

LAMPLIGHTER

6 Kislev
Parshas
Vayeitzei

1167

28 November
5775/2014

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The Parshah tells of Jacob's marriages, to the two daughters of his uncle Laban. Jacob offered to work for Laban without pay for seven years. Then he would marry Rachel, the younger daughter. At last came the wedding night; but Laban cheated him and gave him the older Leah instead. When Jacob discovered what had happened and complained, Laban gave the excuse that the older girl had to be married off before the younger.

What should Jacob do? Laban suggested that after the week of festivities for Leah's wedding, there should be another marriage ceremony in which Jacob would marry Rachel. Then he would work for Laban for a further seven years in order to pay off the second dowry. This was accepted. Jacob was now married to his famous wives, Rachel and Leah, the mothers of the Jewish people.

However, the Sages point out a problem. The Torah forbids a Jew to marry two sisters. How could Jacob do something forbidden by the Torah? One answer is, of course, that the Torah had not yet been given. The special law that a man may not marry two sisters had not yet been revealed at Sinai, so it did not apply to Jacob.

The problem with this explanation is that according to the Sages, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did keep the laws of the Torah, which they knew through spiritual intuition. If so, how could Jacob marry two sisters?

The Rebbe explains that Jacob kept the laws of the Torah as a personal stringency, as a private expression of his closeness to G-d. By contrast, his promise to marry Rachel, as far as she was concerned, was a significant pledge, an expression of commitment which was universally meaningful and valid.

When Jacob found out he had been tricked into marrying Leah, he had the choice of keeping his personal stringency, at the expense of a universal principle. He could have said to Rachel "I am sorry; I cannot keep my promise, because now I am forbidden to marry you..." Instead he decided to forgo the stringency in order to keep his promise.

From this we learn, says the Rebbe, how to act in our generation. There are cases when our personal stringencies might hamper us from the universal imperative to do good to others. One may prefer to study Talmud with a scholarly colleague rather than teach Aleph-Bet to an unlearned individual. Which is more important? More basic?

Sometimes bold action is needed in order to keep the balance of one's responsibilities, and to respond to the deeper needs of others. Through this sense of balance and priority one is truly following the example of Jacob.

Based on the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Likkutei Sichot vol. 5

Rising Above Circumstance

By Rabbi Ben A.

The story of Jacob's life continues in this week's Torah portion. Jacob is fleeing from his brother Esau and is forced to leave behind the holy shelter of his father's home. He sets off for Haran, a place whose very name - literally "anger" in Hebrew - denotes that it was a place which evoked the wrath of G-d. It was a place where selfishness and dishonesty were commonplace, and where people had no regard for each other's welfare. He now lived in an environment whose very nature was inhospitable to spirituality and high moral standards. Yet, Jacob was able to marry and raise his family there in a manner befitting his loftiest ideals. His twelve sons would become the forebears of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

It is said that it was not despite his environment that Jacob was able to accomplish all of this-it was because of it. If he had remained in the safety of the Holy Land, he would not have had to overcome the obstacles that would elevate him and show him his purpose in life. Certainly Jacob would have preferred to remain in a place more conducive to his spiritual way of living. Yet, only by facing the challenges of a place which was opposed to spirituality, was he able to attain a level where he could actually fulfil his calling as the father of Israel. Coming to Haran was a necessary descent-for the sake of a subsequent greater ascent.

If G-d really wants us to do His will, it's natural for us to wonder why He doesn't make it easier for us. If He expects us to have impeccable standards, why doesn't he remove all temptation from our path? If He wants us to stick to our values, why doesn't He protect us from spiritual peril?

The story of Jacob and his years spent away from home addresses the heart of these questions. In Haran it was easier to sin than to cling to virtue. Yet, it is precisely because Jacob remained committed to his ideals - even when exposed to such challenges - that he was able to build the House of Israel.

Obviously, we must never intentionally submit ourselves to a test of moral character. Indeed, we should pray that G-d will steer us clear of temptation. When Divine Providence leads us into such a situation in life that makes it easy to rationalize doing the wrong thing, we need not fear. We must know that, without exception, we are brought to such a trial only in order to take us to a higher level.

Our recovery has taught us to take personal responsibility for our own actions. It has empowered us so that we never blame circumstances. We are not circumstantial victims of fate, and we always have free choice when it comes to deciding to do what is right in G-d's eyes.

We have also learned trust and acceptance. We know that G-d can surely be relied upon to know what is good for us. If He places us in a situation that would seem to make it difficult to choose right over wrong, it is only because He considers us up to the task.

It has been said that life itself is a series of trials. Our very mission in life is to withstand such tests; we must embrace the fact that G-d does not always make things easy for us. Most of us are tired of excuses, exhausted by self-justification and overwhelmed by our overactive minds. Whenever our commitment to spiritual principles wavers, our reflexive response is to blame people, places and things. However, the voice of conscience inside us always knows that there is nothing that can happen to us in sobriety that will ever take us away from our commitment to lofty principles.

Slice of LIFE

Some twenty years ago Rabbi Moshe Kotlarski, one of the Rebbe's most trusted emissaries, was sitting in his home in Crown Heights when he got an urgent call from the Rebbe's office.

Reb Moshe was used to it. He had been sent by the Rebbe on urgent missions throughout the world and he was ready for anything.

Sure enough when he arrived at the office they told him that the Rebbe wanted him to immediately set off for Curacao, a small Caribbean island off the coast of Venezuela.

He hurriedly went home, made travel arrangements packed his bags and that very day was on his way. What was he supposed to do there, who he was supposed to find, where he was supposed to go he didn't know but he was sure it would work out, it always did.

When he arrived in Curacao he picked up his bags, caught a taxi and asked to be taken to the Jewish section - to the synagogue. The driver took him through the winding streets of the city and stopped before a small building with a Star of David on the door.

The Rabbi was a bit perplexed. He had heard that although there were very few Jews in Curacao and they were barely observant, nevertheless there was a large beautiful synagogue there where all Jewish tourists were automatically taken. This couldn't be it.

As he got out and paid the driver, the door of the Synagogue opened and a middle aged man who had obviously been crying came out wiping his eyes with a handkerchief. When he looked up and saw he was standing face to face with a bearded rabbi his eyes opened wide in amazement and his mouth dropped open.

"Who are you?!" he almost whispered. "Are you from...from...the Lubavitcher Rebbe?"

"Yes" answered the Rabbi, almost as surprised as the man, "The Lubavitcher Rebbe sent me. But how...who are?!"

Before he could complete his sentence the fellow fell upon him hugging him with all his might weeping and saying, "This is a miracle! My grandmother was right! A miracle from G-d."

Then he released his grip, stood back, grabbed the Rabbi's hand and began

pumping it up and down. "Shalom, Shalom Ubracha! Ahh!, I am the father of Eli Grossman. You are the one my grandmother spoke of in the dream from the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Please come to my house! This is a miracle!"

Of course the Rabbi had no idea what he was talking about but he followed. In minutes they were sitting in Mr. Grossman's house and he told his story.

"I live here in Curacao because I have a good business here. But I also have a big problem. Very big. This country, like all the other South American countries, is Catholic. And I have a son. His name is Eli. He is a bright boy and he wants to learn but all the schools and all the teachers here make problems for him.

"For instance the prayers; All the rooms have crosses and religious pictures which is possible to ignore. But when it comes to the prayers all the teachers, especially the principal of the school, suddenly become religious, at least where my Eli is concerned, and they make him a lot of trouble. He doesn't want to pray with them.

"You know, Rabbi, we are not religious people at all, not at all. But somehow my Eli he is different than we are; he is very proud to be a Jew.

"Anyway, I don't know how he did it but he actually made it to the seventh grade. Maybe the teachers thought that by acting nice they would change him or something but now they started getting mean. The children in the school also began calling him names and even beating him up, and there was no one to complain to. The principal and teachers encouraged them.

"So Eli found his own solution. Every morning after I drove him to school he would wait till my car was out of sight and then would run away and spend the day at the golf course where no one would notice him.

"But eventually it came to a head. The principal called me and told me that Eli wasn't attending and I should speak to him. But it didn't work. I tried to convince Eli to go along with them. Not to make problems and just to do what they said. But he didn't say anything.

"The next morning he took his books, went to the school, entered the principal's office and announced that he was officially dropping out. He left the books on the table and left the room.

"The next day officials from the government knocked on our door. They announced that every child must attend

school; children that refuse are placed in government schools which are much worse. Eli must make up his mind. Public school or government school.

"But he held strong. And my wife and I also did. Rabbi, like I say, we are not religious people. My grandmother in Russia was very religious but here it is different, we had to be modern. But now something started to change in us.

"I suddenly began to feel proud to be a Jew. To want to fight like my Eli. But then I reminded myself that I would be losing everything; my clients would stop coming and my friends and neighbours would hate me. I was confused I even started to cry.

"Then last night I had a dream.

"I dreamt that I was a young boy sitting on my grandmother's lap. She hugged me, looked deeply into my eyes and said, 'my beloved, if you ever find yourself in trouble, the Lubavitcher Rebbe will be able to help you.'"

"This morning when I awoke I remembered the dream. It was the first time I ever heard this name; 'Lubavitcher Rebbe', but it stuck in my mind and I had this feeling that if I went to the synagogue and prayed everything would be alright. So I went to the small Synagogue.

"When I arrived it was already afternoon and the door was locked. Luckily the janitor was there to let me in. The place was quiet; I took a seat and probably for the first time in my life actually prayed to G-d. I prayed for a long time. And it worked!! Here you are!!

"But somehow the Lubavitcher Rebbe must have told you to come yesterday, before I prayed. How did he do that? Who is he?"

Reb Moshe explained that the letters 'Rebbe' (RBY) stand for 'Rosh Bnei Yisroel'; The Head of the Jewish People. And just as the head feels the body, the Rebbe feels for every Jew in the world.

But what Rabbi Kotlarski could not explain was why the taxi driver didn't take him to the big synagogue but rather to this place and exactly at the time when Mr. Grossman happened to be there.

That very day Rabbi Kotlarski enrolled Eli in the summer camp of Gan Yisroel in New York and several months later, when the camp finished, he enrolled in the yeshiva system of Chabad in New York.

Today Eli is a full-fledged Chassid and his parents are observant Jews.

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

Editor: Isaac Hilel
P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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

ISSUE 1167

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Sages and prophets did not yearn for the Messianic Era in order that [the Jewish people] rule over the entire world, nor in order that they have dominion over the gentiles, nor that they be exalted by them, nor in order that they eat, drink and celebrate. Rather, their aspiration was that [the Jewish people] be free [to involve themselves] in the Torah and its wisdom, without anyone to oppress or disturb them, and thus be found worthy of life in the World to Come.

(Maimondes' Mishne Torah, Laws of Kings, ch. 12)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

From a letter dated 6th of Shevat 5731 [1971]

Blessing and Greeting:

I received your letter with some delay. In it you write about the uncertainty you feel regarding commitment to Yiddishkeit [Judaism], inasmuch as you think that life in accordance with the Torah and Mitzvos [commandments] is restrictive, and limits the individual in personal creativeness, particularly in the area of thinking and choosing for himself, etc., so that it is hard to reconcile such commitment with the idea of personal freedom.

Frankly, this attitude is somewhat surprising, coming from a thinking person. I suppose the difficulty here is due to the superficial understanding of the meaning of the "acceptance of the yoke of the Torah and Mitzvos," because the word "yoke" suggest restrictiveness.

In truth, however, there are many things in the daily life which a person accepts and follows without question, even if it be a highly gifted intellectual, with a searching bent of mind. Since you attend college, and have no doubt studied science, etc., you surely know that one does not go about starting everything in physics and technology from the beginning, by verifying everything through personal research and experimentation. For example, a person will board a plane without first having researched into aerodynamics, etc., to verify that it is safe to fly in it, and that it will bring one to one's destination at approximately the scheduled time.

Or take an example from the area of physical health. There are well-established things which are useful or harmful to one's health. A person will not go about trying to verify the utility or harmfulness of a particular drug through personal experimentation. Even if a person has a very strong inclination to do some research and experimentation, he will surely choose such areas which have not previously been researched.

This generally accepted attitude is quite understandable and logical. For inasmuch as experts have amply researched into these areas and have determined what is good and what is harmful for physical health, or have established the methods as to further technological advancement - it would be at best a waste of time to try to go over all those experiments from the beginning. On the other hand, there is no assurance that he may not make some error, and arrive at wrong conclusions, with disastrous effects, as experience has shown in some cases.

What has been said above in regard to physical health is also true in regard to spiritual health, and how the Neshomo [soul] can attain perfection and fulfillment. All the more so since spiritual health is generally related to physical health, particularly insofar as a Jew is concerned.

Now the Creator of man, Who is also the Creator and Master of the whole world, surely has the best qualifications that might be expected of any authority, to know what is good for man and for the world in which he lives. In His goodness, G-d has already provided us with complete and final results, having put us on notice that if a person will conduct his daily life in a certain way, then he will have a healthy Neshomo in a healthy body, and it will be good for him in this world as well as in the world to come. He has also left some areas where a person can carry on his own experimentation's in other matters which do not interfere with the rules laid down by Him.

In other words, it is quite certain that if a human being would live long enough, and would have the necessary capacities to make all sorts of experimentation's, without distraction and interference and without error, he would undoubtedly arrive at the very same conclusions which we already find in the Torah which G-d has given us, namely the need to observe Shabbos, eat Kosher, etc., etc. But, as mentioned above, G-d in His infinite goodness - and it is in the nature of the Good to do good - wished to spare us all the trouble, as well as the possibility of error, and has already given us the results beforehand, for the benefit of both the person who has the inclination and capacity to search, as well as for those who do not.

To be continued next issue...

CUSTOMS CORNER

Visiting the sick

When a person falls ill heaven forbid, it is a mitzvah for all others to visit him. The fundamental intent of visiting the sick is to concern oneself with the person's needs, to do anything that is necessary for him; also to lift his spirits, and furthermore, to focus ones attention on him and entreat for mercy on his behalf. If one visits the sick without entreating for mercy, one does not fulfil the mitzvah.

For this reason, one should not visit a sick person in the first three hours of the day, because a person's situation has improved at that time, and one will not be motivated to pray for mercy. Neither should one visit him in the final three hours of the day, for then sickness overcomes him and one will despair of praying for mercy.

A WORD

from the Director

This coming Monday (the 1st of December) is the ninth of Kislev, the birthday and yahrtzeit (anniversary of the passing) of Rabbi Dov Ber (known as the Mittler Rebbe), the second Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch.

In 1816, Reb Dov Ber established a settlement of Chabad Chassidim in Israel in the city of Hebron. He encouraged the Chassidim already living in other parts of Israel to resettle in Hebron. In addition, his own daughter and son-in-law moved with their family from Russia to Hebron.

But the history of Chabad-Lubavitch support of people, institutions and settlements in the Holy Land predates even 1816. For the first Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, vigorously encouraged his followers to support the Jews in the Holy Land.

Each and every Rebbe of Chabad, up to and including the present Rebbe, has unequivocally supported the Holy Land and spoken out boldly concerning anything that might have the slightest impact on the security of the Jews there.

Our brethren in Israel know firsthand about the Rebbe's concern for them and their lives. Just to take the Gulf War period as example. During the Gulf War the Rebbe's emphatic message that "Israel is the safest place in the world for G-d is constantly watching it" was continuously played on the radio. The hundreds of Chabad Centres that dot the Israeli landscape were deluged with callers during the Gulf War asking, "What is the Rebbe saying now?"

Without a doubt, and everyone can be sure of this, the Rebbe's policy has not changed one iota from that of his predecessors. Based on clear guidance from the Torah and Jewish law, the Rebbe reiterates: No action can be taken that might negatively affect the safety of the Jews of the Holy Land.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Rabbi Pinchas Reizes was a Chasid of the second Rebbe of Chabad, Rabbi Dovber. When Rabbi Pinchas passed away his only heir was a nephew, who unfortunately was a complete scoundrel.

Among the items that came into the nephew's possession was a letter written by the Mittlerer Rebbe to his uncle, asking him to serve on a special committee to disburse funds for charity. The sum cited in the letter was 4,000 rubles.

The nephew saw this as a golden opportunity to blackmail the Rebbe. If the Rebbe did not give him money, he threatened; he would go to the authorities and tell them that the Rebbe was collecting funds for clandestine, illegal purposes. But the Rebbe was immune to his intimidations. "Not one penny will you get from me," he told him. "Do whatever you want, for I have done nothing wrong and am not afraid of your slander."

Incensed by the Rebbe's response, the nephew carried out his threat. With the help of some unsavoury associates he forged the original letter to make it appear as if the Rebbe had 104,000 rubles instead of 4,000 -- a veritable fortune in those days. The Rebbe was accused of various criminal activities, such as trying to bribe the Turkish Sultan, and it was also alleged that the Rebbe's study hall had been built to the exact specifications of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

On Saturday night of the Torah portion of Noach 5587 [1826] investigators showed up at the Rebbe's house. They conducted a thorough search of the premises. Careful note was taken of all written materials, and anything else they considered suspicious. At the same time, a separate group of investigators measured the Rebbe's study hall; the astonished Chassidim could not figure out what they were trying to find.

By that time a large crowd had gathered in front of the Rebbe's house, and everyone could hear the tearful pleading of the Rebbe's family with the police. The only one who seemed to be taking everything in stride was the Rebbe. As if nothing unusual were going on, he withdrew to his room to write a Chasidic discourse. A while later he announced that he would receive people for private audiences, which he did.

The following morning the Rebbe was ordered to accompany the police to their headquarters in Vitebsk. Word of the Rebbe's arrest quickly spread, and in every town and village along the way hundreds of Jews came out to greet him. Thanks to the efforts of several influential Jews, it was agreed that the long journey would be made in stages, with numerous stops to allow the Rebbe to rest.

When the carriage arrived in Dobromisl, the Rebbe asked to be allowed to pray the afternoon service in the local synagogue. Afterwards, to everyone's surprise, he delivered a Chasidic discourse on the verse from Song of Songs, "Many waters cannot quench love." The allusion to his present situation was clear.

The Rebbe was subsequently imprisoned in the city of Liozhna and placed under tight security. Sometime later it was learned that the formal charge against him was rebellion against the government.

The Rebbe was jailed for one month and ten days, but even from the beginning he was granted certain privileges. Three people were permitted to stay with him, and three times a day, 20 Jews were allowed inside to pray. The Rebbe was also permitted to deliver a Chasidic discourse twice a week in front of 50 people after the Rebbe's doctor testified that it was crucial to the Rebbe's health.

In the meantime, efforts to secure the Rebbe's release were being made behind the scenes. Several high-ranking government officials who had heard about the Rebbe and held him in great esteem tried to exert their influence. The Rebbe was interrogated numerous times, during which he proved that not only were his connections to the Turkish Sultan completely fabricated, but his designs on the Kaiser's throne were equally fictitious.

At the end of several weeks the results of the investigation were turned over to the Minister of the Interior. The Minister was very impressed by the Rebbe's responses to all the questions, and decided that a direct confrontation between the Rebbe and his accuser was in order.

On the designated day the Rebbe dressed in his white Shabbat finery. When he walked into the Minister's office, the official was so disconcerted by his angelic appearance that he ordered his servants to bring the Rebbe a chair.

The informer began to heap his invectives upon the Rebbe, but one by one, the Rebbe dismissed the accusations entirely. At one point in the proceedings the accuser addressed the Rebbe as "Rebbe," prompting the Rebbe to turn to the Minister and remark, "Did you see that? First he calls me a charlatan and a revolutionary, and in the next breath he calls me Rebbe!"

From that point on the accuser's allegations became increasingly illogical. The Minister was so irritated by his behaviour that he ordered him to "stop barking," and he was led away in humiliation. The Rebbe was escorted back to his room with great deference, and informed that he would soon be released.

The Mittlerer Rebbe was liberated on the 10th of Kislev, having been informed of the government's decision while reciting the verse from Psalms 55: "He has saved my soul in peace."

Biographical note:

Rabbi Dovber Shneuri [9 Kislev 1773 - 9 Kislev 1827] was the eldest son and successor to Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of the Chabad movement. The author of numerous deep, mystical texts, he is known in Lubavitch circles as "the Mittlerer (Middle) Rebbe."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

Why do we call G-d Hamakom, "The Place"? Said Rabbi Jose ben Chalafta: We do not know whether G-d is the place of His world or whether His world is His place. But when the verse (Exodus 33:21) states, "Behold, there is a place with Me," it follows that G-d is the place of His world, but His world is not His place. (*Midrash Rabbah*)

Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said: Our patriarchs instituted the three daily prayers. Abraham instituted the Morning Prayer, for it says (Genesis 19:27): "And Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he had stood before G-d." Isaac instituted the afternoon prayer, as it says (Gen. 24:63), "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening." Jacob instituted the evening prayer, as it says, "And he encountered The Place... because the sun had set." (*Midrash Rabbah*)

And he slept over the night there because the sun had set (28:11)

G-d caused the sun to set prematurely, so that Jacob should sleep over ... For G-d said: "Should this righteous man enter My home, and depart without staying the night?" (*Talmud; Rashi*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 28 NOVEMBER 2014

BEGINS	ENDS
8:05MELBOURNE	9:10
7:53ADELAIDE	8:55
6:08BRISBANE	7:06
6:40DARWIN	7:32
6:08GOLD COAST	7:06
6:47PERTH	7:47
7:30SYDNEY	8:31
7:41CANBERRA	8:44
8:06LAUNCESTON	9:06
8:03AUCKLAND	9:07
8:15WELLINGTON	9:24
8:10HOBART	9:20
7:08BYRON BAY	8:06
6:36SINGAPORE	7:27



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD
PARSHAS VAYEITZEI
6 KISLEV • 28 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:05 PM
	MINCHA:	8:10 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:45 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:30 AM
	MINCHA:	8:05 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:10 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MON-FRI:	8:00 AM
	MINCHA:	8:15 PM
	MAARIV:	9:05 PM