

LAMPLIGHTER

22 Kislev
Parshas
Vayeishev
1376
30 November
5779/2018

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The main part of this week's Torah portion, Vayeishev, deals with the jealousy of Jacob's sons towards Joseph which caused them to sell him into slavery. In the midst of this narrative, we read how Tamar, Judah's daughter-in-law, was informed that he was about to come to the town of Timna to shear his sheep. In the words of the Torah: "And it was related to Tamar, saying, 'behold, your father-in-law is coming up to Timna to shear his flocks'."

The Torah does not detail the nature of a person's coming and going if not absolutely germane to the content of the narrative. Why, then, does the verse specify the ascent in the story of Tamar?

The great sage, Rashi, in an innovative interpretation of the above verse, explains that Timna was a town located on the slopes of a mountain. He states: "You ascend to it from one direction and descend to it from the other."

The expression of ascent, therefore, is pertinent in the story of Tamar. Since Timna was on the mountain-slope, and Tamar was planning to go and meet Judah, she would not know from which direction he was coming unless the direction was mentioned.

A person's spiritual service is like ascending a mountain. A mountain climber cannot stop mid-way on the steep slope, for in that position it is almost impossible to prevent himself from losing his footing and falling. He must climb steadily upward without pause. Similarly, in ascending the "mountain of G-d" (Psalms 24:3) a constant upwards movement is vital, not only for the purpose of going higher, but also to ensure that one does not fall lower. One should not be satisfied with his present spiritual level, for such complacency is the beginning of descent.

The upcoming mitzva (commandment) of the Chanuka lights lends particular emphasis to this teaching. Every night of Chanuka a new light must be added, for spiritual affairs must always be in ascendancy. If one failed to add an additional light on the fourth night of Chanuka (for example), he has not merely failed to ascend higher on that day - he has slipped down from the previous day's level. Yesterday he lit three candles, an increase from the day before; he fulfilled the mitzva with the extra devotion required; he was on the upswing, in ascendancy. Not so today. His level has fallen. To observe the mitzva today with the same devotion as yesterday, he must increase his commitment!

True Courage

By Elisha Greenbaum

A captured leader of the so-called Intifada was recently videoed in court taunting his Israeli jailers. The murderer declared that he was positive the Jews would eventually be defeated due to their basic character flaw of cowardice. From his perspective, his cohorts' willingness to die is a sign of their commitment to their cause, while our dedication to survival is a sign of weakness.

Judaism is a religion that values life above all. Our enemies revel in death. For us the pre-eminent command is "Vochai Bohem" - you should live with the Torah and mitzvot — true life, ecstatic with the opportunity to serve G-d; while their societal lust is for suicide, mayhem and murder.

However, even a peace loving, life-affirming nation must be ready, when necessary, to take up arms in self-defence. Jews are not mindless pacifists, nor does our religion demand a reflexive "turning the other cheek" upon being attacked. Halachic law books are replete with justifications for defensive wars and pre-emptive military strikes. One can argue that the distinction between our enemies and ourselves is expressed not by our unwillingness to fight; rather, for us, violence is a last resort, entered into only under duress, while for them carnage and bloodshed are a goal.

Not only must we be ready to defend ourselves when provoked, even at the moral cost of being forced to hurt others, but there are occasions when we must be willing to lay down our own lives in deference to a higher cause.

There are three instances where the tenets of Judaism demand every Jew be prepared to sacrifice himself. The spiritual consequences of murder, worshiping a foreign faith or indulging in a forbidden sexual relationship are so dire that one is expected to allow oneself to be killed rather than perpetrate these transgressions. In these exceptional circumstances it is not that one volunteers to die, rather that one cannot imagine living with such a sin on one's conscience.

Very occasionally, certain Jews have proved willing to sacrifice themselves for a cause that at first glance may seem less critical than these three fundamental sins. We read this week how Joseph was willing to risk his life just to fulfill an errand for his father. Similarly, one of the proudest parts of the Chanukah story is the courage displayed by Matisyahu and sons in their struggle to practice every last scintilla of their religion, even to the extent that they were willing to lay down their own lives to ensure that others too could be free to live as Jews.

Joseph observed a lack of deference by his brothers to their father's authority and resolved to fulfill his father's desires to the maximum, even to the extent of placing himself in danger. Similarly, the Maccabees were willing to die, if there was even the slightest chance of influencing others to appreciate the gift of our heritage.

There are times when one must be willing to make any sacrifice, no matter the cost, to ensure the propagation of our religion. When a leader is convinced that the circumstances of the moment demand this ultimate forfeit, then he will lay his own neck on the line, demonstrating his true values and priorities, and from this his followers will draw succour for generations to come.

Unlike the corrupt mouthpieces for terror who cower safely in their luxurious Gazan villas while despatching their naïve bomb-belted followers into Israel, our leaders such as Joseph and the Maccabees, demonstrate true courage, Jewish courage. Only something of overriding significance to the future of your religion could demand such an ultimate act of personal sacrifice, and this sacrifice can only be undertaken by the greatest and bravest of our people.

Slice of LIFE

Three Years After My Daughter's Open-Heart Surgery

By Loren Minsky

Chunks of time roll by without me even thinking to say thank you, without me remembering or acknowledging the gift of three years ago. Back then, when I was in the rush of the moment—and felt the awareness of G-d and gratitude so deeply—my intention was to fill my life with this. And yet, daily life happens, triggers surface, other details take center stage, and things get taken for granted. But right now, on the anniversary of my daughter's heart surgery, I put my complacency on hold and go within, to find my place of gratitude, where I still aspire to live from.

Rewind. My 2½-year-old is scheduled for open-heart surgery, and in my heart and mind there is so much at stake. Though we are at peace with our decision to go ahead with it and are placing her in the hands of the best surgeon in the world for a procedure that's supposed to be somewhat "straightforward," there is the fear of one wrong move and, of course, of the unknown: How will she react to surgery and all that it entails? We are scared. Scared of the letting go and scared by the tasks that we have certain control over leading up to it, like preventing her from eating that morning (it's necessary to fast beforehand). Fruit is her daily elixir, her coffee, and I simply cannot fathom how she will bypass that routine. Somehow, we manage to.

And then we are en route to the hospital. It's summer in Boston,

early morning—my favorite time of day, when the air is crisp, and smells of vitality and possibility. We arrive and stop at the hospital fish tank for her to marvel at all the colors and patterns. For the next few days, we, too, are going to be living in somewhat of a tank—a bubble in time and space.

We go up and wait. I'd had my own bad experience with anesthesia as a child, with the associated loss of control, and I hope for her it will be smooth. We are very present, more than usual, drinking up the last few seconds with her before she gets wheeled away. She is chatting away and moving around, as always, as she converts the head of the hospital bed into her slide. "Will she ever be able to do this again? Will she retain her character and curiosity and innocence? Are they really about to wheel her away and cut her chest open? Is this happening?"

And then, she is in their hands. She is in the hands of G-d, as always, but now we feel this truth acutely. In the waiting room, I look out the big windows at the world that is beginning another "usual" day. But here inside, so many very different outcomes await so many very different people. A collective holding of breath takes place in this place, where people are privy to perspective on life, where they are not distracted by the non-truths many times we choose to focus on.

Before we know it, we are looking into the kind face of the surgeon, who comes out to let us know how it went. Thank G-d, it went well. We are on the other side.

The other side is a journey itself, from watching her turn blue as they pull her off life support later that same day, to keeping fully on top of her medication doses and vital signs, to just lying and being with her, to playing in the magical hospital playroom. We are blessed with nurses that are both professional and human, and the smoothest of experiences. Thank G-d, within days, we are in a cab out of there.

Fast-forward three years. It is the anniversary itself, and we are

heading to the beach to celebrate, a life-affirming activity, I think. But even on the day, I find myself frustrated by the length of our journey and various details around it, and still find myself weighed down by the responsibility for my daughter's well-being, as if it is in my hands (as if it ever was). I am impatient. I am not present. I am aware I am impatient and not present. I judge myself.

But later in the day, as she sits facing forward on my lap on the train and we watch the fields roll by together, I say to her with feeling and conviction how much I love her. And as I kiss her head and hold her tight, I let tears flow silently and steadfastly down my cheeks. Tears of appreciation, tears of love, tears of awe, tears of fears of not being a good enough mother and tears for not appreciating it all as I once resolved.

Oh, the challenge of life. We experience events that we take for granted, instead of allowing them to infuse our lives with perspective and meaning. For example, all the many times I didn't knock someone over while driving carelessly. I don't even think about this, let alone hold it in my mind's eye and mutter thank you again and again, especially when I find myself preoccupied by things that don't really count.

I am sorry for the missed opportunities to live in constant gratitude since the surgery, but now is where I have power. When I catch myself feeling sorry for myself or weighed down by life, as is inevitable, I intend to contemplate on the surgery, and choose to accept and absorb the valuable gifts within. I will mutter thank you again and again, and appreciate my daughter's life anew and life as a whole.

Everything's OK (perfect, really). Thank you!

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 1376

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

The importance of spreading the study of the teachings of Chassidus

[The following is a portion of a letter that, though undated, appears to have been sent in the middle of Kislev, 5710. The identity of the recipient was also not released.]

Enclosed is the kuntres for the approaching Yud-Tes Kislev [festival] that was just published. Undoubtedly, it is unnecessary to inspire you to look carefully and analyze the letters of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe Shlita, [published] at the beginning and end of that kuntres.

Consequently, it is unnecessary to motivate you about the pressing need to share this kuntres with others, as emphasized in the first letter. [Note the passage which concludes:] "On the contrary," [which emphasizes the importance of increasing the dissemination of the teachings of Chassidus]. It is possible to explain [the need for such an increase as follows]:

a) From the standpoint of the lower realms: At this time, there is a need for a great light, and for it to spread out extensively because of the qualitative [descent of our era], (as [our Sages] rhetorically asked: "Has the generation improved spirituality?" And [they said:] "If the [righteous men of the] first [generation] would be considered angels, then we [would be considered men...]"); and the quantitative factor (due to the events of recent times [which have caused] the number of the Jewish people to decrease collectively and individually).

b) From the standpoint of [the light from] Above: In general, every year, there descends a new and higher light from a more sublime spiritual level which has never before shined in the world (see [Tanya,] Iggeres HaKodesh, Epistle 14). Accordingly, it is necessary to increase the vessels to [internalize] this light. In particular, as the time of the coming and revelation of Moshiach, is approaching and drawing near. The medium to bring this about is the light of the teachings of Chassidus. (See the sichos of Simchas Torah, 5690, where this concept is explained at length.) The precondition for this is that the wellsprings of Chassidus spread outward. Thus [the teachings of Chassidus] must be spread to a place that until now was considered as "the outer reaches." The vessel for the light of Mashiach must be enlarged in every place.

May it be G-d's will that all the blessings in the [above-mentioned] letters become manifest in a full sense, speedily in our days.

A WORD

from the Director

The Festival of Chanuka teaches us many lessons about how to live our day-to-day lives. In particular, the way in which we perform the mitzva of lighting the Chanuka menorah contains lessons for our Divine service.

Even after the Holy Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed the mitzva remains in force and continues. In fact, the Chanuka candles are eternal, and have a long reaching impact on the entire year. There are three important aspects of this mitzva:

The mitzva to kindle the Chanuka lamps is connected to the concept of light and illumination;

The number of lights increase from day to day.

The menorah is placed at the entrance to the house, so as to allow its light to illuminate the outside darkness.

The nature of light is limitless and without boundaries. It reaches out from its source and can travel great distances. Nothing can prevent it from illuminating, and nothing can change its essence.

A Jew's service of G-d should also be performed in this manner, without limits and without alterations. There is nothing in the world that has the power to prevent a Jew from serving G-d or deter him from his holy path.

In the same way that every night of Chanuka we add another candle, a Jew must never content himself with whatever spiritual achievements he has already attained. Like the lights of the menorah, we must always strive to increase in Torah and mitzvot.

Lastly, as we learn from the placement of the Chanuka menorah, no Jew is ever an "island." His connection to other Jews and his obligation to bring them the light of Torah and mitzvot extends not only to his family and acquaintances, but to every single member of the Jewish people. No Jew is ever "outside" the fold, in the same way that the very purpose of the menorah is to illuminate even the outer recesses of the world.

Have a Happy Chanuka, and best wishes on this Festival of Light.

J. I. Gutterman

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Can a convert be my soul-mate?

Question: *My girlfriend isn't Jewish, but she is in the process of converting.*

In your Kabbalah class you said that everyone has a soul-mate, the missing part of our soul. Before we are born our souls are split in two, half is placed in a male child and the other half in a female, and we spend our lives searching for that one person that completes our soul.

I believe I have met my soul-mate.

Am I correct in saying that according to you, she can't be the other half of my soul (even after she converts) because I was born with a Jewish soul and she wasn't?

Don

Answer: Good question Don.

While generally a Jew's soul-mates also born Jewish, there are rare exceptions — it could also be a convert. Because there's more to a convert in Judaism than meets the eye.

The Kabbalah teaches that a true convert actually always had a latent Jewish soul, which for some cosmic reason had to go through a long spiritual journey in order to find its way back. This is one reason why the conversion process is made to be difficult: we are really just testing to see if this person indeed has a Jewish spark; if they do, then no obstacle in the world will be able to stop them rejoining their people.

So it is certainly possible that your girlfriend is your other half. But there's only one way to find out for sure. If she has been exposed to authentic Judaism, and became attracted to it to the point where she truly and sincerely wants to become Jewish, and is determined to do whatever it takes to get there, then she has a Jewish spark that could be the other half of your soul. And if she feels it's not for her, then you both will have been saved from marrying the wrong person.

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

From Lubavitch To Warsaw

By Yerachmiel Tilles

Once, a very distraught woman showed up in the town of Lubavitch. Religious women usually did not wander about all alone one hundred years ago, but this poor woman decided to make the arduous one-week journey because someone told her that the Lubavitcher Rebbe could help her. Sympathetic neighbors had even offered to watch her children and lend her money for the trip.

"Is this where Rebbe Shalom DovBer [Shneersohn] is? I must see him." She pleaded to one of the Rebbe's secretaries. "I've come from so far away, and your Rebbe is my only hope. Please, I must see him! Only he can help me."

But her cries were to no avail; the Rebbe wasn't receiving anyone at that time.

"If you write your request on a paper, I promise that I will give it to the Rebbe and the Rebbe will see it, but I can't promise more than that. I'm sorry." He said apologetically.

With no other choice the poor woman found a quiet place to sit and wrote her request. She was an 'aguna'; a "maybe" widow. Her husband strayed from Judaism about two years ago and then upped and left her. She had no source of income, three hungry children to feed and she could not remarry without receiving an official document of divorce from her husband. But it was impossible to track him down, and no one even knew where to begin.

The woman was at wits' end; she had no money, no husband, no experience and now... her last hope; the Rebbe, was vanishing before her eyes. She felt so discouraged, but nevertheless she handed in her letter and hoped for the best.

To her surprise, the answer was fast in coming. That same day the Rebbe's secretary summoned her and presented her with good news.

"The Rebbe has answered your letter. He says that you should travel to Warsaw."

She was overjoyed! But her smile faded as she realized that there was no more to the message. "But where in Warsaw? What should I do there?"

"That is all the Rebbe answered," shrugged the secretary. "I'm sorry, there was no more."

She wrote in another letter asking for some details, but...no answer.

When the Chassidim heard the story they took up a collection and bought her a round-trip train ticket with enough money to live for a month. A few days later after a two-day journey, there she was; standing bewildered in the Warsaw train station with her old suitcase and no idea where to go or what to do next.

People were rushing by her, occasionally someone would almost knock her over, but she just stood there. She had the address of a hotel on a crumpled piece of paper in her hand. She took it out of her pocket but she didn't want to walk anymore. She was tired and alone and confused and she wanted to cry. "Maybe I'll just go back home"--the thought was still in the corner of her mind when she heard someone say, "Excuse me" in Yiddish.

She snapped out of her reverie and saw standing before her a neatly dressed chasidic Jew with a reddish beard. "Excuse me," he said in Yiddish, "I notice that you are standing for a long time. What do you need? Perhaps I can be of some help?"

"I'm here because the Lubavitcher Rebbe said ..." and, emotionally drained, she mechanically repeated her entire story.

"Tell me," said the man when she had finished, "what was your husband's name and how did he look?"

"Ehh, well..." she mumbled, still in a semi-daze; "his name was Feivel but I'm sure he changed it, he was heavyset, walked with a sort of a limp, had a thick black beard, but I'm sure he's shaved the beard off, and I think he has a sort of mark on his forehead. It's been two years, who knows how he looks now." She almost began to weep again when he interrupted.

"I think I know where he is. Please follow me. It's not far from here." He escorted her out of the station down the street to a large busy intersection and gave her directions how to go from there to a certain tavern. "I think that your husband is sitting in the back of that bar playing cards and gambling."

After everything she'd been through she asked no questions. She just nodded to the stranger and began walking according to his directions. And after an hour she found it! She took a deep breath and entered the dimly lit tavern, dragging her suitcase and feeling terribly out of place. She made her way through the smoke and noise to the back of the room and stared blankly at the figures sitting there, waiting for her eyes to adjust to the dark.

Suddenly one of the gamblers turned, looked at her and let out a cry of horror. "Yow! Sarah! How did you know I was here? And how did you get here!"

She could see clearly now, and the man who was speaking looked something like her husband. He was thinner with no beard, but, but, it was him! When she explained how the Rebbe had sent her and how some Jew gave her directions from the station he began pacing back and forth like a madman, running his fingers through his hair, waving his arms and repeating to himself, "I don't know any Jews, I don't know any Rebbe! How could anyone know? How? How!"

He was so affected by the miracle that he began weeping, and then fell to his knees begging her forgiveness. One thing led to another and one month later, he shamefacedly returned home with her and repented completely of his evil ways.

The next year she traveled again to Lubavitch, but this time to thank the Rebbe. The Rebbe's secretary arranged that she would stand outside the Rebbe's door and when the Rebbe would come out, she could thank him personally and give him a letter of gratitude.

She took her place and stood there, holding her letter and waiting nervously, as this was the first time she would actually see the Rebbe. Then the big moment arrived, the door opened and the Rebbe emerged. She took one look at him...went into a swoon, and fainted unconscious to the floor!

When she came to, the doctor was kneeling over her. "You were so excited that you passed out." He explained, as she began to sit up.

"Was that the Rebbe?" she asked, "Was that him?"

"Why certainly," the doctor answered, "Why do you ask? Didn't you know that that was the Rebbe?"

"Because" she looked the doctor in the eyes, "That was the man whom I saw. He was the one who helped me in the Warsaw train station!"

Later the Rebbe's secretary made some calculations. It had been a on a day when the Rebbe had not prayed publicly with the minyan as usual. The chassidim had been concerned about his welfare, and one young student had gotten up the nerve to climb up a tree and peer into the Rebbe's room. There stood the Rebbe, looking like nothing he had ever seen. The Rebbe's face was aflame and his eyes were peering into the distance, totally unseeing. The boy was so overcome by the sight that he lost his balance and fell to the ground.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Jacob settles in Hebron with his twelve sons. His favorite is seventeen-year-old Joseph, whose brothers are jealous of the preferential treatment he receives from his father, such as a precious many-colored coat that Jacob makes for Joseph. Joseph relates to his brothers two of his dreams which foretell that he is destined to rule over them, increasing their envy and hatred towards him.

Simeon and Levi plot to kill him, but Reuben suggests that they throw him into a pit instead, intending to come back later and save him. While Joseph is in the pit, Judah has him sold to a band of passing Ishmaelites. The brothers dip Joseph's special coat in the blood of a goat and show it to their father, leading him to believe that his most beloved son was devoured by a wild beast.

Judah marries and has three children. The eldest, Er, dies young and childless, and his wife, Tamar, is given in levirate marriage to the second son, Onan. Onan sins by spilling his seed, and he too meets an early death. Judah is reluctant to have his third son marry her. Determined to have a child from Judah's family, Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute and seduces Judah himself. Judah hears that his daughter-in-law has become pregnant and orders her executed for harlotry, but when Tamar produces some personal effects he left with her as a pledge for payment, he publicly admits that he is the father. Tamar gives birth to twin sons, Peretz (an ancestor of King David) and Zerah.

Joseph is taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, the minister in charge of Pharaoh's slaughterhouses. G-d blesses everything he does, and soon he is made overseer of all his master's property. Potiphar's wife desires the handsome and charismatic lad; when Joseph rejects her advances, she tells her husband that the Hebrew slave tried to force himself on her, and has him thrown into prison. Joseph gains the trust and admiration of his jailers, who appoint him to a position of authority in the prison administration.

In prison, Joseph meets Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker, both incarcerated for offending their royal master. Both have disturbing dreams, which Joseph interprets; in three days, he tells them, the butler will be released and the baker hanged. Joseph asks the butler to intercede on his behalf with Pharaoh. Joseph's predictions are fulfilled, but the butler forgets all about Joseph and does nothing for him.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 30 November - 1 December	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	8:07	9:12
Adelaide	7:55	8:58
Brisbane	6:10	7:08
Darwin	6:41	7:34
Gold Coast	6:10	7:08
Perth	6:49	7:49
Sydney	7:32	8:34
Canberra	7:44	8:47
Launceston	8:09	9:18
Auckland	8:06	9:10
Wellington	8:18	9:27
Hobart	8:13	9:24
Byron Bay	7:10	8:09

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, ST KILDA EAST

PARSHAS VAYEISHEV • 22 KISLEV • 30 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	8.15 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	8.45 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	TEHILLIM	8.30 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.28 AM
	SHACHRIS	10.00 AM
	MOLAD THURSDAY	4.52 (7 chalakim) AM
	MINCHA	8.00 PM
	MARIV/SHABBOS ENDS	9.12 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	8.15 PM
	MARIV	9.00 PM