



One of the loyal chasidim of Rebbe Menachem Mendel, who was known as the Tzemach Tzedek, was a successful merchant in the city of Petersburg. Every year he would travel to the great fair which was held in Nizhni-Novgorod to make his purchases. He made it an annual practice to first visit Lubavitch to see his rebbe.

While in Lubavitch he drank in the vibrant atmosphere of the Rebbe's court, and listened to words of Torah which would serve to enrich his spiritual life for the rest of the year. Then, he would make a detour and continue on to the town of Dobromishl. In that town lived the old rabbi who had been his teacher many years before. This old rabbi looked forward to the yearly visit of his former pupil, enjoying the lively company and the stories his guest brought from the Rebbe's court. It wasn't every day that he had guests, and it was a happy event in the old man's life.

One year the merchant's plans for his yearly circuit through Lubavitch were disrupted. One of his biggest customers had trouble raising the money for his usual order, and the merchant was forced to postpone his departure. Finally, he received payment, and with his business now in order, he was able to set off. Even though the fair was well under way, the merchant couldn't imagine missing his yearly visit to the Rebbe, and he headed, as usual, to Lubavitch.

The merchant was invigorated by the time he spent with the Tzemach Tzedek, and after a few days he prepared to continue on his trip. By this time he was becoming concerned about the business days he had lost at the fair, and he wondered if perhaps he should skip his usual visit to his old teacher. He felt guilt about not seeing the old rabbi, but figured that would be the only way to save time.

When he was about to take his leave from the Rebbe he consulted him about his decision. The Tzemach Tzedek answered him, "Since it has always been your custom to visit your teacher it is not proper to change now."

The merchant took his Rebbe's counsel to heart and headed immediately to Dobromishl where he was warmly received by his old teacher. The old man's joy couldn't be contained as he rushed about his tiny kitchen heating up his samovar and setting out a plate of warm bread and butter. The merchant begged his teacher not to bother, as he had to be on his way after the afternoon prayers, but the old man would not forego this pleasure.

As the merchant was completing his prayers, the sky darkened and soon the village was pelted with a fierce downpour. His desire to finally get to the Nizhni-Novgorod fair had become so intense that the merchant was prepared to continue his journey in spite of the weather. The old rabbi implored him to stay overnight, since the local roads became thick with mud after a heavy rain. With one look outside, the merchant realized that it would be impossible to continue and so, he reluctantly agreed to stay.

A next day brought fair weather, but the merchant awoke feeling very ill. His head throbbed and he felt as if a fire burned in his eyes. A doctor was summoned from the nearby town of Orsha, and he diagnosed the illness to be typhus. The old rebbe sent a message to the merchant's family requesting help in caring for the sick man. And in addition, a letter was sent to the Rebbe in Lubavitch, asking that he pray for the merchant. The man lay ill in the old rabbi's house for close to two months before he recovered enough to leave for home.

But first he went to Lubavitch to present the Tzemach Tzedek with his grievance. With tears running from his eyes the merchant entered the Rebbe's study and in a voice choked with emotion asked why the Rebbe had advised him to go visit his old teacher. Why, if he hadn't gone there and exposed himself to the terrible rain storm

and caught a chill, he wouldn't have become so dangerously ill. So why had the Rebbe given him such advice?

The Rebbe looked at his distraught chasid and replied: "There is a teaching in the Talmud which says that 'A man's legs may be depended upon to take him wherever he is called to be.' This means that a man's feet will carry him to that place where he is destined to die, no matter where that is. But this verse may also be interpreted to mean that a man's feet will carry him to a place where there is someone to pray for him. Be grateful and know that your very life was saved by the prayers of your old rebbe who entreated G-d on your behalf. He was able to intercede for you and save your life."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT
on the weekly Torah portion

And they called his name Esav...and he called his name Yaakov (Gen. 25:25-6)

Why is the plural – "and they called his name" – used for Esav, but the singular – "and he called" – used for Yaakov? Esav is the father of all falsehood; many are those who find him attractive and seek him out. Yaakov, however, is the source of truth; only the rare individual desires his acquaintance. (Kli Yakar)

Yaakov was an honest man, a dweller of tents (Gen. 25:27)

Of all the superior character traits possessed by our ancestor Yaakov, the Torah chooses "an honest man" as the highest praise, to teach us that nothing is more worthy of our respect and admiration than a life lived with honesty and righteous ness. (Shaloh Hakadosh)

Two nations are in your womb...and one nation will be stronger Than the other nation (Gen. 25:23)

Rashi comments: When one rises, the other falls. Jacob and Esau symbolize the struggle between the G-dly soul and the animal soul, between a person's good and evil inclinations. When a Jew's G-dly soul is dominant and exerts itself, there is no need to combat the animal soul--it "falls" by itself. Light does not have to fight darkness to illuminate--as soon as it appears, the darkness vanishes. So too, does the light of holiness dispel all evil. (Sefer Hamaamarim)

That my soul may bless you (Gen. 27:4)

Why did Isaac want to bless Esau instead of Jacob? Jacob was "a pure man, a dweller in tents (of Torah)," and even without a blessing he would stay away from evil. Esau, however, was very likely to fall into bad ways, and needed the assistance of his father's blessing. (Ohr HaTorah)


4:14 Candle Lighting Time
NY Metro Area
1 Kislev-Rosh Chodesh/Nov 25
Torah Portion Toldot
Shabbat ends 5:15pm

Dedicated in honor of
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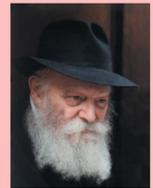
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L'Chaim

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for Every Jewish Person
ניסד תוד ימי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"My help comes from G-d, the Maker of heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2) Year of Unity-Hakhel



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

The *Haftora* for the Torah portion of *Toldot* is the beginning of the book of Malachi. At first glance, it is a prophecy of rebuke to the Jewish people. However, when you take a closer look, you find in it the deep love and connection we have with G-d.

The *Haftora* begins with G-d's words to the Jewish people. "I have loved you," says G-d, and if you ask, "How have You shown Your love for us?" This is G-d's response: "Was not Esau a brother to Jacob? Yet I loved Jacob. And I hated Esau..."

What is this love G-d is referring to? And would we truly be brazen enough to ask G-d, "How have You shown Your love for us?"

Also, first G-d says that we are equal, "Was not Esau a brother to Jacob?" Then He says that He loves us and hates them. What is the deeper meaning in these words?

When G-d says, "I have loved you," it refers to a time when His love was clearly visible through open miracles. During the Exodus, by giving us the Torah, when conquering the Holy Land, and in the First Temple era, we were privy to miracles. But when Malachi is prophesizing in the dark exile, we ask G-d, "How have You shown Your love for us?" Because we don't see G-d's love openly revealed.

Now G-d says, "Was not Esau a brother to Jacob? Yet I loved Jacob. And I hated Esau..." G-d is saying, that I chose to love you from the beginning. Like we say in the holiday prayers, "You have chosen us from all the nations, You loved us and You wanted us."

There are two ways to understand choice.

When two things are similar but one has something that you like more, you choose the one that you like more. This is not true choice, because it is not your will that moves you to choose but rather, it is an intellectual decision, as one is more appealing.

Then there is true choice. When two things are exactly the same, and you choose one over the other, it is your will, your essence, that is choosing, which is beyond your intellect.

G-d is telling us how He chose us. From G-d's essential perspective, Esau and Jacob are brothers, they are the same, everything is equal. But He chose to love us, meaning, His will, His Essence chose us and therefore, we are one with His Essence, one with G-d.

Now the rebuke begins to make sense. You only rebuke someone who you care about, because when you care about someone, how they act matters to you.

In our case, G-d is saying, I chose you over Esau, therefore you are special, you are one with Me. How then could you act like Esau, unabashed, callous and deceptive? G-d loves us and expects more from us for we are His Essence.

May G-d fulfill our deepest desire and show us His open love once again, with the coming of Moshiach. The time has come.

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, yitzhurwitz.blogspot.com. Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

An Attitude of Gratitude

"Don't forget to say 'thank you,'" our parents reminded us as we were growing up.

"It's nice to know I'm appreciated," we say when we're complimented.

Recognizing and even rewarding the good others have done is not only a nice thing to do, it's the right thing to do.

The Torah teaches us the importance of "*hakarat hatov*" – recognizing the good that others do. Saying "thank you," sending a note of appreciation, giving credit where credit is due, verbalizing to others how grateful you are for something someone did, are not just social conveniences. They can be the path through which we become better people.

But, it doesn't stop at just verbalizing our feelings of thankfulness. We are expected to follow that age-old saying, "Put your money where your mouth is." This doesn't mean that you must lavish gifts on someone to whom you are grateful. Rather, even when it comes to services rendered for monetary recompense, you should display your appreciation.

We learn this from Abraham, our ancestor. During his travels down to Egypt – before his name was known far and wide – he stayed in various inns along the way. When Abraham began his return trip from Egypt back to Canaan, he was already famous and successful; everyone knew that Abraham was blessed by G-d. Yet, on the way home, Abraham frequented the same modest inns as on the way to

Egypt.

As every deed of our ancestors is a lesson for us, our Sages learn from this that if someone was there for you when you needed them, you must remember them and patronize them.

The knowledge that we are supposed to recognize the good that others do for us doesn't mean that appreciation comes easy. In fact, being appreciative is a kind of art. To some people this art comes naturally while to others it is a skill



which must be learned like any other skill.

If *hakarat hatov* is required and beneficial in our relationships with our friends, co-workers and relatives, then certainly it is required and beneficial in our relationship to our Creator.

We are obligated to thank G-d for all of the good that He has bestowed upon us. And we are expected to recognize that G-d is the initiator of the good (as well as the seemingly bad). Let's face it. No one's life is perfect. But if we start appreciating what we do have, and being thankful for it, we'll be a lot better off and a lot happier.

