

LAMPLIGHTER

1 Kislev
Parshas Toldos
Shabbos Rosh Chodesh
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Toldot, we read of how Isaac wanted to bless Esau but was prevented from doing so by Rivka, his wife. It was through her intervention that the blessings were bestowed upon Jacob instead.

A fundamental question is raised by this incident. How could Isaac have possibly preferred Esau over Jacob? True, our sages tell us that Esau repeatedly tried to deceive his elderly father into thinking he was G-d-fearing and observant, by pointedly asking questions about religious law, but it is still hard to imagine Isaac being fooled by Esau's ruse. In fact, when Jacob presented himself to receive his father's blessings, Isaac declared that "the voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau," recognizing how unusual it was for Esau to address him in such a civil manner or even to bring G-d's name into the conversation. Isaac surely realized that something was amiss. But if Isaac was well aware of Esau's serious shortcomings, why did he nevertheless want to give the blessings only to him?

The truth is that Esau, the firstborn twin, possessed an extremely lofty soul capable of incredible spiritual accomplishments. In certain respects, Esau was on an even higher spiritual level than his brother Jacob. Jacob was born to be a "dweller in tents (of Torah)," protected from the outside world, enclosed within the four walls of the yeshiva. Esau, however, was "a man of the field," blessed with the spiritual strength to venture forth into the coarser material world to wage war against evil and impurity, bringing G-dliness and holiness down into the physical realm. It was Esau, therefore, who possessed the greater spiritual might.

This, then, explains Isaac's desire to bless Esau, despite his knowledge that his son was abusing these spiritual gifts: Isaac hoped his blessings would cause Esau's considerable talents to be brought out and revealed. Not only would Esau repent of his evil ways, but the entire world would benefit from his actions.

G-d, however, knew it was too late for Esau to repent and live up to his potential. Instead, the blessings were given to Jacob, and with them, the power to overcome evil and transform it into good, and to illuminate the world with the light of Torah.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

A Double Gift

By Yitschak Meir Kagan

Isaac blesses his son Jacob: "...And may G-d give you of the dew of the heavens and of the fat of the earth..." The famed commentator Rashi explains the implication of the words "And may G-d give you" to mean "The Al-mighty will give, and give again."

What was missing in G-d's initial giving, that could be perfected and completed by a second giving? Man is finite, limited; should he give even a magnificent and generous gift to another, it can still be improved upon by additional giving. But even the initial "gift" of the omnipotent and perfect Creator would be perfect. What could be added by "giving again"?

An analogy from the education of a pupil by his teacher might clarify the problem:

A teacher may reach two different levels of achievement with his pupil. He may successfully impart his knowledge to the pupil so that it is completely absorbed and becomes the pupil's own knowledge -- but the pupil may still not be able to creatively develop the line of thought further on his own. There is a second, higher level of instruction in which the teacher so perfectly guides the pupil, that he develops the ability to exercise his own intellectual creativity on the subject, and further extends and expands -- in his own unique contribution -- the knowledge received.

The Mishna records an example of these two levels among the pupils of Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai. One of Rabbi Yochanan's pupils was Rabbi Eliezer ben Hurkanus and another was Rabbi Eliezer ben Aroch. "If all the wise men of Israel (including Eliezer ben Aroch) were on one end of a scale and Eliezer ben Hurkanus on the other, he would outweigh them all," states the Mishna. But then it declares, "If all the wise men of Israel were on one end of a scale, even together with Eliezer ben Hurkanus, and Eliezer ben Aroch was on the other end, he would outweigh them all!"

Rabbi Eliezer ben Hurkanus was like "... a cemented well that loses not even a drop." His reception and absorption of wisdom was superior even to that of Rabbi Eliezer ben Aroch. But Rabbi Eliezer ben Aroch was "...as a well-spring gushing with ever-increasing force," indicating an ability to expand, add and innovate. His creative genius was greater than that of Eliezer ben Hurkanus.

The implication of G-d's "double blessing" that Isaac imparted to Jacob is now clear: not only would the Divine blessing itself be full and perfect, but it would also have the additional effect of enabling Jacob to extend and expand the blessing himself.

Slice of LIFE

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Pevzner is the manager of a large complex of Jewish schools in the heart of Paris called Sinai where over one thousand children learn.

As could be understood such an outstanding achievement was accompanied by many harrowing experiences but possibly the shakiest of them occurred just a few years ago.

In 5749 (1988) the Lubavitcher Rebbe declared that year to be the 'Year of Building'. Hundreds of Chabad institutions took this declaration as a prophesy and, certain beyond any shadow of a doubt that they would succeed, began projects that were completely beyond their normal realm of imagination. And they worked!

In that year thousands of buildings were begun and/or finished. But one of the most impressive examples was that of Rabbi Pevzner.

He announced a multi-million dollar project that only a miracle would finish. And the miracle occurred.

The Rebbe announced that he would give a one hundred dollar bill to whomever donated money to the project and the donors flocked in.

In no time some ninety percent of the costs had been covered and Rabbi Pevzner was able to proudly go to the Rebbe with pictures of the finished buildings and names of the benefactors before the year was over.

But strangely enough when he presented it all to him, the Rebbe seemed to show no sign of satisfaction. In fact, of all things, he seemed a bit worried. He took a dollar bill in his hand, held it out to Rabbi Pevzner and said, "There still remain debts. Here is a dollar for the debts."

Rabbi Pevzner couldn't understand what the Rebbe meant, but he obviously took it anyways.

Thirteen years passed and although the debt never really got paid, it didn't grow either. It was not unusual for an institution of that size to have such a reasonable debt and the Rabbi gave it no thought whatsoever.

In fact the number of pupils in Sinai increased and were coming from such a wide area of Paris that the board of directors of the school decided to expand. Plans were made, licenses and permissions were given and allocations and donations were pledged to build a branch on the outskirts of the town.

Then, suddenly France turned over. The Moslems became militant and anti-Semitism again reared its ugly head in the streets and in the media. Donors retracted their pledges, the ministry of education cancelled funding and the Government turned a deaf ear.

Overnight the debts began piling up and after a few months the situation was unbearable with no end in sight. Teachers, lunchroom, electricity, upkeep all required money and there was none.

The majority of his pupils were poor and had been paid for by the government. And then there was the new unfinished expansion project that he still owed a fortune for.

Every week brought more debt until after a year and a half, Sinai Schools owed no less than TEN MILLION EURO!!

It seemed obvious that the schools would have to close; there was simply no possibility to pay such an amount and to continue was impossible.

Rabbi Pevzner had personally borrowed millions to keep the institutions going and would have to borrow more, but from where? Not only would no one give him a loan, his creditors were hounding him for their money back! The government stepped in, appointed a board of investigators and they decided that it was obvious that Rabbi Pevzner had no choice but to declare bankruptcy.

But he was given a reprieve. It seems that the government court was not interested in closing him down so quickly. If he went bankrupt no one would get what was owed them and, after all, this was an institution that had been working successfully with no motives of profit for years.

They agreed to keep 'Sinai' running for twelve months on government funding to give him a chance to come up with the money.

But nothing happened. The anti-Semitism increased, the debt remained, and the days passed.

He gathered all his teachers, workers and pupils and with tears in his eyes informed them that he had tried everything. He begged them to increase their prayers and then, choking back the tears told them that without a miracle it was only months until the end.

Then he remembered the dollar.

Suddenly he remembered what the Rebbe said and it was clear to him he was prophesying precisely this catastrophe he was going through now. It was like a flash of pure light in the stark murky reality surrounding him. The Rebbe was never wrong!

Sure enough the very next day something happened!

A group of Israeli Newspaper reporters came to visit his institution as part of a report they were doing on France and to his amazement the official that was showing them around was none other than one of the most outspoken opponents of orthodox Judaism, the wealthy and influential Baron David Rothschild of the famous Rothschild family.

But miraculously the Baron was treating the Rabbi like his best friend. He was smiling, laughing and putting his arm around the Rabbi's shoulder at every opportunity as though nothing could please him more than the Rabbi's company! In fact Rabbi Pevzner even managed to set an appointment with him for the next day in his office.

It seemed that this was the breakthrough he was praying for! But he was in for a bitter surprise.

It was all a show. It seems that the Baron had some sort of political reason to pose publicly as a friend of Jewish Orthodoxy, but privately was a completely different story.

When the Rabbi arrived at the Baron's office the Baron's secretary told him bluntly and in no uncertain terms that he, and all other Rabbis in the world could jump in the lake and they would never enter the Baron's office.

The precious months passed and the situation got worse. If it wasn't for that dollar Rabbi Pevzner would have gone mad. He had tried everything! Where would he get a ten million euro donation? He could do nothing but go on spreading Judaism and try not to think of it. But it was impossible.

Then, just as he thought that things couldn't get worse, they did. He got invited to a formal government dinner.

When he arrived he saw it was worse than he thought; It was a large and gaudy affair hosted by none other than his 'friend' Baron Rothschild!

The Rabbi wanted to turn back and head for the exit but before he could move the Baron zeroed in on him and began his fawning act again. He hugged him warmly, smiled like a clown and posed with his arm around him whenever possible.

Suddenly the Rabbi got a bold idea.

He pictured the Rebbe's face handing him the dollar, mustered up his courage and said in a loud enough voice to be heard,

"Tell me my friend, why is it that now you are so friendly when just a few months ago you refused to even see me?"

The Baron was confused. He paled, faked a smile and whispered to the Rabbi "Don't tell anyone about what happened. Listen, tomorrow morning I promise that if you call my office I will make a time to see you."

And so it was; two days later he was sitting before the Baron in his plush office. But he was so apprehensive that all he could manage to do was be friendly and hope the Baron would change his anti-Semitic attitude. Until Rothschild himself finally interrupted,

"Rabbi, we both are busy men and there is no point wasting time. Tell me what you want!"

Rabbi Pevzner poured out his heart and when he was finished Rothschild lifted the phone, called a close friend, a retired economist, briefly told him the story and asked if he would be willing to investigate the case.

No one knows what he reported to the Baron but it was enough to cause him to meet with the bankruptcy officials and promise that he; the rabidly anti-religious Baron Rothschild, would personally...cover the debt!!

He personally promised to give five million euro from his own pocket and arrange allocations to pay the rest!

One week before the deadline, the Rebbe's dollar brought ten million euro and an estranged Jew a bit closer to Judaism.

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Editor: Ovadya Rogalsky & Tzali Reicher
P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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ISSUE 1217

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Midrash explains that in the blessings that Isaac gave to his son Jacob there are a number of references to the Redemption: Before the blessings were given, Isaac ate the food Jacob brought to him. Isaac later said that he had eaten "from everything." Rabbi Nechemiah explained that Isaac had been given a sample of all the delicacies that are being kept for the days of Moshiach. The first blessing was "dew from the heavens." This refers to a special dew that G-d will use to bring the dead back to life at the time of the Resurrection of the Dead.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

On the 28th of Nissan, 5750 (April 23, 1990) the Rebbe was notified that P.L.O. terrorists were threatening to attack various targets throughout the world. The following is the Rebbe's response at a public gathering, freely translated:

I was notified that the P.L.O. has given instructions to all its branches worldwide to strike at targets throughout the world, G-d forbid.

It is therefore necessary to invoke and emphasize the blessings from G-d to all Jews in all places, in all their needs. Primarily the most needed blessing is the miracle of the complete and perfect Redemption through Moshiach (whom we await every day that his coming not be delayed even as much as the blink of an eye). These blessings should be emphasized with complete trust and confidence, as well as with joy and gladness of heart.

We should especially fulfil the directive of the Chabad Rebbes, "Think good and it will be good."

This means that thinking positively causes the course of events to actually turn out good.

This information should be utilized not to scare anyone, G-d forbid, but rather in the positive sense, to enhance the service of the Jewish people in the study of Torah and the observance of mitzvot (commandments).

On the verse (Gen. 27:22), 'The voice is the voice of Jacob,' our Sages tell us that the power of the Jewish people is with "our mouth." Through our heartfelt prayers and Torah learning we can eliminate the plans of "the hands of Esau," the terrible schemes of our enemies.

Thus there should be additional activities in Torah study and prayer and in mitzvot in general.

Special emphasis should be placed on studying Torah diligently. For our Sages explain the verse, "If you will follow my statutes" to mean that if you will labour in Torah... "I will grant peace in the land. You will sleep without fear."

Through Torah study we eliminate all negative things and they are even transformed to good.

Also, additional prayers should be said. Keeping with the spirit of "thinking positive" it would be advisable to recite daily an extra three chapters of Psalms. One of these three chapters should be the final chapter of Psalms (ch. 150) which concludes with the verse, "Let every being that has a soul praise G-d." This means that every man, woman and child praises and gives thanks to G-d for His benevolence, and for the blessings and good fortune that He bestows upon us and will continue to bestow upon us.

Thinking positively causes the course of events to actually turn out good.

It would also be appropriate to add in the giving of charity.

Although "fasting" is out of place (especially in the context of "thinking positive") this does not contradict the giving of charity to redeem a fast.

CUSTOMS CORNER

After Shmoneh Esrei

1. After Shemonei Esrei, one should make take three steps backwards while bowing like a servant parting from his master. If one didn't do so, it's as if he didn't pray.
2. There's an absolute obligation to take 3 steps back after Shmoneh Esrei and wait there until the Chazzan gets to Kedusha or at least starts the repetition. An individual who finishes Shmoneh Esrei should take three steps back and wait there the time it takes for the Chazzan to reach Kedusha, or in extenuating circumstances at least the time it takes to walk 4 amot (3 seconds or so). If one doesn't wait after taking the 3 steps back, it appears that one didn't take the 3 steps back in order to depart from Hashem respectfully.
3. The Shulchan Aruch offers the opinion that we take these three steps back to commemorate the 3 mil (an ancient measurement of distance equating roughly to a mile) the Jewish people were thrown backwards (out of awe and dread) at the Giving of The Torah when they heard G-d's voice stating "I am the Lord, Your G-d."

A WORD

from the Director

This week we find the Parsha, Toldos, in conjunction with the start of the month of Kislev, from which an astounding moral lesson can be derived. The Parsha tells us of the birth of Yitzchak's children after his marriage in the previous week. Our Sages tell us that G-d is like a bridegroom and we are like the bride, the ultimate Divine service is to serve G-d and worship Him, in a manner of closeness, similar to a marriage.

One may think that although he is righteous, he is still unworthy to be close to G-d. Therefore the Torah tells us to go out and "make another Jew," to perform spiritual "reproduction," bringing Jews closer to Torah and Mitzvos. As a reward your sins will be forgiven and you will become pure and worthy to relate to Hashem in a manner similar to a marriage.

Now compare this thought with the concept of Chanukah, which comes in the month of Kislev, which is to kindle lights outside the door of your house. This means that despite the darkness, after the sun has set, you must go out and illuminate the world and dissolve and eliminate the forces which would negate G-dliness.

One could possibly say, being that his level of Torah and Mitzvos is very lofty, and being close to the wellsprings of Torah, it is better for him to remain in his own domain, to study, and do Mitzvos, while his responsibility to reach out will be done by his messengers, children, and grandchildren, or through the "mail" - on his behalf. If "all the roads are dangerous," why encounter peril?!

So the month of Kislev beckons us to go out and illuminate the outside. Spread the wellsprings outside! Go out and spread the teachings of Torah there. Being that this will benefit you, it will neutralize the peril of the way. In practice, illuminate the world with the light of Torah and Chassidus, enlighten even the place of darkness, at the door of your house, outside. Go out, and there, make offspring - by bringing the Jews of that faraway place to Torah and Mitzvos, to the degree that they too will subsequently make more "offspring" for the benefit of Klal Yisrael.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Reb Eliezer Lipa was a simple but devout Jew who lived in the town of Tarnow in Galicia. He was not well versed in Torah and didn't know the meaning of most of his daily prayers, but he always prayed with the *minyán* (prayer quorum) and was scrupulous to say all the proper responses to the prayer leader. He never conversed about worldly matters in the *shul* (synagogue), and he accorded the Torah scholars and rabbi their due honor.

Reb Eliezer Lipa was a laborer who knew many trades, but he was most well known as a water-carrier. He worked hard, and managed to make a decent living, as he had four steady customers who were well-to-do merchants who paid him above the average rate for his services.

One day, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov arrived in Tarnow. This was before the Chassidic master had revealed himself to the world, and he appeared as a simple itinerant, but with a gift for telling stories. He used to congregate with the other laborers and tell them stories from the Talmud. He would also speak to them about how much G-d was pleased with the sincere prayers and straightforward faith of ordinary Jews.

Reb Eliezer Lipa was guiding his wagon with its full barrel of water through the center of town, when he spotted his friend and fellow water-carrier Reb Zalman Dov along with some other men, gathered around a simply dressed itinerant and listening intently with heads inclined to catch his every word.

His interest sparked, Reb Eliezer Lipa went over to join the circle of listeners. The Baal Shem Tov was telling the story related in the Talmud of a wealthy man who lived in the days when the Holy Temple in Jerusalem still stood.

"The wealthy man was taking a fattened ox to the Temple for a sacrifice. It was a massive beast, and when it decided, for reasons of its own, to stop still in its tracks, nobody was able to convince it to walk further towards their destination. No amount of pushing and prodding could make that animal budge.

"A poor man who was on his way home was watching the scene. In his hand was a bunch of freshly picked greens. These he now held to the muzzle of the ox, and when the animal began to nibble, he drew them away and thereby led the animal to its destination at the Holy Temple.

"That night the owner of the ox had a dream. In his dream he heard a voice which called out, 'The sacrifice of the poor man, who gave up the bundle of greens he was bringing to his impoverished family, was a more desirable sacrifice than your fattened ox.'

"The wealthy man brought a large fattened ox for a burnt-offering. He was so joyful at being able to bring such an animal that he also brought a sheep for a peace-offering and made a huge feast for his family and friends. He also distributed the proper gifts from his sacrifices to the priests. His joy was so intense that he held back nothing. The poor man, on the other hand, had only a bunch of greens to bring home for his family. What were his few stalks compared to the fattened animal of the wealthy man?

"Nevertheless," concluded the Baal Shem Tov, "G-d desires the heart. Any mitzvah a person may do, whether great or small, simple or difficult, is judged by how it is performed. A mitzvah done for G-d's sake, with great joy and purity of heart, is very precious to the Creator. G-d cries out to the angels, 'Look at the mitzvah my son/daughter has done!' G-d, from His place in the heavens, saw

that although the wealthy man had offered much, the poor man had offered much more."

Reb Eliezer Lipa's mind knew no rest. How he longed to be able to do a mitzvah like the poor man in the story, with pure intention and a joyful overflowing heart! The weeks passed and still Reb Eliezer Lipa knew no peace, as his heart ached with the desire to be able to do such a mitzvah.

One day, as Reb Eliezer Lipa was delivering water to one of his wealthy customers, he had an idea, an idea so perfect that his whole being became flushed with a great sense of pleasure and relief. Reb Eliezer Lipa's four wealthy customers provided him with half of his livelihood, since they paid him far more than the going rate for a barrel of water. On the other hand, his friend Reb Zalman Dov supplied the town's four synagogues, which paid him half-price for their water. "I can exchange four of my customers for four of his," thought Reb Eliezer Lipa. "Four wealthy homes for four synagogues." He was anxious to serve G-d by providing the water that the congregants would wash their hands with. Certainly the mitzvah was of more value than the profits he would give up.

He went home and told his wife about the story he heard from the visiting storyteller, and how doing a mitzvah with joy is like bringing a sacrifice in the Holy Temple, even though it no longer stands. His wife readily agreed to the idea, as did Reb Zalman Dov, who sorely needed the extra income. The deal was struck and the exchange of customers was made. No one but Reb Eliezer Lipa and his wife knew what had happened, and they were overjoyed at the prospects for their new "business." There were days when Reb Eliezer Lipa's wife went to the river to participate in the mitzvah of drawing the water for the synagogues. As they hauled the water, they would concentrate on the mitzvah of preparing the water for the congregants to wash their hands with before prayers, and their joy was boundless.

Amongst Chassidim there is a tradition that it was in the merit of their mitzvah, Reb Eliezer Lipa and his wife were blessed with children, for she had formerly been barren. They gave birth to two sons, who grew to be luminaries who lit up the Jewish world and inspired tens of thousands to return to G-d and to serve Him with joy: Eilmelech of Lizhensk and Zusha of Anipoli, two of the most illustrious disciples of the Baal Shem Tov's successor, Reb DovBer, the Maggid of Mezeritch.

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CANDLE LIGHTING: 13 NOVEMBER 2015



BEGINS		ENDS
7.49	MELBOURNE	8.43
7.38	ADELAIDE	8.39
5.57	BRISBANE	6.53
6.33	DARWIN	7.25
5.56	GOLD COAST	6.53
6.34	PERTH	7.32
7.16	SYDNEY	8.16
7.27	CANBERRA	8.28
7.49	LAUNCESTON	8.55
7.48	AUCKLAND	8.50
7.58	WELLINGTON	9.04
7.52	HOBART	9.00
6.56	BYRON BAY	7.53

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD
PARSHAS TOLDOS • 1 KISLEV • 13 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7.49 PM
	MINCHA:	7.55 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8.25 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.31 AM
	MINCHA:	7.45 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8.43 PM
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS	SUN-FRI: 8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	7.55 PM
	MAARIV:	8.45 PM