

SHABBAT GUIDE

VAYETZE

ABOUT THE STORY OF VAYETZE

Vayetze means, "he went out." The message for humanity is that it is only when we "go out" of ourselves, leaving our comfort zones and rising above our nature and our selfish desires, that we begin our true spiritual journey. In this story, Jacob had to "go out" to embark on his path toward becoming "Israel"—the conduit of energy for the nation of Israel. By connecting with this particular reading, we can acquire the power to leave behind our own imperfect nature in order to make a dramatic change in our life and create a new destiny.

MICHAEL BERG ON VAYETZE

It says in the portion *Vayetze* that Jacob has a dream, and then he wakes up. In the dream he sees a ladder, with angels going up and down. The Zohar tells us that this place, both in physical space and time, was destined to reveal great Light. Both the Torah and the Zohar mention that Jacob wakes up from his sleep and, as if he's upset at himself, says, "The Creator is here too! How did I not know that? Why did I let myself sleep?"

Why is Jacob beating himself up for not knowing that was such a powerful place and time? We don't know when or where great Light is going to be revealed. The Zohar explains that there is a secret here in what Jacob is telling himself. When Jacob says, "I didn't know," it is like he is asking, "How can all of this have been revealed to me and I've not pushed myself to know more, pushed myself to perfect my connection?"

What Jacob said to himself is something that we have to be saying to ourselves every day, all the time. What Jacob gives us on this Shabbat, and the secret of the words he is saying, the Zohar tells us, is an awareness of pushing ourselves in a completely different way towards perfection.



CONSCIOUSNESS FOR NEXT WEEK

Next week's Zohar portion, *Vayishlach*, contains the energy of angels, or spiritual assistance and protection. By practicing restriction of the ego, we draw the nuanced support of angels. This week, remember to fight your ego at every opportunity and take on extra actions of sharing.

CANDLE LIGHTING

We light candles at specific times and with pure intentions in order to establish a connection to the energy available. Like flipping the light switch upon entering a dark room, the simple act of lighting candles initiates a flow of energy.

EVENING CONNECTION (KABBALAT SHABBAT)

On Friday nights, we sing songs, recite kabbalistic prayers, and consume blessed wine and bread. These acts invite the energy of Shabbat into our lives and enhance our connection to the Light.

SHABBAT DINNER

The first of three meals, we bless the wine and bread before enjoying our Shabbat dinner. These kabbalistic blessings help us connect with our inner desire to share.

BIRKAT HAMAZON (PRAYERS AFTER EATING)

After eating the first meal, we engage in the Birkat Hamazon prayer. Reciting this prayer shows our appreciation for the food and our connection to the Light.

MORNING CONNECTION (SHACHARIT)

On Saturday mornings, we gather to recite prayers and meditate on our relationship with the Light. The energy awakened by the Morning Connection awakens the spiritual force of mercy, which helps keep chaos and judgment from our lives.

CONSCIOUSNESS LECTURE

In the Consciousness Lecture, we learn about the portion of the week that will be read during the Torah reading. This lecture helps us truly understand the forthcoming teachings and explains in detail the kabbalistic principles behind the stories.

TORAH READING

The Torah is read aloud, in Hebrew, by a Kabbalah Centre teacher. The stories of the Torah are actually codes that, when decoded, transmit energy and repel negativity for the week to come.

AFTERNOON CONNECTION

In the Afternoon Connection, we engage in prayers that strengthen our connection following the reading of the Torah.

SHABBAT LUNCH

During Shabbat Lunch, we sing a number of songs in Aramaic and Hebrew, many of which were written by history's greatest kabbalists. They help us manifest the Desire to Share aspect of the Morning Connection.

THIRD MEAL

The third meal is the highest point of Shabbat, known for its tremendous healing properties. This includes a blessing for hand washing, a connection with bread, and special prayers and meditations for creating positive change within ourselves and all of humanity.

EVENING CONNECTION

The Evening Connection consists of unique kabbalistic prayer and song. These recitations bring Shabbat to a close and help us determine our energy for the new week to come.

HAVDALAH

Havdalah refers to the verbal declaration made at the end of Shabbat that is recited once the sun sets on Saturday night. We say the Havdalah to demonstrate our appreciation for the Light, and to ask it for spiritual sustenance in the upcoming week.