

L'Chaim

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1142: VAYERA

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Alan Welner, President

A Limitless Treasure

The disciples of the Maggid of Mezeritch had begged their master many times to show them Elijah the Prophet. Their persistence paid off; when a gathering of poritzim, wealthy Polish landowners, was being held, the Maggid agreed.

The Maggid instructed his disciples to stand in a certain location and watch the poritzim ride by. The third poritz, he informed them, would be Elijah the Prophet. "If you are worthy," the Maggid added, "you will even merit to hear words of Torah from his lips."

The disciples followed the Maggid's instructions. They waited in the exact spot the Maggid had indicated. When the third poritz rode by, they hesitantly approached his carriage. True, he looked like an ordinary, non-Jewish Polish poritz, but hadn't the Maggid declared that he was Elijah?

Addressing him in Polish, they deferentially asked if they could speak with his lordship as they had an important matter to discuss. To their surprise the "poritz" responded with insults and curses, after which he rode off to join the other poritzim.

The bewildered and heartbroken disciples returned to the Maggid. They told him that they had seen Elijah the Prophet, for they didn't doubt for a moment that the poritz was the prophet. But when they asked to speak with him he responded with a barrage of deprecations.

The Maggid's response was unexpected. "You deserved the treatment he gave you! You were certain, for I gave you all the signs, that you were standing in

the very presence of Elijah the Prophet. You should have addressed him in the Holy Tongue! You should have said, 'Bless us!' instead of speaking to him in Polish and timidly asking the 'poritz' for an audience. If you could still relate to him as a poritz after I told you that he is Elijah the Prophet, you deserve what you got!"

The Torah (in Deuteronomy) states, "You are a holy people to G-d your G-d." Every Jew is holy. Every Jew is, as the Baal Shem Tov taught, a trove of unlimited treasures.

But it's not enough to know in our heads that a fellow Jew is holy, that he has a wealth of goodness and G-dliness within him. It's insufficient to believe with absolutely certainty that what the Torah and great Jewish teachers of all generations have said about the worth of every Jew is true.

We have to relate to our brother or sister not according to what appearances tell us. From the beginning our entire interaction has to be in accordance with his or her true, goodly and holy nature.

Then, surely, we will merit to see Elijah the Prophet - the harbinger of the Messianic Era - and ask of him, "Bless us."

Additional Thoughts

The sigh of a Jew over the suffering of another Jew breaks all the barriers of the Accusers, and the joy with which one rejoices in another's happiness and blesses him, is as acceptable by G-d as the prayer of the High Priest in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur.

Reb Elimelech of Linznsk related from the Maggid: "Do you know what they say in Heaven? Love of a fellow Jew means loving the utterly wicked like the perfectly saintly."

"G-d forgoes love of G-d in favor of love of the Jewish people," Rabbi Shneur Zalman declared. ■

Living with the **REBBE**



This week's Torah portion, Vayeira, speaks about the greatness of our forefather Abraham, the very first Jew. Through Abraham's service, G-d's Name was made known throughout the world, and many people were brought to believe in Him.

The Torah states: "And Abraham planted an eishel [literally a grove] in Be'er Sheva, and called there in the name of G-d." The Torah specifically mentions Abraham's planting of the eishel, as this was considered a very great deed and a unique accomplishment.

The Midrash explains that an eishel is more than just a stand of trees under which wayfarers may find protection from the burning sun. An eishel is an inn, a place of lodging. Our Patriarch Abraham established his eishel in Be'er Sheva, in the heart of the desert, to cater to travelers in that inhospitable climate.

Did Abraham know these travelers personally? Of course not. He had no idea who might arrive. All he knew was that these strangers would no doubt be hungry, thirsty and tired from their trek across the desert. His motivation was to make their journey more pleasant and less taxing.

Abraham provided his guests with all kinds of amenities, not just bread and water to satisfy their hunger and quench their thirst. His visitors were offered meat, fine wines, fruit and a wide array of delicacies, as well as a place to sleep to rest from their travels.

His visitors' spiritual needs were also taken into consideration. Next to the inn that provided all their physical necessities, Abraham established a Sanhedrin, a court of law, so that wise men could answer the travelers' questions and find solutions to their personal and business problems.

This same attribute of kindness and justice is the birthright of every Jew, an inheritance from our forefather Abraham. And the Torah portion of Vayeira teaches us how we are supposed to fulfill the commandment of charity:

It isn't enough to provide a poor person with the basic requirements necessary to sustain life. We must offer him more than just the bare minimum, bringing him pleasure and enjoyment. And not only must his physical needs be met, but we must also try to help him resolve his spiritual struggles. This applies to every single Jew, even those we do not know personally, and constitutes the true meaning of the commandment of tzedaka (charity). ■ *Adapted from the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Likutei Sichot, Vol. 3*

**MEZUZAH
DID YOU
KNOW???**

As one of the most visible and powerful symbols of Judaism, mezuzah serves as a reminder of the basic tenets of the Jewish faith.

Nachmanides and Sefer HaChinnukh point out that: *"At the root of the mitzvah [of the mezuzah] lies the purpose that it should remind a person about faith in G-d every time he [or she] enters the home or leaves it."*

Derech Chayim likewise connects mezuzah with remembrance of G-d: *"Every time you come in and go out, kiss the mezuzah so that you may remember G-d."*

**A WORD FROM
THE DIRECTOR**

Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman

Next Thursday (October 28), is the 20th of Cheshvan, the birthday of Rabbi Shalom Dovber, the fifth Chabad leader known by his initials as the Rebbe Rashab.

In the summer of 1960 the Lubavitcher Rebbe visited Camp Gan Israel in upstate New York, during which he related a little-known story about the Rebbe Rashab. It seems that one time the Rebbe Rashab had left Lubavitch in Russia and traveled to Vienna, to be treated by doctors. While in Vienna, the Rebbe had suddenly announced that he wished to visit a certain village 100 kilometers away. Before he left, he went to a store and purchased several articles of clothing, and various other items.

When the Rebbe Rashab arrived in the town he sought out the home of a widow and her two daughters. He gave her the things he had bought and some money, and told her it was to help her marry off her daughters. In fact, the widow had been too poor to do so.

In the Rebbe's words: "Just think about it: In a far-off town 100 kilometers from Vienna, the Rebbe found an opportunity to bring G-d nachas. In truth, the Rebbe had made the lengthy trip solely for that purpose. And he himself went to the store to make the purchases, just so a poor bride could get married.

"This, then, is the lesson to be learned: Regardless of where we are, we must always look for a good deed to perform. For we will certainly find one, and thereby bring pleasure to G-d."

May we merit this year to celebrate the Rebbe Rashab's birthday together with him and with all the great tzadikim of all generations, led by our Righteous Moshiach. ■

The Rebbe Writes

12 Cheshvan, 5711 [1950]

...With regard to your question concerning the shidduch [marriage prospect] for your sister-in-law with a bachelor of about 35 years, I would suggest that inquiries be made to find out why he did not marry before, and if the reasons are such that do not affect a Jewish home, it would be advisable for the two people to get better acquainted and ascertain what mutual attractions they have.

I was very pleased to read in your letter that your son desires to study for semichah [rabbinic ordination] and that the Rosh Yeshiva [dean of the yeshiva] regards him as fitting for it. I was also glad to hear that he devotes time to strengthening Yiddishkeit [Judaism] among the youth. I am sure you will encourage him to continue along this course and will help him achieve his ambition.

As to the question of a shidduch for your son, about which you write that you are afraid to do anything in this matter, not knowing if it would be suitable, the Torah teaches us not to rely on miracles where things can and ought to be approached in natural ways and means. However, while doing so it is necessary to bear in mind that these so-called "natural" ways and means are also miracles ordained by G-d, especially in the case of marriage, as it is said in Proverbs: An intelligent wife is a gift from G-d. At any rate, an attempt should be made in the usual way, and G-d will certainly lead it in such a way as to ensure a suitable and fitting wife for your son.

As to your apology for troubling me and your question whether you can do anything in return, this matter cannot be termed "trouble." You may have heard the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov as to how the three loves - love of G-d, love of Israel, and love of the Torah - are one, and a means to "Thou shalt love G-d thy G-d" is "Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself." There is no question of trouble here at all. May G-d grant that every one of us, including you, do all you and every one of us can to help others.

However, since you have offered to do something in return, and everything is connected with Divine Providence, I am enclosing herewith a copy of the Talk of Shabbos Bereishis. I call your attention to pars. 21 and 22, where you will find some suggestions as to what you could do to strengthen Torah and Yiddishkeit [Judaism]. As to what this would mean to me - I refer you to the Rambam [Maimonides] (Hilchos Teshuvah, ch. 3;4) where he states that "Everyone should regard the world on the basis that the good and bad deeds are equally balanced. Thus, through a bad deed one tips the scale of the bad side, G-d forbid, and through a good deed one tips the scale on the good side." Therefore, if you follow the suggestions in the above-mentioned paragraphs, you will increase the merits of the entire world, thus benefiting me also.

It would interest me to know what "fixed times" you have for the study of the Torah in general, and no doubt for the study of Chassidus also.

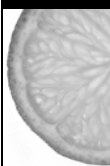
As already mentioned, you need not hesitate in writing to me at any time, but you must be patient if my reply is delayed because of pressure of work.

I hope to hear good news from you. ■

What's In A Name?

TZVI is from the Hebrew meaning "deer, gazelle." Hirsh is the Yiddish for "deer," and the two names, Tzvi Hirsh, are often given together

TALYA, spelled with the Hebrew letter "hei" at the end is from the Hebrew meaning "dew of G-d." Ending with an "alef," it is from the Aramaic, meaning "lamb."



SLICE OF LIFE

Tzitzit for my Car

by Zalman Weinberg

I remember when I first began to wear tzitzit and a kipa daily; until then, my having become an observant Jew was not noticeable or obvious to others. I realized that now, I represented something; my actions would be scrutinized in a way that they had not been previously. The responsibility was great, but so was the opportunity.

Each day, I try to grow closer to embodying more of what I represent by the way I dress. I know that change is a process and not an event (my words, but the essence of what I have learned from my rabbi, friend, brother, teacher, Chabad emissary, Yossi Blesofsky) and I hope others do as well.

Yet, if I thought that my tzitzit and kipa would garner comments from people, I was surprised to note that my car has earned a much stronger reaction. Let me explain:

A few months ago, I ordered what the New York State DMV refers to as "vanity plates." Henceforth, my car license plates would proclaim: "EMUNA613." The Hebrew word "emuna" means "faith," and the number 613 refers to the number of commandments in the Torah.

I think of my license plates as my "tzitzit" for my car. The Code of Jewish Law explains that the word "tzitzit" has the numerical equivalent of 600 and that each of the four sets of strings has eight strands and five knots bringing the total to 613, the number of mitzvot in the Torah. Although I have but two license plates, the word "emuna" and the number 613 serve to remind and inspire me, and as it turns out, others, of the importance of performing the commandments.

And just as I recognized that with tzitzit and a kipa I represent something to the outside world and my behavior has to be consistent

with my religious garb, the same can be said about my license plate: Now I have to drive differently!

This is not easy as I am a native New Yorker, having been born and raised where driving is more like a competition than a mode of transportation. No more cutting people off, yelling at them, nor being overly aggressive. For now, not only do I represent being a Jew out in the world, but the driver of a car with the license plates "EMUNA613" that represent the essential principles of Judaism.

What inspired me to get these license plates? After all, I'm not a rabbi! Since the time I started wearing my tzitzit and kipa, and even before, I often thought about a talk of the Lubavitcher Rebbe that I saw on the Living Torah video series (chabad.org) about Jews being "lamplighters." Our job is to light up and awaken the lamp - the soul - that is within every Jew. But it was the Rebbe's words, his explanation, his enthusiasm, that helped me understand the privilege and responsibility of being a Jew at a very deep ancestral and personal level. I started thinking about how I, too, could be a "lamplighter."

After reading a particular essay based on a talk of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and after reading *The Garden of Emuna* by Rabbis Shalom Arush and Lazer Brody, I envisioned ordering the "EMUNA613" license plates. I knew that I wanted to embody the principle of faith in G-d and dedication to His commandments in my life and that my car could become the vehicle (no pun intended) to express this resolution.

So, ultimately, I ordered the plates as a reminder to me, like the tzitzit, of the importance of faith in G-d in the face of life's many difficulties and challenges. Everything comes from G-d. I know now that all of life's challenges are an opportunity for me to grow closer to Him. It may not feel that way (oh man, it has definitely not felt that way at times), but I have learned to trust G-d and to truly know that everything comes from Him and that everything is for the best.

But back to the impact of the license plates on others. There have been many instances where people from all over the U.S. and even the world have asked me if they could take a picture of my license plates, and some even wanted to have me pose next to the car and the license plates.

Recently, on a holiday weekend, I had to drive my daughters the hour and a half back to where their mother lives in New Jersey. It was a brutally long drive with traffic all the way there and I had a nasty migraine headache from the hot and humid weather. Oddly, several times along the way, out of nowhere, a car would pull up alongside my car and the people inside would wave.

Given the headache and traffic, I didn't think much of it at first. But then, after I had dropped my daughters off and headed back to New York, with my head still pounding, I decided to sing a Chasidic melody and some Shabbat tunes to try to transform my experience.

At one point, a van got behind me and flashed his high beams, which initially was annoying. But then I noticed what seemed to be a smiling Chasid in the driver's seat. As we get past the tolls on the George Washington Bridge he was still behind me. A few minutes later I heard a car beeping its horn. It was the Chasid in the van motioning for me to put my window down, which I did.

"Great license plate," he shouted with a smile. "Completely inspires me to do mitzvot and know that everything comes from Hash-m (G-d)!" I noticed that his kids in the back seat were waving and mouthing "hi" to me. And I realized that this was why I had been in traffic, this is why I ordered the license plates... so that they could be like tzitzit and inspire others, or maybe just to make people smile and give them a lift (figuratively speaking)!

So, the next time you see a 2001 silver Honda CRV with the license plates "EMUNA613" feel free to wave and honk and I will gladly smile and know that you are my partner in remembering what we're here for! ■

Moshiach Matters


During the seven days of festivities following the wedding of Rabbi Sholom Dovber (to become known as the Rebbe Rashab, fifth Chabad Rebbe), the Chasidim celebrated with indescribable joy. On one of those days, his father the Rebbe Maharash sat at his window and watched them dancing in the garden in dozens of circles.

Turning to the 2 chasidim who stood next to him, he said: "See, my children, how chasidim are glad in the joy of a mitzva (commandment). This is how Jews will dance in the streets when Moshiach comes!" ■

(Likkutei Dibburim)



New Emissaries Rabbi Eli and Raizel Rosenfeld are moving to Lisbon, Portugal, where they will open the first Chabad-Lubavitch Center in that country and join the very active and proud Jewish community that is there. Rabbi Arele and Chaya Matusof have arrived in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, to run the Chabad Youth Center and establish a local Friendship Circle. Four young couples recently moved to Moscow, Russia, to serve in various local educational institutions. Rabbi Avi and Chana Gedge and Rabbi Eliyahu and Laya Dikshstein will be joining the Cheder Menachem school, Rabbi Avrohom and Miriam Danisov will be joining the Mesivta, while Rabbi Dovid and Chaya Mushka Yamosky will be joining the Achei Temimim school. ■

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| Important Times October 22 – 29 <i>Shacharis</i> 7:00am Sunday 8:00am Monday/Thursday 6:45am <i>Minchab/Maariv</i> 5:30pm Shabbos 5:15pm <i>Shabbat</i> <u>Chassidus Club</u> 8:15am <u>Kabbalah of Cholent</u> 9:05am Shacharit 9:30am Light Candles 5:28pm Shabbat Ends 6:23pm | Brought to you by: Chabad-Lubavitch in Cyberspace www.chabad.org Copyright © 2010 Lubavitch Youth Organization www.lchaimweekly.org | Re-printed by: Chabad of Scottsdale (480) 998-1410 chabadofscottsdale.org  The Jewish Learning Center of Scottsdale (480) 443-5362 |
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It Once Happened

One day, Reb Shraga Faitel Levin was learning with Reb Shmuel Berhzin, the local shochet, in the shul (synagogue) of Nevel, when the shochet's son suddenly arrived, searching for his father. Reb Shmuel's son was a wealthy butcher who lived in a different town.

"I'm just passing through," his son explained. "The Rebbe Rashab (Rabbi Sholom Dovber, the fifth Chabad Rebbe) is close by at his place of vacation and I am on my way to visit him."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Reb Shmuel. "I wish I could also go!"

His son did not miss a beat. "I will buy you a ticket," he said.

Reb Faitel promptly seized the opportunity to express his overwhelming desire to see the Rebbe, and to his pleasant surprise, the young man bought him a ticket as well. The group set out on their journey.

The Rebbe Rashab was staying at a resort location not far from the Black Sea. The trio reached the closest port on Friday morning. It was a few-mile walk to the village where the Rebbe was staying, with other small villages in between.

Before they began their walk, they decided to immerse in the Black Sea. Reb Faitel and the shochet immediately emerged from the water, but the son continued to swim for quite a while. When he finished swimming, he rejoined the others to walk to the Rebbe's home.

Suddenly, the son dropped to the ground and lay there motionless. All his father's efforts to arouse him were to no avail; the young man was unconscious. Reb Faitel helped the distraught father carry his son to the nearest Jewish home, and as the son lay immobile in bed, their hosts ran out to fetch the closest doctor.

When the doctor finally arrived, he examined the patient. "I can't understand what happened," the father explained. "We were just swimming in the Black Sea and my son was healthy. When we continued walking, he collapsed and has been lying like that ever since."

The doctor looked at them in astonishment. "The Black Sea?" he repeated. "You swam in that water?"

"We didn't stay too long," the shochet said. "My son was there longer than us. He probably swam for a few minutes."

"A few minutes!" the doctor shook his head in dismay. "I'm sorry, but there is little I can do. That water is contaminated and prolonged contact has always proved fatal. Your son is in a coma, far beyond human help!"

The doctor packed his bag, and ignoring their protests, headed out the door. The shochet turned to Reb Faitel in desperation. "Only the Rebbe can help us," he said. "We must go straight to him!"

They left the invalid in the house and continued walking to the resort, arriving at the Rebbe Rashab's residence at midnight Friday night. When they arrived, the shochet immediately asked the assistant of the Rebbe Rashab to grant him a private audience, but he was refused.

"The Rebbe is not seeing anyone now," explained the assistant. "However, if you really must speak with the Rebbe, wait outside his room, because the Rebbe always goes from one room to the next between three and four in the morning. Then you will be able to ask him whatever you want."

The shochet and Reb Faitel waited outside the Rebbe's room for hours. Suddenly, at 3:30 a.m., the door opened and the Rebbe came out. "What do you want?" the Rebbe asked.

Reb Shmuel burst into tears and quickly related what had occurred. When he finished, the Rebbe made a dismissive gesture with his hand. "He will be here for Havdala (the ceremony marking the end of Shabbat on Saturday night)," he said. With that, the Rebbe went to a different room.

The pair looked at one another in amazement: Reb Shmuel's son was stretched out in bed, practically lifeless, and yet the Rebbe expected him to walk five miles to the resort in time for Havdala! However, being true Chasidim, they did not question the Rebbe's words. In fact, the shochet was so overjoyed by the Rebbe's words that he decided to stay there until after Shabbat, for if the Rebbe promised his son would recuperate, then returning to the village would be a futile waste of time.

A little while later, back in the village, the young man suddenly awoke to find strangers looking at him. "What am I doing here?" he said. "Where is my father?" The son tried to get up, but fell back, exhausted by the effort.

"Watch yourself!" said the woman of the house. "You are very ill; the doctor said you will die soon! Don't move or it might get worse!"

The family tried all they could to get him to stay in bed, but he resisted. "What do you mean?" he said indignantly. "I came here to see the Rebbe, not to stay in bed!"

Gradually, he mustered enough strength to sit up. Then he stood up and walked around. After eating something, he left the house, against the strong exhortations of his hosts to remain and gather his strength. When he arrived at the house of the Rebbe Rashab, he opened the door to find the Rebbe standing at the table with the cup of wine in his hand, just ready to begin Havdala. He had arrived in time.

Decades later, one of Reb Faitel's sons related this story to his children. "This story," he observed, "illustrates the incredible faith of the Chasidim. This man had left his son on a deathbed with the doctor saying there was no hope for him, yet when the Rebbe said he would be fine, the Chasid did not return to check to see if the son had returned to health. The Rebbe had spoken; his word was enough!" ■

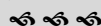
And he sat at the opening of the tent in the heat of the day (Gen. 18:1)

This is the mark of the truly righteous individual, who always sees himself "at the opening," i.e., the very beginning, along the path of righteousness. Considering himself still "outside" and far from spiritual perfection, he worries that his deeds haven't accomplished much... (Toldot Yaakov Yosef)



And they said, So do as you have said (Gen. 18:5)

The way of the righteous is to say little, yet do much. The angels knew that Abraham was a tzadik (righteous), and that he would go out of his way - above and beyond what he had already offered - to make them feel at ease. They therefore asked him to "do as he had said" with regard to their comfort, and no more. (Torat Moshe)



For I know him...that he will do justice and judgment (Gen. 18:19)

What is the connection between justice and judgment? Whenever G-d gives a person an abundance of blessings, he must ask himself: Do I really deserve so much goodness? Why me and not someone else? This "self-judgment" will then prompt him to give tzedaka (charity) in a generous and unstinting manner. (Sefer HaMaamarim)

Thoughts that Count