

L'Chaim

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November 12, 2010 – 5 Kislev, 5771

1145: VAYETZE

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Living with the REBBE



In this week's Torah portion, Vayetzei, we read how Jacob left the home of his righteous father Isaac, left his studies in the yeshiva of Shem and Eber, and went to the home of the evil Laban in Charan. There he began a new chapter in his life, working as a shepherd day & night. Until then Jacob had concentrated on spiritual service, devoting himself solely to the study of Torah. In Charan, however, Jacob's focal point shifted, and he now found himself involved in more mundane tasks.

Surprisingly, it was precisely in Charan that Jacob achieved his highest level of success, as we are told, "And the man increased exceedingly." Jacob became very wealthy, both literally and figuratively. Moreover, it was there that Jacob married and established the Twelve Tribes, the foundation upon which the entire Jewish people would later be built.

But how is it possible that Jacob experienced his greatest success in a place as lowly as Charan? Why was it necessary for the Jewish people to establish its beginnings in such a sordid environment? (Charan is related to the Hebrew word for anger or wrath.)

A similar question can be asked about G-d's desire for a "dwelling place" in the physical world. Of all the higher celestial planes, G-d chose our lowly material world as the place where He wanted to dwell, to establish a permanent "residence."

The mitzvot of the Torah are practical commandments that we perform with simple, physical objects. Tefilin are made from the hide of an animal; tzitzit are made from wool; a suka, from planks of wood; candles for Shabbat and holidays from wax. G-d wants us to build for Him a "dwelling place down below" by using material objects in the performance of mitzvot. The life-long service of the Jew consists of utilizing whatever he comes in contact with to erect a permanent "residence" for G-d in the lower realms.

This desire for a "dwelling place down below" will be realized completely when Moshiach comes and ushers in the Final Redemption. At that time the purpose of creation will be fulfilled, "for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the L-rd, as the waters cover the sea."

This Divine plan for creation is reflected in Jacob's establishment of the Jewish people in as subject a location as Charan, precisely against a backdrop of involvement in material affairs:

In Charan, Jacob first began to fulfill G-d's intent in the creation of the world, the establishment of a "dwelling place" in this lowest of all possible worlds. In Laban's house he succeeded in laying the groundwork for the generations of Jews who would follow, foreshadowing their Divine mission to transform the physical world into an appropriate "residence" for G-d. ■ *Adapted from Likutei Sichot, vol. 30*

Don't Hope - Expect

Any athlete will tell you that one of the hardest things to do is - expect to win. Every athlete hopes to win, but to expect to win? That requires a whole different mindset.

And what's true of athletes is true of anyone who has to perform. Ask any artist. They all hope to perform well, win the prize, get the part, etc. Ask anyone in sales. They all hope to close the deal.

But expect to perform well, get the part, get the contract, close the deal? Only those who always win, the lucky ones, only they can expect to succeed.

If we ask those who do succeed, who do win, achieve, make it to "the other side of hope" - if we ask them how they do it, they'll tell us it requires two things: First, doing it, and doing it again. Second, practicing, and practicing it again.

Doing it the first time means doing it in your head. That's more than role-playing. That's more than conjuring a general sensation of what it feels like to win. That's playing the game, performing the piece, going through the conversation, in all its details, down to the last detail - but doing it first in our heads.

That's not just rehearsing. That's pre-experiencing.

There's a story of the Maggid of Mezritch who was questioned by a merchant why he took so long to complete his prayers. The Maggid replied that it takes time to make the spiritual journey. When the merchant looked skeptical, the Maggid changed the subject, asking

the merchant about his business. He encouraged the merchant to describe in details the buying, bargaining, selling, calculating profit and loss. At the end, the merchant realized that just as one can't do business superficially, one must focus, mentally on the details, involving one's head so that is the only reality of the moment, so too with prayer.

In other words, one has to experience the experience, in all its details, moment to moment, in the mind, before experiencing it a second time, in the mind with the body.

And that brings us to practicing, and practicing again. Just as the mind has to experience the experience once before experiencing it "for real," so too the body. It has to build what athletes call "muscle memory" - practicing so that the performance is just another practice.

That's the difference between hoping and expecting. One hopes for what one hasn't experienced. One expects what one has experienced.

This is true, as in the story with the Maggid, with making our prayers meaningful. Or any mitzva (commandment).

But it's also true when it comes to Moshiach. We don't say, "I hope Moshiach comes." We say, "I expect Moshiach to come."

So, in order to experience the era of Redemption, we need to put in the time and effort to pre-experience the times of Moshiach - to leave in peace with our neighbors, to have harmonious family relationships, to immerse ourselves in Torah teachings, to work toward an end to poverty and illness. May the practice, experience and realization be simultaneous! ■

**MEZUZAH
DID YOU
KNOW???**

The parchment scroll, written in the Torah's original Hebrew, contain two parshiot (Torah sections): Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Deuteronomy 11:13-21.

These verses are the only inscription on the parchment scroll (except for the Shadai inscribed on the reverse side) and emphasize our belief in the Oneness of G-d.

The scroll, of handmade parchment from a kosher animal, is inscribed in black ink with a quill pen by a specially trained, religiously devout scribe known in Hebrew as a sofer. The sofer concentrates intensely and writes with special Hebrew characters in a beautiful calligraphic hand. ■

**A WORD FROM
THE DIRECTOR**

Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman

Next Tuesday, 9 Kislev (Nov. 16 this year) is the birthday and yartzeit of Rabbi Dov Ber, the second Chabad Rebbe, known as the Mitteler Rebbe. The following day, 10 Kislev, is the anniversary of the Mitteler Rebbe's release from imprisonment on false charges.

There is a famous story about the Mitteler Rebbe told by the Previous Rebbe and often related by the Rebbe:

The Mitteler Rebbe was known for his unusual power of concentration. When he was engaged in study or prayer, he did not hear or see a thing around him.

Once, when Rabbi Dov Ber was studying, his baby sleeping in a nearby cot fell out and began to cry. Rabbi Dov Ber did not hear the baby's cries and continued learning. But the infant's grandfather, Rabbi Shneur Zalman (the founder of Chabad Chasidism), who was in his room on an upper floor and was also studying at that time, did hear the baby's cries. He interrupted his studies, went downstairs, picked up the infant, soothed him and put him back in his cot. Still, the infant's father did not hear what went on around him. Later on, Rabbi Shneur Zalman told his son: "No matter how important the thing is that a Jew is engaged in, one must always hear the cry of a child."

This story is applicable to parents, teachers and even children. We must always here the cry of a child, whether that child is a child in years or knowledge or commitment to Judaism. Even when we are involved in important things, we must not neglect or ignore the cry of the child.

This applies, as well, to the child within each one of us. This spark of good and G-dliness, the wide-eyed and innocent trust and belief that the world can become a perfect place, that evil can be eradicated, that goodness can prevail, and that "I" can be a part of it or perhaps even be the catalyst for realizing the world's potential, must be listened to and heeded. ■

The Rebbe Writes

11th of Cheshvan, 5721 [1960]

... continuation of a letter of the Rebbe 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.

Finally, and this is the most basic consideration, it is necessary to bear in mind that "G-d directs the steps of man and finds delight in his (His) way," as explained at length by the Baal Shem Tov [founder of Chasidism] and the Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism]. When individual Divine Providence leads a Jew, man or woman, in a certain direction, and in a way that G-d finds delight in because it is His way, it is to be expected that the Yetzer Horah [evil inclination] will seek ways and means to lessen the enthusiasm and dampen the spirit. For the greater the accomplishments in the realm of holiness, the greater is the opposition on the part of the "other side."

As for what can actually be accomplished, I mentioned to your husband the experience in a somewhat similar situation, when the father of my father-in-law sent two Jews to Gruzia (Caucasia), a remote and neglected region, the two emissaries so transformed Jewish life there that even now, 45 years later, we find grandchildren of those native Jews in New York who are strictly religious and devoted Chassidim.

There is this difference, however, that those two Jews who revitalized Jewish life in that remote region, were the only pioneers and had no helpers. They had to start from scratch, whereas you and your husband came to Australia, finding there a group of Anash [Chabad-Lubavitch chasidim] who have, to a considerable extent, already prepared the ground, except that many phases of the work have still to be accomplished and could best be done by people who have all American-English background, since, basically, the Australian society is similar to that of the English-American society.

I hope that the above lines will suffice to form a basis for further reflection along the lines suggested, for, needless to say, the subject is by no means exhausted.

After all these reflections, I explicitly told your husband that as far as he and you are concerned, and as far as the continuation of your work in Australia is concerned, you have complete freedom of action now, as before you set out for Australia, when you were in Brooklyn or Buffalo. You have the freedom to decide whether you wish to continue your work in Australia at the end of the three year period, with all that it entails, or return to an easier job in this country. As a matter of fact, the job at the Yeshivah which your husband held before, would undoubtedly be available to him in the same capacity as before (which is that of the category of a "clerk", with all the "advantages" indicated earlier).

Furthermore, I assured your husband that there is no implication of Kepaida [harboring resentment] or reproof, from my part, whatever decision he and you make. The important thing is that if the task is to be done successfully, the work must be carried on willingly, without compulsion and without considering it as penal servitude or deportation. On the other hand, I would be amiss of my duty if I were not to point out the essential differences between one job as against the other, in the light of the quotation mentioned above, "More knowledge, more pain."

May G-d grant that you make your decision in a way that will be truly good for you both, materially and spiritually, and that you have good news to report.

With blessing,

P.S. What has been said in regard to your husband's work applies also to your work in disseminating Yiddishkeit among the women and daughters of Chabad, although perhaps not to the same extent, since among the women of Chabad there are a number of persons who have an American-English background. Needless to say, however, you have the advantage of having been in the proximity of my father-in-law and having imbibed directly from his fountains, whereas the other women in Australia could do so only from a "second or third" vessel. ■



SLICE OF LIFE

Foe or Friend?

by Yehudis Kaplan

Greece was a dangerous place to be in last spring. Angry, violent mobs with grievances to the government destroyed property, set fires, battled the police. Bedlam reigned.

Vacationers shunned the island; hotel reservations and plane tickets were cancelled. But for Rabbi Yoel and Ruth Kaplan and their children, the Chabad emissaries in Thessaloniki, Greece, it was just another challenge.

Like the hundreds of Chabad Houses around the world, the Chabad Center in Saloniki is open to the public 24/7.

In the days of the rioting and even the weeks after, signs of vandalism were everywhere and tension filled the air. But the rabbi tried to resume his normal activities.

Even such a seemingly simple task like going to the post office was fraught with danger. The post office was located in a part of the city center that was a hangout and had been hit the hardest by violence.

Recalls Rabbi Kaplan: "I saw the typical group of young people blocking the sidewalk in the city center outside the post office in the middle of the day as they stood and chatted.

"I noticed one of them looking at me out of the corner of his eye. I, of course, was the subject of their conversation as a Jew whose appearance proclaimed my Judaism. I'm already used to comments and laughter, and sometimes I have had to either make a detour or give up on my visit to the post office that day. But due to recent strikes at the post office, my visit was too urgent to put off. So I carried on walking."

Soon the group's curses and anti-Semitic comments in Greek became louder, and they even translated some of their remarks into

English for the rabbi's "benefit."

"As I continued walking, I had a strange feeling. And as I stood opposite them, I smiled and said, 'Good morning to you, too,' in a pleasant voice.

"Who spoke to you?!" was the angry reply.

"No one, but you were talking about the Jewish people."

"We were talking about the nation of thieves, robbers, and gluttons," they answered.

"If you knew the truth, you wouldn't talk to me or to any Jew like that," I responded, still smiling.

The leader of the group, a young man with spiky hair, started to lose his temper. "You'll see!" he said. "I am trained in boxing ... I think you should go away before I have to show you the power of my outstretched arm ..."

The best thing I could do was move on, which I did but not without smiling to each member of the group first. I then went into the post office, which was still undergoing repairs after the riots. When I walked out, I could have gone another way to avoid the group, but decided to go the direct way.

The group was still there. As I drew closer, the voices in deep debate subsided, and I said, "Have a good day!"

"You too," was the surprisingly polite response. I was even more surprised when the leader of the group turned to me and apologized. "We thought about things, and you're right! We've probably been influenced by what we have heard."

"I'm happy to hear this," I said. "You need to treat every single person with respect, no matter what his opinions and thoughts." And before I went on my way, I handed 'the boxer' my card and told him to be in touch if he ever wanted to talk again."

Rabbi Kaplan thought that this was the end of the story, but it wasn't.

A few days later, Rabbi Kaplan was rushing to prepare for the holiday of Shavuot, which was starting that evening. In the midst of preparations, he got a phone call.

"It's Alexandros, the young man you met near the post office. Do you remember me? I'm outside your house right now. Can I come in for a coffee?"

The 'boxer' and his almost victim sat down for a chat. It seemed that Rabbi Kaplan's few words outside the post office, his cheerful expression, and the gentle way in which he had spoken to the group, had really had an effect on Alexandros. "I wanted to speak to you urgently afterwards," he told the rabbi.

Alexandros related to the rabbi that his maternal grandmother was Jewish and is the only member of her family to have survived the Holocaust. Like several hundred other Jews from Saloniki, she hid in the mountains during the German invasion. Sadly her husband and only son were murdered by the Germans.

After the war, she married a devout Christian and gave birth to Alexandros' mother. But surely, Alexandros told the rabbi, since his grandmother had left Judaism and his mother considered herself Christian, he was not Jewish!

Rabbi Kaplan immediately set Alexandros straight. "I told Alexandros that he is, in fact, 100% Jewish. Alexandros was delighted to discover his Jewishness. He took me to visit his elderly grandmother. During this very moving visit I presented her with a mezuzah for her door and Alexandros cheerfully put on tefilin for the first time in his life," relates Rabbi Kaplan.

While Rabbi Kaplan finishes telling the story of Alexandros here, it's surely just the beginning for this young Jewish man. **Adapted from shmais.com and ohrtmimim.org**

What's In A Name?

Alexandra is the feminine form of the adopted Greek name Alexander, meaning "protector of man." Queen Shlomah Alexandra, Queen of Judea from 76-67 b.c.e. brought peace, prosperity, and spiritual healing to the Land of Israel.

Akiva is a variant form of the Hebrew name Yaacov meaning "to hold by the heel." The famous Rabbi Akiva, Talmudic scholar of the 1st century, did not even know the Hebrew alphabet until he began studying Torah at the age of 40. He became one of the most beloved, respected scholars of all time.

Moshiach Matters


Exile is the gestation of the collective entity of Jewish souls, and the coming of Moshiach is the level of birth. The sages say "[Moshiach ben Dovid will not come] until the treasury of souls known as 'guf' (body) has been exhausted." Only when all the individual Jewish souls will have been born will the time of gestation of the people of Israel be complete in the "belly" of the female aspect of G-dliness, and it will be time for Moshiach to be born. **■**

(From a discourse of Rabbi Dovber, the "Mitteler Rebbe," translated by Yaakov Bock)

News

New Emissaries

Rabbi Mendy and Devora Leah Mathless recently moved to Albany, New York, where they are establishing University Heights Chabad to assist families of patients hospitalized in nearby hospitals and students at the nearby Medical, Law, and Pharmacy Schools. Rabbi Yochanan and Mushky Gordon have moved to Germany where they will serve as the local youth directors for Chabad of Munich. Rabbi Immanuel and Rochie Storfer, and Rabbi Yisroel and Rivkie Geisinsky, are moving to North Miami Beach, Florida, where they are founding a new yeshiva Torah Orh, for college-age men who are becoming interested in Torah study and Jewish observance. **■**

Important Times	November 12 – November 19	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	
<i>Minchab/Maariv</i> 5:15pm Shabbos 4:55pm			The Jewish Learning Center of Scottsdale 480.443.5362
<i>Shabbat</i> <u>Chassidus Club</u> 8:15am <u>Kabbalah of Cholent</u> 9:05am Shacharit 9:30am			
Light Candles 5:09pm	Shabbat Ends 6:05pm		

It Once Happened Reb Pinchas Reizes was a Chasid of the Mittlerer Rebbe (Rabbi Dovber, whose birthday and passing are on 9 Kislev). When Reb Pinchas passed away his only heir was a nephew, who unfortunately was a complete scoundrel. Among the items that came into the nephew's possession was a letter written by the Mittlerer Rebbe to his uncle, asking him to serve on a special committee to disburse funds for charity. The sum cited in the letter was 4,000 rubles.

The nephew saw this as a golden opportunity to blackmail the Rebbe. If the Rebbe did not give him money, he threatened, he would go to the authorities and tell them that the Rebbe was collecting funds for clandestine and illegal purposes. But the Rebbe was immune to his intimidations. "Not one penny will you get from me," he told him. "Do whatever you want, for I have done nothing wrong and am not afraid of your slander."

Incensed by the Rebbe's response, the nephew carried out his threat. With the help of some unsavory associates he forged the original letter to make it appear as if the Rebbe had 104,000 rubles instead of 4,000 - a veritable fortune in those days. The Rebbe was accused of various criminal activities, such as trying to bribe the Turkish Sultan, and it was also alleged that the Rebbe's study hall had been built to the exact specifications of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

On Saturday night of the Torah portion of Noach 5587 [1826] investigators showed up at the Rebbe's house. They conducted a thorough search of the premises. Careful note was taken of all written materials, and anything else they considered suspicious. At the same time, a separate group of investigators measured the Rebbe's study hall; no one could figure out what they were trying to find.

By that time a large crowd had gathered in front of the Rebbe's house, and everyone could hear the tearful pleading of the Rebbe's family with the police. The only one who seemed to be taking everything in stride was the Rebbe. As if nothing unusual were going on, he withdrew to his room to write a Chasidic discourse. A while later he announced that he would receive people for private audiences, which he did.

The following morning the Rebbe was ordered to accompany the police to their headquarters in Vitebsk. Word of the Rebbe's arrest quickly spread, and in every town and village along the way hundreds of Jews came out to greet him. Thanks to the efforts of several influential Jews, it was agreed that the long journey would be made in stages, with numerous stops to allow the Rebbe to rest.

When the carriage arrived in Dobromisl, the Rebbe asked to be allowed to pray the afternoon service in the local synagogue. Afterwards, to everyone's surprise, he delivered a Chasidic discourse on the verse from Song of Songs, "Many waters cannot quench love." The allusion to his present situation was clear.

The Rebbe was subsequently imprisoned in the city of Liozhna and placed under tight security. Sometime later it was learned that the formal charge against him was rebellion against the government. The Rebbe was jailed for one month and ten days, but even from the beginning he was granted certain privileges. Three people were permitted to stay with him, and three times a day, 20 Jews were allowed inside to pray. The Rebbe was also permitted to deliver a Chasidic discourse twice a week in front of 50 people after the Rebbe's doctor testified that it was crucial to the Rebbe's health.

In the meantime, efforts to secure the Rebbe's release were being made behind the scenes. Several high-ranking government officials who had heard about the Rebbe and held him in great esteem tried to exert their influence. The Rebbe was interrogated numerous times, during which he proved that not only were his connections to the Turkish Sultan completely fabricated, but his designs on the Kaiser's throne were equally fictitious.

At the end of several weeks the results of the investigation were turned over to the Minister of the Interior. The Minister was very impressed by the Rebbe's responses to all the questions, and decided that a direct confrontation between the Rebbe and his accuser was in order.

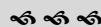
On the designated day the Rebbe dressed in his white Shabbat finery. When he walked into the Minister's office, the official was so disconcerted by his angelic appearance that he ordered a chair be brought to the Rebbe.

The informer began to heap his invectives upon the Rebbe, but one by one, the Rebbe dismissed the accusations entirely. At one point in the proceedings the accuser addressed the Rebbe as "Rebbe," prompting the Rebbe to turn to the Minister and remark, "Did you hear that? First he calls me a charlatan and a revolutionary, and in the next breath he calls me Rebbe!"

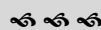
From that point on the accuser's allegations became increasingly illogical. The Minister was so irritated by his behavior that he ordered him to "stop barking," and he was led away in humiliation. The Rebbe was escorted back to his room with great deference, and informed that he would soon be released. The Mittlerer Rebbe was liberated on the 10th of Kislev, having been informed of the government's decision while reciting the verse from Psalms: "He has saved my soul in peace." ■

And Jacob lifted up his feet ("raglav") (Gen. 29:1)

The Hebrew word for foot, "regel" is related to the word meaning habit, "hergel." Jacob "lifted up" and elevated his daily, mundane and habitual actions and transformed them into holiness. "If you turn away your foot because of the Sabbath," said the Prophet Isaiah, "I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father." If you make an effort to rise above and transform your baser instincts in order to bring holiness into the world, you will be rewarded by G-d for your actions. (Baal Shem Tov)



And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth (Gen. 28:14) The Jewish people is likened here to the dust of the earth, although sometimes the Torah compares the Jews to sand, and sometimes to the stars. We learn a lesson from each of these different expressions. Stars are far apart from one another in the heavens and never come into contact with each other. Grains of sand, on the other hand, are in close proximity to the other grains, but do not stick and adhere to each other. Dust, however, attaches to other particles and forms a cohesive mass. The Jewish people receives G-d's blessings when they are unified and undivided like dust. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)



Surely G-d is present in this place and I did not know it (28:16) When does man feel the presence of G-d? When "I did not know it" - when the "I" is ignored and the person works on negating his ego. (Panim Yafot)

Thoughts that Count

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