

children and the husband's attention that childbearing would earn them. More easily overlooked is the husband who watches sheep all day in order to raise a family. Bucolic as it may sound, this was not a sign of the times; his twin brother led a high- pressured, adventurous, corporate-mogul lifestyle.

"Will our children say Kaddish for us" was the worry of a generation gone by. We have no children, is the silent scream of the most comfort-conscious generation. Worry and concern of a Jewish future is misused, overplayed and gauche. Charged-up activism is annoying. *Go get a job! Become successful!* is the cry. And the kids listen, in droves.

One of the positive aspects of the Sixties–Seventies is idealism: a greasy-haired, pot-induced, thoroughly-off-base idealism, but an idealism nevertheless. When the surviving hippies (the ones who didn't OD in Marrakech) took a bath and trimmed their hair they were also cleansed of selflessness and had their strife of the spirit cut short. The lucky ones had someone to help them channel their idealism.

Parents want to provide their children with that what the parents grew up without. That is good thing and a difficult accomplishment. A perhaps greater accomplishment is to provide their children with that what the parent took for granted. When that is overlooked, and the children are not given that what the parent had, then the children grow up without.

It is not enough to want grandchildren. You must want to have children who are parents: want sons who are fathers more than sons who are doctors, want daughters who are mothers more than daughters who are market analysts. And especially, want sons-in-law who are fathers more than sons-in-law who are neurosurgeons.

My mother taught me that you can never choose to have a child: you can only choose *not* to have a child. Never take for granted the blessing of life that you hold: that what made you what you are.

For these are the children of Jacob: an unmitigated faith that the chain has an inherent worth greater than what the link may empirically lack. We have nachas that our children are part of this chain, and we say a little prayer that they earn

(how else to pay for day-school tuition?) a whole lot more than \$8,000 a year.

## Live & Laugh

Rabbi Levy had to spend time in a Catholic hospital. He became friendly with the sister who was the senior nurse there. One day she came into his room and noticed that the crucifix in the wall was missing. She asked him good-naturedly "Rabbi", what have you done with the crucifix? "Oy vey, chuckled Rabbi Levy, I just figured one suffering Jew in this room was enough"

### Calendar

- ◆ Shacharis 8:30 am; Shtibl 8:45 am
- ◆ Brocha in the Seeff Hall sponsored by the **Tobias Family** in honour of **Megan's** Bat Mitzvah and **Kim's** new Hebrew name.
- ◆ **Smorgasbord of Shiurim**
- ◆ **Ladies' Shabbos morning Shmooze** with *Rebbetzin Estee Stern* 10 am. Coffee, tea and refreshments.
- ◆ Mincha: 6:05 pm
- ◆ Shabbos ends: 7:16 pm

## Big Amazing Raffle

### Winners:

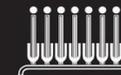
- Mauritius Holiday** - Ros Finkelstein;
- Ivory Tree Lodge** - Ronit Kalmek;
- Giant TV** - Ryan Ritoff;
- Glenfiddich Family** - Alan Bulafkin;
- Kindle** - Bradley Rabin.

- ◆ The **Scottish Leader Signature** whiskey at Shul is sponsored by **Distell** & available for purchase at **Norman Goodfellows**.
- ◆ **Nathan Fine** of I.deal Furnishers at Midway Mall, Bramley Gardens wishes all congregants a Good Shabbos. Call 011-887-5456/082-854-5706. **Furniture, Bedding & Appliances.**
- ◆ **Vehicles wanted. Any make, any condition. Best prices. Phone ARNOLD ORKIN 082 823 7826**
- ◆ Acknowledgements: Chabad.org, aish.com
- ◆ Please take Good Shabbos Sydenham home if you will only carry it within the Eiruv.



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# Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!



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Parshas Vayeitzei

7 Kislev 5778

## The Pressure Principle

by: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

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?

*And Jacob left Beer-Sheba and went to Haran.* Beer-Sheba represented peace and tranquility. Haran stood for violence and immorality. It was the hub of tumult and turmoil, home of Laban the swindler and sheep-thief of note. Yet, ironically, it was there in Haran where Jacob raised his family. There in Haran were the twelve tribes of Israel born and bred.

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 hot house for the future Jewish people to be conceived and nurtured? Why, of all places, in Haran?

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 a 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 the physiotherapists tell us (with such compassion that I want to hit them!) *No pain, no gain.* Like the olive, we too yield our very best when we are under pressure. I don't know about you, but I need to see a deadline staring me in the face to really get myself motivated. The simple fact is that we produce best under pressure.

In fact, one of the reasons we use a hard-boiled egg on the Seder Plate over Pesach is to remind us of the festival offering brought on Yom Tov. 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 enough but it has only strengthened us, given us courage, faith and hope. And no matter where in history it has happened, we have always emerged from the *tzorres* of the time more tenacious, more determined, and stronger 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*

## Parsha Pointers

**Vayeitzei: Artscroll Chumash pg 144;  
Living Torah pg 131**

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.

## Seeing Miracles

*By Rabbi Elisha Greenbaum*

When a minor miracle happened to me a few months ago, I was up in the air with excitement. A series of seemingly unrelated events had combined in the most fortuitous of ways to bring about an unexpected, but much appreciated outcome.

Obviously, when you see the hand of G-d acting in your life in such an incredible way, you tell everyone you meet every detail of your story. I told it over and over, announced it from the pulpit on Yom Kippur and repeated it on every possible occasion.

It was interesting to watch people's responses to my tale. Some were fascinated and inspired while others were plainly uncomfortable at the thought that G-d might be directly intervening in our daily lives. Some people chose to humor me for my gullibility, while others expressed polite skepticism about the whole issue.

But of all the people I told, the response that most fascinated me was that of a friend who owns a local family business: "and I thought that only

businessmen see *hashgacha pratit* on a daily basis." To believe in *hashgacha pratit* - Divine providence - is to recognize that every happening of every moment is due to the direct intervention of G-d. He watches, He cares and He is intimately involved in every facet of daily existence.

Not for nothing did my friend assume that businessmen would somehow be more attuned to G-d's guiding hand in their lives. A wage earner receives a salary for his work, and the regularity of his pay-check can too easily lead to complacency, but when one's future well-being and profit depends on the vagaries of fate, then you really learn the value of faith and prayer.

I once read a book of interviews with self-made millionaires who were asked to share the secret to their success and I was struck by the similarities of those responses. They had each come up with a new idea or invention and had worked very hard, over a long period of time, to develop it as a marketable concept. Yet each and every one of them admitted that chance and luck had played a significant role in their eventual success. "I worked hard, but others did too. I'm smart, but my competitors were often just as bright. I had a great idea, but then, so did others who ended up in the gutter" was the general run of reflection.

Ultimately, the only true driver of success is G-d, and businessmen are perhaps best placed to recognize this truth. This may explain why of all the children of Israel, it was only the tribe of Zebulun, the seafaring merchants, who are described as "living close to G-d".

Most of Israel led a sedentary lifestyle, farming the land and tending the flock. They had time to sit and study, with their sole priority to become close with nature and the source of true life, while Zebulun alone ventured forth into a world wide web of commerce and confidence tricksters.

Leah, Zebulun's mother, named him in the hope that *hapa'am yizbeleimi ishi, now my husband will live (exclusively) with me. (Genesis 30:20)*. Rashi explains that the etymological root of Zebulun's name is a *dwelling place or primary residence*. Wherever Zebulun lives, that is the primary residence of G-dliness and spirituality.

Although, on the face of it, the people of Zebulun had less time to delve into spirituality and prayer than did their more sedentary cousins, the unpre-

dictability of their occupation, with the resulting constant awareness of the fickleness of fate and the immediacy of G-dliness, rendered them best situated to recognize G-d and to welcome Divinity into their lives.

We all see the hand of G-d in our daily lives and we are all thankful for His Divine intervention, but the consciousness of G-d is most obvious to those who risks profit or loss in their daily deals and that awareness is where He chooses to dwell.

## My Son the Doctor

*By Rabbi Shimon Posner*

My son the doctor had a son: he is now a neurosurgeon. *His* son is a forest-ranger in Yosemite: the girl he is not married to is not Jewish. My son the lawyer had a daughter: she is a senior analyst with Morgan Stanley: she's forty-three and just met Mr. Right.

A survey of Jewish America was unveiled recently, containing little we didn't already know anecdotally. Still, some of the numbers were shocking.

Three hundred thousand less Jews than there were only ten years ago? Forget Zero Population Growth: we're eating away at our capital. And for what? Because we earn \$8,000 per year more than the average American family! We're not having kids so we can go out and earn an extra minimum wage. My kingdom for a horse; my birthright for \$8,000 worth of lentils.

The problem is not simply that Jewish *women* don't want to become Jewish *mothers*: it's that Jewish *men* don't want to become Jewish *fathers*. Manis Freidman sees feminism as a cry piercing through the upshot of the Industrial Revolution: *give us back the husbands that you stole from us!* Until that revolt, men grew into fathers: fathers needed to provide, so men worked. Gradually men stopped merely working and providing, they went off to pursue a career, self-fulfillment, a more meaningful life (style). If there are no fathers than who wants to be a mother?

Perhaps more than any Parsha ours is laden with domesticity: from our perspective at least, it is painful to hear the women pining after

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