

LAMPLIGHTER

2 Kislev
Toldos

1061

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Toldot, begins with the words, "These are the generations of Isaac, the son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac."

According to the Talmud, one of the reasons for the repetitiveness of this verse is to emphasize the fact that, according to natural law, Abraham was unable to father children at that age.

When Sara conceived and gave birth to a son the nations of the world scoffed, intimating that Abraham was not the biological father.

G-d therefore fashioned Isaac's facial features to look exactly like his father's, thereby proving his paternity and dispelling any misconceptions.

"The nations of the world" had no difficulty accepting Abraham's ability to father children in the spiritual sense - spreading the belief in One G-d and fostering good deeds among mankind.

What they found impossible to believe, however, was that Abraham - by virtue of his faith in a G-d Who transcended natural law - could overcome his physical limitations and father a child in the literal sense as well.

The miraculous birth of Isaac demonstrated to the entire world that the physical body of the Jew - not only his soul - exists beyond the confines of nature and is created and directly sustained by G-d.

It is in this light that we can understand the words of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, the Previous Rebbe, which he uttered before being exiled to the far Eastern provinces of the Soviet Union, where he was sentenced by the Communist regime for the "crime" of spreading Judaism.

Addressing the assemblage of Chasidim who had come to see him off, the Rebbe declared, "...And let all the nations of the world be apprised that it is only our physical bodies that are in exile and subject to the yoke of the nations. Our souls are not in exile and can never be subjugated! No one can exert any influence over us when it comes to matters of Torah, mitzvot (commandments) and Jewish practice!"

But what good does it do us to know that our souls are not in exile, if our physical bodies - the only medium through which we can observe mitzvot and spread the wellsprings of Judaism - suffer the hardships of the exile?

The answer to this question comes from Abraham, the very first Jew. Abraham proved that whenever a Jew uncovers the supernatural dimensions of his soul, its G-dly light will illuminate his physical being as well.

In this way the physical body is elevated above the laws of nature, to a plane on which no power on earth can exert any influence.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot of the Rebbe, Vol. III

From Generation to Generation

By Rabbi A. Abromowitz

"The children are our future" is often quoted in school faculty meetings and other youth organisations. The education we give and the principles we instill in our youth today are the mold and basis for society of the next generation. Therefore the greatest caution must be exercised to guide and instruct children.

Besides teaching, an additional manner of influence, which perhaps carries with it even greater effects, is to be a living example. By observing the demeanour of grownups, children gather what is considered to be proper conduct (whether it be admirable or otherwise). Generally speaking, this determines their future ethics and morals.

Furthermore the influence we give to our children does not merely guide them on the right path but gives them the strength to follow through with it. They derive a sense of encouragement based on what their leader or guide does and it gives them the drive and capability to continue.

The term "generation" conveys this idea, the transition from parent to child, teacher to student, and the continuity of a parent's values through his offspring. This week we read "Eileh Toldos - the 'generations' (of Yitzchok the son of Avraham)". We, as well as the Jews of all times, are the "generations" of Avraham, Yitzchok, [and Yaakov]. It is therefore understood that we must carry on what they stood for.

Each of the forefathers had a personality which resembled a chariot; a vehicle for G-d, whatever the conductor wanted was done. More specifically, Avraham's task as an individual was to influence others, to disseminate the awareness of the one being, ruler of everything. Yitzchok on the other hand was focussed more on inward challenges, to reinforce the metaphorical torch that retains one's passion on the inside. This was reflected in the fact that he never left the holy land, the land promised to Jewish people; staying close to home in order to abstain from veering from the proper path.

Similarly, every society revolves around these two general types of relationships, one's relationship with others, Avraham, and how one deals with themselves, a parallel of Yitzchok's service. Each law, every 'do' and 'don't' dictated by government, is a decision inspired to maintain a certain standard of order in the general public. While some regulations focus more on the group relationship, others dictate how one must behave in their own home. Regardless of the nature of the law though, concerning society, even private laws are only to control how one will affect others. By contrast, regarding the personal, spiritual service of Yitzchok, there is an objective in and of itself.

The title word "generation" is used primarily by Yitzchok. Though we are descendants, and therefore must mirror the trait of all three of the above mentioned, this fulfilment of the term "descendants" is pronounced most greatly by Yitzchok. Yitzchok's ambition, the emphasis on inward perfection, is the trait which indicates that one is a Jew, a subsequent "generation", a child reflecting his parent's qualities. Perfecting one's self, is changing himself, becoming his truest self. Every Jew must take his natural drive for physical improvement and redirect them for divine service. Therefore, being a child, one who represents the father, is revealed most prominently by Yitzchok.

Slice of LIFE

A SUNDAY AFTERNOON PRAYER- a heartfelt prayer

By Yaakov Brawer

The *Mincha*, or afternoon prayer, is the shortest of the three daily services. Moreover, the time for this prayer often arrives while we are still immersed in our work. People are tired and busy and it is difficult to divest oneself of the effects of a day at the office in order to generate proper intention and emotional involvement. Thus, little *Mincha* often receives short shrift. Paradoxically, in spite of these seeming disadvantages, *Mincha* is a uniquely sublime and transcendent service. In the Chassidic view of things, it is invariably the small, the inconspicuous, and the inconvenient action that is of greatest consequence. Although this concept is elucidated in holy books, the Almighty saw fit to teach it to me by devising circumstances in which I would learn it through an experience.

It has long been my privilege to speak at the Shabbaton held every year at the end of December in Crown Heights. I would usually arrive in New York on Thursday or Friday and leave the following Sunday. I used to always schedule my return flight to allow me the opportunity to join the Lubavitcher Rebbe's *minyán* (prayer quorum) for *Mincha* on Sunday afternoon.

On one such occasion many years ago, I had arranged to fly back to Montreal at 4:30 P.M. That Sunday morning I began to worry about my return trip. I am a very nervous traveller and I generally insist on being at the airport at least a full hour in advance of my flight. Why had I decided to leave so early? The Rebbe's *minyán* generally began at 3:15 and usually ended at 3:30. Allowing myself 15 minutes to return to

where I was staying, I could leave for LaGuardia no earlier than 3:45. What if traffic was heavy? What if a tire went flat? What if a tree had fallen across the Interboro Parkway, and it being Sunday, the road crews took their sweet time in removing it? I calmed myself with the thought that these possibilities were very unlikely and that if I left at 3:45 sharp I would probably make my flight.

I then embarked on my yearly nerve-racking ritual of arranging for a ride to LaGuardia Airport. In those days there was only one car service and it was run by Chassidim, a class of people for whom time means nothing. I walked into the store-front office and told them I wanted a car to take me to LaGuardia at 3:45. I emphasized (several times) that 3:45 does not mean 3:50 or even 3:46. I was not interested in approximations. The proprietor, in soothing tones, assured me of a car at precisely 3:45. They were professionals with considerable experience in this business and there was absolutely nothing to worry about.

I started to leave but I remembered something as I got to the door. I turned to the boss and asked him whether he wouldn't care to know the address to which the car should be sent. "Oh yes, of course, sorry." You see the sort of people I was dealing with.

By 3:00 PM I was packed into the little synagogue in which the Rebbe prayed *Mincha*. Every student attending one of the two local Yeshivas as well as numerous neighbourhood residents and out of town guests were competing for space in that small room. My bones ached and I couldn't breathe but this did not trouble me. This was normal. What bothered me was the time. 3:15, 3:16, 3:17. At 3:20 the Rebbe came in and *Mincha* began. I tried to concentrate on my prayer, reminding myself that I was in the same *minyán* as my holy Rebbe. However, my overwrought brain simply would not mind. It perversely dwelt on my imminent betrayal by the car service.

In the course of my struggles with myself, I became aware of a soft sobbing sound. I had already raced through my prayer and I was able to glance sideways at my neighbour. He was a tall thin bearded man dressed in Chassidic garb. His eyes were closed and tears streamed down his cheeks. His face was intense with concentration. He prayed slowly and with obvious effort.

In spite of myself, I was touched. I could not imagine what sort of terrible trouble lay behind that heartfelt prayer. Perhaps he had a sick child at home or some crushing financial burden. I assumed that he was an out of town visitor seeking the Rebbe's aid and I could not help feeling guilty about my own silly preoccupations with the car service, the airport etc. I mentally wished him the best and hoped that things would turn out well for him.

Mincha completed, I raced back to my host's home and by 3:42 I was awaiting the promised car with fire in my eyes, certain that it would not show. At precisely 3:45, a noisy rusty station wagon spewing blue exhaust rolled up and the driver waved me in. I couldn't believe it. I put my suitcase in the back and then climbed in next to the driver.

My second shock came with the realization that the driver was none other than my heartbroken neighbour at *Mincha*. As we drove off, the driver hummed a jolly Chassidic melody and seemed quite happy. We began to talk. Cautiously I asked him about his welfare: his health, the health of his family, and the state of his finances. Each question elicited a hearty, (if somewhat perplexed) "Thank G-d". Moreover, his wife was soon due to give birth and he was in a particularly excited and happy mood.

Gradually it began to dawn on me that the remarkable outpouring of the heart that I had witnessed earlier was this man's ordinary, daily *Mincha*.

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MOSHIACH MATTERS

We find in this week's Parsha Yitzchak digs three wells. After the third the Torah states: "And he dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it (26:22)". The first two wells allude to the first two Temples, which the enemies of Israel destroyed. The third well represents the Third Temple which shall speedily be built, which will be established without animosity and strife; G-d will then broaden our boundaries and all nations will serve Him in unison.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

B"H, 7 Nissan, 5709

Greetings and blessings,

I received your letter with the question: In what way can one study Tanya to get a taste of it?

You do not clarify what you mean by getting a taste. I think you mean simply understanding it. It is only that since obstacles [to understanding] exist, and Chassidus in general and Tanya in particular are especially difficult [to comprehend] - indeed they are almost beyond understanding - you call understanding merely "tasting."

I must clarify at the outset that Tanya and Chassidus are - like the other portions of the Torah - accessible to everyone who in truth desires to study and understand. Conversely, however, they possess a depth which even the greatest sage in Chassidus cannot say that he can comprehend it in its entirety. In this as well, this is comparable to other aspects of the Torah.

The proof of this is that there are new maamarim and texts being produced which - on the basis of [existing] Torah principles - reveal new concepts and show and clarify deeper and broader [concepts than those] communicated previously.

The reason for these two above-mentioned aspects of Torah in general and Chassidus in particular - simplicity and unique depth which are seemingly opposite - is that they stem from the wisdom of the Holy One, blessed be He. Just as with regard to G-d: a) even simple people know of Him, [and yet,] b) even the greatest sage who is occupied with G-dly wisdom cannot grasp Him in His entirety, so, too, [these concepts] apply with regard to the Torah, because "the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one."

Regarding a program of study for Tanya and Chabad Chassidus, you do not say in your letter what you have already studied or whether you are first starting now. If this is a beginning for you, it appears to me - to the extent that it is possible to offer an opinion - that the order of study should be Shaar HaYichud VahaEmunah, Iggeres HaTeshuvah, Tanya, Vol. I.

The first time you study [these texts], you should not focus on particular words [or] terms, even if [their meaning] is not entirely clear as long as you understand the general concept [communicated] by the chapter. In order to understand the general concept in the chapters of the first volume of Tanya, the text *Kitzur Tanya* by the Tzemach Tzedek published by Kehot is very beneficial. After studying it once superficially, if you [then] study the maamarim in the *Sefer HaMaamarim* [of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe Shlita] from time to time, I think that you will certainly be able to study the Tanya in a more fundamental manner and you will be able to focus on the contents of the chapters in a more detailed manner.

It is obvious that if you have questions concerning the above or regarding the study of Chassidus in general and you think that I will be able to help you, please write to me in a more detailed manner. [You can write] in whichever language is easiest for you to express yourself and I will answer according to my knowledge of the subject. At the outset, however, I would like to make one stipulation: You should not feel slighted if my answer is delayed because of my work for Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch and the like.

I hope to hear good news from you regarding your progress in studying Tanya and Chassidus. I conclude with blessings for a kosher and happy Pesach holiday,

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson

CUSTOMS CORNER

Jewish marriage is a Mitzvah central to Judaism for its similarities to the union of G-d and his people.

One of the necessities for the occasion is a *chupah*. The *chupah* is a canopy which sits atop four poles. Ideally the *chupah* should be ornately decorated, but this is not technically necessary; a *tallit* attached to four poles can also do the trick.

The Ashkenazi custom is for the *chupah* to be held beneath the open skies. Certain wedding halls have a skylight directly over the *chupah* canopy which is opened for the duration of the ceremony. Sephardic custom, however, is to have "roofed" *chupahs*.

If at all possible, a *minyan* (quorum of ten Jewish adult men) should be present at the *chupah*.

Another essential is a *ketubah*. The *ketubah* is a binding document which details the husband's obligations to his wife, showing that marriage, besides being a physical-spiritual union; it is a legal and moral commitment as well.

A WORD

from the Director

This week we find the Parsha, Toldos, in conjunction with the start of the month of Kislev, from which an astounding moral lesson can be derived. The Parsha tells us of the birth of Yitzchak's children after his marriage in the previous week. Our sages tell us that G-d is like a bridegroom and we are like the bride, the ultimate Divine service is to serve G-d and worship Him, in a manner of closeness, similar to a marriage.

One may think that although he is righteous, he is still unworthy to be close to G-d. Therefore the Torah tells us to go out and "make another Jew," to perform spiritual "reproduction," bringing Jews closer to Torah and Mitzvos. As a reward your sins will be forgiven and you will become pure and worthy to relate to Hashem in a manner similar to a marriage.

Now compare this thought with the concept of Chanukah, which comes in the month of Kislev, which is to kindle lights outside the door of your house. This means that despite the darkness, after the sun has set, you must go out and illuminate the world and dissolve and eliminate the forces which would negate G-dliness.

One could possibly say, being that his level of Torah and Mitzvos is very lofty, and being close to the wellsprings of Torah, it is better for him to remain in his own domain, to study, and do Mitzvos. Whereas, his responsibility to reach out will be done by his messengers, children, and grandchildren, or through the "mail" - on his behalf. If "all the roads are dangerous," why encounter peril?!

So the month of Kislev glares at us and beckons us to go out and illuminate the outside! Spread the wellsprings outside! You must go out and spread the teachings of Chassidus there. Being that this will bring you forgiveness, it will neutralize the peril of the way. In practice, illuminate the world with the light of Torah, especially Chassidus, enlighten even the place of darkness, at the door of your house, outside. Go out, and there, make offspring - by bringing the Jews of that faraway place to Torah and Mitzvos, to the degree that they too will subsequently make more "offspring." And this will also speed the ultimate redemption.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

REBBE MATZAH, EXTRAMATZAH

In 1976, after several years of marriage, we finally mustered the courage to make our own Passover seder, at least for the second night. As soon as we made the decision, we began to invite guests. As the festival drew closer, the guest list grew, and grew, and grew! All of a sudden we were expecting sixteen!

After burning chametz on Erev Pesach, a new flush of excitement overtook me. Every year, for the few hours before the festival began, the Rebbe would stand in the doorway of his office and distribute pieces of his matzah, which had been baked earlier that afternoon. As we lived in walking distance of 770 Eastern Parkway, I decided I would tell the Rebbe how many guests we were having. Then, surely, he would give me extra matzah.

Over-enthusiastic and impractical as usual, we sorely underestimated the amount of work left to be done that day. When I finally reached the Rebbe's office, it was too late! He had gone back inside to prepare for the Evening Prayer. "Oh no," I thought. "From one piece of matzah to a lot to none. How will I face my wife?"

"Don't be upset," I was told by an old-timer. "The Rebbe will give out some more after Maariv for a short while."

"Boruch HaShem!" I exhaled. Immediately after the final "Amen" (or perhaps even a bit before, I must admit), I charged out of the shul and sprinted up the stairs to the Rebbe's office. I wasn't first on line, or even close to it, but-praise G-d-I could tell from the pace we were moving that I would get in. No sweat.

My turn came. The Rebbe sized me up with a rapid glance and turned to break off a piece of matzah for me. Before he could do so, I quickly mustered my courage and blurted, "We have sixteen guests."

The Rebbe looked at me. Time froze. I froze. Finally the Rebbe spoke: "For the first Seder or the second?" "The second," I answered, much surprised. "Then I cannot give you matzah now," he declared.

My face must have registered great perplexity, or perhaps the Rebbe sensed I was about to faint. He hastened to explain, and in English! "It is already the first night of the holiday. We are not allowed to do anything on a festival or Shabbat in preparation for the following day, even if the next day is also a festival. Do you understand?"

I nodded, choking back my disappointment. But the Rebbe hadn't finished. "So come again tomorrow night after Maariv (the Evening Prayer), and I will give you then. Gut Yomtov. A kosher freiliche Pesach."

Gut yomtov and what a yomtov! I excitedly ran home to tell everyone what the Rebbe had said. Immediately after the prayers the

next night, I proudly marched up to the Rebbe's door... whereupon his attendant, may he be well and live long, refused to admit me. "The Rebbe doesn't give out matzah tonight. Only the first night," he said, turning away.

"But the Rebbe told me to come," I gasped in panic. He clearly didn't believe me. In desperation, I told him the whole story. I could see he was still sceptical. He could see I was about to either explode or collapse, or both. Finally, he agreed to go and ask the Rebbe. I peeked after him and saw the Rebbe nod.

How did the Rebbe know to ask me which night? I can't answer that. He certainly didn't say that to anyone else - I asked around to find out. I know only that I'm grateful he made an exception for me, on both nights.

Oh yes. He did give me a large amount which I happily shared. I don't know about the other sixteen people, but sixteen plus six years later, I still remember my bag of Rebbe-matzah!

Thoughts THAT COUNT

Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man (27:11)

Two men, one possessing a thick head of hair and the other bald-headed, stood near a threshing-floor. When the chaff flew into the locks of the former, it became entangled in his hair, but when it flew on to the head of the bald man, he passed his hand over his head and removed it.

By the same token, the wicked Esau is polluted by sin throughout the year and has no way to achieve atonement; whereas Jacob is defiled by sin throughout the year, but has the Day of Atonement through which to procure forgiveness. (*Midrash Rabbah*)

And he said: "Because the L-rd you G-d sent me good speed" (27:20)

As soon as Jacob said these words, Isaac said to himself: "I know that Esau does not mention the name of the Holy One, blessed be He; since this one does mention Him, he is not Esau but Jacob." Since Jacob spoke thus, Isaac said to him: "Come near, please, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." (*Midrash Rabbah*)

The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau (27:22)

"The voice is the voice of Jacob"--no prayer is effective unless the seed of Jacob has a part in it. "The hands are the hands of Esau"--no war is successful unless the seed of Esau has a share in it. (*The Talmud*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 16 NOVEMBER 2012



BEGINS		ENDS
7:53	MELBOURNE	8:56
7:42	ADELAIDE	8:43
5:59	BRISBANE	6:56
6:34	DARWIN	7:26
5:59	GOLD COAST	6:56
6:37	PERTH	7:36
7:19	SYDNEY	8:19
7:31	CANBERRA	8:32
7:53	LAUNCESTON	9:00
7:52	AUCKLAND	8:54
8:02	WELLINGTON	9:09
7:56	HOBART	9:05
6:59	BYRON BAY	7:57

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS TOLDOS
2 KISLEV • 16 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:53 PM
	MINCHA:	8:00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:35 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:31 AM
	MINCHA:	7:50 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:::	8:56 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:05 PM
	MAARIV:	8:55 PM