Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,
Based on the talks of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Vayeitzei, 5787

(Vol. 7)

VAAD L'HAFOTZAS SICHOS
788 EASTERN PARKWAY • BROOKLYN, NY 11213
5787 • 2026

In loving memory of
Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** ע״ה
ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי״ד
Shagalov
Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766

Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** ע״ה
Ekman
Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765

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And in honor of
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Dedicated by
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Printed in the U.S.A.

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by
Rabbi Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann, Ph.D

Vayeitze

From a Hundred-fold to a Thousand-fold

The negotiations between Lavan and Jacob allude to the role of the non-Jew, and the blessing he will receive for assisting the Jew in learning Torah and observing mitzvos. In the times of Moshiach, the non-Jew will also be blessed a thousand-fold.

When discussing the Redemption and the coming of Moshiach, one of the most frequently asked questions concerns the role of the non-Jew. While almost everyone understands that the era of Moshiach will be one of universal peace, as Maimonides explains at length, there are still many unresolved issues. True, the "world will be filled with knowledge of G-d as the sea fills the ocean bed;" true Moshiach will "improve the entire world, motivating all the nations to serve G-d together;" true, "in that era there will be neither famine nor war, envy or competition, for good will flow in abundance and all delights will be as common as dust." But the question remains: what is the role of the non-Jew? Or, more specifically, what will be the relationship of the nations to the Jewish people? That depends, of course, on what relationship the nations have to the Jewish people now, not just over the centuries, but most importantly in the current situation, in the last few moments before the coming of Moshiach.

Answers to these questions – and the definition of that relationship – can be found in this week's Torah reading, *Vayeitze*. After the birth of Joseph, Jacob seeks to take his family and return home. His uncle Lavan wants Jacob to continue working for him. In the exchange that follows, as they negotiate over wages, G-d's blessing is mentioned twice. First Lavan declares, "I have observed the signs, and the Lord has blessed me for your sake." Jacob, for his

part, asserts that the disproportionate increase in Lavan's herds is due entirely to the blessing given for the sake of Jacob. "You know how I have served you, and how your cattle have fared with me. For you had little before I came, and it has increased abundantly; the Lord has blessed you wherever I turned."

The *Zohar*, the primary work of Kabbalah, discusses two opinions concerning the extent of the increase. By how much did Lavan's herd grow? According to one opinion, it was a hundred times; according to Rabbi Abba, it was a thousand times, since a blessing from Above never results in less than a thousand-fold expansion.

In order to understand why there are two opinions – and the significance of increasing a thousand-fold as opposed to a hundred-fold, we first have to understand the essential nature of a blessing.

In general, a blessing draws forth an emanation from the spiritual source of the one being blessed. What does this mean? A blessing increases one's well-being. One can have better health, a better livelihood, more stable relationships, or even greater understanding. One's spiritual capability may be concealed, its expression in this world blocked. A blessing, which is connected to the root, the spiritual origins of the individual, opens the spiritual pathway, so to speak. It actualizes potential, acting as a channel to enable possibilities – better health, better livelihood, etc. – to be realized. As a result, one's efforts lead to success or well-being; the previously hidden or obstructed inner reality becomes revealed. Since the physical world is a manifestation of the spiritual, the nature of one's soul, its spiritual source, determines the nature of one's physical life and thus the type and extent of a blessing. Factors such as physique, genetics, personality and environment determine one's physical strengths and weaknesses. So, too, the extent and effectiveness of a blessing depends on the source of one's soul.

We can now understand the difference of opinion concerning

how many times Lavan's flock multiplied. According to the first opinion, it was Lavan's blessing. It's just that Jacob had earned the right to be the transmitter, the vehicle through whom the blessing came down to Lavan. But the nature and form of the blessing was determined by the spiritual source of Lavan's soul. Accordingly, his flock increased a hundred-fold, for that number indicates perfection for Lavan, a complete realization of his spiritual potential.

On the other hand, according to Rabbi Abba the blessing belongs to Jacob. He brought it with him. Thus, even though he brought it to Lavan, the blessing comes from the root and source of Jacob's soul. Therefore the flock increased a thousand-fold, for the number one thousand is connected with the perfection of Jacob, the complete realization of his spiritual potential.

This observation leads to two questions: first, what is the reason for the association between the numbers and the individuals – one hundred for Lavan, one thousand for Jacob; second, why is the property of Lavan blessed through the merit of Jacob?

The second question can be answered easily: As Rashi points out, the world was created for the sake of Torah and for the sake of Israel. The purpose of creation in general is to assist the Jewish people in serving G-d, in observing the commandments. When a *tzaddik* such as the patriarch Jacob comes to a place and there serves G-d, the place and all its inhabitants fulfill their life's mission by helping the Jewish people be a "nation of priests."

As to the difference in numbers, it may be explained this way: The number one hundred indicates completeness within the realm of nature. Thus, a hundred-fold increase means that the natural blessing is complete and perfect. A thousand, on the other hand, indicates a perfection that reaches beyond the laws and boundaries of nature. In fact, the letters of the word for a thousand in Hebrew can be rearranged to form the word "wonder." Saying that something occurs a thousand times means that it is wondrous or

miraculous, that it goes beyond the normal limitations, that it is outside the common experience.

This is also the difference between the nations of the world and the Jewish people. The nations in and of themselves are confined to the natural order, while the Jewish people have a connection with G-d that goes beyond creation, enabling them to serve G-d in a miraculous manner.

The question is, do the nations of the world have a connection to the status of the Jewish people? When they fulfill their Divinely ordained task by assisting the Jewish people to observe the Torah, is their blessing limited to a hundred-fold, to the natural consequence? According to the first opinion of the *Zohar* quoted above, the blessing of the non-Jews is in fact limited, because their connection with the Jewish people, and hence G-dliness, is limited. However, according to Rabbi Abba, who says that Lavan's flock increased a thousand-fold, when the nations of the world do what G-d has commanded them, namely, obey the seven universal laws, the Noachide commandments, and thus enable the Jewish people to observe the Torah, then the nations can also approach the level of the Jewish people, receiving a blessing akin to the thousand-fold, miraculous blessing of the descendants of Jacob.

The lesson for our times is clear: first, although the Jewish people are dependent on the non-Jewish nations in which they live, the life and blessing of the non-Jew depends on the assistance rendered to the Jew. Recognizing this, the non-Jew will joyously help the Jew perform that which brings life and blessing, namely, observance of Torah and mitzvos. When this thousand-fold blessing will apply to the entire world, with the coming of Moshiach, then G-d will "turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the L-rd, to serve Him all together."

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 20, pp. 136-143)

BESURAS HAGEULO
The Announcement Of The Redemption

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Maimonides writes:

"In that era[1] there will be neither famine nor war..."

A foretaste of this peaceful state can be realized even in the last moments of exile. For even as "the nations are provoking one another," and "The king of Persia provokes the Arabian king... and all the nations are in turmoil and terror," the Jewish people are experiencing a state of tranquillity and peace, since "G-d says to them 'My children, do not fear. Whatever I have done, I have done only for your sake... the time for your Redemption has arrived." Furthermore, "The 'King Moshiach' - the Redeemer of Israel - "stands on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash... and says, 'Humble ones, the time for your Redemption has arrived.'"[2]

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Vayeitzei, 7 Kislev, 5751)

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1. Rambam, conclusion of his work *Mishneh Torah*.
2. *Yalkut Shimoni, Yeshayahu, remez* 499.

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The subject that is most urgent in our generation and our time is - the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach. As has been mentioned many times of late, now all the requirements have already been concluded, we need only receive our righteous Moshiach in actual reality.

All the more so in our generation and our time, when according to the signs of our Sages of blessed memory (in the tractate *Sanhedrin*, in Midrashim and in many places) we are actually on the verge of the Redemption.

As mentioned many times recently, that after our many great achievements and Divine service throughout the generations, and specifically after the Divine service of our Rebbeim and leaders through the Divine service of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, all necessary spiritual purifications have been accomplished.

This also includes the spiritual purification of "Aisev [Esau] is Edom."[1] Aisev is already completely spiritually purified, as we see how the nations at this time (in the exile of Edom[2]), which stem from "Aisev is Edom," conduct themselves as benevolent governments. Such conduct has spread to other nations, as we have seen, especially of late.

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1. *Vayishlach* 36:1.

2. *[The Jewish people have endured four exiles, each named after the dominant country or culture of the time. These were the Egyptian exile, the Babylonian, the Greek and the Roman. Edom is the Biblical ancestor of the Roman people, whose empire still persists both in a spiritual sense and in a physical sense in the domination of European civilization and its derivatives. Translator's note.]*

It's therefore understood that now the situation is already one in which the physical body, and even the physicality of the world, is completely purified and refined. It is a "vessel" receptive to all the spiritual lights and concepts, primarily the light[3] of our righteous Moshiach, the light of the true and complete Redemption.

And the only thing missing is that a Jew should open his eyes as he should, when he will see that all is ready for the Redemption! There is already the Shulchan Aruch (the Set Table); there is already the Livyosan, the Shor HaBor and the Yayin Meshumar.[4] The Jewish people already sit by the table, "the table of their Father"[5] (the Holy One Blessed be He), together with our righteous Moshiach. (As is stated in holy books[6] that in every generation there is "one descended from Yehuda who is qualified to be Moshiach"). In our generation this is the leader of our generation, my sainted father-in-law. And now forty years after the passing of my sainted father-in-law we also have already "a heart to know and eyes to see and ears to hear."[7]

We must now only open the "heart to know" and open "the eyes to see" and open the "ears to hear." Likewise we must utilize all 248 physical limbs and 365 physical sinews in the learning of the inner aspects of the Torah, as revealed in the teachings of Chassidus and observing the directives of our Rabbeim and leaders.[8] These

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3. *Zohar* section 3 34:b. Cited and explained in *Likkutei Levi Yitzchak* on the *Zohar*, section 3, p. 219 ff.

4. See *Brochos* 34:b. *Bava Basra* 75:a. *Vayikra Rabba* Chapter 13:3. And in other sources.

5. *Brochos* 3, end of side a.

6. Commentary of the Bartenura on *Megillas Rus*. And see also *Sha'alos U'teshuvos Chasam Sofer Choshen Mishpat* (vol. 6) at the end (section 98). And see *S'dei Chemed, Peas HaSadeh*, entry Aleph , Klal 70. And elsewhere.

7. *Tavo* 29:3.

8. In addition to learning Torah and observing mitzvos in general (the 248 positive commandments corresponding to the 248 limbs (*macos* 23, end of side

directives include learning about the concepts of Redemption, in a way that will open the heart, eyes and ears. That is, one must understand, see and hear in the physicality of the world the true and complete Redemption in actual reality. One should learn the Torah of Moshiach (the inner aspects of Torah) in a way of seeing. All of the above is already prepared; one need only open the eyes to see it!

Also the custom of the Jewish people which is continually spreading in our time, to learn the subject of Redemption and Moshiach, in order to prepare himself and others even more for the revelation of the true and complete Redemption, as mentioned above.

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Vayeitze, 9 Kislev 5752)

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b) and the 365 negative commandments corresponding to the 365 sinews (*Zohar*, volume I, 170b.)

In honor of

Hatomim **Kehos שיחי' Weiss**

On the occasion of his Bar Mitzvah, 10 Kislev, 5787

"May you become increasingly studious and conscientious in your study of the Torah, in the revealed teachings of the Torah and likewise in the teachings of *Chassidus,* and may you observe the *mitzvos* precisely and beautifully. And may G-d grant you success in your endeavors to become a chassid, a G-d-fearing Jew, and a scholar."

(From the Rebbe's Letter to a Bar Mitzvah *Boy)*

and in honor of his brother and sisters

The Soldiers of "Tzivos Hashem"

Yisroel Meir, **Aida Leah**, and **Raya Zelda שיחיו Weiss**

May they merit to be a source of Chassidic pride
to their family and a Torah light to their community.

*

Dedicated by

Rabbi & Mrs. **Daniel Yaakov** and **Chaya Mushka שיחיו Weiss**

Mr. & Mrs. **Elimelech Shmuel** and **Chana שיחיו Weiss**

Rabbi & Mrs. **Shimon Boruch** and **Miriam שיחיו Weiss**

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