

HOW ARE YOU DOING?

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

And Yaakob made a vow saying, "If G-d will be with me, and will guard me on this path on which I am going; and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear; and I will return safely to my father's home...." [Beresheet 28:20,21]

While running away from his incensed brother Esav, Yaakob Abinu a'h fell asleep on the spot where the Holy Temple, [Bet Hamikdash] was to be built hundreds of years later. He experienced a prophetic vision know to all as the "Ladder Dream" wherein G-d promised that not only would He protect him during his exile in Laban's home but He also promised that Yaakob would become the Patriarch of a great family -- the base unit of the Chosen People. Upon awakening he declared the place on which he slept as "holy ground" and vowed to return and build a Sanctuary to Hashem on the very place where he saw the ladder reach the heavens -- so long as G-d provided him with "some bread to eat and some clothing to wear".

The great Sage, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveichik, better known as the Brisker Rav, once visited the city of Minsk. Many of the townspeople excitedly visited the esteemed guest to ask questions of Jewish law, advice on life issues like marriage and career, or to get a blessing from the world- renowned Torah giant. Amongst those who came was a former student of the Rav who had left the Yeshivah world to venture into the world of business. The Rav greeted him enthusiastically and warmly inquired, "How are you doing?" The young man was flattered by the Rav's interest and he replied, "Barukh Hashem, I have a good business and a good partner. The business is growing every day."

The Rav did not react. He continued to greet others who had waited to see him, as his former student watched in awe at the Rav's ability to make each person feel important. The Rav surprised the young man when he again asked, "How are you doing?" Although taken aback the man patiently answered as if he had not already replied once before. And again, although the inquiry seemed so warm and caring, there was no comment or reaction forthcoming from his former teacher, the Brisker Rav.

When the Rav asked a third time, "How are you doing?", the student humbly replied, "Rabbi, how come you keep asking me the same question and over and over?" The Rav responded softly, "I asked again because it was obvious from your reply that you did not understand my question. The Gemara clearly states "everything is in the hands of Heaven except for the fear of Heaven. [Berakhot 33b]. This means that a person's financial condition, health and social standing etc are all pre-determined by G-d. Only spiritual matters are determined by the human being. If a person succeeds

in the material aspects of his or her life, there is no cause to be so proud nor should lack of success cause depression --all of the material world is in G-d's hands. But spiritual achievement is produced by the efforts of the human being. That is his accomplishment. When I asked "how are you doing?", I was asking about your consistency and growth in Torah learning, your success in keeping the commandments and doing good deeds. My intention was to find out how YOU are doing. Instead you told me about all that Hashem is doing for you."

When Yaakob made his vow he clarified his priorities and his beliefs. "If G-d will be with me... and give me some bread to eat and some clothing to wear", i.e. the material is in G-d's control, I pray HE will provide for me. "And I will return b'shalom --spiritually whole-- to my father's home", i.e. through my efforts to perfect my service to Him. The lives of our Patriarch's are lessons to us. We must always pray that G-d will provide what we need to survive in the material world and we must do OUR best to develop ourselves into the spiritually great people we are capable of becoming if WE do our best.

Shabbat Shalom

DID YOU KNOW THAT

If a Jew cooked food intentionally on Shabbat that food becomes forbidden to the one who cooked it forever-- [the cook may not eat it even after Shabbat]. After Shabbat is over, others may partake of the illegally cooked food, even if his intention was to cook the food for others. If a person should unintentionally cook food on Shabbat--[perhaps they did not realize it was Shabbat yet or perhaps they did not know that what they were doing was an activity forbidden on Shabbat etc] the food is forbidden to be eaten by the cook them self and by others, however, after Shabbat both the cook as well as others may eat the food immediately. There is no need to wait after Shabbat the time it would take to prepare the food. [Source Yalkut Yosef, Siman 318:1,2]

CONSIDER THIS FOR A MINUTE

The sefer Seder Hayom explains that any person can repent and return to G- d. Penitence should be based on pleading and crying to G-d. Should a person sincerely try to make Teshuba [repentance], G-d will create special circumstances to assist the person's sincere efforts. Another key to successful return to G-d is to go early and stay late in the synagogue and the study hall. By doing so the person spends more and more of his time involved in the things that prompt service to Hashem like Torah study and prayer. [Seder Hayom 89b] Text Copyright © 2004 by [Rabbi Raymond Beyda](#) and [Torah.org](#).