

Lamplighter

14 Cheshvan
Vayeira
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5771/2010

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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 crossroad 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.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Is Anybody Home?!

By Levi Avtzon

By all accounts, Lot was a total failure. He was raised by his uncle Abraham, and he still ended up as a failure.

He moved to the most corrupt city in the world – Sodom – opting to raise his children in a G-dless hell.

He married a shrew of a wife who made his life miserable and bitter, and ended her bitter life by turning (not ironically) into a pillar of salt.

Later, after he was saved by angels from the apocalypse, he escaped to a cave, drank and drank, and ended up fathering children with his very own daughters. His deeds were considered repulsive even in the immoral society of that day; his uncle Abraham was compelled to relocate to avoid the ensuing shame.

Not the type of guy you would invite over for a beer.

But did I miss something here? Was he a complete disappointment, or did some of the education of living in Abraham's household actually trickle in after all?

Let us rewind and review part of Lot's life story again.

Two angels disguised as men come to Planet Earth to destroy Sodom and her suburbs. They enter the city because they must first rescue Abraham's nephew and his family. But in this depraved locale where guests are regularly mutilated (or worse), there is no one who will show them the path to the house of Lot.

Luckily for Lot, he is the city magistrate that night. He is supposed to ensure that no foreigners enter.

But Lot was educated by Abraham and Sarah; he grew up in a tent with doors that were open in all directions, a tent that welcomed anyone and everyone.

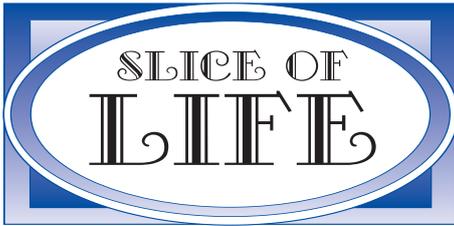
And the education hit home! Although he discarded most of what he was taught, a habit of hospitality remains. He cannot leave the homeless homeless.

So he invites them to his home. Unbeknownst to him, he ushers into his home the ones that will save his life.

As teachers, parents, friends, coaches, mentors, and therapists, we sometimes encounter a "hopeless case." All the effort, time, and money that we expend in order to instigate change seem to have no effect. "There's nobody home."

Why, we sometimes ask ourselves, should we keep spending time on this impossible cause, when we can instead invest in success stories?

Ask Lot.



An Emotional Wedding

As told by Moshe Kotlarsky

On one of my trips to South America I met a wealthy Jewish individual who was a very prominent leader in the local Jewish community. He told me that his daughter lived in New York and that she had become involved in a certain mystic cult. I promised him to make every effort to free his daughter from the cult and bring her back to Judaism.

I promised—and I fulfilled my pledge. After several phone calls, she agreed to pay a visit to my house. One visit brought another in its wake, until she finally cut off her bonds with the cult and began to take an interest in Judaism.

One day she phoned me to tell me her good news: she was engaged to an Israeli young man. She told me that they had decided to marry according to Jewish law and now they wanted me to officiate at their wedding. I responded that I would be happy to oblige, but before the wedding, I would like to speak with her and her groom regarding the observance of the laws of Family Purity.

During my introductory talk with the groom, I discovered interesting details about his family background. His grandfather had been a prominent rabbi in Warsaw, Poland, but his father, who was one of the very few who managed to escape from the Warsaw Ghetto, emerged from the Holocaust with an all-consuming hatred towards anything that had any connection to religion.

The date for the wedding was set for Kislev 14. Unknown to the couple was that this was the date of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's wedding anniversary.

The custom is for the groom to be called up to the Torah on the Shabbat before the wedding. The groom did not go to the synagogue on that Shabbat, but rather attended a small synagogue on the Thursday before, with a limited group of close friends and relatives. The reason for this was his father's completely antagonistic approach, adamantly refusing to step foot in a synagogue for Saturday services, and only agreeing under these conditions.

On the morning of the wedding, I wrote a note to the Rebbe wherein I informed him about the wedding that evening. I also wrote briefly about the background of the groom and his bride.

I received an answer via one of the Rebbe's secretaries later that day. The Rebbe had written that the groom's grandfather had been present at his—the Rebbe's—own wedding in

Warsaw and had even given the Rebbe a gift—a book that he had authored and published. Since, by Divine Providence, the young couple's wedding was set for the same date, the 14th of Kislev, the Rebbe suggested that I take that book with me and hold it beneath the *chupah* (wedding canopy). The Rebbe noted exactly where the book could be located in his library.

I was handed the book by the Rebbe's secretary and with it I set out to Manhattan where the wedding was to take place in an elegant hotel.

Before the wedding reception, the groom approached me and sadly explained that I should not expect any form of co-operation from his father during the ceremony. His father was bluntly refusing to participate, even to the smallest degree. I promised not to pressure his father about these matters.

During the pre-ceremony reception, the groom asked me to address the guests. For many of them this was the first time they had participated in a *chupah* ceremony where all the Jewish laws and customs were observed.

I happily fulfilled his request and in my speech I explained the inner meaning of marriage and married life according to Torah and Chassidic teachings. I concluded my speech by telling them that I wished to tell them about the grandfather of the groom. Raising the book in my arms, I spoke of the groom's illustrious family background.

"And if you ask from where I got this book, I'll tell you!"

At this point, I told the stunned guests the whole story about the Rebbe's answer and request. I added that I was certain that the groom's grandfather was very pleased in his heavenly resting place that his grandson entered his marriage in accordance with the Torah, for the sake of which his grandfather had devoted his entire life.

I was still talking when the groom's father suddenly stood up and left the room. After finishing my speech, I began to look for him. I found him standing in the vestibule, in a corner near the public phones, crying bitterly...

I left him to his privacy and returned to the reception. Before the *chupah*, the father approached me and quietly said, "Please, tell me what I have to do now..."

From that day onwards, the son of the prominent Warsaw rabbi turned over a new leaf in his life.

The Girl Who Had To Be Jewish

By Eli & Malka Touger

Rabbi Zalman Serebryanski, a senior chassid from Russia and dean of the Lubavitch Rabbinical College in Melbourne, Australia, once brought a girl to Rabbi Chaim Gutnick. "Please, help this girl convert," he asked.

Rabbi Gutnick listened to the girl's story. She lived in Balaclava, and from her youth had felt a strong attraction to Judaism. Whenever she heard stories of the Holocaust, she was

deeply touched. She had been reading and studying about Judaism for a long time, and now wanted to convert.

Rabbi Gutnick was moved by her sincerity. Nevertheless, he did not want to perform the conversion. The girl was still living at home with her non-Jewish parents. Would she be able to practice Judaism in her parents' home? Would her interest continue as she matured into adulthood? Since he could not answer these questions, he decided to let time take its course. If the girl was still interested when she was older, she could convert then.

Rabbi Gutnick's refusal plunged the girl into deep depression, to the extent that she had to be confined to a hospital. The elder Reb Zalman, stirred by the depth of her feelings, continued to visit her from time to time.

After several weeks, he called Rabbi Gutnick, telling him of the girl's condition and asking him whether perhaps he would change his mind because of the strength of her feelings.

Rabbi Gutnick answered that the reasons which had dissuaded him from performing the conversion were still valid. Nevertheless, he promised to write to the Lubavitcher Rebbe describing the situation. If the Rebbe advised him to facilitate her conversion, he would happily comply.

Reb Zalman told the girl that the Rebbe was being consulted, and her condition improved immediately.

Rabbi Gutnick did not receive an immediate reply to his letter. But at a later date, at the end of a reply to another issue, the Rebbe added: "What's happening with the Jewish girl from Balaclava?"

Rabbi Gutnick was surprised. The girl and Reb Zalman had both made it clear that her family was Anglican!

He and Reb Zalman went to confront the girl's mother. At first, she continued to insist that she was Anglican, but as the sincerity of the two rabbis impressed her, she broke down and told her story. She had been raised in an Orthodox Jewish home in England. As a young girl, she had rebelled against her parents and abandoned Jewish life entirely, marrying a gentile and moving to Australia. She had not given Judaism a thought since. She loved her daughter, however, and would not oppose her if she wished to live a Jewish life.

Once the girl's Jewishness was established, Rabbis Serebryanski and Gutnick helped her feel at home in Melbourne's Lubavitch community. She continued to make progress in her Jewish commitment, and today is a teacher in a Lubavitch school.

But Rabbi Gutnick still had a question: How did the Rebbe know she was Jewish? At his next *yechidut* (audience with the Rebbe) he mustered the chutzpah to ask.

The Rebbe replied that, at Reb Zalman's urging, the girl had also written him a letter. "Such a letter," the Rebbe declared, "could only have been written by a Jewish girl."

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MOSHIACH MATTERS

Nothing to Fear By Tzvi Freeman

There are some who are afraid of a new age. They wonder: What will happen to my career? My whole lifestyle will have to change! What about all the acquaintances and connections I've spent a lifetime building? And what about all my worldly possessions, my retirement plan, my investments? Will they take my car away? The era that is coming is not something separate from our times. It is pieced together from everything we do now, and all that we know of shall remain. Only the negativity will vanish, and the G-dliness within each thing will be obvious for us to see.

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



A Jew in Madagascar

The following is a freely-translated excerpt from a letter the Rebbe wrote in the fall of 1961 to a Jewish woman living in Madagascar:

...It was with pleasure that I received regards from you and your husband, through Rabbi Joseph Weinberg, upon the latter's return from his visit in your community. It was a double pleasure to hear from him about you and your husband's warm and willing response to the task of unifying the Jewish families in your area and bringing them closer to the practice of Judaism; especially that your husband has taken it upon himself to teach the children, which is of increased importance in our times, for today it is the children who influence their parents.

Certainly you and your husband are aware of the principle of "specific divine providence"—a principle that is a mainstay of our faith in general, and of the teachings of Chassidism in particular. "Specific divine providence" means that every event, great or small, that occurs in the world, whether involving an inanimate object, a growing thing, an animal or a human being, in its every detail and sub-detail, does not occur by chance, G-d forbid, but is specifically ordained by G-d as part of His intentions and purpose in His management of the world.

Therefore, it goes without saying that when a Jew finds himself in a distant corner of the world, far from his homeland, far from any established Jewish community, this is certainly not by chance. This Jew should see himself as an emissary of the Omnipresent through whom G-d's word may reach also this corner of the world, bringing about an increase of justice and righteousness among all its inhabitants, and spreading the teachings and observances of Judaism among its Jews.

In such a case, one should not look upon the number of individuals that one has the opportunity to influence. Our sages have said, "Whoever upholds a single Jewish soul, it is as if he has upheld an entire world." If this is true at all times, how much more so does it apply to our generation, after the destruction, Heaven forbid, of such a significant portion of our people. Today, every surviving Jew is a "brand salvaged from the fire" who must not only fulfil his own role, but also take the place of those who perished in sanctification of G-d's name.

Unfettered Feeling

The following is a freely-translated excerpt from a letter by the Rebbe written in the opening days of the year 5732 (September, 1971):

A question:

As we know and see, there are situations in which Jews, regardless of their best intentions, regardless, even, of their self-sacrifice, are truly unable to fulfil the will of G-d due to circumstances beyond their control. As the parable goes, self-sacrifice can enable one to jump off a roof down to the ground, but it cannot enable one to jump from the ground up onto the roof...

But G-d is the master of the entire world. Since G-d Himself has commanded and spelled out how every Jew should behave in his daily life, how is it possible that there should be a situation in which a Jew is unable to carry out the will of G-d, in every detail?

The answer:

There are two components to a mitzvah: the deed, and the *kavanah* and feeling that accompany it. It is true that "the deed is the primary thing," but the *kavanah* and feeling are also of great importance.

When it happens that there is a situation in which it is impossible for a Jew to actually carry out the will of G-d despite his self-sacrifice, this stimulates in him a deep spiritual pain that pervades him to the very core of his soul, bringing him to a deeper connection with G-d, and with Torah, mitzvot and his Jewishness, the likes of which he could never have attained without this painful experience.

The fact that he did not actually *do* the mitzvah has no adverse effect on his relationship with G-d, since he was prevented from doing it by forces beyond his control. On the other hand, the *feeling* element of the mitzvah achieves a height otherwise unobtainable, and the experience imparts to his spiritual life a depth and perfection that only this situation can generate.

A WORD from the Director

This Thursday, the 20th of Cheshvan, is the birthday of Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber (1860-1920), the fifth Chabad Lubavitch Rebbe.

A beautiful story is told about an important lesson that Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber (known as the "Rebbe Rashab") taught his son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, who was later to become his successor.

Once, when Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak set out on a journey, the Rebbe Rashab asked him to try to do a certain favour for one of the chasidim, a businessman, who was in need of help.

When Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak returned he told his father: "I did everything you told me to do, and the favour to that man I did meticulously."

"You err," said the Rebbe Rashab. "You did a favour to yourself, not to him. G-d did a favour to him, by arranging for an emissary, such as yourself, through whom the will of Divine Providence could be realized."

The Rebbe Rashab was teaching us a lesson that permeates the whole of Judaism. When we do a mitzva, especially one which ostensibly allows us to help another person, we are G-d's emissaries. And, more than helping the other person we are, in essence, helping ourselves.

Tzedaka, charity, is a prime example. When we give tzedaka it should be with the knowledge and understanding that G-d has bestowed upon us a privilege—the privilege to administer His money in a righteous manner. Certainly, this is the reason why our Sages teach, "More than charity does for the poor person, it does for the rich person."

This attitude can and should permeate all "favours" we do for others. In addition to being the correct attitude, it stops us from feeling self-righteous!

J.I. Gutnick

Which situations mandate the recitation of a blessing?

There are three types of blessings:

1) Blessings for Enjoyment:

A person is required to recite a blessing before receiving any sort of benefit or pleasure from this world. We recognize that everything in this world was created by, and is the property of G-d. Therefore we must "ask for permission" before indulging. Perhaps more importantly, constantly acknowledging this idea also reinforces in our own minds the conception of G-d's authority over everything.

Therefore, one is obligated to recite a blessing before eating or drinking, and before enjoying a pleasant fragrance.

2) Blessings for Mitzvahs:

We are required to recite a blessing before performing any Mitzvah. The blessing is "Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to..."

By reciting these blessings we acknowledge that we are honoured to have the opportunity to fulfil G-d's command. There is no greater privilege than to connect to the infinite G-d through observing His Mitzvahs.

3) Blessings of Thanksgiving:

We recite a blessing whenever we are the beneficiary of a divine kindness. Examples include: one who survived a major trauma, recovered from a serious illness, chanced upon a fortune, or had a baby.

Also included in this category is the blessing we recite upon receiving painful tidings. We recognize that ultimately everything which G-d does is for our best. We acknowledge this by saying "Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, the true Judge."

It Happened Once...



There was a long line for yechidus (private audience with a Rebbe) in the home of the Rebbe Rashab in Rostov, all hoping the secretary R' Chonye Morosoz h'yd would give them a turn. Suddenly the quiet was disturbed with the sound of loud arguments. It was an *aguna* (a woman whose husband has disappeared and it is not known whether he is dead or alive; she is thus forbidden to marry) whose husband had deserted her and her young children who asked to be an exception to the rule and be allowed to see the Rebbe then and there. The secretary, who was used to people asking for exceptions to be made, refused.

The woman turned away disappointed, but then a young boy, Mordechai Aharon Friedman a'h, who was a household member of the Rebbe, had pity on her and suggested she write her problem on a paper and he would take care of it.

M.A. put the letter the woman wrote on the table where the Rebbe would eat supper. The Rebbe eventually came, saw the note, and told M.A. something.

The boy left and found the woman in the waiting room. He told her that the Rebbe's response was: Go to Warsaw.

The *aguna's* joy turned to concern as she wondered how she could afford the trip to Warsaw, but when the Chasidim heard that the Rebbe had told her to go to Warsaw they quickly raised the money for her and by dawn she had left.

The train stopped in Warsaw and the woman got out. She had no idea what she should do next. After a while she left the station and headed towards the city. She walked for one hour, then another, and then suddenly, struck by intense loneliness, she sat on a bench and cried.

A person approached her who was obviously Jewish who offered his help. She told him her story and finally asked him whether he had heard anything of her husband whose name was X. The man said he hadn't, but he told her about a factory nearby which employed people of many countries, suggesting that her husband might work there.

The woman walked towards the factory, went into the office, explained her problem to the manager and asked whether she could see the roster of workers. She searched the long list of names and did indeed come across the familiar name of her husband! She went back into the room where the workers could be found and scanned the room. Suddenly she saw him!

The husband was just as surprised to see his wife in Warsaw. They began to talk but the woman despaired when she realized that her husband wanted to remain in Warsaw.

Suddenly her husband asked, "How did you know where to find me?"

The woman explained that the Rebbe Rashab had sent her there and when her husband heard that, he changed his mind and agreed to return with his wife to Rostov.

The woman happily returned home and wanted to inform the Rebbe of the miracle and to thank him for his advice, but she encountered the same problem of the long line.

The Chasidim suggested she stand near where the Rebbe washed his hands before praying and tell him of the miracle. Excitedly, the woman stood at the place the Rebbe had to pass. The door opened and the Rebbe came out and when the woman saw him, she fainted.

When she recovered, the Chasidim asked her what happened. The woman emotionally explained that when she saw the Rebbe, she saw that *it was the*

man who had helped her in Warsaw!

After the Chasidim had calmed down somewhat, they decided to figure out at what hour the woman had seen the Rebbe in Warsaw, and recall what the Rebbe had been doing in Rostov at the time.

It turned out that the event had occurred at the time the Rebbe went to pray. They tried to reconstruct what had happened on that day, at that time. Suddenly they all jumped up. That day, the Rebbe had tarried in his room before going to pray. They had waited a long time for the Rebbe.

When they saw the time passing, they were very curious to know what was keeping him. The Chasidim edged their way over to the window of the Rebbe's room and helped one daring Chasid, who volunteered for the task, to climb up to the window and peek inside.

When the boy stuck his head through the window he recoiled immediately as though bitten by a snake, while screaming, "Oy Rebbe!"

When asked what he had seen, he told them that the Rebbe stood facing the window with his holy face burning like a torch.

He had indeed seen the Rebbe in his room in Rostov, nevertheless, the Rebbe was in Warsaw.

This story was told by R' Sholom Ber Drizin who heard it from his nephew, R' Y.Y. Kaminetzky who heard it from R' Mordechai Aharon Friedman himself.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

To do righteousness and justice (Gen. 18:19)

When G-d bestows wealth and abundance on a Jew, he must honestly judge himself and ask: "Am I really worthy of all this goodness? What have I done to deserve these blessings?" When a person is thus honest with himself, it will cause him to realize that the sharing of his wealth with those less fortunate is truly *zedaka*—righteousness. (*Sefer HaMaamarim*)

He lifted up his eyes... and behold, three men were standing by him (Gen. 18:2)

To Abraham the visitors appeared as men, but to Lot they looked like angels. Our ancestor Abraham was generous and kind, welcoming rich and poor into his tent with equal enthusiasm. Lot, by contrast, would only allow important people into his home. Thus there was no need for the strangers to appear to Abraham as angels, as his hospitality extended to everyone. (*Nifla'ot Chadashot*)

In all that Sara may say to you - hearken unto her voice (Gen. 21:12)

The Talmud states: Three *tzadikim* were given a taste of the World to come in this world - Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In the World to Come, the prophecy "the female will surround and encompass the male," and "a woman of valour is the crown of her husband" (Proverbs) will be fulfilled. Abraham was given a glimpse of this when G-d told him to heed the words of Sara, who was an even greater prophet than he. (*Likutei Torah*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS VAYEIRA • 15 CHESHVAN • 23 OCTOBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:25 PM
	MINCHA:	7:35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:05 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:44 AM
	MINCHA:	7:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8:25 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	7:35 PM
	MAARIV:	8:25 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 22 OCTOBER 2010



Begins	Ends
7:25 MELBOURNE	8:25
7:17 ADELAIDE	8:15
5:41 BRISBANE	6:36
6:27 DARWIN	7:17
5:40 GOLD COAST	6:35
6:15 PERTH	7:11
6:55 SYDNEY	7:53
7:05 CANBERRA	8:04
7:21 LAUNCESTON	8:24
7:25 AUCKLAND	8:24
7:31 WELLINGTON	8:33

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.