

LAMPLIGHTER

15 Kislev
Parshas
Vayishlach
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The Torah portion of Vayishlach begins with the meeting between Esau (interpreted by our Rabbis as the progenitor of Rome) and Jacob (the ancestor of the Jewish people) and the Haftorah develops that theme, focusing on the ultimate confrontation between these nations when: "Saviors will ascend Mount Zion to judge the Mountain of Edom and the sovereignty will be G-d's."

In truth, the conflict between the two is cosmic in nature. Esau is identified with the body; its drives and its cravings. He is a hunter and a man of violence. Jacob is identified with the soul. He is "a simple man, dwelling in tents," "the tents of study," devoting his life to the study of the Torah and straightforward, honest business dealings.

One might think: Well, that's perfect! There is no need for conflict. Let Esau have the material realm and Jacob take the spiritual.

But from the very beginning of their conception, this compromise was not accepted by either. In her womb, the Matriarch Rebecca felt an awesome battle between the two. They were, in the words of our Sages, "fighting over the inheritance of two worlds". For Jacob understood that the purpose of creation is not for spirituality and physicality to remain skew lines, but for the physical to become subsumed to the spiritual. And Esau knew about the spiritual and desired to corrupt it.

And so there is a conflict between the two. This conflict is reflected on an individual level, as the Esau and Jacob within each of us seek dominion. And it is reflected on a national level in the struggles of our people within the sphere of nations.

As stated above, the ultimate resolution of this struggle will be in the era of Mashiach. That, however, is dependent on the service of each individual. As each one of us defeats his individual Esau, achieving a personal experience of redemption, the path is paved for an experience of redemption in the world at large.

Our portion relates that, at their encounter, Jacob promised to visit Esau at his home in Seir. In fact, however, he never made that journey. Our Sages ask: Would Jacob, the embodiment of the attribute of truth, lie?

They explain that Jacob's words were future-oriented. When would he keep his promise? In the era of the Redemption, when "saviors will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau."

The intent is that the interaction between Jacob and Esau is of cosmic significance. For the ultimate of existence is not for the spiritual and the physical to remain as separate realms, but for the two to be intertwined and for spiritual awareness to encompass the worldly realm. So while Esau - material reality - is dominant, Jacob will not visit Seir. But ultimately, after the world will be refined and its spiritual content brought to the surface, he will also go to Seir. For every element of our existence must be brought into contact with essential Gdliness.

The Bear Who Chased a Child

By Chana Weisberg

A father moved into a home backing onto a forest. He repeatedly warned his young and mischievous son about the dangers of the forest and its many ferocious beasts. But the son ignored his father and chose to explore his surroundings.

One day, the young boy climbed over the fence enclosing his home and ventured into the forest. Deciding that it was time to teach his son a lesson, the father dressed up as a bear and followed his son.

As the vicious bear chased him, the child cried out, "Daddy! Daddy! Help me! Save me!" But his father did not appear.

The bear attacked the boy, and his screams grew louder and more frantic. Finally, with his last ounce of strength, he escaped the bear's claws, climbed over the fence and breathlessly ran home.

"Daddy, didn't you hear me?!" He cried to his father. "A bear was attacking me! I called you, but you didn't come!"

"My son," his father lovingly answered. "Didn't you realize? I was the bear."

I thought of this story as I read this week's Torah portion. Jacob prepares to meet his brother, Esau, after 20 years of enmity and is "greatly afraid and distressed." (Gen. 32:8)

Jacob emerges from the meeting whole. Upon parting, he assures Esau that he will travel at his own pace and will eventually meet him in Seir. Seir refers to the Messianic era when there will no longer be conflict between Jacob and Esau (Midrash Rabbah on Gen. 33:14).

The meeting between Jacob and Esau represents the cosmic meeting between light and darkness, Divine consciousness and ego-centeredness, spirituality and physicality, and good and bad.

Jacob was seeking not only to offset his brother, so he would not harm him, but to encourage Esau to join forces with him. Jacob realized, however, that harnessing Esau's strengths would be a long and arduous process that would only happen in the Messianic era.

We, too, are traveling towards "Seir" at our own pace. Until we arrive there, our lives are consumed with Esau encounters of fighting negativity and overcoming challenges.

But, if G-d is all good, why do we need so many of these encounters? Why is life such a dark and difficult battle?

It's a question that we can never fully answer, for if we could justify evil, wouldn't we become it? If we understood the role of darkness, we wouldn't work so hard to eradicate it.

Nevertheless, the Kabbalists explain that G-d created evil so that it can be exploited by goodness. Darkness and cruelty exist in order to be transformed into light. Challenges abound so that we can dig deep within ourselves and mine our infinite potential.

As we face our challenges, as we encounter our battles with Esau, it can help us to remember that the bear isn't as fearful as he seems.

Hiding beneath his costume is our Father, trying to teach us.

Slice of LIFE

A Phone Call in a Moment of Distress

By Nancy Hochman

Upon coming home one Wednesday afternoon, I was met by a sink full of dishes.

Washing dishes has never been my favorite chore; truth be known, it's a task that usually falls, by default, to my husband. But this afternoon, I rolled up my sleeves and turned on the warm sink water, unaware that by taking on this chore, it would become a channel for helping a life. While we may be the actors, G-d is always the Director and Producer.

I began washing the dishes . . . and thinking. For me, there's nothing like flowing water to engage and amplify the thought processes, part of a stream of consciousness that, Kabbalistically speaking, flows down from higher spiritual channels. Although the ocean stirs me most—one of the perks of living by the beach—something as mundane as running a faucet can help facilitate the flow of ideas for a story or joggle my often rusty memory cells. Water flowing over the dishes and my hands, I suddenly remembered that I had been remiss, or at least late, in phoning Sandra to confirm my Shabbat-dinner invitation.

After texting my rabbi for Sandra's number, I thought about last week's Shabbat services, where I had seen Sandra wearing, as she always had at shul, a beautifully crafted gold Star of David. Sandra had been sitting in the back with a shul friend the last

two months or so. It was rumored that this young woman in her 20s was not Jewish, but was interested in learning about Judaism. She also left when services ended instead of joining our congregation for the weekly Kiddush, making it challenging to get to know her.

Passing her on the way downstairs last week while wishing her a warm "Shabbat Shalom," I noticed that Sandra's eyes looked endearingly receptive. Whatever her affiliation, I had been wanting to help her feel accepted and at home here, as had others. I thought about the refrain we repeat while reading Leviticus 19:34: "The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the L-rd your G-d." I took Sandra's hand in mine and asked if she would give us the honor of joining my husband and me for Shabbat dinner next Friday. When she said she would, I told her I would call early in the week to give her my address.

I mentally returned to the task at hand: dishwashing. I heard the cell-phone beep that signals a text message, this one with Sandra's phone number. I went into the bedroom and dialed her.

A quiet, hesitant voice, one I barely recognized, said "hello." When I told Sandra who I was and that I was calling to confirm our Shabbat-dinner date, her voice sounded choked, her words almost indistinguishable. Suddenly, the floodgates opened, and I heard unmistakable sobbing on the other end of the phone.

Concerned, I asked her whether she'd like to take a walk with me on the beach and felt a great wave of relief when she agreed.

During our walk, I soon found out the reason for her burst of emotion. Feeling more alone than I ever could have imagined, Sandra told me she made a very time-based "deal" with herself. If the phone didn't ring now, she said to herself, she was going to dispose of her

Jewish star and forget about her Jewish journey. That was the very moment I called.

Our rabbi, who she dialed later that evening after our walk, told my husband that unbeknownst to me, that phone call was made at exactly the right time. Sandra had called him a number of times to express how depressed she was, and it became clear to him that she was walking down a very dark road.

Walking alongside one another on the beach, I was given a deeper, though limited, picture of Sandra. She said that she had a difficult childhood, and that the memory of a kind Jewish neighbor had become her impetus for exploring Judaism. She was currently working as a maid, cleaning hotel rooms part-time, and studying Judaism. She felt she hadn't connected with enough people in the community, and her relationship with the woman she always sat with in shul wasn't as close as I had assumed.

This was the last I saw her. She neither showed up at my home that Shabbat, nor took me up on the invitation to ring me if she needed to talk. Months later, her basement apartment was destroyed by Superstorm Sandy. Sandra found refuge in the home of a shul member, and later, I learned, found her own home outside our beach community. I hope she is satisfied with her life and has found the inner peace she was seeking.

That day during our walk, I was given a small glimpse into how an offer of hospitality might, with G-d's help, alleviate some of a stranger's troubles, even if only for a short time. This experience taught me to reach out and lend a hand to others because we just never know when that "right" moment will be.

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Comments regarding programs for adult education in Israel

This letter was addressed to R. Avraham Chein.
B"H, 9 Cheshvan, 5710
Greetings and blessings,

I received your letter which arrived after a slight delay.

In general, the outlook of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, with regard to religious education as a whole is that only those who observe the Torah and its mitzvos should be entrusted with this [responsibility], and only they have the authority to make suggestions in this regard. This [approach]... is known from his oral communication and from a previous letter.

With regard to a particular institution or office, his outlook is dependent on the knowledge [he receives] regarding the character of this institution, the manner in which it operates, and the goals of those actually involved in directing it and taking responsibility for it. With regard to mentioning [the Rebbe's] outlook to others... [before this is done,] it is also necessary to be reasonably confident with regard to the character of those taking responsibility in the future.

What could I inform [the Rebbe] about the Center for Religious Culture? [I know] it was under your directorship in the beginning of Tishrei, 5710, and that at present you were able to arrange for a financial grant from that institution [to support] the classes of Rabbi Goldshmidt and those of the Gerer chassidim. I do not, however, know anything about the goals of the institute: whether it is a branch — or under the direction of — the Minister of Education or the Minister of Religion, whether it is connected to a particular political party or not, who has the deciding voice with regard to its activities, and the like. The time and the place we are speaking about is Eretz Yisrael and the year 5710 (1950); i.e., a time and place of confused values and, in particular, confusion regarding the spiritual values of many religious people. It is the greatest confusion that has existed in our time.

Therefore my suggestion — if the question asked in your letter is still relevant... — is that you should approach my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, directly, explain to him what is necessary regarding the character of the above institution, and explain the fundamental point of the letter you want him to write.... I am certain that if you were in my place you would do the same and therefore you will not be upset about this.

I conclude with greetings to my aunt (I wrote to her before Rosh HaShanah; my letter has certainly arrived), my cousin, and the members of your household. With wishes for everlasting good in all matters,

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

When a Loved One Dies, is that the End of the Relationship?

Question: My grandmother passed away last year. I was always her favorite grandchild and we shared an especially close bond. I'm getting married in a couple of weeks, and I just can't accept that she won't be at my wedding. I am almost embarrassed to say it, but I actually went to her grave and begged her to come to the wedding. I'm not really sure what my question to you is. I guess I just want to know... did she hear me?

Answer: Your grandmother not only heard you — she will respond. You may be surprised to learn that what you did is in fact an ancient Jewish custom. Over the generations, Jews have visited the graves of their loved ones to invite them to join in their family celebrations. The most fundamental work of Kabbalah, called the Zohar, says that the souls of departed parents and grandparents come to share in the joy of the weddings of their descendants.

The fact that you went to your grandmother's gravesite to invite her to your wedding, even though you were unaware of this custom, indicates that your soul knew intuitively what the Zohar says.

And the fact that you can't accept that your grandmother won't be at your wedding is because that isn't true. She most certainly will be at your wedding. It will be painful not to be able to hold her hand and see her smiling face, but you should feel comforted in the knowledge that her presence and her love will be right there with you.

And she'll be there whenever you need her, because the soul never dies, and a soul-connection like the one you had with your grandmother is eternal.

A WORD

from the Director

On Tuesday (November 27 this year) we will celebrate the auspicious day of Yud Tes Kislev (the 19th of Kislev).

This is the day on which the first Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, was released from his imprisonment in the infamous Spalerno prison.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman was informed of his release from prison while he was reading Psalms, at the precise moment that he was reading the verse, "He redeemed my soul in peace..." (Psalms 55:19).

Our Sages have interpreted the word "peace" in this verse to mean one who is occupied with Torah study, deeds of kindness, and prayer. Thus, one's soul is "redeemed in peace" by being involved with these "three pillars" upon which the world stands.

This year we have double the energy to expand and enhance our involvement in these mitzvot:

The 19th of Kislev falls this year on the third day of the week, Tuesday, the day on which, during Creation, the expression "And G-d saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:10, 1:12) was repeated. Thus, we should do it with twice as much enthusiasm and vigor.

The 19th of Kislev is known amongst Chasidim as Rosh HaShana of Chasidut. As the purpose for the dissemination of Chasidut in the world is to bring the revelation of Moshiach, it is appropriate, especially at this time of year, to re-dedicate ourselves to assuring that all of our actions help hasten Moshiach's revelation and the long-awaited Redemption.

We will end with the traditional greeting on the 19th of Kislev: May you be inscribed and may you be sealed for a good year in the study of Chasidut and in the Chasidic ways of conduct.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED



Miraculous Shabbat Stew

By Yerachmiel Tilles

Although Rabbi Shlomo Goldman of Zivhil, known as "Reb Shlomke," was acknowledged by all as a genuine Chasidic Rebbe, he still managed to conceal the extent of his greatness. Everyone knew he was learned, and inspired; what they did not realize was what a lofty spiritual level Reb Shlomke was on until the following story occurred:

In Zivhil lived a drunkard whom we shall call Andrei. He was basically harmless, being content with a bottle or two of vodka. Although Andrei was not Jewish, he liked to frequent the Jewish section of town, because he knew from experience that he wouldn't get beaten up there like would happen to him in other parts of town, and he was also aware that the Jews were compassionate people, who would give him food when he went begging.

One Saturday morning, after a big drinking binge the previous night, Andrei felt especially hungry. He knocked on several doors, but got no answer, as it was Shabbat and the residents were in shul. The next house he went to also yielded no response, but he noticed the door was not locked properly. The homeowners, in their rush to get to shul had left the door unlocked.

Andrei opened the door, and was greeted by a set table with beautiful golden braided loaves of challah, a decanter filled with red wine, and other delicacies. There was a heavenly aroma coming from the stove; the smell of the cholent [A stew left on the Shabbat stove overnight from before sunset] and kugel [A sometimes sweet casserole, usually based on noodles or potatoes or rice.] was making his mouth water.

Andrei didn't know where to start. The wine attracted him the most, but he thought it would be best to get some food in his empty stomach first. He opened up the pot of cholent and scooped out a big portion for himself, which he shoved down his throat like a man who had never seen food before. A huge piece of kugel followed the cholent.

At this point, he heard people outside, walking home from shul, and he thought it would be best to leave the house right away, before he would be caught red-handed. He was still chewing his food, as he headed for the door, but was stopped in his tracks by the golden challah on the table; it looked so good and he was still so hungry. He ripped out a huge chunk of challah, took a big bite from it and reached for the doorknob.

Andre had so much food in his mouth that he couldn't chew properly. A piece of challah went down the wrong pipe and he couldn't breathe. Andrei gasped for air and his face turned colors, as he began to choke on the challah, and moments later he fell down, dead, in front of the door.

A few minutes later, the couple who lived in this house arrived home. They tried opening the door but there was something preventing the door from opening more than a crack. The husband pushed with all his might and got the door opened. They walked into the house and looked to see what was blocking the door. They were in a state of shock when they saw, Andrei, the town drunkard, lying on the floor of their house.

The husband started shaking him and yelling at him to get out of his house, but soon realized that Andrei was completely lifeless. He saw the big chunk of challah next to Andrei and surmised what had transpired. They began to panic. Just recently there had been pogroms in the area. If people found out that Andrei was found dead in a Jews' house they would accuse the Jews of killing him. Even though they couldn't care less about Andrei, they would use any opportunity to attack the Jews. The wife told the husband to go run to the Rebbe, Reb Shlomke, and ask for his advice.

The homeowner rushed over to the Rebbe's house and told him what

happened. The Rebbe concurred with him that the townspeople might use this as an excuse to make another pogrom. Reb Shlomke took a spoonful of his cholent and told him to take it and put it into the dead drunkard's mouth. Thoughts started going through the man's mind--how could he feed a dead man?--but he did not ask any questions. He was a simple Jew who had complete trust in whatever the Rebbe told him.

He walked home briskly, being careful not to drop the cholent. He tried to put the cholent in Andrei's mouth, but his mouth was sealed shut. So the man said in a panic "Reb Shlomke said I should feed you the cholent".

At the mention of the Rebbe's name, the lifeless drunkard opened his mouth, and the man quickly placed the Rebbe's cholent in as far as he could. He almost fainted from fright due to what he saw next. Andrei got up from the floor and looking straight ahead, walked out the door.

The man followed Andrei, curious to see what would happen. Andrei walked across town, in a zombie-like manner, looking straight ahead. After several minutes, Andrei arrived at his own residence. As soon as he stepped inside, he fell down to the floor, lifeless as before.

The man ran back to his house to tell his wife over what happened. They had just witnessed an open miracle. They had seen a dead man get up and walk across town to his house. They now realized that Reb Shlomke was a lot more than he made himself out to be.

The story spread quickly and everyone now knew that their Rebbe was a very holy man, who had tried to conceal his greatness. It is said that this event is what prompted Reb Shlomke to start thinking about moving to another place, where people wouldn't know him.

Eventually he did move to Jerusalem, where he managed to conceal his identity until one day someone from Zivhil bumped into him in shul and revealed to everyone who he was. After that throngs of people flocked to him for his advice and help until his passing on 26 Iyar*** 5705/1945. One of the tzadikim at the funeral smelled different fragrant spices coming from Reb Shlomke's body. Later on, he asked Reb Shlomke's son, Reb Gedaliah, what the source of this custom was. Reb Gedalia replied that they have no such custom. They realized that this beautiful smell was actually from this great tzadik himself. May his memory be a blessing.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Jacob returns to the Holy Land after a 20-year stay in Charan, and sends angel-emissaries to Esau in hope of a reconciliation, but his messengers report that his brother is on the war path with 400 armed men. Jacob prepares for war, prays, and sends Esau a large gift (consisting of hundreds of heads of livestock) to appease him.

That night, Jacob ferries his family and possessions across the Jabbok River; he, however, remains behind and encounters the angel that embodies the spirit of Esau, with whom he wrestles until daybreak. Jacob suffers a dislocated hip but vanquishes the supernal creature, who bestows on him the name Israel, which means "he who prevails over the divine."

Jacob and Esau meet, embrace and kiss, but part ways. Jacob purchases a plot of land near Shechem, whose crown prince—also called Shechem—abducts and rapes Jacob's daughter Dinah. Dinah's brothers Simeon and Levi avenge the deed by killing all male inhabitants of the city, after rendering them vulnerable by convincing them to circumcise themselves.

Jacob journeys on. Rachel dies while giving birth to her second son, Benjamin, and is buried in a roadside grave near Bethlehem. Reuben loses the birthright because he interferes with his father's marital life. Jacob arrives in Hebron, to his father Isaac, who later dies at age 180. (Rebecca has passed away before Jacob's arrival.)

Our Parshah concludes with a detailed account of Esau's wives, children and grandchildren; the family histories of the people of Seir, among whom Esau settled; and a list of the eight kings who ruled Edom, the land of Esau's and Seir's descendants.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 23 - 24 November	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	8:00	9:04
Adelaide	7:49	8:50
Brisbane	6:05	7:02
Darwin	6:38	7:30
Gold Coast	6:04	7:02
Perth	6:43	7:43
Sydney	7:26	8:27
Canberra	7:37	8:39
Launceston	8:01	9:09
Auckland	7:59	9:02
Wellington	8:10	9:18
Hobart	8:05	9:15
Byron Bay	7:05	8:03

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, ST KILDA EAST

PARSHAS VAYISHLACH • 15 KISLEV • 23 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	8.05 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	8.35 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.28 AM
	SHACHRIS	10.00 AM
	MINCHA	7.50 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS / MARIV	9.04 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	8.10 PM
	MARIV	8.50 PM