

LAMPLIGHTER

4 Teves
Vayigash

1015

30 December
5772/2011

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Vayigash, Joseph's brothers return to Jacob and bring him the wonderful news that his son is still alive. "Joseph is yet alive, and is ruler over all the land of Egypt." Jacob, however, could not believe it was true until "he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him." Only then was he convinced, "and the spirit of Jacob their father was revived."

Rashi, the foremost Torah commentator, explains that the wagons, "agalot" in Hebrew, were a special sign from Joseph to Jacob. The last time Joseph and his father learned Torah together, 22 years before, they had studied the portion of the "egla arufa" -- the calf that is beheaded to atone for a murder whose perpetrator is unknown.

When Jacob saw the "agalot" he understood the allusion, and was thus convinced that Joseph was indeed alive.

Nonetheless, this explanation is problematical. Surely Jacob did not suspect his sons of telling a falsehood. Why then did he not immediately believe them when they stated that "Joseph is yet alive"? Did Jacob truly think that they had been fooled by an Egyptian stranger, who had somehow tricked them into believing that he was their long-lost brother?

The answer is simple. To a tzadik, a truly righteous person such as Jacob, "life" is not a matter of the physical body but of the soul. When the brothers told him that Joseph was not only alive but "the ruler over all the land of Egypt," he could not believe that his son had been able to maintain his spirituality and continue to live as a Jew in such abject circumstances. After all, Joseph was completely alone for so many years, in the most corrupt and abominable civilization in the ancient world. Not only was he surrounded by the lowest class of people, the brothers had stated that Joseph was their leader! How then could he "live" -- truly "live," the spiritual life of a Jew?

When, however, Jacob was given the sign of the "agalot" and understood that Joseph had not forgotten his Torah learning. He realized that his son was on the same high spiritual plane as before his descent to Egypt.

Joseph had managed to remain a tzadik, despite his degraded surroundings. Only then was Jacob convinced that his son still "lived," and "the spirit of Jacob their father was revived."

(Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Thriving in Hostile Territory

By Eli Pink

As Jacob was traveling down to Egypt to meet Joseph, he stopped off in Beersheba, long-time home of his grandparents, Abraham and Sarah, and offered sacrifices to G-d. G-d then appeared to Jacob and comforted him: "Jacob, Jacob!... Don't be afraid of journeying down to Egypt because it is only there that I will make you into a great nation" (Genesis 45:2-3). Rashi - the foremost Biblical commentator - explains that with these words G-d was addressing Jacob's distress at being compelled to leave the Holy Land.

At first glance, however, G-d's message to Jacob does not seem to address his concerns. Jacob was distressed about moving out of the country, but G-d tells him not to be afraid. Jacob was distressed, not afraid!

It seems clear that G-d was not trying to mitigate Jacob's distress; a Jew should be anguished by the prospect of leaving the Holy Land, especially for a culture as depraved as Egypt was in those days. Rather, G-d was addressing Jacob's other concerns - his worries about the Jewish education of his children and how they would continue to live as Jews in a hostile environment.

Ever since Jacob descended to Egypt we have been shuffling from one exile to the next, with only short periods of respite. Galut (exile) is a crucible; the challenges and difficulties of thriving in a hostile world provide the optimal setting for personal and national growth. However, if we become comfortable in our exile and feel that we are in a "home away from home," we become vulnerable to its insidious effects.

This was G-d's message to Jacob: precisely because of your distress at having to live in Egypt you do not need to be afraid of its influence on your descendants.

Unfortunately, it is not unusual to get occasional reminders that we are still in exile, be it an anti-Semitic comment, a biased news report. It is far better when these reminders are not imposed on us by others but of our own volition, making a small move out of our comfort zone and doing something to remind ourselves what it means to be a Jew.

Slice of LIFE

Rabbi Brenenbard was an excellent speaker, so it was no surprise that he was invited to speak in the Israeli town of Efrat for the opening of a new Talmudic centre that was donated by the famous philanthropist Rabbi Yosef Gutnick.

But it was a surprise to everyone when Rabbi Brenenbard who was born and bred into a sect of religious Jews called "Li'ta'eem" (in the past opposed 'frivolities' like joy, singing and dancing as practiced by the Chassidim, especially the Chabad-Lubavitch Chassidim who believe that this joy is essential and will bring Moshiach), stood and announced that he wanted to relate a personal encounter that he had with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Shneerson.

The story was as follows.

When he was just a young man he decided with the guidance of his teachers and advisors that he would devote his life totally to learning Torah. So when it came time for him to get married he found a bride who agreed to support his holy goal and they set up a home in Israel, in Jerusalem.

For the first few years everything was fine. He was intelligent, devoted and motivated and was able to sit and learn virtually non-stop and his wife and in-laws were overjoyed to have such a son-in-law. But as the years passed an ominous cloud began to slowly settle over their happy home.

They had no children.

At first they thought that prayer and charity would help, but it didn't. Then they tried getting blessings and advice from elder Torah scholars. But that also didn't produce any results. So they began taking the normal route.

They visited doctors, experts and professors of all sorts. His wife received special treatments and various alternative medicines... but nothing changed, the prognosis was black and the years were passing.

But his wife refused to give up. She knew there must be a way. And sure enough, a breakthrough came from a totally unexpected place.

One of her close friends told her about ... The Lubavitcher Rebbe in Brooklyn! "Why, the Rebbe is famous for miracles! If anyone could help it's him.

But when Mrs. Brenenbard told her husband about it... he was anything but excited.

"Chassidic Rebbis!?! The Lubavitcher!?" he said in disbelief and vetoed the idea totally and immediately.

Two more years passed and he began to accept his lot but his wife didn't let up. Every week or so she reminded him and begged, "Why not try? What have we got to lose? Maybe it will work? Please, just this one time."

His conscience began nagging him. He couldn't bear to see her suffering this way.... until finally one day he broke down and announced.

"All right, we'll go to Brooklyn". And a week later they were entering the Lubavitcher Rebbe's office.

As soon as the door closed behind them his wife burst out in uncontrollable tears. But the Rebbe looked at her with kind and wise eyes and comforted her saying "You needn't worry, you will certainly be blessed with a child."

Then, when she calmed down he turned to her husband and asked "And what do you do?" To which he answered "I learn Torah all day".

"But what do you DO?" The Rebbe asked again, emphasizing the last word.

Rabbi Brenenbard's mind began to race. He had always thought that the ideal way to spend one's life was to be immersed in the holy Torah and avoid the world as much as possible.

But the Rebbe seemed to be saying that this wasn't good, or wasn't good enough. He wanted him to DO something to improve the world around him. Could it be that the Rebbe was suggesting that he should subtract time from learning the precious Torah?

The Rebbe looked at him in a way that it was obvious that he was reading his thoughts, smiled and asked pleasantly.

"Tell me, where do you live? On what street?"

Rabbi Brenenbard gave his address and the name of the tiny and obscure street in Jerusalem where he lived.

"Now on that street," said the Rebbe, "there are two apartment houses. One has a grocery store on the first floor and the other doesn't. Which building do you live in?"

Rabbi Brenenbard was floored! The Rebbe had never been in Israel and even most people in Jerusalem don't know these buildings exist!!

He answered the Rebbe with wide eyes of disbelief, 'In the building without the market' and the meeting ended.

As Rabbi Brenenbard told the story it was obvious that he was still overwhelmed with what the Rebbe said about his building perhaps even more so then by the fact that his wife shortly thereafter became pregnant and gave birth to their first son!

Rabbi Brenenbard concluded by saying that he then decided to change his life. He took the Rebbe's advice, opened a "Kollel", an institution for advanced Torah scholars and began teaching Torah to others and changing the world around him instead of just learning for himself.

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

Editor: Shimon Dubinsky

P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA
Phone 03 9530 3022
Email: lamplighter_weekly@hotmail.com

The Lamplighter contains words from sacred writings. Please do not deface or discard.

ISSUE 1015

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Everything in this world was created with a purpose. That's why when Moshiach comes even metal, which might have not been used for holy and peaceful purposes whilst we are in exile, will be part of the Temple structure, the metal will now be transformed to be used for holy purposes, this in fact is an example of "a descent for the sake of an ascent".



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

[November 25, 1974]
By the Grace of G d
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. Reuven David Kimball
Springfield, Mass.

Greeting and Blessing:

Your letter of the 22nd of Cheshvan reached me with some delay, and this is the first opportunity for me to acknowledge it...

...With regard to the business venture about which you write, it is clear that the general conditions which affect the problem, as well as those specific ones that you mention in your letter, are of a nature which change from time to time. Indeed, as you write, this is also the reason that caused the problem of financing. At any rate, it seems at this moment that the next step does not depend on you, as you don't seem to have any options to choose from.

The only suggestion I can make to you is one that may appear mystical, but it has been borne out by experience and proved quite practical. I have in mind the idea that when a Jew strengthens his bond with the Source of wisdom, which is in G d, he gains wisdom and understanding also in mundane affairs, which helps him to decide what to do and what not to do in matters of business and the like.

Needless to say, by strengthening one's bonds with the Source of true wisdom and understanding, is meant the actual observance of the Mitzvoth which G d set forth in His Torah, of which it is written, "This is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of all the nations."

As mentioned above, the advice that you should make an effort to strengthen your commitment and actual fulfillment of the mitzvot, which will also help you make the proper decisions, is at first glance of a mystical nature. But looking at it from a practical point of view, we know that in everything else the important thing is the actual results which a certain measure brings about. If experience shows that doing such and such a thing brings such and such results in the vast majority of cases, then it is not so important whether one understands how and why those results are caused, for the important thing is the result itself.

The same applies also to Jews and their commitment to the Torah and Mitzvoth throughout the ages. Our long history has borne out the fact that the wellbeing of the Jewish people, as well as of the Jew as an individual, is intimately connected with his observance of the Torah and Mitzvoth in the daily life. And although the Torah and Mitzvoth should be observed for their own sake, as the commands of our Creator, it has been revealed that the Torah and Mitzvoth are also the channels and vessels to receive G d's blessings for Hatzlocho in the material aspects of life.

May G d, whose benevolent Providence extends to each and everyone individually, grant you the wisdom to make the right decisions, and to have Hatzlocho in all above.

With blessing,
M. Schneerson

P.S. Noting that you are an attorney at law, I would like to add a point that is no doubt quite familiar to you. This is that in matters of a legal suit, the best and weightiest legal argument is when one can cite precedents of judgment in similar cases, and there is no need to substantiate and explain the reason for the judgment further since the judgment speaks for itself.

CUSTOMS CORNER

Some laws regarding the answering of the Kadish.

1. It is forbidden to speak while the Kadish is being said, this should not be taken lightly at all for the seriousness of it is evident from the stories told about people who spoke in Kadish (look in Shulchan Aruch in the laws regarding Kadish).
2. When one answers 'Amen' he must have in mind that he indeed trusts these things - of which he is answering to - will materialize.
3. It is said that he who answers 'yihay shmay rabah...' with his utmost concentration, even if a bad decree was being formalized for 70 years, he can now tear it with this one 'yihay shmay rabah...'
4. 'Yihay shmay rabah' should be said louder than the other 'amen's', however it should not be said too loud so as not to evoke people to laugh at you.

A WORD

from the Director

The 5th of Teves [this very Sabbath] is a very special day in the Chabad calendar. When the previous Rebbe escaped communist Russia it was through great effort and self-sacrifice, yet he insisted that the collection of books which he had in his possession (which included the rarest and antique books) come with him.

Against all odds he managed to bring them with him in his escape from Russia and through Nazi Germany [which in itself was a great miracle; incredibly it was a German soldier who made the effort for the previous Rebbe to get out of Germany and make it to safe soil], finally in the year 1940 the previous Rebbe made it to America, he stored all the books in his new home in 770.

In the 80's a certain individual entered the library and stole - in few instalments - many of the books and put them up for sale, claiming that he had the rightful ownership over the books. This caused immense pain to our Rebbe, he spoke about it by a Farbengen (Chasidic get-together) how this is not only denial of ownership of the books, rather it is denial of the continuity of the Chabad Rebbe and its legacy, the Rebbe explained how in fact the opposite is true, the impact of the Rebbe becomes more abundant with the passing of years.

In the year 1987 the verdict was given that the books be returned. The Rebbe explained that this is a victory of the holy books and that the most proper way to celebrate it would be through learning from the books themselves. May we all put in an effort to add in learning from our holy books. And ultimately like Maimonides writes "through one good deed one can tip the scale for himself and for the entire world to the side of merit".

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED

Once...

Rabbis Mair Avtzon and Lazer Nannes were arch criminals... in the eyes of the Communist government.

That's why they were both sent into exile to the distant city of Turkistan. There they would be distant from their friends, family and other counter-revolutionary influences. Exile would wean them from spreading Jewish propaganda like teaching Jewish children Torah or influencing others to do commandments.

And they were constantly afraid; there were spies everywhere and every day there was news of someone else getting caught and punished. The slightest wrong move, suspicious look or word could bring disaster.

But when the holiday of Succot came around they had to make a Succa.

Really it wasn't that difficult. There was a dilapidated shack outside their apartment building. They just removed what was left of the roof, threw a few branches and leaves on top and presto they had a Succa!

Now, on this holiday there is a commandment to be happy, especially on the last night called 'Simchat Torah' the joy of the Torah, Rabbi Mair promptly announced that he decided that the best way to fulfil this commandment was to make the Kiddush on vodka.

But Rabbi Lazer vetoed the idea totally. First of all vodka disagreed with him and not only that but if they got drunk they might let down their guard, get discovered and that would be the end!

But that evening, when each had snuck furtively into the Succa they quietly wished one another happy holiday and Reb Mair pulled out a big bottle of vodka for Kiddush.

One major problem was the fact that early in the holiday they realized that they had built their Succa on the side of the building nearest to the back wall of the GPU Secret Service offices!

As could be expected, at first everything was quiet and subdued but as the holiday spirit and the vodka began taking effect all there was was HOLIDAY!!

The singing got a bit louder until finally they actually stood, linked arms and began dancing and really rejoicing!

Then they sat down, out of breath, to finish their meagre meal.

Suddenly they heard a noise outside! Someone was approaching.

There was a knock on the door.

They sobered up instantly as though a bucket of freezing water was poured over them.

There was no sense in running or hiding or making up stories. A

cold sweat covered the Rabbi's foreheads and their hearts pounded with fear. They were finished!

They opened the door and there stood the landlord of the apartment building, a pleasant man by the name of Ibrahim.

"Greetings!" he said in Russian "Happy Holiday!"

"Happy holiday" they answered quietly.

"Greetings not only from me," Ibrahim continued, "Also from Karim."

Their eyes opened in fear and their blood froze in their veins. Karim! The very name sent shivers up their spines.

Karim was Ibrahim's brother-in-law, the keeper of the local jail and a bloodthirsty sadist with a reputation for cruelty a mile long. Ibrahim was playing with them like a cat with a mouse before the kill. He was one of ... them.

Or so they thought, but they were in for a surprise.

Ibrahim continued "Karim heard you singing and dancing just a while ago from the window of his office so he came to me. You know what he said to me? He said, 'I envy those Jews'.

"He went to my window pointed to your hut here and said, 'you see those Jews. They live in fear every second. They know that we hate them and any second we can take them away and have them killed for the smallest reason. And what do they do? They dance and sing!'

"I tried to tell him it's because of your holiday but he replied, 'I know it's their holiday. But that isn't why they are happy. We have holidays too! But are we ever happy like that? No! We are happy when we take revenge or something... but never like that. They are happy because they are Jews. And when I see them dancing and singing despite their fear I envy them!'

Ibrahim continued, "He even told me that he would like to go and wish you a happy holiday but he knew it would frighten you so he asked me to come and tell you. In Karim's name, Happy Holiday!"

When Rabbi Mair or Rabbi Lazar told this story even tens of years later they would say they would never forget that Succot all their life.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

Then Judah drew near and said, "My lord - bi adoni..." (Gen. 44:18)

The Hebrew words "bi adoni" may also be rendered "the L-rd is within me." A Jew must always remember when he prepares himself to pray that he has an actual part of G-d inside him, his Jewish soul, on whose behalf he is communing with his Maker. (*Ohr Torah*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 30 DECEMBER 2011

BEGINS ENDS

8:27	MELBOURNE	9:32
8:14	ADELAIDE	9:17
6:28	BRISBANE	7:26
6:56	DARWIN	7:49
6:27	GOLD COAST	7:26
7:07	PERTH	8:08
7:51	SYDNEY	8:53
8:03	CANBERRA	9:06
8:30	LAUNCESTON	9:39
8:25	AUCKLAND	9:29
8:39	WELLINGTON	9:48
8:34	HOBART	9:45
7:28	BYRON BAY	8:27



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS VAYIGASH
5 TEVES • 31 DECEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:27 PM
	MINCHA:	8:35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9:10 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:42 AM
	MINCHA:	8:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:32 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:35 PM
	MAARIV:	9:25 PM