

# LAMPLIGHTER

13 Kislev  
Parshas  
Vayishlach  
**1168**  
5 December  
5775/2014

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Vayishlach, relates Jacob's statement that, "I have sojourned - garti - with Laban." The great commentator Rashi notes that the word garti has the numerical equivalent of 613. Thus, by using the word garti, Jacob implied that, "Though I sojourned with the wicked Laban, I have observed the 613 mitzvot (commandments)."

"Sojourned" implies that Jacob lived as a stranger with his father-in-law. All aspects of Laban, all the physical objects of oxen, donkeys, flocks, menservants and handmaids, were to Jacob no more than garti - something alien, strange, and transitory. They were not his true self.

Where was Jacob not a stranger? Where did he not merely sojourn, but live? His true home was his soul and its involvement in studying Torah and performing mitzvot.

Once, Rabbi Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezritch (whose birthday we celebrate this coming week on the 19th of Kislev), was asked why his home was furnished so sparsely; it contained only a table and chairs which converted into a bed at night.

The Maggid explained, "At home, one needs everything. On a journey, though, it doesn't matter if the temporary dwelling and furniture are not so beautiful; and after all, it is just a journey." And for him, his life was just a transition, a journey to the eternal world of truth.

By keeping his material concerns in a state of "strangeness," Jacob assured not only that they would not interfere with his spiritual life, but also that a dimension of spirituality would be infused even into the material - transforming matter into something spiritual and holy.

The Torah and its instructions are everlasting, relevant to every Jew in all times and places. The lesson of the above is as follows:

Every Jew must realize that although his environment, the world, may hardly be perfect, each individual can prepare himself and everything related to him for the complete redemption.

This preparation is by means of "I have sojourned with Laban": the realization that this entire world is no more than garti - furnishings and baggage that one needs on a journey.

No matter what the duration of a person's life, whether seventy, eighty, or a hundred and twenty years, these years are no more than a stranger's temporary sojourn. From this perspective, the physical is not in conflict with the spiritual. In fact, this attitude will result in having prosperity even in the physical sense.

*Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.*

## Gratitude and Humility

By Rabbi Ben A.

*"I have been made small from all of the kindness and all of the truth which You have done for [me]" (Genesis 32:11)*

How should one respond to a favour?

In last week's reading, we learned how Jacob was forced to flee from home in order to escape from his brother Esau. In this week's portion we read how-after thirty-four years in hiding-Jacob returns home to finally confront him. Preparing for their meeting, Jacob prays that G-d should deliver him safely from this ordeal, despite being-in his own estimation-unworthy of this favour. Jacob sees himself as "small," as lacking merit and undeserving of G-d's help.

But why did Jacob see himself as "small" and unworthy?

During the years away from home, Jacob faced many spiritual and material challenges. Yet, despite it all, he was able to marry, raise a family, prosper financially and retain his spiritual and moral ideals. G-d had clearly been with Jacob, guiding him and protecting him all the time. So, after seeing G-d's revealed providence throughout all of his previous ordeals, why wouldn't he just assume that G-d would see him through this next travail?

The answer is that there are two diametrically opposed ways to react to a favour. For Jacob, the multitude of blessings in his life is precisely what led him to believe that he was unworthy of Divine aid at this time. Rather than becoming sure of himself, Jacob was instead humbled by all of the blessings in his life. To his thinking, whatever little merit he may have possessed had certainly already been expended, and he had no right to expect any further kindness from G-d.

When we view things from an ego perspective, the more favours G-d grants us, the more outrageously entitled we feel. Invoking a warped logic that cites our good fortune as the very proof of our worthiness, we audaciously lay claim to all sorts of expectations. We feel downright affronted when we are not given our due. But from a selfless, spiritual point of view, the more G-d gives kindness to us, the more overwhelmed with gratitude and humility we become.

One of the great truths of life is expressed in Jacob's feeling "small" in the face of Divine favour. It's a simple calculation, really. Here's how it goes: Since our blessings are a result of G-d bringing us close to Him, and next to the Infinite all are as absolute naught, then the closer G-d brings us to Him, the more obviously insignificant we become.

A key to our recovery has been in developing a sense of humility. In the beginning, broken as we were, we had little choice but to accept humility-or perhaps humiliation, as it were. But as we grow in recovery and G-d continues to show us His kindness, we are easily lured back into a false sense of entitlement. Perhaps things have begun to change for the better because we deserve it, we think. Maybe we have finally earned a better life for ourselves.

That is one way to look at it-a selfish way, an un-G-dly way. As for us, we must try to see things like Jacob, never forgetting that the closer G-d brings us to Him, the more keenly aware of our own utter nothingness that should make us.

## Slice of LIFE

A certain well-known Talmudic scholar in Bnei Brak had a wayward son. At first the boy was an ideal student and apparently a totally devoted religious Jew. But something cooled him off.

At first he came late to classes then he stopped coming altogether. It wasn't long before he dropped all connection to the Torah and its commandments and began wandering the streets. He found himself a bunch of new friends and began life anew, free from all obligations.

Needless to say his father was broken hearted. He tried, in vain, to talk to his son and even sent other boys to talk to him but it failed miserably. The only thing he could do was to pray, say a few psalms every day and then try to go about his life. But every time he thought about it... it hurt.

So things went on for the next few years until, unbeknownst to him, G-d answered his prayers.

His son had just arrived in the central bus station in Tel Aviv after a weekend in Eilat or some other resort town and as he exited the restroom an elderly Chabad Chassid approached him and asked him if he wanted to put on Tefillin.

Of course he refused and even made a few disparaging remarks, but the old fellow didn't let up.

For some reason he decided to put all his efforts into this young fellow and not let him go till he put on Tefillin. He got him into a conversation and then used every trick that he could to try to get him to just put the Tefillin on for JUST ONE MINUTE.

Until he hit on the right one: "Please, do it for me."

The young fellow melted like butter. He was opposed to Judaism, to rituals, to religion but, after all he was a Jew. He couldn't turn the old fellow down.

"Nu" he said as he rolled up his sleeve, "to do it for myself ...no way! But to do it for you? Well... I guess so."

But when he took the Tefillin, put them on with ease and expertise and said the appropriate Shema Yisrael prayer by heart the old Chassid was truly amazed.

The young man explained how he had learned in yeshiva etc. Suddenly an idea popped into the old man's head.

"Listen," He said "I just got an idea. My wife and I live alone. Our children are already married and live far from us. Maybe you can do me a big favour. I'll even pay you for it. All you have to do is come to my house for the evening Shabbat meal and praise my wife's cooking.

"She's already used to my praises. If you, as a stranger, praise the food it will give her a LOT of pleasure and lift her spirits. I'll pay you fifty dollars plus travel expenses. Really she is quite a good cook."

The young fellow took up the offer as an easy way to earn money and faithfully showed up each Shabbat to praise the Chassid's wife and earn the money. In fact the food was indeed good and the old Chassid's words of Torah were interesting.

It wasn't long before he began spending the entire Shabbat with them and the Jewish atmosphere had an effect.

Several months later he decided to return to the religion of the

forefathers and a few months after that returned home a religious young man.

It didn't take long for his father to find out what happened; the Rebbe of Lubavitch sent an emissary to save his son! The next morning he bought a ticket to New York to give the Rebbe 'thanks'.

He arrived in New York, succeeded in finding the Rebbe's headquarters in Brooklyn, stood in line for 'dollars' (the Rebbe handed out thousands of dollar bills and blessings each Sunday) and when he finally stood face to face with the Rebbe he said a deep and tearful 'thanks'. But he couldn't hold back his natural instincts; he had to ask a question. "Tell me Rebbe, I'm very thankful for what you did, but it's forbidden to put Tefillin on someone who just came from the bathroom - forbidden! How could your old man do such a thing! It's not permissible!"

The Rebbe just looked at him and answered.

"You should know that there is a Jew in Connecticut who wakes up on Yom Kippur morning, takes a shower, shaves, drinks a cup of coffee and eats a meal (all of which are explicitly forbidden) and then drives to the Synagogue to pray. No one can fathom how much pleasure G-d gets from those few minutes that that Jews spends in the Synagogue. You can have NO IDEA how much pleasure G-d gets."

And the Rebbe continued, "You can ask how is it possible to put on Tefillin with a young man that came out of the bathroom? Why you yourself see how this commandment saved your son! And you should know that EVERY Jew is dear to me like your son is to you!"

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

ISSUE 1168

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Lubavitcher Rebbe once wrote to one of his Chasidim: "When will you finally begin to do your part in disseminating the wellsprings of the Baal Shem Tov outward? Moshiach is waiting for the activities of each and every one of us in order that what Moshiach answered the Baal Shem Tov be fulfilled, that then he would come to redeem us from the exile, which is an exile both for the body and for the soul." (*Igrot Kodesh, Vol. 3*)



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

*Continued from previous issue, from a letter dated 6th of Shevat 5731 [1971]*

The expression of "yoke" in relation to accepting the Torah and Mitzvos [commandments] in the daily life is to be understood in the sense that human nature makes it necessary to act on imperatives. For, human nature, and the Yetzer Horah [inclination toward evil], are such that an individual might easily succumb to temptation. Temptation is sweet at the beginning but bitter at the end. But human nature is such that an individual may disregard the bitter consequences because of the initial gratification.

We see, for example, that children, and very often also adults, may be warned that overindulgence in certain foods would be harmful to them, and make them sick later on so that for a period of time they might not be able to eat anything at all, yet they may nevertheless reject all restraint to gratify their immediate appetite or passion. In a like manner, G-d has given us the "yoke" of Torah and Mitzvos, telling us that whether one understands them or not, or whatever the temptation may be, one must carry out G-d's commandments unquestioningly.

There is a further point, and this is the most essential aspect of the concept of "yoke" of the Torah and Mitzvos. It is that although, as mentioned before, the Torah and Mitzvos have been given for the benefit of man, both in this life and in Eternal Life, there is an infinitely greater quality with which G-d has endowed the Torah and Mitzvos, namely the quality of uniting man with G-d, that is, the created with the Creator, who would otherwise have nothing in common. For, by giving man a set of Mitzvos to carry out in his daily life, G-d has made it possible for man thereby to attach himself to his Creator, and transcend the limitations of a limited being, living in a limited world.

The Torah and Mitzvos constitute the bridge which spans over the abyss separating the Creator from the created, enabling the human being to rise and attach himself to G-dliness. Of course this quality can be attained if the person observes the Torah and Mitzvos not because of the reward that goes with it for the body, or for the soul, or for both, but purely because they are the Will and Command of the Holy One blessed be He. For this reason also, the text of the Berocho [blessing] which a Jew makes before fulfilling a Mitzvah does not mention the utility of the Mitzvah, but rather the fact that "He has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us."

Much more can be said in connection with such a profound subject, but I trust that the above lines, though limited in quantity, have sufficient content to illuminate the true aspects of the matter. Besides, should you wish to discuss these matters further, you surely have friends among Anash [Lubavitcher Chasidim] in London who will be glad to enlighten you.

Finally, I would like to say that the fact that you have had some doubts and uncertainties, should not discourage you at all. Indeed, the Torah desires a person to utilize all his capacities, including his mind and intelligence, in the service of G-d as long as the approach is right, namely accepting the Torah and Mitzvos first. It is quite natural and even desirable that one should understand everything that is within one's mental grasp. In your case this is of additional significance, because you have an opportunity to influence and benefit other people who have the same bent of mind as you.

In the light of the above, you will also understand my answer in the matter of the Shidduch [marriage match], that in my opinion, as has been said before, namely that it is a suitable Shidduch, and may it be in a happy and auspicious hour, for a Binyan Adei Ad [eternal edifice], on the foundation of the Torah and the Mitzvos with complete commitment to the Torah and Mitzvos in the spirit of the Berocho "Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us."

This will, as a matter of course, also be the channel for good health, both for the Neshomo [soul] and the body, and all desirable benefits - though of what value are all rewards by comparison to the achievement of "Israel and the Holy One blessed be He, through the Torah, are all one."

With blessing,

## CUSTOMS CORNER

### Honouring one's parents

A person must be very careful about honouring his parents and holding them in awe, for the Torah compares the honour and fear of parent to the honour and fear of Hashem.

Included in honouring one's parents are feeding, dressing, and helping them walk. When one is doing such an activity, one should do it with a smile.

Included in fearing one's parents are; it is forbidden to call your parents by their name, If one's parent foregoes this honour, one may then call them by their name, yet there is still a mitzvah not to. One must stand before one's mother and father unless they forgo this honour. One shouldn't sit in the place where one's parents usually sit at home. One may not contradict their words or even say that one agrees with their words in front of them.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*This Shabbos, the 14th of Kislev marks the wedding anniversary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and his Rebbetzin.*

*Our Sages taught of the importance of "Shalom Bayit" - peace and harmony in one's marriage. Thus, we are enjoined to be of the disciples of Aaron, for he loved peace and pursued peace, bringing peace between two friends and between husband and wife.*

*In the Rebbe's personal correspondence, the greatness of Shalom Bayit is emphasized, as well as practical advice on how to achieve a peaceful, harmonious relationship.*

*In one letter, the Rebbe writes that the Torah teaches, and Chassidus emphasizes, that a person is created with a right eye and a left eye. The right eye teaches that one must always look at another Jew (and obviously and most importantly, one's spouse) with a good eye, to see what is best and nicest in him/her, etc.*

*In another letter, the Rebbe reminds the person of the adage that "charity begins at home." The Rebbe was referring to his newly initiated (at that time) campaign of Ahavat Yisrael - loving one's fellow Jew and that the person should make sure to implement this "campaign" at home with his spouse.*

*The Rebbe suggests, in another letter, that a couple take a "second honeymoon" which would rectify the situation.*

*In many of the letters, the Rebbe reminds the recipients of the importance of conducting their lives in general and the relationship of the husband and wife in particular, in accordance with the Torah and mitzvot as they affect daily life.*

*May we very soon merit the ultimate Shalom Bayit at the complete reunion of G-d (the husband) and the Jewish people (the wife) with the revelation of Moshiach.*

*J. I. Guterlich*

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

In a town near Liadi there lived a promising young scholar whose father-in-law supported him for a few years after his marriage so that he would be able to advance his Torah studies. After some time, however, the fluctuations of business were such that the young man had to go out and try his own hand at merchandising in order to provide for himself.

Once, on the way back from a fair where he had bought up a good deal of merchandise, he passed through a forest near Liadi. It was a day or two before Shavuot, and as he recalled how it had always been his custom to spend the Festival of the Giving of the Torah in the company of his Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, he was so overcome with nostalgia that he decided to leave the wagon with its costly load in the forest and to make his way on foot to Liadi.

He arrived in *Shul* just in time for the afternoon prayers. When the Rebbe saw him he commented to his son: "this young man may well be called a Chassid of sacrifice."

The son was surprised to hear this, for his father had not exchanged a word with the young stranger. He later went to speak with the visiting Chassid himself, until he eventually understood where lay his self-sacrifice.

When the visitor went to speak to the Rebbe after the festival, he was assured: "You will find the wagon and the merchandise untouched, with G-d's help."

The Chassid then told the Rebbe that his business took his mind away from his study and his devotions. After a moment, the Rebbe replied: "I would suggest that you find yourself some inn with a tavern in a village. That kind of livelihood will not bother you unduly. Your wife will be able to help out in the business, and you will be left with time for study and prayer."

As the Chassid reached his wagon in the forest soon after, untouched as the Rebbe had promised, a local nobleman who had passed by asked him how he had left a loaded wagon unattended.

The Chassid laughed heartily. "Good sir," he said, "this wagon of mine has been standing unguarded for three whole days!"

The nobleman was so amazed to hear the young man's story that he said: "Young man, I see that you are straight and honest: I would like to make you a business proposition. In my village there stands a fine inn. You could make a decent living out of it, and I am willing to lease it to you."

"But I don't have a penny to my name," protested the young man. "I haven't even got what it takes to buy fodder for the horses, let alone vodka, beer, or whatever."

"Very well then," said the other. "I shall lay out all that is needed now, and in the course of time you will repay me."

It was a deal. The Chassid went home, sold his stock, and took over the inn as arranged - despite the friendly warnings of his new Jewish neighbours, who told him that even though one could make a living out of the inn, the people next door were a malevolent old Russian couple who wielded mysterious black arts. No Jew living in that inn had ever survived one whole year.

"I am not afraid of witches," he answered them, "for my Rebbe told me that I would make a living out of this place. Now tell me: would my Rebbe direct me to a living from which I would die, G-d forbid?!"

Within a few months his little business had done so well that he was able to return his entire debt to the nobleman. A little while later, however, he began to feel weak. An ominous malady seemed to be taking hold of him. He was barely

able to walk. Suspecting the dread influence of the sorcerers next door, he hastened to make the journey to his Rebbe, and arrived in Liadi on the eve of the Shabbos on which the weekly Portion of Balak was to be read. On Friday evening he could not muster the strength to go to synagogue. In the morning, with great effort, he managed to walk to the *Shul* where the Rebbe was wont to pray.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi was accustomed to reading the Torah himself, and when it was time for a fifth congregant to be honoured by being called up to the public reading, he asked that this young visitor be so honoured. The other worshipers were somewhat surprised, for the Rebbe never gave instructions as to who should be called forward to the reading; besides, he could not have seen the stranger coming in, because he had arrived when the prayers were already under way.

At any rate, the stranger made his way forward to where the Torah Scroll was being read, and the Rebbe proceeded to intone the next passage with especial intensity, which came to a climax in the verse: "For there is no sorcery in Yaakov, nor any divination among Israel." He threw his head back, his face burned like a brand and his eyes blazed - for such was his way when his soul ascended to a higher realm - and while still in a state of *dveikut* [contemplation], read the same words again and again.

"For there is no sorcery in Yaakov, nor any divination among Israel." "For there is no sorcery in Yaakov, nor any divination among Israel."

After Shabbat the young man felt his health returning, but before leaving Liadi he went to tell the Rebbe his whole story.

"Do not worry," the Rebbe reassured him. "With G-d's help you will be well, for there is no sorcery in Yaakov" - and again the Rebbe repeated the verse several times with the same impassioned intensity as before.

On his way home the young man felt hale and hearty, and as he approached the outskirts of his village a few of the Jewish villagers ran up to him excitedly: "Have you heard what happened right next door to your inn? That malicious old peasant died suddenly, and so did his wife!"

"When?" he asked.

"On Shabbos morning," they said.

"I sensed it in Liadi," he said, "when I was called up to the reading of the Torah,"

[Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles]

# Thoughts THAT COUNT

And he said: "Let me go, for the day breaks" (32:27)

Said Jacob to him: "Are you a thief or a gambler, that you are afraid of the morning?" Said he: "I am an angel, and from the day that I was created my time to sing praises to G-d has not come until now." (Talmud, Chulin 91b)

Jacob arrived, whole, in the city of Shechem (33:18)

Whole in body, for he was healed of his limp. Whole in wealth, for he sustained no loss as a result of the gift [he dispatched to Esau]. Whole in his Torah, for he forgot nothing of his learning in the house of Laban. (Talmud; Rashi)

And Jacob held his peace until they came (34:5)

Thus it is written, "But a man of wisdom holds his peace" (Proverbs 11:12). (Midrash Rabbah)

## CANDLE LIGHTING: 5 DECEMBER 2014

BEGINS	ENDS
8:12 .....MELBOURNE .....	9:17
7:59 .....ADELAIDE .....	9:02
6:08 .....BRISBANE .....	7:06
6:40 .....DARWIN .....	7:32
6:13 .....GOLD COAST .....	7:11
6:53 .....PERTH .....	7:53
7:36 .....SYDNEY .....	8:38
7:48 .....CANBERRA .....	8:51
8:14 .....LAUNCESTON .....	9:23
8:03 .....AUCKLAND .....	9:07
8:23 .....WELLINGTON .....	9:32
8:18 .....HOBART .....	9:29
7:14 .....BYRON BAY .....	8:12
6:48 .....SINGAPORE .....	7:40



## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS VAYISHLACH  
13 KISLEV • 5 DECEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:12 PM
	MINCHA:	8:20 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:50 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:30 AM
	MINCHA:	8:10 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:17 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MON-FRI:	8:00 AM
	MINCHA:	8:20 PM
	MAARIV:	9:15 PM