

# LAMPLIGHTER

17 Cheshvan  
Parshas  
Vayeira  
**1371**  
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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Vayeira, relates that Abraham established an inn for guests, and there he "called upon the name of 'kail olam,' the eternal G-d." Our Sages interpret this phrase to imply that Abraham was not satisfied merely to call to G-d himself, but that he taught others too to proclaim G-dliness.

What did he do? He established his tent at a crossroads in the desert and generously provided food and drink to wayfarers. After they completed their meal, he asked them to: "Bless the One who provided you with food and drink."

When the guests began to bless Abraham, he told them: "Was it I who provided you with food? Bless He who spoke and brought the world into being." By providing people with their physical needs, he made them conscious of the spiritual reality.

The Hebrew term kail olam has also attracted the attention of the commentaries. Translated here as "the eternal G-d," it can also mean "G-d of the world," or more literally "G-d, world." "G-d of the world" would imply that G-d and the world are two distinct entities, the former paying homage to the latter, while the more literal meaning is deeper, namely that G-d and the world are indistinguishable; everything is an expression of G-dliness. This is the intent of the phrase "G-d is one" that we recite in the Shema prayer: not only is there only one G-d, but everything in the world is at one with Him.

This is not only an abstract concept. It affects a person's fundamental approach to his life. When he sees G-d as "G-d of the world," he understands that he has obligations to Him. After all, if G-d is the Ruler of the world, a person has to pay his dues.

But that, he thinks - is all he is obligated to do. In the rest of his affairs, his life is his own. It's like paying taxes. You have to give the government a percentage of your income, but afterwards, you can spend the remainder of your money however you like. Similarly, in a spiritual sense, such a person recognizes that he owes something to G-d, but his life is primarily his own; he can do with it whatever he wants.

When we appreciate the world as one with G-d, by contrast, our entire relationship with Him changes. Religion is not merely going to the synagogue or carrying out a certain body of laws, but an all-encompassing experience, affecting every element of our lives.

Every situation in which we are found, every person whom we meet gives us an opportunity to advance in our knowledge of G-d and our connection to Him.

This is the heritage that Abraham gave to his descendants - to spread the awareness that we are living in His world, that our lives are not intended merely to provide ourselves with a little bit of enjoyment and satisfaction, but are instead mediums to make His presence known to others.

## Humility is Teachability

By Rabbi Ben A.

"Abraham planted an orchard in Beer-Sheba and there called out in the name of the L-rd."—Genesis 21:33

After discovering the truth about the one G-d as a child, Abraham spent the rest of his life spreading the message of monotheism throughout the world. One of his tactics, as described in this week's portion, is that he would establish himself in a barren spot in the desert and set up a tent to create a lodging place for travelers. Whenever people would pass by, he would invite them in and lavish them with fine delicacies to eat. Abraham would talk to his guests about his belief in G-d, and open their eyes to a new way of living. At the end of the meal, when his guests would thank him, Abraham would tell them not to thank him, but to bless "Him from Whose food you have eaten."

Sometimes it would happen that a guest would refuse to recite a prayer of thanks, in which case Abraham would then present the guest with an exorbitant bill, and demand payment for the meal. When unable to pay, the guest would agree to thank G-d.

The question is: Why did Abraham bother to coerce stubborn guests into reciting this prayer? If they did not believe, then his pressuring them would only succeed in extracting outward compliance, not genuine devotion. What was the value of forcing his guests to pay lip service to a belief in G-d; it was, after all, insincere?

The answer is that Abraham was not interested in his guests feigning a belief in G-d. He sought to, and succeeded in, bringing them to a genuine faith.

What Abraham realized is that when a person puts up a wall against G-d, it is a sign of a coarse and rigid ego. After granting the person hospitality and speaking so convincingly about his beliefs, only a person consumed by arrogant self-reliance would be so stubborn as to refuse to acknowledge G-d by offering thanks for his food. Accordingly, Abraham would cast such a person into the predicament of not being able to pay for his meal in order to break down this willful self-pride. The ego had been tactically crushed and the obstacle to faith was removed. The guest became naturally receptive to embracing all of the ideas that A b r a h a m had taught him during his stay.

The lesson to us is not that we need to bring about a state of helplessness in others in order to lead them to become more open to pursuing a relationship with G-d. Such maneuvers are the right of spiritual giants, completely selfless people like Abraham.

What we can take from this, is to apply this principle to ourselves, and realize how our sensitivity to G-d is inversely proportional to the degree of our feelings of self-reliance. The more prideful and sure of ourselves we are, the less open we are to G-d. It was, after all, only after we hit our "bottom" that we finally became willing to allow G-d to fully enter our lives. Many of us believed in G-d long before coming to recovery; yet surrendering our addiction to Him was impossible—until such time as we were suitably crushed by our burdens that we had no other choice than admitting to utter defeat.

Even in recovery, we fluctuate in the firmness of our faith. These ups and downs do not happen by chance. When we take a close and honest look, we find out that the fluctuation is a result of our own flirting with self-pride.

# Slice of LIFE

## The Rebbe Envied Him

By Tuvia Bolton

We will call him Jerry; a twenty five year old, handsome, talented, Jew was driving to a Chabad House early in the morning with his mother to talk to the Rabbi about his upcoming marriage. There were two problems he wanted to discuss.

The first problem that his mother was driving him crazy. And the second was that the girl wasn't Jewish. "What", his mother kept saying, "After all we suffered, your father and I, in the holocaust ... now you're marrying one of them?!"

They arrived. He knocked at the door and entered. The Rabbi greeted him with a warm handshake, showed them in to his office, told them to sit down and closed the door.

"I'll get right down to business, Rabbi" the young man said. "My name is Jerry, my last name isn't important. I met this very nice gentile girl, we love each other and want to get married but my mother doesn't like the idea, in fact she's driving me nuts because she says I'm Jewish and Jews don't marry out.

"So a few weeks ago she took me to talk to a Rabbi, a nice fellow she knows, very impressive and knowledgeable man. He was really convincing! He explained that there was a golden chain of self-sacrifice. For thousands of years, since Abraham, Jews have suffered holocausts, pogroms, exiles and given their lives for Judaism. And now I would be breaking my link in the chain!!

"He was so convincing that when we left his office I even considered breaking the engagement. But that night I thought about it and the next day I decided that, what.. I'm the only Jew in the world? There are a lot of other Jews and Rabbis around ... let them

keep the chain intact! I'm going to marry this girl.

"But my mom kept nagging and arranged a meeting with another Rabbi that was supposed to be even better than the first.

"He had a different angle. He explained how it is that if I married this girl my children would not be Jewish and would have no connection to me and some ninety percent of all intermarriages end in divorce or tragedy anyway ... so I would be left with nothing but heartbreaking regret.

"He really drove his message home with all sorts of charts, graphs and cold logic. But the next day I thought about it and decided that maybe ninety percent end in tragedy ... but ten percent work... so maybe I will be in the ten percent! I'm willing to take my chances and marry her.

"So finally my mom says I should give it one more chance and if it doesn't work she agreed to leave me alone. So that's why we're coming to you. Not only that but we heard that Chabad has a different way of looking at things. So I'm giving it one more chance. You're a Chabad Rabbi, right? So tell me why I shouldn't marry this girl."

The Rabbi thought a while and finally said. "Listen Jerry, I don't know what to say. Those other Rabbis gave really good reasons. If they didn't convince you then I don't know what I can add. I mean, you will be breaking the glorious chain of Judaism and opting out for a pretty meaningless future but except for that..."

They sat there in silence... both lost in thought.

Then suddenly the Rabbi turned to Jerry and said.

"Listen, let's go to the Rebbe."

"Rebbe?" asked Jerry. "Who is that?"

"The Lubavitcher Rebbe gives out dollars every Sunday and today is Sunday." The Rabbi explained. "If we leave now we'll get there on time."

Soon enough they were waiting in the incredibly long Sunday-morning line before the Rebbe's headquarters; a large, three story, red brick building in residential Brooklyn. These thousands of people didn't come for just the dollars the Rebbe handed out to encourage people to give charity. They came for advice or for a blessing or just to see the Rebbe's face in person. And now Jerry was one of them.

It took over three hours but finally the line entered the building, went

down a hall, turned the corner and ... Jerry was standing before the Rebbe.

He was a bit stunned. He thought he would see an ancient, fragile holy-man. Instead he felt like he was standing before a king... a very friendly, wise and awesomely Jewish king. The Rebbe handed him a dollar and suddenly Jerry began talking.

"I have a non-Jewish girlfriend and ..... we want to get married."

"I envy you." The Rebbe answered. Jerry tilted his head, squinted his eyes and looked at the Rebbe in disbelief. Was he joking?!

"I envy you" the Rebbe continued, "because each difficulty that G-d gives is a wrung in the ladder of personal perfection and I never had such a test. G-d must have given you a very unique and powerful soul to overcome such a difficult trial. I give you my blessing that you may succeed in all you do and be a good, proud and happy Jew."

The Rebbe gave him another dollar, turned to the next person in line and Jerry was pushed on.

Outside, Jerry was obviously moved. But he had been moved before by other Rabbis. He said goodbye and left without leaving an address or telephone number.

Several months later he appeared in the Chabad House, shook the Rabbi's hand and announced that he broke the engagement with the girl and wanted to buy a pair of Tefillin.

"What did the Rebbe say that convinced you?" The Rabbi asked. "Or maybe it was just because the Rebbe is so special?"

"No" Jerry answered. "The Rebbe is certainly a holy and unforgettable person. But it was his approach that got me.

"The other Rabbis were good but the first one talked about the past... the history of the Jews and all that and the second Rabbi talked about the future; my children, the dim prognosis for my marriage.

"But the Rebbe spoke about the present .... Who I am and how special I am right NOW.

"And that is what knocked me out."

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# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

## “A man's trust is the measuring-stick...”

By the Grace of G-d  
25 Sivan, 5712 [1952]  
Brooklyn  
Greetings and Blessings!

I received your letter dated Wednesday, the 34th day of the Omer, in which you describe the state of your business affairs, your considerable debts, etc. etc. You write further that you have a possibility of selling some of your properties, but that you find yourself unable to decide alone what you should do. Above all, it appears from your letter that you are dispirited, so that as a matter of course your trust in G-d has weakened.

The phrase I just used was “above all.” As is stated in our holy sources in general and in the literature of Chassidus in particular, everything depends on bitachon, the attribute of trust. A man's trust is the measuring stick of the extent to which his material affairs are bound and fused with the Creator. If this fusion is complete, it is certainly impossible for anything to be lacking, because in the worlds Above, the concept of lacking is utterly non-existent.

In accordance with your request, I mentioned your name in connection with the fulfillment of your needs when I visited the holy resting place of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe [Rayatz]. That said, since you asked for my advice, I hold that you should focus on toiling on yourself — to fortify your trust in G-d to the greatest extent possible.

In truth, having the attribute of trust means that even if according to the laws of nature one sees no way out, in one's mind it is beyond all doubt that everything will be good, in a way that is actually visible i.e., the to fleshly eyes, with regard to having an ample livelihood, sound health, and so on. From the perspective of the world Above, considerations of nature are quite immaterial. Accordingly, once a person raises himself up and adopts a stance that is even slightly above the ground — that is, he brings himself to the realization that since he is a believing Jew, [he is] utterly certain that there is no master over him but G-d alone — he can draw down [and actualize this certainty] here, too, so that in this physical world, too, considerations of nature will not affect him adversely (G-d forbid).

I firmly hope to G-d that if you will only fortify your trust to the utmost, you will immediately see a change in the Providence which governs your material business affairs and that your situation will begin to improve, and to proceed from good to even better.

In addition, it would be appropriate to immediately begin giving tzedakah as you used to do, and to increase your accustomed donations at least slightly. I look forward to hearing good news from you on all the above.

With blessings for material success, and may the teaching of the Alter Rebbe be fulfilled in your life — that the Holy One, blessed be He, grants Jews materiality, and they transform materiality into spirituality.

## QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

### What is the Significance of the Chupah

**Question:** Why is there a chupah (canopy) at a Jewish wedding?

**Answer:** Marriage is the union of man and woman. But male and female are opposites, and the idea that they can become one is absurd. You can't take opposites and make them one. It's impossible.

Impossible, that is, unless you do one thing: find something that encompasses both of them. An energy that can include opposites can unite opposites. And the only energy that can include opposites is divine energy. Only G-d, the source of male and female and everything else, can bring together opposites. And so only G-d can create a marriage.

The word chupah means “encompassing.” It represents the divine presence that hovers above bride and groom to unite them. Because man and woman can only truly become one if they dedicate themselves to something bigger than the both of them. When two people unite for a common higher cause, then they transcend the differences between them and become one.

Love, attraction, chemistry, biology and physics are all important for marriage, but what will keep it together is shared spiritual values and a common sense of divine purpose. As long as G-d is a partner in the marriage, you will be standing under the chupah for a lifetime.

## A WORD

from the Director

*The 20th of Cheshvan, this year corresponding to Monday, October 29, is the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab, Rabbi Shalom Dovber. The Rebbe Rashab was the fifth leader of Chabad/Lubavitch.*

*The Rebbe Rashab was universally known for his steadfast defense of Torah true Judaism in Czarist Russia and for his establishment of the Lubavitcher Yeshiva, Tomchei Tmimim, in the town of Lubavitch in 1897. The Rebbe Rashab also worked diligently to implement the virtue of ahavat Yisrael (love of a fellow Jew) among all Jews. A key Chasidic discourse that the Rebbe Rashab delivered one year delved primarily into the spiritual roots of baseless hatred. However, the essence of the discourse was to foster love and unity among all Jews. “One must assume that the other person is good in every respect. One should not view others in terms of one's own experience, for one must judge every man positively and firmly believe he is surely better than oneself. Hence, one ought to be deeply distressed by the suffering of one's fellow...”*

*Once the Rebbe Rashab instructed his son the Previous Rebbe to travel to a particular place to help a particular chassid and businessman. When the Previous Rebbe returned he told his father, “I have done everything you told me. I did the favor in the best manner possible.”*

*The Rebbe Rashab replied, “You are making a mistake. The favor you have done is a favor for yourself, not for the other. The Almighty has done the favor for the other; he arranged emissaries to fulfill the divine providence. The favor you have done is for yourself as it says in the Midrash, “More than the house owner does for the poor man, the poor man does for the house owner.”*

*In the merit of the Rebbe Rashab let us all do our utmost to abolish senseless hatred and foster true, unblemished love for our fellow Jews, which is certainly the precursor to the final redemption, the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days, NOW.*

J. I. Gutterman

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

## The Dog, the Fish and the Dream

By Yerachmiel Tilles

Rabbi Nachman of Kosov had a relative named Rabbi Yudel of Chudnov who was also a follower of the Baal Shem Tov.

Rabbi Yudel was careful not to accept favors of others. He preferred to provide for himself from his own work, running an iron ore business. Once, Rabbi Yudel went to check on one of his iron ore mines. Being a long way from his home, he decided to spend the Shabbat in a small village near the mine. He asked Reb Meir, a local householder in that village, if he could spend the Shabbat with him.

Reb Meir answered, "Rabbi Yudel, it would be my honor if you would be my guest for this Shabbat. However, I don't have any fish or meat for you to eat at the Shabbat meals. To my knowledge, no one has caught a fish here lately. And while I do have some meat that can be prepared, you being a chasid, won't be able to eat it because you didn't have a chance to examine the knife used by the shochet." [In those days, the chasidim were very careful to check the knife used by the kosher-slaughterer to be sure the edge of the knife blade was razor sharp and free of any knicks that would render the meat of the slaughtered animal unkosher. -ed.]

Reb Meir continued, "Rabbi Yudel, I suggest that you journey to the next village where a certain wealthy man lives. He is an old acquaintance of mine and I know that he'll be very pleased to host you for the Shabbat. He has his own shochet and will be able to provide fish and meat that will meet your standards."

Rabbi Yudel decided to follow Reb Meir's advice and started to walk on the road towards the next village where the wealthy man lived. The road connecting the two villages passed through a large pond that one had to cross to go from one village to the other. Usually, the water in the pond was quite shallow. But after a strong rain or in the spring after the snow melted, the water in the pond became much deeper. When Rabbi Yudel reached the pond, he wasn't aware that strong spring rains had caused the pond water to be exceptionally deep.

Just as Rabbi Yudel was about to step into the pond and cross to the other side, a dog jumped in. The dog started howling from fear; it couldn't swim so it was starting to drown. The howling of the drowning dog upset Rabbi Yudel so much that he began to shed tears.

After this experience, Rabbi Yudel decided that the water was too deep for him to continue his way to the next village. So he returned to the village that he had just left. When Reb Meir saw him he asked in wonderment, "Rabbi, I thought you were going to the next town to celebrate the Shabbat."

Rabbi Yudel replied, "When I reached the pond, I didn't realize how deep the water is at this time of the year. Just then, a dog jumped into the pond. Unfortunately, it couldn't swim and it drowned. It saved my life! Thank G-d. But the howling of the drowning dog upset me so much that I couldn't continue, so I decided to return here for Shabbat."

Reb Meir said, "Rabbi Yudel, of course you're always welcome to stay with me but what will you eat for the Shabbat meals?"

Rabbi Yudel asked, "Could you please see if there is any chance at all that you might get a fish for the Shabbat meals?"

Reb Meir requested a few of the local villagers to try extra hard to catch a few fish. They agreed. Almost miraculously, they returned that very afternoon with an unusually large pike. When Reb Meir saw the fish, he said in amazement, "In all the years I've lived here, I've never seen such a large fish." The villagers that caught the fish nodded their heads in agreement.

That day, being Friday, Reb Meir's wife prepared several sumptuous meals for the Shabbat with the fish.

Later that night, Rabbi Yudel was sitting at the Shabbat table with Reb Meir and his family. After making Kiddush, eating the Shabbat dinner and singing several Shabbat songs, Reb Meir and his family left the table to go to sleep.

Rabbi Yudel stayed at the table to study a holy Torah book, as was his custom before going to sleep. Suddenly, a strong feeling of tiredness came over him and he put his head down on the table to rest. After a few short minutes, he fell into a deep sleep.

During this sleep, he had a vivid dream in which his departed father appeared and spoke to him. "My son, I was reincarnated as that fish you were eating tonight. Do you remember that man I always spoke so strongly against because he was an informer against our Jewish brethren? Well, he was reincarnated as the dog that you saw drown in the pond. He finally made up for his behavior as an informer when he drowned to save you."

Rabbi Yudel's father continued speaking in the dream, "I was reincarnated as the fish because I publicly condemned this informer. As the Torah says, 'You shall not bear a sin on his account.'\* My son, the tears you shed when the dog howled as he drowned atoned for me. Please be careful how you eat the fish. Be sure to hold the proper intentions in your mind. This will help elevate my soul."

## PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

G-D reveals Himself to Abraham three days after the first Jew's circumcision at age ninety-nine; but Abraham rushes off to prepare a meal for three guests who appear in the desert heat. One of the three—who are angels disguised as men—announces that, in exactly one year, the barren Sarah will give birth to a son. Sarah laughs.

Abraham pleads with G-d to spare the wicked city of Sodom. Two of the three disguised angels arrive in the doomed city, where Abraham's nephew Lot extends his hospitality to them and protects them from the evil intentions of a Sodomite mob. The two guests reveal that they have come to overturn the place, and to save Lot and his family. Lot's wife turns into a pillar of salt when she disobeys the command not to look back at the burning city as they flee.

While taking shelter in a cave, Lot's two daughters (believing that they and their father are the only ones left alive in the world) get their father drunk, lie with him and become pregnant. The two sons born from this incident father the nations of Moab and Ammon. Abraham moves to Gerar, where the Philistine king Abimelech takes Sarah—who is presented as Abraham's sister—to his palace. In a dream, G-d warns Abimelech that he will die unless he returns the woman to her husband. Abraham explains that he feared he would be killed over the beautiful Sarah.

G-d remembers His promise to Sarah, and gives her and Abraham a son, who is named Isaac (Yitzchak, meaning "will laugh"). Isaac is circumcised at the age of eight days; Abraham is one hundred years old, and Sarah ninety, at their child's birth. Hagar and Ishmael are banished from Abraham's home and wander in the desert; G-d hears the cry of the dying lad, and saves his life by showing his mother a well. Abimelech makes a treaty with Abraham at Beersheba, where Abraham gives him seven sheep as a sign of their truce.

G-d tests Abraham's devotion by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah (the Temple Mount) in Jerusalem. Isaac is bound and placed on the altar, and Abraham raises the knife to slaughter his son. A voice from heaven calls to stop him; a ram, caught in the undergrowth by its horns, is offered in Isaac's place. Abraham receives the news of the birth of a daughter, Rebecca, to his nephew Bethuel.

## CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 26 - 27 October	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	7:30	8:30
Adelaide	7:21	8:20
Brisbane	5:44	6:39
Darwin	6:27	7:18
Gold Coast	5:43	6:38
Perth	6:18	7:15
Sydney	6:59	7:57
Canberra	7:10	8:09
Launceston	7:27	8:30
Auckland	7:29	8:29
Wellington	7:36	8:39
Hobart	7:29	8:33
Byron Bay	6:43	7:38

## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, ST KILDA EAST

### PARSHAS VAYEIRA • 17 CHESHVAN • 26 OCTOBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	7.35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	8.05 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.39 AM
	SHACHRIS	10.00 AM
	MINCHA	7.25 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS	8.30 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	7.40 PM
	MAARIV	8.25 PM