

SHABBAT GUIDE

VAYISHLACH

ABOUT THE STORY OF VAYISHLACH

Vayishlach means, "to send away." This word encompasses the energy and consciousness required to let go of something or someone. Often, we have difficulty detaching ourselves from negative people and situations, but this particular story of Genesis gives us the power to do so.

MICHAEL BERG ON VAYISHLACH

In the first part of the story in the portion Vayishlach, Jacob decides to meet with his brother Esau. The kabbalists explain that the fight between Jacob and Esau is not a fight between two brothers, but rather it is a fight between energies that exist, energies that every single one of us experiences every day. Jacob represents the Light, our soul, and the part of us that wants to change and grow, while Esau represents the negative aspect that wants to take us backwards. And this portion is really a pinnacle of that battle.

There is a verse in this portion that says, "The Creator will send his angels to protect you in all of your ways." How do you achieve this level of protection? By understanding and being aware of both the spiritual and physical battles that we go through every day, and by understanding that we can't possibly win this battle by ourselves and that we need the support of the Light of the Creator. This is one of the great gifts of this Shabbat - to be able to access the assistance of angels to protect and support us in our world.

The angels that protect us and assist us cannot come on their own. Only when a person is able to achieve the *Shechinah*, the female aspect of the Light of the Creator, can the protection of the angels surround that person as well. And we bring the *Shechinah* to rest within us through the work that we do, through

transforming, and through restricting anger and all of the things that disconnect us from the Light of the Creator.

This understanding should be what drives both our restriction and our push to do extra actions of sharing that are outside of our nature. Because in so doing, we draw the Light of the *Shechinah* further and stronger into ourselves, allowing those angels to come and surround us in a much more powerful way, giving us greater assistance and protection.



CONSCIOUSNESS FOR NEXT WEEK

The upcoming portion of Vayeshev compels us to awaken a connection to the Light in others. The energy available can turn us into conduits of Light for more than just ourselves. This week, look for opportunities to genuinely share—without pretense—your Light with other people.

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.