

LAMPLIGHTER

28 Cheshvan
Parshas Toldos

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Toldot, we read of our Matriarch Rebecca's barrenness; the subsequent birth of her and Isaac's twin sons, Esau and Jacob; the twins' growth into adulthood; and the blessing of the firstborn which Isaac bestows upon Jacob.

Isaac became blind in his old age, as it states in this week's portion: "And it came to pass, when Isaac was old, and his eyes were too dim to see." Isaac remained sightless for many years, unable to even leave his home because of his infirmity. One explanation offered by Rashi (the foremost Torah commentator) for Isaac's blindness is that he lost his sight "so that Jacob could receive the blessings."

Isaac did not know that his son Esau was an evil person; thus when he grew old he wanted to bless him. G-d, however, knew that Esau was unworthy and that the blessings should go to Jacob. What did He do? He caused Isaac to become blind, allowing Jacob to come to him in stealth and receive the blessings that were intended for Esau. Had Isaac been sighted he would have been able to distinguish between his sons, and Esau would have ended up the recipient of his blessings.

A question is raised: Why was it necessary for Isaac to suffer for so many years just to ensure that Jacob received the blessings? Couldn't G-d have arranged for Jacob to receive the blessings in another manner? Indeed, Isaac knew that Esau was not as virtuous as his brother; he realized that "the name of heaven" was not usually on Esau's lips. Surely G-d could have simply told him that Esau was an evil person; Jacob could then have received the blessings without Isaac's becoming blind. Why didn't G-d simply reveal the truth to Isaac?

The answer has to do with G-d's reluctance to speak lashon hara (slander), even against as evil an individual as Esau. Despite the fact that Esau was evil, G-d refrained from saying so outright. The Torah thus emphasizes the degree to which we must avoid committing this transgression.

If G-d could restrain Himself from speaking lashon hara against Esau, how much more so must we be careful to avoid speaking lashon hara about any Jew! For every Jew, in his heart of hearts, is good.

By emulating G-d's ways and being careful in what we say, we fulfill the mitzva (commandment) of safeguarding our tongue.

Adapted for Maayan Chai from Likutei Sichot, Volume

Strength of Character

By Tali Loewenthal

Do we have the power to change our own lives? Or are we entirely the products of our environments? After all, we are buffeted by manifold influences exerted on our lives from all quarters: the powerful effect of the peer groups of our school and college years; the daily barrage from the media; the more subtle influence of literature, art and even architecture.

All these go together to form a remarkably powerful set of mind-bending forces acting on each individual. As a consequence, some sociologists doubt whether most of us are capable of any truly independent view on anything.

An example of someone who did express a highly independent stance, based on G-d's will rather than peer pressure, appears in this week's *parshah*. There we learn about Rebecca, the wife of Isaac, one of the four famous Matriarchs of the Jewish people.

We first met her in last week's *parshah*, when she expressed her determination to leave her home and travel far away to become the wife of Isaac. This was not just a youthful urge to travel, a quest for a change of scene. Rebecca came from an environment of idolatry. Everyone around her, including her immediate family and the society in which she lived, believed in idols, such as various nature forces, and worshipped them, often in a horrible way. Her great-uncle Abraham was famous for his rejection of idolatry and his faith in one G-d. But Abraham was far off in the Land of Canaan.

Nonetheless, Rebecca managed to stand above her situation. As the commentator *Rashi* points out, despite her surroundings, she managed to arrive at and maintain her own independent view of life: "Although she was the daughter of a wicked man, the sister of a wicked man, and her hometown was a place of wicked people, she did not learn from their misdeeds."

Then, when the servant of Abraham came looking for a wife for Isaac, she seized the opportunity to join the famous family of monotheists. Despite her parents' reluctance, she insisted on going.

In our *parshah* this week, we see another aspect of her independence. In a personal and revealing account, we learn how she coped first with years of childlessness and then with a very painful pregnancy. This culminated in the birth of the two totally opposite twins: Jacob and Esau!

Although filled with immeasurable love and respect for her husband Isaac, she had had a Divine prophecy about the future of their two children. This, combined with her down-to-earth perception of reality, made her determined that Jacob, rather than Esau, should receive Isaac's blessings. The *parshah* tells us how she achieved success in this aim.

Thus one of the points that this *parshah* teaches us in its account of Rebecca is the idea of strength of character. She had the ability to stand up for that which she knew was right, risking her own well-being in the process. Through this she ensured the establishment of the Jewish people, the children of Jacob.

Slice of LIFE

A Million Little Cables

By Tuvia Bolton

Following Israel's miraculous victory of the Six Day War in 1967, the Lubavitcher Rebbe intensified his "tefillin campaign," instructing his followers to take to the streets and invite Jews to fulfill the mitzvah of *tefillin* (observed by binding on one's head and arm leather boxes containing Biblical passages encapsulating the fundamentals of Judaism).

The idea of approaching non-religious strangers in the street with a request to do a religious act, and such a novel one at that, was unheard of at the time (even today only Chabad is "crazy" enough to do it). No one knew exactly how to "take" this new directive from the Rebbe. In Chabad-Lubavitch communities across the globe, the Rebbe's Chassidim talked about virtually nothing else. Many of these discussions took place at *farbrengen* gatherings (a *farbrengen* is an informal, but very serious, gathering of Chassidim of all ages, with the goal of doing -- and being -- what the Rebbe wants; *l'chaim* is often consumed and people bare their hearts and minds to one another).

At a *farbrengen* in Kfar Chabad (the Chabad-Lubavitch village in Israel) was Rabbi Mendel Futerfas, a salty Chassid and the *mashpia* (Chassidic teacher mentor) of the central Yeshiva, who had spent many years in Soviet prisons and labor camps for his Jewish outreach activities. The discussion went on all night long, with everyone at the *farbrengen* trying to explain this totally unorthodox, seemingly unacceptable idea, with no success.

Then Reb Mendel remembered something he had heard in Siberia fifteen years earlier. During his years in the gulag, with nary a Jewish book to nourish his soul, Reb Mendel tried to learn a lesson in the service of G-d from everything he heard and saw (in accordance with the famous teaching of the Baal Shem Tov) -- and usually he succeeded. (He once told me that he believes that the reason that the great Chassidic master Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli said that it's possible "to learn seven positive lessons in the service of G-d from a thief" is because Rabbi Zusha never sat in prison. If he had sat in prison he would have learned thousands of things!) But there was one story -- said Reb Mendel to his fellow Chassidim at the *farbrengen* that night -- that, try as he might, he could not figure out what was its spiritual point... until now.

One of the prisoners in the labor camp had been a deep-sea diver in the Czar's navy, and was talking about his exploits: "It occasionally happened that one of the ships of the Czar's navy would sink, sometimes because of a storm at sea, or because it struck a rock, or sometimes in battle.

"Now, ships are worth a lot of money, just the metal and the equipment alone were often worth millions, so the navy developed a means to lift the ship from the ocean floor so it could be towed to shore and repaired or at least partially salvaged. And that's where I came in.

"What they would do is situate two towing-ships on the sea above where the sunken ship was. Each ship would lower a long, thick chain with a huge hook on its end, and I would dive down, attach one hook to the front and the other to the rear of the sunken ship. Then the towing-ships would reel in their chains, lift the sunken ship from the ocean floor, and tow it in to shore.

"Now, this was all good and well when the sunken ship had been under water for a month or so, but after that the ship began to rust and the hooks would bring up only huge chunks of iron, leaving the rest of the ship behind.

"So someone developed a brilliant idea. The two tugboats, instead of lowering just one chain each, would spread a huge inflatable rubber mat over the place where the sunken ship was. Inside the mat was a large flat sheet of steel with hundreds of steel cables attached to it. The cables ran through special airtight holes in the rubber bottom of the raft in a way that no water could get in and no air would escape. At the end of each dangling cable was a hook.

"My job was to go down with a few other divers, lower the mat, spread it over the sunken ship, and attach the hooks to as many places as possible. Then a motor on one of the two tugboats would pump air into the mat and slowly inflate it. It began to pull upwards until... WHOOPA! The entire ship rose to the surface and could be towed to dry land. Because there were cables attached to so many parts of the ship, the disintegrating ship could be lifted in one piece, without falling apart."

"Only now am I beginning to understand the meaning of this story," said Reb Mendel that night in Kfar Chabad. "The ship is like the Jewish people, rusting and falling apart because they have been submerged in exile for almost two thousand years.

"The Rebbe's idea is to save the ship and we are the Rebbe's deep-sea divers. Trying to pull up the whole thing up with one or two big hooks won't work. We need to attach a cable to every single Jew... bind *tefillin* on as many Jews as possible, and then when enough "hooks" and "cables" are attached... WHOOPA! G-d will pull us all up together."

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MOSHIACH MATTERS

Our sages state, "Any generation in whose days the Holy Temple is not rebuilt, it is reckoned against that generation as if it was destroyed in its time!" (*Yerushalmi, Yoma 1:1*) The destruction thus is not simply an event that happened in the past. Its consequences extend to this very day, and the event, therefore, must be seen as something happening even now - as if the *Beit Hamikdash* is being destroyed this very moment. It follows, then, that it is our duty - and we do have the ability - to rid ourselves of the cause of the *churban* and to prevent its present recurrence.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

26th of Teves, 5742 (1982)

Continued from the previous issue from a letter in which the Rebbe explains why he established the Jewish children's organization "Tzivos HaShem," 1982.

As with every health problem, physical, mental or spiritual, the cure lies not in treating the symptoms, but in attacking the cause, although the former may sometimes be necessary for relief in acute cases.

Since, as I mentioned, the root of the problem is the lack of Kabolas Ol [accepting the yoke (of Heaven)], I thought long and hard about finding a way of inducing an American boy to get used to the idea of subordination to a higher authority, despite all the influence to the contrary - in the school, in the street, and even at home, where parents - not wishing to be bothered by their children - have all too often abdicated their authority, and left it to others to deal with truancy, juvenile delinquency, etc.

I came to the conclusion that there was no other way than trying to effect a basic change in the boy's nature, through a system of discipline and obedience to rules which he can be induced to get accustomed to. Moreover, for this method to be effective, it would be necessary that it should be freely and readily accepted, without coercion.

The idea itself is, of course, not a novel one. It has already been emphasized by the Rambam [Maimonides] in the introduction to his Commentary on Mishnayos, where he points out that although ideally good things should be done for their own sake (Lishmoh), it is necessary to use inducements with young children until they are old enough to know better.

Thus, a "Pilot" Tzivos HaShem was instituted. It immediately proved a great success in getting the children to do good things in keeping with the motto V'Ohavto L'Reacho Komocho [love your neighbour as yourself], coupled with love and obedience to the "Commander-in-chief" of Tzivos HaShem, namely HaShem Eloikei Tzivo'os [G-d, the L-rd of Hosts].

The Tzivos HaShem Campaign has a further reward, though not widely applicable to Jewish children attending Hebrew schools. This, too, has already been alluded to by our Sages, in their customary succinct way, by saying that a person born with a violent nature should become a (blood-letting) physician, or a Shochet [ritual slaughterer], or a Mohel [ritual circumciser], in order to give a positive outlet to their strong natural propensity (T. B. Shabbos 156a). Thus, children that might be inclined to aggressiveness, and hence easy candidates for street gangs, and the like, would have a positive outlet by diverting their energy in the right direction.

This brings us to the point that although the ideal of peace is so prominent in the Torah, as mentioned, the fact is that G-d designed and created the world in a way that leaves man subject to an almost constant inner strife, having to wage relentless battle with the Yetzer Hora [evil inclination]. Indeed, the Zohar points out that the Hebrew term for bread - lechem - is derived from the same root that denotes "war," symbolizing the concept of the continuous struggle between the base and sublime nature of man, whether he eats his bread as a glutton, in a way an animal eats its food, or on a higher level - to keep the body healthy in order to be able to do what is good and right in accordance with the Will of the Creator.

This is the only kind of "battle" the Tzivos HaShem are called upon to wage. By the same token, the only "secret weapon" they are encouraged to use is strict Shabbos observance and other Mitzvoth [commandments] which have been the secrets of Jewish strength throughout the ages.

Our experience with Tzivos HaShem - wherever the idea has been implemented, in the U.S.A. and Canada, Eretz Yisroel [the Land of Israel], and in many parts of the world - has completely convinced us of its most successful positive results, with no negative side-effects whatever. I can only hope that it would be adopted in other sectors, outside of Lubavitch, in growing numbers.

I trust that the above lines will not only put to rest all your apprehensions concerning Tzivos HaShem, but will also place you in the company of the many prominent educators and spiritual leaders who have enthusiastically acclaimed the Tzivos HaShem operation as uniquely successful in attaining its desirable goal.

With esteem and blessing,

CUSTOMS CORNER

The Virtue of Truth

The Torah says: "Distance yourself from words of falsehood." This is the only sin regarding from which the Torah warns us to "distance" ourselves.

In telling the truth we emulate our Creator regarding whom it says: "The seal of G d is truth." The Sefer Chassidim writes that one who speaks only truth can actually change destiny by decreeing something to happen-and it will.

It is evident from the Talmud that being careful to only speak truthfully is a segulah (spiritually propitious activity) that allows one to complete the years allotted to him by G d.

The Talmud also says that there are three types of people that G d despises. One of them is those that say one thing, while having completely different feelings in their heart.

On a very practical level, it is clear that when a person accustoms himself to speaking truthfully, people come to trust him, as the verse says: "A true tongue will be established forever." On the other hand, one who is a habitual liar will not be trusted, as the verse continues: "But a lying tongue, just for a moment"; i.e., his believability is short lived.

A WORD

from the Director

In our Parshsa the Torah tells us about Rivkah's experience carrying twins in her womb. She felt a struggle within her and so she went to inquire of [a man of] G-d. The reply she received was that "two nations are in your womb..." referring to her two sons, who would be the forebears of future nations.

The commentaries explain that when she passed a house of Torah, Yaakov struggled to emerge, and when she passed a house of idol worship, Eisav would squirm to come out. This perplexed her as she was under the impression that she was carrying one very confused child. G-d's answer was that she was actually holding two, which calmed her, because although she now knew that one of her children craved for idolatry, at least there was no indecisive turmoil, the inability to distinguish between right and wrong.

She recognized that as long as a person is ambivalent, it is impossible to guide him on the right path. Only after his views have been clarified, one can debate and endeavour to persuade him. Now informed that she was going to give birth to two children, she was relieved because she could now hope to convince the other child to emulate the ways of his righteous brother.

The Torah's advice for us is clear: when we are unsure, the decisions we make will be inconsistent and confusing. It is our duty to clarify our inner workings and to determine what we are inclined towards. And if we are to discover that they are negatively inclined, we can begin to develop ourselves in a way that is oriented appropriately. All of this is only possible after the harmful trait is identified. As the saying goes "knowing the sickness is half the cure".

May Hashem speedily fulfil His promise to us regarding the times of Moshiach to remove all sickness and malady from among His people.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

SECOND-HAND TEFILIN

It was the custom in Berditchev that the *tefilin* of deceased townsmen would become the property of the local burial society, whose director would sell them for the benefit of the *Chevrah Kaddisha*.

One day this functionary received a visit from the chief rabbi of the town, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, who asked to be shown all the *tefilin* on hand, for he wished to buy a pair for himself. The Rebbe soon chose a particular pair. The director, a clever fellow, reasoned that the *tzadik* would not have come along to simply buy himself a nondescript secondhand pair of *tefilin*: there must be more to this purchase than met the eye. So he said: "Rebbe, I am willing to sell you all the pairs of *tefilin* you see here - except for this pair. This pair I am not willing to part with...."

But Rabbi Levi Yitzchak made it clear that it was only this pair that interested him, and he earnestly begged to be able to buy it.

So finally the director said: "Very well, I will agree to sell them to you - but only on condition that you tell me what is so special about them that makes you seek this particular pair."

"Very well," said the *tzadik*. "As you no doubt know, for many years the brothers Elimelech of Lyzhinsk and Zushya of Hanipoli wandered about among the townships and villages, with the aim of firing their fellow Jews with a desire for repentance. Whenever they arrived at some place for the night, one of them would address the other as if he were a sinner turning to his rebbe, weeping over his imagined sins and requesting a suitable penance. And while so doing - within earshot of their host - he would list all the transgressions of which the host was in fact guilty. Overhearing his seeming confession of another, the host would recall that he too, as it were, had sinned in a like manner, and this recollection would cause him to repent.

"Arriving one night at the house of a Jew who lived in a certain village, Reb Zushya began to tearfully beg his brother to prescribe a penance for his negligence. Throughout his life, he had never had his *tefilin* checked to see whether the verses inscribed on the parchment scrolls inside them were still in valid condition. And now he had at last given his *tefilin* to a scribe for checking, and had found that there were no scrolls inside them whatever! If so, then he had lived all his life in an illusion, and clearly fell into the unfavorable category of 'a head that has never worn *tefilin*.'

"At this point Reb Elimelech took over, and explained to his brother what a serious state of affairs this was. And as their host overheard this dialogue, he recalled that he 'too' had never given his *tefilin* to a scribe for checking. He ran off to fetch them, and when they were opened he found that they were utterly empty! Alarmed by his discovery, he sobbed out his story to the two visitors, and begged them to direct him as to how to repent.

"Reb Elimelech now turned to Reb Zushya and said: 'Please write out a set of scrolls for the *tefilin* of our host. And as you do so, make it your solemn intention to draw down into their words the kind of light from Above that will be of the intensity appropriate to a man who had never fulfilled the *mitzvah* of *tefilin* in his life.'

"Reb Zushya took out parchment, quill and ink, and devoutly inscribed the passages required. Then he rolled up the tiny scrolls, placed them inside the black leather boxed of the *tefilin*, and returned them to their owner.

"But the divine light that those *tefilin* now irradiated was of an intensity that this man was unable to bear. Soon after this incident he moved here to Berditchev, and a short while later, died in our city.

"And these," concluded Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, "are the selfsame *tefilin* which thus found their way into the hands of our local burial society."

Biographical notes:

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak (Deberamdiger) of Berditchev (1740-25 Tishrei 1809) is one of the most popular rebbes in chasidic history. He was a close disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch. He is best known for his love for every Jew and his active efforts to intercede for them against (seemingly) adverse heavenly decrees. Many of his teachings are contained in the posthumously published, *Kedushat Levi*.

Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk (1717 - 21 Adar 1787), was a leading disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch, successor to the Baal Shem Tov, and the leading Rebbe of the subsequent generation in Poland-Galitzia. Most of the great Chassidic dynasties stem from his disciples. His book, *Noam Elimelech*, is one of the most popular of all Chassidic works.

Rabbi Zusha of Anapoli (?- 2 Shvat 1800), was a major disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch. The seemingly unsophisticated but clearly inspired "Reb Zusha" is one of the best known and most beloved Chassidic personalities. He and his famous brother, R. Elimelech, spent many years wandering in exile, for esoteric reasons.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

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

When Jacob said these words, Isaac told 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." Therefore Isaac asked Jacob: "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: 1 OCTOBER 2013

BEGINS	ENDS
7:36MELBOURNE	8:37
7:26ADELAIDE	8:25
5:48BRISBANE	6:43
6:29DARWIN	7:20
5:47GOLD COAST	6:42
6:23PERTH	7:20
7:04SYDNEY	8:03
7:15CANBERRA	8:14
7:33LAUNCESTON	8:37
7:35AUCKLAND	8:35
7:42WELLINGTON	8:46
7:36HOBART	8:41
6:47BYRON BAY	7:43
6:32SINGAPORE	7:22



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS TOLDOS

28 CHESHVAN • 1 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:36 PM
	MINCHA:	7:45 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:15 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9:37 PM
	MINCHA:	7:25 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8:37 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	
	SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MON-FRI:	8:00 AM
	MINCHA:	7:45 PM
	MAARIV:	8:35 PM, 9:00 PM