

# LAMPLIGHTER

11 Teves  
Vayechi

1016

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

No words in the Torah are chosen arbitrarily, least of all the names of the weekly Torah portions. The name of a particular Torah portion expresses the essence of that section and tells us something about its content. This being the case, why is this week's portion entitled Vayechi ("and Jacob lived"), when it deals exclusively with the events which led up to his passing?

The answer to this question lies in understanding the true meaning of life. Is life our temporal existence in this world, where we are constantly faced with extinction from numerous forces threatening us at every turn? Or is true life something even greater?

Only G-d, the source of all life, can rightly be termed "alive," for he is never changing and exists forever. In this sense, only G-d truly lives, for His existence does not depend on outside forces. But human beings may also attain eternal life, by cleaving to that which is Eternal. G-d is the only entity which lives forever; attaching oneself to Him enables mere mortals to do the same.

"And you, who cleave unto G-d - all of you therefore live today." This is the reason that the Jews are called "alive" by our Sages, for they cleave unto the Eternal Living G-d.

This is demonstrated most clearly when a Jew encounters difficulties and obstacles lying in his path, which serve to make his passage through life all the more challenging. Leading a carefree existence unencumbered by problems is no test of our attachment to G-d; successfully overcoming life's hurdles is what reveals our true devotion and commitment to serving G-d. It is only then that we may be considered "alive."

This illustrates why this week's Torah portion is named Vayechi. It was precisely just prior to Jacob's passing in Egypt that the meaning and purpose of his life was fully revealed. The years Jacob had spent in the Holy Land, although fraught with various trials and tribulations, were insufficient to adequately demonstrate his true devotion to G-d. It was only on his deathbed, in the lowest and most abominable land on earth at the time, that Jacob's true "life" could be recognized by all.

The Talmud states that "Jacob did not die...as long as his seed is alive, he lives too." The continued existence of the Jewish people and their adherence to G-d and His Torah follows in the footsteps of their forefather Jacob and ensures his eternal perpetuation.

Furthermore, it is precisely now, at the very end of our long and bitter exile, that our adherence to Torah and our faith in the imminent coming of Moshiach demonstrates the attainment of true and eternal life.

*(Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

## The Power of Forgotten Knowledge

By Yanki Tauber

Chassidic teaching speaks about the idea of cosmic precedent -- how G-d sets things up a certain way, even though they are subsequently undone, so that later, when the process is repeated, the lingering "memory" of the way it originally was should have an implicit (but not a tangible or sensed) impact on the way things unfold.

A classic example of this is the Chassidic interpretation of the Talmudic passage: "The child in his mother's womb... is taught the entire Torah. But at the moment he emerges into the world, an angel comes and slaps him on his mouth, and makes him forget everything." The obvious question: Why are we made to forget the entire Torah? Obvious answer: Because G-d wants us to study and achieve on our own, not to be granted knowledge as a gift from above. Obvious question no. 2: So why are we taught it in the first place? Obvious answer no. 2: Because the Torah, the wisdom and will of G-d, is beyond the comprehension of mortal man. We could never attain it on our own; it must be taught to us.

In other words, we must be given the Torah -- otherwise we could never obtain it. But we also must not know that we have it -- otherwise we would never relate to it as something that is our own achievement and is therefore significant and meaningful to us. So we're taught everything, and then made to forget. We toil not to obtain something that is beyond us, but to regain what is already ours.

The principle of cosmic precedent applies not only to things that appear on the stage of history and then disappear, but also to things that almost happen -- things that are supposed to happen, or were merely desired to happen, but are prevented from actually happening. When G-d "changes His mind," what He is doing is setting up a potential precedent: He wants things to be a certain way in actuality, but He also desires that a different (or even opposite) reality should wield its influence on how things are. (The difference between an actual precedent and a potential precedent would be the degree of this influence, how accessible it is, how deeply concealed within our subconscious, etc.) Thus we are told that "In the beginning, it arose in G-d's thought to create the world with Justice; then He saw that the world could not survive it, so He put Compassion first and joined it to Justice." G-d created a world that tolerates imperfection, but He placed absolute standards in the "background" because that represents its ultimate potential.

The same thing happens on Jacob's deathbed in this week's Parsha, our sages tell us that Jacob desired to reveal to his sons the secret of when Moshiach will come and the time of the ultimate redemption. G-d prevents that from happening, because it's integral to His cosmic plan that we should not know. But He allows Jacob the desire and the intention to tell us, so that the potential for this knowledge should exist, meaning that in the deepest recesses of our souls, the knowledge is there.

And that, of course, is the very place where this knowledge is most potent, and most useful. It's what has enabled us to survive the long night of Jewish history. It's how we know, with absolute certainty, that the Redemption will come.

# Slice of LIFE

## CHAIN REACTION

A few years ago, in the year 2000 (5760) Rabbi Shlomo Wilhelm, the Chabad representative in the city of Zitomer in the Ukraine, attended a family affair, perhaps a wedding, in London England when a woman approached him, introduced herself and said that she was very pleased to hear that he ran the Chabad House in Zitomer and had a personal favour to ask.

She had been raised in a small village by the name of T'chorisha not far from Zitomer but had to leave it and her family at a young age. To her knowledge, her parents were buried there and she requested with tears in her eyes that at his first free moment to please locate their graves and send her a picture.

Of course there was no such thing as a free moment for Rabbi Wilhelm but somehow when he returned he asked the help of Reb Hersh Shribman one of the pillars of the Jewish community of Zitomer, and together they found time to locate the town of T'chorisha find its Jewish cemetery and finally take pictures of the desired tombstones; all this to calm one troubled Jewish woman.

After taking the pictures Rabbi Wilhelm turned to his companion and said, "Listen, if we're already here... why not see if there are any Jews in the town. Maybe we can do some good!"

So together they began wandering the streets of T'chorisha asking the residents if there were any Jews until one of them pointed to a large hut (all the houses there were large huts) and said they should ask the old lady living there. If anyone would know it was her.

So they walked to the house, opened the gate to the front yard and saw a young couple with a small child standing there. As soon as this couple saw them, their eyes opened in amazement and they froze.

"What do you want?" the young man barely asked.

When Rabbi Wilhelm told them that they were looking for Jews the couple turned to each other shaking their heads incredulously almost in tears and the young

man shook the Rabbi's hand as though he couldn't believe he was real.

The young woman explained. "Our grandmother is inside. She is Jewish. We are her grandchildren. This little girl is my daughter and this young man is my brother. The reason we are here today is because her doctor told us to come quickly if we want to see her alive again."

They all entered the hut and as their eyes adjusted to the dim light they saw a very old woman, eyes slightly open, lying almost lifeless in the bed. But as soon as she saw the Rabbis she opened her eyes, smiled and whispered, 'Shalom!' They said a few words to her in Yiddish and she replied, while her grandchildren stood hypnotized not believing their eyes.

After several minutes of this the Rabbis said goodbye, left their phone numbers and plenty of reading material on Judaism and returned to Zitomer.

That evening they received a phone call from the young lady that shortly after they left, her grandmother passed away. Rabbi Wilhelm quickly and efficiently arranged a proper Jewish burial for her and was amazed by the revealed Divine providence; how he 'happened' to come to this 'lost' town, 'happened' to arrive at the home of a lost Jew in her last moments in this world and 'happened' to get her a proper Jewish burial.

But there was much more to the story.

Six years later the Rabbi Wilhelm arranged a special evening of lectures for the citizens of Zitomer with a talented speaker by the name of Mrs Rivka Nimoy on the topic of prayer. Almost fifty women from the area attended most of who were tasting Judaism for the first time. The lecture went well, the discussion afterwards was lively and at one point Mrs. Nimoy asked if there was anyone that had an experience of having their prayers answered. After a few moments of uncomfortable silence one of the women raised her hand and stood.

She introduced herself as Netalia Pogoroi and told the following story.

Her mother passed away when she was a young girl and she and her

brother were raised by her grandmother, a woman by the name of Batia Pabolotzkia. Eventually they grew up and moved away, she even married and had a child, but they always kept in touch with each other and with their grandmother and regularly visited her.

Then, when their grandmother was well into her eighties, the doctor that had been assigned to her called and told them to come quickly because the old lady was dying.

So they both took taxis and within the hour were by their dying grandmother's bedside. She was breathing with great difficulty and was barely conscious and it seemed like the end would be any second, but then she suddenly opened her eyes, motioned for them to come closer and began to speak clearly and with great determination.

She told them she was Jewish! And so were they!

She explained that her whole life she was surrounded by gentiles and kept her Jewishness quiet because she didn't want to be different. But now that she was dying she begged them to see to it that she would get a Jewish burial. Then she lapsed back into her semi-comatose state.

They couldn't believe their own ears. They were ..... Jews?! Their grandmother wanted a Jewish burial!??

They didn't even really know what either of these things were! They had been sure that they were just like everyone else! Maybe the old lady was crazy? But she spoke so clearly!

They went out to the yard to calm down and discuss things when suddenly... from nowhere, two genuine Rabbis entered through the gate! It was as though they were participating in some sort of dream!

"At first we thought that maybe grandma invited them but when we saw how genuinely excited and amazed she was when she saw them and they spoke to her we realized it was a miracle. The Rabbis came because she prayed for a Jewish burial and G-d answered her prayers!

"Afterwards we, my brother and me, read some of the pamphlets the Rabbis left and began to get interested in what was written there. Until this year I enrolled my daughter, who was the young baby in the story six years ago, in the Chabad school here in Zitomer. And that is why I'm here tonight!"

Now Rabbi Wilhelm was truly astonished; his search for a grave not only got a woman a proper Jewish burial it brought an entire 'lost' family back to Judaism.

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ISSUE 1016

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

In the Torah portion of Vayechi we read, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah... until Shilo comes (Gen. 49:10) "Shilo" is the numerical equivalent of "Moses" (345); "until Shilo comes" is the equivalent of "Moshiach" (358). (Zohar and Baal HaTurim)



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d  
2nd of Tammuz, 5716 [1956]  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

## Blessing and Greeting:

I received your letter in which you ask the question "if a soul has come back to earth several times to complete its duty here, when Messiah comes in which form will the soul come back?" I was pleased to note from your letter that you are taking an interest in your studies and follow the instructions of Torah as you are taught in the Yeshivah in New Haven.

As for your question, it was already asked a very long time ago by one of our great teachers of the Talmud, Rabbi Hizkiah, as mentioned in the holy book "Zohar" (Part 1, page 131a). The answer given there by another great teacher of the Mishnah, Rabbi Jose, is that the soul will come back to life in the body in which it has accomplished Torah and Mitzvoth during her lifetime on this earth, and that a body which did not practice Torah and Mitzvoth on earth will not come back to life. This answer must be considered in the light of a further explanation by the great Rabbi Isaac Luria, who lived about 400 years ago, and is known as Ari (the "Lion"). (About his life and work you may have read in the "Talks and Tales.") The saintly Ari explained that it is almost impossible for a Jew not to fulfil at least some Mitzvoth. Therefore, in accordance with the answer in Zohar, almost all bodies will come back to life. The question then is in which body will the soul return if it had been in more than one body. The answer, strange as it may seem at first glance, is that it will return in all bodies it had inhabited. To understand how this is possible, let us remember that the souls of mankind started from two people, Adam and Eve. Their souls included all the souls of the future generations, in a way a single seed includes in it future generations of trees, fruits, and seeds. In the same way the souls of parents are not just two souls, but they can split up into soul sparks, each of which is in turn a complete soul. Therefore, when a Jew performs a Mitzvah, the body takes part in it and it is no longer "dry wood" that rots away, but it will come back to life with a soul which is a Divine spark, and which was included in the original soul. Thus at the Time of Resurrection (after Messiah will come) all "parts" of a "general" soul will each have a separate body, just as parents will come back to life with all their children.

If you find the above a little difficult to understand, you can ask your teacher to explain to you more fully, or leave the question until you grow older. But you may be sure that no good deed, no Mitzvah, not even a single minute spent in the study of the Torah, is ever lost.

With blessing,

By [signed by the Rebbe's secretary]

## CUSTOMS CORNER

### FEW LAWS REGARDING THE READING OF THE TORAH

1. The Rebbe [before he actually assumed leadership of Chabad] once came the study hall where the students were learning, he was carrying a message from the previous Rebbe; "the Rebbe told me to tell you all that the Rebbe Rashab [who had by now passed away!!] wants to know why there are people here who talk in the middle of the reading of the Torah".
2. When one is called up to the Torah he approaches the Torah, takes the 'Gartle' (the belt of the Torah) or his Talit, touches the beginning of where is being read and then the end and then the beginning again, and kisses the 'Gartle' or the Talit. He then closes the Torah, looks to the right and begins the blessing. The same should be done after the blessing, only that he touches the end 1st, then the beginning and then the end again (mostly Chabad customs).
3. The one who was called up to the Torah reads to himself very quietly with the one who is reading the Torah, unless he is holding in a place in prayers where he may not speak.
4. One should say the blessing s loud enough so the congregation can hear the blessings.
5. In the after blessing, the words 'asher nusan lanu toras emes' (he who gave us a Torah of truth) refers to the written Torah. The words 'v' chayeit olam nutah b' socheinu' (and an eternal life he has placed in us) refers to the oral Torah.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*A story is told of the Tzemach Tzedek, who was to become the third Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch. As a young child he was studying the Torah portion of Vayechi, this week's Torah portion, and had just learned that "Jacob lived in the land of Egypt 17 years." The teacher explained that from this verse we learn that the 17 years Jacob spent in Egypt were the best years of his life. The Tzemach Tzedek asked his grandfather, the Alter Rebbe, the founder of Chabad, how it was possible that Jacob could have lived his best years in such a place as Egypt?*

*The Alter Rebbe replied: "We have been taught in the previous Torah portion (Vayigash) that Jacob had sent his son Judah ahead of him to establish a yeshiva in Goshen. Therefore, since learning Torah brings a Jew closer to G-d, it is possible for a Jew to truly live even in a place like Egypt and that those years can even be considered 'good' years."*

*This story has an eternal message for every one of us:*

*"Egypt" is the prototype of all the exiles our people have experienced during our long history. The Hebrew word for Egypt is "Mitzrayim," which is connected with "metzarim"-constraints. Egypt thus indicates all situations in which a Jew finds himself constrained and limited in the development of his true Jewish spirit. If it were not for the Torah, the Jewish spirit would languish and lose vigour and vitality in the darkness of exile, whether external or internal. It is the Torah and mitzvot that illuminate Jewish life and provide the strength and vitality to overcome all constraints and hindrances, enabling every Jewman, woman and child to live a bright and meaningful life even in the midst of outside darkness.*

*May we merit very soon to live truly bright and meaningful lives.*

*J. I. Gutterick*

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

**Little Shmuel**  
By Tuvia Bolton

A Jew -- let's call him Fievel -- came to seek the help of the famed "Tzemach Tzedek" (the 3rd Rebbe of Chabad). He was inexplicably being evicted from the inn he'd been running for over twenty years. He couldn't understand it; the poritz (landowner) liked him, he always paid his rent on time, and he never made any trouble. But a week ago the poritz suddenly came and gave him one month's notice. Now with nine mouths to feed and no other way of earning a living, he had no other recourse than to travel to the Rebbe for help.

When Fievel finished his story, the Rebbe took out a piece of paper and a pen, wrote a short letter, put it in an envelope, and addressed it. He then blessed Fievel with success, and instructed him to deliver the letter as swiftly as possible.

He thanked the Rebbe profusely and backed out of the room. Once outside, he glanced at the envelope and his heart sank: the Rebbe seemed to have mistakenly addressed it to the wrong man!

In Fievel's village there were two men by the name of Shmuel. The first, nicknamed Shmuel Hagadol, was a rich, influential Jew who had close connections with all the landowners and nobles and some said even with the Czar himself! If anyone could help Fievel, it would be him. But the Rebbe had addressed his note to Shmuel Hakatan -- a simple old Jew who lived with his wife in his small hut in the woods. The Rebbe must have intended to write the big rich guy. Little Shmuel was a virtual nobody!

But Fievel was stuck. To enter the Rebbe's study again was out of the question; people waited for days for a minute of the Rebbe's time. Then he had an idea: he would go to one of the Rebbe sons and ask for advice.

But the Rebbe's son only assured him of what he already knew -- normal people make mistakes, but not the Rebbe!

So with a heavy heart, Fievel made his way to Little Shmuel's house. The old man invited Fievel in. When he saw the Rebbe's letter asking him to help Fievel in his predicament, he admitted that he had no idea what the Rebbe meant. He suggested that Fievel be his guest for a few days and see what would happen.

A week passed. Fievel began to become depressed. In another two weeks he would have to forfeit his livelihood and vacate his home.

The wind and rain were pounding on the roof and the walls adding to his melancholy. He put his head in his hands and wept.

Suddenly the front door rattled and thundered; someone was pounding and shouting outside. "Help! Help! Let me in!" Little Shmuel ran to the door and opened it as Fievel looked on from his room. It was the poritz, drenched to the bone, shivering and blue with cold. It seems that he had been on his way home and the storm caught him unexpectedly. He had been wandering in the cold, lost in the forest for hours, and was on the verge of death. He fell to the floor in exhaustion.

Shmuel helped him to the fireside, brought him a change of clothes, some warm blankets and hot soup, and in no time the poritz was sitting bundled up near the stove and showering old Shmuel with praises and promises.

"You saved my life! I owe you my life! Tell me how to repay you"

"If you truly wish to reward me then you can do me a big favour."

"Anything! I owe you my very life! Just ask!" exclaimed the poritz.

"Well, a few days ago you told my good friend Fievel that he has to vacate his inn. I want you to let him stay."

"So it shall be!" shouted the poritz.

"It just so happens that Fievel is here in the other room" continued Little Shmuel. "Will you put it in writing?"

Fievel came out of his room and the poritz immediately shook his hand warmly, asked for pen and paper and wrote out a contract giving him and his offspring sole rights on the inn for all generations, and for good measure he gave him the next three years' rent free.

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

**And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger (Gen. 48:14)**

It was precisely because Ephraim was the younger that Jacob placed his stronger hand upon his head to bless him. For young people always require more attention, supervision and encouragement than older people. (*Techiyat Yisrael*)

**Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise (Gen. 49:8)**

The blessing Judah received from Jacob contains every letter of the Hebrew alphabet except for one: the letter "zayin," which means literally a weapon. This is an allusion to the eventual restoration of Jewish sovereignty in the Messianic era, which will come about through a descendant of Judah (in the person of Moshiach). The absence of the letter zayin indicates that Moshiach's victory will be accomplished without the help of the sword, as it states, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the L-rd of hosts." (*Rabbeinu Bachya*)

### CANDLE LIGHTING: 6 JANUARY 2012

BEGINS		ENDS
8:28	MELBOURNE	9:32
8:15	ADELAIDE	9:17
6:30	BRISBANE	7:27
6:59	DARWIN	7:52
6:29	GOLD COAST	7:27
7:09	PERTH	8:09
7:52	SYDNEY	8:53
8:04	CANBERRA	9:07
8:30	LAUNCESTON	9:39
8:26	AUCKLAND	9:30
8:39	WELLINGTON	9:48
8:34	HOBART	9:45
7:30	BYRON BAY	8:28



### CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

**PARSHAS VAYIGASH  
12 TEVES • 7 JANUARY**

<b>FRIDAY NIGHT:</b>	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:28 PM
	MINCHA:	8:35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9:10 PM
<b>SHABBOS MORNING:</b>	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:46 AM
	MINCHA:	8:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:32 PM
<b>WEEKDAYS:</b>	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:35 PM
	MAARIV:	9:25 PM