

LampLighter

3 Kislev
Toldot
905
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Toldot, begins with the words, "And these are the generations of Yitzchak, the son of Avraham: Avraham begot Yitzchak." According to the Talmud, one of the reasons for the repetitiveness of this verse is to emphasize the fact that, according to natural law, Avraham was unable to father children at that age.

When Sara conceived and gave birth to a son the nations of the world scoffed, intimating that Avraham was not the biological father. G-d therefore fashioned Yitzchak's facial features to look exactly like his father's, thereby proving his paternity and dispelling any misconceptions.

"The nations of the world" had no difficulty accepting Avraham's ability to father children in the spiritual sense — spreading the belief in One G-d and fostering good deeds among mankind. What they found impossible to believe, however, was that Avraham — by virtue of his faith in a G-d Who transcended natural law — could overcome his physical limitations and father a child in the literal sense as well.

The miraculous birth of Yitzchak demonstrated to the entire world that the physical body of the Jew — not only his soul — exists beyond the confines of nature and is created and directly sustained by G-d.

It is in this light that we can understand the words of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, the Previous Rebbe, which he uttered before being exiled to the far Eastern provinces of the Soviet Union, where he was sentenced by the Communist regime for the "crime" of spreading Judaism. Addressing the assemblage of Chasidim who had come to see him off, the Rebbe declared, "...And let all the nations of the world be apprised that it is only our physical bodies that are in galut (exile) and subject to the yoke of the nations. Our souls are not in exile and can never be subjugated! No one can exert any influence over us when it comes to matters of Torah, mitzvot and Jewish practice!"

But what good does it do to us to know that our souls are not in exile, if our physical bodies — the only medium through which we can observe mitzvot and spread the wellsprings of Judaism — are suffering the hardships of the galut? The answer to this question comes from our ancestor Avraham, the very first Jew. Avraham proved that whenever a Jew uncovers the supernatural dimensions of his soul, its G-dly light will illuminate his physical being as well.

In this way the physical body is elevated above the laws of nature, to a plane on which no power on earth can exert any influence.

To Save a Friend

By Chaya Sarah Silberberg

Gedalia Moshe Goldman, who later became the Grand Rebbe of Zvhil, and Chaim Shaul Bruk, a renowned Chabad *meshpia* (mentor), were serving time together in a Soviet prison camp. What was their "heinous" crime? Observing and spreading Judaism under the Communist regime.

One Shabbat, the sadistic commandant of the camp called Gedalia Moshe into his office. "I have here the papers for your release," he said as he waved some papers in the air, "and if you sign them now you will be a free man."

"But it is Shabbat," replied Gedalia Moshe, "I cannot and will not sign on Shabbat."

The commandant — who, of course, knew that Gedalia Moshe wouldn't transgress the Shabbat — shouted, "If you don't sign the papers now you will remain here another eight years!"

"Nevertheless, I will not sign and desecrate the Shabbat."

"Very well," sneered the commandant. "Don't sign. You will be in this prison for eight more years and we'll see how your G-d will help you..."

"If my G-d wants to help me, He'll do it without you. And if He wants me to be in this prison eight more years, I will be here eight more years even if you would decide to let me go," replied Gedalia Moshe calmly. "It has nothing to do with you."

The already enraged commandant saw red. He whipped his pistol out of its holster, pointed it at Gedalia Moshe's heart, and screamed "Let's see who will help you now!"

He cocked the gun...

And his daughter walked into the office. She saw her father pointing the gun at Gedalia Moshe and said in a bored voice, "Father, it's a waste of a bullet..."

Slowly the commandant lowered the gun. "Don't think it was your G-d that saved you!" he shouted at Gedalia Moshe who was standing there serenely. "If it hadn't been for my daughter you would be dead meat by now!"

He turned to an aide and yelled to him, "Bring in Chaim Shaul, the other Jewish trouble-maker!"

A few moments passed, and Chaim Shaul was standing in the office next to Gedalia Moshe. The commandant made him the same offer as he had to Gedalia Moshe, "Sign these papers and you can go free."

"Of course I can't sign the papers," replied Chaim Shaul, "It's Shabbat, and I don't violate the Shabbat."

"You will remain here another eight years."

"I will not write on Shabbat."

Suddenly Gedalia Moshe said, "Give me the papers. I will sign for him."

The commandant was dumbfounded. "What? You said you wouldn't write on Shabbat! You're going to be here for another eight years! And now you'll sign for him?"

"Of course I wouldn't sign on Shabbat to gain my freedom," Gedalia Moshe replied. "But this is different. I'm strong, and I can withstand the conditions in this prison another eight years. But Chaim Shaul is weaker, and he cannot stand this place any longer. It would be dangerous for him to remain here another eight years. Give me the papers and let me sign..."

Both men were freed from prison within the next few days.

For after all, it wasn't the commandant who was in control.



A Hungry Soldier's Kosher Food Portion

By Dovid Zaklikowski

War broke out in Russia, the Germans advanced, and the Russians scrambled to prepare for a battle and many casualties.

Basia Gurewicz took her own steps to secure her family's well-being during the war. She immediately went to the store and purchased many loaves of stale bread. She toasted the loaves, making them crisp and giving them a longer shelf life—thus she would have the bread when food became scarce during what was expected to be a prolonged war.

As the war continued, the Russians evacuated women and children, including the Gurewicz, from Moscow to the mountainous area of Ivanovka, Russia.

Supplies in the stores slowly dwindled, but the Gurewicz family had their backup bread to break some of their hunger.

When war had broken out, the patriarch of the family, Nachum, had been enlisted into the Russian army. He was stationed for a time at the entrance of Moscow, a city that the Germans bombarded for eighteen months straight. Later he received a job as a supply officer in the employ of one of the higher-ranking officers.

Being stationed near a large city gave him the opportunity to continue his kosher diet and to keep Shabbat and the Jewish holidays. To Nachum, being in Moscow was also an opportunity to assist other Jews who were in desperate need.

At one point, Nachum suffered from an ulcer and was placed in a military hospital. The family considered that a good period of time, as they at least knew where their father was. Nachum shared a hospital room with another Jewish soldier.

Even though Basia was occupied with supporting her family, three times a week,

she would make the long trip to visit her husband. In the army, he had been able to fend for himself with regard to finding and preparing kosher food, but he would not be able to do so while lying in pain on a hospital bed, so she brought him kosher food.

Later, their son, Mulik, would recall the one time that his mother took him along to visit his father while he was in hospital.

Following the war, the Gurewitz family escaped the Soviet Union using forged Polish passports. The family remained in Europe for a time, but later they moved to Australia, where they were one of the founders of the Chabad-Lubavitch community.

Mulik married Chava, and in 1964, they moved with their two children to Israel.

At first they lived at a relative's house in Jerusalem, where Mulik found a job which gave them financial stability. A short while later, they found an apartment that they wanted to purchase; however, to purchase it they would need a loan guarantee from the Jewish Agency.

Mulik made the trip several times to the office of the Jewish Agency. Every one of Mulik's trips turned out to be futile. He would wait many hours to reach a clerk, who would tell him that the people he needed to see were not there.

Mulik learned about Israeli bureaucracy the hard way. It was not as if he could just take any day off to go to the agency and wait in line. But he learned that many had to do this for months on end, until they actually received their signed paper with a guarantee for a loan. The long, hot days and the difficulty of travelling from his home in Jerusalem to Tel Aviv did not ease his frustration.

One morning, after two weeks of daily visits, Mulik anticipated the same speech from the clerk. This time, however, there was a new clerk, so the excuse would at least come from a different voice...

While he waited his turn, he noticed that this new person seemed a little nicer, though who knew if that would actually make any difference?

In less than half an hour he was sitting in front of the clerk. Mulik handed him his Australian passport.

"So where were you born?" the clerk asks.

"Russia."

"In your passport it says Poland," the clerk said.

So Mulik explained to him the story of his family's escape from Russia in 1946.

"So the passport is forged?"

Mulik explained to him that the information in the passport was true, just the nationality was not the correct one.

It seemed that the clerk understood the situation, and began examining the other details of the passport.

"I was also in Russia during World War II," the clerk began to relate to him. "I was a soldier in the Soviet forces, and I was lying in the hospital next to a man who had the same family name as you. His wife would bring him food every few days, because he adhered to the *kosher* dietary laws."

Shivers went down Mulik's back as he remembered that day he went to visit his father in the hospital. As the clerk continued to describe his time in the hospital, he could not hold himself back any longer.

"That man was my father, and that was my mother bringing the food," Mulik said. Mulik told him that, in fact, he himself once went with his mother to the hospital.

The clerk looked at Mulik in silence, stunned at the Divine Providence involved in this meeting. In disbelief, he inquired about his roommate's family, and Mulik answered his questions.

The clerk, contemplating all that had happened, told Mulik, "You know what your father would do with the food once your mother left?"

Mulik thought to himself, "That's simple, father would eat the food, and quickly. Since he would not touch any other food, he was very hungry."

"He would split the food with me," said the clerk, answering his own question, "so that I would also eat kosher food."

He asked Mulik exactly what it was that he needed. Mulik told him that he needed five signatures to guarantee his loan. The clerk told him to stay seated while he went to another room.

Ten minutes later he came back with all the signatures Mulik needed. He left that day with the paper that would secure him his mortgage... and a lesson in love for one's fellow.

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ISSUE 905

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Chasam Sofer was careful to note that in the blessings of the New Month we say: "He will redeem us speedily." Speed is the main emphasis of our prayers. Concerning the Redemption itself our prayers are not needed, for the Redemption has been promised to us by G-d.

(Customs of the Chasam Sofer)

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



Torah of life

15 Av, 5735 (1975)

I was pleased to be informed about your steady advancement in matters of Torah. The Torah is called Toras Chaim [the Torah of Life], because it is the Jew's guide in life, and also Toras Emes [the Torah of Truth], because it is the truth. Your progress is doubly gratifying inasmuch as persons of your standing have an impact on the community, for people look up to you and try to emulate you. Thus, your going from strength to strength in matters of Torah and Mitzvoth [commandments] is greatly multiplied through those who are inspired by your example, not to mention direct impact on children and through them on their children in an everlasting chain reaction.

In light of the above, even if there are some difficulties to overcome, it is surely worthwhile to make the effort, inasmuch as the effort involves only the individual; while the benefit is for many. Add to this also the fact that this is also the channel to receive G-d's blessings in all needs, and that G-d rewards in kind and in a most generous measure.

The above refers to all matters of Torah and Mitzvoth, but has a special significance in regard to kashrus [the Jewish dietary laws]. As a doctor you know the immense knowledge that has been accumulated recently in the area of nutrition and diet, and how much the quality of food affects physical and mental health. For Jews the Dietary Laws have come down with the Torah itself, which revealed the true meaning of monotheism, of which the Jewish People have been the bearers ever since. It was relevant not only in those days of old, when paganism and idolatry were the general practice in the world, but it is just as relevant in the present day and age, since it is only the Torah and mitzvot that are the basis of pure monotheism, rooted in the absolute unity of G-d. This means that the Jew brings unity and harmony in this, the physical world, eliminating any compartmentalization in daily life, or having occasional practices. Some misguided and misconceived individuals might even think that they can practice Judaism at home, but must make concessions and compromises outside the home. All such differentiations are contrary to true unity; pure monotheism. For the concept of pure monotheism is not confined to One G-d, but also requires unity in the personal life of each and every Jew, who is a member of the One People, of which it is said that it is "One People on earth." According to the explanation of the Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman], founder of Chabad, "One People on earth" means that they bring oneness and unity also in earthly things, and it is only in this way that the individual can achieve complete personal harmony and unity of the body and soul, at all times, whether in the synagogue, at home, or in the office.

Thus, it is obvious how important kashrus is for a Jew, since the food and beverages that he consumes become blood, tissue and energy. Therefore food that is not suitable (kosher) for a Jew can only alienate him from matters of Yiddishkeit [Judaism], and only the right and kosher food can nourish him physically, mentally and spiritually. As already mentioned, there is no need to elaborate on this to you, a physician, although your specialty is not directly in the field of nutrition.

The most desirable blessing that can be expressed in this case is that you should indeed serve as a living and inspiring example for others to emulate, and that through your inspiration many others will go from strength to strength in matters of Torah and Mitzvoth in daily life.

May G-d grant that you should always have good news to report.

A WORD from the Director

This coming Thursday, the ninth of Kislev, is the birthday and anniversary of the passing of Rabbi Dovber, the second Rebbe of Chabad.

A story is told of Reb Dovber when he was a young boy of four or five. At that time, the boy's father, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of the Chabad movement, was the Rebbe. After cheder one day, little Dovber ran into the room where many of his father's chasidim sat. He sat next to one elderly chasid. The chasid was asking two fellow-chasidim, who were wealthy businessmen, why they were so sad. The two men answered together, "Times are bad, and business is slow."

Dovber sat up straight and, in a pun, said to the first chasid, "Why do you need to ask them about their sadness (atzvut in Hebrew)? Does it not say in Psalms, 'Their idols (atzabeihem) are silver and gold...' Their sadness comes from money."

Later that day, when the three chasidim had the opportunity to speak privately with the Rebbe, they asked him how Dovber, at this tender age, had such a keen understanding of Torah and Chasidic philosophy.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman explained, "I have had to make great sacrifices in my life for Torah and Chasidism. They therefore automatically became my legacy to my children."

As illustrated by this story, when we make sacrifices for our children in matters of Judaism and Torah, we are automatically insuring that our children will inherit an extra measure of strength and commitment in those areas. G-d sees our sacrifice, He sees the extra effort we put in, and rewards us with true Yiddische nachas, Jewish pleasure - our children and grandchildren will follow in our footsteps.

J. I. Gutnick

At the end of the Chupah [marriage ceremony], the groom breaks a glass under his foot, and everyone says "Mazel Tov!" This commemorates the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem some 2000 years ago. This event was the catalyst of all the tragedies that the Jewish people have suffered since. Why remember such sadness at a wedding? One reason given is that if we are sensitive to the suffering in the world, even at the height of our joy, then when we have to go through hard times we will have the perspective to perceive the bigger picture; that in the long run there will be a change for the better and good times are ahead.

So then why do we say "Mazel Tov" after breaking the glass?

This brings us to a deeper explanation of the breaking of the glass.

At a wedding, everything seems perfect. Look at the bride and groom, all smiles and happiness. If you believe the speeches, they are the two greatest people that ever lived. It seems that their future together will be idyllic.

But soon after the wedding, real life sets in, and real life isn't faultless. We aren't always as considerate as we should be, even towards the people we love. Sometimes, in a rash moment, we may even hurt each other. We may even break things sometimes.

Therefore we say "Mazel Tov!" after breaking the glass. The Mazel Tov reminds us that none of us are perfect. In fact, it is precisely because of our imperfections that we need each other.

By accepting each other's faults, and working together to try and overcome them, we have something real going. So we end the Chupah with the breaking of the glass. Welcome to real life, and don't forget that's what makes it exciting and meaningful.

CUSTOMS CORNER

It Happened Once...



Yechidut

From the writings of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch

During one of his journeys, Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch stopped at an inn near the city of Samargon. It was summer, the weather was pleasant, and the Rebbe decided to stay for a week.

When Rabbi DovBer's decision became known, many people from the Samargon area converged at the inn, wishing to be received by the Rebbe and to consult with him. The Rebbe began to receive each one in turn, in a private audience known as *yechidut*.

A few days later, while hundreds of people still crowded the courtyard waiting to be received, the Rebbe suddenly stopped the *yechidut* and locked his door.

His Chassidim assumed that the many visitors of the past few days had tired the Rebbe and that he had taken a short break to recoup his strength. But after half an hour the Rebbe's secretary, Reb Zalman, emerged from the Rebbe's room extremely distressed, his eyes red from weeping, and whispered a few words into the ears of the leading Chassidim who had accompanied the Rebbe on his journey. These Chassidim became greatly alarmed, their faces turning red and white and red again, and a wave of horror spread through the crowd. All were at loss as to what had happened.

An hour or two later several of the elder Chassidim entered the house and listened at the Rebbe's door. They heard the Rebbe pouring out his soul, weeping and saying chapters of Psalms from the depths of his holy heart. Some of them fainted in distress. No one had any inkling as to what may have caused the Rebbe, in the middle of an ordinary weekday, to interrupt the *yechidut* and to be moved to such heart-wrenching prayers. Soon the distressing news seeped out to the anxious crowd, which broke up into groups and began to tearfully recite Psalms.

When the Rebbe finished reciting Psalms, he began to prepare for the afternoon *minchah* prayers. But he was so weakened from his earlier efforts that he was forced to first rest in bed for over an hour to recover his strength. Then he prayed *minchah* in the manner that is customary during the Ten Days of Repentance.

After *minchah* the Rebbe came out to the courtyard, seated himself on the platform which had been prepared for him, and delivered a lengthy discourse on the verse, "*Wall of the daughter of Zion, let flow a tear as a stream.*" The Rebbe spoke of how tears cleanse the soul of harmful words and thoughts, and expounded on the merit of saying words of Torah and Psalms. The discourse greatly moved the audience, and reverberated throughout the Chabad-Chassidic community. Years later, Chassidim remembered that day.

The next day the Rebbe was very weak and confined to his bed, but on the day after he resumed the *yechidut*. Still, no one knew what had so greatly distressed the Rebbe and caused his fervent prayer and address.

Rabbi Pinchas of Shklov, who had accompanied the Rebbe on this journey, was among the distinguished Chassidim yet in the time of the Rebbe's father, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. A few days later, Rabbi Pinchas asked the Rebbe what it had all been about.

A great sadness descended upon the Rebbe. Then he said: "When a Chassid enters into *yechidut*, he reveals to me the inner maladies of his soul, each on his own level, and seeks my assistance to cure his spiritual ills. To help him, I must first find the same failing — be it in the most subtle of forms — within my own self, and strive to correct it. For it is not possible to direct someone else in cleansing and perfecting his character unless one has himself experienced the same problem and undergone the same process of self-refinement.

"On that day," continued the Rebbe, "someone came to me with a problem. I was horrified to hear to what depths he had fallen, G-d forbid. Try as I might, I could not find within myself anything even remotely resembling what he told me. But Divine Providence had sent this man to me, so I knew that somewhere, somehow, there was something in me that could relate to his situation.

"And then it occurred to me that it must be something imbedded so deep within me that it was way beyond my conscious reach. The thought shook me to the very core of my soul and moved me to repent and return to G-d from the depths of my heart."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

And you shall stay with him a short time ... until your brother's fury turns away ... until your brother's anger turns away (*Gen. 27:44, 45*)

Rebecca advised her son Jacob what to do: "Run away to my brother Laban and wait until your brother gets over his anger. How will you know when that time has arrived and he is no longer angry at you? When you yourself stop holding a grudge against him." Rebecca understood the reciprocity of human emotions: Love is reciprocated with love, and hatred elicits a like response in others. (*Baal Hahaflaah*)

Isaac had grown old and his eyesight was failing. (*Gen. 27:1*)

Isaac's eyesight was failing him so that Jacob could receive the blessing. (Rashi) Was it necessary for Isaac's eyesight to fail him? Wouldn't it have been "easier" for G-d to have revealed to Isaac that Esau was wicked and therefore undeserving of the blessing? G-d didn't want to speak badly about Esau! If this is true concerning the wicked Esau, all the more must we be extremely careful not to gossip about or slander any Jew. (*Likutei Sichot*)

And one people shall be stronger than the other (*Gen. 25:23*)

Rashi comments: When one rises, the other falls. Jacob and Esau symbolize the struggle between the G-dly soul and the animal soul, between a person's good and evil inclinations. When a Jew's G-dly soul is dominant and exerts itself, there is no need to combat the animal soul - it "falls" by itself. Light does not have to fight darkness to illuminate - as soon as it appears, the darkness vanishes. So too, does the light of holiness dispel all evil. (*Sefer Hamaamarim*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS TOLDOT 4 KISLEV • 21 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:56 PM
	MINCHA:	8:05 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS :	8:40 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	7:50 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:00 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN- FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:10 PM
	MAARIV:	9:00 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 20 NOVEMBER 2009



Begins	Ends
7:56 MELBOURNE	9:00
7:45 ADELAIDE	8:46
6:02 BRISBANE	6:59
6:36 DARWIN	7:28
6:01 GOLD COAST	6:59
6:40 PERTH	7:39
7:22 SYDNEY	8:23
7:34 CANBERRA	8:35
7:59 LAUNCESTON	9:07
7:55 AUCKLAND	8:58
8:06 WELLINGTON	9:13

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נבג"מ ז"ע

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