

סיום והכנסת
ספר תורה
-See pg 9-

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היא בית לחם



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Inside:

The Sun Also Rises
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Rav Shimshon David Pincus ztl

**The Beat of
Our Heart**
Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

and more...



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Shabbos Zmanim

2023 **Early Friday Mincha**, 18 Main
at **מנחה גדולה** and then every 15 minutes until 3:00pm

CANDLE LIGHTING	4:10 ^{PM}
MINCHA in tent Aleph	4:20 ^{PM}
CHABAD MINCHA	4:20 ^{PM}
SHKIYA	4:28 ^{PM}

SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM:

Vasikin followed by a Daf Yomi Shiur, 20↑	6:23 ^{AM}
Shachris 2 18 Main	8:00 ^{AM}
Shachris 3 Tent א	9:15 ^{AM}
Shachris 4 BAIS CHABAD 20↑	10:00 ^{AM}
Shachris 5 18 Main	10:30 ^{AM}
First Mincha on Shabbos	1:45 ^{PM}
PIRCHEI	2:00 ^{PM}
MINCHA FOLLOWED BY SHALOSH SEUDOS	4:10 ^{PM}
SHKIYA	4:28 ^{PM}
MAARIV 1	5:08 ^{PM}
MAARIV 2	5:13 ^{PM}

Late Maariv Motzei Shabbos Every 15 Minutes!
6:00 pm – 8:30 pm | 18 Main

Weekday Zmanim

Zmanim for the week of Dec 3 - 9

Shacharis — 20 min. before Neitz

Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag
and more (see posted times)

NEITZ

S 7:04 | M 7:05 | T 7:06 | W 7:07
T 7:08 | F 7:09 | SH 7:10

TEFILA- GRA

S 10:11 | M 10:12 | T 10:13 | W 10:13
T 10:14 | F 10:14 | SH 10:15

SHEMA- Magen Avraham

S 8:41 | M 8:41 | T 8:42 | W 8:42
T 8:43 | F 8:44 | SH 8:44

CHATZOS

S 11:45 | M 11:46 | T 11:46 | W 11:47
T 11:47 | F 11:48 | SH 11:48

SHEMA- GRA

S 8:48 | M 8:49 | T 8:50 | W 8:51
T 8:51 | F 8:52 | SH 8:53

PLAG

S 3:29 | M 3:29 | T 3:29 | W 3:29
T 3:29 | F 3:29 | SH 3:29

SHKIA

S 4:27 | M 4:27 | T 4:27 | W 4:27
T 4:27 | F 4:27 | SH 4:27

For Shiurim:



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weekly Inspirational
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Rabbi Stern's
Daf Yomi
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For Updates on
Rabbi YY's Shiur for
women:

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To see
Minyanim:

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Halachos in 60
seconds

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For Israelis daily
chizuk in Hebrew



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For 20 Min Daf
Yomi

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For a 4 min
video of Chizuk
connecting to the
day

Rabbi Coren





Learning from Lavan

Yaakov sent messengers to Eisav before their confrontational meeting with the following message: "I have lived with Lavan (*Im Lavan Garti*), and tarried until now" [*Bereshis 32:5*]. Rashi cites the famous Rabbinic comment that the word *GarTY* (I lived) has the numerical value of 613 (*TaRYaG*), indicating "I lived with the wicked Lavan, but I observed the 613 Commandments – without learning from his evil ways."

Rav Ruderman (1901-1987) once commented on the apparent redundancy in Yaakov's message to his brother, Eisav. If Yaakov had already sent the message "I observed the 613 Commandments," what indeed is added by further stating "and I have not learned from the evil ways of Lavan?" The Rosh Yeshiva, of blessed memory, taught that the inference to be drawn is that one can observe the 613 commandments and, nevertheless, learn from the ways of a Lavan. Even within the context of a fully observant life-style, a person can wind up looking like a Lavan. Even when an individual's actions are technically permissible, the person may still be acting like a Lavan. A person can live an indulgent life-style – one which may not technically deviate from the letter of the Law but one which is totally alien from that which should be representative of a Jewish lifestyle, from the spirit of the Law.

Therefore, Yaakov clarified: "Not only have I observed the letter of the 613 commandments, I have also not learned from Lavan and have even continued to observe the spirit of those laws."

I was prompted to relate this insight as a result of an article in the New York Times. The article, "Jews Debate Who Will Define Orthodoxy," included the following paragraph: "The waters of the Hudson River gently lapped at the bow of the cruise ship sailing under the flag 'The Glatt Yacht' as it slowly pulled away from the noisy shoreline of Manhattan. A couple celebrating a special anniversary got up to dance as the pianist played Billy Joel's 'Just the way you are'. Suddenly a rabbi appeared on the dance floor and tapped the man on the shoulder. The man knew right away that the rabbi did not just want to butt into his dance. The Rabbi asked the couple to stop dancing. When they ignored him, the Rabbi walked over to the pianist and ordered him to stop. The boat was eerily silent until the couple sat down. Only then did the music resume."

What is the issue at hand here? The *New York Times* Page 2 synopsis of all the major stories in the paper defined the issue as whether there is in fact a dichotomy between a person's religious life and his social life. Or as Ari Goldman (the New York Times reporter) wrote, some Orthodox Jews "...draw distinctions between the different facets of their lives..." This means compartmentalization. Yes, I am a Jew. I am an Orthodox Jew, but that stops at a certain point. To quote the person who was embarrassed off the dance floor, "The Rabbi's place belongs in the kitchen. Kashrus is in the kitchen. It has nothing to do with the dance floor."

Reading this article on the Wednesday of *Parshas Vayishlach* led me to relate the Rosh Yeshiva's comment of learning from Lavan's actions, while ostensibly observing the 613 commandments. The concept that there can be a dichotomy between someone's religious life and his social life, that *glatt* Kosher applies only to what I put in my mouth but not to what I see or how I act or dress – is wrong. It is a violation of "I have not learned from his evil ways." A person can be religious and even only eat *glatt* Kosher, but still learn from the ways of Lavan.



Hidden Power

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

Parshas Vayishlach always reminds me of something that once happened to me when I was sitting in a car, stuck in traffic with one of my talmidim. He told me that he was once in a similar situation with a rebbe that made a certain waving motion with his hand and few moments later the traffic dissipated. I said, 'Let's try it. It can't hurt' and so we waved our hands all over the place and, low and behold, it worked! The traffic dispersed.

I don't know the source for this hand-waving but what I do know is the idea of *Kfitzas Haderech*. This is mentioned in our holy books and mainly works with permutations of letters based on verses in the Torah. For example, let's take the letters of the first 4 words *Es Hashamayim V'es Haaretz*. When a person meditates on them with the proper intent and *kedusha* it can help him reach his destination much quicker. Why is this significant today when most of us rely on the help of Waze to get us to wherever we want to go?

The answer is that the very act of meditating on the letters of the Torah helps us to reach even a small appreciation of the entire Torah, the precious gift that we received 3330 years ago. As the Or Hachayim writes in *Parshas Bechukosai*, only when *Mashiach* comes will we really understand how incredible the Torah is. In his words, we will go *meshugah* over the Torah.

Another example of the power hidden in the Torah is expressed by the Chafetz Chayim z"l who explains the logic behind the concept of *ain mukdam* in the Torah. It seems very strange that scattered throughout the holy Torah there are paragraphs that are out of chronological order. The Chafetz Chaim explains this based on the *Yalkut Shimoni* where it is written that the Torah is so powerful that when a person learns it he can have the potential of *techiyat hametim*. This is, of course, a dangerous power for just anyone to possess and therefore Hashem mixed up the order somewhat so when someone is learning, he/she can't easily access this force.

Additionally, there are several verses in *Mishlei* that express the idea of how the Torah can provide healing to one's flesh since its spiritual power has a direct effect on our physical existence- both our body and the world at large. It is worth seeking out these passages.

Wednesday Night 8pm – Smichas chaver Rabbi Coren Office
Shabbos Morning - Vasikin Minyan & 8:00am Minyan

Oil as a Guide for Living



Rabbi YY Jacobson

Oil embodies the essence of the Chanukah narrative and serves as the main focus of the festival of lights. This is strange. The miracle of the oil, it would seem, was of minor significance relative to the military victory. Besides the fact that this was a miracle that occurred behind the closed doors of the Temple with only a few priests to behold, it was an event concerning a religious symbol without any consequences on life, death and liberty. Why the emphasis on oil?

In our lives, we must learn how to become “oil-like.” We must learn to cultivate the four properties characterizing oil.

A) The crushing and pressing of the olives, which allows you to become oil, represents the notion of humbleness, the antithesis of arrogance and self-inflation. Seeing ourselves for who we really are, being open to discover our biases, blind spots and errors, allows us to genuinely grow.

B) The direct result of this “pressing” is your ability to become oil-like and, just like oil, penetrate others deeply. When you’re haughty and pompous (usually because of a lack of self-confidence and hence the need to create a delusional self-confidence), you are incapable of sharing yourself with others, or allowing them to share themselves with you. You hide in a bubble, afraid of being vulnerable and authentic. You can’t be in a real relationship. Only when your fake ego is crushed a little bit, either by choice or by life’s circumstances, you have the courage to show up in the world, and to show up to other people, with the real “you.” You can then connect with other people’s hearts profoundly.

C) Humility and genuine relationships must never allow you to be pulled down and completely defined by the relationships. You must never forfeit your individual identity and to dissolve in the emotions or choices of the other person. The beauty and magic of a relationship lay precisely in the fact that two distinct individuals choose to share themselves with each other. Just like oil, you know how to feel and experience another human being deeply, while still not becoming consumed and nullified by the other’s identity. Like oil, you must always retain your distinctiveness.

D) This threefold process of crushing yourself, bonding with others and at the same time retaining your distinctiveness, should ultimately cause you to rise—just like oil—to the top, and “float” head and shoulders above all which is around you. Realizing that you are a “piece of the Divine,” and that at every moment you are an ambassador of G-d to our world, allows you to experience yourself as invincible, wholesome and way above the gravel that you may encounter in yourself or others. This comes not from arrogance, but from realizing that your core is part of the infinite. Just like oil, you, too, rise to the top.

The Talmud states, “The messenger of a person is just like sender.” If G-d chose you and sent you on a mission to this world, you are G-d-like! If you can only identify that space within yourself, nobody can compare to you.

This was the deeper mystical significance of a miracle that caused oil to increase. And it is why we celebrate with focusing on oil, for this story captures the rhythm of life. For me to become a glowing menorah, casting light in me and around me, and lighting up the world, I must be oil-like: First, I must discover the art of humility and integrity; second, I must allow myself to show up in my relationships genuinely and wholesomely; third, I must retain my distinctiveness and individuality; fourth, I must always recognize that part in me which is always “on the top.”

Judaism, particularly its festival of Chanukah, comes to teach ordinary human beings how to become oil-like. If we wish to ignite a fire in our lives, we ought to take a good and deep look at the olive oil in our *menorahs*. Happy Chanukah – let’s go easy on the physical oily foods, but not on the spiritual message of oil.

Womens Shiur **Tuesday** 9:30am (18 Main)
Chassidus Shiur **Monday & Thursday** 7:45am (18 Main)
Shabbos: Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs)
Morning 9:00 (20 Upstairs)
After Davening 12:00pm (20 Upstairs)

UFARATZTA



HASHEM IS YOUR PARTNER

... You write about your being pressed for funds to get the material out of the customs, etc. As I wrote to you in my previous letter, it is a pity that you did not request a larger loan from the Bank. But it is no use crying over the past, and the Almighty will surely present some other channels to help you out of the difficulty. At any rate, I hope that from now on you will realize more fully and confidently that Hashem is your partner in the business, by virtue of the *Tzedoko* stake in it, and of course, the larger the share of the *Tzedoko* the larger is the share of the partnership. So, you can go boldly ahead on a broader front. I hope to hear good news from you...

==== part of Rebbe’s letter Shvat 17, 5720 -1960.

Shabbos Yud Tes Kislev: Rosh Hashana Lechassidus. Gut Yom Tov!

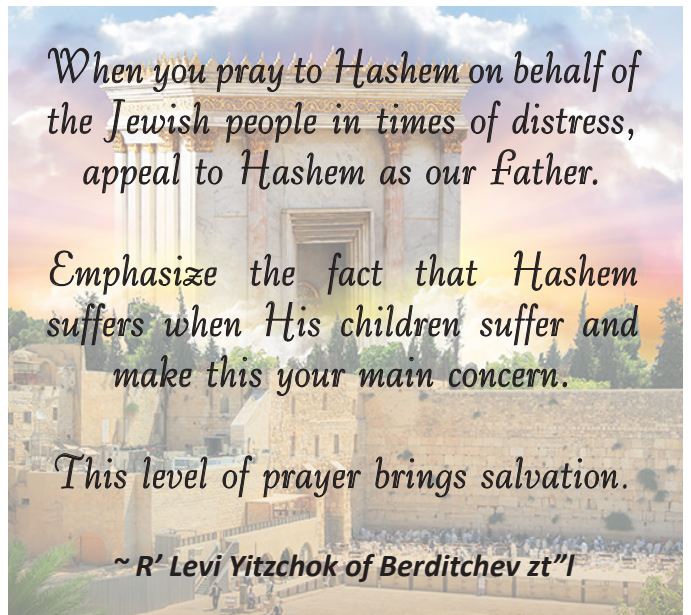
Leshana tova blimud hachassidus vedarkei hachassidus tikaseivu vesichoseimu

When you pray to Hashem on behalf of the Jewish people in times of distress, appeal to Hashem as our Father.

Emphasize the fact that Hashem suffers when His children suffer and make this your main concern.

This level of prayer brings salvation.

~ R’ Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev zt”l



Differences between *Shechita* and *Ner Chanuka*

by Rabbi Nachum Scheiner



We have seen that, according to the Pri Chodosh and the Pri To'ar, there is a fundamental *machlokes* between the Rashba and Ran. According to the Ran, a *mitzvah* done just to remove suspicion is not considered a *mitzvah* (Chanukah candles), and does not require a *brocha*. According to the Rashba, if the Chachamim mandated that we do something to remove suspicion, (*shechita* of a *ben pekua*) it is considered a *mitzvah* and does require a *brocha*.

However, from other *poskim* it would seem that there must be a difference between the cases, as they quote both of these rulings. The *poskim* quote the ruling of the Ran, not to recite a *brocha* when lighting to remove suspicion, as well as the ruling of the Rashba to recite a *brocha* on the *shechita* of the *ben pekua*. This proves that they must have held that there is a difference between the cases.

There are, indeed, a number of ways to explain the difference between lighting to remove suspicion, which will not require a *brocha*, and the *shechita* of the *ben pekua*, which will require a *brocha*.

1) An Established Takana of Beis Din

The Tevuos Shor writes that it is only when it comes to the *ben pekua*, which is mentioned in the Mishna. This was an official mandate, established by a Beis Din, and is considered a full-fledged rabbinical *mitzvah*, which requires a *brocha*.

On the other hand, lighting at the second door was an innovation of Rav Huna, an Amora. Although we must certainly follow his ruling, it was not an official mandate, established by a Beis Din, and is not considered a rabbinical *mitzvah*, which requires a *brocha*.

According to this understanding, there is no *machlokes*, and all agree that *ben pekua*, which is an official mandate, requires a *brocha*, and lighting at the second door was not, and does not require a *brocha*.

2) Suspicion in regard to a Scriptural mitzvah

The Tevuos Shor adds that there is another fundamental difference between the two cases. In the case of *ben pekua*, the *Chachamim* required *shechita*, so that the person is not suspected of not keeping the Scriptural *mitzvah* of *shechita*. This is considered a full-fledged rabbinical *mitzvah*, like any other *rabbinical* mandate, which requires a *brocha*.

On the other hand, lighting is a rabbinical *mitzvah*, and avoiding suspicion for a rabbinical *mitzvah* is not a full-fledged *mitzvah*, and does not require a *brocha*.

According to this understanding, as well, there is no *machlokes*, and all agree that *shechita* of a *ben pekua* requires a *brocha*, and lighting at the second door on Chanukah does not require a *brocha*.

Ben pekua is an official mandate, and requires a *brocha*, but lighting on Chanukah at the second door is not, and does not require a *brocha*.

Shechita of a *ben pekua* is to safe-keep the Scriptural *mitzvah* of *shechita*, and is like any other rabbinical mandate, which requires a *brocha*. But lighting Chanukah candles is a rabbinical *mitzvah*, and avoiding suspicion for a rabbinical *mitzvah*, is not a *mitzvah*, and does not require a *brocha*.

To be continued...

Rabbi Scheiner

KOLLEL BOKER | 7:00-8:00am

- Chavrusa learning - Gemara
Currently: מסכת חגיגה
- Friday - Shuirim Beinayoni Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL | 8:15-9:45pm

- Chavrusa learning - Halacha
Currently: הלכות שבת / הדלקת נרות

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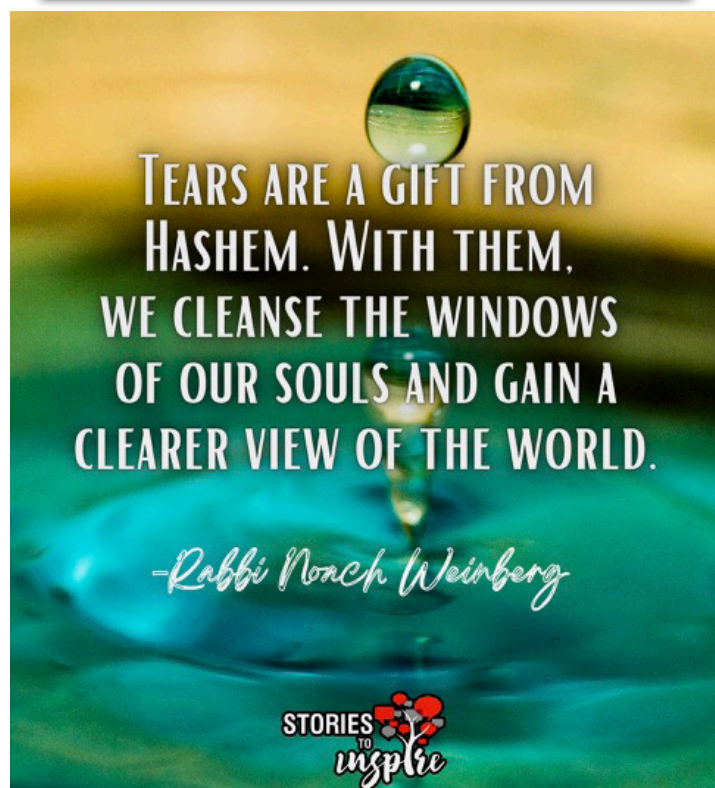
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Summary

There is a difference between lighting to remove suspicion, which does not require a *brocha*, and the *shechita* of a *ben pekua*, which does require a *brocha*.





Due to the מצב in ארץ הקודש there will be a daily Minyan Mincha with אבינו מלכנו led by Rabbi Daniel Coren at 1:45 in tent

Kol Hanearim youth program with Rabbi Fried Motzaei Shabbos | 6:45pm

Farbrenge י"ט בסלר A community Melave Malka with Rabbi YY Jacobson Motzaei Shabbos - Vayishlach Dec. 2nd | 7:30 PM | Tent ג
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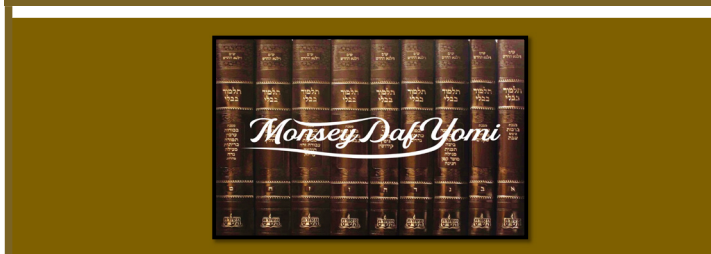
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Night Kollel



*Rabbi Shimon Peretz speaks
at Ohr Chaim.*



Yaakov Avinu Sent Millions of Malachim

"וישלח יעקב מלאכים לפניו אל עשו אחיו, ארצה שעיר שדה אדום"
32:4

"And Yaakov sent "Malachim" ahead of him to Eisav his brother, to the land of Seir, the field of Edom. — רש"י

Bereishis Rabbah says that Yaakov sent actual angels to Eisav. Yaakov sent the *Malachim* to tell Eisav that Yaakov had sojourned with Lavan (עם לבן גרתי) and was still doing well. Why did Yaakov send angels to Eisav deliver this message as opposed to sending mortal *messengers*?

There are two types of *Malachim*: *Malachim* who were created from the beginning of Creation, *ששת ימי בראשית*, and *Malachim* who are created from Torah and *Mitzvos*. The Magid says that *Malachim* which a person creates by learning Torah and performing *Mitzvos* are always with him, as opposed to the *Malachim* which were created during Creation of the world which only certain people are *Zoche* to meet at certain times. *ויפגעו בו מלאכי אלקים* – The *Malachim* met Yaakov Avinu; these *Malachim* were not always with Yaakov, and we therefore know that they are the *Malachim* from beginning of Creation. Yaakov called the place *מחניים*. At that point, he had two camps; one camp of *Malachim* which he created by his actions, and another camp which the *Ribono Shel Olam* sent to him. (ישמח משה)

Rashi explains גרתי is a reference to the מצוות. Yaakov

was sending a message to Eisav that even when he was by Lavan's house, he heeded the *Taryag Mitzvos*. How was Yaakov able to say that he heeded the *Taryag Mitzvos*? There are *Mitzvos* which did not apply to him, such as establishing a king for *Klal Yisroel*, and building the *Bais Hamikdash*. *Menachos* 110a – "כל העוסק" – anyone who learns the Torah regarding *Korbonos*, it is as if he was *Makriv* the *Korbonos*." This rule applied to Yaakov as well. Being that he was *Osek* in the Torah which contains all of the *Mitzvos*, it was as if he actually performed all of those *Mitzvos*. (דברי דוד)

There is a profound lesson for us to learn here. Eisav may have thought that he would be able to overpower Yaakov. Eisav assumed that in Lavan's house, Yaakov would not be able to perform many *Mitzvos* of the *Torah Hakdoshah*. Had Yaakov Avinu been bereft of many *Mitzvos*, Eisav could have won his battle with Yaakov. Yaakov was sending a powerful message to Eisav. עם לבן גרתי, Yaakov is *Meramez* to Eisav that even in Lavan's house, he kept the *Taryag Mitzvos*. The *Posuk* says that Yaakov sent *Malachim*. Why did Yaakov send more than one *Malach*? Each *Malach* represented a different *Mitzvah* which Yaakov had fulfilled. How did Yaakov fulfill every *Mitzvah*? He fulfilled every *Mitzvah* by learning the *Torah Hakdoshah*. Yaakov learned how to be *Mekayeim* all of the *Mitzvos* of the Torah under all circumstances, by learning the *Torah Hakdoshah*. Yaakov came with all of these *Zechusim*, yet he still came with the *Midah* of *Anavah*. He attributed everything that he had to the *חן אלקים*, the *Chesed* of Hashem. We should be *Zoche* to learn the *Torah Hakdoshah* in the proper manner to fulfill all of the *Mitzvos* of the *Torah Hakdoshah*.

Success in These Difficult Times

As Yaakov came closer to Eisav, his brother who had tried many times to hurt him – he was fearful. When he heard that 400 men were with him, he trembled, then he prepared. *Tefillah* assumed the leading role in his three-pronged approach. It was the key element of a well thought out strategy. Without *tefillah*, he knew nothing could succeed.

Yaakov pleaded to Hashem – "Save me from my brother, save us from death, lest he kill my wives and my children."

Looking to make his *tefillos* count, he beseeched Hashem. But Rav Yosef Dushinsky sees Yaakov mentioning a *zechus* that his brother Eisav did not have. They both had parents who were *tzaddikim*. But Yaakov had righteous wives – Eisav did not. This much is clear to us. Chazal say that everything good in our lives comes through the merit of our wives.

But in order for this Heavenly reward to really impact our lives, we must be sure to honor and love our wives properly. Our wives look to us for understanding and encouragement. We must not let them down. They need our praise, like a flower needs the sun. They need connection. Having a husband who cares, really cares about them, one who appreciates all they do for the family and cherishes them for being who they are – this is a home run.

Keep these facts in mind – but only if you want a life that is chock full of happiness and prosperity.

Adding to our list is the power of *tefillah*. Quite simply, asking Hashem for everything and anything that you need. In your own words... not only from the *siddur*. The Baal Shem Tov asked his student R' Dovid Mikulov to make a superb wine from the magnificent grapes native

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



to his homeland. R' Dovid worked the better part of a year on this project. He succeeded in making the most amazing wine this region had ever produced.

Spending hundreds of hours tending to the vineyard and all the other processes, he set out to Medziboz. Upon crossing the border, the person in charge insisted on inspecting all that was being transported. The officer dipped his fingers into each barrel to "sample the goods" – rendering the wine undrinkable to any Jew. Tearfully, he later asked the Baal Shem Tov. Why did this happen?

"You worked so hard, so many hours, on this wine? It is indeed the finest wine money can buy. You put all your efforts into this production... but did you daven to Hashem that the wine should turn out well?"

"I did not." R' Dovid replied.

So many times we put all our efforts into achieving success. We overwork, we agonize, worry and plan. We cannot sleep... Maybe this angle, this *kneitch*, will make it happen. But do we daven as strongly as we plan and strategize?

Yaakov Avinu laid the paths for all his generations to come. Prayer is the secret to success and happiness. It is our most powerful tool especially during this time of war.

B"H, we have achieved many miracles through *tefillah*, let us continue and redouble our efforts!

Written by R' Avrohom Hillel Reich based on a lesson and story by Harav Ben Tziyon Sneh Shlita

שישי ושמחו בשמחת תורה

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אשת חבר הרב הגאון ר' ראובן זצ"ל

Which will take place on
Sunday, December 10th
יום א' פרשת מקץ, כ"ז כסלו ה'תשפ"ד, ג' דחנוכה

10:00am כתיבת האותיות
At the home of
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11:00am Procession & Dancing
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REMEMBERING THE BEAT OF OUR OWN HEART

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg



Yaakov begins his conciliatory message to Eisav by saying that he had been living with their uncle, Lavan, over the last twenty years (32:5). Rashi famously comments that the word גרתי in *gematria* equals 613, and thus

Yaakov was indicating to Eisav that "I have lived with Lavan, but I observed the 613 commands, and I did not learn from his evil ways." Yaakov professed that although he spent many years with his evil, corrupt uncle, he remained loyal to the Torah and was not influenced by Lavan's sinful conduct.

What was the source of Yaakov's extraordinary resilience? How did he succeed in maintaining his religious standards while living with such an evil person for so many years?

Rav Shlomo Wolbe (Shiurei Chumash) finds the answer to this question in the word גרתי which is related to the word גר a foreigner." In *parshas Chayei Sara*, Avraham Avinu told the *beni Cheis*— that he was a foreign resident, physically residing among them without actually being one of them. Similarly, throughout the twenty years that Yaakov spent with Lavan, he was a גר a foreign resident who was just passing through. He didn't "unpack," get settled, or officially change his address, so-to-speak. This is how he succeeded in maintaining his commitment to Torah. He always saw himself as a foreigner, as somebody different, who did not fully belong where he was.

This is the key to resisting the natural process of assimilation. Although we must feel grateful for the freedoms we are given here in the Diaspora, at the same time, we must live with a sense of גרתי that we are foreigners, that this is not where we belong, that we are different, and that we need to be different. This is how we can say *taryag mitzvos shamarti* while living among other peoples.

The Torah commands us in *Sefer Vayikra* (18:3) not to follow gentile customs. Even if a custom is not inherently forbidden, nevertheless, if it is associated with foreign nations, we must refrain from it. The word *chok* used in this *pasuk* is related to the word חיק—chest." If we accustom ourselves to the "heartbeat" of other nations, we forget about our own heartbeat. If we feel too comfortable with the חיק of the people around us, we are prone to abandoning our own, neglecting our own heartbeat, our own cherished values and customs. We must therefore live with a sense of גרתי recognizing that we are different, that we are just גרים that we do not fully fit in, and this is the key to preserving our commitment to the מצוות תרי"ג.

Yaakov and Eisav

Rabbi Berel Wein



Many commentators over the ages have seen in the two confrontations between Yaakov and Eisav – first the struggle with Eisav's angel and then the meeting with Eisav in the flesh – the two-front war that Judaism and the Jewish people have been forced to fight over millennia in order to simply survive.

The struggle with Eisav's angel, as described in the *parsha*, represents a spiritual and intellectual fight, a contest of ideas, beliefs and debate. The meeting with the physical Eisav in turn represents the struggle of the Jewish people to simply stay alive in a bigoted, cruel, and nearly fatal environment.

Yaakov does not escape unscathed from either confrontation. He is crippled physically and somewhat impoverished financially. Eisav's "evil eye" gazes upon his children and Yaakov is relieved to escape alive, even if damaged in body and purse, separating himself from Eisav physically and from his civilization and worldview.

The scenario is pretty much set for the long dance of Jewish history, with the Jews always attempting to survive in a constantly challenging and brutal society governed by Eisav. The rabbis of Midrash discussed the possibilities of coexistence and even cooperation with Eisav.

Though this debate did not result in any permanent or convincing conclusion, the opinion of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai that Eisav's hatred of Yaakov is completely irrational and implacable seems to be borne out by history, past and present. The anti-Semitism in today's seemingly enlightened world is so pervasive as to be frightening. And we seem to be powerless to do anything about it.

As is painfully obvious to all, these struggles for continued Jewish existence are ongoing and seemingly unending. All of the foreign ideas and current fads of Western society stand almost unanimously opposed to Torah values and traditional lifestyle. The angel of Eisav changes his program from time to time, but he is always opposed to Torah and moral behavior. He wavers from totalitarian extreme conservatism to wild liberalism but always is able to wound the Jewish psyche and body no matter what philosophy or culture he now advocates. We limp today from this attack on Jewish values and Torah study and practice.

Jewish parents in America sue school boards for anti-Semitic attitudes, policies and behavior. Yet they would not dream of sending their children to a Jewish school or giving them an intensive Jewish education. The lawsuit is the indicator of the limp inflicted upon us by Eisav's cultural angel.

All agree that Europe is currently a lost continent as far as Jews are concerned. The question most asked of travel agents by Jews today is "Can I wear a kippah on the street there?" Billions of dollars of Jewish treasure pillaged during World War II and immediately thereafter still lie in the hands of Eisav.

And yet we certainly would be satisfied if the world just let us alone but that seems to be a forlorn hope. So our struggle continues but the Lord's promise to us that we will somehow prevail remains valid and true. And that is our hope for continuing on as loyal and steadfast Jews.

THE LIGHT OF SHABBOS

-SHABBOS STORY-

The holy Seer of Lublin lived approximately 180 years ago. In those days, the Jewish people lived in ghettos and everyone was religious. But there was one person who never went to Synagogue and he was a real playboy.

One Friday afternoon, the holy wife of the Seer of Lublin didn't have enough money to buy two candles for the Holy Shabbos. All Friday she was waiting for a miracle, but you know, miracles don't always happen. It was already five minutes before the beginning of Shabbos, and she still didn't have the two candles. So she went out to the street, and she was crying. She pleaded, "Please G-d, don't let me have the Shabbos without candles."

At that moment the wealthy playboy passed by in his carriage, pulled by eight horses. He was already late for an important appointment, but he still had a very good heart. He saw her standing on the street crying, stopped the horses, and asked, "Why are you crying?" She said, "It is obvious that you are a rich man, but all I need is two pennies."

"Two pennies? Here they are." He put them into her holy hand.

She said to him, "You'll never know how much you did for me. I bless you; may the light of Shabbos, the light of Heaven, shine into you forever." He jumped back into his carriage and drove off. She quickly bought the candles, and kindled the Great Shabbos Light, and that light is still shining.

Her holy husband, the Seer of Lublin, began to pray. You know, when we pray we think about our business, but when the Rebbe of Lublin was praying, his soul really went to Heaven. He saw a big commotion in Heaven and the Heavenly court said to him, "You always make trouble for us. You always bless the most unworthy people. And now your wife is following in your footsteps. Look who she blessed! Look where the playboy is going now!"

The Seer of Lublin said, "You are one hundred percent right. But I would like to ask you one favor. Shine the light of Shabbos, the light of Heaven into his heart for just one hour. And let's see what happens."

The playboy was driving along when he suddenly felt a very holy and exalted feeling. He thought, "What am I wasting my life with? Why don't I become a *mentch* [decent person]?" He turned his horses around and decided to go back to the house where the two candles were burning. According to our tradition, he became one of the greatest Rabbis of that generation.

I thus want to bless all parents, just shine the light of sweetness into your children's hearts.

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The Kings of Edom

Rabbi Pinchas Winston

These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before a king ruled over the Children of Israel. (Bereishis 36:31)

If you think about it, Edom and Yishmael seem to represent two polar extremes of the same continuum. True, Eisav was the source of Catholicism, one of the biggest religions in the world today with many loyal followers, but compared to Islam, it is quite a different religion. In any case, Eisav today represents the Western World, which is intensely secular, and even if President Joe Biden professes to be a somewhat religious man, he leads a nation that acts in very non-religious ways.

On the other hand, Islam is at the other extreme. In many places they still cut off the hand of the thief, among other extreme acts of law enforcement. In some places in the world, Western backwardness is a function of Third World poverty. However, many Arab countries have more than enough money to be even more western than the West, but choose not to as a matter of culture, often rejecting it to an extreme.

Historically, the Jewish people have stood in between both cultures, or were supposed to have stood between both cultures, at least. As we have seen, just like any other people, we are capable of going to extremes. Today, some Jews are more secular than anyone else in the world, and historically we have fostered groups capable of taking the letter of the law too far.

Okay, we may never have cut off the hands of thieves, but we still have been quite extreme in our judgment of ourselves and others at times. Especially today, we can't seem to find that national "Middle Road," and as a result, we still find ourselves in a long, spiritually and often physically brutal exile.

It is interesting how the above verse mentions where the kings of Edom ruled — in the land of Edom — but stops short of doing so with respect to the Children of Israel. It is as if the *posuk* is trying not to confine itself to a single time period, but rather wishes to refer to the entire period of Jewish history — until a true king will finally come and rule over the Jewish

Once Moshiach comes, the extremes will disappear. That which is good and holy, at least in potential, within Western society will be absorbed and appreciated, and that which is not, will be flatly rejected. And with the end of the yetzer hara at this time of history, extreme judgment will no longer be necessary either.

If so, then maybe this *posuk* has yet to be truly fulfilled. After all, even Moshe couldn't quite get the nation to walk that straight line of Torah perfection, and certainly the kings after him did not either. Thus, no Jewish king has ever really "ruled" the Children of Israel, while in the meantime the kings of Edom still seem to rule the world.

Thus, this *posuk* is a fitting end to this week's parshah, which just happens to end with Chapter Thirty-Six, the number of the Final Redemption as the thirty-six candles of Chanukah remind us. After all, nothing happens by accident, even the non-Jewish numbering of the Torah, especially when it is based upon traditional "stops" and "starts" — even if they didn't know it at the time.

Yud Tes Kislev

From a letter of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, 1981

...It is appropriate that we speak of Yud-Tes Kislev, the liberation of the Alter Rebbe from imprisonment on the 19th of Kislev. As with all things connected with Judaism, talking about Yud-Tes Kislev must be such that it lends vitality to and permeates all one's limbs and faculties. Since the words spoken are the words of G-d in His Torah, true and everlasting, they lead to deeds, both that of the speaker and listeners. As the Alter Rebbe writes in *Tanya*, that "the thing is very near to you in your mouth and in your heart that you may do it." First comes speech (your mouth) which stimulates the feelings in "your heart," and through this they come to fruition in deed ("that you may do it").

The central theme of Yud-Tes Kislev is the liberation of the Alter Rebbe from imprisonment because of his work in spreading Judaism and *Chassidus*. Knowing that he was endangering his life, he still threw himself into this work, disregarding all obstacles. For although Jewish law regards "the law of the country as law," this only applies when the government's laws are not at variance with the fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos. The previous Rebbe, in the name of his father the Rebbe Rashab, said that the soul (of a Jew) can never be in exile; hence no person can dictate to a Jew how to behave in matters of Judaism.

The Alter Rebbe was imprisoned because of his work in spreading both the exoteric and the esoteric parts of Torah. His imprisonment for 53 days, eventually brought about greater good than before — greater dissemination of *Chassidus*. This can be compared to the concept of "the superiority of light (greater dissemination of *Chassidus*) that comes from prior darkness (the imprisonment)."

Hence, when we remember and meditate on the events of Yud-Tes Kislev, it brings us to greater efforts in spreading Judaism and Torah. This should be in a manner above and beyond normal limits, disregarding all obstacles, even to the extent of literal self-sacrifice. In such a manner our efforts will be with enthusiasm and vitality, with joy and a good heart.

Just as the liberation then caused greater dissemination of Torah and Judaism, so must it be today, in regard to each and every Jew, men, women, and children. In all those things to which the Alter Rebbe dedicated his life, all of us must know that "the thing is very near to you in your mouth and in your heart that you may do it." Then we may be sure that "we will have the upper hand" — we will surely be successful in battling the exile.

This day is an auspicious one for making good resolutions in spreading Judaism and Torah. Just as the Alter Rebbe was completely exonerated and victorious, so too today in each person's fight against his personal exile, and against the darkness of the general exile. Then will be fulfilled the Rambam's Halachic statement that "Torah has promised that eventually Yisroel will repent... and *immediately* they will be redeemed," in the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach.



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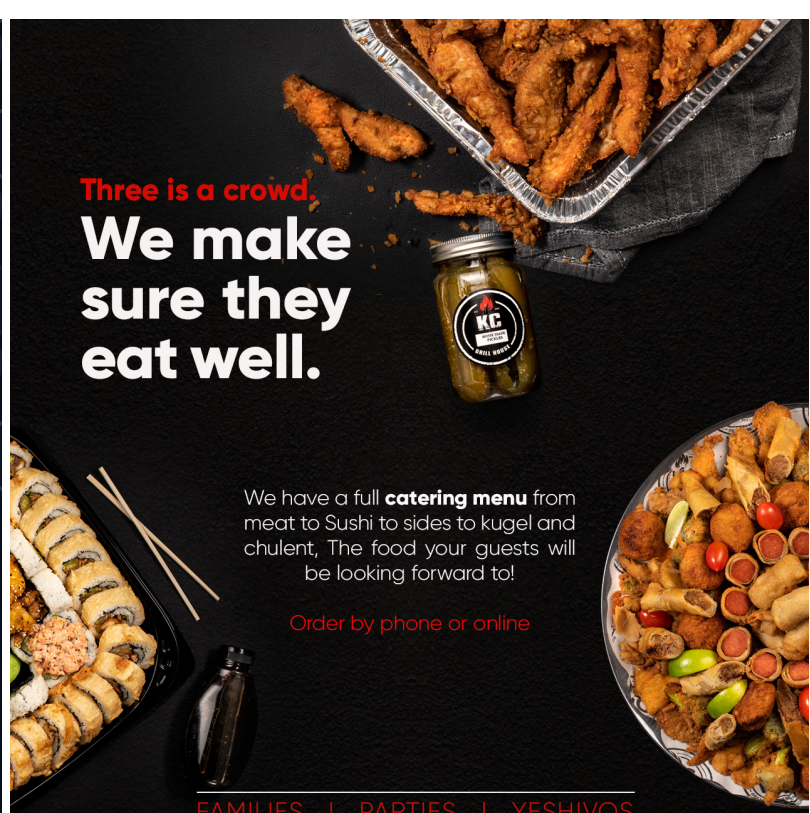
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JOKES

Driving in NY

As a student driver in New York City, I was taking the road test for my driver's license. When someone cut me off, I held my temper so I wouldn't look out of control. "You have a lot to learn," said the inspector.

At a red light, the car behind tapped my bumper. I remained calm while the inspector shook his head. When the light turned, I accelerated, but the car behind sped up and cut me off. That did it! I hit the horn as hard as I could.

The inspector turned to me, smiled and said, "Now you're getting the hang of it."

Penguins

A police officer sees a man driving around with a pickup truck full of penguins.

He pulls the guy over and says: "You can't drive around with penguins in this town! Take them to the zoo immediately."

The guy says OK, and drives away.

The next day, the officer sees the guy still driving around with the truck full of penguins, and they're all wearing sunglasses.

He pulls the guy over and demands: "I thought I told you to take these penguins to the zoo yesterday?"

The guy replies: "I did . . . today I'm taking them to the beach!"

Big Decisions

You know the joke about how this Rabbi gave a man the best wedding advice: That his wife should be in charge of small decisions and he, the big ones.

After 30 years he came to the rabbi complaining: In 30 years, there have been no big decisions!

To which his wife responded: Of course there have been—and I allowed you to decide them all!

"Like what?" Asked the husband.

"Like what? I will tell you: a big decision is what to do about Global Warming, conflict in Syria, the situation in Iran . . . that you decide, my dear, and I do not mix in. Small decisions are — where we live, where we send our kids to school, which synagogue we attend, what type of house we buy. That I decide!"

The Steak

Yankel and his wife Dina go to the Kosher Restaurant and order steak and chips. They are served with fantastically tasty, giant steaks which they think are the best they've had for years. You have never seen such a big steak in your life.

They are so excited about their meal that they tell their friends Abe and Sarah about it. Abe doesn't believe any meal could be that good, so all four decide to go back next weekend to check it out.

When they get there, they all order steak and chips. However, much to their disappointment, the waiter brings them very small steaks. You need a magnifying glass to find it on your plate.

Yankel asks to see the manager.

"I'm very upset with our meals," he says to the manager. "My wife and I were in this restaurant only last week, and you served us big juicy steaks. Today, however, just when I've bought my best friends with us, you serve us such small ones."

"Yes, sir, I know," replies the manager. "But last week you were sitting by the window where everyone can see you."



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