

LampLighter

17 Kislev
Vayishlach
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In the Torah portion of Vayishlach we read of Jacob's preparations before confronting his brother Esau and his army of four hundred men.

Regarding Jacob's manner of preparation, the great Sage Rashi comments: "He repaired himself in three ways: to give gifts [to Esau and thereby appease him], to pray, and to do battle [with Esau]."

Why does Rashi use the unusual expression "repaired himself" rather than the more common expression "prepared himself"?

When a person "prepares himself" it means either that he mentally or physically gets ready for the event.

Repairing, however, indicates more than just general preparation: it is indicative of the person "rectifying" himself; changing something within himself first in order to do what must be done.

This was the case with Jacob. He prepared himself for "gifts, prayer and battle" by "repairing" something within himself.

Our Sages note that Jacob was angry that he had to appease his brother through gifts. In order for the gifts to be given - as gifts should be given - with a cheerful countenance, Jacob had to cause a change of attitude within himself.

Jacob was also fearful that his merits were not enough for G-d to save him from his brother's wrath. It was therefore necessary to change this negative trait within himself, through the vehicle of prayer, and thereby merit G-d's blessings.

Regarding Jacob's preparations for battle, because he was averse to doing battle: "...he feared and it anguished him." In order to mentally prepare himself to do battle, an emotional change had to be effected in him.

These three changes manifested themselves within him at one and the same time. How is this possible when each of these three actions requires a distinctly different attitude? Granting gifts calls for a position of closeness and kindness, while doing battle requires a feeling of distance and severity. Both of these are interpersonal in nature. Prayer, on the other hand, requires beseeching Divine mercy.

A human being cannot harbor these three very different and opposite emotions simultaneously, without effecting a radical change within himself. This, then, is an additional reason why Jacob had to "repair himself," so that he could maintain all of these at the same time.

Jacob is symbolic of holiness and Esau of evil. Their confrontation symbolizes the battle between the three attributes of kindness, severity and mercy within holiness and the same three attributes within evil.

In a physical battle victory can be assured when, in one grand, united effort, three divisions from three different points converge upon one of the enemy's divisions. This strategy can be repeated over and over again with the same successful results.

In the spiritual battle against evil, when kindness, severity and mercy of holiness join ranks, attacking and subduing each unholy attribute in turn, successful results are assured.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

What You Need and What You are Needed For

By Eli Touger

As one of the Alter Rebbe's wealthy chassidim advanced in years, he was able to marry off his children and establish them in business. A generous man by nature, when the responsibilities of his immediate family became less pressing, he committed himself to pay for the weddings and dowries of his relatives' children.

Suddenly, however, his business affairs took a sharp turn for the worse, he found himself in debt and unable to meet his commitments. Before his financial situation became public knowledge, he hurried to Liozna to receive advice and blessings from the Alter Rebbe.

At his yechidus[private audience], he poured out his heart to the Rebbe, saying that he was prepared to remain impoverished himself, but he needed to pay his debts and honour the commitments that he had made to his relatives.

The Alter Rebbe responded: "You are speaking about what you need. But you have not given a thought to what you are needed for."

The chassid fainted and the Alter Rebbe's attendant had to help him out of the Rebbe's room. When he came to, he began to devote himself to prayer and study, without thinking of his business concerns.

After the chassid had conducted himself in this fashion for some time, the Alter Rebbe sent for him. Standing before the Rebbe, the vision of his previous yechidus came to mind, and he could barely muster the strength to look the Rebbe in the face. This time, however, the Alter Rebbe spoke to him gently: "Now you appreciate G-d's truth.... You can return home...; may G-d grant you success."

The man made his way home and discovered that the gloomy picture he had seen previously could be corrected. A few favourable business moves in the right direction gave him the opportunity to right his financial situation.

The Alter Rebbe gave people a sense of mission, enabling them to see what they were needed for. Commitment to a purpose beyond self empowered them to redefine their sense of self and live fuller and more complete lives. Simultaneously this awareness helped them refine their own character traits.

In our times we would do well to reflect on what we are here for, rather than what we want out of life. This will give our lives a totally different dimension, and perhaps even, as in the case of the wealthy chassid, turn our financial and spiritual states around as well.



An Irish Kid with a Jewish Name

By Tuvia Bolton

I heard this story from the Lubavitcher Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Laibel Groner.

A woman from the Chabad-Lubavitch Community in Brooklyn was pulled over by a N.Y.C. traffic cop for a traffic violation. Standing outside her car and watching her search for her license and registration papers, the police officer caught sight of a picture of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in her purse.

"Excuse me, ma'am," he asked, "are you one of the followers of this Rabbi?"

"Yes," she replied.

"Well, in that case I'm not giving you a ticket." He closed his ticket book and continued, "Do you know why? Because this Rabbi," he pointed to the picture she was now holding in her hand, "did a very big miracle for me."

"Well," said the grateful woman, "since you aren't giving me the ticket, I have time to hear the story."

The policeman smiled and said, "It's my favourite story, but I haven't told it to many Jewish people. In fact I think that you are the first." The cars were whizzing by behind him and he had to raise his voice slightly. "The story goes like this: I used to be in the police escort that once a week escorted the Rabbi to the Montefiore Cemetery (where the Rebbe's father-in-law and predecessor, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, is interred). I got to know some of the young men who accompanied the Rebbe, and I learned a lot of things. They are very friendly people, which you probably already know, and we talked a lot while the Rabbi was inside praying.

"Well, one day I saw that all the fellows there were really talking excitedly to each other so I asked them what happened. So they told me that the Rabbi does a lot of miracles for people, but today he did a miracle that was really something. I didn't even ask what the miracle was that they were talking about, I just asked them if the Rabbi helps non-Jews also.

"Sure," they said, "The Rebbe helps anyone who asks. Why? Do you need something?" So I told them, that me and my wife had been married nine years with no children, and a week ago the doctors told us that we had no chance. We had spent a lot of money on treatments, seen all sorts of big professors, we were running

around like crazy for the last six or seven years, and now they told us that they tried everything and there is no chance. You can't imagine how broken we were. My wife cried all the time and I started crying myself.

"So this young man tells me, 'Listen, the next time that you escort the Rebbe to the cemetery, stand near the door of his car and when he gets out ask him for a blessing.' So that is just what I did. The next time I was in the escort I stood by his door and when he got out I said to him: 'Excuse me, Rabbi, do you only bless Jewish people or non-Jews too?'"

"So the Rabbi looked at me like a good friend, it was really amazing, and said that he tries to help anyone he can. So I told him what the doctors said, and he said I should write down on a piece of paper my name and my father's name together with my wife's and her father's names and that he would pray for us. So I did it. My hands were shaking so much I almost couldn't write, but I did it and you know what? My wife became pregnant and nine months later she gave birth to a baby boy! The doctors went crazy, they couldn't figure it out, and when I told them that it was all the Rabbi's blessing they just scratched their heads and — Wow! I felt like the champion of the world!"

"But here comes the good part. Do you know what we called him? What name we gave our baby boy? Just guess! We called him Mendel after the Rabbi. At first my wife didn't like the name because it's not an American name, but I said, 'No! We're calling him Mendel!' Each time we say his name we'll remember that if it weren't for the Rabbi this boy would not be here.

"But when our parents heard the name they really objected. They said, 'With a name like that, all the kids will think he's a Jew or something and they will call him names and be cruel to him. Why make the kid suffer for no reason?' 'That's just what I want,' I said to them. 'When he comes home and says that the other kids called him names and beat him up because he has a Jewish name, I'll tell him that I want him to learn from those other kids how *not* to behave. They hate the Jews for no reason, but you should love the Jews, you should help the Jews. You just tell them that without that Jewish Rabbi called Mendel you wouldn't be here at all, and then maybe they'll start thinking differently too!'"

The 19th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev is celebrated as the "Rosh Hashanah of Chassidism." It was on this date, in the year 1798, that the founder of Chabad Chassidism, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), was freed from his imprisonment in Czarist Russia. More than a personal liberation, this was a watershed event in the history of Chassidism, heralding a new era in the

revelation of the "inner soul" of Torah.

The public dissemination of teachings of Chassidism had in fact begun two generations earlier. The founder of the Chassidic movement, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760), revealed to his disciples gleanings from the mystical soul of Torah which had previously been the sole province of select Kabbalists in each generation. This work was continued by the Baal Shem Tov's disciple, Rabbi DovBer, the "Maggid of Mezeritch"—who is also deeply connected with the date of the 19th of Kislev: on this day in 1772, 26 years before Rabbi Schneur Zalman's release from prison, the Maggid returned his soul to his Maker. Before his passing, he said to his disciple, Rabbi Schneur Zalman: "this day is our *yomtov* (festival)."

Rabbi Schneur Zalman went much farther than his predecessors, bringing these teachings to broader segments of the Jewish population of Eastern Europe. More significantly, Rabbi Schneur Zalman founded the "Chabad" approach — a philosophy and system of study, meditation, and character refinement that made these abstract concepts rationally comprehensible and practically applicable in daily life.

In its formative years, the Chassidic movement was the object of strong, and often venomous, opposition from establishment rabbis and laymen. Even within the Chassidic community, a number of Rabbi Schneur Zalman's contemporaries and colleagues felt that he had "gone too far" in popularizing the hitherto hidden soul of Torah.

In the fall of 1798, Rabbi Schneur Zalman was arrested on charges that his teachings and activities threatened the imperial authority of the Czar, and was imprisoned in an island fortress in the Neva River in Petersburg. In his interrogations, he was compelled to present to the Czar's ministers the basic tenets of Judaism and explain various points of Chassidic philosophy and practice. After 53 days, he was exonerated of all charges and released.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman saw these events as a reflection of what was transpiring Above. He regarded his arrest as but the earthly echo of a Heavenly indictment against his revelation of the most intimate secrets of the Torah; and he saw his release as signifying his vindication in the Heavenly court. Following his liberation on the 19th of Kislev, he redoubled his efforts, disseminating his teachings on a far broader scale, and with more detailed and "down to earth" explanations than before.

The 19th of Kislev therefore marks the "birth" of Chassidism: the point at which it was allowed to emerge from the womb of "mysticism" into the light of day, to grow and develop as an integral part of Torah and Jewish life.

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ISSUE 907

MOSHIACH MATTERS

"Moshiach signifies the separation of the good from the evil. This is why he will come" only in a generation which is altogether meritorious or altogether sinful," i.e., at a time in which there will be no mixture of good and evil. So as long as Moshiach has not come, there is a mixture of good and evil in all the worlds: there is no good without evil and no evil without good." (Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi)

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



Yud Tes Kislev

Yud Kislev, 5711 [1950]

Greetings and blessings!

"This is a day of glad tidings" and it is drawing near - Tuesday, the nineteenth of Kislev, the day on which the righteous cause of the Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of Chabad Chasidism] (the author of the Tanya and the Shulchan Aruch) was publicly vindicated, together with the righteous cause of the teachings of Chabad Chassidus and the teachings of Chassidus at large.

In a letter dated Yud Kislev, 5710 [1949], two months before his histalkus (passing), my revered father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe, writes: "Studying the teachings of Chassidus is relevant not only to a particular category of Jews; it is an obligation that relates to the entire Jewish people, and to Torah scholars in particular." Chassidim, moreover, have an obligation to actively engage in disseminating the study of Chassidus. This means that such endeavors should be incessant, so that this goal remains central to all one's activities, no matter how peripheral - "just as a man is engaged in his business all day, and not only during the specific times during which it occupies him directly, because it is so meaningful to him; he is involved in it at all hours and at all times."

Elsewhere the [Previous] Rebbe explains at length how the stipulation made by Mashiach, viz., that "the wellsprings (of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings) be disseminated far afield" - is a prelude, a preparation and a vessel for the coming of Mashiach.

This stipulation, which obliges each and every one of us to exert himself to the utmost, comprises three elements:

1. To disseminate: This implies teaching Chassidus over so wide a spectrum that it reaches every part of the environment in which one teaches.
2. The wellsprings: The teachings of Chassidus that one disseminates must retain the characteristics of a maayan (lit., "a wellspring"). A wellspring has two main characteristics:
 - i. its waters are alive, welling forth uninterruptedly from its source;
 - ii. quantity is not what counts: the wellspring at its source yields a mere trickle.

The conditions for the dissemination of these teachings are the same: Quantity is not what counts. What is crucial is that the teaching should be alive with a vitality of the soul and with an inward exuberance, and that it should well forth from its source - from the innermost core of the soul of the person who is disseminating these teachings, whose heart of hearts is bound with the Rebbes of the teachings of Chassidus.

3. Far afield: We should not be satisfied with teaching merely in a study hall or shul; rather, this should also take place when one is traveling or sitting in his store or whatever. Likewise, one's students should not be restricted to certain ideological categories or particular kinds of people. For the simplest of people is also obliged to study the teachings of Chassidus, just as the greatest of the great is unable to plumb its depths.

As to those who are presently beyond all pales of Jewish commitment, even in places that the Torah itself calls far afield, - there, too, the wellsprings must be disseminated.

The merit of our endeavors to disseminate the wellsprings widely will precipitate - and enable us to receive - the blessings which my revered father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe, gave every one of us in preparation for the last Yud-Tes Kislev before his histalkus, and which he is no doubt giving us now, too, in preparation for this Yud-Tes Kislev. He expressed it in the second person, as follows: "May you be blessed by G-d with a good year in the study and dissemination of Chassidus - you, your households, your sons and your daughters (May they all live in the ways of Chassidus!). May you and your families and all those who are close to you be blessed with all your needs both material and spiritual."

With blessings for success in avodah (Divine service) and for all manner of good,

A WORD from the Director

The 19th of the month of Kislev, which occurs this coming week on Sunday, December 6, is the date on which Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the founder of Chabad Chasidut, was liberated from prison. It is also the anniversary of the passing of Rabbi Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezritch, successor of Rabbi Shneur Zalman.

The focal point of the 19th of Kislev is the concept of spreading the wellsprings of Chasidut outward. The "wellsprings," the innermost part of Torah, must not remain at their source, but must flow "outward" and inundate even the lowest parts of the world. Furthermore, not only must the waters of Chasidut be carried everywhere, but the wellsprings themselves must be conveyed to every single Jew, no matter where he or she are. In other words, the 19th of Kislev teaches us the necessity of bringing the life-giving waters of Torah, and particularly the inner part of Torah as expounded in Chasidut, to every Jew.

Known among Chasidim as the Festival of Liberation, the 19th of Kislev always falls out in close proximity to the week when the Torah portion of Vayishlach is read.

"Vayishlach," means "And he sent." A shaliach, an emissary (from the same root as vayishlach), is a person who is dispatched in the sender's stead; moreover, "a person's emissary is just like him." In other words, when an emissary is sent to a certain place to carry out his mission, it is the same as if the sender himself has made the journey.

The concept of Vayishlach also exists in every age. G-d "sends" the soul down from the celestial spheres to be en clothed within a corporeal body, to enable the person to serve G-d within the context of the physical world. This shlichut (mission) began with Adam and Chava (Eve), and is continued by their descendants. In our generation, our role as Jews is to be shlichim and spread the wellsprings of Torah and Judaism wherever we go and to whomever we come in contact with. In particular, with regards to the 19th of Kislev, by doing this we will be continuing the legacy of the Alter Rebbe and all the Chabad Rebbes and helping to bring a time when the wellsprings will be spread everywhere, which will allow for the ultimate Redemption.

J. I. Gutnick

Panim chadashot (new faces) at a Sheva Bracha (seven festive meals held after a wedding).

Joy doesn't increase in a vacuum. Including new people (new faces or *panim chadashot*) increases the delight and excitement. Therefore, to "refresh" the happiness of newlyweds after their wedding, someone who was not at the wedding or any previous *sheva brachot* is invited. If there is not someone new (*panim chadashot*), the *sheva brachot* blessings (special blessings added to the grace after meals) are not recited. On Shabbat and major Jewish holidays, the special quality of the day itself, and the joy it provides, serves as the *panim chadashot*.

Sephardic custom is to invite at least two *panim chadashot* to every *sheva brachot*. Considering that presumably all the close friends of the bride and groom attended the wedding, more often than not the *panim chadashot* are friends of the hosts of the *sheva brachot*. It is not necessary for them to be present for the entire meal; it is fine to invite them for dessert and benching (grace after meals).

It Happened Once...



The black carriage was already waiting. Inside the house, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of the Chabad Chasidic movement, made final preparations before his arrest and imprisonment.

Rabbi Yisrael Kazik, the Rebbe's brother-in-law, managed to exchange a few words with him. "What shall be done?" he asked worriedly. "Travel to Petersburg," the Rebbe answered, "immediately!"

The officer in charge ordered the armed police to surround the Rebbe, who was making his way toward the carriage. The black carriage drove off, leaving the distraught Chasidim behind.

The charges brought against the Rebbe were extremely serious. The government informants claimed that the money the Rebbe sent to Israel in order to strengthen Jewish settlements was actually supporting the Turks, who were, at the time, at war with Russia.

The Rebbe was brought to the prison, but not one chasid knew his whereabouts. There were many prisons in Russia, and it would be dangerous to search through them. The elder Chasidim instructed everyone to pray, and they appointed a committee to be in charge in the meantime.

The Rebbe's brother-in-law didn't waste a minute. Rabbi Yisrael didn't even take time to change out of his Chasidic garb, which he knew could cause him some difficulty in the capital city. As he didn't even have the proper travelling documents with him, which could lead to his own arrest, he borrowed the documents of another chasid, and left.

Meanwhile, in a prison in Petersburg, the Rebbe was interrogated for many hours. His interrogators were impressed by his strength of character and integrity. Deep down they knew that the accusations against the Rebbe were false, but they were bound by the law that did not allow for his release without an investigation.

One day, one of the officers said to the Rebbe, "I would like to do you a favor. What can I do for you?"

The Rebbe requested that his family be informed that he was alive and that he hoped that G-d would soon make his innocence known. The officer readily agreed to his request. He asked, however, how he would be able to contact someone from the Rebbe's family as he didn't know them.

"Before I was brought here," the Rebbe told the guard, "I instructed my brother-in-law, Reb Yisrael Kazik, to travel to Petersburg. He is wearing the traditional Chasidic garb, and he is probably wandering near a prison."

After searching for some time, the guard noticed a Jew who fit the Rebbe's description. When the guard was sure no one was looking, he motioned to the Jew to come over to him. When he asked the Jew, who was Reb Yisrael Kazik, to identify himself, Reb Yisrael identified himself with the name on the documents he had borrowed. The guard accused him of lying and left.

Reb Yisrael figured that the officer wanted to give him a message. After consulting with other Chasidim, he continued to wander through Petersburg in case the guard returned. The guard told the Rebbe of his meeting with a Jew who fit the description, but whose name was not Yisrael Kazik. The Rebbe told the guard to try once more.

The officer again met Reb Yisrael, who identified himself as such. Without exchanging another word, the guard began to walk away, and Reb Yisrael followed him discreetly. They arrived at the guard's home. The guard went inside, and while Reb Yisrael stood outside and wondered what to do next, a

watermelon fell out of a window of the house. Reb Yisrael understood that it was for him, and he quickly picked it up and carried it away.

He brought it home, and in the presence of the elder Chasidim, opened it carefully. Inside the watermelon was a note that read, "Hear O Israel the Lord our G-d the Lord is One." The Rebbe was alive! But they still didn't know where he was being held.

Meanwhile, the Rebbe's health was in danger, because he would not eat the prison food. The warden offered to obtain kosher food for the Rebbe and went to Reb Mordechai of Lipeli, and asked him to prepare kosher food for a Jewish prisoner. Reb Mordechai sensed that this prisoner was the Rebbe, and on the bottom of one of the jars he hid a note that said, "Who is the one eating this, and where is he found?"

The jar was returned, and under a bit of food was a small note written in the Rebbe's handwriting. The Rebbe informed the Chasidim of his situation and where he was being held. The news quickly spread throughout Russia, "The Rebbe is alive and well!"

Eventually the Rebbe was exonerated of all charges and released on the nineteenth of Kislev, which is celebrated as the Festival of Redemption, when the Chasidic movement and the right to disseminate Chasidic philosophy triumphed.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

The remaining camp which is left may escape (Gen. 32:9)

This episode of Jacob and Esau in the Torah hints to the future wanderings of the Jewish people in exile. "The remaining camp which is left may escape" - G-d will never allow Esau to destroy the entire Jewish nation. When one king issues a harsh decree against the Jews, another king, in a different part of the world, will open his country's doors and allow the Jews refuge. (Ramban)

And Jacob came whole to the city of Shechem (Gen. 33:18)

Rashi explains this to mean that Jacob was sound in body, his wealth was intact, and his Torah-observance was uncompromised. We learn from Jacob to always strive for excellence in all areas of our lives. Even a person whose primary path in the worship of G-d is through practical mitzvot - charity and good deeds - should also strive to be perfect in study. (Likutei Sichot)

Save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau (Gen. 32:12)

Jacob feared two things: The "hand of Esau" - Esau's sword, and "the hand of my brother" - the hand of friendship Esau would extend toward him. Fraternalizing with Esau more than necessary worried Jacob even more than the physical threat he posed. Esau's might threatened Jacob's body, but the other put Jacob's soul in danger. (Rabbi Yosef-Ber of Brisk)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS VAYISHLACH 18 KISLEV • 5 DECEMBER

| | | |
|------------------|----------------------|----------|
| FRIDAY NIGHT: | CANDLE LIGHTING: | 8:10 PM |
| | MINCHA: | 8:20 PM |
| | KABBOLAS SHABBOS : | 8:55 PM |
| SHABBOS MORNING: | SHACHARIS: | 10:00 AM |
| | MINCHA: | 8:10 PM |
| | SHABBOS ENDS: | 9:16 PM |
| WEEKDAYS: | SHACHARIS: SUN- FRI: | 9:15 AM |
| | MINCHA: | 8:20 PM |
| | MAARIV: | 9:15 PM |

CANDLE LIGHTING: 4 DECEMBER 2009



| Begins | Ends |
|-----------------------------|------|
| 8:10 MELBOURNE | 9:16 |
| 7:58 ADELAIDE | 9:01 |
| 6:13 BRISBANE | 7:11 |
| 6:43 DARWIN | 7:36 |
| 6:12 GOLD COAST | 7:11 |
| 6:52 PERTH | 7:52 |
| 7:35 SYDNEY | 8:37 |
| 7:47 CANBERRA | 8:50 |
| 8:14 LAUNCESTON | 9:25 |
| 8:09 AUCKLAND | 9:13 |
| 8:22 WELLINGTON | 9:31 |

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

זצוקללה"נ נב"מ ז"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.