

LAMPLIGHTER

28 Cheshvan
Toldos
1010
25 November
5772/2011

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The True Heir

By Naftali Silberberg

This week's Torah portion, Toldot, begins with the words, "These are the generations of Isaac, the son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac." What is the meaning of the repetition in this verse? By stating "the son of Abraham" and "Abraham begot Isaac" - two ways of expressing the same idea - the Torah offers us the reason for "the generations of Isaac":

The generations of Isaac are the consequence of Abraham having begotten Isaac.

Abraham, as the Torah relates, was "one" - the only Jew in the entire world. The whole world stood in opposition to Abraham, as the name "Ivri - Hebrew" (from the word "eiver - side") - implies. The entire world was on one side and Abraham on the other. Nonetheless, Abraham persisted in his mission to make G-d's Name known, as it states, "And he called there in the name of the L-rd, G-d of the world."

This approach was passed on to Abraham's son Isaac as an inheritance, thereby paving the way for the possibility of future "generations of Isaac" - both in the spiritual sense (according to the explanation of our Sages that the primary "descendants" of the righteous are their Torah, mitzvot (commandments) and good deeds) and the physical sense, actual offspring.

This contains a lesson for every Jew in his daily life. When a Jew takes a look at the world he is apt to become discouraged. Evil people seem to prosper and flourish, and countless obstacles stand in the way of his service of G-d. For most of the day he must involve himself in mundane affairs; it is an ongoing struggle to bring holiness into his life. The Jew is liable to wonder where he will get the strength to observe the commandments and perform good deeds. How can he withstand the many trials that he must endure?

The answer is contained in this week's Torah portion.

"The deeds of the forefathers are a sign for their children" - and not only a sign or indication of how they should conduct themselves, but an infusion of strength. "Abraham begot Isaac" - Abraham was the rock from which Isaac was hewn, and the source of strength for all Jews. Just as Abraham did not flinch at taking on the entire world, spreading the belief in one G-d and the knowledge that "there is none but Him," so too must every single one of Abraham's descendants take courage in his ability to overcome all hindrances and impediments that come his way.

By striving to fulfil "the generations of Isaac" in the spiritual sense, i.e., Torah, mitzvot and good deeds, we thereby merit to become "the generations of Isaac" in the literal sense as well, vanquishing the enemies of G-d and His Torah in preparation for the conquest of the holy land, at the hands of Moshiach.

(From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

When Jacob outsmarted Esau and received his father Isaac's blessings, Esau was outraged. "He cried out a great and bitter cry, and he said to his father, 'Bless me too, O my father!'... And Esau raised his voice and wept." Esau had been anticipating these blessings for many years, and for decades long Esau had feigned religious observance because he wanted his father to believe that he was worthy of these blessings. He was utterly devastated when he realized that he, the on-the-ball, worldly hunter, had been outwitted by his religious "goody-goody" brother.

It is remarkable that this person who was a murderer, rapist and glutton was so eager to receive the blessing of a tzaddik (righteous person). Esau wasn't out for a large inheritance; after all, Isaac was an elderly, blind person who had nothing to offer other than his blessings. Rather, as someone who was raised in the households of Abraham and Isaac, he was well aware of the value of a tzaddik's blessing. Esau was a Jew who was born to a Jewish mother, and therefore possessed a Jewish soul which imbued him with a strong belief in G-d and the super-natural. His "Jewish heart," however, did not manifest itself in his immoral lifestyle, which was contrary to all he had learned in his father's home. He knew what was right, but was unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices to live an ethical, spiritual life.

The Divine plan determined that Jacob, not Esau, receive the blessings. For Jacob was a Jew not only at heart, but in practice as well. With faith alone we cannot accomplish the mission of revealing G-dliness in this world, and transforming ourselves and the world around us into a Divine abode. Only through actually practicing Torah and mitzvot can this goal be achieved.

In microcosm, many can relate to Esau's dilemma. Most people know what is proper, but oftentimes lack the strength and willpower to implement that which is proper into their daily lives. We must always remember that only the practice of Torah and mitzvot makes us a worthy receptacle for Divine blessings. Faith isn't a product of our labour; it naturally exists within every Jew due to our G-dly soul which was instilled within us. Blessings must be earned. Only the hard work of applying the faith in everyday life makes a person worthy of all of G-d's blessings.

Slice of LIFE

A Soldier's Struggle to Eat Kosher

By Dovid Zaklikowski

Living under Soviet rule, Aharon Chazan, 24, was constantly under the watchful eyes of the communists. A staunchly religious Jew, he refused to buckle under communist pressure and abandon his religious practices and beliefs.

In 1936, Stalin ordered all citizens to complete a census form. Everyone needed to record their name, family relationships, nationality, and whether they believed in G-d. Aharon encouraged his friends and acquaintances to declare their belief in G-d, explaining that to falsely answer this question on the census form would constitute a grave rejection of G-d and the Jewish religion. He knew that "counter-revolutionary" activities like this carried a major risk of incarceration or worse, so he decided to beseech G-d's mercy by traveling to the resting places of righteous sages buried in Russia, to ask them to intercede On High on his behalf.

He was granted a month's leave from the factory where he worked, and he travelled to Mezeritch and Berditchev.

In Berditchev, Aharon found the three synagogues mostly filled with elderly people; many of the youth had already abandoned regular synagogue attendance and religious practice.

"One morning, a young man, Sholom Friedman, approached Aharon in one of the Berditchev synagogues and invited him to his home. Aharon told him that he had to catch a train and wouldn't have time. The man wouldn't relent, and continued to beg Aharon to come to his home. Finally, Aharon agreed.

Sholom's parents, Rochel and Zushe, were fighters for the Jewish faith. After their synagogue had been shuttered, the family brought the synagogue to their home. Under Rochel's loving warmth and hospitality, their home was open to all guests passing through town, many on the run from the Soviets.

The Friedmans placed great emphasis on educating their children to fear G-d, and not to be intimidated by the

communist regime. The Friedman children were not educated in Soviet schools; rather, they were educated at home and in clandestine Jewish schools. The Friedman parents loved their children tremendously, and the children, in turn, deeply honoured their parents.

Aharon learned that Sholom had been keenly interested in him all along, having heard about Aharon's activities from a mutual friend. Sholom soon told Aharon that he thought his sister, Leah, would be a fitting match for him. The Friedman and Chazan parents corresponded, and it was agreed that Aharon would meet Leah. Aharon was immediately impressed by Leah's demeanour, her noble bearing, and her pledge to firmly support his commitment to Jewish tradition, no matter the consequences. They decided to marry, and the wedding date was set for June 14, 1937.

Though at the time most Jewish weddings were held in secrecy, the elderly Friedmans would not let that happen. Celebrating a Jewish wedding was a rare joy during those dark days. Hundreds came to the wedding, many of them Soviet secret police, who, as always, were spying on the happenings in the Friedman home.

A week later Zushe passed away, but his family upheld his legacy by continuing to run a synagogue from their home, open to any Jew in need.

A short while after Aharon and Leah's first daughter, Devorah, was born, Aharon was drafted into the army. Conscription into the Soviet army was a frightening prospect for anyone, as many soldiers were killed on the front lines. Aharon tearfully bade farewell to his family, hoping, G-d willing, he would see them again.

Aharon was strictly observant of the kosher laws. After the first morning of rigorous training, while his fellow soldiers went to eat lunch, Aharon roamed the hallways. He would not eat a lunch composed of non-kosher ingredients. "Chazan, why are you here?" asked an officer whom he encountered. "Are you not supposed to be eating now?" Chazan told the officer that he had already eaten. The officer did not believe him, and ordered him to join him for the meal.

They were served two plates of simmering non-kosher meat. With visible

delight, the officer dug into his plate of delicious food.

"Why are you not eating? The meat is very tasty," the officer exclaimed. Aharon sat quietly, silently praying to G-d to save him from this severe predicament. "Eat, eat!" the officer angrily barked. "Are you trying to short-change the army? If you do not eat, you will receive the severe punishment you deserve. Take the spoon and eat now!"

Aharon told the angry officer that he could not eat, as his stomach was hurting him. The officer snarled loudly, "Sick?! You are not sick!"

Aharon remained silent.

Seething in anger, the officer sent him to the army hospital, along with a note to the doctor demanding a diagnosis. "If you are healthy," the officer warned, "you will be court-martialed!"

Aharon was terrified. He'd surely be found healthy and ordered before a court. If convicted of treason and evasion, he could easily be executed. What would be with his wife and young daughter?

The hospital only received patients in the afternoon, so Aharon spent several hours trying to induce symptoms of illness. He drank a lot of water, hoping to become bloated. He did a lot of running, hoping to speed up his heart rate.

The doctor quizzically read the officer's note, and questioned Aharon about his supposed condition. Aharon explained that he suffered from stomach issues and an abnormal heart rate. An examination ensued, and Aharon feared the worst when the doctor quickly scribbled a return note, sealed it in an envelope and told him to deliver it to the officer.

Aharon returned to his unit, downcast, and handed the note to the officer, who eagerly rubbed his hands, excited at the opportunity to indict a Jew. Only moments later, however, the officer stormed angrily from the room, leaving the note on the table.

The note stated: "Mr. Chazan is unhealthy and unfit for army service." Aharon was duly discharged.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, many of Aharon and Leah's grandchildren have returned to the former Soviet Union, where they serve as Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries.

Published by **The Chabad House of Caulfield** in conjunction with the **Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.**

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ISSUE 1010

MOSHIACH MATTERS

"And it will be on that day, he will blow a great Shofar, and the lost people of Ashur will come...."

Even before Moshiach comes, some of these prophecies have come in to affect, at least in the spiritual sense; The shofar sound - as in Rosh Hashana - arouses us to return. Before the coming of Moshiach the great Shofar is blown, we now witness a phenomenon like never before, so many Jews which had not been connected to their roots - perhaps for generations - now return to their roots and yearn to get close to their creator. Indeed their soul hears the sound of "the great Shofar".



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

The Touchstone

Elul 22, 5721 (September 3, 1961)

The Torah, our guide to life, tells us that regarding all matters "[G-d] has set before you life and good, and death and evil" with the hope that, as the verse concludes, "you shall choose life"...

But the evil inclination often garbs itself in nice and virtuous garments, enticing the person with arguments that on the surface seem righteous and just. How then goes the famous question—might a person know if a certain argument has been put forth by the good drives in the heart or by the evil ones?

One way is to examine your long-term feelings about what you have done. When a person is driven to do an evil act by a surge of lust and desire, he inevitably has feelings of regret afterwards; indeed, the more time goes by (taking him further away from the temporal rewards of his evil deed), the stronger these feelings grow. On the other hand, with a good deed, a person only becomes more and more satisfied over time with the choice he made...

Religion, State, and the Ten Commandments

... You write concerning those who are thinking to "separate between religion and state"... The Jewish faith unites two extremes (which only seem to be in contradiction to each other). On the one hand, it includes the most abstract concepts, such as the unity of G-d, the unity of creation, [the concept that the world was created] ex nihilo, etc. On the other hand it instructs the daily life of man down to its most minute details, including the most simple and mundane things.

We see this also in the Ten Commandments, which begin with the commandment "I am the L-rd your G-d...", whose inner meaning is the negation of any true reality except the reality of G-d, and concludes with commandments such as "Do not kill," which pertain to the lowliest instincts in man.

This teaches us that there cannot be any separation between religious and mundane matters in Jewish life. On the contrary: as is the case on the micro-level of personal life, unity and harmony on the macro-level of social life can be achieved only via the synthesis of the two domains--by integrating the spiritual into the material and thereby refining the material. Hence the all-time motto of our sages, of blessed memory: "The essential thing is not study, but deed." Though they occupied themselves with the study of the secrets of the Torah and the most sublime concepts, they also elaborated, in exacting detail, on practical matters, including matters--such as eating and drinking--that seem petty and insignificant. But this is the touchstone of any individual or ideology...

CUSTOMS CORNER

Continuation from last week regarding the laws of the Amida.

1. If one desires to add in a little prayer [ex. To pray for a specific person in the (8th) blessing, which is a prayer for the sick, or] in any of the blessings [except for the 1st 3 blessings and the last 3 blessings], he may do so, though he must make sure that it is brief. However in the blessing of Shma kolainu [the 16th blessing], or after the 1st Y'hiyu l'ratson [at the very end of the Amida], he may add his prayer, and he need not shorten it. Also he must make sure that his addition is at the end of the blessing.
2. At the points in the Amida where we bow down in the Amida, we make sure not to bow lower than the waist. When we straighten up we 1st pick up our heads, than our backs. We make sure to straighten up in a slow fashion.

A WORD

from the Director

This Shabbat is Shabbat Mevarchim, when we bless the upcoming month of Kislev.

Kislev is a month of celebration, when we commemorate many joyous occasions. A recurring theme throughout the festivities of Kislev is freedom.

On the 10th day of Kislev, 1826, the second Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Dovber (the Mitteler Rebbe), was released from his incarceration in Czarist Russia for his work in spreading Jewish teachings.

Decades earlier, on the 19th of Kislev in the year 1798, his father, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the founder of Chabad Chasidism, was released from imprisonment on trumped up charges of anti-government activities. (Two years later, when Rabbi Shneur Zalman was imprisoned once again, he was also released in the month of Kislev, on the third night of Chanuka.) And on Chanuka, which is celebrated for eight days beginning on the 25th of Kislev, we celebrate the victory of the Jewish people over their mighty Hellenic oppressors, and their subsequent freedom to once again follow in the ways of the Torah. We also celebrate the freedom of our Holy Temple, which the Hellenists had defiled and desecrated. Once the Jews cleansed and purified the Temple, it was free to be used for its holy purpose, bringing the Jewish people closer to G-d.

Torah in general, and Chasidic teachings in particular, help free and liberate us from our personal or self-imposed "prisons." Throughout the month of Kislev, then, it is appropriate to increase in our study of Torah. Surely this study will help us reflect upon how best to use the opportunities available to us today because of religious freedom.

And let us pray that G-d speedily grant us the ultimate freedom, the revelation of Moshiach. For then we will truly be free to serve G-d, in the third and final Holy Temple.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED

Once...

Gold and Silver

By Bentzion Elisha

A follower of the chassidic leader Reb Mottel of Chernobyl had a particular habit which came to light when he visited Reb Mottel to request a blessing. Reb Mottel asked the visitor to recount his typical daily schedule. The young man explained that he began each day by buying goods for his business from the local landowner. Following that, he would recite the morning prayers, after which he began to sell his wares.

"Why do you buy your merchandise before you pray in the morning?" asked Reb Mottel.

The young man explained, "Why, if I waited until after prayers, the only goods remaining would be of inferior quality, if not sold out entirely!" Upon hearing that, Reb Mottel shared a story with his follower.

There was once a teacher of Jewish studies, whose livelihood entailed traveling far from his hometown to teach Jewish children in distant cities. He was often away from his home for a year or more at a time. Meanwhile his wife and children lived the year without him, borrowing and living on credit.

This teacher was paid for his services with coins. The wealthy gave him gold coins, the middle class paid with silver coins, and people of more modest means paid with copper or nickel coins.

The teacher had made a belt for himself where he would hang the various bags. Each bag carried a different type of coin. He had a bag for his gold coins, a bag for his silver coins, a bag for his nickel coins and a bag for his copper coins.

After the year of teaching was up, he headed back home. As the first Shabbat on his voyage approached, he knew he would have to remove his belt, as carrying money on Shabbat is forbidden. But he didn't know where to hide his money bags.

He decided to bury his earnings in the ground, and retrieve them after Shabbat. But just as he was about to finish his digging, he heard some people in the distance. Paranoia set in, and he became alarmed by the possibility that if he could hear them, they could probably see him, and his money wasn't safe.

Now pressed for time, he grabbed the belt with the bags of coins and ran to the local Jewish inn, where he handed the innkeeper the entire bundle in a furious hurry for safekeeping. Shabbat began, and the teacher was livid with himself. He had just given the innkeeper his entire year's earnings without even a note or receipt mentioning the amount of money being held. It would be so easy for the innkeeper to deny safeguarding the coins, and his whole year's pay would be lost.

Thoughts of his wife and children flooded his mind. What would they do? How would they face the creditors? His imagination took off, leaving him worried and on edge for the entire Shabbat.

The innkeeper sensed his guest's troubled condition and, as soon as Shabbat departed, he recited the evening prayers very quickly, and placed the belt with the bags of coins in front of the teacher, who was still reciting the silent Amidah prayer.

To the amazement of the innkeeper, in the middle of his supplications the teacher opened the bag of gold coins and started counting them one by one. He saw that all the coins were still there. Nevertheless, he took out the bag with the silver coins and started counting them next. All the silver coins were also still there, yet his concern and worry did not dissipate. He then started counting the nickel

coins, and then the copper coins, and finally returned to his prayers. The innkeeper, who had observed the entire process, was taken aback and perplexed.

When the teacher finished his prayers, the innkeeper confronted him. "After you saw I hadn't taken any of your gold coins, why did you not trust that I hadn't taken any of your silver coins, which are much less valuable? And after you counted the silver coins too, and saw I took nothing, why didn't you trust me then? You continued to count the ridiculously less valuable nickel and copper coins."

Mottel of Chernobyl turned to the young man before him and said, "I want to ask you the same question the innkeeper asked the teacher. Every single morning, G-d has given you back your soul, your body, your very life-the equivalent of gold and silver coins. What makes you think he won't also give you your livelihood-your nickel and copper coins? You should increase your trust, and believe that G-d will give you your physical sustenance too. There is no need to rush off to buy goods before morning prayers."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

"Please pour into me some of this red stuff" (Gen. 25:30)

It seems strange that someone as coarse and ill-mannered as Esau, would use the word "please." The Hebrew word for "please," na, can also be translated as "raw." Because Esau was so hungry and so lacking in manners, he gruffly ordered Jacob pour some of the "raw red stuff" down his throat. (*Iturei Torah*)

And Jacob said, "Sell me this day your birthright." (Gen. 25:31)

This transaction took place on the day of Abraham's passing. But, while the whole world was mourning this great loss, his own grandson Esau was out hunting. When Jacob discovered this, he resolved to acquire the birth-right, saying to Esau, "Sell me your birth-right because of what happened this day. You are unworthy of so lofty a spiritual identity." (*Harav B. Berzan*)

"And stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury turn away; until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets that which you have done to him" (Gen. 27:44-45)

Rebecca was aware that Jacob hated Esau, just as Esau hated Jacob. So she repeated the words "until your brother's anger turns away." Jacob asked her how he would know when Esau was no longer angry at him, and Rebecca replied, "When you your self are no longer angry." (*Pardes Yosef*)

"May G-d grant you the dew of heaven... Nations will serve you..." (Gen. 27:28, 29)

The first blessing Isaac gave to Jacob was the dew from the heavens. This refers to the special dew G-d will use to bring the dead back to life at the time of the Resurrection of the Dead in the Messianic Era. Isaac also blessed Jacob that of hers nations would serve him. G-d gave the same promise for the times of the Redemption, as it says in Isaiah, "Kings will be your babysitters and princesses your nursemaids." (*Breishit Rabba*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 25 NOVEMBER 2011

BEGINS	ENDS
8:01MELBOURNE	9:06
7:50ADELAIDE	8:52
6:06BRISBANE	7:03
6:38DARWIN	7:31
6:05GOLD COAST	7:03
6:44PERTH	7:44
7:27SYDNEY	8:28
7:39CANBERRA	8:41
8:03LAUNCESTON	9:11
8:00AUCKLAND	9:03
8:12WELLINGTON	9:20
8:06HOBART	9:16
7:06BYRON BAY	8:04



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS TOLDOT
29 CHESHVAN • 26 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:01 PM
	MINCHA:	8:10 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:45 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	TEHILIM:	8:30 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:30 AM
	THE MOLAD OF THE MONTH OF KISLEV	
	IS FRIDAY NOVEMBER 25 6:36 AND 16 CHALAKIM PM	
WEEKDAYS:	MINCHA:	8:00 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:06 PM
	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:15 PM
	MAARIV:	9:05 PM