **“yud.”**

In keeping with what we have discussed, here is the explanation. Yaakov Avinu perceived while yet in his mother's womb that Eisav had a penchant for avodah-zarah, and he was one of the two legs of the klipah. Hence, when Rivkah passed by the study-halls of Shem and Eiver, Yaakov became energetic and tried to get out to study Torah. He understood that it was incumbent upon him to subjugate the klipah of Eisav.

Therefore, when Yaakov was born immediately after Eisav, he performed this crucial act: **"He emerged with his hand grasping onto Eisav's heel"**—to annul the klipah of Eisav with the kedushah of his Torah. We can find an allusion to this in the word עקב (heel). Its letters in reverse order are an acronym for ביטול קליפת ע"ש—**elimination of the klipah of Eisav**. HKB"H, however, Who knows what will happen in the future, foresaw Eisav's future union with Yishmael, and that together they would form the two legs of the klipah. Therefore: **"ויקרא שמו יעקב"**—HKB"H named him יעקב, with the addition of the **"yud"**. Thus, He conveyed to Yaakov that with the kedushah of his Torah, he possessed the power to eliminate not only the klipah of Eisav but also the klipah of Yishmael. For, יעקב with the addition of the letter **"yud"** is an acronym for ביטול קליפות ע"ש וישמעאל—the **elimination of the klipos of Eisav and Yishmael**.

It gives me great pleasure to conclude this essay with what Chazal expound in the Midrash Tanchuma

(Bereishis 1) on the passuk quoted above: **"אשריכם זורעי על כל מים, אלו עוסקי תורה שנמשלו למים... משלחי רגל השור, זה משיח בן יוסף שנמשל ל"שור, וחמור זה משיח בן דוד, שנאמר עני ורוכב על חמור."** **"Praiseworthy are you who sow upon all waters": This refers to those who study Torah, which is compared to water . . . "who send away the feet of the ox" refers to Mashiach ben Yosef, who is compared to an ox (see above), "and the donkey" refers to Mashiach ben David, as it states (Zechariah 9, 9): "A humble man, riding on a donkey."**

According to what we learned from the Arizal, we can explain the matter as follows: Since the final galus is a combination of galus Edom and galus Yishmael, the two legs of the klipah, the elucidation of the Midrash teaches us: **"אשריכם זורעי על כל מים, אלו עוסקי תורה שנמשלו למים, שנאמר הוי כל צמא: לכו למים"**—that in the merit of Yisrael studying Torah **"like an ox to a yoke and a donkey to a burden,"** HKB"H will send the two legs of kedushah, Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David. Hence, the passage of the Midrash concludes: **"משלחי רגל השור, זה משיח בן יוסף שנמשל לשור, וחמור זה משיח בן דוד, שנאמר עני ורוכב על חמור"**—they will subjugate and eliminate the union of Eisav and Yishmael. Thus, the supplication we recite in Shemoneh Esreh will be fulfilled: **"ומלכות הרשעה והזדים תעקר ותשבר ותמגר ותכניע במהרה בימינו"**—**may You speedily uproot, crush, cast down, and humble the evil regime and the malicious sinners, swiftly in our times. Amen.**

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