

# LAMPLIGHTER

6 Kislev  
Parshas  
Vayeitzei  
**1323**  
24 November  
5778/2017

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

## 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!

## The Pressure Principle

By Yossy Goldman

Do we need security and comfort to do well in life? Do we achieve more when we are relaxed and comfortable, or when we are challenged and provoked?

Jacob left Beer-Sheba and went to Charan (Genesis 28:10).

Beer-Sheba represented peace and tranquility. Charan stood for violence and immorality: it was the hub of tumult and turmoil, home of Laban, swindler and sheep-thief of note. Yet, ironically, it was there, in Charan, where Jacob raised his family, where the twelve tribes of Israel were founded.

Abraham had a wonderful son named Isaac, but he also fathered Ishmael. Isaac bore the pious Jacob, but also had a ruffian named Esau. Only Jacob is described as "select of the forefathers," because his children were all righteous: "his progeny was perfect."

Asks the Lubavitcher Rebbe: would not Beer-Sheba have made a better place for Jacob to have raised his children? Would not Beer-Sheba have been the ideal hothouse for the future Jewish people to be conceived and nurtured? Why, of all places, in Charan?

Says the Rebbe: the olive yields its best oil when pulverized. To produce gold, we need a fiery furnace where the intense heat on the raw metal leaves it purified and precious. Jacob did not have an easy life, but it made him a better man, and it made his children better children.

Many years ago, I met a young man who had just come out of military service in the South African army. I greeted him with the platitude, "So, Joe, did the army make you a man?" He said, "No, Rabbi, the army made me a Jew!" Apparently he had encountered more than a fair share of anti-Semitism in the military, and it actually strengthened his resolve to live a Jewish life. Today he is the proud father and grandfather of a lovely, committed Jewish family.

Life isn't always smooth sailing. But it appears that the Creator, in his vast eternal plan, intended for us to experience difficulties in life. Evidently, we grow from our discomfort and challenges, to emerge better, stronger, wiser and more productive people. There is always a purpose to pain. As our physiotherapists tell us (with such compassion that I want to hit them!), "No pain, no gain." It would seem that, like the olive, we too yield our very best when we are under pressure. (From personal experience—and my editor will confirm—I just can't get these sermonettes done until I see a deadline staring me in the face.) The simple fact is that we produce best under pressure.

One of the reasons we use a hard-boiled egg on the Seder plate on Passover is to remind us of the festival offering brought in the Holy Temple. But the truth is that any cooked food would do. So, why an egg?

One of my favorite answers is that Jews are like eggs. The more they boil us, the harder we get. We have been punished and persecuted through the centuries, but it has only strengthened us, given us courage, faith and hope. At every point in our history we have always emerged from the tzores (hardships) of the time stronger, more tenacious and more determined than ever.

Jacob raised a beautiful family in less than ideal conditions. Please G-d, we should emulate his example. Wherever we may be living and in whatever circumstances, may we rise to the challenge and live successful lives, and raise happy, healthy Jewish children who will build the future tribes of Israel.

# Slice of LIFE

## How I Overcame a Childhood of Bland Judaism

By Beryl Tritel

Growing up, I was used to sitting at home on Dec. 25, watching movies and feeling lonely because everyone I knew was celebrating with their family. I was used to Easter, hearing my friends talk about their new dresses and the Easter-egg hunts. Now, I knew that Chanukah and Passover fell out around those times, but these holidays were nothing more than a blip on my radar. Our definition of being Jewish just meant that we weren't anything else.

In my neighborhood, there weren't very many Jews around; I think there were two others in my high school class of 250. My family raised us to be "just like everyone else": to do well in school, get into a good college, get a job, get married and have kids. Now, I think those are pretty reasonable goals, and they can lead to a satisfying and fulfilling life. But we were missing something. When Sunday mornings or the holidays rolled around, our lack of plans made it pretty clear that we weren't like everyone else.

When I think of my life at that time, I imagine trying to fit into an outfit that, well, just didn't quite fit. The style is nice, even attractive. But either there is an annoying tag or the waistband is just a (wee) bit too tight (ahem). I could squeeze into the outfit, but I could never really get comfortable.

We didn't have a tree, nor did we hunt for eggs. But we didn't do

much of the "Jewish stuff" either. We went to temple on Rosh Hashanah until I had my bat mitzvah (then my parents stopped our temple membership—it just wasn't relevant anymore). We lit a menorah on Chanukah (a ritual that also petered out during my teenage years). We did have a seder—at a friend of my mother's—until sports practice and after-school clubs made going to a several-hours-long meal unfeasible.

So our Judaism wasn't defined by the beauty of being Jewish, but rather by what we weren't supposed to do. That left me with a deep feeling of dissatisfaction. I tried the idea of just "believing in G-d," and that was my spirituality. For a time.

When it came time to go to college, I chose a school that had a large Jewish population and a Jewish feel. I was entranced with the idea of going to a place where I wouldn't be "the other." There, I met people who really had a relationship with G-d. Felt His presence in their existence. Suddenly, Shabbat, kashrut and halachah (Jewish law) were no longer ancient relics from the days of my great-grandparents, but rather the basis for a real, living and breathing existence that I could have. If I wanted.

There were actually people who defined themselves as Jews, who defined themselves as who they were, rather than who they weren't. After soul-searching, questioning and observing, I realized that not only was G-d real, He was a force in my life. He cared about me, and my becoming religious was not just about serving Him, but improving myself.

So slowly, oh so slowly, I began

to change. Saturday became Shabbat, food became kosher. And I realized that there was meaning in the mundane. There was a connection to Someone who had high standards, and cared about us meeting them.

So I still do not hunt for eggs or buy a tree for my house. But rather, I prepare for Shabbat, make challah, keep kashrut and light my Shabbat candles on time (hopefully). I try to learn halachah, try to listen to Torah classes. Come the Hebrew month of Nissan, when I open my windows, I hear the sounds of vacuums whirring, water splashing and music blasting as my neighbors get busy with Passover cleaning. And I know that this is what I was meant to do.

Before, when I thought about being Jewish, it was merely a description, like my long eyelashes or brown hair. But as I learn and live my life as an observant Jewish woman, I see that it is so much more. It is who I am.

While it isn't always easy, I try to keep G-d in the forefront of my mind. When the good and the not-so-good happen, I remember that there is One who is in control.

Yes, I still struggle sometimes. Yes, there are times when I think that things would "certainly be easier if . . ." But then I think of the billions of people in the world, and all the different paths travelled by them. And that is when I feel truly blessed to have been chosen to be a Jew.

So yes, I still strive to be just like everyone else around me. But now, I surround myself with people like me. As the years have gone by, my waistband may have become elastic (cough) and my skirts longer, but now I am comfortable. The clothes fit.

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield in conjunction with the

Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

Editor: Shlomie Naparstek

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

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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

ISSUE 1323

### WEEKLY VIDEO



Please do not scan or access this QR code on Shabbat or Yom Tov.

Content printed with permission from

**Chabad.ORG**

The Official homepage for worldwide Chabad-Lubavitch movement that promotes Judaism and provides daily Torah lectures and Jewish insights



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

## An Entry Visa to Israel

5725

Mr. \_\_\_\_\_  
Hartford, Connecticut  
Greeting and Blessing:

I just received your letter in which you write about your and your wife's forthcoming trip to the Holy Land. I am glad to note that your plans include visits to Kfar Chabad and other Chabad institutions.

I wish you and your wife a very pleasant and successful trip. In your case it is surely unnecessary to remind you that the transportation should be arranged in a kosher way, which excludes going by a Jewish ship which travels on Shabbat. As you are no doubt flying, may G-d grant that it be a safe flight there and back, and that your stay in the Holy Land should be truly inspiring. And I mean inspiring not only to you, but also to others with whom you will come in contact. May you bring a goodly measure of this inspiration back with you, to use it to good advantage in your personal and public affairs.

I would also like to add the following point, which again is no doubt superfluous, yet is one that can stand repetition. If going to a foreign country necessitates obtaining a visa from the government of that country, then when one desires to visit a land which is called "The Palace of the King"—the King of the Universe—a special "visa" is surely required. There is this difference, however. In the case of the requisite formal visa for any country, the conditions for a successful application may or may not be fulfilled. However, with regard to the "visa" to the Holy Land—which is in the form of an addition in matters of holiness—this is always within reach.

Since your trip is taking place in the week of the portion of Kedoshim, there is a rather significant message in the general theme of this portion, as pointed out in the Ramban at the beginning of Kedoshim. There we find the famous comment that the commandment "You shall be holy" refers to self-discipline in the area of the permissible, for otherwise, since the Torah does not set limitations in the area of the permissible, a person might feel free to indulge, and overindulge, in permitted pleasures, to the extent of becoming a disgrace, while remaining within the "letter of the Law." And inasmuch as the Torah commands us, "You shall be holy"—by practicing holiness even in regard to permitted things—it is clear that this too is within the reach of every Jew and Jewess. And, needless to say, there is always room for progress in all matters of goodness and holiness.

With blessing,

## QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

### Can a Soulmate Be Stolen?

**Question:** A friend of mine says she is in no rush to get married, but feels pressured to "get out there" lest she miss out on her soulmate. I say that if it is meant to happen, it will. Who is right? Can your soulmate be "stolen" if you don't act in haste?

**Answer:** It is most certainly possible to miss out on your soulmate.

The Talmud discusses certain times of the year when Jewish law does not allow weddings to take place. One of them is during a festival, like Pesach, as we do not want one celebration to overshadow the other.

However, the Talmud says that while you can't perform a wedding during a festival, you can make a shidduch—a match between prospective mates. The reasoning the Talmud gives is that while a wedding can wait until after the festival, if you delay making a match, someone else may beat you to your soulmate.

But how can one find a soulmate destined for someone else?

Through raising one's soul to a higher level.

If you work on yourself, improve your character and refine yourself to a new spiritual plane, then your soulmate changes. A new, improved soul gets a new, improved soulmate.

And who will be that new soulmate? Someone whose original soulmate has either fallen to a lower spiritual level and doesn't deserve that person anymore, or is dithering around, wondering if he or she is ready to get married . . .

Therefore, the two factors that can cause you to lose your soulmate are spiritual decline or lack of real effort. And the two factors that will most help you find your soulmate are self-improvement and determined effort.

Sit around, and nothing will happen. But as long as you are out there, and as long as you are working on yourself, you will find him.

## A WORD

from the Director

*This coming Monday, the ninth of Kislev, is the birthday and anniversary of the passing of Rabbi Dovber, the second Rebbe of Chabad.*

*A story is told of Reb Dovber when he was a young boy of four or five. At that time, the boy's father, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of the Chabad movement, was the Rebbe. After cheder one day, little Dovber ran into the room where many of his father's chasidim sat. He sat next to one elderly chasid. The chasid was asking his two fellow-chasidim who were wealthy businessmen why they were so sad. The two men answered together, "Times are bad, and business is slow."*

*Dovber sat up straight and, in pun, said to the first chasid, "Why do you need to ask them about their sadness ("atzvut" in Hebrew)? Does it not say in Psalms, 'Their idols (atzabeihem, sharing the same root letters in Hebrew as "atzvut") are silver and gold...' Their sadness comes from money."*

*Later that day, when the three chasidim had the opportunity to speak privately with the Rebbe, they asked him how Dovber, at this tender age, had such a keen understanding of Torah and Chasidic philosophy.*

*Rabbi Shneur Zalman explained, "I have had to make great sacrifices in my life for Torah and Chasidism. They therefore automatically became my legacy to my children."*

*As illustrated by this story, when we make sacrifices for our children in matters of Judaism and Torah, we are automatically insuring that our children will inherit an extra measure of strength and commitment in those areas. G-d sees our sacrifice, He sees the extra effort we put in, and rewards us with true Yiddishe nachas, Jewish pleasure - our children and grandchildren will follow in our footsteps.*

J. I. Guterlich

# A Story From Our Past

## The Miser Who Built the Mikvah

Rabbi Menachem Nochum Twerski (1730–1798), founder of the Chernobyl chassidic dynasty, would often travel to small communities and inspire the townspeople to increase their mitzvah observance. On one such trip he came to a town in the Podolia region (today, southwestern Ukraine).

As was his custom, he first visited the local rabbi and inquired about the welfare of the community. He would then address and advise the congregation accordingly.

The rabbi unburdened himself about the sorry state of the local women's mikvah (ritual bath). "It is a high priority to renovate the mikvah so that it is beautiful and welcoming, and so that it will encourage the community to be meticulous in the great mitzvah of family purity."

"What are the townspeople doing about it?" inquired Reb Nochum.

A deep sigh escaped the rabbi. "The community is too poor, and cannot shoulder the financial burden of this endeavor. And as for the local gevir," continued the rabbi, using the Hebrew-Yiddish word for magnate, "it is a waste of time even to approach him, as he does not care about communal affairs whatsoever."

Reb Nochum ended the conversation and said goodbye. He motioned to his wagon-driver to quickly leave the town. In the next town Reb Nochum instructed his assistant to rent a princely carriage, and they traveled right back to the city they had just left, arriving at the house of the gevir.

The gevir was not from the chassidic camp, and was not particularly fond of rabbis. Nevertheless, when he saw the elegant carriage arrive and Reb Nochum descend from it, he ran outside and greeted him respectfully.

The gevir was surprised to learn that the famed tzaddik of Chernobyl chose to honor him by staying at his house. The news spread like wildfire, and soon crowds gathered outside with hopes of seeing the righteous man. Meanwhile, the gevir was feeling very satisfied with all the attention he was receiving.

A few hours passed, and Reb Nochum remained in his room studying. A few minutes before it was time to pray Minchah (the afternoon service), Reb Nochum sent word to the gevir that he'd like to meet him privately regarding an urgent matter.

Upon entering the room that had been set aside for the esteemed guest, the gevir saw that he was engrossed in Torah study, his face glowing with spiritual delight. Observing the righteous man, he began to understand the feelings of those gathered outside hoping to behold "the shining countenance of the wise man."<sup>1</sup>

The gevir sat down on a chair quietly, not wishing to disturb the tzaddik. Reb Nochum was deeply immersed in his studies, and did not appear to notice that his host had entered. As he sat observing the rabbi, a thought entered the gevir's mind: "Reb Nochum's share in the world to come must be great, as so many people are waiting just to see him."

When Reb Nochum lifted his head from his holy book and noticed the gevir, he apologized and said, "Since now is the time for Minchah, we will discuss the urgent matter afterward."

The gevir was disappointed, but when he remembered the crowds outside, he calmed down, recognizing his good fortune in being able to interact so closely with the saintly visitor.

Stepping outside, the gevir called out to the crowd: "Please come to my mansion for the afternoon service with the righteous man of Chernobyl."

Several minutes after the service began, the entire congregation had finished saying the Amidah ("The Standing Prayer"), except for two people: Reb Nochum and the gevir. The crowd observed the scene in growing astonishment. It was evident that something had come over the gevir, who was uncharacteristically devout in his prayer.

Upon reaching the sixth blessing of the Amidah—"Forgive us for our sins"—the gevir became pensive. When he struck his chest on the words "for we have sinned," regret was written all over his face. He soon began to cry. For a while he stood with his head bent and his body convulsing, as tears flowed silently from his eyes.

All this time Reb Nochum was also engrossed in prayer, with his eyes shut, swaying back and forth in a measured rhythm. When the visitor completed the Amidah, the gevir also did.

After the prayers had concluded, the gevir and the tzaddik withdrew to the guest room alone. The townspeople were already bewildered as to why the visiting rabbi had chosen to stay at the house of the stingy man who alienated himself from the community and its needs. They were doubly confounded by what happened at the Minchah service.

Soon afterward, the wealthy man and Reb Nochum emerged from the room. Reb Nochum began to clasp the hands of those gathered and to bless them. After greeting the last villager in line, the rabbi soon left the town. The gevir, whose eyes were still red and swollen, seemed to be smiling and content.

In response to the villagers' queries, he readily agreed to solve the mystery for them. He took out a document from his breast pocket. On it was written these words: "I am selling my portion in the world to come to the gevir of Podolia in exchange for his commitment to finance the building of a new and beautiful mikvah in Podolia. Signed, Nochum of Chernobyl."

"Such a deal I could not refuse," said the gevir with a sheepish smile.

## PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Jacob leaves his hometown of Beersheba and journeys to Charan. On the way, he encounters "the place" and sleeps there, dreaming of a ladder connecting heaven and earth, with angels climbing and descending on it; G-d appears and promises that the land upon which he lies will be given to his descendants. In the morning, Jacob raises the stone on which he laid his head as an altar and monument, pledging that it will be made the house of G-d.

In Haran, Jacob stays with and works for his uncle Laban, tending Laban's sheep. Laban agrees to give him his younger daughter, Rachel—whom Jacob loves—in marriage, in return for seven years' labor. But on the wedding night, Laban gives him his elder daughter, Leah, instead—a deception Jacob discovers only in the morning. Jacob marries Rachel, too, a week later, after agreeing to work another seven years for Laban.

Leah gives birth to six sons—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun—and a daughter, Dinah, while Rachel remains barren. Rachel gives Jacob her handmaid, Bilhah, as a wife to bear children in her stead, and two more sons, Dan and Naphtali, are born. Leah does the same with her handmaid, Zilpah, who gives birth to Gad and Asher. Finally, Rachel's prayers are answered and she gives birth to Joseph.

Jacob has now been in Charan for fourteen years, and wishes to return home. But Laban persuades him to remain, now offering him sheep in return for his labor. Jacob prospers, despite Laban's repeated attempts to swindle him. After six years, Jacob leaves Charan in stealth, fearing that Laban would prevent him from leaving with the family and property for which he labored. Laban pursues Jacob, but is warned by G-d in a dream not to harm him. Laban and Jacob make a pact on Mount Gal-Ed, attested to by a pile of stones, and Jacob proceeds to the Holy Land, where he is met by angels.

## CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 24 - 25 November	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	8:01	9:06
Adelaide	7:50	8:52
Brisbane	6:06	7:03
Darwin	6:38	7:31
Gold Coast	6:05	7:03
Perth	6:44	7:44
Sydney	7:27	8:28
Canberra	7:39	8:41
Launceston	8:03	9:11
Auckland	8:00	9:03
Wellington	8:12	9:20
Hobart	8:06	9:16
Byron Bay	7:06	8:04

## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

### PARSHAS VAYEITZEI • 6 KISLEV • 24 NOVEMBER

<b>FRIDAY NIGHT:</b>	MINCHA:	8:10 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:40 PM
<b>SHABBOS DAY:</b>	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:28 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	8:00 PM
<b>WEEKDAYS:</b>	SHACHARIS:	8:00/9:15/10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	5:35 PM
	MAARIV:	6:25 PM