



**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

TORAH WEEKLY

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Parshat Vayishlach

26 November -

2 December, 2017

8 - 14 Kislev, 5778

Torah:

Genesis 32:4 - 36:43

Haftorah:

Obadiah 1:1 - 21

■ CALENDARS

We have Jewish Calendars, if you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask your Rabbi / Chaplain to contact us.

■ CHANUKAH GELT

Please ask the chaplain for the 'Chanukah Gelt Form'.

Your children will receive Chanukah Gelt from you.

Happy Chanukah!

■ FAST OF TEVET-

The fast of 10th Tevet (12/28/2017) is fast approaching, please send in the necessary paperwork to the chaplain and food service so you receive the bag lunch. The Abarbanel writes, if the 10th of Tevet would be a Shabbat, we would be required to fast!

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THE GOLDEN TICKET

If you won the lottery, what would you do? A new home? A dream vacation? Perhaps a charity you've always wanted to create? We all have dreams and wishes that would easily be realized if only we'd just hit that good ol' jackpot. Most of us wish we would.

But there was one man who had this wish more than you or me. He'd pray three times a day, every day, asking God to let him win the lottery. He'd dream about it at night. He'd dream about it during the day! He even opened up a special bank account in anticipation, and called it the "lottery account."

Once, during his prayers, his longing for the winning ticket became too much for him and he broke down crying. "Please God!" he cried, "Just once! Just once I'd like to win the lottery and that's all I ask. Is that too much bro ask from Almighty God??"

The angels on high saw this man's bitter tears, and they asked God, "Why can't he just have his wish? Look and see how badly he wants it!"

"I'd love to let him win!" Answered God, "I'm waiting for him to buy a ticket!"

The power of prayer is widely recognized, amongst almost all religions, as a source for many good things.

Some we see it at the ticket to God's blessings. But it is not. When Yaakov was preparing to meet his dangerous brother, Eisav, he also turned to God in prayer. He beseeched God to protect him and his entire family from the possibility that Eisav was still angry about the "stolen blessings" and would attempt to take revenge in the form of a physical attack. This fear was only reinforced, when he was informed that Eisav was indeed marching towards him along with a troop of 400 men. But Yaakov knew that prayer alone is not enough. He knew he had to do something more, he had to take action. He had to buy the ticket.

He divided his family and belongings into two camps, reasoning that if one camp were be attacked, the second would be able to flee while the first waged battle. Our blessings come not through the work of our hands alone, but through the blessing of God. We cannot just sit back though, and trust that God's blessings will fall into our laps. Our job is to create the vessel into which and through which God may transmit his plentiful graces.

We plant the seeds, God makes the produce grow. We make business proposals, God turns them into reality. We do ours, and God will do His. We have but to ask.

By Rabbi Nissan Friedman

COVERING ALL THE BASES

As our patriarch Yaakov traveled with his family back to his hometown, he knew with certainty that his brother Eisav would be waiting for him. He sent messengers ahead to scout out the situation, and they returned with the grim report that Eisav was indeed anticipating Yaakov's return. He was even coming towards them to "greet" his brother, along with 400 men armed to the teeth.

Yaakov and his family prepared for this encounter in three ways. First, he put together a large gift of cattle, herds of sheep, goats and servants. He instructed the messengers who were to present the gift to Eisav to place a gap between each herd in order to make the gift seem even larger than it was. He hoped that in this way he might appease his brother, and avoid having to confront any hostility when they would finally meet.

The second thing Yaakov did was prepare his family for war. In the event that the gift would not defuse the rage of his violent twin brother, his family would be divided into separate camps so that if one group were attacked and plunged into war, the rest of the family could escape.

The third thing he did in preparation for this

fateful moment was what every believing person would do. He turned to God in prayer. He prayed to God to protect his family from the hand of Eisav and his band of thugs.

By doing these three things Yaakov had covered all of his bases. The three modes of preparation represent the attributes of Chesed, Gevurah and Tiferes - Kindness, Force and Mercy. He felt that any of these three on its own would not suffice; Just a gift, kindness? There was a very slim chance of appeasing the man who had been planning to kill him for two decades. Just force, was not a great option as Yaakov and his family were no match for Eisav and his soldiers. And just prayer, relying on God's mercy? Yaakov felt that he was not worthy enough of God's miracles.

But by combining all three of these attributes, Yaakov was confident that he had done everything he could and could then leave the rest up to God.

This strategy worked well for Yaakov and, like all things in the Torah, serves as a lifelong lesson for all future generations.

Eisav and Yaakov, respectively, represent body and soul. Eisav was the embodiment of all things worldly, and Yaakov was the spiritual one, always on task making the world more Godly.

Every person possesses their own spark of Yaakov, the Jewish soul which pushes us to do our part in the betterment of society.

But we are often obstructed by the world around us, indeed very often by the effect the world may have had inside of us as well. We have self imposed inferiorities which make us feel unworthy, outside influences which seek to prevent us from fulfilling our tasks, and an overwhelming sense of despair when approaching the daunting task of effecting our surroundings and improving our personal lives.

If we approach the task with Yaakov's three pronged method, it can work for us as well.

Kindness; be kind to yourself. This means realizing and remembering that we are all a part of God and intrinsically good, regardless of the mistakes we've made or people we have hurt in the process. Deep down there is, was, and always will be the essential goodness that we try to project.

Apply force; at the same time be strong and uncompromising. We have standards that need to be upheld, goals that need to be met and imperfections that need to be improved.

Last but not least, prayer: Never give up on yourself. We are never alone in the fight against evil. God is on our side, and He surely answers the prayers of those who turn to Him for help. When we commit to making it right, He assists us in doing just that and accomplishing is necessary.

He will help us, guide us and lead us to a place of positivity and success in overcoming our personal Eisav and all that he represents. .

By Rabbi Nissan Friedman

In Jewish History

Monday, 9 Kislev, 5778 - November 27, 2017

Birth & Passing of R. Dovber of Lubavitch (1773; 1827)

Kislev 9 is both the birthday and day of passing of Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, son of and successor to the founder of Chabad Chassidism, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. Rabbi DovBer was known for his unique style of "broadening rivers" -- his teachings were the intellectual rivers to his father's wellspring, lending breadth and depth to the principles set down by Rabbi Schneur Zalman.

Born in Li'ozna, White Russia in 1773, Rabbi DovBer was named after Rabbi Schneur Zalman's mentor and teacher, Rabbi DovBer of Mezeritch, who had passed away on Kislev 19 of the previous year. Rabbi DovBer assumed the leadership of Chabad upon his father's passing in 1812. In 1813 he settled in the town of Lubavitch, which was to serve as the movement's headquarters for the next 102 years. In 1826, he was arrested on charges that his teachings threatened the imperial authority of the Czar, but was subsequently exonerated.

Rabbi DovBer passed away on his 54th birthday in 1827, a day before the first anniversary of his liberation (see calendar entries for tomorrow, Kislev 10).

Tuesday, 10 Kislev, 5778 - November 28, 2017

Liberation of R. DovBer (1826)

In 1826, Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch (see above, Kislev 9) was arrested on charges that his teachings threatened the imperial authority of the Czar, but was subsequently exonerated. The date of his release, Kislev 10, is celebrated amongst Chabad Chassidim as a "festival of liberation." Tachnun (confession of sins) is omitted from the day's prayers, farbrengens are held, and Rabbi DovBer's teachings are studied.

Shabbat, 14 Kislev, 5778 - December 2, 2017

Rebbe's Marraige

On the 14th of Kislev, 1928, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, married Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneersohn (1901-1988), the middle daughter of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (1880-1950), the sixth Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch. The wedding was held in Warsaw, Poland, at the Lubavitcher Yeshivah, Tomchei Temimim.

Upon Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's passing in 1950, Rabbi Menachem Mendel succeeded his father-in-law as the Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch. On the 14th of Kislev of 1953, at a farbrengen (Chassidic gathering) marking his 25th wedding anniversary, the Rebbe said to his Chassidim: "This is the day that bound me to you, and you to me."