

# THE CHABAD WEEKLY

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Chabad of North Beverly Hills, 409 Foothill Rd. Beverly Hills, 90210

[beverlyhillschabad.org](http://beverlyhillschabad.org)

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This week's Torah reading begins: "And Jacob lived in the Land of Egypt." The Baal HaTurim, one of the foremost Torah commentaries, explains that Jacob spent his best years in the land of Egypt."

To explain: Throughout his life, Jacob was beset by problems and difficulties. In Egypt, he was able to live in wealth and prosperity and spend his final years sharing his wisdom with his sons. These were obviously the best years of his life.

One might, however, ask: Why were the best years of Jacob's life spent in Egypt? Egypt is a depraved land, a place of spiritual darkness. Why was it that Jacob found fulfillment there rather than in Eretz Yisrael, our holy land? Couldn't G-d have structured it otherwise?

The commentaries explain that this reflects a motif suggested by the Zohar. On the verse: "I saw an advantage to light over darkness," the Zohar explains that it is through darkness that it is possible to attain the higher quality of light.

The existence of every entity in the world is maintained by G-dly life-energy. Even those objects which appear to be spiritually empty possess G-dly sparks. Indeed, from a certain perspective, the G-dly energy contained within them is greater than that manifest in situations where holiness is openly revealed.

How can the G-dliness within these entities be tapped? By emulating Jacob's example. Jacob saw no difference between life in Egypt and life in Eretz Yisrael. Certainly, the externals were not the same. Here he lived amid affluence and security, and there he struggled with perverse foes. In one place, the land was holy, and in the other, it was corrupt. But internally, he saw no change. In both places, his life was characterized by an unchanging and uninterrupted commitment to the Torah. Even in Egypt, this was the focus of his existence. Despite the decadence of Egyptian society, he and his descendants remained focused on the spiritual.

Through these efforts, he was able to tap the latent spiritual potential that is present within Egypt, enabling the higher quality of light to the surface. And by doing so, he generated the potential for the exodus from Egypt, when his descendants would proceed from exile to redemption. (From Keeping in Touch Vol. 1 by Rabbi Eliyahu Touger)- [sichosinenglish.org](http://sichosinenglish.org)

**And it came to pass after these things, that it was said to Joseph: Behold, your father is ill (48:1)** Abraham introduced aging to the world, Isaac affliction, and Jacob illness.

Abraham requested old age, pleading before G-d: "Master of the Universe! When a man and his son enter a town, none know whom to honor." Said G-d to him: "By your life, you have asked a proper thing, and it will commence with you." Thus, from the beginning of the Book aging is not mentioned, but when Abraham came, old age was granted to him, as is written: "And Abraham was old and come along in days" (Genesis 24:1).

Isaac asked for affliction, pleading thus: "Master of the Universe! When a man dies without affliction, Judgment threatens him; but if You afflict him, Judgment would not threaten him." Said G-d to him: "By your life, you have asked well, and it will commence with you." Thus affliction is not mentioned from the beginning of the Book until Isaac, as is written: "And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dimmed" (ibid., 27:1).

Jacob requested illness, saying to Him: "Master of the Universe! A man dies without previous illness and does not settle his affairs with his children; but if he were two or three days ill, he would settle his affairs with his children." Said G-d to him: "By your life, you have asked well, and it will commence with you." Thus it is written: "It was said to Joseph: Behold, your father is ill." (Midrash Rabbah) – [chabad.org](http://chabad.org)



**This coming Wednesday (January 14) is the 20th of Tevet, the yahrzeit of Rabbi Moses Maimonides, otherwise known as the Rambam.** The Rambam lived in the 12th century and was a great philosopher, doctor, and Jewish scholar. But he is probably best remembered for his encyclopedic codification of all 613 commandments of the Torah in his magnum opus, the Mishne Torah.

In the Mishne Torah, the Rambam enumerates and details all of the 613 laws of the Torah. He places the laws relating to the Jewish king, and Moshiach, at the very end of his work. In the introduction to these laws he states that the Jews were commanded to fulfill three mitzvot upon conquering and entering the Land of Israel: To appoint a king; to kill the descendants of Amalek; to build G-d's Chosen House.

It would seem that these mitzvot should have been mentioned much earlier in his work if they were, in fact, so important! However, the Rambam chose to organize the Mishne Torah in this fashion to emphasize that the true and complete performance of all the mitzvot of the Torah will be attained only when a king rules over Israel. The Rambam then defines Moshiach as a king, who will not only redeem the Jews from exile, but also restore the observance of the Torah and the mitzvot to its complete state.

For many, this would seem a rather novel approach. Yet, the Torah states that "the world was created solely for Moshiach." This being the case, we certainly must do everything in our power to prepare ourselves for Moshiach's imminent arrival. What is within the power and reach of each individual, great and small? Good deeds, charity, studying concepts associated with Moshiach and the Redemption, fostering peace among family and friends, and actively anticipating his arrival each and every day. (From: L'Chaim 5757, #449) – [lchaimweekly.org](http://lchaimweekly.org)

## Smorgasbord

*A man once came to Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov (The "Besht," 1698-1760, founder of the Chassidic movement) and poured out his heart: "Rebbe!" he cried, "I don't understand what is happening to me. A while ago, I decided to dedicate myself to the service of the Almighty, and I immediately found myself invigorated with spiritual life: when I prayed, my soul soared in ecstasy; when I studied Torah, the gates of wisdom opened before me; when I did a mitzvah, I was suffused with a wonderful joy. But soon after, I lost it all. My prayers are dry. When I try to study, I stare for hours at the page without comprehending a word. My deeds have become mechanical and devoid of meaning. Rebbe, what happened?"*

*"Let me tell you a story," said the Besht. "A man once entered a shop in which all types of delicacies were displayed. He noticed that people were partaking of the food free of charge, with the consent and encouragement of the shopkeeper. So he decided that he, too, should take advantage of the shopkeeper's generosity. After sampling each dish on*

*the counter, he served himself a generous helping of a particularly appealing food.*

*"Wait a minute, my friend," objected the shopkeeper, "that would be 50 kopeks."*

*"But I don't understand," said the surprised 'customer.' "Why are you suddenly demanding payment? Up until now, you allowed me to eat for free!"*

*"Only because it is in my interest that people sample my wares," replied the shopkeeper, "so that they may learn how desirable they are. But after you have already tasted them and have appreciated their worth, it's time to start paying for your pleasure."*

*"Nothing worthwhile in life is free of charge," concluded the Besht, "particularly in matters of the spirit. The sublime pleasures of divine service can be acquired only with the currency of perseverance and toil. Nevertheless, the Almighty offers a free 'taste' of His intimacy to all who seek Him with a true heart. But once one has sampled these heavenly wares, it's time to get to work..." (Adapted from the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe by Yanki Tauber) – [meaningfullife.com](http://meaningfullife.com)*

THE TZEMACH TZEDEK TOLD REB HENDEL<sup>1</sup> AT YECHIDUS: "STUDY OF ZOHAR EXALTS THE SOUL; STUDY OF MIDRASH AROUSES THE HEART; TEHILLIM WITH TEARS SCOURS THE VESSEL. (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM TEVET 16).

FOOTNOTES

1. REB HENDEL WAS A CHASSID WHO EXEMPLIFIED MANY CHASSIDIC TRAITS - HUMILITY, WARMTH OF HEART, COMPASSION, FERVENT WORSHIP - THOUGH HE DID NOT EXCEL IN THE INTELLECTUAL MASTERY OF CHASSIDIC THOUGHT. AN ELDER CHASSID WHEN THE LATE REBBE, R. YOSEF YITZCHAK, WAS A CHILD, HE HAD A PROFOUND INFLUENCE ON THE REBBE-TO-BE, AND WAS OFTEN CITED IN THE REBBE'S SICHOT. ).

**Practice Makes Perfect**

*A higher state of consciousness does not come by sudden enlightenment. It is a matter of training yourself, every day, until you become used to seeing each thing in a higher way.*

From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe; rendered by Tzvi Freeman.

**PARTICIPATE IN WEEKLY CLASSES**

<u>Sunday</u>	8:00 AM	Gemara-Tractate Shabbos (men)
<u>Monday</u>	8:00 PM	Chumash (men and women)
<u>Tuesday</u>	8:00 PM	Gemara-Tractate Makos (men)
	9:00 PM	Tanya (men and women) with Rabbi Wolf
<u>Wednesday</u>	8:30 PM	Halacha and Tanya (women)
<u>Thursday</u>	10:00 AM	Chassidus (women)
	8:00 PM	Class for Beverly Hills Highschool Students
<u>Daily</u>	6:45 AM to 7:15 AM	Chasidus
	Between Mincha and Maariv	Halacha

**SHABBOS PARSHAS VAYECHI**

January 9, 2004

Candlelighting:(Los Angeles) 4:43 PM

Friday Mincha: 5:00 PM

**LATEST TIME FOR SHEMA: 9:29 AM**

**SHABBAT MORNING**

- Tanya 8:45 AM
- Shacharit 9:30 AM followed by Kiddush, Cholent & Farbrengen
- Chumash 4:05 PM
- Mincha 4:35 PM followed by Seuda Shlishit
- Shabbat ends 5:43 PM

**Yartzeits:** Esther Monkarsh – Teves 16, Alexander and Augusta Marshall – Teves 19.

**Happy Birthday** to Tammy Urman.

**Happy Anniversary** to Rabbi and Mrs. Shmuly Kornfeld, Avraham and Gilda Beroukhim.

**DAILY MINYONIM:**

**Shacharis: Mon-Fri: 6:00 AM and 7:30 AM**

**Sunday: 9:00 AM**

**Mincha/Maariv: 5:00 PM**

**GOOD SHABBOS!**