

# LAMPLIGHTER

2 Kislev  
Parshas Toldos  
**1272**  
2 December  
5777/2016

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Toldot, we read of our Matriarch Rebecca's barrenness; the subsequent birth of her and Isaac's twin sons, Esau and Jacob; the twins' growth into adulthood; and the blessing of the firstborn which Isaac bestows upon Jacob.

Isaac became blind in his old age, as it states in this week's portion: "And it came to pass, when Isaac was old, and his eyes were too dim to see." Isaac remained sightless for many years, unable to even leave his home because of his infirmity. One explanation offered by Rashi (the foremost Torah commentator) for Isaac's blindness is that he lost his sight "so that Jacob could receive the blessings."

Isaac did not know that his son Esau was an evil person; thus when he grew old he wanted to bless him. G-d, however, knew that Esau was unworthy and that the blessings should go to Jacob. What did He do? He caused Isaac to become blind, allowing Jacob to come to him in stealth and receive the blessings that were intended for Esau. Had Isaac been sighted he would have been able to distinguish between his sons, and Esau would have ended up the recipient of his blessings.

A question is raised: Why was it necessary for Isaac to suffer for so many years just to ensure that Jacob received the blessings? Couldn't G-d have arranged for Jacob to receive the blessings in another manner? Indeed, Isaac knew that Esau was not as virtuous as his brother; he realized that "the name of heaven" was not usually on Esau's lips. Surely G-d could have simply told him that Esau was an evil person; Jacob could then have received the blessings without Isaac's becoming blind. Why didn't G-d simply reveal the truth to Isaac?

The answer has to do with G-d's reluctance to speak lashon hara (slander), even against as evil an individual as Esau. Despite the fact that Esau was evil, G-d refrained from saying so outright. The Torah thus emphasizes the degree to which we must avoid committing this transgression.

If G-d could restrain Himself from speaking lashon hara against Esau, how much more so must we be careful to avoid speaking lashon hara about any Jew! For every Jew, in his heart of hearts, is good.

By emulating G-d's ways and being careful in what we say, we fulfill the mitzva (commandment) of safeguarding our tongue.

## The True Heir

*By Naftali Silberberg*

When Jacob outsmarted Esau and received his father Isaac's blessings, Esau was outraged. "He cried out a great and bitter cry, and he said to his father, 'Bless me too, O my father!'... And Esau raised his voice and wept." Esau had been anticipating these blessings for many years, and for decades long Esau had feigned religious observance because he wanted his father to believe that he was worthy of these blessings. He was utterly devastated when he realized that he, the on-the-ball, worldly hunter, had been outwitted by his religious "goody-goody" brother.

It is remarkable that this person who was a murderer, rapist and glutton was so eager to receive the blessing of a tzaddik (righteous person). Esau wasn't out for a large inheritance; after all, Isaac was an elderly, blind person who had nothing to offer other than his blessings. Rather, as someone who was raised in the households of Abraham and Isaac, he was well aware of the value of a tzaddik's blessing. Esau was a Jew who was born to a Jewish mother, and therefore possessed a Jewish soul which imbued him with a strong belief in G-d and the super-natural. His "Jewish heart," however, did not manifest itself in his immoral lifestyle, which was contrary to all he had learned in his father's home. He knew what was right, but was unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices to live an ethical, spiritual life.

The Divine plan determined that Jacob, not Esau, receive the blessings. For Jacob was a Jew not only at heart, but in practice as well. With faith alone we cannot accomplish the mission of revealing G-dliness in this world, and transforming ourselves and the world around us into a Divine abode. Only through actually practicing Torah and mitzvot can this goal be achieved.

In microcosm, many can relate to Esau's dilemma. Most people know what is proper, but oftentimes lack the strength and willpower to implement that which is proper into their daily lives. We must always remember that only the practice of Torah and mitzvot makes us a worthy receptacle for Divine blessings. Faith isn't a product of our labor; it naturally exists within every Jew due to our G-dly soul which was instilled within us. Blessings must be earned. Only the hard work of applying the faith in everyday life makes a person worthy of all of G-d's blessings.

# Slice of LIFE

## A Barn and a Dream

by Rabbi Raphael Jaworowski

According to his own description, Mr. Abe G. is not a very spiritual person. Although he was raised in an Orthodox home, as the years passed he steadily moved away from religious observance.

As an adult, Abe immerses himself in business and science, does not trust emotions, and meets any suggestion of the "supernatural" with the utmost skepticism. While he and his wife identify as Jews and attend family functions, they do not allocate any regular time, effort or funds to Jewish study or practice.

Naturally then, when Abe's family purchased a new (second) home in the countryside, they did not entertain any thoughts of affixing mezuzahs to the door posts. But the mystifying events that unfolded less than a month ago gave Abe and his wife a new perspective on religion in general and on the mitzva (commandment) of mezuzah in particular.

As Abe relates, one of the items on his "to-do" list was to spray insecticide on a beehive that was nestled up high in the eaves of the new home's barn. Unfortunately, this task required Abe to climb onto the rotting wooden boards of the barn's unsafe second-story deck. Despite planning and executing his movements with great caution, Abe's first step out of the barn's second floor onto the deck was met with the sound of horrible groaning, creaking, and shrieking. With his entire weight resting on the ailing structure, Abe was horrified to see the deck's rotten wood and tortured metal inexorably twisting and tearing further and further away from the barn's support wall.

"This is it," Abe thought. In another moment the deck, with him on it, would crash to the ground, resulting in untold pain, injury, or even death, G-d forbid. But as the entire deck disengaged

completely from the wall and began to plummet towards the ground below, its precipitous plunge was abruptly and inexplicably interrupted.

Instinctively, Abe launched himself backwards, and somehow managed to scramble safely (if rather ungracefully) inside the barn's second floor doorway. After counting his limbs and collecting his wits, Abe safely exited the barn. Looking 15 feet up towards the sky, he was astounded to see that the source of his highly improbable salvation was an open chain-link gate that had gotten in the way of the deck's fall. The incredible spectacle of the gate's flimsy metal hinges and top bar propping up the imposing weight of a huge wooden deck (measuring 50 x 20 feet!) was simply astonishing.

But Abe's sense of wonderment was compounded even further as he realized how unusual it was for the gate to be in its current open position at all, as the section of land behind the gate was hardly ever used. But as marvelous as it was, Abe's story was not at all complete.

After suffering a very near-miss, Abe and his wife were pleased to be able to return to their old home that evening, sad about losing a deck but extremely thankful to remain intact in life and limb. They tried to have as normal an evening as possible, walking the dogs, eating dinner, and preparing for work the next day. Now that the events of the day were behind them, life would go on as normal - or so they thought.

That night however, Abe had a very vivid and memorable dream, in which he envisioned himself hanging mezuzahs in his home. The dream was completely unexpected, and impacted him greatly. "I can't explain it," Abe says. "Of course, I remember mezuzahs from my childhood. And I still see them on occasion when visiting my mother's home or attending the synagogue for a wedding or bar-mitzvah. But I had not recently read, heard, or spoken about mezuzahs. Prior to this dream I cannot even recall the last conscious thought I gave to the topic of mezuzahs or their somewhat

mysterious reputation for protecting a home and its occupants. Yet, after all this time, and following a near-catastrophic experience with our new home, that very evening I dreamed of mezuzahs."

By nature, Abe is a skeptic, and certainly doesn't believe in dream interpretation. In this case however, no interpretation was needed. There he was, hanging mezuzas in his home; plain as day, albeit while sleeping at night. Following his brush with disaster and subsequent dream, Abe decided that the time had come to affix mezuzahs to his homes. But he knew that if he was going to take the plunge for mezuzahs, he wanted them to be kosher.

After searching the internet he discovered the Chicago Mitzvah Campaign and called Rabbi Aron Wolf, the organization's founder and director. Although the rabbi promised to bring Abe enough mezuzas for his two homes the very next day, Abe felt that his newfound spiritual awakening was pushing him to do something Jewish even more immediately. He right away searched for and put on his tefillin, which had previously lain dormant in a closet for two decades.

While he has chosen to share his story with the public, Abe does not claim to have made any conclusive judgments. "I have no explanation for what happened," he says. "I have no ulterior motives, and I have no desire to convert you to any belief. And although I assure you that I relay my story without exaggeration, frankly I sometimes find it hard to believe myself."

Nevertheless, Abe's new inspiration has driven him to take further steps in his relationship with Judaism. Nowadays, he keeps his tefillin out on top of his desk, and remembers to put them on periodically. And when he goes out of town, he takes along a special "religious bag" containing a kippah and tefillin, a prayer book and a Tanach (Bible).

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

Editors: Shlomo Chaim Kesselman and Mendel Bacher

P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: [lampighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au](mailto:lampighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au)

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

ISSUE 1272

## SOUL COFFEE

How can we heal the world? By being one.

What does it mean to be one?

If, wherever you go, you carry there every other Jew in your heart, then all of us are one.

And when we are one, all the peoples of the world can live in harmony as one.

And then the world is healed. For we are the heart of the world.



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

## When Tragedy Strikes while Performing a Mitzvah

The following is a free translation of a letter by the Rebbe to someone who wrote him regarding a tragic event which occurred in his, the correspondent's, home. This person had invited members of his community to a festive meal in his home on Shavuot, to celebrate the completion of a Torah scroll which was scheduled to be presented to the synagogue in the days following the festival. In the course of the celebration, a young woman suddenly fell ill and died. The distraught host wrote the Rebbe, posing the following questions:

How can it be that a mitzvah such as the writing of a Torah scroll should be the cause of such a tragedy?

The Rebbe's response stresses are the Rebbe's:

- (1) It is impossible for man, a finite creature, to comprehend all the reasons of the infinite Creator. Indeed, we'd have no way of knowing even some of G-d's reasons, were it not for the fact that G-d Himself told us to seek them out in His holy Torah (Torah meaning "instruction").
- (2) According to the Torah, it cannot be that anything negative should result from any of G-d's mitzvot (including your Torah scroll); on the contrary, these protect against evil and prevent it.
- (3) Each and every individual has been granted a set amount of years of life on earth. (It is only in extreme cases that one's deeds can lengthen it or shorten it (with some terrible sin, etc., G-d forbid.))
- (4) Based on (1), (2) and (3) above, one can perhaps venture to say that had the departed one (peace be to her) not been invited to the Sefer Torah celebration, she would have found herself, at the onset of her attack, in completely different surroundings: on the street, in the company of non-Jews or, in any case, of strangers; without the presence of a doctor who is both a friend and a religious Jew; without hearing, in her final moments, words of encouragement and seeing the faces of friends and fellow Jews. Can one imagine: a. the difference between the two possibilities?; b. what a person experiences in each second of her final moments, especially a young, religious woman on the festival in which we celebrate and re-experience our receiving the Torah from the Almighty?!

## QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

### What is the significance of 613?

**Question:** Does 613, the number of commandments G-d gave the Jews, have any symbolic meaning?

**Answer:** G-d's commandments are divided into 248 positive precepts and 365 prohibitions. According to our sages, the human body is divided into 248 organs and 365 sinews. Our sages teach that the 248 limbs correspond to the 248 positive precepts, and the 365 sinews correspond to the 365 prohibitions. Each commandment pairs up with a specific limb or sinew, and just as we take care of our physical limbs and sinews, we also need to take care of our spiritual "limbs and sinews."

In the Talmud, Rabbi Simlai says that the 365 prohibitions represent the 365 days in a solar year's cycle. The famed commentary of Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, known as Rashi, explains that the 365 days of the year should bring vigilance in fulfilling G-d's 365 prohibitions.

The book of Isaiah quotes G-d as saying, "I made the earth, and created man upon it." The numeric value of the Hebrew word "created" (בראתי—barati) is 613. The sixth Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, of righteous memory, explained that the very purpose for which G-d "made the earth and created man" is to fulfill His 613 commandments.

While the biblical commandments number 613, there are in fact an additional 7 rabbinical commandments. The Kabbalists explain that the Hebrew word for crown (keter—כתר) has the numeric value of 620, the sum of the biblical and rabbinical commandments.

## A WORD

from the Director

*This week (on Thursday, 1 December) we began the new month of Kislev, the third month of the Jewish calendar. Is there a special connection between the beginning of the new month ("Rosh Chodesh") and specifically this month of Kislev?*

*In a talk, the Lubavitcher Rebbe pointed out a unique connection. Rosh Chodesh represents the renewal of the moon. This renewal does not occur unearned, but comes about through its previously carried out service of self-diminution.*

*As the Rebbe explained, this is alluded to in our Sages' statement that G-d told the moon, "Go and make yourself small." Why did G-d have to say "Go," rather than just "Make yourself small"? To emphasize that in order to "go," to make genuine progress and rise to a level that is completely above those already achieved, it is necessary to "make yourself small."*

*This same idea is alluded to in the book of Samuel: "Tomorrow is the new moon, and you shall be taken notice of because your seat will be empty." This implies that the path to receiving "special attention" is self-diminution, "making one's place empty." Symbolically, this corresponds to the service of the soul in the physical world. Although the process itself involves descent and self-diminution, it ultimately generates the potential for the soul to reach previously unattainable heights, had the soul remained on the spiritual level.*

*Moreover, the name Kislev represents a fusion of opposites. "Kis" refers to a state of concealment, whereas "lev" (lamed-vav) is symbolic of the ultimate in revelation. (Lamed-vav, numerically equivalent to 36, six times six, represents the highest level of revelation of our six emotional powers.)*

*Kislev is also called "the month of redemption." May the coming month truly be a time of thanksgiving and redemption for the entire Jewish people, with the coming of Moshiach and the Final Redemption.*

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED



At his grandson's circumcision celebration, the great Chasidic master, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740-1810), recounted the following episode:

"This morning I arose very early to prepare myself to perform the brit mila (circumcision) of my dear grandchild. At daybreak I opened the window and saw a penetrating darkness in the heavens. As I wondered about the blackness before my eyes, it was made known to me that this very day a prince of Israel, the holy Tzaddik (righteous person), Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Leib Sassov, had passed away.

"As I mourned for that master of Israel, I heard a voice cry out: 'Make way for Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Leib!'

"When Rabbi Moshe entered the celestial realms, the Tzaddikim and Chasidim formed a joyous circle around him. Suddenly, he heard a voice reaching from one end of the world to the other. Intrigued, he began following it until he found himself at the gates of Gehinnom (Purgatory).

"Without waiting for permission, Rabbi Moshe entered Gehinnom. The guards saw him walking back and forth as if looking for somebody. They were certain that he had come there by mistake and they politely asked him to ascend to his proper place in Gan Eden (the Garden of Eden).

"Rabbi Moshe said nothing. The guards repeated their request, but he remained silent and did not move. They didn't know whether to drive him out or permit him to remain. They decided to confer with the Heavenly Court, but even it was puzzled. Never had a Tzadik descended into Gehinnom of his own desire. Rabbi Moshe was summoned before the Throne of Glory where he made his request known.

"Rabbi Moshe began, 'Master of the World, You know how great is the mitzva (commandment) of redeeming captives. I have occupied myself with this mitzva my entire life, and I have never differentiated between wicked captives and righteous captives. All were equally beloved by me, and I had no peace until I had succeeded in freeing them. Now that I have entered the World of Truth, I find that there are many captives here, too. I wish to fulfill this mitzva here, as well.

'I will not leave Gehinnom until I have fulfilled this mitzva. So dear are Your commandments to me that I have observed them no matter what the place or time or penalty might be. If I cannot bring these wretched souls to freedom, I would rather remain with them in the fires of Gehinnom than to sit with the righteous and bask in the light of the Divine Presence!'

"Rabbi Moshe's words flew before the Throne of Glory, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, uttered the decision: 'Great are the Tzaddikim who are ready to relinquish their share in the Gan Eden for the sake of others. Because this mitzva is so noble, let it be calculated how many people Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Leib redeemed during his lifetime, both they and their children, and their children's children until the end of time. That number he

may redeem here, also.'

"The Book of Records was immediately brought, opened and read. The names of all those who had been redeemed by Rabbi Moshe were counted and their children and their children's children. The final figure arrived at was 60,000 souls from Gehinnom to Gan Eden.

"Rabbi Moshe began to walk through Gehinnom, looking into countless pits and caves where he found souls who had suffered for a long time. One by one he gathered them and when he was finished, he found their number to be exactly 60,000. Column after column emerged from Gehinnom, marching with them at their head, until they arrived at Gan Eden.

"When all 60,000 souls had entered, the gates were closed."

After recounting this story, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak named his little grandson Moshe Yehuda Leib and blessed him to grow up to emulate the holy Tzaddik, Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Leib of Sassov.

# Thoughts THAT COUNT

**And he called his name Jacob (Gen. 25:26)**

When Jacob was born, the singular verb "he called" is used; by Esau's birth, the Torah states, "and they called his name Esau." This alludes to the fact that the paths of evil are many, but there is only one truth in the world - the truth of Torah. Throughout his life Esau was surrounded by many sympathizers and friends. Jacob, however, was supported only by the tiny number of rare individuals who appreciated his worth.

*(Kli Yakar)*

**And his hand was holding onto Esau's heel (Gen. 25:26)**

The Hebrew word for "heel" - ekev - is related to the word "ikveta" - literally "footsteps," the End of Days, when the "footsteps" of Moshiach will usher in the Era of Redemption. At that time, the verse, "and his hand was holding onto Esau's heel" will find its ultimate fulfillment, and the final victory will belong to the Jewish people.

*(Asefat Chachamim)*

Esau, symbolic of the animal soul and the evil inclination, was born first, as chronologically, a person possesses an evil inclination for a long time before he has a good one. (The good inclination is acquired upon Bar/Bat Mitzva.) Jacob symbolizes the Jew's G-dly soul and his good inclination. The Divine service of Jacob thus consists of keeping his hand on Esau's "heel," as the true reason the G-dly soul descends into this world is to achieve the correction of the animal soul.

*(Likutei Sichot)*

**He moved on from there and dug another well, and they did not fight over it. He called it Rechovot (lit. "spacious") saying, "Now G-d has made room for us" (Gen. 26:22)**

The three wells Isaac dug are symbolic of the three Holy Temples. These are the wells of "living waters" which give us our spiritual life. The first well Isaac dug proved to be a source of strife, just as the first Temple was destroyed in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. The second Holy Temple, like Isaac's second well, was also eventually destroyed, by Titus and his armies. But the third well remained, just as the Third Holy Temple which we eagerly await, will be eternal.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 2-3 December	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	8:10	9:15
Adelaide	7:57	9:00
Brisbane	6:12	7:10
Darwin	6:43	7:35
Gold Coast	6:12	7:10
Perth	6:51	7:52
Sydney	7:34	8:36
Canberra	7:46	8:49
Launceston	8:12	9:21
Auckland	8:08	9:12
Wellington	8:21	9:30
Hobart	8:16	9:27
Byron Bay	7:12	8:11

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS TOLDOS • 2 KISLEV • 2 DECEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8.10 PM
	MINCHA:	8.15 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8.45 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.28 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	8.05 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9.15 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	8.20 PM
	MAARIV:	9.05 PM