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# Hands-off parenting

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Parents always want the best for their children. We ensure that they are properly fed and clothed, that they receive a good education; we want them to get into good schools, to have good friends, and to eventually have good jobs. We'll even do things behind their backs that we believe will benefit them in the long run. We want their lives to be as easy as possible and that they are able to accomplish their dreams without having to worry about how it will come about.

Jacob certainly wanted all that and more for his own children, and he believed that clearing the path of obstacles for them was the right thing to do. That's why, on his deathbed, he attempted to tell his children when the final redemption of the Jewish people would occur. He was going to give them the exact date of the arrival of Moshiach, the long-awaited redeemer of the Jewish people.

He wanted to plant the seed that despite all the hardships they would endure—first in Egypt and later in the various exiles throughout history—there was an end in sight. And he believed that by informing them of what that end-date was, he would alleviate the suffering just enough to make them be able to get through it all, to make it bearable. In a way, he wanted to orchestrate the end of the exile before it even began.

Yet G-d made him forget what he was about to tell his children; He didn't want the Jewish people to be complacent and accept that things will eventually turn around regardless of what we do. Instead, Jacob blessed them each individually with a blessing based on their unique characteristics. Rather than telling them when it will all end, he provided them with the capabilities they would need to make it to the end.

Jacob wanted the absolute best for his descendants, and G-d reminded him that this requires the parent to provide the child with the right tools and to then let go and allow them to fly on their own.

Sure, there will one day be an end to the hardships and suffering, but we need to be proactive about it. Knowing the date it will happen will not only not help us get through the exile, it will quite possibly enhance the suffering and make things even more unbearable. When you see an end date so far off, what motivation do you have to keep moving along and trying to reach the goal? But when we know that our actions have the power to make a difference—and to even hasten the end date, to make it happen earlier than originally planned—that is how we relieve ourselves of the burden of exile.

By being an active participant in bringing about the ultimate redemption with Moshiach, not just sitting there and waiting for it to happen on its own, that's how we uplift the morale of our families and our communities. A single mitzvah performed on an individual level, by a single Jewish person, can make all the difference; not just for that person but for the entire world. That's infinitely more effective than knowing the date of Moshach's arrival, and G-d wants us to be constantly aware of this in order to be able to make the best of it.

Then, when Moshiach comes, we will be able to point to the changes we've affected in the world and proudly take credit for them. May it happen sooner than we ever imagined!

