

**VAYISHLACH**  
Thought of the Week  
A Living Flame  
By Rabbi Shlomo Truzman

Perhaps it is a bit early for a Hanukkah story, but judging by the premise that the present and future are but one step away from each other, theoretically, Hanukkah is but a few days away. This being said the story is told about a G-d fearing Shamash (Synagogue Caretaker) who neglected to put sufficient oil to light the Synagogue's Ner Tamid perpetual light. It turned out that during Arvit prayers, the Ner Tamid flame went out, to everyone's dismay, all fingers pointed at the distraught Shamash.

The Synagogue's Rabbi, as a form of penance, commissioned Yaacob, his Shamash, to travel from village to village, return with a living flame and present it before the Rabbi.

Bewildered and confused, Yaakov set out the following morning to do his master's perplexing bidding. "How am I to bring back a living flame, what exactly does the Rabbi have in mind?" He kept muttering to himself.

It was nightfall when he arrived at the only Inn in the village. He prayed Arvit and since it was the eve of Hanukkah, he readied himself to light it.

Realizing that he had brought everything but candles, he looked all over the place for the Inn's proprietor.

He was nowhere to be found. Instead, he saw a young boy that appeared quite immersed reading Midrashic stories. He asked the boy regarding the whereabouts of the Inn's owner.

The boy deferentially responded that his father, the Inn's owner, was at home with his mother, brothers and sisters, lighting the Hanukkah candles, and that when he overheard his father telling his mother that a sage from the neighboring village was lodging at the Inn, he volunteered to come and help be of service to him.

Marveling at the boy's kindness, Yaakov asked the boy why would he leave his family on Hanukkah eve and deprive himself of the joy of celebrating with his family to serve a complete stranger.

The boy responded. "is the light of Hanukkah that lasts eight days, greater than the flame of Torah which burns forever, that I should not be close to it now that it has arrived to our Inn? Besides, you are in need of candles."

As the boy handed over the candles, Yaakov asked him his name.

"Meir (literally, he that gives light), is my name," the boy responded.

"Indeed, a fitting name for a young man commissioned by heaven to be my Meir, my light, the living flame my master described."

Yaakov brought the boy back to the Rabbi where he stayed to become a great Torah luminary, the great sage Rabbi Meir.

A spark of Jewish spirituality can become a living flame. Such a spark is within all of us, especially in the souls of our children, ready to ignite at any moment's notice into a living flame.

May we be blessed to see it continually burning in our progeny.  
Shabbat Shalom and Hanukkah Alegre.

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