

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 188

**Vayetze** | Consistency - the Secret of Holiness and Success

# MESILOT

## *Pathways to the Soul*

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly Parsha  
of **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel Zt"l**

From the weekly lessons of his son  
**Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita**

# ...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Writer's Block . . . . .	1
Yaakov Wished to Reveal the End of Days . . .	2
The Refinement Process Through Generations . . .	3
The Dawn of Moshiach - At Anytime . . . . .	6
The Undying Faith in Moshiach . . . . .	11
King David Was Not at Peace . . . . .	13
The Answers of the Mesharim Maggid . . . . .	14
The Holy Sparks Hidden in Esav . . . . .	16
Yaakov Rectifying 64 Sparks . . . . .	17
Yaakov Paves the Path for His Children . . . . .	19
Consistency in Life's Conduct . . . . .	21
Join the Battle . . . . .	22
David Flees On A Mission of Refinement . . .	24
Summary and Practical Conclusions . . . . .	26



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## Parshat Vayetze

### Writer's Block

The pencil grew shorter and shorter. Yossi's strong teeth chewed on it incessantly. As he continued to chew, memories began to surface.

It was about a year ago. The gabbai of the neighborhood synagogue announced a lecture to be given by a renowned rabbi. Yossi was curious and came to listen.

In the lecture, the rabbi explained the meaning of the words in the blessings over the Torah that we recite every day. He focused his talk on the words: "Who has chosen us from among all nations and given us His Torah."

With wonderful elaboration and eloquence, he elevated the stature of those who study the Torah. He explained that through daily Torah study, one merits to connect and bond with the Holy One, blessed be He - the Giver of the Torah.

"We must understand," the rabbi continued, "that the Holy

One has given each and every Jew a portion in His Torah - a portion unique to him, one that only he can attain and reveal to the world.

"Therefore, every Jew has the obligation to strive to uncover his unique portion in the Torah.

"The journey of revealing Torah insights begins with getting into the habit of writing a few lines of Torah thoughts every day. Through consistent writing, the inner wellspring of the soul will begin to awaken within him."

Yossi left the lecture inspired, and for several days, he walked around under the lecture's spell until he decided to take action: "Every night before going to sleep (except for Shabbat, when writing is forbidden), I will write at least 20 lines of original Torah thoughts."

For an entire year, he upheld this commitment; every night, he managed to write - every night, until tonight.

**Parshat Vayetze - Yaakov Wished to Reveal the End of Days**

All day he was very preoccupied with various endeavors and couldn't find time to study anything. He tried to focus his thoughts but to no avail. "I have nothing to write," he concluded in despair.

His thoughts continued to bounce around in his mind. "Not

long ago, I read about a father who appeared to his son and taught him Torah. Maybe I, too, will merit such an experience? Maybe someone will appear to me and tell me what to write?

His hands instinctively reached out to the Chumash beside him and opened it.

**Yaakov Wished to Reveal the End of Days**

The Chumash opened to the first verse of Parshat Vayeichi: "And Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; and the days of Yaakov, the years of his life, were a hundred forty and seven years" (Bereshit 47:28).

Rashi comments:

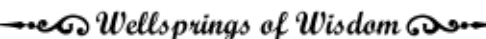
"And Yaakov lived" - "Why is this section of the Torah closed (beginning without the usual opening space)? Because he sought to reveal the end of days to his sons, but it was concealed from him."

Yossi closed his eyes and let his imagination soar.

For seventeen years, our forefather Yaakov lived in Egypt. The Torah describes these years briefly: "And Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years."

During those wonderful years, Yaakov ascended greatly in his spiritual service and devotion to G-d, and then, one clear day, Yaakov suddenly felt a new sensation, one that he had never experienced before; A supreme and lofty spiritual light filled his entire being.<sup>1</sup>

Yaakov understood that the day of his passing had come.



1. See at length in the Zohar ('Vayeichi', 218b).

**Parshat Vayetze - The Refinement Process Through Generations**

Since his final day had arrived, he wished to instruct his sons, so he sent a messenger to gather them all together.

All twelve of his sons, the twelve tribes of Israel, stood around his bed and waited.

Yaakov surveyed them with his eyes and began to speak: "My righteous sons, I wish to reveal to you the final end of days; please listen carefully."

Suddenly, like a black curtain descended before him and the revelation was concealed from him.

Yaakov was shaken. "Why has the secret been suddenly hidden from me? Could it be because one of you is wicked?"

The Talmud (Pesachim 56a) says:

"And Yaakov called unto his sons and said: Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you' (Bereshit 49:1). Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: Yaakov wished to reveal to his sons the end of days,

but the Shechinah departed from him. He said, 'Perhaps, Heaven forbid, there is someone unfit among my offspring, like Avraham who fathered Ishmael, or my father Yitzchak who fathered Esav.'

His sons said to him in unison: 'Hear, Israel, the L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is one' - 'Just as there is only One G-d in your heart, so too is in our hearts.'

At that moment, Yaakov said: 'Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever.'

Yossi's thoughts were in disarray: "I don't understand. Of what benefit is there in revealing the time in which the end of days would occur? Why is it so important to reveal ?

"Additionally, why did Yaakov suspect his sons were wicked like Ishmael and Esav? Does being unworthy of knowing the end prove that someone is wicked?"

**The Refinement Process Through Generations**

Suddenly, he remembered what he had once read about

the refinement process of the world:

When it arose in G-d's will to create the world, He did so in six days through ten utterances. On the first day, He said two utterances: "In the beginning" (Bereshit 1:1), as well as "And G-d said: Let there be light" (Bereshit 1:3); On the second day, He said: "Let there be a firmament" (Bereshit 1:6), separating the heavens from the earth, and also creating the angels.

In the subsequent days, He created all of existence as we know it - plants, animals, and humans. All of the creatures He created, He made in their ultimate stature and at the peak of their strength.<sup>2</sup> He also created Adam, the first man, in complete perfection<sup>3</sup> - pure goodness without any evil. Moreover, He implanted within

him an all-encompassing soul that included all the souls of the people of Israel. He showed him<sup>4</sup> all the generations that would descend from him - "each generation and its scholars, each generation and its sages, each generation and its leaders," and placed him within the Garden of Eden to work it and guard it.

However, following the sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the holy souls that Adam contained fell into the realm of impurity, and within all souls, good and evil now became mixed and intertwined.

From that point on, the task of extracting the good from the evil began.<sup>5</sup>

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### *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

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**2.** To quote the Talmud ('Rosh Hashanah' 11a):

"Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said, all the acts of Creation were created in their full stature, with their consent, in their full form."

**3.** G-d created them with bodies of twenty-year-olds. As the Midrash says: Rabbi Yochanan said, "Adam and Eve were created as twenty-year-olds."

**4.** Bereshit Rabbah (24:2).

**5.** As the Ohr HaChaim writes (Numbers 16:1):

"When G-d created man, He created one seedling in which all branches of holiness were included. When he sinned and became blemished, all the souls dependent on him became blemished, and all that came forth from him were blemished."

Following the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, when all souls became mixed together with one another, it took 1,948 years until our forefather Avraham arrived and stood firm in all the tests G-d gave him, and through his divine service, merited to begin the process of refinement.

The evil parted and emerged in Ishmael, while the good emerged in Yitzchak. Yitzchak married Rebecca, daughter of the wicked Bethuel and sister of the deceitful Laban, and they had two sons - Yaakov and Esav; the good emerged and was embodied in Yaakov, and the evil in Esav.

Meanwhile, in distant Haran, the work of refinement continued. Laban had two daughters, Leah and Rachel; the good emerged in Rachel, and the other part in Leah.

In those generations, even hidden matters were known<sup>6</sup> and knowing of this division, people declared (Bava Batra 123a): "Rebecca has two sons (Esav and Yaakov), and Laban has two daughters (Leah and Rachel); the elder to the elder and the younger to the younger."

Esav heard this and began planning his wedding with Leah. The rumor eventually reached far-off Haran. Leah began to inquire about her intended groom, what she heard about him was enough to tear her heart into tiny pieces.

She rose from her place, went out to the fields, and poured out her soul before G-d with sincere prayers from the depths of her heart and with a torrential rain of tears.

For many years she wept and cried, and G-d, from His abode,

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*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

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Until the soul of our father Abraham emerged and was purified through the ten trials, clearing the impurity of Ishmael.

The soul of Isaac emerged and was purified at the Binding, clarifying the impurity of the intensity of fire - that is Esau, and the soul of Jacob emerged without any blemish.

This is what our Rabbis of blessed memory allude to in their saying ('Bava Metzia' 84a):

"The countenance of Jacob, our forefather, was like that of Adam HaRishon,' meaning, there was no impurity in him, like Adam before he had sinned."

**6.** 'Agra D'Kala' ('Parshat Vayetzei').

**Parshat Vayetze - The Dawn of Moshiach - At Anytime**

counted her tears and placed them in His treasury.

Ultimately, she succeeded in purifying her soul from all evil, elevating it to the heights of the loftiest world of Atzilut, and merited to marry Yaakov even before her sister Rachel.

However, despite all her weeping and prayers, she could not purify herself from the thoughts

that he had about her. They had left an impression, and she could not cleanse herself from them.

Yossi finished writing his thoughts and looked at his notebook. "Thank G-d, I've written for almost half an hour about the process of refinement in creation, but can this help me understand better the revelation of the end of days that Yaakov wished to reveal to his sons ?

**The Dawn of Moshiach - At Anytime**

The next day, after praying Shacharit, Yossi donned his Rabbeinu Tam tefillin and sat to learn a Torah book that was placed nearby, and began to read:

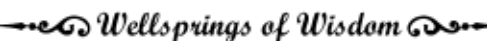
Exile is likened to a dark night, and the ultimate redemption to the great light of day. The Chafetz Chaim shared the following parable using this illustration:<sup>7</sup>

A farmer decided to travel to see the big city for the first time in his life. He took his bundle and savings and made his way to the

nearby train station. Anxiously, he boarded the carriage and looked around in embarrassment at the sophisticated passengers who were traveling across the country.

The engine whistled, and the train sped on its journey. The farmer watched as fields and meadows flew by at lightning speed.

In the carriage sat a group of revelers who winked at each other, hinting to the farmer, who was clearly on his first train ride. They decided to have fun at his expense.



7. The Passover Haggadah - The Chofetz Chaim (page 370), by Rabbi Wallach.

Parshat Vayetze - The Dawn of Moshiach - At Anytime

With broad smiles, they approached him and asked, "Friend, where are you headed?"

"I am traveling to the big city," replied the farmer with importance.

Immediately, they all feigned astonishment and replied, "To the big city? Like this? In these clothes, dressed as a simple farmer? You'll be a laughingstock there."

Embarrassed, he said, "I have more formal attire, but I packed it away in my bundle at my feet. They laughed and continued, "With your clothes, no one will even rent you a room."

His embarrassment grew. He trusted the group of fellow travelers and asked, "Please, give me advice - what should I do?"

They told him, "No problem at all. In just a moment, the train will enter a dark tunnel. Now, untie your bundle and take out your

formal clothes, and when the train enters the tunnel, quickly remove your clothes and put on the formal ones under the cover of darkness."

He heeded their advice. He untied his bundle and took out his nice clothes. Just as they said, the train entered the dark tunnel, and he hurried to change.

But alas, within just a few fleeting moments, the train emerged from the tunnel, and the embarrassed farmer stood in the middle of the carriage, without clothing, to the roaring laughter of the revelers.

"Do you understand?" continued the Chafetz Chaim.

This world is like the night. Soon, Moshiach will come, and redemption will dawn upon us like a great light.<sup>8</sup> Then, we will be frozen in our current spiritual condition and state - "and the years

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*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

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**8.** The following tale illustrates our imminent belief and hope for the coming of Moshiach:

The exile was in full force. The darkness was great all around.

Judaism in the diaspora was wallowing in its blood, sinking in the depths of its troubles: hatred, persecution, blood libels, expulsions, and the Inquisition - and this is only a small part of the list.

**Parshat Vayetze - The Dawn of Moshiach - At Anytime**

In the heavens, G-d took from among the treasury of souls a pure and clean soul, as clear as the heavens, and sent it down into the world to illuminate the dark world with wondrous light for his generation and future generations.

It was nighttime in the great city of Poznań in Poland. Its dark streets were cloaked by a mantle of tranquility. A fragrant spring mist spread over the city, and within the dwellings of the Jewish quarter, the Festival of Matzot had spread its wings, ushering in the sacred garb of freedom.

Hearts were stirred, and for a moment, all forgot their misery and poverty, in hope for the future.

"Now we are here; next year in the land of Israel. Now we are slaves; next year free people."

A gentile - filled with ancient Jew-hatred - treaded quietly and carefully through dark alleys, burdened by mud. Dark ideas and abomination filled his heart, and on his back was a thick sack hiding a victim - a murdered Christian child.

A cruel and despicable blood libel had been woven in secret, soon to emerge like a wild beast thirsty for blood, eager to devour.

He stepped stealthily through the Jewish streets until he reached the house of Rabbi Betzalel. There, inside the cellar, he planned to place the child's corpse. This would cause quite an unhappy holiday for the Jews.

The police would be summoned to search for the missing child until the corpse would be "found," and the Jews will be accused of using his blood to knead the matzot.

Sweet, enthusiastic melodies emanated from Rabbi Betzalel's house.

The gentile, having drunk a large cup of vodka to steady his nerves, thought gleefully - "Sing, sing while you can."

Suddenly, Rabbi Betzalel's house was startled; premature labor pains seized his wife during the Seder night. She began writhing in severe pain, and terrible cries emerged from her throat. The joy of the festival was interrupted; there was a commotion in the house.

Alarmed and excited, people rushed to call a midwife. The street was agitated with calls and cries. The gentile saw this and was terrified: His secret had been discovered. They were surely running to catch him, despite the warnings from his accomplices to be cautious lest he bring disaster upon himself and them. He had been careful, but now these Jewish devils - how had they discovered his plan?

He turned and began to flee. He ran, the sack swaying on his shoulder, pounding on his back. Behind him, they continued to chase. It seemed they were about to catch him; his eyes blurred, and his legs faltered.

He had already left the Jewish quarter, entering gardens and fields, but the footsteps of his pursuers echoed in his ears, spurring him on.

**Parshat Vayetze - The Dawn of Moshiach - At Anytime**

The city guards were alerted: "It's a thief, catch him!"

He was caught, and heavy, bony hands seized the sack. He struggled, raged, took blows, and hit back until he was overpowered. He collapsed and was taken away to the police. There he cursed and swore about "the scoundrels who hired him, enticing him to harm the hated Jews," but he claimed that he hadn't lifted a finger in this plot.

The next day, news spread in the city about the great salvation - the L-rd had performed a miracle for His people through His small messenger, the newborn son of Rabbi Betzalel's wife, who hurried to be born in the seventh month to save the Jewish people.

The father's heart swelled with joyful trembling over the miraculous salvation and he said, "This little one will be great, and he will comfort us from our sorrow."

They named him Yehudah Lowe (Aryeh) - and he became famous in his generation and for all generations he is known as the Maharal of Prague.

The year was 5272 (1512 CE). The terrifying state of the Jewish people in exile accompanied the Maharal from birth; he breathed it in his childhood, was satiated with its bitterness in his youth, and it irritated his heart and mind until old age.

It was midnight. Young Lowe lay in bed with his brother Shimshon. Iron shutters locked the windows securely, and darkness filled the room.

Beyond the wall, his mother's deep sigh broke the heart. Echoing her, his father, Rabbi Betzalel, responded, "It is known that Esau hates Jacob, and in every generation, they rise against us to destroy us, but the Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hand in His great kindness."

The mother replied, "Why did we escape from the lands west of here, to come to Prague? We were poor there and have not become rich here.

As for the Jew-haters - they are here just as they were there: Troubles, decrees, and blood libels.

You know," she continued, "yesterday a gentile threw a stone at Yitzchak, our neighbor's child, injuring his head. Lowe saw and rushed to defend him, throwing big stones back at the gentile. It's a miracle that I noticed and pulled him into the house by force; we don't need trouble.

"Lowe didn't understand why I brought him in: the gentile neighbor always provokes us, and throws stones at us. He needs to be taught a lesson.

"I didn't know what to tell him. How can I explain that in the eyes of the authorities, Jewish blood is cheap, while a drop of a gentile child's blood is invaluable?"

Rabbi Betzalel responded, "Let's leave the calculations to G-d; it's not for us to delve into His ways. G-d will run His world as He sees fit, and it's upon us only to hope for salvation, as it says, 'I have hoped for Your salvation, G-d' (Bereshit 49:18)."

## Parshat Vayetze - The Dawn of Moshiach - At Anytime

Lowe lay awake in the dark room, absorbing as much of the conversation as he could. He pressed against his sleeping brother Shimshon. His young heart tightened with fear and anger. His mind could not reconcile the questions that his heart pondered: "Why do the gentiles cause trouble for the Jews? What have the Jews done to them? Why doesn't G-d take revenge on the wicked gentiles? And why hasn't Moshiach come yet?"

He asked his mother all this, but she sent him to his father for answers. His father said that a small child could not yet understand all this; it was all explained in the Torah - in the big books on the many shelves.

How vast and expansive was the Torah, could it all be learned someday?

It seemed his father was avoiding answering. Why didn't he want to tell him? Why couldn't he understand all this?

He had heard the teacher tell his father, "Your son has a good head, he understands everything told to him, and his questions and answers are remarkably sharp."

The teacher told his father about a question Lowe had asked regarding Rashi's commentary on the verse "And the children struggled within her" (Bereshit 25:22), explaining that when Rebecca passed by houses of study, Jacob would run to exit, and when she passed by houses of idolatry, Esau would run to exit. "One can understand that Jacob didn't exit first, because Esau, who was positioned before

him in the womb, prevented him. But why didn't Esau exit first? Who held him back?"

The teacher laughed and, while pinching his cheek, said, "Indeed, a great question you've asked, my son. What answer do you think can be given?"

"I think," Lowe replied, "that Esau didn't want to come out alone without Jacob. Whom would he hit if Jacob weren't with him? At whom would he throw stones? Here in the womb, he can at least give Jacob a good kicking."

The teacher looked at him in great wonder, without saying a word.

"But, Rabbi," Lowe asked, "why do the gentiles always hate the Jews? What did the Jews ever do to them? And why doesn't Moshiach come to avenge our disgrace from the gentiles and return the Land of Israel to us?"

The teacher answered similarly to his father: "When you grow up and study a lot, you'll understand all of this."

Indeed, he wished to grow up, to study all the big books, and to understand everything. His mother had told him about important people who tried to bring Moshiach but didn't succeed.

He was sure that he would study enough to know what to do to bring Moshiach. He would do all of that, and Moshiach would surely come.

(*'Maharal of Prague'* (page 7), by Rabbi Ben Zion Gershoni).

**Parshat Vayetze - The Undying Faith in Moshiach**

will draw near when you will say, 'I have no pleasure in them'" (Kohelet 12:1) - These are the days of Moshiach, in which there is neither merit nor obligation (Shabbat 151b).

We think this current tunnel we're passing through will last a long time, giving us time to change our "farmer's clothes" into clean garments, to fully repent and acquire Torah and mitzvot. But what will we do if suddenly the light shines, and we're caught in our nakedness, poverty, and lowliness?

We will then become a laughingstock to all, like fools and simpletons, and like ignorant farmers.

Therefore, we have the obligation to fulfill the verse: "At all times, let your garments be white" (Kohelet 9:8) - we must board the train in formal clothes and be ready.

Yossi closed the book and thought to himself, "How do we 'wear formal clothes' in readiness for the redemption and coming of Moshiach?"

**The Undying Faith in Moshiach**

Yossi left the synagogue and went to talk over his questions with his rabbi. When he arrived, he saw him bent over a book, his forehead furrowed with wrinkles.

The rabbi looked up and saw Yossi. "It's good you came," he

said. "I'm studying a Midrash,<sup>9</sup> and trying to comprehend it. Perhaps you can assist me in figuring it out."

"As you know, at the beginning of Parshat Toldot, it's mentioned that after many years Yitzchak and Rebecca merited to have children - a pair of twins.

*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

9. 'Bereshit Rabbah', 63:9, to quote:

"'And afterward his brother emerged' - a certain governor asked one of those from the House of Saloni, 'Who will seize the kingdom after us?' (Meaning, can

anyone possibly take over the kingdom after us?)

He brought a blank paper, took a quill, and wrote: 'After that, his brother came out, with his hand grasping the heel' (Bereshit 25:26)."

**Parshat Vayetze - The Undying Faith in Moshiach**

"The first son was born hairy and red, who they named Esav.

The second son was born holding onto his brother's heel, and they named him Yaakov - 'After that, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esav's heel; so he was named Yaakov' (Bereshit 25:26).

These twins grew, and over the years, two great nations emerged from them: Israel - from Yaakov, and Edom - from Esav.

Edom's roots and lineage is from Esav (who lived at the beginning of the third millennium from Creation), their dominion began only hundreds of years later at the end of the Second Temple period (mid-fourth millennium) and peaked following the Temple's destruction.

In the year 3828 from Creation, the Second Temple was destroyed, and the Romans devastated almost all of the Land of Israel.

Despite all the pain and sorrow, great destruction, and desolation, the Jewish people did

not despair and continued to hope for redemption. The Romans couldn't comprehend this hope and faith at all.

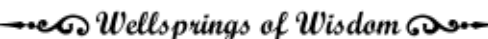
Rabbi Chaim Pessachowitz writes on this phenomenon:<sup>10</sup>

The Roman army heard that in a small village, some Jews had evaded paying taxes, and they went to that village and captured its inhabitants.

On the way back, the Romans decided to display their power. Hundreds of Roman soldiers, clad in armor and gleaming spears, rode noble horses through the streets of the cities they passed. The sun's rays reflected off the metal swords, and the beams of light added splendor and glory to the soldiers.

On the sides of the road trudged groups of the captured Jews, bent and miserable, thick iron chains around their necks.

Into this dreadful procession stumbled a local Jewish scholar. Seeing this horrifying sight, he



10. 'Divrei Chefetz', p. 270.

**Parshat Vayetze - King David Was Not at Peace**

tried to slip away, but before he could do so, a Roman philosopher who stood beside him tugged at his sleeve and mockingly said:

'Look and see with your own eyes the greatness we possess. Do you still await your Moshiach?'

The young man heard his words and appeared with a blank page on which wrote: 'After that, his brother came out, with his hand grasping the heel' (Bereshit 25:26). The Midrash concludes

that the philosopher was greatly impressed by the answer.

I don't understand," the rabbi continued, sharing his thoughts with Yossi. Why did the Jewish scholar omit the last word - 'Esav' when he wrote his answer "...grasping the heel"?"

Yossi looked at the rabbi and said, "Rabbi, I came with my own questions, and now you've added to them another?"

The rabbi smiled, "In fact I have one more question for you."

**King David Was Not at Peace**

The book of Samuel mentions that Saul tried to kill David multiple times but did not succeed.

The last time he attempted to do so was following the betrayal of the Ziphites. As it is stated:

"And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, 'Does David not hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, before Jeshimon?' Then Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having chosen three thousand men of

Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph" (I Samuel 26:1-2).

During the search, night fell, and Saul and his men fell asleep. David seized the opportunity and stealthily approached Saul: "David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's head; and they escaped, and no one saw it, nor knew it, nor did any awake; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from G-d had fallen upon them" (I Samuel 26:12).

**Parshat Vayetze - The Answers of the Mesharim Maggid**

After distancing himself, he raised his voice and said to Saul:

"Why does my lord pursue after his servant? What have I done, and what evil is in my hand?" (I Samuel 26:18).

Indeed, following this incident, Saul informed David that he would no longer pursue him, as it is said:

"Then said Saul, 'I have sinned; return, my son David, for I will no more do you harm, because my soul was precious in your eyes this day. Behold, I have been foolish and have erred exceedingly'" (I Samuel 26:21).

Seemingly, if everything was resolved, David should have returned home in peace and resolved their ongoing quarrel.

**The Answers of the Mesharim Maggid**

It is known that the Beit Yosef had a "Maggid" - an angel from heaven who taught him Torah. The Beit Yosef merited this due to his dedicated study of the Mishnah.

The Beit Yosef immersed himself constantly in the 526

Yet, surprisingly, David's reaction was quite different: "David said in his heart, 'I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me than to escape into the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will despair of seeking me anymore within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape out of his hand'" (I Samuel 27:1).

We need to understand why David described his situation as "There is nothing better for me."

Yossi looked at the Rabbi and said, "Rabbi. I have nothing to say, so many questions. When will we finally hear some answers?"

The Rabbi replied, "Soon I will offer some answers. But first, some final points to consider."

chapters of Mishnah and continuously, both in speech and thought, memorized them with devotion and purity for the sake of Heaven.

As a result, he merited that an angel revealed secrets of the Torah to him, a small portion of

**Parshat Vayetze - The Answers of the Mesharim Maggid**

which he revealed and wrote in 'Maggid Meisharim'.

Similarly, in the previous generation, Rabbi Yitzchak Tzvi Bernfeld merited a similar experience.

At the age of seven, he committed to studying four Mishnayot every day.

By the time he was fifteen, he had committed to studying every day eighteen chapters of Mishnah, as well as learning the entire tractate Makkot of the Talmud with the commentaries of Rashi and Tosafot. This in addition to his other Torah study schedules, and he merited to complete tractate Makkot more than fifteen thousand times during his lifetime.

Then, at the age of 21, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of Elul 5698, he merited a revelation of an angel from heaven (who he termed the "Maggid").

He wrote about his experiences in 'Mesharim Maggid' (Parshat Nitzavim):

"On the night of the 27<sup>th</sup> of Elul 5698, the eve of Friday,

Parshat Nitzavim, in the study hall of my grandfather in my hometown of Topolcany, while I was studying Mishnah after midnight with my childhood friend Mordechai, son of Shalom HaCohen Tzedek, in the middle of the third chapter of tractate Menachot, an old man appeared to us, resembling a poor person.

We greeted him and he returned the greeting. Soon afterward, my friend went out and did not return.

"I was in awe of the appearance of his face, which shone like fiery torches, and I asked him if I could bring him something to 'revive his soul', thinking he might be hungry, or if I should arrange a place for him to sleep. He replied, 'Know that I have come because you study eighteen chapters of Mishnah every day, and it has made an impression above in Heaven. They have sent me to bless you and to teach you from time to time; but be sure to strengthen yourself and complete the daily Mishnah as before.'

"I was overwhelmed by the holiness of his countenance and could not utter a word, only weeping

like an infant in his mother's arms. My whole body trembled the entire time he was in the study hall, and I barely spoke. My soul was distressed that my friend had left me, for a reason I didn't know."

Then the Maggid told him, "Prepare yourself, for soon you will merit to ascend to the Land of Israel."

After he moved to the Land, the terrible Holocaust broke out in all its might.

The Maggid told him at a later time (Parshat Chukat):

### **The Holy Sparks Hidden in Esav**

Due to the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, the souls became intermixed, without separation between them.

After 1,948 years, Avraham our forefather came and stood firm in all the trials that the Holy One, blessed be He, placed before him, and through his divine service, initiated and began the refinement process. The evil emerged in Ishmael,

"Know that you have merited among all your ancestors to leave the lands of darkness due to the traits of peace and harmony you have adhered to for many years. Fortunate are you, and thus you shall continue in your stay in the Holy Land, and it will be good for you, even if not all are equal for good."

The Maggid taught him profound secrets, and he recorded a small portion of these teachings in 'Mesharim Maggid'.

Among these teachings, we find answers to the questions that we asked above.

while the good came forth in Yitzchak.

Yitzchak married Rebecca, who was the daughter of the wicked Bethuel and the sister of the deceitful Laban. To Yitzchak were born two sons - Yaakov and Esav.

The good came forth in Yaakov, and the evil in Esav.

However, nonetheless, because Yitzchak was a "perfect offering"

**Parshat Vayetze - Yaakov Rectifying 64 Sparks**

(an "olah temimah") with overflowing holiness, Esav received from him 190 sparks of holiness.

As the holy Shelah writes,<sup>11</sup> the name "Yitzchak" can be divided into two: (צק and חי).

Esav received 190 (צק) sparks from Yitzchak, and Yaakov received all of the spiritual good, hinted at in (חי)

A Jew inherits at birth from the side of holiness which is called "good," as it says about Moshe our teacher, peace be upon him: "He was good" (Shemot 2:2) - meaning he was born circumcised, an added holiness decreed upon his soul from the six days of Creation.

The acronym of the creation, "the heavens and the earth" ("אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ"), corresponds to the name of G-d whose initials spell "אהוה", which numerically equals 17, or "טוב" ("good").

Thus, every spark of creation is called "good," which numerically equals 17, and thus, Esav, who inherited 190 sparks of holiness, essentially had over 3 thousand minor sparks of "good" that needed to be refined.

Yaakov, our forefather knew this. He knew that Esav was not entirely evil like Laban and Bethuel, but that he needed to extract from him every part of "good" rooted in him, and began the work.

**Yaakov Rectifying 64 Sparks**

Our forefather, Yaakov, succeeded in extracting 64 sparks of holiness from Esav through four actions during his lifetime:

1. The Sale of the Birthright: He rectified 29 sparks.

2. Receiving the Blessings: He rectified 5 sparks.

3. Praying in Parshat Vayishlach: "Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav"

...*Wellsprings of Wisdom*...

**11.** To quote the Shelah HaKadosh ('Parshat Toldot', Torah Ohr, section 3): "And they are hinted at in the name 'Ketz Chai' (קצחי), which is 'Ketz' ('end')

'Chai' ('alive'), for 'Ketz' is the side of the left, of impurities, referring to Esav, and Yaakov is an 'Ish Chai' ('living man'), a man of great deeds."

## Parshat Vayetze - Yaakov Rectifying 64 Sparks

(Genesis 32:12), he rectified 16 sparks.

4. The Birth of His Sons: With the secret of "Ephraim and Manasseh are mine, as Reuben and Simeon" (Genesis 48:5), through which he rectified another 14 sparks.

Let us elaborate on these four actions:

-First Action: "And Esav said to Yaakov, 'Feed me, please, with that red pottage; for I am faint.' Therefore, his name was called Edom" (Genesis 25:30). "אֶדוֹם" ("Edom") has a gematria of 51, equivalent to three times "טוֹב" ("good").

In addition, by giving him lentils ("עֵדִישׁ"), which has the same gematria as 22 more times "good," Yaakov rectified these sparks as well.

This was followed by Esav saying, "'Behold, I am at the point to die'" (Bereshit 25:32). Yaakov managed to rectify an additional four times "good," which numerically equals the gematria of "חַיִּים" ("life"), and since Yaakov rectified "life,"

Esav felt he was "about to die."

All these total to 29 times, as above mentioned.

-Second Action: During the blessing, Yitzchak declared, "The voice is Yaakov's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esav" (Bereshit 27:22). Yaakov then rectified "good" five times, which totals for the gematria of "פֶּה" ("mouth"), as he said, "The voice is Yaakov's voice."

-Third Action: When he prayed, "Deliver me, please, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav" (Bereshit 32:12), he rectified "good" 16 times, which totals numerically to be equivalent to the gematria of "עֲרוּב" ("pledge"), as King David hints, "Be surety for Your servant for good" (Tehillim 119:122).

-Fourth Action: By the birth of his 14 sons (including Ephraim and Manasseh, who are likened to Reuben and Simeon), Yaakov rectified the "good" 14 times, totalling the numerical value of "רַחֵל" ("Rachel").

However, these refinements were not all done under the same

**Parshat Vayetze - Yaakov Paves the Path for His Children**

circumstances; in the midst of his divine service of refinement,

Yaakov had to leave his father's house and flee to Haran.

**Yaakov Paves the Path for His Children**

Yaakov and Esav were 63 years old. Their father Yitzchak was approaching his 123<sup>rd</sup> year. Yitzchak called Esav and said:

"Tonight, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, I enter my 123<sup>rd</sup> year. As you know, Grandmother Sarah, peace be upon her, passed away at the age of 127.

I fear that perhaps my end is near, for it is appropriate for a person nearing the age of his ancestors to be concerned five years before and five years after the age that they died. I do not know if I will be called to die at my mother's age or if my years will be prolonged like my father's.

Therefore, I ask you: Go to the field and hunt game for me. 'And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, so that my soul may bless you before I die'" (Bereshit 27:4).

Esav went out to hunt, but Rebecca had been listening the whole time:

"Now Rebecca was listening when Yitzchak spoke to Esav, his son. And Esav went to the field to hunt game and bring it" (Bereshit 27:5).

She immediately called her son Yaakov and told him, "I will prepare the food; you present it to your father and receive the blessings."

Yaakov disguised himself as Esav, entered his father's presence, received the blessings, and left.

Esav, in great wrath, issued a death warrant against Yaakov.

"And Rebecca was told the words of Esav, her older son" (Bereshit 27:42).

Rashi explains: "'And Rebecca was told' - through divine inspiration, she was informed of what Esav was plotting in his heart."

Rebecca called Yaakov and commanded him to flee to her brother Laban's house. Since everything should be done with

**Parshat Vayetze - Yaakov Paves the Path for His Children**

the husband's consent, she approached Yitzchak and said:

"I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Yaakov takes a wife from the daughters of Heth, like these daughters of the land, what good is my life to me?" (Bereshit 27:46).

Yitzchak called his son Yaakov and commanded him not to take a wife from the daughters of Canaan under any circumstances, and informed him that his destined match was in Haran.

Yaakov did not delay and set out at once on his journey.

On the way, the sun set, and he built a wall of stones and went to sleep among them:

"And Yaakov left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he chanced upon a place and stayed there since the sun had set. He took from the stones of the place and put them under his head and

laid down in that place to sleep" (Bereshit 28:10-11).

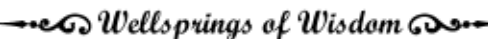
When the saintly Rabbi Shalom of Belz studied these verses, he interpreted them as follows:<sup>12</sup>

Yaakov knew that the Jewish people would have to endure many trials and tribulations until the refinement of the 190 sparks was completed. The Jewish people would have to undergo difficult and bitter exiles, and he therefore devised a plan to pave and make the path easier for his descendants.

At that time when Yaakov left the Land of Israel, he made preparations for all of the exiles his children would eventually experience, ensuring they would be able to draw upon themselves the light of the Divine Presence wherever they might be.

This is hinted at in the verses:

- "And he chanced upon a place" - the numerical value of "יעקב" ("Yaakov") with "במקום" ("upon the



**Parshat Vayetze - Consistency in Life's Conduct**

place") is 370, corresponding to the divine "370 lights" known in Kabbalah, which he drew down to all the places where the Jewish people might live in exile.

- "And stayed there" - he established a permanence for holiness.

- "Because the sun had set" - he foresaw the "setting

of the sun" of the Davidic monarchy.

Yaakov was making preparations for his children, drawing holiness from the Divine Presence to all the places where they would be scattered until the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days.

**Consistency in Life's Conduct**

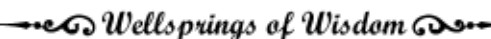
Yaakov understood that for a person to withstand all the trials of the evil inclination, he must be steadfast in serving the Holy One, blessed be He.

Therefore, "And stayed there" (Bereshit 28:11) - he established a permanence for holiness.

Through perseverance, the Jewish people merit holiness, for consistency is the secret of holiness. Anyone who serves G-d regularly and without deviation merits that the supreme holiness rests upon him.

It is said in the name of the Chazon Ish<sup>13</sup> that perseverance is the secret of holiness, and one who is consistent in their divine service will merit holiness. A righteous person's prominent trait is consistency, as signified by the verse: "And the ones praise You every day, Selah" - the can praise continuously.

While consistency is needed in all aspects of life, it is even more imperative that every person have a fixed daily schedule and a clear understanding of what needs to be done at every hour.



13. Igrot Chazon Ish (Part I, Letter 3).

**Parshat Vayetze - Join the Battle**

-Morning Routine: Time of rising, getting organized, prayer, breakfast, assisting one's spouse with domestic chores.

-Work Ethic: If one is an employee, one must know and maintain the precise time of arrival - "punching the clock." Once clocked in, one is obligated to the employer. Nothing external should interfere during work hours. One must work honestly and faithfully, as explained in Jewish law.

Despite all this, one must know that the main consistency should be maintained with regard to prayer and Torah study.

-Prayer: Every Jew should have a fixed synagogue they pray in, a fixed time, and a fixed place where they pray morning, afternoon, and evening.

-Torah Study: One should have a fixed place for Torah study. As the early sages wrote,<sup>14</sup> a person should establish a set place for learning, and through this, he will merit that all of his enemies will fall defeated before him.

Through consistency and perseverance, one can merit to board the train in formal garments, and prepare for the future era of redemption.

**Join the Battle**

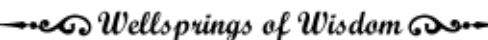
Now we can also understand why Yaakov wanted to reveal the "end of days" (אָפֶת) to his sons.

The Talmud says (Pesachim 56a):

"And Yaakov called unto his sons and said, 'Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you'" (Bereshit 49:1).

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said:

Yaakov sought to reveal to his sons the End of Days, but the Divine Presence departed from him. He said, "Perhaps, Heaven forbid, there is a flaw in my lineage, like Avraham, from whom Ishmael emerged, or like



**14.** Sheiltot of Rav Achai Gaon, Parshat Toldot, Sheilta 19, and the Rif on Berachot 4a.

Parshat Vayetze - Join the Battle

my father Yitzchak, from whom  
Esav emerged."

His sons said to him: "Hear,  
Israel (Yaakov), the L-rd our G-d,  
the L-rd is one" (Devarim 6:4).

They said: "Just as there is  
only One in your heart, so there  
is only One in our hearts."

At that moment, Yaakov  
responded: "Blessed be the name  
of His glorious kingdom forever  
and ever."

The meaning of this passage in  
light of the above interpretation, is  
as follows:

Yaakov knew that as long as  
the 190 sparks of holiness within  
Esav were not fully rectified, the  
redemption would not come.

He wanted to teach his sons  
how to clarify the "end" (אָפּק),  
which numerically equals 190.  
But the Divine Presence departed  
from him.

He then understood from this  
that there was still some evil  
element within his sons, making  
them unworthy to participate in  
this refinement process.

His sons then reassured him,  
saying, "Father. There is no evil  
within us."

Yaakov realized they were  
right - they were indeed pure.

The reason he couldn't teach  
them the straightforward path to  
the refinement of Esav was a  
mystery of G-d, who desires the  
service of the Jewish people.

Thus, he said, "Blessed be the  
name of His glorious kingdom" -  
blessed is the One who runs His  
world according to His will.

Many years have passed  
since that time, during which the  
Jewish people have rectified and  
continue to rectify additional 65  
sparks from Esav:

-25 times "good" ( $25 \times 17$ ),  
equaling numerically 425,  
corresponding to the divine Name  
that destroys the enemies of G-d.

-40 times "good", equaling  
numerically of "פרת" ("Parat")  
where the Jewish people settled  
during their travails in exile.

Now, only 61 times "good"  
remain in Esav, equaling  
numerically 1307.

**Parshat Vayetze - David Flees On A Mission of Refinement**

One day, a Roman philosopher met a young Jewish scholar and decided to challenge him:

"See with your own eyes the greatness we experience. Do you still await the Moshiach?"

The young man heard his words and wrote out on a blank sheet the verse:

"After that, his brother came out, with his hand grasping the heel" (Bereshit 25:26).

The Midrash continues, noting that the philosopher was greatly impressed by the answer.

**David Flees On A Mission of Refinement**

Although Saul informed David that he would no longer pursue him, David still decided to flee to Achish son of Maach, king of Gath.

The reason for this was that King Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin, son to Rachel, while David was from the tribe of Judah, son to Leah.

Rachel was entirely pure and refined, unlike Leah, in whom

The meaning of the response was:

"Know that your greatness is temporary. As soon as the 61 remaining sparks will be rectified, your great empire will perish." The exact words that he wrote the words: "After that, his brother came out, with his hand grasping the heel" - equal the numerical value of

1307, which are the number of individual sparks that remain to be refined.

Let's proceed to the final question.

remained an imprint of Esav's intent.

Thus, Saul had no remnants of Esav within him, unlike David.

David however, feared that as long as Esav's rectification is incomplete, he still has negative influence, and through this, Saul will be able to overpower him.

Thus, David said to himself: "I shall now perish one day by

**Parshat Vayetze - David Flees On A Mission of Refinement**

the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me" (I Samuel 27:1).

The word "אין" ("nothing") has a gematria of 61, representing the 61 sparks of "good" of Esav that still required rectification.

Therefore, King David decided to flee to "Achish son of Maoch, king of Gath," - these words, altogether with "David," total exactly 61 times "good," which needed to be refined and rectified.

He therefore fled to the Philistines, whose land is

destined to be in the portion of Judah, Leah's descendants.

There, the attribute of justice prevailed - ten times 'אלהים' ('Elohim,' which equals 86), totaling 860, which is also the gematria of 'פְּלִשְׁתִּים' ('Philistines'). There, he would transform and turn the liable to meritorious and righteous.

Yossi stood up and said, "Rabbi, what great Torah novelties. Now I have tens of pages to fill with deep insight."

**Shabbat Shalom!**



## Summary and Practical Conclusions

1. To withstand the trials of the evil inclination, one must be consistent in serving the Holy One, blessed be He. The hallmark of the righteous is their consistency; through perseverance, a Jew attains holiness. Those who serve G-d regularly and without deviation merit to experience holiness, as the verse states, "And the ones praise You every day, Selah" - the praise G-d continuously.
2. This consistency should permeate all aspects of life. Everyone should have a daily schedule and know what they need to do each hour. Employees should be punctual and devoted to their employers during work hours, working honestly and faithfully, as outlined in Jewish law.
3. Despite other commitments, the main consistency should be evident in prayer and Torah study. One should have a regular synagogue, and a set time and place for their daily services and Torah study. Consistent practice in these areas empowers one to stand strong against life's challenges.
4. The study of the Oral Torah has not been fully purified, and due to residual negativity from Esav, those who gain extensive knowledge in the Oral Torah may be prone to pride and, at times, disrespect toward true righteous individuals, turning their Torah into a "poisonous potion," G-d forbid. Those privileged to study the Oral Torah must therefore be exceedingly cautious, and must take care to engage in Torah study with humility and holiness, for G-d's sake alone.
5. We must nullify our own opinions before those of our righteous leaders, even if we think that they might have erred, since the Divine Presence guides their actions, ensuring that no error arises from them. When seeking advice from a righteous person, one should approach with humility, like a blind person before someone who has the sense of sight, and follow their counsel sincerely and without cunning. By doing so, success is assured in all of our endeavors.

” A person must rejoice when the time for  
**prayer**

as the author of the Tanya says that:

every Jew, wherever he is, receives from G-d at the time of prayer a gift called **"Mochin D'Gadlut,"** meaning that the understanding of everything is expansive before him, as is written **"Open wide your mouth and I will fill it"** ”



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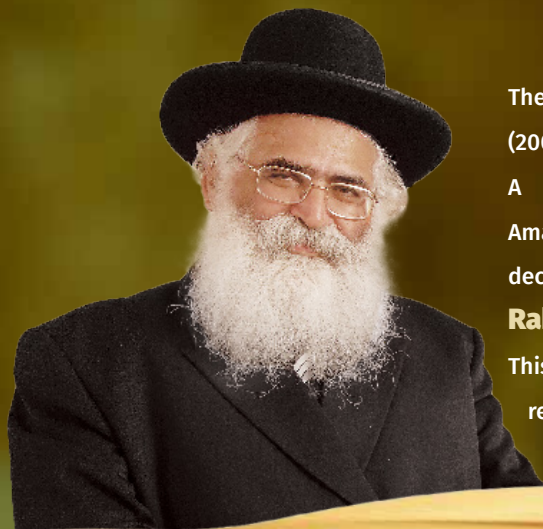
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Toronto	4:23 pm	5:28 pm	5:53 pm
London	3:34 pm	4:50 pm	5:04 pm
Jerusalem	4:20 pm	5:10 pm	5:42 pm
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*We must know that everything is decreed from Heaven, it is futile to spend effort in vain.*

*One who wishes to receive a certain position, should believe that it is all in the hands of G-d. If G-d wills it, he will receive the coveted position, even without his efforts, and he need not chase and toil to such an extent. His greatest efforts are all to waste if is not what G-d ultimately decided for him.*



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