

L'Chaim

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November 5, 2010 – 28 Cheshvan, 5771

1144: TOLDOS

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Living with the REBBE



This week's Torah portion, Toldot, begins with the words, "These are the generations of Isaac, the son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac." What is the meaning of the repetition in this verse? By stating "the son of Abraham" and "Abraham begot Isaac" - two ways of expressing the same idea - the Torah offers us the reason for "the generations of Isaac": The generations of Isaac are the consequence of Abraham having begotten Isaac.

Abraham, as the Torah relates, was "one" - the only Jew in the entire world. The whole world stood in opposition to Abraham, as the name "Ivri - Hebrew" (from the word "eiver - side") - implies. The entire world was on one side and Abraham on the other. Nonetheless, Abraham persisted in his mission to make G-d's Name known, as it states, "And he called there in the name of the L-rd, G-d of the world."

This approach was passed on to Abraham's son Isaac as an inheritance, thereby paving the way for the possibility of future "generations of Isaac" - both in the spiritual sense (according to the explanation of our Sages that the primary "descendants" of the righteous are their Torah, mitzvot (commandments) and good deeds) and the physical sense, actual offspring.

This contains a lesson for every Jew in his daily life. When a Jew takes a look at the world he is apt to become discouraged. Evil people seem to prosper and flourish, and countless obstacles stand in the way of his service of G-d. For most of the day he must involve himself in mundane affairs; it is an ongoing struggle to bring holiness into his life. The Jew is liable to wonder where he will get the strength to observe the mitzvot and perform good deeds. How can he withstand the many trials that he must endure?

The answer is contained in this week's Torah portion. "The deeds of the forefathers are a sign for their children" - and not only a sign or indication of how they should conduct themselves, but an infusion of strength. "Abraham begot Isaac" - Abraham was the rock from which Isaac was hewn, and t he source of strength for all Jews. Just as Abraham did not flinch at taking on the entire world, spreading the belief in one G-d and the knowledge that "there is none but Him," so too must every single one of Abraham's descendants take courage in his ability to overcome all hindrances and impediments that come his way.

By striving to fulfill "the generations of Isaac" in the spiritual sense, i.e., Torah, mitzvot and good deeds, we thereby merit to become "the generations of Isaac" in the literal sense as well, vanquishing the enemies of G-d and His Torah in preparation for the conquest of the holy land, at the hands of Moshiach. ■

2,000 feet, 69 days, 33 miners, 1 lesson

by Rabbi Yisroel Engel

Everything we experience in life serves as a hands-on lesson in our purpose on Earth.

Consider this: Thirty-three miners plunge into two months of darkness 2,000 feet below the surface, disconnected from their source. After 69 days of eternity, the moment they were praying for, has arrived. Their dream became a reality. They would finally see the light of day, the joy of freedom, the hug of their loved ones, and the tears of their children.

However, they needed to prepare for this transition before a 13 foot capsule would whisk them up and away to heaven on earth.

Special socks, dark glasses, high calorie fluids, properly anchored straps, and an escape hatch were precautions that were set into motion. To make it out safely, they were instructed, they must follow these guidelines, and they did.

The miners were not doctors, scientists, nor engineers. They had no inside knowledge of the capsule's mechanism.

But they didn't need to know.

What was important is realizing that this is their connection to light, to freedom and to life.

The story of the miners is the story of our souls.

Our souls come from a source of light. Divine light.

And then it descends into this material world, exchanging a heaven of pristine light for an earth of confusing darkness.

Indeed, the Mishna (Avot ch. 4) tells us the soul is "forced" to descend against its will.

It would rather stay and bathe in light and holiness. But it descends for a purpose, a higher calling.

It will confront darkness and transform it. It will make this world a place where G-d chooses to "reside."

G-d engineers our "rescue mission" from above and provides the spiritual cable which elevates us, connects us to the divine, and empowers us to bring light into a world of darkness, meaning into a world of chaos, and goodness into a world of evil.

G-d told Noah to enter the capsule - the ark which would save himself and his family from the raging floods of evil and the vicissitudes of life.

The Hebrew word for ark/capsule is "teiva," which also means "word."

This is the deeper meaning of "Enter the teiva," says the Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chasidic movement.

Entering the "word" means entering the words of prayer and the words of Torah.

Prayer and Jewish teachings are the food and garments for the soul.

Enter the protection of Torah and mitzvot (commandments) which elevates us and indeed, the entire world, to our divine source, the surface of light.

"A candle is a mitzva and Torah is light," King Solomon proclaims in Proverbs. Every mitzva reveals so much light in this world.

One more mitzva can bring Moshiach today. And this will change the world. For good. ■

Rabbi Engel is co-director of Chabad-Lubavitch of Colorado

**MEZUZAH
DID YOU
KNOW???**

When purchasing a home, affix the mezuzahs, with the blessing, immediately upon moving in.

When renting the home or apartment the obligation to install a Mezuzah applies only after 30 days. However it is obviously preferred not to be without a Mezuzah, so many have the custom to affix all of the mezuzahs immediately upon occupancy, without reciting the blessing. After 30 days one of the mezuzahs (from a room that has a door) is removed, checked and replaced. That mezuzah may also be replaced with a new or upgraded one. The blessing is then recited on the new Mezuzah while having in mind the other Mezuzahs as well. ■

**A WORD FROM
THE DIRECTOR**

Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman

This weekend is the International Conference of Chabad-Lubavitch Shluchim. (Shluchim is from the word "shaliach" which means emissary.) Over 3,000 shluchim (emissaries of the Lubavitcher Rebbe) will, from almost every country throughout the world.

From its inception, the highlight of the convention was always the address on Shabbat by the Rebbe. The last time the Rebbe addressed the Shluchim was in 1992. At that time, the Rebbe explained that the task of the shluchim in this momentous period - the last few "moments" before the Messianic Era - is to make people aware of the imminence of Moshiach and the Redemption: "And this is the task of the International Conference of Shluchim: First and foremost, to make a public statement that this is the task confronting us - to prepare ourselves to accept Moshiach. Every aspect of our service and every dimension of our activity must be directed to this goal."

The Rebbe went on to explain that every person is a shaliach. Therefore, the task and responsibility of every Jew these days is to make himself and others aware of the imminence of the long-awaited Redemption, an eternal era of peace, prosperity, health and wisdom: "Every Jew possesses a spark of Moses and similarly, every Jew possesses a spark of Moshiach. Therefore, every Jew is G-d's emissary to illuminate the world with the light of Torah..."

On numerous occasions, the Rebbe suggested that we study matters pertaining to Moshiach and the Redemption. We can attend pre-existing classes or organize them ourselves, we can avail ourselves of the many books or study-material that can be found on the internet and we should allow what we are studying to impact upon our lives and upon the lives of those around us.

May we all take advantage of these precious moments to prepare ourselves, our families and friends, for Moshiach's arrival, may it take place NOW! ■

The Rebbe Writes

11th of Cheshvan, 5721 [1960]

The following letter was written to Mrs. Devorah Groner, wife of Rabbi Yitzchok Groner (of blessed memory), emissary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Melbourne, Australia, who headed the institutions there, and was a pioneer and builder of the Melbourne Jewish community.

Blessing and Greeting:

I received your letter of Monday, Parshas Noah, and the two preceding letters. Although I have discussed the matter at length with your husband, who will undoubtedly convey to you my thoughts, I wish to put down in writing at least several points, in the hope that this letter will contribute to a happier outlook on the various matters about which you wrote in your letter.

First of all, in regard to your question, "Whose ship is it?" I am surprised that you should have any doubts about it, since, obviously, the ship is that of my father-in-law of saintly memory, our Nossi [leader] and the Nossi of our people. It is explained in the Zohar and in the Tanya at length that Tzadikim [the righteous] continue to participate in our world even in afterlife, and, moreover, in a greater degree that during their life on this earth, since in their exalted state they are free from physical limitations. Happy are they whom he has enrolled in his crew and has assigned to them various tasks. The more responsible a task is, the greater is the reward, of course, both in this world and in the world-to-come.

You mention other points in your letters, concerning opinions and attitudes of other people, the lack of appreciation, etc., all of which you seem to have taken in a rather sensitive way, which gave rise to your thoughts on the relative disadvantages of your husband's present position by comparison with his previous one. As I have emphasized to your husband, the difference between his present work and his previous work is not a difference of place or surroundings, but a difference of the essential quality and character of the work itself. For previously he was in the capacity of an employed "clerk", and as such, there were certainly a number of advantages. A clerk has definite hours, and upon completion of his day's work he can dismiss it from his mind, knowing that the responsibility lies squarely on the shoulders of his superior. He need only to do the task given to him, in his best way, and he can then feel no worries, responsibilities or other commitments. Furthermore, such a job arouses a minimum of envy, less nervous strain, etc.

On the other hand, when one has the task of an executive, upon whom the full responsibility rests, all the more so being at a great distance, and having to make decisions, and especially when he takes up such a job willingly and enthusiastically and is successful, it is bound to call forth envy. And envy is such a mental state that it evokes various feelings in the envious person and other expressions, which frequently are inconsiderate and unjustified and very often - the envious person himself regrets them. It is also obvious that such a position entails greater personal commitment, nervous strain, etc.

Obviously, one whose capacity limits him to a secondary position, such as that of a clerk, there is little he can do about it, as this is all that he can accomplish. On the other hand, one who has the capacity to be an executive and in charge of a responsible undertaking, if such a person should confine himself within the framework of a clerk's job, it would be a gross injustice even to himself, not to mention to the cause. It is written, "More knowledge, more pain," and the more knowledgeable and advanced person is inevitably involved in more complicated things. One can say: "I don't want to be on the higher level, so that I be spared the pain." But this would be like a person saying: "I don't want to be a human being; I want to be like an animal and be spared all the pain associated with human life."

Aside from the above general considerations and principles, if one considers the specific work of disseminating and strengthening Yiddishkeit [Judaism], the outlook assumes new dimensions. For our Sages say that the first word of the Torah, Bereishis ["In the beginning"], indicates that the whole of creation is for the sake of Torah, which is called Reishis [the first]. Considering further that the work concerns education of Jewish boys and girls, which is not only of vital interest to themselves but also to posterity, for all generations to come, we arrive at a further dimension, namely, the second interpretation of Bereishis: "For the sake of the Jewish People who are called Reishis."

Furthermore, there is the added dimension in that the work is carried on in a country where Judaism is still in its infancy, requiring a real pioneering spirit to transform the whole of Jewish life in that remote continent. What a challenge and opportunity such work offers to the qualified person! ■

... continued in next issue



SLICE OF LIFE

A Minibus in Minnesota

by Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

My wife and I were returning to Israel from Minnesota and were on our way to the airport in a minibus. The minibus trip from our hotel took a bit over an hour due to the many stops to pick up passengers. The driver and I got to talking and as we approached the last hotel stop he said, "Rabbi, this guy I'm picking up now is Jewish. He's over 90 and he's a WWII vet. There he is now! Howya doin' my friend!? I got a rabbi here for you!"

The elderly Jew was a lively fellow with Bermuda shorts, an open short sleeve shirt under a thin unzipped jacket despite the February cold, with a large silver Jewish Star around his neck. He stuck out his hand to me and said, "Ahh, vos macht a Yid?" (How are you doing, fellow Jew?)

I shook his hand and he walked to the back of the minibus. I took my tefilin, went to the back, sat down, and asked him if he wanted to put on tefilin.

"What, me?" he asked in amazement. "Not me! I mean, thanks but no thanks!"

I asked rhetorically, "You're Jewish, right?"

"Of course!" he replied.

"So if you're Jewish you can't really be normal, correct? I mean, if we Jews were normal we would have quit long ago. Right?"

He hesitated for a moment and then nodded his head "yes."

"So," I encouraged, "do what Jews have been doing for over 3,000 years! Put on tefilin. What do you care about what anyone says?"

He rolled up his sleeve, repeated the blessings after me and I put the tefilin on his arm and head. Then he said "Shema Yisrael" and after a minute removed them. Although putting on tefilin took less than five minutes, it was enough time for everyone on the bus to stare, look at one another and shrug their shoulders.

The elderly Jew and I shook hands and I returned to my seat at the front. A minute later, the man behind me asked me what the black boxes were. I explained to him their significance after

which he asked me if I knew about the "truth" of gospels, etc., and what I had to say about it.

I pointed out that if the Jews accepted the "gospels," they would cease doing what that man had just done, which he had to admit was pretty impressive, as well as all of the other commandments and rituals in the Torah.

He smiled and said rather sheepishly, "I guess we did sort of make everything spiritual without concrete observances, didn't we?"

Then after a short pause, he asked, "Tell me... and what happens if a non-Jewish man marries a Jewish woman? Because that is what I did."

I told him what it seems he already knew, that the children are Jewish.

Then I asked him if he wanted to know what the Jews believe. After all, they received the Torah 1,500 years before his religion started. He answered "yes."

"We Jews believe that G-d is infinite, He creates every creation in the universe constantly and He does it from pure love. He is infinitely close to us and listens to all of our prayers. So it isn't necessary to pray to spirits, ghosts, or even to other Jews (whom the Bible calls "G-d's only son" - Exodus 4:22).

He thanked me, we shook hands and two minutes later a young man in his late teens who was sitting next to me said he overheard my conversation and wanted to ask a question. "You said that G-d is infinite, right? So that means that He's infinitely strict, right. So if He's infinitely strict then when Adam sinned with the tree of knowledge it made an infinite blemish! So how can we possibly be forgiven for an infinite sin when we are just finite creations?"

I was a bit surprised by the question. It was very good and I told him so. He began to quietly answer with Christian dogma, "Therefore G-d gave His only son..." but I interrupted and replied,

"Therefore G-d sent Abraham to show us how to fix up the sin of Adam."

This totally threw him, he had never heard such an answer! I continued. "And what you say about G-d being infinitely strict is certainly true. But you have to admit that G-d is also infinitely kind. Do you agree?"

"I guess so," he replied after pausing to reflect. "So" I continued, "what do you think is strongerHis kindness or His strictness?"

When he shrugged his shoulders I told him that I can prove that G-d's kindness is greater. "Consider how G-d makes trillions upon trillions of animals, fish, birds, bugs, protozoa, etc., each with its own circulatory, respiratory, digestive, nervous systems that, if there is the slightest malfunction in even one of these systems it can die. This shows G-d's infinite severity!

"But on the other hand," I continued, "G-d keeps creating all these beings! So this shows that G-d's kindness is stronger than His severity.

"This," I concluded, "was the message of Abraham and it's what the Jews were 'chosen' for: namely to teach the world how good, and kind, and close G-d is to us!"

I want to emphasize that this entire conversation was in very friendly and non-combatant tones, so when I saw that he was battling internally with the ideas I added:

"You know why you are having trouble with all this? Because you think too much about yourself and about death. Think about life! Think about the Creator! Then you'll turn life around! That will erase the sin of Adam!"

He shook my hand. We had arrived at the airport at his terminal and he had to leave. As he went to take his luggage from the back, I heard him ask the man who had been sitting behind me, "Dad, is this your suitcase?"

Two hours later when my wife and I were on the plane it occurred to me: The teenager sitting next to me was the son of the man who had been sitting behind me. The young man was Jewish. ■

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What's In A Name?

NOA means "tremble, shake." Noa was one of the five righteous daughters of Tzela'fchad (Num. 26:33) who petitioned that women without brothers could inherit their deceased father's portion in the land of Israel.

NAFTALI a son of Jacob by Rachel's handmaid, Bilha, was named by Rachel. In the Torah (Gen. 30:8) the name is translated as "wrestled" in recognition of the effort Rachel exerted to have a child born in her merit. Commentators also explain it to mean "crooked and twisted," explaining that she used every method possible to influence G-d in her favor. It also has a connection to a Hebrew word for "prayer" or "bound" - to G-d.

Moshiach Matters


The Hebrew word "shliach" (emissary) has the numerical value of 348. If we add 10 (the number of powers of the soul) the total is 358, which is the numerical equivalent of Moshiach (358). By revealing the inner powers of our soul in this service the inner truth of the entire world will be revealed. ■

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe, eve of 29 Cheshvan, 5750 -1989)

News

New Torah Scrolls

Chabad of Australia marked its 100 year anniversary with the completion of a new Torah scroll. The celebration included a video about the long and august history of Chabad in Australia since the arrival of the Feiglin brothers in 1909. The new Torah was welcomed to the Beis Chabad Ohel Devorah in Melbourne, amidst much rejoicing. The Chabad House at the University of Central Florida (UCF) in Orlando, just completed their own Torah scroll. This is the first Torah that UCF has ever had. Another Chabad Center on campus that also recently welcomed a new Torah scroll is Texas A & M University, in College Station. The Rohr Chabad Jewish Student & Community Center had been using a borrowed Torah scroll until now. ■

Important Times	November 5 – November 12	Brought to you by: Chabad-Lubavitch in Cyberspace www.chabad.org	Re-printed by: Chabad of Scottsdale (480) 998-1410 chabadofscottsdale.org
<i>Shacharis</i> 7:00am Sunday 8:00am Monday/Thursday 6:45am		Copyright © 2010 Lubavitch Youth Organization www.lchaimweekly.org	 The Jewish Learning Center of Scottsdale 480.443.5362
<i>Minchab/Maariv</i> 5:15pm Shabbos 5:05pm			
<i>Shabbat</i> <u>Shabbos Mevorchim Tehillim Minyan</u> 8:00am Shacharit 9:30am			
Light Candles 5:15pm	Shabbat Ends 6:05pm		

It Once Happened

In a small town in Poland lived a storekeeper named Abraham. Though not at all a wealthy man, when it came to giving charity and offering hospitality to wandering Jews, he was without equal.

One day Abraham had an unexpected and distinguished visitor, his Rebbe. The Rebbe was impressed with the warm hospitality and attention Abraham showed him. But his keen eyes did not fail to note that Abraham went far beyond the call of duty in the mitzva (commandment) of hospitality to visitors and giving charity. And so, before leaving, the Rebbe blessed Abraham - that he be able to practice these mitzvot in comfort and riches.

Soon after the Rebbe left, Abraham noticed a change in his business affairs; a change for the better. Every day brought him better business and more prosperity. But, riches can be as much a test as poverty and, without even realizing, it he began to find less and less time for the mitzvot he had always treasured so.

Abraham now lived in a beautifully furnished house, with several servants. Beggars were no longer admitted, though at the door they could still get a fairly handsome donation. People began to notice the change in their old friend.

One day Abraham was informed that a very persistent Rabbi wanted to see him. Abraham greeted the man curtly, but when told that he was sent by their Rebbe, Abraham's face lit up. "Ever since the Rebbe's visit to my house my fortune has taken a good turn, and, thank G-d, I have done well, as you can see." The Rabbi asked for help in freeing a man who had been imprisoned on false charges.

Abraham quickly took out a substantial sum of money and gave it to the visitor to take to the Rebbe. While seeing him to the door, Abraham apologized to the visitor that he was too busy to spend more time. "Remember me to the Rebbe, please," Abraham said as he shook his hand.

The Rebbe questioned his emissary closely about Abraham and his way of life, and it saddened him to think that Abraham had changed so. "Is it possible that my blessing could have been the indirect cause of this change?" the Rebbe wondered. He decided to pay a visit to Abraham.

Abraham welcomed his Rebbe on his arrival with joy and respect. "Quite a change from before, Rebbe," Abraham commented as he saw the Rebbe looking all around.

"Quite a change" the Rebbe agreed, his face quite serious. He came up to the window and looked out.

"Abraham, come here a minute," the Rebbe called. "Who is that man walking there?"

"That is Yankel the Tailor," Abraham replied, adding "a pious Jew. Unfortunately he is very poor..."

"And who is that woman carrying an empty basket?"

"That's a widow going to market...poor woman, and a houseful of orphans, too."

Abraham began to wonder why the Rebbe had become so interested in the passers-by; he was not a man of idle curiosity. The Rebbe turned away from the window and walked up to a large mirror. "Look into the mirror, Abraham. Whom do you see there?"

"Why, myself, of course," Abraham replied, puzzled.

"Tell me, Abraham. What is the difference between a window and a mirror?"

"That is quite simple," Abraham explained. "They are both glass but a mirror has a coating of silver on it."

"I see, I see..." the Rebbe said. "When you put silver on a piece of glass, you see only yourself.

Extraordinary, isn't it?"

"Yes, indeed, but..."

Abraham did not finish the sentence. Suddenly it dawned on him what the wise and saintly Rebbe was hinting at. Before he was "coated with silver" he could see everybody, but now that he had become rich, he could only see himself.

Abraham felt a deep sense of shame. "I've failed my test, haven't I Rebbe? Is there any way I can make it up?" he asked tearfully.

"You must return to your good old way of giving charity generously and graciously, and inviting guests humbly into your home - all in accordance with your ability."

Later Abraham went over to his mirror with a sharp knife. He scraped off the silver in one of the corners. In this way he would always be reminded not to see only himself. ■

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A ladder was standing on the ground and the top of it reached to heaven (Gen. 28:12)

Prayer is the ladder that connects our souls with G-d. Although it stands "on the ground," beginning with no more than acknowledgment of G-d's greatness, its top (the Amida, or silent prayer) reaches this level through the prior attainment of understanding inherent in the Shema itself.

(Hayom Yom, from the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe)



And Isaac loved Esau...but Rebecca loved Jacob (Gen. 25:25) Isaac was a "perfect offering," whose "style" of Divine service was somewhat removed from the material world and its concealments. Rebecca, by contrast, had grown up in household surrounded by devious people. When Esau asked his father how to "tithes salt" (Esau knew that it is not required to tithe salt, he was just trying to show his father how "pious" he was) it was beyond Isaac's imagination that his son was being deceitful. Rebecca, however, with her experience in the ways of the world, recognized that it was only a scheme to impress his father, and "loved Jacob" for his quality of truthfulness.

(Der Torah Kval)



And the man became rich, and gained more and more, until he became very wealthy (Gen. 26:13) It often happens that the richer a person gets, the smaller his essential "humanity" and regard for his fellow man becomes. Isaac, however, not only retained his quality of being a "man" the wealthier he grew, but continued his rise to perfection as an empathetic human being.

(Rabbi Yitzchak of Torshiv)



Behold, I heard your father speak to Esau your brother (Gen. 27:6)

Although Isaac had carried on his conversation with Esau in a whisper, Rivka had heard it as loudly as if he were speaking in a normal tone. She thus interpreted it as a sign from Above to intervene.

(The Rebbe of Dinov)