

# LAMPLIGHTER

Rosh Chodesh  
Kislev Parshas  
Toldos  
**1373**  
9 November  
5779/2018

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Toldot, describes the life and times of our ancestor Isaac. The Talmud states that in the Messianic Era, Isaac will be referred to as "our father," implying that it is Isaac from among all our forefathers who has a special connection to the Messianic Era. As we now stand at the threshold of the coming of Moshiach and the ultimate Redemption of the Jewish people, it is important to understand what exactly Isaac's path and service mean for us.

Isaac was the only one of our Patriarchs who lived his entire life within the boundaries of the land of Israel. Abraham was born outside of Israel and also left Israel to go to Egypt when a famine threatened. Jacob, too, went to Charan, where he worked for Laban for many years. However, when there was another famine in the Land during Isaac's lifetime, G-d commanded him to stay where he was and not to seek food elsewhere. "Do not go down to Egypt, but dwell in this land...and I will bless you." This is because after having shown his willingness to be sacrificed on the altar by his father Abraham, Isaac was considered a "perfect offering," too holy to dwell anywhere but in the Holy Land.

Isaac, therefore, symbolizes the Jewish people as they were meant to be, and as they will exist in the Messianic Era, their rightful place being in their land and not in exile in the four corners of the earth. During our present exile, we are like "children who have been banished from their father's table." We must therefore continue to demand that G-d send the redeemer now, so that we will be able to emulate Isaac and live a full life of Torah and mitzvot in our own land, as we were meant to.

Isaac's approach to the service of G-d is also especially applicable to us today. Even though Isaac continued in his father Abraham's path of spreading the belief in G-d throughout the world, he did so in a different manner from his father: Abraham wandered from place to place, including Egypt, spreading G-dliness wherever he went. Isaac, on the other hand, always remained in the same place, in Israel, yet others flocked to him because they were attracted by his holiness. In this way Isaac was able to influence others.

For the most part, the Jewish people have followed Abraham's example during their long exile, wandering from country to country and causing G-d's name to be called on wherever they went. After Moshiach comes, however, we will follow in Isaac's footsteps, as G-d's holiness and light will emanate from the Third Holy Temple in Jerusalem. And at that time, as happened in the days of Isaac, all the nations of the world will likewise flock to Jerusalem, as it states, "And all nations shall flow unto it...for the Torah shall go forth out of Zion."

We must, in the meantime, combine aspects of both these approaches, refining our own personal spirituality, yet at the same time, not neglecting to spread holiness throughout the world at large.

## Life Begins at 40

*By Elisha Greenbaum*

The driver who took me to the airport yesterday was a failure; or so he believed. A Coptic Christian, he'd spent over 10 years living as a monk. Living in the Egyptian desert, meditating, praying and fasting, he'd done everything he could to attain spiritual enlightenment. But he'd given it all up.

"I'm too weak," he confessed to me. "I kept dreaming of women and other pleasures of the flesh. I left the order, and a few years ago I immigrated here. I'm married now and we're expecting a child. Instead of a life of piety, I drive a limousine in New York City. I wasn't worthy."

I couldn't help contrasting his standards of religious perfection with the Jewish ideal. We don't believe in asceticism and don't hold up celibacy as an ambition. The ideal is to marry and bring children to this world. Rather than withdrawing from society, we are expected to do work that contributes to the common good.

The Parshah we read this week begins: "This is the story of Isaac the son of Abraham ... Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebecca." We then proceed to relate the story of the birth of Jacob and Esau, Isaac's interactions with the local king and his digging of wells throughout the region.

On the face of it, by starting the story of Isaac's life here, we're selling him short. After all, he had a fascinating backstory. Although we have read about the Akeida—how Abraham took Isaac on G-d's instructions and bound him as a potential sacrifice to G-d—we weren't given any of the details from Isaac's perspective. Surely that would be a story worth telling?

We also read in the Midrash that immediately following the Akeida, Isaac spent three years in the Garden of Eden, studying Torah, communing with the angels and imbibing G-dliness. I would have liked to learn how those years of spiritual solitude affected his psyche and colored his future endeavors, but the Torah skips blithely past these fundamentals and starts the story only once he'd finally settled down to marriage, at the relatively advanced age of 40.

By starting Isaac's story at this point, the Bible is pointing out that the true religious ideal is not a life of loneliness and self-sacrifice, but one of engaging in the world and making a difference in the lives of others. Spending time in paradise might be personally rewarding, but Isaac's real story began when he settled down and started making his mark on the world.

# Slice of LIFE

## The Grave-Search that Brought a Family home

By Tuvia Bolton

A few years ago, in the year 2,000 (5760) Rabbi Shlomo Wilhelm, the Chabad representative in the city of Zitomer in the Ukraine, attended a family affair, perhaps a wedding, in London England when a woman approached him, introduced herself and said that she was very pleased to hear that he ran the Chabad House in Zitomer and had a personal favor to ask.

She had been raised in a small village by the name of T'chorisha not far from Zitomer but had to leave it and her family at a young age. To her knowledge, her parents were buried there and she requested with tears in her eyes that at his first free moment to please locate their graves and send her a picture.

Of course there was no such thing as a free moment for Rabbi Wilhelm but somehow when he returned he asked the help of Reb Hersh Shribman one of the pillars of the Jewish community of Zitomer, and together they found time to locate the town of T'chorisha find its Jewish cemetery and finally take pictures of the desired tombstones; all this to calm a troubled Jewish woman.

After taking the pictures Rabbi Wilhelm turned to his companion and said, "Listen, if we're already here... why not see if there are any Jews in the town. Maybe we can do some good!"

So together they began wandering the streets of T'chorisha asking the residents if there were any Jews until one of them pointed to a large hut (all the houses there, were large huts) and said they should ask the old lady living there. If anyone would know it was her.

So they walked to the house, opened the gate to the front yard and saw a young couple with a small child standing there. As soon as this couple saw them, their eyes opened in amazement and they froze.

"What do you want?" the young man

barely asked.

When Rabbi Wilhelm told them that they were looking for Jews the couple turned to each other shaking their heads incredulously almost in tears and the young man shook the Rabbi's hand as though he couldn't believe he was real.

The young woman explained. "Our grandmother is inside. She is Jewish. We are her grandchildren. This little girl is my daughter and this young man is my brother. The reason we are here today is because her doctor told us to come quickly if we want to see her alive again."

They all entered the hut and as their eyes adjusted to the dim light they saw a very old woman, eyes slightly open, lying almost lifeless in the bed. But as soon as she saw the Rabbis she opened her eyes, smiled and whispered, 'Shalom!' They said a few words to her in Yiddish and she replied, while her grandchildren stood hypnotized not believing their eyes.

After several minutes of this the Rabbis said goodbye, left their phone numbers and plenty of reading material on Judaism and returned to Zitomer.

That evening they received a phone call from the young lady that shortly after they left, her grandmother passed away. Rabbi Wilhelm quickly and efficiently arranged a proper Jewish burial for her and was amazed by the revealed Divine providence; how he 'happened' to come to this 'lost' town, 'happened' to arrive at the home of a lost Jew in her last moments in this world and 'happened' to get her a proper Jewish burial.

But there was much more to the story.

Six years later, Rabbi Wilhelm arranged a special evening of lectures for the citizens of Zitomer with a talented speaker by the name of Mrs Rivka Nimoy on the topic of prayer. Almost fifty women from the area attended most of whom were tasting Judaism for the first time. The lecture went well, the discussion afterwards was lively and at one point Mrs. Nimoy asked if there was anyone that had an experience of having their prayers answered. After a few moments of uncomfortable silence one of the women raised her hand and stood.

She introduced herself as Netalia Pogoroi and told the following story.

Her mother passed away when she was a young girl and she and her brother were raised by her grandmother, a woman by the name of Batia Pabolotzkia. Eventually they grew up and moved away, she even married and had a child, but they always kept in touch with each other and with their grandmother and regularly visited her.

Then, when their grandmother was well into her eighties, the doctor that had

been assigned to her called and told them to come quickly because the old lady was dying.

So they both took taxis and within the hour were by their dying grandmother's bedside. She was breathing with great difficulty and was barely conscious and it seemed like the end would be any second, but then she suddenly opened her eyes, motioned for them to come closer and began to speak clearly and with great determination.

She told them she was Jewish! And so were they!

She explained that her whole life she was surrounded by gentiles and kept her Jewishness quiet because she didn't want to be different. But now that she was dying she begged them to see to it that she would get a Jewish burial. Then she lapsed back into her semi-comatose state.

They couldn't believe their own ears. They were .... Jews?! Their grandmother wanted a Jewish burial!?? They didn't even really know what either of these things were! They had been sure that they were just like everyone else! Maybe the old lady was crazy? But she spoke so clearly!

They went out to the yard to calm down and discuss things when suddenly... from nowhere, two genuine Rabbis entered through the gate! It was as though they were participating in some sort of dream!

"At first we thought that maybe grandma invited them but when we saw how genuinely excited and amazed she was when she saw them and they spoke to her we realized it was a miracle. The Rabbis came because she prayed for a Jewish burial and G-d answered her prayers!

"Afterwards we, my brother and I, read some of the pamphlets the Rabbis left and began to get interested in what was written there. Until this year I enrolled my daughter, who was the young baby in the story six years ago, in the Chabad school here in Zitomer. And that is why I'm here tonight!"

Now Rabbi Wilhelm was truly astonished; his search for a grave not only got a woman a proper Jewish burial it brought an entire 'lost' family back to Judaism.

Published by **The Chabad House of Caulfield** in conjunction with the

**Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.**

Editor: Shmuel Kesselman

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 1373

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

**“If you occasionally feel this certain trust is wavering..., avert your attention from this weakness, for it is no doubt only imagined.”**

By the Grace of G-d  
7 Shvat, 5712 [1952]  
Brooklyn

Greetings and Blessings!

I was told by one of your acquaintances that your health is not in such a good state. Accordingly, I would like to point out to you, even though this is doubtless not new to you, that every single one of us is under the specific surveillance of the Creator's Providence. It follows that if you imagine that someone is able to harm you, this is a fantasy, for it is impossible.

You should therefore be strong in your trust that just as G-d directs the entire world, He likewise directs yourself and your body, for a man is called “a small world” (Tanchuma, beg. of Parshas Pekudei; Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 69, p. 117b). If you occasionally feel that this certain trust is wavering, it is not advisable to become engrossed in the matter. Instead, you should avert your attention from this weakness, for it is no doubt only imagined, and then very soon you, too, will see that just as all Jews are “believers, [being] the descendants of believers,” you, too, are firm in your trust.

You will no doubt obey the doctor's orders, for the Torah has given the doctor permission — which also means the power — to heal.

And may G-d grant that you will soon give me good tidings about your constantly improving health.

It would be appropriate that every day you recite a number of psalms from the Book of Tehillim. As is well known, King David requested of G-d that the recitation of Tehillim be regarded as equivalent to the study of [challenging Talmudic tractates such as] Nega'im and Ohalos. Accordingly, the recitation of Tehillim comprises both an element of prayer (see Berachos 4b) and an element of Torah study.

With blessings for a speedy recovery and sound health, and in anticipation of good news,

## QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

*With Rabbi Aron Moss*

### Why Is Pressing a Button Considered Work on Shabbat?

**Question:** Rabbi, do you honestly believe that pressing a button to cross the road is considered doing work on the Sabbath? It doesn't seem so strenuous to me..

**Answer:** It is not strenuous work that is forbidden on Shabbos, but rather creative work.

During the working week we strive to make the world a better, safer and more comfortable place. We use our human ingenuity to invent, build, develop and improve the world around us. But on the seventh day we step back into ourselves. We take a break from trying to change the world and we appreciate the innate beauty of the world that G-d created. Instead of altering our surroundings we enjoy them. Rather than utilize the amenities that technology has given us we enjoy the blessings that G-d has given us - love, family, friendship, meditation, and just being human.

Shabbos is a like a dream-world, and we enter this dream-world by leaving the mundane world behind. Even the smallest disturbance — like pressing a button — would bring us crashing back down to earth. And there's nothing worse than waking up from a dream before it's over.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*In Chasidic circles, and particularly Chabad Chasidic circles, the month of Kislev that we have now entered is known as the "Month of Redemption" for it contains many events of good news and Redemptive qualities.*

*The first day of Kislev (this Friday November 9), marks the anniversary of the Rebbe's first public appearance after suffering a heart attack in 1977.*

*The second of Kislev is the anniversary of the actual return of the holy books to their rightful owner - the library of Agudas Chasidei Chabad - following their illegal removal from the library. After a prolonged civil court-case, which decided to whom the library of the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe belonged, the verdict was rendered on the day when the Torah reading stated, "I shall return in peace to my father's house."*

*The ninth of Kislev is the birthday and anniversary of passing of the second Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Dov Ber, known as the Mitteler Rebbe. On the 10th of Kislev, one year before his passing, the Mitteler Rebbe was released from prison where he had been interred on false charges.*

*On the 19th of Kislev, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the founder of Chabad, was released from his Czarist imprisonment. During his interrogation, he impressed the investigators, including the Czar himself, with his wisdom, scholarship and piety. Thus, the entire Chasidic movement was exonerated and its teachings could be spread freely. Ever since, the 19th of Kislev has been celebrated as the "New Year of Chasidut."*

*Of course, last but not least, the holiday of Chanuka, begins on the 25th of Kislev (this year beginning Sunday evening, December 3). It, too, is a holiday of redemption. On Chanuka we thank G-d for the miracles and for redeeming them from the oppressive rule of the Greeks.*

*May this month truly be a month of redemption for the entire Jewish people, with the coming of Moshiach, NOW.*

*J. I. Guterlich*

IT HAPPENED



Two Orphans and their Wedding Presents

By Yerachmiel Tilles

There once was an innkeeper who employed two assistants, a young boy and girl who happened to be orphans. When they grew a little older the innkeeper thought that it would be a good idea for them to marry each other, a plan to which they both agreed. As they were very poor and lacked the money to make the wedding and to set up their new home, the kindly innkeeper provided them with a large sum to cover their expenses. The young couple took the money and traveled to a nearby town to make their purchases.

As they approached the village they heard a loud commotion. When they asked the local townspeople what was going on they were told that a particular family had not paid its rent to the poritz (landowner) for quite some time. As a result, the entire family was being led to prison.

The orphaned bride and groom were overcome with pity. They immediately decided to try to ransom the poor family with the money they had been given, which happened to be the exact amount the family owed the poritz. The grateful family was released, and the young couple returned to their own town. They told the innkeeper that robbers had attacked them on the way to the store and had stolen all the money. The innkeeper then gave them more money to replace what had been stolen.

The date for the wedding was set and guests from the surrounding area were invited. On the appointed day, just a short time before the chupa was to take place, a carriage full of unexpected guests arrived. Inside were several Jews of regal and majestic bearing, who were obviously Torah scholars. These were, unbeknownst to anyone, the Baal Shem Tov and some disciples.

Alighting from their carriage the Baal Shem Tov addressed the groom, although without revealing his own personal identity: "Mazal tov to you, nephew. I am your uncle. I came as soon as I heard you were to be married today." One of the Baal Shem Tov's disciples introduced himself as an uncle of the bride. Another explained that he was the groom's cousin. Each one of the guests presented himself as a relative of the orphaned couple, who came to take part in their simcha. They were received with much joy, for no one had known that these relatives existed.

As was the custom of the time, part of the wedding revelry consisted of publicly announcing the gifts that were being bestowed on the newly married couple. When the Baal Shem Tov was asked what he was giving, he replied: "I hereby bequeath to them the poritz's village!" This announcement caused the celebrants to laugh, for everyone thought he must have had nothing to give and merely wanted to amuse the bride and groom. One disciple said he was giving the couple another poritz's mill; a second disciple announced the gift of a different poritz's river, and yet a third said he was giving a fourth poritz's forest as a gift. Each announcement drew a ripple of laughter from the happy crowd, all of whom were having a merry time at the wedding celebration.

A short time after the wedding the kindly innkeeper suggested that the young couple open their own inn in a neighbouring village. Again he generously provided them with financial assistance and helped them set up their own business.

Not long after the inn was opened, the couple was awakened one night by a knock at the door. Standing outside was a gentile peasant, who explained that he was the servant of a very wealthy and powerful

landowner. He was sent on a hunting expedition with the landowner's son, and unfortunately they met with an accident. The horse pulling the huge winter carriage had slipped and fallen into a deep ravine, dragging the wagon and the young boy inside down into the gully. The horse and wagon were stuck in the snow -- could the young innkeeper please help him rescue the child?

The young man immediately threw on his overcoat, reached for this lantern and shovel, and followed the servant off into the night. Together, the two of them managed to free the horse and carriage. The innkeeper carried the half-frozen child back to his house, changed his clothes, gave him warm food and drink to revive him, and put him to bed.

The next morning, the boy was well enough to go home, accompanied by his father's servant. When they reached the poritz's estate they were given the most joyous welcome, for the landowner had sent out a search party to look for the boy, but had met with no success. Relieved by his son's reappearance the poritz nonetheless called for a doctor to examine the boy, who pronounced him fit, although weakened by the experience. He ordered that the youth rest in bed for a few weeks to regain his strength.

After the boy had totally recovered, the poritz decided to throw a party to celebrate. He invited many of his fellow landowners and sought out the young Jew who had saved his son's life, to invite him to the celebration as well. After the assembled landowners all had more than their share of fine wine, they decided to show their gratitude to the Jew who had been instrumental in the rescue by presenting him with their gifts.

The poritz, the father of the boy, got up and announced that he was giving one of his villages (the very village which had been promised by the Baal Shem Tov) to the astonished young man. Another landowner, not wanting to be outdone, stood up and declared that he would give his mill (the specific mill promised by the Baal Shem Tov's disciple) as a gift. Another presented the young man with the deed to his forest, another, his river. Each gave the young orphan the exact gift that had been promised by one of the mysterious guests who had arrived the day of the wedding. The struggling orphaned couple had now become very rich.

This was, of course, the young couple's just reward for the precious mitzvah of redemption of the prisoners, a deed that the saintly Baal Shem Tov had seen with his holy vision.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Isaac and Rebecca endure twenty childless years, until their prayers are answered and Rebecca conceives. She experiences a difficult pregnancy as the "children struggle inside her"; G-d tells her that "there are two nations in your womb," and that the younger will prevail over the elder.

Esau emerges first; Jacob is born clutching Esau's heel. Esau grows up to be "a cunning hunter, a man of the field"; Jacob is "a wholesome man," a dweller in the tents of learning. Isaac favors Esau; Rebecca loves Jacob. Returning exhausted and hungry from the hunt one day, Esau sells his birthright (his rights as the firstborn) to Jacob for a pot of red lentil stew.

In Gerar, in the land of the Philistines, Isaac presents Rebecca as his sister, out of fear that he will be killed by someone coveting her beauty. He farms the land, reopens the wells dug by his father Abraham, and digs a series of his own wells: over the first two there is strife with the Philistines, but the waters of the third well are enjoyed in tranquility.

Esau marries two Hittite women. Isaac grows old and blind, and expresses his desire to bless Esau before he dies. While Esau goes off to hunt for his father's favorite food, Rebecca dresses Jacob in Esau's clothes, covers his arms and neck with goatskins to simulate the feel of his hairier brother, prepares a similar dish, and sends Jacob to his father. Jacob receives his father's blessings for "the dew of the heaven and the fat of the land" and mastery over his brother. When Esau returns and the deception is revealed, all Isaac can do for his weeping son is to predict that he will live by his sword, and that when Jacob falters, the younger brother will forfeit his supremacy over the elder.

Jacob leaves home for Charan to flee Esau's wrath and to find a wife in the family of his mother's brother, Laban. Esau marries a third wife—Machalath, the daughter of Ishmael.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 9 - 10 November	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	7:45	8:47
Adelaide	7:35	8:35
Brisbane	5:54	6:50
Darwin	6:31	7:23
Gold Coast	5:53	6:50
Perth	6:30	7:29
Sydney	7:12	8:12
Canberra	7:23	8:24
Launceston	7:44	8:50
Auckland	7:44	8:45
Wellington	7:53	8:59
Hobart	7:47	8:54
Byron Bay	6:53	7:50

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, ST KILDA EAST

ROSH CHODESH KISLEV PARSHAS  
TOLDOS • 24 CHESHVAN • 9 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	7.50 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	8.20 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.32 AM
	SHACHRIS	10.00 AM
	MINCHA	7.40 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS	8.47 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	7.55 PM
	MAARIV	8.40 PM