

LAMPLIGHTER

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Vayeitzei

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Vayeitzei, we read how Jacob left the home of his righteous father Isaac, left his studies in the yeshiva of Shem and Eber, and went to the home of the evil Laban in Charan. There he began a new chapter in his life, working as a shepherd day and night. Until then Jacob had concentrated on spiritual service, devoting himself solely to the study of Torah. In Charan, however, Jacob's focal point shifted, and he now found himself involved in more mundane tasks.

Surprisingly, it was precisely in Charan that Jacob achieved his highest level of success, as we are told, "And the man increased exceedingly." Jacob became very wealthy, both literally and figuratively. Moreover, it was there that Jacob married and established the Twelve Tribes, the foundation upon which the entire Jewish people would later be built.

But how is it possible that Jacob experienced his greatest success in a place as lowly as Charan? Why was it necessary for the Jewish people to establish its beginnings in such a sordid environment? (Charan is related to the Hebrew word for anger or wrath.)

A similar question can be asked about G-d's desire for a "dwelling place" in our physical world. Of all the higher celestial planes, G-d chose our lowly material world as the place where He wanted to dwell, to establish a permanent "residence."?

The mitzvot of the holy Torah are practical commandments that we perform with simple, physical objects. Tefilin are made from the hide of an animal; tzitzit are made from wool; a suka, from planks of wood; candles for Shabbat and holidays from wax. G-d wants us to build for Him a "dwelling place down below" by using material objects in the performance of mitzvot. The life-long service of the Jew consists of utilizing WHATEVER he comes in contact with to erect a permanent "residence" for G-d in the lower realms.

This desire for a "dwelling place down below" will be realized completely when Moshiach comes and ushers in the Final Redemption. At that time the purpose of creation will be fulfilled, "for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the L-rd, as the waters cover the sea."

This Divine plan for creation is reflected in Jacob's establishment of the Jewish people in as abject a location as Charan, precisely against a backdrop of involvement in material affairs:

In Charan, Jacob first began to fulfil G-d's intent in the creation of the world, the establishment of a "dwelling place" in this lowest of all possible worlds. In Laban's house he succeeded in laying the groundwork for the generations of Jews who would follow, foreshadowing their Divine mission to transform the physical world into an appropriate "residence" for G-d.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Somewhere Between Spirituality and Religion

By Yanki Tauber

Most of us profess a "spiritual side," a "religious self," or however else we might refer to that part of ourselves that's in touch with Something Higher. So the question is not really do we have it, but what exactly is it. Is it a self-improvement thing, like a woodworking class or a therapy session? Is it a duty, like obeying the law of the land and going to work in the morning? Or is it simply who you are?

The Talmud, addressing this question more than 1500 years ago, put it in these terms: what do you call the place that G-d occupies in your life—a mountain, a field, or a house?

It was something else to each of the three founding fathers of the Jewish people. There is a place—the Temple Mount in Jerusalem—which the Torah regards as the focal point of G-d's presence in our world. When Abraham was there, it's called "the mountain of G-d's revelation." To Isaac, the place was a "field." Jacob spent a night there and proclaimed it "the house of G-d."

The Kabbalists sum up the lives of the three Patriarchs this way: Abraham was the embodiment of love, Isaac personified awe, and Jacob was the essence of truth.

The problem with love is that it can go too far, bearing down on the boundary between self and other to the extent that it becomes smothering and decadent. Abraham was the perfection of love, but his son Ishmael was an example of love run amok. The problem with humility, commitment and self-discipline is that it can congeal into cruelty—Esau is an example of Isaacness corrupted.

Truth, on the other hand, is what it is, not because it is reaching for something or recoiling from something. Truth is love that respects boundaries; truth is commitment tempered with compassion. Truth is not a mountain, a distended piece of earth trying to be heaven; nor is it a field, flattening itself to the ground to submit to the plough and spade. Truth is a home: a place that shelters life, facilitates its needs, enables it to be itself.

Of course, the home cannot exist without the mountain and the field. Truth without passion is dead; truth without commitment is ungrounded. To become ourselves, we must climb our mountains and work our fields. But we must remember that life truly lived is not to achieve or to submit, but to inhabit our achievements and commitments. Or as the Midrash expresses it: to make the world a home for G-d.

Slice of LIFE

A Shabbat on the Battlefield that Saved My Life

By Shmuel Gurewicz

In 1960, I married an Israeli girl and, in 1964, we settled in Israel. I was conscripted to the Israeli army in 1965 and was assigned to the reserve troops.

In May of 1967, the Egyptians amassed troops in the Sinai Desert, close to the Israeli border, and closed the Straits of Tiran to shipping. Israel regarded this as a declaration of war.

While the diplomats were running between Washington, London, Paris and Tel Aviv, the Israeli public was preparing for war, expecting the worst. The Arab leaders were violently inciting their populations with dramatic promises to "push the Jews into the sea."

In Israel, the army started a general mobilization. First, the pilots and armoured corps were called up. Then, more and more reserves were called to duty.

More and more homes were left without parents and siblings. People were frightened, concerned for the future of Israel and their families.

Israel was outnumbered one hundred to one. The Egyptians had German scientists developing missiles and the Russians supplying them with tanks and combat jet planes. The French, who supplied Israel with Mirage fighter planes, declared an embargo on supplies to Israel with the excuse that they do not supply arms to a combat zone.

The Jewish burial society of Tel Aviv alone dug fifteen thousand graves, ready for civilian casualties.

The threat was real.

I was called on May 25th to report for duty the following day, Friday, the 26th. My regiment organized themselves by Sunday, where we were moved to a hill, 500 feet from a Jordanian village called Budrus.

Prior to the next Shabbat, the commanding officer, Victor, announced that ten percent of the soldiers could go home for Shabbat, a twenty-four hour leave. We were 130 soldiers and the first permitted to leave were fathers of three children and more. I fell into this category.

Unfortunately, the truck that came to take us back to civilization arrived at 7:00 p.m., twenty-five minutes before Shabbat began. Therefore, I could not go-as doing so would have caused me to desecrate the holy day. The following evening, Saturday night, again, another thirteen soldiers could take leave and I was hoping that this time I would be able to go. But again the truck came at 7:00 p.m., while it was still Shabbat. Once again, I missed out.

Victor, my commanding officer, who was not a religious man, took pity on me and said that since I missed out on my leave because of my religious principles, he would let me go on Sunday night for forty-eight hours. To me, forty-eight hours was an eternity! I impatiently waited for the day to pass.

On Sunday afternoon, we heard on the radio that Iraq sent two armoured divisions into Jordan to bolster their army for the forthcoming war with Israel.

A little later, Victor came to announce that all leave was cancelled. Since we were in the centre line defending Israel from Jordan, the readiness level was raised to the uppermost limit.

I was terribly disappointed, not so much because of the prospect of the war, but because my leave was cancelled!

I tossed and turned a whole night. On Monday, the 5th of June, at 5:00 a.m. I went to Victor's tent and begged him to let me go see my family even for a short period of time. Victor told me he would let me go, but only for eight hours. I'd have to be back by 3:00 in the afternoon.

No one knew that the war was to begin in another two hours. Even Victor, a commanding officer, did not know.

I did not wait to argue about the eight hours. I took my rifle, put my prayer shawl in my backpack and ran! I got a lift

with a motorcyclist and arrived in Jerusalem at 8:30 a.m., where my wife and children were at the home of my sister-in-law.

One can imagine the reunion with my wife and children!

Soon after, the radio reported that heavy fighting had broken out in the south. So the long-expected war had begun.

But in Jerusalem, people felt safe. Though Jerusalem was then a divided city, with Jordanian-controlled East Jerusalem in close proximity to Israeli West Jerusalem, no one believed Jordan would start hostilities.

But at about 11:00 a.m., the Jordanians started shelling West Jerusalem. We all went down to the air raid shelter, and I was the only soldier in a packed shelter full of women and children.

A little later, I called up the town-major to report that I was in Jerusalem and asked what I should do. I was told to return to my unit and, in fact, I should have not been away in the first place... So I had to say goodbye to my family and in midst of Jordanian shelling, made my way to the main road where I waited together with many more soldiers. I got a ride with a police car that dropped me off in Ramla. From there, I had to walk about two hours to join my unit on that hill near Budrus. All along the way, shells were exploding in the distance and also nearby.

I got to my unit at about 5:00 p.m. I tried to look for my foxhole to take cover but could not find it. Something had changed since I left that morning. I found Victor and reported that I returned. He looked at his watch and sternly told me off for being two hours late. I began excusing myself that I got stuck in Jerusalem and so on....

He then turned to me with a smiling face and tears in his eyes, "Now I know that there is a G-d in heaven! At exactly 3:00 p.m., a shell fell and exploded in your foxhole!"

If I would have taken leave on the previous Friday night, I would not have been away on that Monday! And I would have not been here telling this story...

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ISSUE 1011

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Hebrew word for exile is 'Golah', the Hebrew word for redemption is 'Geulah'. The only difference between the two is the Hebrew word 'Alef' which is added to 'Geulah', redemption. 'Alef' also means master, referring to G-d which is the master of the world. What this comes to teach us is that redemption is in fact the real essence of the world even now. This is why the word 'Golah' is included in the word 'Geulah'. All we have to do is to reveal the 'Alef', the G-dliness which is hidden in the present world. This can help us to stay focused to strive to bring the ultimate redemption, knowing that we are just revealing what is already there.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

What Can Be Achieved through Determination and Commitment

By the Grace of G-d
8th of Tammuz, 5738 [July 13, 1978]
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Mr. I. Cohen
Johannesburg
South Africa

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 13th of June, in behalf of yourself as chairman of the committee.

I was gratified to read in your letter about the favourable impact of Lubavitch in South Africa, and in your city and congregation in particular. I trust that this good influence finds the fullest expression in actual deeds, namely in promoting of matters of Yiddishkeit [Judaism], Torah and Mitzvoth, in your community, in accordance with the saying of our sages that, "The essential thing is the deed." And in matters of Torah and Mitzvoth even one good deed is very important, since "one Mitzvah [good deed] leads to another Mitzvah." Even more important it is where Jewish education is concerned, especially as I note that your Shul [synagogue] is situated on the campus of, and used by, a Jewish Day School of approximately 1,000 children and where your congregation has been blessed with many families, adults and children - may their number grow. For, as I have had occasion to emphasize this many times, every beneficial influence on a child is like the benefits and care given to a young seedling, which multiplies in due course many times over, when the seedling becomes a full-grown fruit-bearing tree.

As we are approaching the auspicious anniversary of the liberation of my father-in-law of saintly memory on the 12-13th of Tammuz, I trust that you know the history and significance of this date. The main point of it is that he has shown what a Jew can achieve when he is absolutely determined to live up to his commitment to Torah and Mitzvoth regardless of the circumstances. And there is no need to spell out what these circumstances were under the Communist regime 50 years ago. And although who can compare to his stature, nevertheless having accomplished what he did, he has made it easier for all those who would follow in his footsteps. Certainly those of us who are privileged to live in incomparably happier circumstances, where one does not have to endanger his life, G-d forbid, to observe the Torah and Mitzvoth, and whatever difficulties there may be are for the most part imaginary and can certainly be overcome, so that in the final analysis it is mainly a matter of one's own will and determination. This makes it the duty and privilege of every one of us to do all one can, by example and precept, to spread Yiddishkeit, Torah and Mitzvoth, in one's surroundings, and it is certain that every such effort is bound to be blessed by G-d with Hatslocho [success].

With blessing,
M. Schneerson

P.S. With regard to your writing about your desire to visit me with a group from your congregation, I regret that for the present "Yechidus" [private audiences] has been suspended for reasons beyond my control. I trust, however, that before long it will be resumed, and it will then certainly be a pleasure to meet with you personally.

CUSTOMS CORNER

Continuation from last week regarding the laws of the Amida.

1. If the Shliach Tzibur [cantor] begins the repetition while one is still in the middle of the Amida [before Yihyu liratzon] he may not answer Amen to any of the blessings. However if the Shliach tzibur reached Modim, if he is in the middle of a blessing he too should bow, but he should not utter anything.
2. It is forbidden to yawn in the Amida, we must pray with fear and awe as he would stand in front of a king.
3. One must look in the siddur [prayer book] whilst in the Amida, alternatively he may close his eyes (the 1st option is preferable).
4. No objects should be separating him and the wall, unless it's a chair, table, or anything used for prayer, a person too is not considered a separation.

A WORD

from the Director

This coming week on Monday is the birth day and passing day of the 2nd Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi DovBer (1773- 1827). It is said that true Tzadikim (righteous men) are born and pass on in the very same day. Yet we don't always find by Tzadikim that they indeed passed away the day they were born. Obviously in a spiritual sense they do indeed pass away the day they were born. But by Rabbi Dovber this was in the physical sense too, why is it that specifically he was born and passed on in the same day in the physical sense too? To understand this let us take a little look in to the style of teaching of Rabbi Dovber; Rabbi DovBer's teachings is known between Chasidim as "The wideness of a river", what this means to say is that Rabbi DovBer would take the teachings of his father (the 1st Lubavitcher Rebbe) and expound on it in detail and in depth. Now in essence the whole concept of Chasidic teachings was to take lofty G-dly concepts, and to make them accessible and easy to understand even for the ordinary person. Rabbi DovBer however took this to a whole new level, he expounded on the teachings of Chasidus so much so that it is said about him that he once said over a Chasidic discourse for 16 hours straight, thereby bringing very lofty concepts in to a very practical way. Now we can understand why he was born and passed away in the same day in a physical sense too, his entire strive was bringing the very deep and seemingly not so practical concepts of Torah in to very practical understanding, this is why also this concept of his birth-day and passing day were the same day. May we all take a lesson from Rabbi DovBer and make G-dly concepts and spirituality a real and practical way of life. This also serves as a preparation for the ultimate redemption when we will all see G-d with our physical eyes.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED

Once...

Hidden and Revealed

By A. H. Glitzenstein

It is a tradition that in every generation there are hidden tzaddikim ("righteous ones") who conceal their greatness from the eyes of men and live amongst us disguised as simple, ignorant folk.

Rabbi Gershon Kitover once asked his famous brother-in-law, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem, to show him one of the hidden righteous. At first, the Baal Shem Tov refused. But Rabbi Gershon persisted in his request until the Chassidic master finally relented.

"This Friday night in shul, look among the crowd of beggars waiting near the door to be invited for the Shabbat meal. One of them will be a hidden tzaddik," said the Baal Shem Tov to Rabbi Gershon, and described the righteous pauper. "But you must promise not to let on in any way that you are aware of his true identity."

Rabbi Gershon readily identified the tzaddik-in-disguise and invited him to share his Shabbat meals. But though he carefully scrutinized his guest's every word and deed, he was unable to discern anything beyond the ordinary behaviour of a wandering pauper. Finally, he could not resist the temptation to ask his guest to grace the table with some words of Torah.

"Me?! Speak words of Torah? A beggar the child of beggars, who has scarcely seen the inside of a cheder? Whatever gave you such an idea, anyway?" asked the guest, a note of suspicion in his voice.

Rabbi Gershon quickly let the matter drop.

The next day, however, at the noontime meal, Rabbi Gershon could not resist another attempt. Finally, he thought, I have one of the greatest people of the generation at my table--should I indeed learn nothing from him? Again he pressed his guest to reveal something of his well-concealed greatness. This time, the hidden tzaddik seemed to hesitate somewhat, as if tempted to accede to his host's request, but only for a fleeting moment; he immediately resumed his ignorant-beggar pose of the night before, protesting that the very request was ridiculous.

But at the seudah shelishit, (the third Shabbat meal), Rabbi Gershon seemed to have finally made some headway. When he again asked his guest to enlighten him with words of Torah, the holy beggar's face was transformed. His eyes began to glow with a Divine light, and his coarse features assumed a sublime grace. He opened his mouth to speak; but before a single word emerged from his lips, he suddenly closed them, and with obvious effort, wrenched himself from his seat and bolted from the room. By the time Rabbi Gershon had collected his wits and run after him out to the street, he was gone.

The next day, when Rabbi Gershon came to see the Baal Shem Tov, he was shocked to learn that his brother-in-law had been ill all Shabbat. At

the Friday night meal, the Baal Shem Tov's disciples had noticed that something was amiss; the next day the situation had worsened, and at one point, toward the close of Shabbat, it had seemed that his very life was in jeopardy. But the crisis had passed, thanks to G-d, and he was steadily regaining his strength.

When Rabbi Gershon entered his brother-in-law's room, the Chassidic master said to him: "What have you done? Because of you, I almost departed from this world.

"You see, every righteous soul has two faces-one hidden and the other revealed. The tzaddik who ate at your table this Shabbat is my cosmic "twin", whose greatness must remain hidden for as long as I openly serve as a teacher and guide in the service of the Almighty. But the temptation for a hidden tzaddik to reveal himself is very great, since every person desires to manifestly influence his surroundings. Had he done so, my soul would have had to be concealed from the world; since I am already widely known, this meant that I would have had to pass on from my present life. Luckily, he stopped himself just in time."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

"And Jacob went out of Beer shuvah and he went to Charan"

The word Charan means anger, referring to the people of that place who would arouse the anger of G-d. Yaakov's travel to such a low place like Charan signifies the soul's descent in to the lowly world to uplift the sparks which are spread all over the world. (*sefer hamaamarim*)

"And he dreamt, and behold a ladder stood on the ground and its head reached the heaven"

The ladder of Jacob signifies our ladder of prayer, the ascend of human to G-d, the 4 steps of the ladder signify the 4 levels that we strive to reach in the 4 steps of Davening. (*Chasidic sources*)

"And he took from the rocks of the place and placed them under his head"

In worldly concepts we have to be involved in them only as much as necessary, the head should not be stuck inside our mundane earthly worries. This is what the rocks of Jacob symbolize, only under the head with the external energies. The way to accomplish this is through being like those stones which are totally nullified; they don't make any movement without being told to. This resembles the humility and acceptance of the yoke of heaven we all ought to have, with this power we can accomplish the above mentioned concept of not being involved in worldly matters. (*lekutei sichos*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 3 DECEMBER 2011

BEGINS ENDS

8:09	MELBOURNE	9:14
7:56	ADELAIDE	8:59
6:11	BRISBANE	7:09
6:42	DARWIN	7:35
6:11	GOLD COAST	7:09
6:50	PERTH	7:51
7:33	SYDNEY	8:35
7:45	CANBERRA	8:48
8:11	LAUNCESTON	9:20
8:07	AUCKLAND	9:11
8:19	WELLINGTON	9:28
8:14	HOBART	9:26
7:11	BYRON BAY	8:10

**CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH**

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

**PARSHAS VAYEITZEI
7 KISLEV • 3 DECEMBER**

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:09 PM
	MINCHA:	8:10 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:45 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:30 AM
	MINCHA:	8:00 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:14 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:15 PM
	MAARIV:	9:05 PM