

LAMPLIGHTER

19 Kislev
Parshas Vayeishev

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Vayeishev, begins, "And Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojourning, in the land of Canaan." The Maggid of Mezeritch offers the following explanation on this verse:

"And Jacob dwelt" implies the act of settling in, an active investment of one's energies;

"In the land" alludes to the material realm, to the physical world and its affairs.

In Canaan, the Maggid explained, our Patriarch Jacob involved himself in mundane matters, utilizing simple physical objects in his service of G-d. The Hebrew word for sojourning, "megurei," is related to the word "agar," to hoard or to store.

Jacob's work in Canaan consisted of collecting and refining the sparks of holiness that were concealed within the physical world and obscured by its gross materiality. Through his service Jacob elevated these sparks and returned them to "his Father" - to G-d.

Divine service of this nature is derived from our acceptance of the yoke of heaven, without consideration for individual understanding.

The Jewish people are called "the Army of G-d." A soldier in the army must obey without question. He does not act at his own discretion, nor does his commander explain his reasoning when issuing an order. A soldier demonstrates pure obedience and acceptance of authority; so must every Jew in his G-dly service.

Jacob left Be'er Sheva for Canaan to begin his work of elevating the sparks of holiness. He understood that he and Esau could not live in close proximity, but he did not question why he was the one who would have to depart, uprooting himself from a life of Torah study and tranquillity. Rather, he accepted G-d's command without protest, and acted with joy and enthusiasm.

For Jacob, going to Canaan represented a very great descent, for it required him to abandon the world of Torah study and involve himself in mundane matters in order to elevate them. Yet we see that Jacob's spiritual stature was not damaged by this in the least. On the contrary, by serving G-d with true acceptance of His authority, Jacob experienced a very great ascent, both in the spiritual sense and in the material wealth that he accrued.

From Jacob we can derive a lesson for every Jew: When it comes to serving G-d, it is not necessary to look for grandiose actions and methods. A Jew's task is to properly utilize even the most mundane of physical objects in his Divine service, elevating the hidden sparks of holiness they contain out of a sense of acceptance of the yoke of heaven.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot, vol 1 of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

"How Are You Today?"

Would you think that "how are you today?" can be a religious question? And that it plays an important role in a major Biblical narrative?

In this week's Parshah, *Vayeishev* (Genesis 37-40), we read the dramatic story of Joseph - the technicolour dream coat, the sibling rivalry in Jacob's family, and Joseph's descent to Egypt, sold into slavery. After being framed by his master's wife for scorning her attempts at seduction, young Joseph finds himself incarcerated in an Egyptian jail. There he meets the Pharaoh's butler and baker, and correctly interprets their respective dreams. Later, when Pharaoh himself will be perturbed by his own dreams, the butler will remember Joseph, and Joseph will be brought from the dungeon to the royal court. His dream analysis will satisfy the monarch, and the young Hebrew slave boy will be catapulted to prominence and named viceroy of Egypt.

How did Joseph's salvation begin? It began with the imprisoned Joseph noticing that the butler and baker were looking somewhat depressed. "And Joseph came to them in the morning and he saw them, and behold, they were troubled. He asked Pharaoh's officials . . . 'Why do you look so bad today?'. They tell him about their disturbing dreams, he interprets the dreams correctly, and the rest is history.

But why did Joseph have to ask them anything at all? Why was it so strange to see people in prison looking sad? Surely depression is quite the norm in dungeons. Wouldn't we expect most people in jail to look miserable?

Joseph was exhibiting a higher sense of care and concern for his fellow human beings. Torn away from his father and home life, imprisoned in a foreign land, he could have been forgiven for wallowing in his own miseries. Yet, upon seeing his fellow prisoners looking particularly unsettled, he was sensitive enough to take the time to inquire about their well-being. In the end, not only did he help them, but his own salvation came about through that fateful encounter. Had he thought to himself, "Hey, I've got my own problems, why worry about *them*?" he might have languished in prison indefinitely.

Sometimes, a simple "how are you today?" can prove historic.

It's a lesson to all of us to be a little friendlier. To greet people, perhaps even to smile more often.

When we meet someone we know and ask, "Hey, how are you doing?" do we wait for the answer? Try this experiment. Next time you are asked how you are doing, answer "Lousy!" See if the other person is listening and responds, or just carries on his merry way, oblivious to your response.

Aside from Joseph's many outstanding qualities which we ought to try and emulate, in this rather simple passage Joseph reminds us to be genuinely interested in other people's well-being. And that it should not be beneath our dignity, nor should we be inhibited, to make an honest and sincere inquiry as to their condition. Who knows? It may not only change their lives, but ours.

Slice of LIFE

SLAPS OF LOVE

[In this story the regular typeface is Ido, Rabbi Weber's student, speaking first-person; the italic is Sara, referring to herself in third-person.]

Two Americans are visiting Israel. It is Jan. 1988, just after the beginning of the Intifada. They had met as secular people, business people, working in the same city. Their relationship had developed over a year's time to include concerts, restaurants, lectures, and an ever-intensifying discussion concerning religion. Although non-traditional in almost every way you can imagine, they were trying to sort out their lives, and just beginning to learn about Torah-Judaism.

The elder, an American businessman in his 49th year, arrived in Jerusalem in November and began taking classes at different beginners' yeshivas for English-speakers. The woman, in her late twenties at the time, arrived January 1. She had just quit her job suddenly, sold most of her belongings, and stored the rest. She felt she was embarking on a whole new path on her life's journey. Her intent was to meet up with this man, see some of Israel with him and discuss her decision about Judaism.

One afternoon, a tour guide took them to see Mea Shaarim; the weather was very cold and wet—a virtual deluge. The narrow streets were dark and full of water runoff. The guide showed them the basics and then, with a wink, announced that he had "a brilliant idea, something off the beaten track." As he led them through slippery alleys, occasionally cutting between ramshackle buildings, he explained that he was taking them to visit an old friend—these two would not have known a tzaddik unless hit between the eyes with one...which is what happened next!

Rabbi Moshe Weber and I were about to leave his house to go to the *shul* where he conducted a daily class in *Daf Yomi* [a two-sided page of Talmud per day]. Unexpectedly, there was a knock at the door of his small apartment in the Meah Shearim neighbourhood of Jerusalem. A man and woman came in. He appeared to be in his forties, while she seemed much younger. Both were obviously Americans. The man said he had heard that it would be worthwhile for him to meet Rabbi Weber.

Not knowing English, Rabbi Weber held the man's right hand affectionately between both of his for a number of moments, and then motioned for the two of them to sit down at the table. He started to speak to them excitedly

about Israel, Torah and mitzvot. They couldn't understand a word, but nevertheless glowed at the obvious warmth and caring that was expressed in the tone of his voice and his kind sparkling eyes. Fortunately, I was present and able to act as a translator.

After a few minutes, the man revealed that the woman accompanying him was not Jewish and that it was his intention to marry her. When he said that, I was sure that Rabbi Weber would either yell at him for daring to bring a non-Jewish woman into his house and for brazenly announcing his plans to intermarry, or more simply, immediately ask the two of them to leave.

Rabbi Weber did neither. He continued to speak to the man in warm friendly tones.

Although she had grown up "orthodox" Protestant, she had found Judaism at the end of her college career. Her apartment was lined with books, including translations of biblical texts and a tome on Jewish Halacha. The real truth was that she knew more about Judaism than he had from Day 1!

When he left for Israel to learn, they had parted ways but expected to remain friends. Three weeks into the separation, she was picking up the phone to call his daughter and get a telephone number to reach him when the phone rang. When she heard his voice again, she knew. She would go to Israel. What happened after that was up to G-d. Little did she know!

Rabbi Weber conversed with the man in a heartfelt manner, stressing the beauty and fulfillment in a life based on *mitzvah* observance. Within minutes, the truth of the expression "words that emerge from the heart enter the heart" was visible to all. The visitor was obviously affected by the warmth and love with which Rabbi Weber was speaking to him. He declared that he was ready to commit himself to putting on *Tefillin* every weekday and to keeping *Shabbat*.

Rabbi Weber seated them at the table, asked if they would like something to drink or eat and sent Ido for some cookies. After gently instructing him to say the proper blessings, Rabbi Weber took the hands of the gentleman between his and spoke calmly but urgently to him; every once and a while he would gently slap one of the man's cheeks. Apparently he was suggesting that his guest discontinue the use of his razor—if he had to shave, buy an electric shaver when he returned to the U.S.

"Very good," replied Rabbi Weber, "but that is not sufficient. You must know that it is forbidden for you to be with this woman!"

The man quickly responded that it was her intention to convert, and had been so even before she had met him, and for a long time. Rabbi Weber answered him that if it was indeed her desire to join the Jewish people and accept the yoke of Torah and mitzvot, she would have to do so under the auspices of an Orthodox

rabbi in the city where she lived in the USA.

They promised that was exactly what would happen. The man parted from Rabbi Weber with a warm hug, and a promise that he would do precisely as Rabbi Weber had instructed him.

A half-year went by. One day, we received an overseas phone call. It was that same American Jew. He said that the woman had undergone a strictly kosher conversion, and that he had increased his personal level of observance as he had promised Rabbi Weber. He then announced that they were planning to marry soon, and they both deeply wished that Rabbi Weber would accept their invitation to attend their wedding in Pittsburgh, which they would send formally as soon as the date was set.

Rabbi Weber explained to him that such a long trip would be impossible for him, as his wife was seriously ill and bedridden, and he had to be available to care for her. "But Reb Moshe," the man exclaimed, "You must come. We both desperately want you to be there. We need you to come."

That summer, Mrs. Weber was admitted to a special rehabilitation home—for which she had been on a waiting list for many months!—and the Rav was able to go. I, too, went with him.

Ido telephoned. The invitation took only 4 days to arrive at the Webers—from the U.S. to Eretz Yisrael, to Mea Shaarim in just four days! A miracle. "We can come. Special care for the Rebbetzin has just recently been arranged." Another miracle!

The joy of that unique wedding was extraordinary. Rabbi Weber danced with the chatan for a long time. Everyone present was enthralled and delighted by the special guest from Jerusalem. More than a decade later, and they still speak about it.

Today, twelve years after they first came to us, the couple dwells in San Diego, California. They have three sons, all of whom study in fine Torah institutions. Every Shabbat, they invite many guests, some of whom they help draw closer to Torah-true Judaism. During the week they also host observant Jews from different communities who are visiting their city.

Who knows? Perhaps the reason Rabbi Weber was so patient with them at their first encounter, at his house, was simply an outcome of his kind and caring nature. Or perhaps, as I often think, it was because he saw with true vision the potential for the fine Jewish home that would emerge from their union.

May the blessed memory of Rabbi Moshe Weber continue to kindle the hearts and minds of all his students and the lives he touched at his home and at the Kotel until the coming of Moshiach, may it be soon.

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ISSUE 1114

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Torah gives us 613 mitzvot to do. Many of these mitzvot are to be done in the Temple in Jerusalem. Others are applicable only when all or most of the Jewish people are living in the Jewish land. Altogether, the majority of these mitzvot cannot be fulfilled as long as we as a nation are scattered all over the Diaspora and there is no Temple in Jerusalem—and the only way that this can be repaired is through the promised leader and sage to whom we refer as the Moshiach.

So you see that every one of these unfulfilled mitzvot is silently screaming, "Bring the Moshiach so that you can fulfill me! I know that Moshiach will once again build the Temple, so that I will be revived!"

And if so, should not the heart of a sensitive Jew cry and yearn in the same way?



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

20th of Kislev, 5732 [1971]

I am in receipt of your letter of the 22nd of Cheshvan, and may G-d grant that you should have good news to report in all the matters about which you write.

Now that we are in the days between the 19th of Kislev and Chanukah, the history and significance of which are surely known to you, may each and every one of us be inspired to intensify the efforts to spread the fountains, both the fountains of Torah in general and the fountains of Pnimius HaTorah [the inner dimension of Torah] in particular, in a growing measure.

Indeed, the Mitzvah [commandment] of the Chanukah lights brings us vividly the three fundamental aspects of such activity:

to spread the light of the Torah and Mitzvos in a growing measure from day to day, as indicated by the addition of a candle each succeeding night of Chanukah;

to do so not only within one's own home, but to spread it also "outside," as indicated by the fact that the original place of the Chanukah lights is "at the entrance of his home, outside;"

when it is dark outside, one must not be discouraged, and that is precisely the time to start kindling the lights - as the Chanukah candles have to be kindled after sunset.

Wishing you and yours a bright and inspiring Chanukah.

Kislev, 5741 [1980]

This is to acknowledge receipt of your correspondence. May G-d grant the fulfillment of your heart's desire for good in all the matters about which you wrote. Especially as we have now entered the bright month of Kislev, highlighted by Chanukah, the Festival of Lights.

As has been pointed out before, the kindling of the Chanukah Lights, which is the first of the special Mitzvos connected with Chanukah, is unique in the way it is performed, namely, in that a light is added each night of Chanukah. Although when one has kindled two Chanukah Lights on the second night, the Mitzvah was performed mehadrin-min-hamehadrin (par excellence), yet the following night, the number of Chanukah Lights is increased to three, and the next night - to four, and so on.

Thus, the Mitzvah of Ner Chanukah [the Chanuka light] is especially significant in its message in regard to all matters of "ner mitzvah v' Torah or [a commandment is a lamp and the Torah is light]:

That even though a Jew has attained excellence in the performance of the daily Mitzvos, one must not stop at that; for as a Jew grows older and wiser each day, he (or she) is expected to do even better than the day before.

And, of course, there is always room for advancement in all matters of goodness and holiness, Torah and Mitzvos, which are infinite in their scope and depth, being connected with the En Sof (The Infinite).

There is a further significance in that the Mitzvah of Ner Chanukah requires that the lights should be displayed also for the "outside." The meaning of this, among other things, is to show that no matter how dark it is in the outside world - and never has it been darker than in our time - Jews are not disheartened.

On the contrary, by strengthening our adherence to the way of the Torah and Mitzvos, both at home and outside, and also spreading the eternal values of the Torah in terms of morality and justice which the Torah makes incumbent upon all humanity (the so-called Seven Mitzvos given to the children of Noah, i.e. all mankind), Jews can confidently look forward to the time when the darkness of our Golus [exile], and the darkness of all the world, will soon be totally dispelled, with the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

CUSTOMS CORNER

Our forefather Jacob showed special favour to his son Joseph, the firstborn of his favoured wife Rachel. He taught him all of the Torah he had learned in the yeshiva of Shem and Eber.

In connection here are a few points from Jewish Law on education.

- " The training for the positive mitzvot begins at the age that is appropriate for each mitzvah. For example, when a child is able to listen to Kiddush and understand the concept of Shabbat, he or she should be trained to listen to Kiddush.
- " When choosing a teacher for a child, it is better to choose one who is particular to teach the material correctly, even if he teaches at a slower pace, rather than one who teaches at a faster pace but is not particular about teaching all the details correctly.
- " A teacher should be G-d fearing, an expert in the material being studied, and precise in his teaching.
- " Rabbi Moshe Feinstein wrote that it is proper to educate children to go beyond the letter of the law in fulfilling their religious obligations.

A WORD

from the Director

This Friday is the 19th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev, which marks the anniversary of the passing of one of the early Chassidic masters, Rabbi Dovber of Mezritch, also known as "the Maggid of Mezritch" (the preacher of Mezritch). This day is also the day that his disciple, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, was released from jail, and started a new revolution in the teachings of Chassidus.

The day marks a unique significance in the onset of Chassidism and is a day that today is celebrated by thousands of Jews, the world over.

The following story expresses the specialty of their teachings and the cause for the great celebration.

There was once a Jew who occupied himself solely with the study of Torah. He was free from financial worry because his wife ran a store, which kept them rather well-to-do. After many years this Jew heard of a Rabbi called the Maggid of Mezritch who was said to be one who would teach about G-d and the inner dimension of the Torah. So, attracted by the opportunity, he travelled to see the Maggid. Impressed by the Maggid and his teachings, he stayed to study and soon he too, was praying fervently and his heart was beginning to flame with love for the Almighty. But as his feelings for Hashem grew, his business dwindled. Upset by his newfound challenge, he made another trip to the Maggid to seek advice. The Maggid listened to his plight and said: "the Talmud says that if someone wants to receive wealth he should pray (slightly) towards the north, and if one wants wisdom he should pray (slightly) southward. How can one be facing two directions at the same time? Only if loses his existence and is not found in the realm of space can the opposing directions not be a contradiction."

This story encapsulates the message that the Maggid and his disciple the Alter Rebbe dedicated their lives to teach: a Jew's service of G-d must be with total nullification towards G-d until one comes to perceive that G-d is the only existence. However, this brings the Jew to reveal this in the world, so that the material world itself recognizes and appreciates Hashem. The boundless joy that is released in this personal state, and that in the very near future will be the state of the world's awareness, truly calls for this day to be a day of great celebration!

J. I. Guttentag

IT HAPPENED

Once...

The Vanishing Flame

It was the first night of Chanukah. Outside a snowstorm raged, but inside it was tranquil and warm. The Rebbe, Rabbi Baruch of Mezhibuz, grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, stood in front of the menorah, surrounded by a crowd of his Chassidim. He recited the blessings with great devotion, lit the single candle, placed the *shammash* ("servant candle") in its designated place, and began to sing *HaNairot Halalu*. His face radiated holiness and joy; the awed Chassidim stared intently at him.

The flame of the candle was burning strongly. Rebbe and Chassidim sat nearby and sang *Maoz Tsur* and other Chanukah songs. All of a sudden, the candle began to flicker and leap wildly, even though there wasn't the slightest breeze in the house. It was as if it were dancing. Or struggling. And then, it disappeared!

It didn't blow out, there was no smoke, it just was not there anymore. It was as if it flew off somewhere else. The Rebbe himself seemed lost in thought. His attendant went over to re-light the wick, but the Rebbe waved him off.

He motioned to the Chassidim to continue singing. Several times, between tunes, the Rebbe spoke words of Torah. The evening passed delightfully, and the Chassidim present had all but forgotten about the disappearing Chanukah candle.

It was nearly midnight when the harsh sound of carriage wheels grating on the snow and ice exploded the tranquillity. The door burst open and in came a Chassid who hailed from a distant village. His appearance was shocking. His clothes were ripped and filthy, and his face was puffy and bleeding. And yet, in stark contrast to his physical state, his eyes were sparkling and his features shone with joy.

He sat down at the table, and with all eyes upon him, began to speak excitedly. "I know the way to Mezhibuz by the forest route, very well. But there was a terrible snow storm this week, which greatly slowed my advance. The thought of not being with the Rebbe for the first night of Chanukah disturbed me so much, I decided not to wait out the storm, but to plod ahead in the hope that I could reach my destination on time.

"Last night, as I was traveling, I ran into a gang of bandits. They figured I must be a wealthy merchant whose business could not brook delay. They demanded that I surrender to them all of my money.

"I tried to explain, I pleaded with them, but they absolutely refused to believe I had no money. They seized the reins of my horses and leapt on my wagon, and then drove me and my wagon off to meet their chief to decide my fate.

"While they waited for their chief to arrive, they questioned me, searched me, and beat me, trying to elicit the secret of where I had hidden my money.

"After hours of this torture, they bound me and threw me, injured and exhausted, into a dark cellar.

"When the chief arrived, I tried to the best of my ability to describe to him the great joy of being in the Rebbe's presence, and how it was so important to me to get to the Rebbe by the start of the holiday that it was worth it to endanger myself by traveling at night.

"It seems that my words made an impression on him, and he released me from the handcuffs, saying:

"I sense that your faith in G-d is strong and your longing to be with your Rebbe is genuine and intense. I am going to let you go, but you should know that the way is extremely dangerous. And I am telling you, if you get through the forest and the other terrible conditions safely, unharmed by the ferocious wild beasts or anything else, then I will break up my gang and reform my ways.

"If you actually reach the outskirts of the city, then throw your handkerchief into the ditch next to the road, behind the signpost there. One of my men will be waiting, and that is how I will know that you made it.

"I then became terrified all over again. The hardships I had already endured were seared into my soul, and now even more frightening nightmares awaited me. But when I thought about how wonderful it is to be with the Rebbe at the menorah lighting, I shook off all my apprehensions and resolved not to delay another moment. My horse and carriage were returned to me and I set off on my way.

"There was total darkness all around. I could hear the cries of the forest animals.

"I crouched down over my horse's neck and spurred him on. He didn't budge.

"I had no idea what to do. At that moment, a small light flickered in front of the carriage. The horse stepped eagerly towards it. The light advanced. The horse followed. All along the way, the wild animals fled from us, as if the tiny dancing flame was driving them away.

"We followed that flame all the way here. I kept my end of the bargain and threw my handkerchief at the designated place."

It was only then that the Chassidim noticed that the Rebbe's Chanukah light had returned, burning strong and pure as if it had just been lit.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

And they took him, and cast him into a pit; and the pit was empty; there was no water in it (37:24)

The mind and heart of man are never empty. If there is no life-nourishing "water," there are "snakes and scorpions in it". (*The Chassidic Masters*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 22 NOVEMBER 2013

BEGINS	ENDS
7:58MELBOURNE	9:02
7:47ADELAIDE	8:48
6:03BRISBANE	7:01
6:37DARWIN	7:29
6:03GOLD COAST	7:00
6:41PERTH	7:41
7:24SYDNEY	8:25
7:36CANBERRA	8:38
7:59LAUNCESTON	9:07
7:57AUCKLAND	9:00
8:08WELLINGTON	9:16
8:03HOBART	9:12
7:03BYRON BAY	8:01
6:34SINGAPORE	7:25



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS VAYEISHEV
19 KISLEV • 22 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:58 PM
	MINCHA:	8:05 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:40 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9:30 AM
	MINCHA:	7:55 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:02 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MON-FRI:	8:00 AM
	MINCHA:	8:05 PM
	MAARIV: SUN-FRI:	9:05 PM
	WED-THURS:	9:30 PM