



The Community

Boruch Hashem

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Rabbi's Article

Jacob the Shepherd of Sheep

Jacob's primary occupation for twenty years was to shepherd the sheep of Laban, from which (-Genesis 30:43), "And the man became exceedingly wealthy, and he had prolific sheep," and even his, "and maidservants and manservants, and camels and donkeys," were through (-Rashi ibid), "He would sell his sheep at a high price and purchase all these for himself." Nevertheless, we find Jacob telling Esau (-ibid 32:6), first, "I have acquired oxen and donkeys," and only then, "sheep, (manservants, and maidservants)."

Being that, "The actions of forefathers are signs for their offspring (-MaHRSh"A, Avodah Zorah 8b; See Bereishit Rabbah 48:7)," hence, every Jew must spiritually have (i) the primary service of, "sheep," to the point of, "exceedingly wealthy," (ii) and nevertheless, we exchange of our sheep for, "maidservants and manservants, and camels and donkeys," and (iii) to Esau we mention, "sheep," after, "oxen and donkeys."

The Midrash (-Link; Shir HaShirim Rabba 2:16) teaches, "He (G-d) is a Father to me (Israel), and I am a son to Him... He is a Shepherd to me... I am His flock." In our Father/son, relationship with G-d, even though our soul is (-Likkutei Torah, R"H 62d), "All one (with G-d) and is not separated from Him, blessed be He, at all," nevertheless, the very title *son* denotes a separate existence, cherished and loved by his, *Father*. This relationship of G-d being our *Father*, and us being G-d's *son*, can only exist within the *Finite Light* of the *Order of Evolution*, which is the source of all creations, and hence, the relationship between this *Finite Light* and the *creation*. However, to the *Infinite Light*, which is *beyond* the *Order of Evolution* (-Ecclesiastics 4:8), "He has neither son nor brother," and there exists nothing (*Father/son*) but *Him*. Rather, within the *Infinite Light*, the existence and belovedness of Israel is as that of the *sheep* to their *Shepherd*, to Whom the sheep have no relational comparison of worth. Meaning that the existence and belovedness of Israel within the *Infinite Light* is not due to who Israel *is* (existence), but of their humility and self-negation (non-existence). This is the metaphor of Israel being like *sheep*, for (-Likkutei Torah, Emor 36a), "within sheep there is a greater nature of self-negation (obedience) that within any other animal."

In our service to G-d: The *Father/son* relationship is *Torah-study*, which begets the conscious existence of one's own intellect (*existence*). And even though, the doorstep into Torah-study is (-Brochot 17a), "May my soul be like dust to all," in order that there be, "Open my heart to Your Torah," nevertheless, this self-negation is but a *prerequisite* and *foundation* to Torah-study, while Torah-study itself demands the existence of one's intellect. The *Shepherd/sheep* relationship is *Mitzvot-observance*. The Hebrew word for *sheep* is *tzoin* (צאן) related to the word *yeziah* (יציאה), to *exit out of*. Meaning to exit from the, "Four cubits of Torah-study," to the *outside* service of *Mitzvot-observance*; refining and elevating the physical world into becoming a, "Dwelling place for Him." And it is specifically this service --of *stepping out of self*, descending into the physical realm and paradigm,-- which brings the humility and a negation of self and personal wants, in order to fulfill *G-d's* will and desire.

Jacob, in his *father's* house, in the category of *son*, was (-Genesis 25:27), "Jacob was... dwelling in tents," (-ibid, Rashi), "The (*Torah-study*) tent of Shem and the (*Torah-study*) tent of Eber." It is only when (-ibid 28:11), "And Jacob left (*יצא*)," the *Torah-study* tents, and became involved into the *Shepherd/sheep* service, in which Jacob *left* his own wants, *self-negation* (*sheep*), that Jacob was able to achieve, "And the man became (lit. *burst forth*) exceedingly wealthy." For only through *self-negation* (*sheep*) one *bursts out* of the finite confinement of the *Order of Evolution*, and reaches into the *Infinite Light*, *beyond* the *Order of Evolution*, the, "Exceedingly wealthy."

And just as Torah-study (*existence*) demands the prerequisite of self-negation, so too, *Mitzvot-observance* (*self-negation*) demands that it permeate our intellect (*existence*) with the, "be bold (*existence*) as a leopard... strong (*existence*) as a lion... not to be ashamed of scoffers." But, this *existence* must be built *only* upon the foundation of humility (*sheep*). Hence, Jacob sold *some* (not all!) *sheep* (*humility*) in order to buy, "(*existence*) maidservants and manservants, and camels and donkeys." However, when impressing upon Esau not to attack him, Jacob first puts forth, "I have acquired oxen and donkeys (*existence*)," and only then, "sheep, (*humility*)," letting Esau know that even Jacob's strength is not of his own, but that of his humility to G-d.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2022 ★ ח' כסלו תשפ"ג
Shabbat Candle Lighting: North Miami: 5:11 PM · Mincha: 5:30 PM

This Week...

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2022 ★ ט' כסלו תשפ"ג
BIRTHDAY & YAHRTZEIT: *The Mittler Rebbe*; [Rabbi Dovber Schneerson](#) (1773-1827)

TORAH READING: [Vayeitzei](#) (Genesis 28:10-32:3) · HAFTORAH: [Hosea](#): (11:7-12:14)
Talmud: 9:00 AM · Shacharit: 9:30 AM · Mincha 12:27 PM · Shabbat Ends: North Miami: 6:06 PM

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2022 ★ י' כסלו תשפ"ג
LIBERATION: *The Mittler Rebbe*; Rabbi Dovber Schneerson, [released from Czar's prison in 1826](#)