

LAMPLIGHTER

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Parshas Vayeitzei
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Vayeitzei, we read about Jacob's departure from the Land of Israel for Charan and his subsequent dealings with Laban.

The first thing the Torah tells us is that "he reached a certain place," i.e., Jacob prayed. We then learn that Jacob worked for Laban for 20 years, married, and fathered the Twelve Tribes. Then, on his way back to Israel, Jacob was met by "angels of G-d."

The Torah is not a book of stories. The word Torah is derived from hora'a, Hebrew for teaching, as the events that the Torah relates are a guide for us to apply in our daily lives.

Just as Jacob left the sanctity of the Land of Israel and his Torah studies to go to Charan at G-d's command, so too is every Jew enjoined to go out into the world and involve himself with "Laban the Aramaean."

A Jew must never isolate himself within the "four cubits of Torah study," but must leave "the Land of Israel" - his preoccupation with G-dliness and holiness - to travel to even the lowest places on earth in order to draw his fellow Jews closer to G-d and to mitzvot (commandments). And, like Jacob, the Jew must always conduct himself like a tzadik (righteous person), even in "Charan," the most trying and difficult of circumstances.

The first thing Jacob did upon leaving the Holy Land was "vayifga bamakom - and he reached a certain place." Jacob actively sought out Hamakom (referring to G-d), and was indeed rewarded with a revelation of G-dliness that came to him in a dream.

Years later, however, when Jacob left Charan to return to Israel, there was no need for him to seek G-d out, for "he was met there by angels of G-d." After 20 years of G-dly service in Charan Jacob did not have to initiate the search; the angels and G-d Himself came to him! Indeed, Jacob merited an even higher revelation of G-dliness, one that occurred while he was awake and not while dreaming. When a Jew goes out toward "Charan," spreading Judaism and drawing his fellow Jews nearer to G-d, his departure from the rarefied world of G-dliness and holiness is not a descent, but in actuality, constitutes a very great ascent. In Charan, Jacob merited both physical and spiritual success, as it states, "And the man increased exceedingly."

When a Jew is "in the Land of Israel" - involved in his own spiritual perfection to the exclusion of others, no matter how great his achievements he can never attain the level that is reached through the service in "Charan." For it is only when he goes out into the world to draw his fellow Jews closer to G-d that he merits a much higher degree of both material and spiritual success.

Joining Worlds

By Tali Lowenthal

The dream of the ladder in our Parshah is something that has captivated people's imaginations for thousands of years. Jacob, the ancestor of the Jewish people, was on a journey going far away from home. The sun set, and he lay down and slept, dreaming of a ladder reaching from earth to heaven.

The basic perspective of Judaism is that "earth," meaning practical, physical life in all its detail, and "heaven," spirituality and holiness, are closely connected.

In every area of activity, we have the opportunity to express this connection. The physical details of Jewish law provide guidance how to achieve this.

For example, the Zohar tells us that the ladder in Jacob's dream represents prayer. Like the ladder, prayer reaches from earth to heaven. It is the means for every individual person to connect with G-d.

The prayer service has different sections. In the morning service there is the preliminary part of the prayers, then the Shema, then the Amidah. These are different stages, similar to the rungs of a ladder. During the service the person is climbing higher and higher, reaching ever closer to G-d. The highest stage is the Amidah prayer, in which you stand in the immediate presence of G-d, as in the throne room, and you speak directly to Him.

Following this interpretation, the angels going up the ladder in Jacob's dream represent the words of prayer. The words coming from our mouths and our hearts rise up to G-d. They carry with them a little bit of the radiance of our soul: our feelings of love and dedication.

The angels coming down the ladder are the messengers from G-d carrying divine blessing to the person who is praying, to his or her family, to the community, to the Jewish people and to the entire world.

After having the dream of the ladder, Jacob made a declaration establishing the bond between another version of these two worlds. One world is that of his own personal material success. The other is holiness. How can these two be joined?

Jacob said to G-d, ". . . of whatever You give me, I will give a tenth to You" (Genesis 28:22). By giving a proportion of his income to charity, Jacob was ensuring that all his wealth was tinged with holiness—because every hundred pieces of silver he earned meant that an extra ten pieces of silver would be used for a sacred purpose. Thus, two worlds are joined, the material and the holy, like earth and heaven.

Through the ages, Jews have tried to follow Jacob's example, giving a tenth of their income to charity. This practice has been a vital factor in the preservation of the Jewish ideal, learnt from Jacob's dream: to seek in every aspect of life, whether in prayer or at work in the office, to join earth and heaven.

Slice of LIFE

The Big Freeze

by Dovid Shmuel ben Michael

I am a managing attorney at a small boutique law firm of nine lawyers. While the firm has a good group of clients, close to 90% of my income is from one large Fortune 100 corporate client. As the relationship with this client grew, and as they started giving the firm more work, we moved from a traditional hourly fee to an alternative fee. This arrangement provided the client with steep discounted rates, but also encouraged the client to give us more and more work. With the increase in work, my income also increased.

When I started working with this client, my family and I were living in a very small three-bedroom apartment. As my income grew, we decided to move to a larger house in a Jewish neighborhood outside the city. In order to check out the neighborhood, we began by renting the main floor of a large ranch house.

There was a single young man already renting the basement of this house, which was as large as the main floor. When we moved in, I was very careful about the mitzvah (commandment) of mezuzah. In the part of the house that we were renting, I made sure to affix mezuzas on all doorways that required mezuzahs. I did not touch the mezuzahs that were in the basement nor the side entrance of the house. We all used the side entrance, but technically, it was really an entrance into the basement residence.

After some time, my family agreed that we liked the neighborhood and the synagogues close by, so we purchased the house. While our legal relationship to the house changed, nothing else did. The single guy continued to live downstairs, and we lived upstairs.

A few months after we bought the house, the tenant moved out and left many belongings in the basement, saying that he would come back for them. Since we never used the

basement anyway, we allowed him to do so.

About nine months later, in early Autumn, there was a heavy snowstorm. Since the leaves were still on the trees, the weight of the snow pulled down thousands of branches onto the area's power lines. We lost electricity for about six days. During these days it was also freezing cold. While the temperature in the main floor of the house dropped into the thirties and forties, the basement remained a "toasty" 63 degrees.

We decided to move into the basement to sleep, and also to keep warm there during the day, until the power came back on. In order to do this, I moved the previous tenant's belongings into an alcove. We carried down some of our bedding, arranged a table and chairs, and soon made the space our own. Thankfully, the power came back on just before Shabbat, so we quickly moved our stuff back upstairs and put the ordeal out of our minds. The kids continued to use the basement as a playroom from time to time.

Shortly after these events, my main client called me into a meeting. As a response to recessionary pressures in 2011, they were cutting their legal budget. They especially wanted to cut their cost with respect to local legal services - 50% of those being my services. They proposed to bring me in-house. Generally, a move in-house is a good thing, and I was happy that they wanted me. However, I was stunned that the salary they were offering me was about half of what I was making.

I have always been careful about the mitzva of calculating and giving 10% of my earnings to charity. I had just had my tefillin checked during the month of Elul. What did G-d want from me in this situation?

I called several rabbis with whom I am close. I also began to discuss the situation with my contacts in the client's office, quietly lobbying for a higher salary. In the meantime, one of my rabbis suggested that I check my mezuzahs.

"But how could that be the problem?" I thought. "I have always been careful with my mezuzas. When

we moved into our house, we put up only the best!" It was then that I realized I had never checked the mezuzas in the basement.

I took down all of the mezuzahs from the basement and arranged for them to be checked by a certified scribe. Several were completely not kosher, the rest were questionable, and some of them had not been affixed correctly.

"Oy!" I cried, "How could I have been so foolish?" As soon as I could arrange it, a scribe wrote several new mezuzas and corrected the ones that could be corrected. I affixed the new ones in the basement and then had the ones on the main floor checked, as well as reviewing their proper positioning on the doorposts.

Up until this time, my negotiations for a higher salary had been failing - the client had been unwilling to raise his offer. I had considered turning him down and turning my efforts toward getting other clients. A short time later, however, I heard in a roundabout way that the company had instituted a hiring freeze. Unexpectedly, the arrangement with my law firm would stay the same, at least until they had another round of budget cuts. I was able to stay at the income that had enabled us to purchase the house.

In retrospect, it's not surprising that they wanted to cut my income by 50%, when the special blessing that mezuzas bring was missing from half my house. What's really amazing, though, is that the absence of proper mezuzas in the basement didn't have any effect on the blessing in the home when we bought the house, or even when the tenant moved out. It only was felt when we began using the basement in a manner that effectuates "taking possession" according to Jewish law.

Halachic Note: It is a tenant's, and not the owner's, obligation to affix his or her mezuzas and to regularly check them. Also, if one moves out, and he knows that another Jewish tenant is moving in, he may not remove his mezuzahs.

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ISSUE 1273

SOUL COFFEE

When man and woman were first formed, they were a single being.
And then G-d divided them apart, so that they could achieve a higher union.
Why is it higher?
Because now it is through their own effort.
That is true oneness: When two choose to be one.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Results of Suicide

With regard to the question of Gehinnom and how it affects sinners in general, and suicides in particular, you can well imagine that this is a subject about which I do not encourage discussion, especially in the case of a young man whose whole life is ahead of him and who has to utilize the years which G-d bestows upon him, and utilize them with energy and joy and complete trust in G-d. Thus, this and similar morbid topics are not conducive to the proper attitude and activity which should fill one's life. However, in order not to leave your question altogether unanswered, let me say briefly this. Besides the fact that one who takes his own life has no share in the world to come, and this is a result which few transgressions bring about, there is the added consideration that there is no escape from G-d, and, as it is written, **אם אסק הנך** [If I ascend to the heavens, there You are, and if I make my bed in the grave, behold, You are there]. Therefore, one who takes his own life in the hope of avoiding suffering, actually adds to his woes in that in addition to having to go through all the things which he had hoped to escape, he has to suffer also the consequence of having tried to escape his duties and obligations, etc. However, the main point is, as mentioned above, this is not a topic to be delved in, but one should be totally immersed in the Torah, which is called *Toras Chaim*, the Law of Life, and the *Mitzvos* whereby Jews live, and to do one's utmost to spread the light and life of the Torah and *Mitzvos* in the environment at large.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

How can I be Happy?

Question: *I know that a Jew is supposed to always be joyous, but when I look at myself and my life I see no good reason to be happy. On the contrary, I have plenty of reasons to be miserable. Am I supposed to be able to just switch on happiness at will?*

Answer: Yes, we face some heavy challenges in life, and feelings of despair are understandable. But we can turn our situation around. Happiness is never beyond our reach.

That's because happiness is the natural human state. Just look at a young child. Children don't need to learn strategies for positive living, and they don't need a reason to be happy. They need a reason to be sad. If a child cries, we ask, "What's wrong?" If a child laughs and plays and dances around the room, we don't ask, "What's the big celebration about? Why are you happy?" A child is happy by default; if they aren't happy there must be a reason, like they need to be changed, they are hungry or thirsty or tired, or need attention, or just had a *Bris*. But as long as nothing's wrong, a child is happy for no reason at all.

Somewhere along the line things change. We grow older and become more demanding, harder to please, and we lose this childish contentment. As we become jaded by life's disappointments, we feel that we need a reason to be happy. If you see an adult walking around with a big smile, you ask, "What's wrong with you, why are you smiling?"

The difference is, a child is not self-conscious. They are free to be happy because they are not yet aware of themselves. It is only when we mature and become more self-aware that we also become more self-absorbed. We have worries and concerns, unfulfilled desires and unrealized dreams. None of us can honestly say we have it all, and we can always find reason to be upset. But a child isn't bothered by what he is "missing," so he does have it all. The child's lack of self-consciousness leaves her free to enjoy life and be happy.

The more we are concerned with our own happiness, the farther we are away from achieving it. As soon as we forget about what we need and instead focus on what we are needed for--the good we can do for others rather than the good we can get for ourselves--our childlike joy comes flowing back and we are happy.

A WORD

from the Director

The 14th of the month of Kislev is the wedding anniversary of the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka. Their wedding took place in Warsaw, Poland. However, the Rebbe's parents, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson were not in attendance, as the Russian government did not permit them to travel to Poland for their eldest son's wedding. They, however, prepared a celebration and wedding feast in their town of Dnepropetrovsk, which was attended by many in the Jewish community.

Before the chupah, the Previous Rebbe delivered an intricate Chasidic discourse. He began the discourse by explaining why he had woven teachings of all the previous Rebbes into his discourse. He said: "It is well-known that at the time of a wedding celebration, the souls of ancestors of the couple from three generations back come from the World of Truth to attend the simcha. There are times, however, when ancestors from generations even further back come. As a way of inviting the souls of the righteous ancestors of our holy Rebbes, so that they should come to the chupah to bless the young couple, we will say a Chasidic discourse which contains a Torah thought from the Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the first Chabad Rebbe]; from the Mitteler Rebbe [Rabbi Dovber]; from my great-grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek; from my grandfather - the great-grandfather of the bride - the Rebbe Maharash; from the great-great-grandfather of the groom; from the great-great-grandfather of the bride; and my father [the Rebbe Rashab]..."

The Rebbe proceeded to deliver the Chasidic discourse entitled, "Come my Beloved to greet the bride."

May we very soon merit the ultimate wedding of G-d and the Jewish people, at which time, we will hear the Torah thoughts of our ancestors and great Sages of previous generations not through others, but they themselves will teach us!

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED



Friday 9 Kislev (9 December) is the Yartzeit, anniversary of the passing of Rabbi Dov Ber, the Second Chabad Rebbe, son of Rabbi Shneur Zalman. We present here the story of his passing:

The journey of Rabbi Dov Ber, the second Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch (known as the Mittlerer Rebbe), to Haditch was unusually somber. On his way to pray at the grave of his father, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the Rebbe was not merely meditative, but reclusive. He not only refrained from delivering the accustomed Chasidic discourses for which his disciples thirsted, but he showed no desire to converse at all with those who formed his entourage. When he wished to commit some of his Torah thoughts to paper he was unable to do so, and he indicated to his close followers that he felt the approach of some impending harsh judgement from Above.

He even intimated that he felt his own end approaching. He related to his chasidim that at the time of the arrest and imprisonment of his father, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, two alternatives had been offered from Above: suffering or death. Rabbi Shneur Zalman had chosen suffering. "It seems that he left the other for me," concluded the somber Rabbi Dov Ber.

When the entourage arrived at Haditch the Rebbe prayed at great length at his father's grave. He also delivered a number of Chasidic discourses in the study hall which had been erected at the site. One day, after having prayed for many hours, the Rebbe appeared to his followers, his face beaming with happiness. "My father has given me his promise that they will release me from my position as Rebbe," he told them.

The Chasidim had long been aware of the Rebbe's desire to journey to the Land of Israel, and they understood his words to mean that he had finally decided to make the journey. "Rebbe," they cried out, "how can you leave us like that, like sheep without a shepherd?" But the Rebbe just turned to them and said, "Don't worry, you will have my son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, and he will be a faithful leader for you."

When the visit ended, the party began the homeward journey, passing through the town of Niezhin. But upon his arrival, the Rebbe fell ill and was unable to continue travelling. The most experienced physicians that could be found were called in, but none could cure the Rebbe.

They ordered complete bed-rest, and even proscribed the Rebbe from delivering his customary talks to his chasidim. This advice was the most bitter for the Rebbe. For the very essence of a Rebbe is to give of himself to his Chasidim. The relationship between Rebbe and chasid is a symbiotic one in which both benefit physically as well as spiritually.

His condition deteriorated steadily, until he finally lapsed into unconsciousness, evincing no apparent life force. The doctors were at a loss, when one of them said to another, "Do you want to see something very strange? If we permit the Rebbe to deliver a discourse to his followers, you will see him regain his vitality."

The scene which followed was truly amazing, as the Rebbe, fully vibrant, sat in his bed and spoke to the Chasidim who crowded the house to hear his words. In the course of the talk, the Rebbe said, "Now I will tell you secrets of the Torah which have never been revealed." But just as he was about to continue, a chasid leaning forward on a bench behind the Rebbe fell. The tumult interrupted the Rebbe's thoughts and he remarked, "It seems that Heaven doesn't wish these things to be revealed."

The Rebbe's condition worsened on the night of the ninth of Kislev to the point that he could not be revived. People flocked to the house to be near the Rebbe. Suddenly the Rebbe sat up in bed, smiling and said, "I heard a voice saying, 'What need has a soul like this for this world?'"

The Rebbe requested that he be dressed in white garments. And then, for the first time since he had been so ill, he delivered a discourse in which he praised the Jewish people for doing mitzvot (commandments) with such devotion. He bade his family and Chasidim to be joyful, for joy breaks through all boundaries and bitterness. Then he continued revealing deep Chasidic philosophy. All those present were overjoyed to see that their Rebbe appeared to have recovered his strength.

The Rebbe then turned to one of his disciples and told him, "While I am speaking, watch out that I don't fall asleep. If I do, just touch me with your hand and I will wake up."

He continued delivering his discourse in a greatly heightened mental state, asking several times whether it was yet dawn. He expounded upon the words, "For with You is the source of life," and when he had finished saying the word "life" his soul left his body.

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CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 9-10 December	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	8:16	9:22
Adelaide	8:03	9:06
Brisbane	6:17	7:15
Darwin	6:46	7:40
Gold Coast	6:17	7:15
Perth	6:57	7:58
Sydney	7:40	8:42
Canberra	7:52	8:56
Launceston	8:19	9:29
Auckland	8:14	9:19
Wellington	8:28	9:37
Hobart	8:23	9:35
Byron Bay	7:18	8:16

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PARSHAS VAYEITZEI • 9 KISLEV • 9 DECEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8.16 PM
	MINCHA:	8.25 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8.50 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.30 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	8.10 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9.22 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	8.25 PM
	MAARIV:	9.10 PM