



11 - 17 November, 2018  
3 - 9 Kislev, 5779

**Torah :**

Genesis 28:10 - 32:3

**Haftorah:**

Hosea 11:7 - 12:14

■ **CALENDARS**

We have Jewish Calendars, if you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi / Chaplain to contact us.

■ **FAMILY PROGRAMS**

Do you have family on the outside who are struggling, please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

■ **GRAPE JUICE & MATZAH**

Aleph offers free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll, it is available to all prisons.

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## LEAVING YOUR MARK

This week's Torah Portion begins by telling us how Jacob leaves the city of Be'er Sheva and travels to Charan, the home of his uncle, Laban. There he marries, bears eleven of his twelve children, and amasses a large fortune. All this while working as a shepherd for the flocks of his father in law. If you inspect the wording of the first verses, you find an interesting thing. The Torah seems to use superfluous words when describing Jacob's travels. "And Jacob departed from Be'er Sheva and went to Charan." If the Torah is always careful not to use unnecessary words - and we know it is - would it not have been enough to simply tell us that Jacob went to Charan? Surely we could then infer on our own that he departed from his homeland of Be'er Sheva...

There is a wonderful lesson to be gleaned from these seemingly extra words. When Jacob left the land of Be'er Sheva the effects of the blessing which filled the land went with him. Granted, the was still able blessing in the merit of his righteous parents, Isaac and Rebecca whom he left behind, but nevertheless, his departure was felt by the population.

Wherever we live, wherever we end up, all of our travels and pit stops are ordained by heaven. We don't end up somewhere "accidentally," or for no reason. Wherever we are, there is a Godly reason for being there. That getting the case, we

must learn to take full advantage of our time in any given place and purify or improve our surroundings in any way possible. In our homes, in our neighborhoods and towns, we ought to do everything we can to make a difference.

Stop and think for a moment, "if I left town tomorrow, would anyone notice? Would my absence make any difference?" If the answer is anything less than "absolutely," then it's time to step it up. Think of what else can be done to help, to improve the lives of those around us.

What else can we do to serve our communities? There is no man who has no place, and there is no thing which has no moment. We all have a purpose, a specific reason for which we were created. A mission which no one else can fulfill.

Often, the purpose for which we were created, and put where we are, may be the one thing with which we struggle most. Today is as good a time as any to find that propose and get to it. Your community will thank you. Your family may be waiting for it. God sure is. Why not make a move today...?

*By Rabbi Nissan Aizek*

## THE PRESSURE PRINCIPLE

Do we need security and comfort to do well in life? Do we achieve more when we are relaxed and comfortable, or when we are challenged and provoked?

Jacob left Beer-Sheba and went to Charan (Genesis 28:10).

## Parshat Vayeitzei

Beer-Sheba represented peace and tranquility. Charan stood for violence and immorality: it was the hub of tumult and turmoil, home of Laban, swindler and sheep-thief of note. Yet, ironically, it was there, in Charan, where Jacob raised his family, where the twelve tribes of Israel were founded.

Abraham had a wonderful son named Isaac, but he also fathered Ishmael. Isaac bore the pious Jacob, but also had a ruffian named Esau. Only Jacob is described as "select of the forefathers," because his children were all righteous: "his progeny was perfect."

Asks the Lubavitcher Rebbe: would not Beer-Sheba have made a better place for Jacob to have raised his children? Would not Beer-Sheba have been the ideal hothouse for the future Jewish people to be conceived and nurtured? Why, of all places, in Charan?

Says the Rebbe: the olive yields its best oil when pulverized. To produce gold, we need a fiery furnace where the intense heat on the raw metal leaves it purified and precious. Jacob did not have an easy life, but it made him a better man, and it made his children better children.

Many years ago, I met a young man who had just come out of military service in the South African army. I greeted him with the platitude, "So, Joe, did the army make you a man?" He said, "No, Rabbi, the army made me a Jew!" Apparently he had encountered more than a fair share of anti-Semitism in the military, and it actually strengthened his resolve to

live a Jewish life. Today he is the proud father and grandfather of a lovely, committed Jewish family.

Life isn't always smooth sailing. But it appears that the Creator, in his vast eternal plan, intended for us to experience difficulties in life. Evidently, we grow from our discomfort and challenges, to emerge better, stronger, wiser and more productive people. There is always a purpose to pain. As our physiotherapists tell us (with such compassion that I want to hit them!), "No pain, no gain." It would seem that, like the olive, we too yield our very best when we are under pressure. (From personal experience—and my editor will confirm—I just can't get these sermonettes done until I see a deadline staring me in the face.) The simple fact is that we produce best under pressure.

One of the reasons we use a hard-boiled egg on the Seder plate on Passover is to remind us of the festival offering brought in the Holy Temple. But the truth is that any cooked food would do. So, why an egg?

One of my favorite answers is that Jews are like eggs. The more they boil us, the harder we get. We have been punished and persecuted through the centuries, but it has only strengthened us, given us courage, faith and hope. At every point in our history we have always emerged from the tzores (hardships) of the time stronger, more tenacious and more determined than ever.

Jacob raised a beautiful family in less than ideal conditions. Please G-d, we should emulate his example. Wherever we may be living and in whatever circumstances, may we rise to the challenge and live successful lives, and raise happy, healthy Jewish children who will build the future tribes of Israel.

I end with a little poem I wrote many years ago:

The tragedy of pain  
is we overlook its aim  
of leaving us humble and wise

Oh, how shallow  
of man to wallow  
in misery and never realize

That gold, so pure, is in fire proved  
and oil from olive by crushing removed  
'tis so with all things of worth

So differ from the rest  
be strong in life's test  
and make of ordeal, rebirth.

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

## Chanukah December 3 - 10

Please make arrangements with your chaplain to schedule candle lighting and prayers.

## Sanctification of the Moon

Once a month, as the moon waxes in the sky, we recite a special blessing called Kiddush Levanah, "the sanctification of the moon," praising the Creator for His wondrous work we call astronomy.

Kiddush Levanah is recited after nightfall, usually on Saturday night. The blessing is concluded with songs and dancing, because our nation is likened to the moon—as it waxes and wanes, so have we throughout history. When we bless the moon, we renew our trust that very soon, the light of G-d's presence will fill all the earth and our people will be redeemed from exile.

Though Kiddush Levanah can be recited as early as three days after the moon's rebirth, the kabbalah tells us it is best to wait a full week, till the seventh of the month. Once 15 days have passed, the moon begins to wane once more and the season for saying the blessing has passed.

### *In Jewish History*

***Tuesday, 5 Kislev, 5779 -  
November 13, 2018***

***Maharsha (1631)***

Kislev 5 is the yahrtzeit (date of the passing) of Rabbi Shmuel Eliezer Eidels (1555-1631), known by the acronym "Maharsha". Rabbi Shmuel authored a highly regarded and widely used commentary on the Talmud and its primary commentaries, Rashi and Tosfot.

***Shabbat, 9 Kislev, 5779 -  
November 17, 2018***

***Birth & Passing of R. Dovber of Lubavitch (1773; 1827)***

Kislev 9 is both the birthday and day of passing of Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, son of and successor to the founder of Chabad Chassidism, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. Rabbi DovBer was known for his unique style of "broadening rivers" -- his teachings were the intellectual rivers to his father's wellspring, lending breadth and depth to the principles set down by Rabbi Schneur Zalman.

Born in Liozna, White Russia in 1773, Rabbi DovBer was named after Rabbi Schneur Zalman's mentor and teacher, Rabbi DovBer of Mezeritch, who had passed away on Kislev 19 of the previous year. Rabbi DovBer assumed the leadership of Chabad upon his father's passing in 1812. In 1813 he settled in the town of Lubavitch, which was to serve as the movement's headquarters for the next 102 years. In 1826, he was arrested on charges that his teachings threatened the imperial authority of the Czar, but was subsequently exonerated.

Rabbi DovBer passed away on his 54th birthday in 1827, a day before the first anniversary of his liberation.