

LAMPLIGHTER

8 Kislev
Parshas
Vayeitzei
1218

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Vayeitzei, G-d promises Jacob: "I am the L-rd G-d of Abraham your father and the G-d of Isaac; the land on which you lie, to you will I give it, and to your seed."

According to our Sages, "G-d folded up the entire Land of Israel beneath him, thereby hinting that it would be as easily conquered by his descendants as four cubits, which is the area that a person covers." In the same way that conquering a tiny space (the four cubits Jacob occupied when he lay down to sleep) is easy, so too would it be easy for Jacob's children to conquer the entirety of the Land of Israel.

Two generations previously, when G-d promised Abraham that Israel would belong to him and his descendants, He commanded him: "Arise and walk through the land in its length and in its breadth, for I will give it to you." Abraham strode throughout the Land of Israel, visiting any location he wished without interference. He walked through the Land as its "baal habayit" (proprietor), thereby demonstrating his ownership.

G-d's promise was in effect even before Abraham's sojourn. But after he walked the length and breadth of the Land, he was able to more strongly perceive the fulfillment of G-d's words.

Jacob, by contrast, was never commanded to "walk"; it was enough for him to lie down on the ground to sleep. Jacob did not openly demonstrate his ownership of the Land. No one else was present, and thus no one knew that G-d "folded up the entire Land of Israel beneath him."

The innovation in G-d's promise to Jacob (as opposed to His promise to Abraham) was that the Land of Israel would be conquered easily and without effort. You will not have to do anything to obtain it; just lie down on the earth, and it will come into your possession.

G-d promised the Jewish people that they would conquer the Land successfully and effortlessly.

Today, there are some Jews who must still be convinced that the entirety of the Land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people forever. There are some Jews who are not entirely sure of our ownership of the Land.

Nothing is created by G-d without a purpose. No element in the world exists that has no function, nor does G-d do anything "coincidentally" or without significance. If G-d "folded up the entire Land of Israel" to show Jacob that it would easily be conquered, He did so because that is the true reality!

Adapted from Volume 20 of Likutei Sichot

A Ladder to Heaven

By Yossy Goldman

So what's the best way to get to heaven? Walk across a busy highway? Perform some amazing act of faith? Save a thousand lives? Well, a pretty good answer may be found in this week's Parshah.

We read the story of Jacob's dream and the famous ladder with its feet on the ground and head in the heavens. "And behold the angels of G-d were ascending and descending on it."

Let me ask you what they might call in Yiddish, a *klotz kashe* (simplistic question). Do angels need a ladder? Everyone knows angels have wings, not feet. So, if you have wings, why would you need a ladder?

There is a beautiful message here.

In climbing heavenward one does not necessarily need wings. Dispense with the dramatic. Forget about fancy leaps and bounds. There is a ladder, a spiritual route clearly mapped out for us; a route that needs to be traversed step-by-step, one rung at a time. The pathway to Heaven is gradual, methodical and eminently manageable.

Many people are discouraged from even beginning a spiritual journey because they think it needs that huge leap of faith. They cannot see themselves reaching a degree of religious commitment which to them seems otherworldly. And yet, with the gradual step-by-step approach, one finds that the journey can be embarked upon and that the destination aspired to is actually not in outer space.

When I was growing up in Brooklyn, I would pass a very big building on my way to school every morning. It was the King's County Savings Bank. All these years later I still remember the Chinese proverb that was engraved over the large portals at the entrance to the bank. "A journey of a thousand miles begins with but a single step." Now that's not only Chinese wisdom; we Jews agree. And it's not limited to starting a savings plan. It is a simple yet powerful idea that it need not be "all or nothing."

What do you think is a rabbi's fantasy? A guy walking into my office and saying, "Rabbi, I want to become 'frum' (fully observant), now tell me what I must do"? Is that what I lie awake dreaming of? And if it did happen, do you think I would throw the book at him and insist he did every single mitzvah from that moment on? Never! Why not? Because a commitment like that is usually here today and gone tomorrow. Like the popular saying goes, "Easy come, easy go." I'm afraid I haven't had such wonderful experiences with the "instant Jew" types. The correct and most successful method of achieving our Jewish objectives is the slow and steady approach. Gradual, yet consistent. As soon as one has become comfortable with one mitzvah, it is time to start on the next, and so on and so forth. Then, through constant growth, slowly but surely we become more knowledgeable, committed, fulfilled and happy in our faith.

When my father was in yeshiva, his teacher once asked the following question: "If two people are on a ladder, one at the top and one on the bottom, who is higher?" The class thought it was a pretty dumb question -- until the wise teacher explained that they were not really capable of judging who was higher or lower until they first ascertained in which direction each was headed.

If the fellow on top was going down, but the guy on the bottom was going up, then conceptually, the one on the bottom was actually higher.

And so my friends, it doesn't really matter what your starting point is or where you are at on the ladder of religious life. As long as you are moving in the right direction, as long as you are going up, you will, please G-d, succeed in climbing the heavenly heights.

Wishing you a safe and successful journey.

Slice of LIFE

Rebecca's Gift

by Tzippy Clapman

Tzippy Clapman: Rebecca, a hospital administrator who had no children, was an only child herself. I worked in the same hospital as Rebecca, and a friend and I would make monthly luncheons. We would hang posters all over the hospital and many Jewish medical students, nursing students, doctors and even orderlies would come. Guest lecturers came and we often focused on the upcoming Jewish holiday or special date. Rebecca always attended.

Years passed and I no longer worked in that hospital, so I lost touch with Rebecca. Then one day, I bumped into her just a few blocks from my home. Rebecca, now in her 70s, tearfully told me that her husband had died of sudden heart failure. She had retired from her job, and she was very lonely without her beloved husband who was also her one and only relative. She had moved to just a few blocks away from my home!

I invited her to come to our home for Shabbat. I told her that I would have one of my children meet her at her apartment door to escort her to our home and that someone would walk her home after the meal. She was very sceptical, "Let me tell you right off the bat that I am not a religious woman and I don't even keep kosher or any of your traditional Judaism."

I told Rebecca that I am not G-d, and I do not judge her religious actions, but I would truly love to have her presence at our Shabbat table.

For the next 15 years, Rebecca sat at our Shabbat and holiday table. Rebecca had never had siblings or children. She was very set in her ways. She could not stand children's loud voices and squabbles (common at our table). She could not stand a lot of movement (my children and grandchildren would run around the house). I would notice her look of displeasure during all those meals and I

would feel sorry for her. But for 15 years, despite her disapproval at all the ruckus, Rebecca came back to our house every Shabbat and Jewish holiday. We also invited her to all of our birthday parties, and weddings, and other milestones. Rebecca was our official honorary Bubby for all those years.

Our children were not delighted with Rebecca as our continuous guest. But my husband and I decided that this was the best Jewish education we could give them; to teach them to tolerate her and treat her well despite her disapproval of them.

Over the years my children grew up and began to enjoy her presence. As they matured they began to understand how someone who had spent most of her life around very few people might feel.

Although Rebecca needed us so that she wasn't totally alone in the world, we really needed her to teach us unconditional love for a fellow Jew.

Eventually Rebecca started to keep kosher. She began lighting candles for Shabbat and Yom Tov, and then she began keeping all the laws that she knew.

Rebecca was a graduate of Brooklyn College and during our time together, her graduating class celebrated her class's 50th reunion. There would be a weekend of dinners and conferences, and her class was going to walk down the aisle with that year's graduates and then have a graduation banquet. Rebecca was very touched that I attended this gala event which was quite costly. But I knew it was important that I was with her and took pictures and stood by her side.

Rebecca did have one distant cousin who would call her from Florida once or twice a year to make sure she was still alive. This cousin knew that she was in her will and therefore would send Rebecca a birthday card. One day Rebecca turned to me and asked me if she should put me in her will. Without a second thought, I answered, "Absolutely not!" I very lovingly told her that if she wanted, she could pick a charitable organization to receive a donation after her death. I explained that this would be very beneficial for her in the afterlife. "But don't give anything to me!"

My children were shocked by my quick response and I noticed their eyes widen with amazement. After Rebecca left, my children asked me why I did not accept the offer. "Mommy, you are the one who cares for her, and had her all these years, you deserve her inheritance!" I immediately answered the children, "If I would accept her offer, she would feel that I did all this for her money!" My children had to admit I had a point, something they had not thought of. Over the next couple of years, Rebecca became older and more frail and we advised her to wear an emergency alert necklace in case she fell or felt ill. I was the first "relative" on her list and she gave me the keys to her apartment. Once or twice I was summoned to her home by the response team, and ran over to see what was wrong and to deal with it. From one episode she was hospitalized for a couple of weeks, and we all took turns visiting daily with her. She had sufficient rehab and by the time she came home we happily had her back at our Shabbat and Yom Tov table.

We celebrated Passover last year with Rebecca and a few days later a neighbour called us to say that she had not taken in the mail outside her door that day. I immediately called and there was no response. She would always pick up the phone right away, glad to receive a phone call. My husband and I grabbed her keys and ran to her apartment where we found our beloved friend at her kitchen table with a cup of tea in front of her, no longer alive. I called her distant cousins in Florida and asked permission for us to arrange that she have a proper Jewish burial. The relative gave permission to release her funeral directives and to let us handle it all. Rebecca had a very large number of people gather outside her building as well as all my children's classmates and friends to bid her farewell with Psalms and tears. We had a minyan of men who attended her burial and made sure that everything was done properly and with the fullest respect.

I will forever be grateful to G-d for sending Rebecca into our lives. She helped bring out the best in us, and her presence gave my children a priceless sensitivity to the needs of a fellow Jew.

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MOSHIACH MATTERS

In describing Jacob's dream, the Torah states, "And he arrived at the place and lodged there because the sun had set, and he took some of the stones of the place and put them at his head, and he lay down in that place." (Gen. 28:11) The "place" spoken about is Mount Moriah where the Holy Temples would later be built. The mention of the "place" three times hints to the three Holy Temples. The first time hints to the first Temple and the setting sun corresponds to its destruction. The second time ("and he took some stones...") hints to the second Temple because the second Temple had only "some" of the holiness of the first Temple. The third mention of the word "place" corresponds to the third Holy Temple which will stand forever; then we will finally merit to rest and serve G-d in eternal peace. (*Abarbanel*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

B"H, *Chol HaMoed* Sukkos, 5711,
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greetings and blessings,

Enclosed is the *kuntreis* for the coming Shemini Atzeres-Simchas Torah festival. Certainly you will share it with all those in your surroundings, to arouse, strengthen, and illuminate now and throughout the year their rejoicing in the Torah. As a result of this, this will arouse, strengthen, and illuminate their happiness in the observance of *mitzvos*. And as a consequence, their study of the Torah and observance of its *mitzvos* will be carried out in a more elevated manner.

For just as Torah study is equivalent to and leads to [the observance] of all the *mitzvos*, so, too, the happiness associated with the Torah is equivalent to and leads to the happiness associated with the *mitzvos*. Divine service with happiness and gladness of heart breaks through all the constraints and limitations that exist, both on this earthly plane and Above. It distances a person from [worldly] desires and nullifies [heavenly] judgments [against him]. And then, "in the light of the King's countenance, there will be life."

With the conclusion of the festive days of Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkos, Shemini Atzeres, and Simchas Torah, a Jew must return to [ordinary] weekdays, and, moreover, [ordinary] weekdays of the winter, where there will be [almost] half a year without festivals. He must [therefore] take with him "provisions for the way," powers and Divine influence that will endow him with the potential that when fulfilling the commandment: "And Yaakov went on his way," he will be able to proceed confidently, even though "all ways are presumed to be dangerous."

For this purpose, on the day of Shemini Atzeres, all of the general Divine influences of the month of Tishrei are gathered together and collected. And on Simchas Torah, there is the beginning of the revelation and the drawing down [of these energies]. As a result, it will be easier to express all the good resolutions taken during the month of Tishrei in positive activity throughout all the days of the entire year.

In particular, the rejoicing connected with the Torah on these days will lead to the rejoicing associated with a *mitzvah* during all the days of the year. And as a consequence, all of the limitations, obstacles, and hindrances to the study of the Torah and the observance of the *mitzvos* will be removed.

For Simchas Torah represents the highest encompassing light which includes all the other general encompassing lights of the month of Tishrei.

On this basis, it is understandable that we find two seemingly contradictory points with regard to Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah:

- It is Jewish custom-and [Jewish custom has the power of] Torah Law-to celebrate at this rejoicing more than during *Simchas Beis HaShoeivah* and more than during the celebrations of festivals in general.
- Celebration on the festivals is a positive commandment of Scriptural origin. The extra happiness experienced on the festival of Sukkos-which also includes *Simchas Beis HaShoeivah*-is explicitly mentioned in the Scripture. And so is the happiness associated with the observance of a *mitzvah*. The [concept of] celebration on the final day of Sukkos, [i.e., Shemini Atzeres,] in contrast, is derived only through the non-literal technique of interpretation referred to as *derush*. (It is understood that is impossible from this to derive the concept that [the day mandates] extra rejoicing.) And according to some, there is no Scriptural obligation at all.

The explanation is that one concept complements the other. Since this happiness is of such a sublime and general nature, it cannot be included in the enumeration of the *mitzvos*, following a similar line of thinking as *Rambam* writes with regard to the general *mitzvos*. And according to the opinion that it is merely a custom, the explanation is similar to that given with regard to the *hakkafo*s.

May G-d enable us to merit that this happiness reach [even] the lowest powers of the soul, [enabling us] to make a firm resolve and decision to accept the yoke of G-d's sovereignty through establishing fixed times for Torah study, the observance of the *mitzvos*, and Divine service of the heart, and bring these resolves from a state of potential to actual practice. Then, as my revered father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe, concludes in his *maamar* in the [enclosed] *kuntreis*: "The light that is good will be drawn down in vast goodness, both material and spiritual."

(Because of the sanctity of the festival, I did not sign.)

Menachem Schneerson

CUSTOMS CORNER

If one forgot to pray...

- If one forgot to say Shacharis, he should say the Shmoneh Esreh of Mincha twice, the first for Mincha and the second as a makeup (Tashlumin) for Shacharis.
- If one forgot to say Mincha, he should say Maariv twice, the first for Maariv, the second as a makeup for Mincha.
- If one forgot to say Maariv, he should say the Shmoneh Esreh of Shachris twice, the first for Shacharis, the second as a makeup prayer for Maariv.
- There is no makeup if one missed saying Mussaf.
- A woman who usually prays three times a day and misses a prayer unintentionally, the same rules of making up prayer apply.

A WORD

from the Director

This week 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 chasidim in Israel in the city of Hebron. He encouraged the Chasidim 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 Rebbe of our generation, 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 an 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, the Rebbe's policy had not changed one iota from that of his predecessors. Based on clear guidance from the Torah and Jewish law, the Rebbe had constantly reiterated: No action can be taken that might negatively affect the safety of the Jews of the Holy Land.

In the merit of Rabbi Dov Ber who established the first Chabad settlement in Eretz Yisrael, may we speedily be privileged to gather with Jews around the world in greeting Moshiach in our Holy Land.

J. I. Gurtman

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

In a village not far from Kovno in Lithuania, there lived a G-d-fearing Jewish innkeeper. He had a daughter, Sarah, who was a strikingly beautiful girl. Sarah did not let her beauty turn her head, and she remained a modest, G-d-fearing young girl, obedient to her father and a right hand to her mother.

One day, the young son of the country squire chanced to stop at the inn. The moment his eyes fell on Sarah, he was attracted to the beautiful young woman. He called on her to serve him one drink after another, and the more he drank, the more he liked her. When he was pretty well drunk, he asked her, "Will you marry me?"

Sarah ignored his marriage proposal, but when he kept on telling her that he was serious, she told him, politely but firmly, that she was Jewish and would never marry a non-Jew. For his part, the young squire said that he would return, and insisted that he would definitely marry her.

When the young squire returned home and told his father that he intended to marry the Jewish innkeeper's daughter, the old nobleman could not believe his ears. The father tried to dissuade his son, but the young man remained adamant. The elderly nobleman, who had pampered his spoiled son all his life and catered to his every whim, once more gave in. But on one condition: the girl had to convert to Christianity.

Happily, the young squire raced back to the inn to tell Sarah the "good news" that his father had consented to the marriage. There was, of course, the small matter of conversion, but once done, she would live a life of luxury.

Sarah was horrified. She told the young squire that she would never marry him under any circumstances, and ran from the room. She decided not to say anything to her father, in the hope that this was a passing whim.

The young squire, however, was used to getting what he wanted. And his father, although he was originally opposed to his son's infatuation, was deeply insulted that a poor Jewish girl was turning down the marriage proposal of a wealthy and handsome nobleman! The old squire sat down at his desk and wrote a letter to the innkeeper, expressing his outrage at the fact that after his son had graciously consented to marry his daughter and lift her up from her lowly station, the Jew had the audacity to refuse, and insisting that he agree to the "match."

The young squire rushed with a few of his friends to deliver the letter. En route, a tremendous rainstorm broke out, and they stopped at the closest inn. At the inn, the boisterous company began drinking and offered a round of toasts to the young squire. "Drink," they said. "Once you marry that pretty Jewish girl, you will have to behave..." Laughter followed.

All this time, an old man bent sat quietly in a corner, bent over a book. He was Reb Yosef, the *melamed* (tutor) of the innkeeper's two sons. His ears caught the boisterous conversation of the company and the mention of Sarah, the daughter of the neighboring innkeeper. He listened intently as the young squire read out loud the letter from his father to Sarah's father.

When the young squires fell into a drunken sleep, Reb Yosef closed his book and traveled quickly to the next village, where he immediately alerted Sarah's family to the situation at hand.

"Rabbi Yosef," Sarah's father cried, "what shall we do? They are perfectly capable of carrying her off by force."

"Sarah must get married immediately. There is no time to wait," said Rabbi Yosef.

"But with whom will she go to the *chupah*? There is not one Jewish man of marriageable age in this village," the innkeeper lamented.

"In that case, there is myself," the teacher said. "I am not young man, I am a widower, and Sarah deserves someone worthier. But I am prepared to be the groom. Of course, once the danger has passed, we will go to the rabbinical court in Kovno and arrange for a proper divorce."

The innkeeper hesitated, but Sarah herself immediately accepted the plan. "Rabbi Yosef is risking his very life for our sake," she said. "But there is no other way. We have no time to lose."

That very night, a quorum of Jews was hastily assembled, and a *chupah* set up for the strangest marriage in the memory of the village: the white-bearded *melamed* with the innkeeper's beautiful young daughter.

When the young squire and his companions rode into the inn, they were amazed to find that they had arrived right in the middle of the wedding feast.

"What welcome guests!" the innkeeper called to the new arrivals. The young squire was flabbergasted. He had come too late; Sarah was already married. He and his friends quickly made their exit.

Rabbi Yosef stood up. "My friends," he said, "we must be truly grateful to the One Above for this wonderful salvation. We celebrated this wedding to save Sarah from a calamity. Now that the danger has passed, I am ready to arrange for a divorce, so that Sarah is free to marry the man of her choice."

The innkeeper once again thanked Rabbi Yosef for his selflessness, and thanked the guests for their cooperation. "Well, my daughter, remove your bridal veil, for we are going to the rabbinical court," he said to Sarah.

"I am prepared to venture into town with my new husband, but not for a divorce," Sarah replied. "G-d has brought us together, and made us husband and wife. I am certain that this marriage was made in heaven. I could not have chosen a more devoted and loyal partner, who risked his life to save me from a fate worse than death..."

The following year, Rabbi Yosef and Sarah were blessed with a son whom they named Aryeh Leib. Leib's father did not live long to enjoy his young treasure and it was Sarah who brought up and educated the child. In adulthood he became famous as a great *tzaddik* and wonderworker, and was known as Rabbi Leib Sarah's, so called in honor of his pious mother Sarah. Rabbi Leib would often tell the story of his parents' marriage, citing his mother as an example of a Jew's ability to withstand the most difficult of tests and to make great sacrifices for his faith.

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CANDLE LIGHTING: 20 NOVEMBER 2015



BEGINS	ENDS
7.56MELBOURNE	9.00
7.45ADELAIDE	8.47
6.02BRISBANE	6.59
6.36DARWIN	7.28
6.02GOLD COAST	6.59
6.40PERTH	7.39
7.22SYDNEY	8.23
7.34CANBERRA	8.36
7.57LAUNCESTON	9.05
7.55AUCKLAND	8.58
8.06WELLINGTON	9.14
8.01HOBART	9.10
7.02BYRON BAY	8.00

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD
PARSHAS VAYEITZEI • 8 KISLEV • 20 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7.56 PM	
	MINCHA:	8.05 PM	
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8.35 PM	
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM	
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.30 AM	
	MINCHA:	7.55 PM	
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9.00 PM	
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS	SUN-FRI:	8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:		8.05 PM
	MAARIV:		8.55 PM