

LAMPLIGHTER

17 Cheshvan
Parshas
Vayeira
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Vayeira, hints at a spiritual yet mundane aspect of Abraham and Sara's relationship.

Our Sages of the Talmud teach: "How does a woman help a man? ...If a man brings wheat, does he chew the wheat? If he brings flax, does he wear the flax? It follows, then, that she brings light to his eyes and puts him on his feet!"

A person's mission in life is to elevate and refine the material aspects of the world, imbuing them with spiritual content. But man brings only wheat and flax, he is concerned with raw materials, with generalities. He is somewhat removed from the down-to-earth realities, the details. It is woman who transforms the wheat into food and the flax into clothing, who tangibly implements our lifetime mission.

Abraham and Sara. Man and woman. When Abraham found out that his wife, Sara, was to bear a child, he prayed. From the lofty, detached viewpoint of his great saintliness he asked, "That Ishmael might live before you!" He hoped that Ishmael would continue to live in fear of and worship G-d. Abraham saw in Ishmael, future father of the Arab nations, the potential for living a G-d-fearing life.

But Sara saw reality. She saw Ishmael's devastating influence in the home, particularly over her son Isaac. She demanded that Abraham remove the harmful influence of Ishmael from the home.

Abraham could not find peace with the idea of sending his oldest son away. Although G-d had already informed Abraham that He would fulfill His covenant specifically and exclusively through Isaac, from Abraham's perspective it seemed that Ishmael should stay in the house. Only in his own home could Abraham hope to influence Ishmael in a positive manner.

But G-d declared to Abraham, "In all that Sara says to you, listen to her voice, for in Isaac shall descendants be called to you." The commentator Rashi explains that this statement indicates that Sara's power of prophecy was superior to Abraham's. It was Sara, the down-to-earth woman, the foundation of the home, who recognized the harmful influence.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Keeping One's Balance

By Tali Loewenthal

The Jewish people have the knack of keeping their balance despite being confronted by extremes. They have great ideals, but are also realists and pragmatists. They are sensitive to spirituality, with a long list of prophets and visionaries - but also know how to keep their feet on the ground. They are steeped in study of the sacred Torah, but also know how to make a living and create a warm and welcoming home environment.

This ability to balance spirituality and the practical level of life goes back to Abraham and the opening theme of the Torah portion. Abraham has just been circumcised, and is sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. At this point, G-d is revealed to him.

Now, the idea of G-d being revealed to anyone is a very striking concept. Obviously this means some kind of intense state of consciousness. Abraham had experienced this previously, as we see in last week's Torah portion. There it tells us that "Abram prostrated himself face down, and G-d spoke to him." By contrast, in our Torah portion, when G-d is revealed to Abraham he calmly sits at the entrance of his tent.

A hint to the intensity of the Divine revelation to Abraham is expressed in the idea that this was happening "in the heat of the day." The intensity of the sun relates to the intensity of the spiritual revelation that was taking place.

Nonetheless, Abraham went on calmly sitting at the entrance. There is no indication that he was blown out of his mind. He seems to have been able to balance the exalted and intensely spiritual revelation of the Divine with being a hospitable person, sitting at the entrance of his tent and looking for guests. The Sages tell us this is because he had been circumcised. The *brit*, meaning the covenant with G-d expressed by *brit milah*, enabled Abraham to keep his balance when G-d was revealed to him.

Why should circumcision have this effect? One explanation is because it establishes a pact between G-d and the most physical part of the person. This gives the person the ability to reach for the highest level of the sacred while at the same time keeping his feet on the ground.

According to the Sages, for a male the covenant of circumcision requires a physical operation. By contrast, a Jewish female is considered to be born circumcised. She is born with the ability to balance holiness with the reality of daily life.

Another aspect of the *brit*, the covenant which balances holiness and daily reality, is that it has the power to affect not only one's physical body but also the world in general. The prime example of this is the sacred Land of Israel. The Sages tell us that by merit of the covenant of circumcision, the Jewish people were given possession of the Holy Land. They were able to transform the Land of Canaan into the sacred Land of Israel, the land where the Divine is most intensely revealed.

This is the purpose of the Jewish people in the world: to join holiness and daily reality, including physical flesh and physical earth, with balance, tenderness and joy.

Slice of LIFE

As Rachel Bluth watched in shocked silence as the swirling ash kept falling out of the smoke filled sky, she wondered whether this was America - or Europe during WWII.

As she wrote these words, the horrific details began to filter in over the news. Could this really be happening in the year 2001? She sat there stunned at the horrendous loss of life and the enormity of it all. And then the phone rang.

The woman's voice was abnormally high-pitched and so laden with hysteria that it was almost impossible to make sense of what she was saying. With great effort Rachel decoded the sentences and understood the wonder in her words. Her story was about a miracle, one of the many amongst the ashes of that day.

Her husband worked at #1 World Trade Center, and up until 15 minutes ago she was sure she was a widow and her six children were orphans. The phone rang while she was surrounded by neighbors who had rushed in to support her after the news broke, knowing that her husband worked in the midst of the inferno.

One of the neighbors picked up the phone to spare the "widow" the task and nearly fainted when she heard the husband's voice at the other end. She quickly handed the phone to Rachel, and silence filled the room as her husband conveyed the course of the most amazing events.

Standing on the train on his way to work he stood next to a man he often saw on his daily commute. They had never spoken. The man, considerably older and always preoccupied with a sefer, regularly stood by himself, apart from the other straphangers.

On that day, September 11, 2001, this man stood facing him and said he thought it was a good day to go fishing. Thinking this an odd opener for conversation, the husband replied with some insignificant pleasantries and went back to his sefer. The man, however, would not be put off. He again said that today would be a good day to be elsewhere. Just then the doors opened at his stop. A rush of people pushed out of the train at Cortland St. and up the stairs, many rushing to their demise.

The husband entered the huge Twin Tower complex and waited for the elevator

that would take him to his desk on the 60th floor.

He pushed his way in and soon reached his destination. Just as the elevator door parted there was a harrowing explosion somewhere above. Black, acrid smoke began to billow into the hallway. Within a second everything was engulfed in darkness and breathing became nearly impossible.

Hysteria overtook good sense and people stepped over each other. People collapsed in a faint for lack of oxygen and were trampled by the disoriented masses. As his lungs filled with putrid, black smoke and he was losing consciousness, he felt an arm grab his waist and push him forward.

Dazed, he moved in the direction in his faceless guide was prodding him and soon felt stairs under his feet. Along with a fortunate few others, he and his guide descended the endless track of steps. Another huge explosion erupted just as he felt the cool air of the street hit his face.

The husband turned to the person who saved his life and, although the face was blackened by soot and ash, he recognized the hat as that of the man who had made small talk with him on the train. Before he could say words of thanks for saving his life there was an indescribable groaning sound, as the once magnificent tower crumbled like tissue paper.

Once the realization of what actually happened sank in, the husband turned to thank the selfless angel who so gallantly commandeered their escape from death, at a risk to his own life. He was shocked to find no one there.

Rachel Bluth thanked the woman profusely for calling and relating this wondrous story. But it was what she said next that completely floored her.

Once her husband was safe and found other people he knew from his building, three other people told him that they were led to safety by the same gentleman. They distinctly described the gray beard, the black coat and the fedora hat. All three met him on their individual trains on their way to work, and had the same, seemingly strange conversation!

(Reprinted with permission from "miracle in our times")

David Miller [not his real name], a pious observant Jew, was at Boston's Logan Airport waiting to board his flight to Los

Angeles. It was an important business trip on which much depended, so he had been extra careful to get there on time. Finally he boarded the plane, sat down and watched the doors close.

Suddenly he remembered that he left his tefillin in the terminal boarding area. He politely asked the stewardess if he could go back and retrieve his tefillin, which were sitting just a few feet from the gate.

She told him that once the doors of the plane closed, no one was allowed off the plane. Not willing to accept this, he asked if he could speak to the pilot to obtain special permission. Surely the pilot would understand.

But the pilot did not comply. He simply restated the policy.

David was not about to let the holy tefillin get lost like that, so, not knowing what else to do, he started screaming at the top of his lungs, "I am going to lose my tefillin!- I don't want to lose my tefillin!" The crew asked him to be quiet, but he refused to stop making a fuss - a rather loud fuss.

Finally, he was making such a ruckus that the flight crew told him that they would let him off the plane, simply because he was a nuisance. But, they told him, even if it were so that it would only take him about 90 seconds for to run out, grab his tefillin, and run back, they were not going to wait for him.

No matter. David was not about to lose his tefillin, even if it caused him great inconvenience or even if it would cost his business a severe loss. He left the plane, resigned to not re-board.

The date was September 11, 2001. The flight was United #175--the second plane to reach the twin towers of the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan. David's devotion to a mitzvah saved his life.

But this is not just about 'David Miller,' for the consequences of his actions do not end there. The terrorists original plot was for both towers to be struck simultaneously, in order to maximize the explosive carnage. Later it was learned that due to his tefillin tumult the takeoff was delayed, causing a space of 18 minutes between the striking of the two towers. This delay made it possible for thousands more people to escape alive from both buildings.

Literally thousands, if not tens of thousands, of lives were spared because one Jew would not forsake his precious tefillin.

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ISSUE 1215

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Torah states: "And also that nation whom they serve will I judge, and afterward they will go out with great substance." (Gen. 15:14) Just as those Jews living during the previous exiles in Egypt and Babylonia who put their faith in the nations and their kings for their salvation were proven wrong, so too will those who, in our present exile, think that we must rely on the nations of the world for our continued existence and redemption. When Moshiach comes and G-d judges all the nations, the Jews will see that their faith in them was misplaced. At that time we will also "go out with great substance," the greatest riches of them all - the ultimate Redemption. (*The Lubavitcher Rebbe*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Continued from previous issue, from a letter dated 12 MarCheshvan, 5722 [1961]

This brings me to the third area mentioned earlier, namely, the conduct of your home and especially the education of your children, whom you surely want to see growing up to be conscientious Jews and to retain a certain standard of Jewish practice. It is possible to ensure this only if the children receive their education while they are still young, in such an atmosphere, and on such a level, that even when they come under the pressures of life, mentioned earlier in my letter, they will retain at least that minimum standard.

I need hardly point out to you that Jewish education is not confined to the acquisition of a certain level of knowledge and information about Jewish life. Its essence is rather, that the child be brought up within a Jewish lifestyle and in an atmosphere which is permeated with Judaism. This is something that a private teacher cannot replace by simply teaching a set number of hours a week. Besides, when the Hebrew lesson comes after the child has spent most of the day in public school, where he is given tests and homework, the Hebrew lesson cannot have the same importance in the mind of the child as does the public school (not to mention other factors such as the effect of classroom, discipline, community with other children, etc.). All of these factors serve to relegate the Hebrew lesson to a third or fourth place in importance, so that it often comes to be regarded altogether as an unnecessary burden.

To reiterate, the purpose of this letter is not to admonish, but only to point out to you those areas where you can attain a higher level of accomplishment and efficiency. As I also mentioned at the end of my previous letter to you, it is not a question of doing something to qualify as a true Jewish daughter, but, on the contrary, inasmuch as you are a Jewish daughter, and a member of the Jewish people whom G-d has chosen and singled out, not for pleasures, but rather for holiness and for bringing light and holiness into the world, that you owe it to yourself, as well as to your people, to make the fullest use of the capacities which Divine Providence has generously bestowed upon you and your husband, along the lines indicated above.

2nd of Marcheshvan, 5725 [1964]

Blessing and Greeting:

I was pleased to receive your letter of the 26th of Tishrei, containing a report of the activities with the girls' groups, as well as N'shei Chabad, and the Camp, all of which I read with much interest.

May G-d grant that the attainments of the past should stimulate an increased activity and even greater results in the future, exceeding by far the plans and expectations.

As we are now reading in the Torah about Avrohom Ovinu [Abraham our father], it is well to remember the lesson which, our Sages say, we have to learn from Abraham, namely that his actions always exceeded his words, and he always did a great deal more than he promised. It befits us, who are called the children of Abraham, to follow in his footsteps.

May G-d grant you and all your co-workers the utmost success.

With blessing,

CUSTOMS CORNER

Netilat Yadayim in Preparation for Davening

1. If there is no water available for one to wash Netilat Yadayim before Shacharit (and one has not yet washed since waking up) or for Netilat Yadayim before Mincha or Maariv then in a scenario where one is sure one's hands are unclean (one has either been to the bathroom or touched an unclean area) and one is travelling, the person is required to travel up to 4 mil (3840m) to get to water in order to wash Netilat Yadayim, or up to 1 mil (960m) in the case of having to travel back the direction one came from in order to get water. If one is at home but has no water to wash one only has to travel up to 1 mil.
2. If there has been a significant amount of time between washing and davening and in the meantime one stopped concentrating on keeping one's hands clean, one should wash again. However, if there is no water available, one only has to rub one's hands on something that cleans them.
3. One must wash before Mincha and before Shacharit. The same is true about Maariv and if there is a break between Mincha and Maariv and Mussaf or if there is a break between Shacharit and Mussaf, one is required to wash before each one.

A WORD

from the Director

This week we will be celebrating 20th of Cheshvan, the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab, the fifth Chabad Rebbe. Since the Torah is a guide to our actual conduct in our lives at present, it follows that a connection can be found between this week's Torah reading, Parshas Vayeira, and this auspicious day.

There is a well-known story concerning the Rebbe Rashab and the Tzemach Tzedek. When the Rebbe Rashab was four or five years old, he was taken to his grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek, for a birthday blessing. When he entered his grandfather's room, he began to cry.

After calming him, his grandfather inquired about the reason for his tears. The child responded, "In school we learned that G-d revealed Himself to Avraham, our forefather. Why does He not reveal Himself to me?"

The Tzemach Tzedek answered him, "When a Jew (according to an alternate version, 'a Tzaddik') who is ninety-nine years old recognizes that he must undergo [the spiritual service of] circumcision, he is worthy for G-d to reveal Himself to him."

The Tzemach Tzedek answered that for a person to receive a direct revelation of G-dliness, he must merit it through his actual deeds. When a person serves G-d for ninety-nine years, and then realizes that he requires to undergo circumcision, he is worthy of a manifest revelation.

This produces a lesson for every individual, when he reads that G-d revealed Himself "to him," he must realize that "to him" does not mean only to Avraham, but "to him," to his own self. Since he is a descendant of Avraham and has entered into "the covenant of Avraham" through circumcision, G-d reveals Himself to him. As can be derived from the story concerning the Rebbe Rashab, even a young child can desire such a revelation, and similarly this should arouse in every one of us a desire to actually see that revelation.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

When he was a youngster, Rebbe Naftoli Katz, the head of the Rabbinical Court of Posen, was once playing outdoors with his friends. They were throwing rocks, and Naftoli accidentally hit the passenger of a fine carriage that was nearby. Unfortunately, that passenger was none other than the High Prince of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The prince's guards arrested the boy for this act of "rebellion." He was brought to court and found guilty. His sentence: public execution.

Naftoli was to be escorted by a guard to the empire's capital, where his sentence was to be carried out. It was a difficult journey, and the stormy weather they encountered made travelling almost impossible. At one point they stopped at an inn that was owned by a Jew.

While the guard made himself comfortable in a corner by the stove, young Naftoli sat and listened to the innkeeper's sons studying Talmud with their tutor. Naftoli knew this tractate by heart, and when the boys and their tutor were stumped by a question in the tractate, Naftoli supplied them with the answer.

The innkeeper realized that this was a brilliant boy, and when he found out why Naftoli was being kept in custody, he thought of a plan to save the boy's life. The innkeeper offered the guard free food and drinks, thus convincing him to stay at the inn for a few days until the weather cleared up.

After a while the innkeeper approached the guard casually: "What would happen if a prisoner was to die in custody as he was being escorted from one city to another?" he inquired.

Replied the guard, "The escort would simply have to present a document testifying to the prisoner's death, signed by the local authorities."

Using his connections, the innkeeper obtained the required document and handed it to the guard, along with enough money to bribe him. The guard left Naftoli with the innkeeper, who took the boy in and raised him as if he was a member of his own family.

Years passed. Naftoli was of marriageable age, as was the innkeeper's daughter. The innkeeper proposed a match between the two young people and they both agreed. The wedding date was set.

One night, sometime later, the innkeeper passed by Naftoli's room and heard him talking. He peeked through the keyhole and saw Naftoli sprawled on the floor, begging and pleading. "What can I do?" Naftoli was saying, "these people saved my life."

The scene repeated itself the next night. The innkeeper could not contain his curiosity, as he knew no one was in Naftoli's room, and he asked Naftoli for an explanation. "My parents keep appearing to me and telling me that your daughter is not my intended mate."

The innkeeper, realizing that a Heavenly hand was guiding the young man, told him to obey his parents' wishes, and that he bore Naftoli no ill will.

Before Naftoli left, he requested that the innkeeper give him a written account of the money paid on his behalf to bribe the guard so many years before.

"I have merited to fulfill the commandment of redeeming a hostage, and seek no reimbursement," exclaimed the righteous innkeeper.

Naftoli insisted and the innkeeper finally gave him a paper stating the sum paid to the guard. Naftoli left and became famous for his exceptional qualities. He married and was appointed the rabbi of the city of Posen.

The innkeeper's daughter married a storekeeper, and settled in a town near Posen. One night, as she was walking home from the store, she was kidnapped by a wealthy landowner and brought back to his estate with obvious intentions. Despite the dangerous situation, the young woman maintained her composure. "I will go along with all your wishes," she told the landowner, "but first you must go to town to purchase some fine liquor for me." The landowner readily agreed.

While he was in town, the clever woman looked for a means of escape from the mansion. The only window she found unbarred was very high up. Realizing the jump was dangerous, she looked for something to cushion her fall. She found the landowner's heavy lambskin overcoat and, wrapping herself in it, offered a prayer and leaped out the window. Miraculously, she was not hurt. She fled home, still wrapped in the coat.

The husband was thankful for his wife's narrow escape. He related the entire incident to the rabbi of Posen.

Rabbi Naftoli told the husband, "Your wife is a righteous woman and her level-headedness is admirable. G-d is truly with her. Open the seam of the landowner's coat, and you will find money that rightfully belongs to you and your wife."

A few days later, the landowner came into the husband's store to make a purchase. He complained about "some Jewish woman" who had not only outwitted him, but had managed to steal his overcoat that had a large sum of money sewn inside it. The husband returned to Rabbi Naftoli and told him what the landowner had said.

"This finally concludes a much longer story," Rabbi Naftoli replied, and proceeded to tell the husband the whole story of his arrest and ransom. "That landowner," he concluded, "was the guard who had escorted me. The amount of money in the coat is the sum that your father-in-law paid for my release. Here, I will show you a bill which confirms the figure exactly."

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CANDLE LIGHTING: 30 OCTOBER 2015



BEGINS		ENDS
7.34	MELBOURNE	8.35
7.25	ADELAIDE	8.24
5.47	BRISBANE	6.42
6.28	DARWIN	7.19
5.46	GOLD COAST	6.41
6.22	PERTH	7.19
7.03	SYDNEY	8.01
7.13	CANBERRA	8.12
7.32	LAUNCESTON	8.35
7.33	AUCKLAND	8.33
7.41	WELLINGTON	8.44
7.34	HOBART	8.39
6.46	BYRON BAY	7.41

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS VAYEIRA • 17 CHESHVAN • 30 OCTOBER

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7.34 PM
	MINCHA:	7.40 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8.10 PM
SHABBOS	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.39 AM
	MINCHA:	7.30 AM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8.35 PM
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS	SUN-FRI:I: 8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	7.45 PM
	MAARIV:	8.35 PM