

LAMPLIGHTER

8 Kislev
Parshas
Vayeitzei
1374
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Vayeitzei, recounts how Jacob leaves his father's home in the land of Israel, goes to Charan, a city in the Diaspora, where he marries, raises a family, and amasses wealth. After a sojourn of 20 years, he seeks to return, collects his family and possessions and journeys back to the Land of Israel.

Without discounting the narrative's historical truth, it can also be understood as an analogy. Jacob serves as an analogy for the soul, the land of Israel for the spiritual realms, and Charan, for our material world.

The soul is an eternal spiritual entity, "an actual part of G-d." And yet, it is forced to abandon the revelation it experiences in the spiritual realms and descend to this material world. Why? To get married, raise a family, and amass wealth. And then, after many years pass, the soul returns to the spiritual realms?

If the soul begins in the spiritual realms and ends in the spiritual realms, and its fundamental identity is spiritual, why is it so necessary for it to descend to this material realm? Is getting married, raising a family, and amassing wealth that important?

Yes!

Were the soul to be concerned with its own satisfaction alone, then it would be better for it to remain in the spiritual realm. There it would be encompassed by revealed G-dly light at all times. But there is something more important to the soul than its own satisfaction, and for that reason it descends to this material world.

The soul is sent into this world with a mission. G-d wants man to improve upon His creation. He created the world with a G-dly potential, but that G-dly potential is not openly revealed. It is left for man to "Know Him in all your ways," and to make the G-dly potential that is hidden in this world openly manifest. This mission is what propels the soul into this material realm.

This is why getting married, raising a family, and acquiring possessions are so important. G-d is not interested only in the way we study or pray. If all He wanted from us is to perform spiritual activities, He could have left the soul in the spiritual realms. G-d made the soul descend so that it becomes involved with other people and with the material environment it is placed. On this plane, it must look beyond the physical and appreciate that every entity has a spiritual purpose and do what it can to insure that this purpose is realized.

On the other hand, this emphasis on material activities is not to the exclusion of prayer and study. Without them, we would not have the awareness to appreciate an entity's spiritual purpose, or the inner strength to pursue that purpose despite our material tendencies. That is why our sages emphasize that Jacob spent 14 years immersed in study before setting out for Charan. He needed - as do we his spiritual heirs - this positive influence to empower him to meet the challenges he would face in the long years in Charan.

Aleph-Bet Before Alphabet

By Levi Avtzon

In this week's Torah portion, Jacob leaves (or, more accurately, flees) his home in southern Israel and travels to his mother's hometown, Charan. The Midrash tells us that while in transit he was robbed of all his possessions by his own nephew, Eliphaz son of Esau.

After a fourteen-year stopover in the great Yeshivah Academy of his time, which was under the leadership of Noah's great-great-grandson Eber, he finally arrived in Charan. There, his uncle Laban, a shrewd and sly character, scammed and cheated him at every opportunity, even greeting him with warm kisses to check if he might be hiding precious stones in his mouth.

He married Laban's two daughters, and remained at his father-in-law's place for twenty years (an admirable feat even under the most normal of circumstances . . .). There he raised eleven of the twelve tribes, and a daughter, in the ways and legacy of his grandfather Abraham and father Isaac, until he finally returned to Israel.

One man, alone in an extremely hostile environment, cheated and hated by his own father-in-law, working all day and night to support his family, away from his holy parents and homeland for more than three decades.

To top it all off, he had that little memory stick in his brain reminding him that if his twin brother Esau were to lay hands on him, he would murder him in cold blood for stealing his blessings.

He could have easily succumbed to the circumstances and pressure, and built an unhealthy home and raised a dysfunctional family. Where the children would hear more "Don't you dare or I'll kill you!" than "I love you." Where the children would know they were different, but couldn't appreciate why they are different. Sociologists would surely have predicted that he would rear confused children who would grow up with a deep hatred toward the "archaic," "burdensome" values of their ancestors.

Yet that was not the case: each and every child remained loyal to his heritage, honoring Jacob and assuring the continuity of the Jewish nation.

How admirable for a man to remain strong in his convictions and maintain an indomitable character in the face of opposition and hostility!

My own grandparents, both maternal and paternal, grew up in Communist Russia, where they saw millions of their Jewish brothers and sisters fall for the utopian dreams of Karl Marx and Comrade Lenin. While their neighbors and friends—and for one of my grandparents, his siblings as well—fell for the attractive nonsense, my brave antecedents (and many others) weathered the storm, at great risk to their lives. Today, their descendants, who number deep into the three-digit mark, continue their legacy.

From where did they draw the strength and determination?

Jacob's story provides the answer.

Where did he develop this backbone? It was the fourteen years during which he immersed himself in Torah study and prayer. Fourteen years of pristine holiness. Only afterwards did he enter the world of business—in which, by the way, he did phenomenally well.

Similarly, the strength derived from the yeshivahs in which my grandparents studied paid back dividends.

You don't get a backbone of values from learning how to split the atom or from studying $4/5 + 4 - 000 = \underline{\quad}$. Yes, knowledge is vital, but young and impressionable children must, first and foremost, be immersed in the study of values and faith—the Torah.

Teach your child the aleph-bet before the alphabet.

And in just a few years (time flies . . .), when your Jewish grandchildren will come sing "I Have a Little Dreidel" on your lap, you will be grateful that you did.

Slice of LIFE

The Healing Dollar

By Tuvia Bolton

When Rabbi Nir Gavriel, the Chabad 'Shilach' (representative of the Lubavitcher Rebbe) in the 'Florentine' area of Tel Aviv, was on his way to the Synagogue one Thursday just a few years ago, he noticed that he had three unanswered calls on his cellular phone from the same number.

He had a lot to do that day and was just about to turn off his phone and answer the calls after prayers, when it rang again, from the same number.

He answered. The young man on the other end was desperate. He said he got the Rabbi's number from a friend and was now waiting in front of the locked door of the Chabad House for the Rabbi to return; he needed advice immediately.

Rabbi Gavriel dropped his plans and rushed to his Chabad House where he found a young man almost in tears. He introduced himself, unlocked the door, invited him in, told him to sit down and heard a tragic story.

The visitor said that he had just gotten married a few weeks earlier and now his new wife was scheduled to have a serious operation in just a few days. He heard there was a way to consult the Rebbe's Books of Letters and receive advice and comfort. He had already written a letter, and he just needed help consulting the book.

Rabbi Gavriel, without asking questions, took out one of the 25 volumes of the Rebbe's letters (Igrot Kodesh) from his bookcase, inserted the letter and read the page that appeared there. But after reading it a few times he had to admit that it seemingly had no connection whatsoever to the young man's case, so he asked his visitor to explain exactly what had happened.

The young man explained; over a month ago he and the young woman that was now his wife decided to get

married. But shortly thereafter she complained about pains in her throat. So she went for a checkup and got the horrifying news that it was a malignant tumor!

The doctors reluctantly agreed that the operation could wait a month until after the wedding but warned that any more than that could be fatal.

So they married, but now the time came for the operation. It was to take place in four days; next Monday.

Rabbi Gavriel gave his best wishes, took the young man's phone number again, gave him a few encouraging words and assured him that he would pray and keep in touch. But when he left, Rabbi Gavriel almost broke into tears. Could it be that the lack of a clear reply of the Rebbe meant...?

"No! He thought to himself. "The Rebbe will help. He always does!"

Rabbi Gavriel went to the morning prayers and afterwards made his usual 'rounds'.

His Chabad House was in the middle of some fifty small shops and every morning he visited all of them to see if they needed any 'Jewish' assistance. But this morning he noticed that a new shop opened up that he hadn't seen before. He entered, introduced himself to the middle aged woman who was the owner and asked if he could be of assistance.

The woman smiled and replied that she was happy to see him on her opening day but was already well acquainted with the Rebbe from years ago. And she began to tell her story.

Over twenty years earlier when she was living in New York (like so many other Israelis) she was still single and was having problems getting married. She was thirty years old and simply could not meet the right man.

Then she met up with a Chabad Chassid who told her to visit the Lubavitcher Rebbe on Sunday morning when he gave out dollar bills (to encourage the giving of charity) and ask for advice and a blessing.

So the next Sunday morning she went to Crown Heights and waited for several hours in the women's line. But amazingly, when she finally stood before the Rebbe and told him her problem, he gave her a dollar, told her to give it to someone who needs it, and blessed her with a speedy recovery and good health!

At first she figured that the Rebbe hadn't heard her request; all she wanted was a husband!

So the next Sunday she again stood in line but this time when she was finally

standing before the Rebbe she made her request in a louder voice.

But to her surprise the same thing happened again; the Rebbe gave her a dollar, told her to give it to someone who needs it, and blessed her with a speedy recovery.

A month later she understood the blessing. She woke one morning with severe pains in her neck. After several months of suffering, hoping it would disappear she went to a doctor who examined her, took samples and diagnosed her condition as a malignant tumor that had to be removed.

A few weeks later she went into the operating room with the Rebbe's dollar as her only hope...but it didn't seem to help! Her heart stopped pumping in the middle of the operation and, although they brought her back to life, they had to stop the operation in the middle and sew her back up with only half the tumor removed. The doctors even told her relatives not to tell her the truth so her last few weeks should be positive ones.

But miraculously when she made her next checkup the malignant tumor turned benign! She was released in totally good health and shortly thereafter met her husband to be.

All of the Rebbe's blessings came to fruition.

"Wonderful story!" Said Rabbi Gavriel. But tell me, do you still have the dollar the Rebbe gave you?"

When her reply was positive, Rabbi Gavriel told her the story of the young man who visited him a few hours earlier, and begged her to run home, bring the dollar and give it to someone who needs it as the Rebbe requested.

The woman asked Rabbi Gavriel to watch her store while she ran home and within less than a half hour she was back with the dollar. He called the young man who rushed to take the dollar and promised to return it as soon as possible.

The rest was too good to be true. His wife took the dollar with her to the operation and it was successful.

That week there were big celebrations in the Chabad House for the young man and his wife. Just as Rabbi Gavriel thought; the Rebbe didn't let them down.

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

A Person Is Given Strength to Overcome Challenges

By the Grace of G-d
21 Cheshvan, 5737

Greetings and Blessings!

I have received your letter, and I will mention you in a Prayer that G-d, blessed be He, Who watches over everyone and Who sustains and provides for the entire world with his Goodness and Kindness, will find your livelihood and will improve your situation with everything that you and your family need.

It is certainly unnecessary to explain at length that daily behavior according to G-d's will is the way to receive G-d's blessing, and it is understood that it is not proper to give conditions to G-d.

However, it is important to emphasize that every single Jew was given the strength to live according to G-d's will. It is also self-understood, that just as a human does not demand from his handiwork (for example, a machine or the like, that he built) more than the ability he has given it, how much more so does this apply to the Creator, blessed be He.

As the Sages say, "G-d only demands according to the strength of the person."

Unlike a human who, when delegating a job to someone or something, can err in his calculation, it is not possible for G-d to err, and to demand the impossible.

It is only that the goal can be easy for one person to achieve, while the other person has to overcome difficulties and challenges in order to achieve that same result, but it's clear that everyone receives the strength to fulfil G-d's Mitzvot in their totality.

Even more so, when one person is given extra difficulties and challenges, it is a sign that he was given more strength, and with patience and a firm resolve to withstand the challenges, and with faith in G-d, blessed be He, he will see that the obstacles were not as great as he had imagined, and that, "G-d's salvation can come in the blink of an eye."

May it be G-d's will that you will very soon be able to report good news regarding everything mentioned.

With blessing,

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Who Should Fill in the Grave?

Question: I noticed at a Jewish funeral that the rabbi called forward family members and friends to fill in the grave with earth. What is the reason for this? Who are the appropriate people to participate?

Answer: Burial is the last physical act of kindness that we do for our departed loved ones. We have cared for them in their lifetimes, and now we care for them in their passing by ensuring they have a proper Jewish burial. This obligation rests firstly on the children, then on the rest of the family and friends, and finally upon all fellow Jews. It is a holy task, and an essential part of the Jewish burial ceremony; it should not be left to the gravediggers. The soul of the departed, watching over their own funeral, derives comfort from the fact that they were laid to eternal rest by those who love them.

There may also be a therapeutic purpose to this custom. Our initial reaction to tragedy is denial or disbelief. It is too much for our senses to handle, so they reject it. By the loved ones themselves actually participating in the burial, the reality of what has happened hits. Although painful, this will allow the process of acceptance, healing and consolation to begin.

Customarily, after filling in a bit of earth, one doesn't hand the spade to the next person, but rather leaves it in the mound of dirt for the next person to take themselves, for we don't want to seem to be "giving over" something that symbolises sadness and tragedy.

May G-d bring comfort to all who need it, and may we all have only happy occasions to celebrate.

A WORD

from the Director

This Shabbos is the ninth of Kislev, the birthday and yahrtzeit of Rabbi Dov Ber (known as the Mittler Rebbe), the second Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch.

In 1816, Reb Dov Ber established a settlement of Chabad chasidim in Israel in the city of Hebron. He encouraged the chasidim already living in other parts of Israel to resettle in Hebron. In addition, his own daughter and son-in-law moved with their family from Russia to Hebron.

But the history of Chabad-Lubavitch support of people, institutions and settlements in the Holy Land predates even 1816. For the first Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, vigorously encouraged his followers to support the Jews in the Holy Land.

Each and every Rebbe of Chabad, up to and including the present Rebbe, has unequivocally supported the Holy Land and spoken out boldly concerning anything that might have the slightest impact on the security of the Jews there.

Our brethren in Israel know firsthand about the Rebbe's concern for them and their lives. During the Gulf War the Rebbe's emphatic message that "Israel is the safest place in the world for G-d is constantly watching it" was continuously played on the radio. The hundreds of Chabad Centers that dot the Israeli landscape were deluged with callers during the Gulf War asking, "What is the Rebbe saying now?"

Without a doubt, and everyone can be sure of this, the Rebbe's policy has not changed one iota from that of his predecessors. Based on clear guidance from the Torah and Jewish law, the Rebbe reiterates: No action can be taken that might negatively affect the safety of the Jews of the Holy Land.

In the merit of Rabbi Dov Ber, who established the first Chabad settlement in the Holy Land, may we be privileged to go together with Moshiach to the Holy Land, NOW.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED



The Strict Butcher vs. the Lenient Rebbe

By Yerachmiel Tilles

The Baal Shem Tov once traveled to the town of Kamenka. As he approached his destination, he heard a heavenly voice: "Yisroel ben Eliezer, Please remove the shochet (kosher slaughterer) of Kamenka from his position."

The Besht pondered the directive he received. He couldn't fathom why there would be a heavenly decree to discharge the shochet from his position. He knew that R. Boruch, the Rabbi of Kamenka, was a wise and respected Rabbi who was meticulous when it came to matters of Jewish Law. He was sure that if there was any halachic problem with the town's shochet, the rabbi would know of it and correct it immediately.

"Perhaps," reasoned the Besht, "the problem is not a halachic one. Perhaps the shochet has taken a spiritual 'position' from which he needs to be removed."

When he arrived in Kamenka, the Baal Shem Tov went directly to the house of Rabbi Boruch, who was elated and honored to welcome the holy Besht to his town. He was invited to rest there while Rabbi Baruch arranged for a celebration honoring the arrival of the great tzadik. He set aside several choice lambs, and sent a request to the local shochet to come and slaughter them for the occasion.

After the slaughtering, when inspecting the lambs as Jewish Law requires, the shochet found one of the lambs to have a certain lesion that he decided rendered it not kosher. He removed the unfit lamb and hung it on a hook in the passageway behind Rabbi Boruch's home.

Later that day, Rabbi Boruch found the Baal Shem Tov smoking his pipe in that passageway and staring in deep concentration at the slaughtered lamb. After a few minutes, the Besht turned to the rabbi and said, "Rabbi Boruch, would you be so kind as to cut a piece of meat from this animal and roast it for me."

Reb Boruch thought the tzadik had made a mistake.

"Rebbe, this animal is treif (not kosher). That is why the shochet hung it here. Let me prepare a piece from one of the other animals that he also just slaughtered."

"No," answered the Baal Shem Tov, "I want a piece from this particular animal."

"But Rebbe, the shochet told me personally that this animal is not kosher."

The Besht turned to him and said, "I understand. But I can hear this animal begging me that it be able to fulfill its purpose in this world; that it be slaughtered by a G-d fearing shochet and that a blessing be said by a Jew before it is eaten so its soul-spark can be elevated. We must speak with the shochet and find out why he considers it to be not kosher."

Immediately, Rabbi Boruch sent for the shochet. When he arrived, the rabbi asked him in the presence of the Baal Shem Tov why he thought this lamb is treif.

The shochet explained his doubt as to whether the animal was one hundred percent kosher, and his hesitancy to allow any Jew to eat

it. Then he continued, "It is true, however, that there are several rabbinic opinions regarding this particular lesion, and that some authorities consider it to be kosher, and some do not."

The Baal Shem Tov then understood the 'position' the shochet was in, from which he had to be removed. Although the shochet was G-d fearing and expert in his profession, he did not understand the spiritual consequences of his perhaps too strict position.

"In that case," the Besht addressed Rabbi Boruch, "please cut me a piece of meat and roast it for me." The Rabbi stared at the Baal Shem Tov in shock. On one hand he wanted to fulfill the request of his Rebbe. On the other hand how could he feed the Rebbe treif meat, a prohibition directly from the Torah?

The Baal Shem Tov understood the rabbi's dilemma. So he suggested, "Please send a messenger to Rabbi Shmuel, the Dayan (rabbinical court judge) of the large strictly observant community of Polonnoye, with a letter explaining the doubts the shochet has about this animal. Let him be the judge for us."

The other two agreed. Rabbi Boruch, relieved by the Besht's suggestion, immediately sent a messenger to Rabbi Shmuel. The messenger returned that same day with rabbinical judge's reply, which was that the meat was indeed kosher. He also included the halachic reasons for his opinion.

Thus, the Baal Shem Tov complied with the heavenly decree and succeeded to remove the shochet from his 'position.' Indeed, he placed him in a much better one in the eyes of Heaven!

Biographical note:

Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer [of blessed memory: 18 Elul 5458- 6 Sivan 5520 (Sept. 1698 - June 1760 C.E.)], the Baal Shem Tov ["master of the good Name"-often referred to as "the Besht" for short], a unique and seminal figure in Jewish history, revealed his identity as an exceptionally holy person, on his 36th birthday, 18 Elul 5494 (1734 C.E.). He wrote no books, although many claim to contain his teachings.

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 16 - 17 November	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	7:53	8:56
Adelaide	7:42	8:43
Brisbane	5:59	6:56
Darwin	6:34	7:26
Gold Coast	5:59	6:56
Perth	6:37	7:36
Sydney	7:19	8:19
Canberra	7:30	8:32
Launceston	7:53	9:00
Auckland	7:51	8:54
Wellington	8:02	9:09
Hobart	7:56	9:05
Byron Bay	6:59	7:56

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, ST KILDA EAST

PARSHAS VAYEITZEI • 8 KISLEV • 16 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	8.00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	8.30 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.29 AM
	SHACHRIS	10.00 AM
	MINCHA	7.45 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS / MARIV	8.56 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	8.00 PM
	MARIV	8.50 PM