



Many years ago, after the rabbi of Tchentzikov had been married for eighteen years without having been blessed with children, he travelled to the Kozhnitzer Maggid to obtain the tzadik's blessing.

When the Kozhnitzer listened to the man's request he uttered a sigh from deep within his being. "The gates of heaven are closed to your petition!" he cried.

"No, no! Please, you must help me!" the man wept desperately.

"I cannot help you," said the Kozhnitzer. "But I will send you to someone else who will be able to help. You must go to a certain person who is called 'Shvartze Wolf -- Black Wolf,' and he will be the one to help."

"Yes, I know him," the rabbi said, "He lives in my village, and a more coarse, miserable person you could never find."

At first the Kozhnitzer did not respond. The rabbi realized that if the Kozhnitzer was sending him to Black Wolf, he must have a good reason.

The Kozhnitzer then quietly revealed, "Black Wolf is head of the eighteen hidden saints whose merits sustain the world."

The rabbi sought out Black Wolf in the forest hut which was his home. Though cognizant of Black Wolf's true identity, the rabbi was still frightened to approach him.

He devised a ruse by which to gain admittance to his hut.

He would go into the forest just before Shabbat and when he found Black Wolf's house, would pretend that he had lost his way. He would beg to spend the holy Shabbat there, and under the circumstances, Black Wolf could hardly refuse a fellow Jew that favor.

Friday afternoon he set out and as planned reached Black Wolf's hut. He knocked on the door and the man's wife answered.

Her horrible appearance marked her as a true equal to her husband, for never had a more hideous and unpleasant woman been seen.

Nevertheless, the rabbi begged her to allow him to stay over Shabbat.

"Very well," she finally relented. "But if my husband finds you here, he'll tear you apart with his bare hands. You can't stay in here, but go into the stable if you want," she croaked.

Soon Black Wolf arrived home and entered the stable, his eyes blazing with hatred. "How dare you come here! If you set foot outside of this stable, I'll rip you apart with my bare hands!"

The frightened Jew shivered in his boots as he beheld the terrible visage of Black Wolf.

Suddenly the thought came to the rabbi that a tzadik is so pure that he acts as a mirror, reflecting the image of the person who is looking upon him.

Thus, what he saw in the appearance of Black Wolf was nothing more or less than a picture of his own spiritual impurity. With that, he searched into his soul, and prayed from the deepest part of his being. He poured out his soul and in those few moments returned wholeheartedly to his Maker. He felt himself suffused with a warm, peaceful feeling.

Suddenly he was shaken from his reverie by the unexpected sensation of a soft hand being laid on his shoulder. He looked up, not quite sure what he would see, a shiver of fear passing through him. There stood Black Wolf, but instead of his accustomed fierce exterior, he had a refined and peaceful visage.

The visitor was ushered into the hut, which no longer appeared rough and tumble-down, but warm and inviting. Black Wolf's wife entered with her children, and their appearance, too, was beautiful and serene.

Black Wolf turned to his guest and said in a quiet voice, "I know why you have come here. I know, I know. You and your wife will rejoice in the birth of a boy. But you must name him Shvartze Wolf."

The rabbi wondered to himself, "How can I name my son after him? It is not our custom

to name after the living," but he remained silent. The following morning Shvartze Wolf passed away. After Shabbat, the Tchentzikover Rabbi returned home. In time, he revealed to his congregation the hidden identity of the hated Shvartze Wolf.

True to his word, a baby boy was born and he was given the strange name "Shvartze Wolf."

In the year 1945 Jews who had survived the horrors of the Holocaust began streaming into the Land of Israel. When the Belzer Rebbe held his first Melave Malka (Saturday night meal taking leave of the Sabbath Queen) in the Holy Land many Chasidim came and introduced themselves to the Rebbe.

This story was one of those related at that first Melave Malka of the Belzer Rebbe.

And at that memorable occasion one man stood before the assembled and said, "My name is Shvartze Wolf ben Chana, and I am a descendant of that child who is spoken about in the story."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah Portion

And the boys grew up, and Esav [Esau] was an expert hunter (Gen. 25:27)

"Expert at deceiving his father into believing him to be pious and a scrupulous observer of the commandments," comments Rashi, the great Torah Sage.

Esav's hypocrisy is symbolic of our present Exile, in which the forces of evil are not as readily identifiable as they were during previous exiles. It is for this reason that our Exile is termed "Galut Edom" ("the Exile of Edom"), for the nation of Edom is descended from Esav.

When Moshiach comes, the "Deliverers will go up to Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esav, and kingship will be the L-rd's." (Lubavitcher Rebbe, Toldot, 5750)

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)

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

"When one will rise, the other will fall," comments Rashi. Yaakov is symbolic of the Jew's G-dly soul; Esav is symbolic of man's animalistic drives and the Evil Inclination.

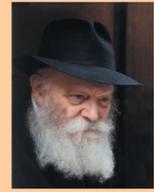
When the G-dly soul is strengthened (through learning Torah), the Evil Inclination is weakened without effort, as a natural consequence.

For just as physical darkness is dispelled when one lights a candle, so too is spiritual darkness dispelled when the light of Torah is allowed to illuminate. (Chasidic Teachings)

4:18 Candle Lighting Time
NY Metro Area
4 Kislev / Nov 17
Torah Portion Toldot
Shabbat ends 5:19 PM



L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

This week's Torah portion, Toldot, begins with the words, "And these are the generations of Yitzchak, the son of Avraham: Avraham begot Yitzchak."

According to the Talmud, one of the reasons for the repetitiveness of this verse is to emphasize the fact that, according to natural law, Avraham was unable to father children at that age.

When Sara conceived and gave birth to a son the nations of the world scoffed, intimating that Avraham was not the biological father.

G-d therefore fashioned Yitzchak's facial features to look exactly like his father's, thereby proving his paternity and dispelling any misconceptions.

"The nations of the world" had no difficulty accepting Avraham's ability to father children in the spiritual sense -- spreading the belief in One G-d and fostering good deeds among mankind.

What they found impossible to believe, however, was that Avraham - by virtue of his faith in a G-d Who transcended natural law - could overcome his physical limitations and father a child in the literal sense as well.

The miraculous birth of Yitzchak demonstrated to the entire world that the physical body of the Jew -- not only his soul -- exists beyond the confines of nature and is created and directly sustained by G-d.

It is in this light that we can understand the words of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, the Previous Rebbe, which he uttered before being exiled to the far Eastern provinces of the Soviet Union, where he was sentenced by the Communist regime for the "crime" of spreading Judaism.

Addressing the assemblage of Chasidim who had come to see him off, the Rebbe declared, "...And let all the nations of the world be apprised that it is only our physical bodies that are in galut (exile) and subject to the yoke of the nations. Our souls are not in exile and can never be subjugated! No one can exert any influence over us when it comes to matters of Torah, mitzvot and Jewish practice!"

But what good does it do us to know that our souls are not in exile, if our physical bodies -- the only medium through which we can observe mitzvot and spread the wellsprings of Judaism -- are suffering the hardships of the galut?

The answer to this question comes from our ancestor Avraham, the very first Jew.

Avraham proved that whenever a Jew uncovers the supernatural dimensions of his soul, its G-dly light will illuminate his physical being as well.

In this way the physical body is elevated above the laws of nature, to a plane on which no power on earth can exert any influence.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot of the Rebbe, Vol. III

The Land of Israel: An Eternal Inheritance to an Eternal Nation

The way a writer opens his work reveals much about his fundamental approach and intent. This is certainly true when speaking about a great Torah giant and biblical commentator like Rashi.

(Rashi is the acronym of Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, who is renowned for his legendary commentaries on the entire Torah and on the Talmud.)

Among all of Rashi's teachings, the one that the Rebbe would highlight most frequently was Rashi's opening statement in his commentary on the Torah.

Rashi begins:

Rabbi Yitzchak commented: The Torah should have started from "This month shall be for you," which is the first commandment given to Israel, the Jewish people. Why did G-d begin the Torah with "In the beginning?" Because of the profound message implied by the verse "In the beginning G-d created heaven and earth." "The strength of His works He related to His people to give them the inheritance of nations."

If the nations of the world will tell Israel, "You are robbers, for you conquered the lands of seven nations," Israel will respond to their accusation: "The entire earth belongs to the Holy One, blessed be He; He created it and gave it to whomever He deemed proper."

Rashi invites a person to adopt a

way of thinking that stems from Torah's wisdom, which makes it clear that the land of Israel was given to the Jewish people by the Creator of heaven and earth.

In this way, it not only provides guidelines on how to answer the nations of the world, but also it aligns us with G-d's intent and empowers us to conduct our everyday life, in any and all settings, in a manner befitting for G-d to manifest His providence as He does in the land of Israel.

The Rebbe further explained that on this basis, it is possible to understand the emphasis on the word "strength" in the verse "The strength of His works He related to His people."

In order to refute the claims and arguments of the nations of the world, it is not sufficient to know that all existence is "His works." One must also realize that "the strength" -- referring to the inner intent and motivating purpose -- of "His works" was related to His people.

Additionally, the verse employs the verb "related," and not "told," because it connotes "conveyed." G-d conveyed and transmitted strength -- the inner motivating force of His works -- to His people. This strength is what enables the Divine service of the Jewish people to transform G-d's "works" -- material existence -- into holiness.

Dedicated in honor of a dear friend of the Lubavitch Youth Organization
Mr. David Schwartz

