

LAMPLIGHTER

15 Kislev
Parshas
Vayishlach
1219
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Vayishlach, describes the encounter between Jacob and his brother Esau, after Esau had sent 400 armed men announcing his arrival. Their meeting, which threatened to be confrontational, actually turned out amiable - "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him; and they wept."

Why this change of Esau's intentions? Rashi explains: Esau's mercy was aroused when he saw Jacob prostrating himself before him so many times. Rashi continues by quoting Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai: Despite the fact that Esau hates Jacob, Esau's compassion was stirred at that time and he kissed him with his whole heart.

Rabbi Shimon used the word "halacha" to describe the fact that Esau hates Jacob. Halacha, which means religious law, emphasizes something about the nature of Esau's hatred toward Jacob: it is as immutable and timeless as are the practical laws of Torah. Rabbi Shimon wished to teach us that we should not try to rationalize Esau's hatred of Jacob by ascribing various reasons or motives to it; it is a hatred rooted in Esau's very essence. If and when we find an instance of Esau's positive behavior toward Jacob, we should realize that it is an exception to the rule - "his compassion was stirred at that time."

This saying of Rabbi Shimon also found its expression in his own personal life. Rabbi Shimon lived under the yoke of Rome, and suffered under the harsh decrees issued against the Jewish nation. He, in particular, suffered greatly because of his own staunch opposition to the Romans, and was forced to hide in a cave for 13 years, together with his son. Yet it was precisely this same Rabbi Shimon who travelled to Rome to have the anti-Jewish decrees rescinded, and was successful!

The story of Rabbi Shimon illustrates both sides of the coin: the unchangeable nature of Esau's hatred and persecution of the Jews, and the triumph of one who was particularly renowned for his opposition to Roman rule.

We learn from this a valuable lesson in how to relate to our oppressors during this long and bitter Exile:

On the one hand, a Jew must not rely on the mercy of the nations, because we know that Esau's hatred toward Jacob is a given fact. At the same time, it is within the power of every Jew to command respect from the non-Jews by maintaining his pride and adherence to the Jewish way of life.

When a Jew is unbending in his commitment to Torah and mitzvot, it positively influences the nations, so that "Esau's compassion was stirred and he kissed him with his whole heart." Not only does this command respect, but it brings about Esau's cooperation and even assistance in helping the Jew to keep his Torah.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Jacob's Lament

By Yossy Goldman

In this week's *parshah*, the dreaded encounter between Jacob and Esau finally materializes. After decades of separation, the twin brothers who are anything but identical square up. Jacob, who fled the wrath of Esau 34 years earlier, is returning home with a large family and much wealth. Esau is fast approaching with four hundred desperados armed to the teeth. Will it be all out war or will they make peace? Jacob prepares for all eventualities and also sends a message to his hostile brother:

"*Im Lavan garti*," Jacob declares, "I have sojourned with Laban." Rashi interprets Jacob's message to mean that though he lived with a notorious trickster for more than 20 years, he "did not learn from his evil ways" and remained a righteous Jew committed to the G-dly way of life. This is indicated by the *gematria* (numerology) of the Hebrew word *garti* ("sojourned") which equals 613 -- the number of mitzvot in the Torah.

But wasn't this rather boastful of Jacob? The same man who will soon be praying for deliverance and claiming that, "*kotonti*" ("I have been humbled") by all G-d's kindnesses to him, now seems to be pointing proudly to his piety, telling Esau how religious he has been?

The *Chofetz Chaim* (Rabbi Israel Meir Kagan, 1838-1933) offers a novel interpretation. He explains that Jacob's words should not be understood as a boast but rather as a lament. "I sojourned with Laban, but did not learn from his evil ways" means that Jacob is bemoaning the fact that he did not learn from the way Laban did evil. How did Laban do evil? Enthusiastically! With vim and vigor. His wicked ways were embarked on with a passion and energy, and Jacob regrets that his own good deeds were not performed as passionately as Laban's evil deeds.

If the good guys were as incentivized as the bad guys, crime would be dramatically down. If the security forces were as passionate as Osama Bin Laden and his cohorts, they would have found him long before they actually did. If the police and justice systems of the world operated with the same commitment and drive as the drug lords and the hijacking syndicates, we would all be better off. The trouble is that the forces of evil are enthusiastic and highly motivated while the forces of good often depend on civil servants who are overworked and underpaid.

Nikita Khrushchev (of United Nations shoe-banging fame) was once addressing a large public meeting in Russia during the anti-Stalinist period. He was blasting Stalin's cruel and unforgivable atrocities, when a voice in the crowd suddenly spoke up and asked, "If Stalin was such a villain, why didn't *you* do anything about it then?"

"Who said that?!" thundered Khrushchev. There was absolute silence in the hall. Not a sound, not a movement. People froze in fear.

"Now you understand why I didn't do anything," was Khrushchev's convincing answer.

This interesting interpretation of Jacob's lament reminds us that the voice of morality must be at least as loud as the voice of evil. Too often the voice of justice is soft and still while the voice of corruption and degeneracy is loud and bombastic.

Who will amplify the sweet, silent sound of goodness?

Let us strive to become as passionate and assertive for the cause of G-dliness and goodness as the other side is for evil and injustice. The world will be better balanced, much nicer and a lot safer.

Slice of LIFE

A few years ago, in the year 2000 (5760) Rabbi Shlomo Wilhelm, the Chabad representative in the city of Zhitomir in the Ukraine, attended a family affair in London, England when a woman approached him, introduced herself and said that she was very pleased to hear that he ran the Chabad House in Zhitomir and had a personal favour to ask.

She had been raised in a small village by the name of T'chorisha not far from Zhitomir but had to leave it and her family at a young age. To her knowledge, her parents were buried there and she requested with tears in her eyes that at his first free moment to please locate their graves and send her a picture.

Of course there was no such thing as a free moment for Rabbi Wilhelm but somehow when he returned he asked the help of Reb Hersh Shribman, a pillar of the Jewish community of Zhitomir, and together they found time to locate the town of T'chorisha find its Jewish cemetery and finally take pictures of the desired tombstones; all this to calm one troubled Jewish woman.

After taking the pictures Rabbi Wilhelm turned to his companion and said, "Listen, if we're already here... why not see if there are any Jews in the town. Maybe we can do some good!"

So together they began wandering the streets of T'chorisha asking the residents if there were any Jews until one of them pointed to a large hut (all the houses there were large huts) and said they should ask the old lady living there. If anyone would know it was her.

So they walked to the house, opened the gate to the front yard and saw a young couple with a small child standing there. As soon as this couple saw them, their eyes opened in amazement and they froze.

"What do you want?" the young man barely asked.

When Rabbi Wilhelm told them that they were looking for Jews the couple turned to each other shaking their heads incredulously almost in tears and the young man shook the Rabbi's hand as though he couldn't believe he was real.

The young woman explained. "Our grandmother is inside. She is Jewish. We are her grandchildren. This little girl is my daughter and this young man is my brother. The reason we are here today is because her doctor told us to come quickly if we want to see her alive again."

They all entered the hut and as their eyes adjusted to the dim light, they saw a very old woman, eyes slightly open, lying almost lifeless in the bed. But as soon as she saw the Rabbis she opened her eyes, smiled and whispered, 'Shalom!' They said a few words to her in Yiddish and she replied, while her grandchildren stood hypnotized not believing their eyes.

After several minutes of this the Rabbis said good bye, left their phone numbers and plenty of reading material on Judaism and returned to Zhitomir.

That evening they received a phone call from the young lady that shortly after they left, her grandmother passed away. Rabbi Wilhelm quickly and efficiently arranged a proper Jewish burial for her and was amazed by the revealed Divine providence; how he 'happened' to come to this 'lost' town, 'happened' to arrive at the home of a lost Jew in her last moments in this world and 'happened' to get her a proper Jewish burial.

But there was much more to the story.

Six years later the Rabbi Wilhelm arranged a special evening of lectures for the citizens of Zhitomir with a talented speaker by the name of Mrs Rivka Nimoy on the topic of prayer. Almost fifty women from the area attended most of whom were tasting Judaism for the first time. The lecture went well; the discussion afterwards was lively and at one point Mrs. Nimoy asked if there was anyone that had an experience of having their prayers answered. After a few moments of uncomfortable silence one of the women raised her hand and stood.

She introduced herself as Netalia Pogoroi and told the following story.

Her mother passed away when she was a young girl and she and her brother were raised by her grandmother, a woman by the name of Batia Pabolotzkia.

Eventually they grew up and moved away, she even married and had a child, but they always kept in touch with each other and with their grandmother and regularly visited her.

Then, when their grandmother was well into her eighties, the doctor that had been assigned to her called and told them to come quickly because the old lady was dying.

So they both took taxis and within the hour were by their dying grandmother's bedside. She was breathing with great difficulty and was barely conscious and it seemed like the end would be any second, but then she suddenly opened her eyes, motioned for them to come closer and began to speak clearly and with great determination.

She told them she was Jewish! And so were they!

She explained that her whole life she was surrounded by gentiles and kept her Jewishness quiet because she didn't want to be different. But now that she was dying she begged them to see to it that she would get a Jewish burial. Then she lapsed back into her semi-comatose state.

They couldn't believe their own ears. They were Jews?! Their grandmother wanted a Jewish burial!??

They didn't even really know what either of these things were! They had been sure that they were just like everyone else! Maybe the old lady was crazy? But she spoke so clearly!

They went out to the yard to calm down and discuss things when suddenly... from nowhere, two genuine Rabbis entered through the gate! It was as though they were participating in some sort of dream!

"At first we thought that maybe grandma invited them but when we saw how genuinely excited and amazed she was when she saw them and they spoke to her we realized it was a miracle. The Rabbis came because she prayed for a Jewish burial and G-d answered her prayers!

"Afterwards we, my brother and me, read some of the pamphlets the Rabbis left and began to get interested in what was written there. Until this year I enrolled my daughter, who was the young baby in the story six years ago, in the Chabad school here in Zhitomir. And that is why I'm here tonight!"

Now Rabbi Wilhelm was truly astonished; his search for a grave not only got a woman a proper Jewish burial it brought an entire 'lost' family back to Judaism.

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ISSUE 1219

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The giving of the Torah is likened to a marriage because, like a marriage, the objective of Torah is to create a union: between G-d and the Jewish people, physical and spiritual, body and soul, and the union of all of the world's inhabitants to serve G-d as one. This marriage will only be complete with our final Redemption from exile. The marriage between G-d and Israel that occurred at Sinai is the betrothal stage of our relationship. The giving of the Torah was akin to the giving of the ring at a wedding. That event connects us to our spouse but does not represent the ultimate union. The final stage of the marriage between G-d and the Jewish people, and all the ensuing forms of unity that our marriage will generate, will take place imminently with the final Redemption.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

B.H.
28 Tishrei, 5737 [October, 22, 1976]
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Marine Corps Base
FPO Seattle

Sholom UBrocho:

I am in receipt of your letter of 20 *Tishrei*.

To begin with the good news towards the end of your letter, may G-d grant that your wife should have a normal and complete pregnancy and an easy delivery of a healthy offspring, and, in accordance with the traditional blessing, you and your wife should bring up each and all of your children to a life of Torah, *Chuppah* and Good Deeds.

With regard to the general topic of your letter, namely, that you are a Chaplain and endeavouring to fulfil your duties to the best of your abilities, but you now find that it would be difficult to carry out the task of a Jewish Chaplain as you now conceive of its responsibility in light of your greater commitment to *Yiddishkeit* than before. You ask therefore whether you ought to relinquish your post:

Perhaps you have heard of my general view in similar situations, but I will outline it briefly.

Every Jew is always a "soldier" in the service of G-d, including the duty of spreading G-dliness among fellow-Jews, with emphasis on the actual deed, namely, fulfilment of G-d's commands, the *Mitzvos*, in the daily life.

Certainly, in our age of confusion and perplexity, the call to duty is more urgent than ever. On the other hand there is also a very favourable circumstance in the widespread search for truth and real values on the part of the new generation, even among young people whose parents and grandparents had placed a priority on the pursuit of material well-being, through professions and careers, almost to the exclusion of *Yiddishkeit* in their personal lives.

If every Jew is in the service of G-d, as noted above, how much more so one whom the Supreme *Hashgocho Protis* has placed in the Chaplaincy, and has, moreover, given him the *Zechus* of gaining deeper insights into *Yiddishkeit* to the extent of reassessing his position. It is clear what the response to the said call of duty should be, especially of one who is not just a "private" but a ranking officer.

Of course, the new assessment presents new challenges. But, as in the case of a military outpost facing increased pressure, the answer is not to abandon the front, but to call out reserves and reinforcements, so also in the case of facing a personal challenge. It is certain that the inner forces are there, for G-d would not give one a task which is beyond one's capacity to carry out. In the case of the military, there can sometimes be a miscalculation; but not so with *Hashgocho Protis*. Thus it is only necessary to bring out these forces from the potential to actuality. Even if the ultimate success is in some doubt, the Torah, *Toras Chayim*, does not permit one to abandon his responsible position; how much more so when there is the assurance of *yogaato umotzoso*.

Add to this several encouraging aspects, which I have often emphasized in similar situations:

The whole military establishment is based on discipline and obedience to orders. A soldier receiving an order from his commanding officer must carry it out promptly, even if it may seem irrational to him. No soldier can claim that his conduct is his personal affair, and he is prepared to take the consequences, for the consequences would not be confined to him, but to the entire sector, with far-reaching consequences in a time of emergency for the entire front and the country. A further point is that it is quite irrelevant if in civilian life the private was superior to his commanding officer in other areas, in physics, astronomy, and the like: in the military, he must bow to the superiority of his commander, who is the expert.

All these points and the whole military training and environment make the Jewish serviceman particularly responsive to *Yiddishkeit*, which is based on the principle of *naaseh* before *v'nishma* and to the influence of his Jewish chaplain who is permeated with true spirit of the Torah and present a living example of it to his charges. There is surely no need to elaborate to you on all above.

To conclude *me'inyono d'yoma*, now that we are coming from the Festival of *Simchas Torah*, which is the conclusion and culmination of all the festival and religious experiences of the month of *Tishrei* that ushered in the new year may G-d grant you and all yours, in the midst of all our people, true rejoicing throughout the year in all respects, materially and spiritually.

With blessing,

CUSTOMS CORNER

Havdalah

1. Havdalah is the ceremony of separation between every Shabbat and weekday, Yom Tov and weekday, or Shabbat and Yom Tov. It is recited over a cup of wine, at night, immediately following the end of Shabbat.
2. Before one says Havdalah, one may not do any Melchah (activity forbidden on Shabbos). If one made Havdalah (said the paragraph of Atah Chonantanu in Shemoneh Esreh) during Maariv, he/she may do Melacha.
3. If one needs to do Melachah before saying Havdalah in Maariv, one should say "HaMavdil Ben Kodosh LeChol" (which is not a bracha) and then do Melachah. However, one may not eat until they make Havdalah over a cup of wine.
4. It is permissible to use a non-religious Jewish taxi driver on Motzei Shabbat even though the taxi-driver didn't make Havdalah.

A WORD

from the Director

Yud-Tes Kislev, the 19th of Kislev, the day of the Alter Rebbe's liberation, proceeds the first day of Chanukah by a few days, and the intervening Shabbos connects them. There is a major distinction though between the miracle of Chanukah and the 19th of Kislev. The miracle of Chanukah came only after fierce battles and divine miracles of "many in the hands of few" and "strong in the hands of weak." The miracle of Yud-Tes Kislev however was accomplished peacefully, with the governing powers nullifying the decree, giving the Alter Rebbe freedom and peace to continue to do, with greater strength, the same things for which he had originally been incarcerated, namely the spreading of Chassidism.

In the first letter written after being freed, the Alter Rebbe writes: "... and when I was reciting the book of Tehillim, when I said the verse: 'He has redeemed my soul in peace,' and before reaching the following verse, I was released with peace." This was a true case of peace, the same ministers who first made the decrees against him and the teachings of Chassidus, now granted him freedom and permitted the dissemination of his teachings, which he began to do immediately in Petersburg. This was truly with peace.

Normally a contract does not have to be approved by a court, but if there were suspicions and the contract was investigated and then certified by the court, it then stands strong forever.

The arrest and liberation certified the philosophy of the Alter Rebbe, for there had been a spiritual doubt that perhaps the world really was not ready for Chassidic philosophy. When it was ruled in the spiritual realm "that it is incumbent to reveal this wisdom," it was then revealed below; the Alter Rebbe was freed and the conduits were opened to spread the wellsprings of Torah to the outside.

Through the revelation of the wellsprings of Torah and the distribution of the inner teachings of Torah, we too will merit a "redemption with peace" from our exile, and have all of Torah's secrets completely revealed to all mankind.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Zalman was a successful businessman. He had made millions of rubles in his metal business, but now that same business was threatening to end his life.

Several months earlier, he had landed an immense government contract to supply all the cooking utensils for the Czar's army. The deal was worth a fortune, a real blessing from G-d. . . Until he received a summons to appear in the imperial court on charges of thievery and treason!

It seems that someone reported to the government that Zalman was making the pots a bit thinner than promised. He had received funds for 100,000 tons of iron, but really only used 90,000, thus cheating the government out of a pretty penny.

To make matters worse, the report was true! He did it. Everyone did it. That's how things were in Czarist Russia.

But that didn't change anything. If he would be found guilty, which he almost certainly would be, it would be the end of him.

Zalman did not give up, however; there was still a ray of hope. Being a follower of the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, he would go to him and hope for a miracle.

But when he arrived, he was told that the Rebbe wasn't receiving visitors until further notice. This meant that the doors could open any minute, or it could take several days.

With no other choice, Zalman sat in the waiting room, with about twenty other people who had come for help, reading *Tehillim* (Psalms).

The Rebbe had seven sons, and the youngest, Shmuel, who was seven years old at the time (and eventually would become the fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe), was wandering around the room, occasionally talking to the visitors. When he came to our businessman and asked him why he was there, the latter, hoping that maybe somehow it might help him get in to the Rebbe, told the child his entire story, finishing with a sad word about how his only hope is the Rebbe, and now the Rebbe won't see him.

The boy listened carefully, promised that he would see what he could do, left the waiting room, and entered his father's study.

Minutes later he returned, approached the businessman, and told him quietly: "You see that man sitting near the door, also reading *Tehillim*? He needs one thousand rubles for his daughter's wedding. Give him the money he needs, and G-d will take care of your upcoming trial."

Of course our hero promptly gave the charity. Sure of victory, he told the boy to thank his father for the blessing, and left the premises a new man, full of optimism and hope.

One month later, Zalman was standing confidently in the courtroom before the judge. He didn't even bother hiring a lawyer. After all the Rebbe said that G-d would take care of everything; and, in any case, the best lawyer in the world couldn't help anyway.

The judge examined all the papers, first those of the prosecution, then of the defendant, pausing several times to look up at the litigants. Finally he removed his reading glasses, held his head erect, and declared, "Very severe accusations, very severe indeed. If the accused is guilty as charged, the punishment will be at least twenty years, do you understand?" The prosecutor nodded his head, as did the defendant, who was beginning to worry.

The judge put his spectacles on once more, silently read the briefs again, and again looked up, pushed his glasses up onto his forehead, thought for a while, and announced: "The only way to settle this is to actually weigh all the pots and pans."

"But, your excellency," exclaimed the prosecutor, "that will take months, and at such expense to the country. Your excellency has before him the testimony of reliable witnesses..."

Our hero was really sweating now. If the pots were weighed, he was finished. "That is my decision!" said the judge. "Tomorrow the army will send one hundred wagons to bring all the vessels to the courtroom for weighing." He raised his gavel, pounded it on the huge table before him, and announced, "Court adjourned!"

It took over a week to organize the wagons, travel to the factory and load them all up, and then another week or so to bring them to the court, weigh them and record the results. But when it was all finished and the results were brought to the courtroom, the tension was so thick you could almost cut the air with a knife. Word of the trial reached the newspapers, and the courtroom was packed.

The judge entered after everyone was seated, took his place behind his huge desk, picked up the papers and read carefully. The courtroom was silent.

After several minutes he looked up at the defendant, squinted his eyes as though in sheer hatred, and spoke almost theatrically.

"Mr. Zalman, you... you lied to the government!"

The Judge was holding the papers in both hands and leaning forward on his desk, peering over them at the accused, almost completely out of his chair. Zalman was swooning. He wiped his brow with his handkerchief. He thought he was about to faint.

The guards moved a few steps closer to him. The prosecutors looked at each other from the corners of their eyes and faintly smiled.

"You declared to the Russian Government that you needed one hundred thousand tons of iron. *You took funds for one hundred thousand tons of iron!*"

The judge was now standing, leaning with his entire body over the table, holding the papers in one hand, shaking them in the air as he spoke, and almost whispering, hissing at poor Zalman... "And you really used... one hundred and twenty thousand tons! Those pots weighed twenty thousand tons more than you reported."

"Mr. Zalman, you are a patriot!"

Two days later our hero was waiting again in the Rebbe's front room, this time to thank him for the miracle. But when he was finally sitting opposite the Rebbe and began thanking him, the Rebbe was surprised. He didn't remember ever giving such a blessing.

"But your son, Shmuel, told me..." said the businessman.

The Rebbe summoned his son, who admitted that he had done the whole thing on his own.

"But how did you give him such a blessing? How could you have been sure that it would be all right?" his father asked.

"Simple," answered the boy. "I saw in heaven all the weight of that charity jumping onto his pots on the scale. It was obvious that it would be more than a few thousand tons..."

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CANDLE LIGHTING: 27 NOVEMBER 2015



BEGINS	ENDS
8.04MELBOURNE	9.09
7.52ADELAIDE	8.54
6.08BRISBANE	7.05
6.39DARWIN	7.32
6.07GOLD COAST	7.05
6.46PERTH	7.46
7.29SYDNEY	8.31
7.41CANBERRA	8.44
8.06LAUNCESTON	9.14
8.02AUCKLAND	9.06
8.15WELLINGTON	9.23
8.09HOBART	9.20
7.08BYRON BAY	8.02

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS VAYISHLACH • 15 KISLEV • 27 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8.04 PM	
	MINCHA:	8.10 PM	
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8.40 PM	
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM	
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.30 AM	
	MINCHA:	8.00 PM	
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9.09 PM	
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS	SUN-FRI:	8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:		8.15 PM
	MAARIV:		9.05 PM