

Parshas Vayigash-Hashem Is With Yaakov Eternally
By Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

In Bereishis 45:4, we read how Hashem promises Yaakov that he will be with him as he goes down to Mitzrayim. The verse reads: "I will descend with you to Mitzrayim and I will also bring you up and Yosef will place his hand over your eyes." Yaakov is leaving Eretz Yisroel to join Yosef regarding whom he has just been informed is still living. Yaakov is leaving Eretz Yisroel at this point again not knowing what to expect. He knows Mitzrayim is a major center of world events. He also knows how Mitzrayim's decadent culture and lifestyle can be very harmful to his children and future descendents. He is very concerned. Will they stay descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov and fulfill their mission to bring Hashem's message to the world? Hashem assures Yaakov that they will. They will not assimilate. They will emerge as the Bnai Yisroel. Hashem will see to it at every stage that they will not be facing their exile alone and forgotten. Hashem is with Yaakov now and he will be with him eternally through his children.

During the time of the gulf war, in the early 1990's, the Mashgiach, Harav Michel Barenbaum, zt"l, quoted the above verse in a mussar schmooze during that time. The United States was at war with Iraq. At the same time missiles were being sent to Eretz Yisroel by hostile nations as well. It was a time of great fear and uncertainty for all of the free world but especially for Am Yisroel. During that time, the Mashgiach quoted the above verse in his weekly mussar schmooze. His message to us was that we know Hashem is with us at this time even if we do not see it directly. We are assured by Hashem's promise to Yaakov that when he goes into exile he does not go alone. This is true not only of Galus Mitzrayim but every future galus. When Am Yisroel goes into galus, Hashem also goes with us. Just as Hashem did great miracles when we were in Mitzrayim and when he took us out, so too, will he do miracles for us as well. We have to keep up our emunah and say Tehillim that we should be open enough to see the great miracles and be worthy of being saved. Indeed a number of miracles did take place at that time. A number of incidents were reported of missiles landing in Eretz Yisroel in vacant lots in heavily populated cities. Had the missiles landed only a short distance away, the casualties from the explosions would have been horrific. We need to open ourselves and see that even today Hashem continues to do miracles for us. Hashem IS with us, the children of Yaakov and will stand by us till the final geulah.