



L'Chaim

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Living with the Rebbe



In this week's Torah portion, Vayetzai, Jacob escapes from his deceitful father-in-law, Laban. "Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels." Surprisingly, Jacob attends to the needs of his children before ensuring the security of his wives. Later, when Jacob meets his brother Esau, his wives take precedence over the children. "And he took his two wives and his two concubines and his eleven sons."

The Torah demands that a husband puts his wife's welfare before his children, and he enjoined to honor his wife even more than himself. Without her, obviously, the children would never have been born. In addition, putting one's wife first sets a positive example for the children, who see their father treating their mother with respect. Why then, did Jacob tend to his sons before his wives in the first instance?

According to Rashi, the great Torah commentator, one characteristic of Esau was that he always "placed the females before the males." The end result, therefore, was that both Jacob and Esau put their wives before their children, but for reasons that were diametrically opposed.

Esau lived a life entirely dictated by his uncontrollable desires. Women were of great importance to Esau, but not because he sought to honor and respect them. His children were therefore of secondary importance.

To Jacob, however, his children represented the continuation of the Jewish people and their G-dly service. Jacob put his wives before his sons as an expression of respect for the woman's role and also to properly educate his children.

In general, the terms "male" and "female" are used as symbols for the intellect and the emotions. "Male" stands for hard logic, untempered by compassion, whereas "female" refers to the heart and the capacity for warmth. In his personal life, Jacob placed the "male" before the "female," that is, his emotions were ruled by his intellect and were not subject to his personal desires. Esau, on the other hand, was dominated by his desires, unable to control himself in the endless search for self-gratification. Esau employed his intellect only as far as it could further the fulfillment of his passions.

Yet, in certain instances, the heart has an advantage over the intellect, which may sometimes be overwhelmed by a difficult challenge. Man's intelligence is limited, but his emotions can reach beyond the limits of our understanding. Esau could have attained spiritual greatness, had he properly developed and utilized his superior emotional range.

In fact, when Moshiach comes, speedily in our day, the "heart" will be in ascendance over the "intellect," for the "female" quality of emotion will be fully revealed, taking precedence over the "male" quality of cold intellect.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

In Defense of Hypocrites

by Rabbi Eliezer Zalmanov

The eighteenth century Rebbe, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, was referred to by his colleagues and followers as the "Advocate of Israel." He was famed for constantly highlighting the positive in his fellow Jews, so that they find favor in G-d's eyes.

One morning during services, he noticed that someone had stepped out of the synagogue in middle of the "Shema." Peering out the window, the rabbi saw this individual, still decked out in his Tallit, greasing the wheels of his horse-drawn carriage.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak immediately raised his eyes towards heaven and called out, "Master of the Universe! How great are your children. Even while involved in extremely mundane tasks, they still make time for prayer!"

Indeed, a unique perspective on worshipping G-d.

The term "religious" is oftentimes used as reference to one who is firm in his or her beliefs. People who attend services regularly are considered to be more religious than those who aren't as frequent attendees.

According to Judaism, however, being religious means observing G-d's laws. We believe that G-d has given the Jewish people 613 commandments - mitzvot. Each mitzva provides us the opportunity to strengthen our bond with G-d.

Every mitzva is independent of the others, and with every mitzva performed - or transgression avoided - a link is added to our connection. The more we do, the stronger the bond.

At times, we may hesitate taking upon ourselves the observance of certain a mitzva. The reluctance usually stems from feelings of hypocrisy. For, how can I observe one mitzva while I disregard another?

A quote I am fond of repeating is "There are three types of Jews: Those who do mitzvot, those who do more mitzvot, and those who do even more mitzvot." Simply because you aren't prepared to make a life changing decision regarding some mitzvot, shouldn't preclude you from observing those you are able, and willing, to.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's comment regarding the individual greasing his wheels while praying was referring to precisely this scenario. The man's prayer was a step in the right direction. Had he thought himself a hypocrite, he would have sooner stopped praying rather than stop greasing.

By emphasizing the positive in this behavior, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was reminding us that we aren't at all perfect, and that every activity is judged by its own merit.

And the more we do, the better we off we are.

So, go ahead, be a hypocrite!

Rabbi Zalmanov is the co-director, with his wife, of Chabad of Northwest Indiana. To comment on this article visit chabadnwind.com

COMMUNAL MEMORIAL SERVICE

For the victims of
the Mumbai terrorist
attack and a tribute
to Rabbi Gavriel and
Rebbetzin Rivkah Holtzberg
of blessed memory

Tuesday 9 December at the
Yeshiva Centre - Chabad NSW HQ
36 Flood St Bondi
7:30pm for 7:45pm start
Event will conclude at 9pm

The service will include a special
video message by the Prime Minister,
The Hon. Kevin Rudd MP, and an
address by the leader of the opposition,
The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP

SUPPORTED BY THE FOLLOWING COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS



For more information, contact (02) 9387 3822 | memorial@yeshiva.org.au | www.yeshiva.org.au

Parsha in a Nutshell

Jacob leaves his hometown Be'er Sheva and journeys to Charan. On the way, he encounters "the place" and sleeps there, dreaming of a ladder connecting heaven and earth, with angels climbing and descending on it; G-d appears and promises that the land upon which he lies will be given to his descendents. In the morning, Jacob raises the stone on which he laid his head as an altar and monument, pledging that it will be made the house of G-d.

In Charan, Jacob stays with and works for his uncle Laban, tending Laban's sheep. Laban agrees to give him his younger daughter Rachel - whom Jacob loves -- in marriage, in return for seven years' labor. But on the wedding night, Laban gives him his elder daughter, Leah, instead -- a deception Jacob discovers only in the morning. Jacob marries Rachel, too, a week later, after agreeing to work another seven years for Laban.

Leah gives birth to six sons -- Reuben, Shimon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun -- and a daughter, Dinah, while Rachel remains barren. Rachel gives Jacob her handmaid, Bilhah, as a wife to bear children in her stead, and two more sons, Dan and Naphtali, are born. Leah does the same with her handmaid, Zilpah, who gives birth to Gad and Asher. Finally, Rachel's prayers are answered and she gives birth to Joseph.

Jacob has now been in Charan for fourteen years and wishes to return home, but Laban persuades him to remain, now offering him sheep in return for his labor. Jacob prospers, despite Laban's repeated attempts to swindle him. After six years, Jacob leaves Charan in stealth, fearing that Laban would prevent him from leaving with the family and property for which he labored. Laban pursues Jacob, but is warned by G-d in a dream not to harm him. Laban and Jacob make a pact on Mount Gal-Ed, attested to by a pile of stones, and Jacob proceeds to the Holy Land, where he is met by angels.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN AND SPIRITUAL LEADER



This Shabbos is the ninth of Kislev, the birthday and yahrtzeit of Rabbi Dov Ber (known as the Mittler Rebbe), the second Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch.

In 1816, Reb Dov Ber established a settlement of Chabad chasidim in Israel in the city of Hebron. He encouraged the chasidim already living in other parts of Israel to resettle in Hebron. In addition, his own daughter and son-in-law moved with their family from Russia to Hebron.

But the history of Chabad-Lubavitch support of people, institutions and settlements in the Holy Land predates even 1816. For the first Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, vigorously encouraged his followers to support the Jews in the Holy Land.

Each and every Rebbe of Chabad, up to and including the present Rebbe, has unequivocally supported the Holy Land and spoken out boldly concerning anything that might have the slightest impact on the security of the Jews there.

Our brethren in Israel know first-hand about the Rebbe's concern for them and their lives. During the Gulf War the Rebbe's emphatic message that "Israel is the safest place in the world for G-d is constantly watching it" was continuously played on the radio. The hundreds of Chabad Centers that dot the Israeli landscape were deluged with callers during the Gulf War asking, "What is the Rebbe saying now?"

Without a doubt, and everyone can be sure of this, the Rebbe's policy has not changed one iota from that of his predecessors. Based on clear guidance from the Torah and Jewish law, the Rebbe reiterates: No action can be taken that might negatively affect the safety of the Jews of the Holy Land.

In the merit of Rabbi Dov Ber, who established the first Chabad settlement in the Holy Land, may we be privileged to go together with Moshiah to the Holy Land, NOW.

Pinchus Feldman
Rabbi Pinchus Feldman OAM

Farbrengen In honor of YUD TES KISLEV And the official welcoming of the new Shluchim

Tuesday December 16, 8:30pm
at The Yeshiva Centre 36 Flood St. Bondi

Cost: \$10 Farbrengen dinner will be served

Men and Women welcome

A Project of Chabad of Sydney



Keynote Speaker



Rabbi Yehoshua B. Gordon resides in Encino, California where he has been the Spiritual Leader of Chabad of Encino for the past 35 years, he was ordained in 1971 at the Rabbinical College of Canada in Montreal.

In the spring of 1973, he and his wife Deborah were appointed by The Lubavitcher Rebbe as his personal emissaries to the San Fernando Valley region. They established Chabad of the Valley which is comprised of some 30 Rabbis and their families assisted by their support staff in 22 centers throughout the greater Valley. Rabbi Gordon is a well known teacher, orator and lecturer who was endowed with an incredible sense of humor. He has traveled the world speaking to diverse groups in places as distant and as exotic as Anchorage and Fairbanks Alaska, Hong Kong, South Africa, Israel and many cities throughout North America.

For more info contact Rabbi Elimelech Levy @ Info@yeshiva.org.au or 0433 549 190

Smile its Friday

A man stormed into Moishe's Bakery and confronted Moishe. "Do you know what happened to me?" he demanded. "I found a fly in the raisin bread I bought from you yesterday." Moishe gave a palms-up shrug and replied, "Nu, so you'll bring me the fly and I'll give you a raisin."

Save the date! 22nd December – Car Menorah Parade with new modern Menoraos and Chanukah in the City – Giant Menorah lighting in Martin Place fantastic program – more info coming soon!

With Woman, With Life by Tova Hinda Siegel

"Midwife" is a word in old German meaning "with woman." Historically, as well as today, it categorizes a specific profession in medicine.

As a midwife, I have certainly attended many births, guiding women through the intensity of labor and delivering their babies. As a midwife, I also provide medical care, as well as emotional support, during pregnancy and after the birth, often looking after the newborn as well. Outside of pregnancy, I take care of women and girls of all ages, providing for their various health care needs. In short, as a midwife, I have been "with woman" for the entirety of her life cycle.

In the last few years, however, I have become aware of a part of being "with woman" that was never covered in my medical training. I have become involved with performing Taharas for Jewish women in Los Angeles. A Tahara is the ritual of preparation of a Jewish person for burial. It consists of a specific set of actions, delineated by Torah law, that are performed by a group of women, if the person is female, and of men, if the person is male. These groups are often volunteers and are known by the title Chevra Kadisha, which means "holy friends." The service they perform is called chesed shel emet or the ultimate "true kindness" since this service is provided for those who can no longer say "thank you."

How, you may ask, can I compare Chevra Kadisha work with that of providing women's health care? An interesting question...And yet, I have experienced a reality which tells me that this last act of caring for women is a logical extension of the work I have been doing for so many years.

When a pregnant woman comes under my care, there is a sacred trust that exists between us. Implicit in this trust is my saying "I will be sensitive to you, to your needs. I will respect you and this new existence that you are creating. I will be there to help your transition from one state to another." I have always considered it a privilege, this work that I have been drawn to. I was blessed with blessings from the Lubavitcher Rebbe when I began the

process which led to my present professional career.

Several years ago, I began to feel myself drawn to the idea of becoming part of the Chevra Kadisha. It took a while before I was able to begin the learning process and attend my first Tahara. By Divine Providence, I happened to ask a friend I knew had been doing Taharas for several years, to please call me the next time she goes. Her response was, "How about tonight?"

It somehow doesn't seem appropriate to use the term "excited" in reference to how I felt. However, there was definitely an eager anticipation. Other emotions, as well, remain in my memory when I think of that night: nervousness...how would I react?... what if I did something wrong?... I won't know what to do...As we were driving to the facility, I remembered that during my medical training I had the same concerns with my first birth. This was fascinating to me. What was the similarity? Why did I feel the same way?

Our team of three women consisted of my friend, who had a lot of experience, another woman whom I was meeting for the first time - who would be our leader, since she was the most experienced, and myself. We discussed what would most likely be the scenario and as I listened to these women speak, most of my trepidation and anxiety melted away. I knew that I was in good hands and I would be guided well.

We entered the room where we would be doing our work. We removed the sheets that had been covering the woman when she came from the hospital, at all times maintaining a respect for her modesty and dignity. I was reminded that when a woman is in labor, we likewise acknowledge the need for modesty and dignity. We behaved, as we began the Tahara, in a manner of great sensitivity and caring. And, I thought, when a woman comes to me for health care, my promise to

her is, similarly, to treat her with sensitivity and caring. Talking was minimal, speaking only when necessary to give instructions or to lend clarity. The atmosphere in the room was one of deep consideration for this woman who was someone's wife, mother, daughter. Only actions necessary to accomplish the needed task were performed, always recognizing the need for and goal of minimal movement or disruption. There was a sense of depth, of spirituality and of connection, as we went through the ritual of the Tahara and recited the tefilot (prayers). It was impossible to not be impacted by this profound feeling.

When we finished our work, we asked forgiveness of this woman whom we had the privilege of assisting in her transition from one plane of existence to another. If we had done anything improper, some action not according to Jewish Law, if we had caused any distress or humiliation, if in any way we were remiss, we now asked that we be forgiven. At this last moment of being "with woman," I found myself also asking that she please be an advocate for all Jews and beg G-d to bring Moshiach.

We walked out into the night air, seeing a clear sky, and feeling a deep quiet. I examined my feelings and realized that I felt as if I had been at a birth. There was the same silence, the same respect, the same depth of feeling. The same sense of privilege and the same knowledge that I had been given a gift of witnessing the transition of the soul. I knew with a certainty of understanding why I had been drawn to participating in this extraordinary mitzva. Whatever it was that had propelled me to being "with woman" throughout their lives also drew me to being "with woman" as they leave this life. I felt that now I was truly a "midwife" in the fullest sense of the word.

Tova Hinda Siegel is a Certified Nurse Midwife. Among her 1000-plus births are several of her grandchildren. Recently she started the Lubavitch Women's Chevra Kadisha in LA.

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Customs

What is the reason for dancing at a wedding?

Part of the mitzva of "making the groom and bride happy" is to entertain them with dancing. By dancing around the bride and groom, the community expresses its support for the couple. The Talmud relates many instances when the greatest of our Sages set aside their uninterrupted study of Torah for the sake of entertaining the couple. In accordance with Jewish law, men and women dance separately with a mechitza (partition) separating them.

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Moshaitaich

Our Sages describe Moshiach as waiting anxiously to come. In previous generations his coming was prevented by the fact that the Jews had not completed the tasks expected of them. At present, those tasks have been accomplished; there is nothing lacking. All we have to do is accept Moshiach. This is the challenge of our generation: To make the world conscious of Moshiach, and to create an environment that will allow his mission to be fulfilled. Every element of our Torah study and mitzva (commandment) observance should be permeated by this objective, and directed towards it. *(The Lubavitcher Rebbe, 9 Kislev, 5752 - 1991)*

It Happened Once

Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa's wrenching poverty was exceeded only by his great piety. He and his family often lacked even the barest necessities of life, but he refused assistance or charity from others. It was known that he himself subsisted on only a small basket of carob from week to week.

Rabbi Chanina's wife was herself a great and righteous woman. In spite of their desperate plight, she never complained. On the day before Shabbat, when all the other women busied themselves buying wine, meat, and other necessities, she lacked even the flour with which to make her challahs. Her neighbors were aware of her poverty, and their pitying glances caused her great distress.

One day she thought of an ingenious ploy to avoid this embarrassment. Every Friday morning, she prepared her oven exactly as if she were baking challahs. The fire was lit, and the smoke rose through the chimney. Who would be able to guess that the oven was, sadly, empty, since the family had nothing to cook for Shabbat?

Her secret was safe until one Friday, her neighbor, a nosy and mean-spirited person, decided to get to the bottom of this mystery. She knew that Rabbi Chanina was desperately poor, so what could be going on in his kitchen Friday afternoons? She made up her mind to investigate, and went next door to spy on her neighbor. The sound of knocking sent Rabbi Chanina's wife running to hide, so fearful was she of discovery.

The neighbor, not to be thwarted, entered the kitchen and looked in the oven. To her surprise, it was full of beautiful, golden challahs. She called to the rabbi's wife, "Run and get your oven-shovel. You challahs are about to burn!" And, in fact, the righteous woman was coming already, shovel in hand. You see, since miracles were so common in their household, she believed that G-d wouldn't allow her to suffer such embarrassment!

One day, Rabbi Chanina's wife could no longer bear to see the hardship of her poor children who lacked so many comforts. She approached Rabbi Chanina and said to him, "My husband, how much longer must we bear this terrible poverty?" The tzadik (righteous person) also felt his family's pain and replied, "What can we do to help ourselves?"

His wife answered, "Pray to the Master of the World, and beg Him to give us just a bit of our great reward which awaits us in the World-to-Come."

Rabbi Chanina, who was himself at a loss of how to deal

with his family's problem, began to pray. "G-d, we can no longer bear this terrible suffering. Please grant us in this world some of the great reward due us in the World-to-Come."

Suddenly, a hand descended through the roof of the house, and grasped in the hand was a golden table leg!

Rabbi Chanina, who was accustomed to miracles, happily received the golden leg. When he showed it to his wife, she was filled with joy. No longer would she have to bear the wailing of her cold, hungry children. G-d had answered their prayers; they would be able to live without hunger or want for the rest of their lives.

That night, the whole family retired to bed in a happy frame of mind. Everyone slept well that night. Only the wife of Rabbi Chanina slept fitfully, her rest disturbed by a distressing dream.

In her dream, the rebetzin saw the World-to-Come. And there, in great glory, sat hundreds of Sages and righteous people, all seated at magnificent golden tables. The awesome sight was marred by just one shocking detail. As she studied the scene carefully, she saw amidst all these people, one lone couple who stood out from the rest. This couple was seated at a table with only three golden legs!

Looking at this couple with pity, she suddenly realized that it was none other than she and her husband.

She awoke with a start, and related the terrible dream to her husband.

Rabbi Chanina was also quite upset by the dream. He faced his wife and asked her: "Do you wish to sit in the World-to-Come at a table with only three legs, while the other righteous people all have complete tables? Are you willing to lose a small amount of your eternal reward for more comfort in this world?"

Pale and trembling with distress, she answered, "Of course not! Please ask G-d to take back the golden leg."

Rabbi Chanina immediately rose and uttered a heartfelt prayer to G-d to remove the golden table leg. And no sooner had he completed his prayer, than the leg disappeared.

The great rabbis of the time, upon hearing of this occurrence commented, saying, that although the first miracle of the table leg descending from heaven was very great, the second miracle was far greater. For, as a rule, G-d gives more readily than He takes back.



Candle Lighting Times Friday 5 December 2008

City	In	Out
Sydney	7:37pm	8:39pm
Brisbane	6:14pm	7:12pm
Surfers Par	6:14pm	7:12pm
Melbourne	8:12pm	9:18pm

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