

LAMPLIGHTER

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Parshas Bereishis
Shabbos Mevarchim
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

"In the beginning G-d created the heaven and the earth." With these momentous words the Torah begins the very first chapter of Bereishis, establishing G-d's Kingship over all of creation.

The Torah, however, is not a history book. The Torah is the guide by which we live our lives, applying its teachings to every aspect of our existence.

The ancient Sage, Rabbi Yitzchak, raises a pertinent question. "Why does the Torah open with the story of Creation?" he asks, as quoted by Rashi in his commentary. "Why didn't G-d begin with the words, 'This month is to you,' - the first commandment containing practical implications?

"The might of His deeds He told to His nation; to bequeath to them the heritage of the nations," Rabbi Yitzchak himself answers.

"If the nations of the world will one day accuse the Jewish people of being thieves, having 'stolen' the land of Israel from the seven nations who formerly inhabited it, they will counter, 'The entire earth belongs to G-d! He is the One Who created it and bequeathed it to whom He saw fit. It was His will to give the land to the nations; it was His will to take it from them and give it to us.'"

According to this explanation, the entire order of the Torah's portions was changed solely to refute the world's complaint that the Jewish people misappropriated their land. But is their accusation really so important that G-d would change even one letter in His holy Torah for its sake? Would not a refutation in the Oral Tradition have been sufficient to counter whatever complaint Gentiles would one day lodge against the nation of Israel?

In truth, the Torah's choice of language holds significance not only for the nations of the world but for Jews themselves.

"In the beginning" contains an important lesson for every Jew to apply in his daily life. In general, the life of a Jew may be divided into two realms: the religious and the secular. The Jew willingly observes his various religious obligations because the Torah requires him to.

When, however, he is asked to also sanctify those mundane aspects of daily life that seemingly fall outside the domain of religious observance, he balks, rejecting this demand as an invasion of privacy.

The secular realm of a person's life, pertaining to the physical and material domain, metaphorically belong to the "seven nations." Yet it is precisely this realm that the Jew is called upon to conquer, elevating his every action by performing it solely for the sake of heaven.

"You are thieves!" the world cries out against the Jew. "How dare you conquer the domain of the seven nations and blur the distinction between religious observance and the mundane?!"

To which the Jew replies, "All of creation belongs to G-d." Every realm of existence is part of Divine plan and can be made holy.

Indeed, such is the mission of every Jew -- to transform wherever he may be into a spiritual Land of Israel.

Judaism demands that we sanctify even the lowest aspects of the material world, thereby imbuing all of creation with holiness and demonstrating the unity of the One Creator.

The Bread of Shame

By Yitschak Meir Kagan

"Man is born to toil." This is true of the Jewish people as a nation, as well as the individual man. G-d commanded Moses at the time of the birth of our people, "When you will take this people out of Egypt you shall serve G-d on this mountain" (Exodus 3:12). Israel's deliverance from Egypt was not merely to come to "the good and broad land" or to "eat its fruit and be satiated with its goodness." The Jewish people were freed from Egyptian slavery in order to attain the level of true service of the Almighty.

And as at the time of Israel's birth, so was it also at the time Man came to be; Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden, "To work it and to guard it" (Genesis 2:15).

Why should the Creator, who is the essence of all goodness, require work and service as man's only ultimate path to perfection? Why must we struggle and toil to remove the many obstacles and barriers to realizing our true potential? Does this not seem to be the very opposite of G-d's infinite goodness?

A deeper analysis of human nature, however, reveals that requiring work, toil and effort from man was an act of ultimate and perfect goodness by G-d. When a person invests effort, he earns his reward. Even when he has not exerted great effort, but has merely pleased another person, the other might be moved to give him a gift. But in a case when even this factor of pleasing another is absent, and he receives a totally gratuitous handout, purely as a donation — this is "bread of shame" that does not satisfy, but distresses.

Our sages illustrate the concept of "shameful bread" with the example of a bride who turns away her face in shame while eating the wedding meal. Not having yet invested any efforts in establishing or maintaining her household, she feels that the meal provided for her is not earned, is but a gratuity, and is "bread of shame."

The Talmud teaches that if a man deposits some of his produce with a neighbor (for the latter to keep for him while he is away) and it starts to rot, one opinion is that the neighbor should sell it, before too much of it rots, so as to save his friend's money. Another opinion maintains, however, that the neighbor should not touch it, for "a man prefers one of his own to nine of his neighbor's." His friend would prefer the smaller quantity of fruit, salvaged from the rot, that he grew himself to the larger quantity of another's fruit that he could buy with the money. His own fruits are particularly endeared to him because he toiled to produce them. One honestly-earned measure that is the product of one's own toil and effort is more desirable — not merely than someone else's one or two measures, but — than even nine!

G-d desired that we should "have it good" in the best possible way. He wished not merely to bestow upon us the greatest goodness, but also to ensure that we should receive, absorb and "digest" this goodness in the most perfect way; so He created mankind to toil and the Jewish nation to serve. Had G-d not done so, had He instead gratuitously bestowed His blessings, then there would indeed have been vast goodness granted us, but it would have been distasteful, it would have been unearned "bread of shame" and its bestowal would not have characterized the ultimate and perfect beneficence of the Creator.

Slice of LIFE

An Interview with an Egyptian Prime Minister

By Tuvia Bolton

Gershon Ber Jacobson was a well known journalist, according to some he was the journalist's journalist. He wrote for several major newspapers around the world, was fluent in many languages including French, English, Yiddish, Russian, Georgian and Hebrew, had a fluent, often stirring style, an eye for often uncomfortable detail and an unquenchable drive for often life-threatening scoops.

But in addition to all this, or perhaps we should say foremost, he was a totally observant Jew and a devoted Chassid (follower) of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, perhaps the greatest, most erudite Jewish leader in history who teaches his followers to do everything possible to improve mankind.

And it saved his life at least once.

The scene was immediately after the Six-Day war. Israel had decimated the combined armies of Egypt, Syria and the other Arab nations surrounding them and the idea popped into the mind of Gershon Ber, who at the time was the chief correspondent in New York for the Israeli newspaper 'Yediot Achronot' the biggest daily in Israel, to get a really hot story.

He decided that the scoop of scoops would be to get into Egypt and get an interview with none other than the Prime Minister

himself; Abdul Nasser!

He began to go about getting the necessary papers, when he got a phone call from another important personage from the 'other side' of the coin; 'Isar HarAil' the head of the Israeli Secret Service the 'Mosad'. "Jacobson are you insane?" he screamed, "Listen, we have information that if you go through with this you'll never come back. Why, they'll arrest you as a spy and you'll never get out of jail! And we won't be in a position to help you! Do you understand? Don't go! And if you do we will take no responsibility!"

Jacobson thanked HarAil, hung up the phone and called the headquarters of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. It wasn't long before he got a reply.

The Rebbe said he definitely should go but he should do the following things (1) Take several pairs of new Tefillin (2) Take a new 'sh'chita' knife for slaughtering birds (3) check into the best room in the most expensive hotel (4) before leaving write short letters to all his friends and important acquaintances telling them he is in Egypt and mail them as soon as you arrive (5) as soon as he enters the hotel call all the foreign ambassadors living in Egypt and (6) at the first opportunity visit the Jewish community there.

Gershon Ber did exactly what the Rebbe told him and a week later landed in Cairo. He told the driver to take him to the finest hotel and on the way he stopped at the post office and mailed the letters he had written.

Then he checked in to his room and immediately set about calling all the foreign representatives in Egypt as the Rebbe said.

And the response was fantastic! In fact one of the ambassadors was so impressed (he claimed that in the fifteen years he was in Egypt no one had ever called him) he insisted on coming to see him and when he arrived insisted on being

Jacobson's personal driver!

"Very well!" he answered. "Then let's go visit the Jewish community here." With the ambassador (I heard it was the representative from Canada) as his driver they pulled up at the home of the head of the Jewish community. Jacobson brought greetings from the Rebbe and began asking journalist questions; how was life in Egypt, Was there anti-Semitism, was anything affected by the Six Day War? etc. etc.

The community leader answered that although there was not overt anti-Semitism it was nevertheless very difficult for them to get around and impossible for them to contact the outside world. For instance what they really needed were a few pairs of tefillin (phylacteries) because several had become disqualified for use and a sh'chita knife for slaughtering chickens because the one they had somehow broke and was irreparable. But they couldn't get out of Egypt to get these things replaced.

You can imagine his joy and amazement when he produced exactly these items and told him how the Lubavitcher Rebbe somehow sensed their need.

Jacobson got the interview with Nasser and when he arrived safely back in New York he got another call from Issur HarAil. "Listen Jacobson. We know for SURE that they were planning to arrest you for spying. But when you got there and made such a storm with those letters and phone calls they didn't want to arouse adverse public opinion. Tell me, where did you get the idea to do those letters and phone calls?"

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Editor: Shmuel Kesselman

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

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

6th of Marcheshvan, 5727 [1966]

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of October 12th, in which you also refer to a previous letter you wrote.

As you can well imagine, there is a great deal of correspondence that reaches me during the period of the month of Tishrei and prior to it, so that a delay is unavoidable, not only because of the volume of correspondence, but also of the various matters of the month of Tishrei and the intervening festivals, as well as the many visitors that come to spend this month with us here.

With regard to the question of hatzlacha [success] in study and the gaining of knowledge, surely you know of the promise of our Sages, "Try hard and you will succeed." Thus, success is largely something which depends on the student himself.

However, inasmuch as everything requires Divine help, including also that the "try hard" as well as the "and you will succeed" should be satisfactory, the way to obtain this is through devotion and diligence in the study of the Torah and the observance of the mitzvos [commandments] with hiddur [special beauty]. This is mainly a matter of will and determination, for nothing stands in the way of the will.

Having just concluded the month of Tishrei, culminating with the joyous festival of Simchat Torah, you have surely heard the explanation of the Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi] that the joy of Simchas Torah is a double one: The Jews rejoicing with the Torah, and the Torah rejoicing with the Jews, based on the verses, "Israel rejoices with their Maker" and "G-d rejoices with His works."

And since all the festivals of the month of Tishrei conclude with Simchas Torah, it means that this mutual rejoicing can be achieved only through the fulfillment of the Torah and mitzvos, as it is stated in the Zohar, "Israel, the Torah and the Holy One blessed be He, are all one" - the Torah placed in the center as the connecting link between Israel and G-d. We have but one Torah, comprising both Nigle [the "revealed" parts of the Torah] and Chassidus [the "inner" aspects of the Torah], which must be studied with a view to fulfillment of the mitzvot with hiddur, as emphasized by our Sages that the essential thing of the Torah study is the deed. This brings G-d's blessings for hatzlacha not only spiritually, but also materially,

Hoping to hear good news from you,

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

The Land of Milk and Honey

Question: Our dream to move to Israel is finally becoming reality. We are making aliyah next month. I know it will be challenging. Any advice?

Answer: Israel is unlike any other country in the world. Every other place you could live, as long as you like it there all is fine. But with Israel it isn't enough that you like it there. Israel has to like you too.

Israel is a land with a soul of its own. It is the Holy Land, the place of divine blessing. If Israel finds you worthy, she shares her blessing with you, and no matter how hard life gets there, you will feel at home. But if you are undeserving of her holiness, you won't feel settled there for long.

The move to Israel is called making aliyah, which means "going up." This is not merely because Israel has a higher altitude to its surrounding countries. You need to go up to Israel because Israel is one step closer to heaven than the rest of the world. To reach Israel you need to be going upwards in your spiritual life. It is a land of higher spiritual frequency that has little tolerance for stagnant souls. Only those who are willing to grow can feel at home there.

So along with all the paperwork and preparations for moving, prepare your soul for the journey ahead. Take a step up in your own spirituality by choosing a new mitzvah to observe, and taking on a new project of Torah study. The aliyah ascent begins now, long before you set foot in the Holy Land.

Life in Israel is not always easy. But for a soul on the way up, it really is a land flowing with milk and honey.

A WORD

from the Director

This Shabbat is "Shabbat Bereishit," when we read the very first portion of the Torah. As explained by the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, the way we conduct ourselves on Shabbat Bereishit has an influence on our conduct of the entire year to come.

This week is also the Shabbat on which we bless the coming month of Marcheshvan. The name is derived from the Hebrew word meaning "drop," as it is in Marcheshvan that the rainy season begins in the Holy Land.

Winter is the season for rain; summer, for dew to fall. But what is the difference between rain and dew?

Rain is dependent on man's Divine service. In the merit of our prayers, G-d causes the rain to fall. If, G-d forbid, our behavior is lacking, He withholds His life-giving waters. Dew, by contrast, occurs independent of our actions. G-d causes the dew to regularly replenish the earth, without any effort on our part.

The physical phenomena of rain and dew expresses the essential difference between summer and winter. In the summer, when dew falls, the world receives G-d's blessings from Above without our exertion. Winter, when rain falls, is a time when it is more difficult to obtain His blessings, as we must labor to be worthy of receiving them.

This Shabbat, when we bless the month of Marcheshvan, we imbue the "month of rain" with the power which will sustain it. It is the last Shabbat of Tishrei, the "chodesh hashevi'i" (the "seventh month" when counting from Nisan), that is "musba" ("satiated," from the same root word as "sheva," meaning "seven") with all that is good. For only a month that is so full of mitzvot as Tishrei can impart the necessary strengths to the difficult month that will follow. Indeed, it is from Tishrei that we draw the ability to perform our G-dly service throughout the entire winter.

So rain or shine, it's always time to do a mitzva.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

The Farmer Method

By Yerachmiel Tilles

A Chabad chassid from the Slonim family in the Holy Land once sailed to White Russia to visit the Lubavitcher Rebbe of that time, the Maharash, who was also his relative. The Rebbe asked him many questions about the situation of the Jews in the Land. While answering, the chassid commented, "I don't understand what is written in certain books that in the Holy land dwell lofty souls. I know the Jews there, and I haven't seen that they are more special than the Jews here."

"Oh, are you qualified to recognize lofty souls?" remarked the Rebbe. "Here, let me tell you a story that I heard from my father, the Rebbe of blessed memory, about a simple Jew in the Land of Israel."

There was once a Jewish farmer who lived just outside of Jerusalem. He did not know how to study Torah, nor did he even understand the words of the prayers that he said everyday. In fact, he couldn't grasp the order of the prayers to tell him that there was a different Psalm each day and longer penitential prayers on Monday and Thursday than on the other weekdays, except on those days when they are not said at all, left him hopelessly confused. Instead, when he came to the city once a week to sell his produce, he would go to a certain one of the local rabbis, who would write down for him the order of the prayers for each of the seven days to come.

One year, in the month of Mar-Cheshvan, when the rainy season usually begins, he asked the rabbi to list for him two weeks' worth. He explained that because of the bad road conditions caused by the winter rains, he would now come only once every two weeks.

It turned out, however, that he came to Jerusalem the next week anyway. He had something pressing to attend to, and besides, it hadn't rained. When he arrived, he halted his donkey in shock: all the Jewish stores were closed!

The simple fellow was seized by anxiety. Could he possibly have miscounted the days? G-d have mercy! Was it Shabbat today? He stood motionless. What to do?

Looking around, he saw a solitary Jew on the street, walking along with his tallit and tefillin under his arm. "Thank G-d!" the farmer intoned; "It can't be Shabbat if he is carrying tefillin!"

But if so, why were the stores closed and the street deserted? He approached the strolling Jew he had spotted and asked him what was going on. The man told him that it was a public fast-day.

Now he felt distressed again. A fast day? But he had already eaten! And failed to say the appropriate extra prayers too. Why hadn't the rabbi warned him the week before?

Abandoning his donkey and wagon right in the middle of the marketplace where he had stopped, he rushed over to the rabbi's house. There he was told that the rabbi was still in shul, so off he ran again, his heart pounding from both fear and exertion. "Rabbi!" he cried out, bursting into tears. "How could you do this to me!"

The sage couldn't understand why he was so upset. "What happened, my friend?" he asked gently.

"What happened?" you ask? Today is a fast day, I just found out,

but Your Honor didn't write it down or even mention anything about it to me last week, and so I already ate and said the wrong prayers. Woe is me!"

The rabbi smiled, relieved. "You can relax, my friend. This is not a regular fast day. We just recently decreed this special fast-day for the residents of Jerusalem because of the possibility of a serious drought due to our lack of rain, but you don't live here and so were in no way obligated."

The farmer looked perplexed. "When you folk need rain, you decree a fast?" he asked, puzzled.

"That's right," the rabbi replied.

"Really?"

"Of course. "Why? What do you think we should do?"

"Well," answered the farmer, innocently, "when my fields don't have enough rain, I go out there and say to the One Above, 'Father! I need rain.' And then it starts to rain."

The Rabbi looked at the simple looking fellow intensely and saw that he was sincere. "If that's so, why don't you try and see if your methods will work here in the city too."

The farmer turned and went outside to the courtyard of the shul. He began to weep. Through his tears he cried out, "Father! Can it possibly be that the people of your holy city will expire from famine? Don't you see that they need rain?"

Immediately the sky darkened and rain began to fall.

As he completed the story, the Maharash said to his visitor from the Holy Land, "So do you really think you are able to distinguish who in the Land is a lofty soul?"

Biographical note:

Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn (1834-1882), the fourth Lubavitch Rebbe, known as "the Rebbe Maharash," was the sixth and youngest son of his predecessor, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, "the Tsemach Tsedek".

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

G-D creates the world in six days. On the first day He makes darkness and light. On the second day He forms the heavens, dividing the "upper waters" from the "lower waters." On the third day He sets the boundaries of land and sea, and calls forth trees and greenery from the earth. On the fourth day He fixes the position of the sun, moon and stars as timekeepers and illuminators of the earth. Fish, birds and reptiles are created on the fifth day; land animals, and then the human being, on the sixth. G-d ceases work on the seventh day, and sanctifies it as a day of rest.

G-d forms the human body from the dust of the earth, and blows into his nostrils a "living soul." Originally Man is a single person, but deciding that "it is not good that man be alone," G-d takes a "side" from the man, forms it into a woman, and marries them to each other.

Adam and Eve are placed in the Garden of Eden, and commanded not to eat from the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil." The serpent persuades Eve to violate the command, and she shares the forbidden fruit with her husband. Because of their sin, it is decreed that man will experience death, returning to the soil from which he was formed, and that all gain will come only through struggle and hardship. Man is banished from the Garden.

Eve gives birth to two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain quarrels with Abel and murders him, and becomes a rootless wanderer. A third son, Seth, is born to Adam; Seth's eighth-generation descendant, Noah, is the only righteous man in a corrupt world.

CANDLE LIGHTING



| | Shabbos 5 - 6 October | |
|------------|-----------------------|------|
| | Begins | Ends |
| Melbourne | 6:10 | 7:08 |
| Adelaide | 6:04 | 7:00 |
| Brisbane | 5:32 | 6:25 |
| Darwin | 6:25 | 7:15 |
| Gold Coast | 5:31 | 6:24 |
| Perth | 6:03 | 6:58 |
| Sydney | 5:42 | 6:39 |
| Canberra | 5:52 | 6:49 |
| Launceston | 6:03 | 7:04 |
| Auckland | 7:10 | 8:08 |
| Wellington | 7:13 | 8:13 |
| Hobart | 6:04 | 7:05 |
| Byron Bay | 5:30 | 6:24 |

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, ST KILDA EAST

PARSHAS BEREISHIS SHABBOS MEVARCHIM
CHESHVAN • 26 TISHREI • 5 OCTOBER

| | | |
|---------------|--|-----------------------|
| FRIDAY NIGHT: | MINCHA | 6.15 PM |
| | KABBOLAS SHABBOS | 6.45 PM |
| SHABBOS DAY: | TEHILLIM | 8.00 AM |
| | LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA | 8.56 AM |
| | SHACHRIS (Followed by a Shabbos Mevorchim Kiddush/Farbrenge) | 10.00 AM |
| | MOLAD: TUESDAY | 9.01 (11 chalakim) PM |
| WEEKDAYS: | MINCHA | 6.05 PM |
| | SHABBOS ENDS | 7.08 PM |
| | SHACHARIS | 8.00/9.15/10.00 AM |
| | MINCHA | 7.20 PM |
| | MAARIV | 8.05 PM |