

At times, this thirst may be consciously felt, and in other instances, a person may be unaware of his own thirst. But this lack of awareness does not change the reality. At the core of every Jew lies a soul that was created in the image of G-d. And every being seeks to express its fundamental identity. Therefore, when we emulate Avraham's example and extend ourselves to these individuals, we will discover a readiness to respond that reflects their inner G-dly nature.

Live & Laugh

Sadie Cohen lived in a diverse neighbourhood on Long Island. Her neighbour was a very generous black woman who stopped in one Saturday and asked, "Mrs. Cohen, I have to go into the City this afternoon to meet my daughter; can I get you anything?"

Mrs. Cohen thanked her and exclaimed, "Listen, I have a commuter ticket for the train that I don't use on Saturday. Why don't you use my ticket and you'll bring it back tonight. After all, it's all paid for. Why should you pay extra?"

The neighbour thanked her, and later got on the train. As the conductor came through the train, he happened to glance at the ticket and noticed the name "Sadie Cohen." "Excuse me madam, are you Sadie Cohen, the person whose name appears on this ticket?"

The woman smiled sweetly and shook her head affirmatively. A little suspicious, the conductor asked, "Would you let me compare signatures—would you please sign your name?" The black lady turned indignantly and snapped, "Man, are you crazy? You want me to write on Shabbos?"

- ◆ 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.**
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- ◆ Acknowledgements: Chabad.org
- ◆ Please take Good Shabbos Sydenham home if you will only carry it within the Eiruv.

Marriage Statistics:

I just read that 4,153,237 people got married last year. I don't want to cause any trouble but shouldn't that be an even number?

What's Nu?!

The Barmy Boy
Josh Sachs

Mazal Tov Wayne & Myrna and grandmothers Hannah Sachs and Doreen Bensaul.

The Battie Girls

Netanya Cohen, Leya Davidoff, Jordan de Villiers, Chaya Goldman, Rivka Kirsh, Batya Stern, Leah von Zwiklitz, Tehilla Willis, Devorah Woznica.

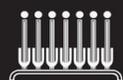
Calendar

- ◆ Shacharis 8:30 am
- ◆ Brocha in the Seeff Hall sponsored by **Rabbi & Estee Stern** in honour of Batya's Bat Mitzvah and by **Wayne & Myrna Sachs** in honour of Josh's Bar Mitzvah.
- ◆ Mincha: 5:50 pm
- ◆ Shabbos ends: 6:59 pm



Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!

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The Boy or the Bottle?

by: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

How we spend our money is usually a pretty good barometer of where our priorities lie. And it applies equally whether it is plentiful or scarce.

After the birth of Isaac, his half brother Ishmael behaves threateningly towards him and Sarah finds it necessary to ask Abraham to banish Ishmael from the family home. Together with his mother, Hagar, they wander the desert. Soon they run out of water.

And the water in the leather flask was finished and she cast off the boy beneath one of the bushes. (Genesis 21, 15)

So let me ask you what would be called a typical *klotz kasha*, or a seemingly obvious but, nonetheless, stupid question. If the flask is empty, why throw away the child? Throw away the empty flask!

It would appear, then, that when our food supply is depleted, and finance is in short supply, the first ones to suffer may be our children.

What do I mean? Here are a few examples. The bank balance is low? How can we even think of a Jewish Day School education? The tuition fees are so expensive. Instead of denying ourselves creature comforts we deem non-negotiable, we sacrifice our children's Jewish upbringing in the name of economics.

It's like the old story of the Jewish mother who came from Eastern Europe to join her son in America and was horrified to see he had shaved of his beard and cast off his *yar-*

mulke. "What happened to you, my Yankele?" she asked. "Mama," "America is not the *shtetl*." And when she saw him going to work on Shabbos, again he told her America was different. And when she opened the fridge and discovered all kinds of creepy things she never saw in a Jewish kitchen, again he explained that America was not the same as "back home." Eventually, when it was all getting too much, she asked him, "Yankele, tell your old mother the truth. Are you still circumcised?"

It's not only an old *shtetl* story. It's happening right now. We know of too many who left these shores to make a better life for their children. But emigrating is expensive and with limited resources one must make choices and prioritise. Many chose to do without Jewish schooling. The rest is history. Bad history. Without a Jewish education young people wander about wondering why they should not be doing what their contemporaries are doing. And the money we saved in school fees is now going to doctors, psychologists, or G-d forbid, drug rehab centers.

Even in Israel, we have to be discriminating when choosing a community. If the other kids on the block are riding their bikes on Yom Kippur, why shouldn't your child? And if you insist and they feel denied, they may opt out altogether.

Kids need stability and an environment with a healthy value system. No matter how tempting or secure other seemingly greener pastures may be, before making a move we ought to consider the spiritual security systems our children will need to survive and thrive – as Jews. Just because the bottle may be empty don't throw away the child.

Parsha Pointers

Vayeira: Artsroll Chumash pg 78;
Living Torah pg 79

Avraham, on the third day after his *brit mila*, sits outside his tent looking for guests to extend his hospitality. While talking with the Almighty, he sees three visitors (actually angels of the Almighty). Avraham interrupts his conversation with the Almighty to invite them to a meal. One angel informs him that in a year's time, Sarah, his wife, will give birth to a son, Yitzhak (Isaac).

G-d tells Avraham that He is going to destroy Sodom because of its absolute evil (the city is the source of the word sodomy). Avraham argues with G-d to spare Sodom if there can be found ten righteous people in Sodom. Avraham loses for the lack of a quorum. Lot (Avraham's nephew) escapes the destruction with his two daughters.

Other incidents: Avimelech, King of the Philistines, wants to marry Sarah (Avraham's wife), the birth of Yitzhak, the eviction of Hagar (Avraham's concubine) and Ishmael. Avimelech and Avraham make a treaty at Beersheva. Avraham is commanded to take up his son, Isaac, as an offering "on one of the mountains" (Akeidat Yitzhak). Lastly, the announcement of the birth of Rivka (Rebecca), the future wife of Yitzhak.

Believing Again

By Rabbi Yosef Lewis

Walking the paths of an Auschwitz sterilized by the time that has passed since the horrors perpetrated here, I begin to doubt humanity and its Creator. I stare at the lush green of a tree reflected in a puddle, battling the obvious fact that trees cannot be green here, and neither can water reflect. This is hell that came to earth. Yet, while conscious of this, I feel no blinding pain for the senseless murder of millions of my brethren. Just a void emptiness, the nothingness of a head that's not thinking. I feel suspended in a world I cannot comprehend.

I first arrive at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where at least 1.1 million Jews were killed during the Holocaust. A sprawling camp with naked red

chimneys. Only remnants of the barracks remain, because the inmates had stripped them for firewood, desperate to stay warm in the winter after liberation. A visiting group walks by, indifferent to the sanctity of this hallowed ground, and I hear laughter and casual conversation as they pass. Another young couple stands in a passionate embrace, seemingly unaware of the millions of last goodbyes uttered only yards away.

I arrive in Auschwitz proper. The entrance to Auschwitz: I've seen it a thousand times, in a thousand pictures and videos. It casts a heavy shadow, looming across train tracks, tracks that head straight into the mouth of the beast. I walk the length of the train track, my head abuzz with Elie Wiesel's description of vicious salivating dogs snapping at a shivering child just disembarking from a hellish ride.

I enter a low-lying building, innocuous-looking, as most buildings in Auschwitz are. It almost looks inviting on this hot day. The floor is covered by a glass platform that prevents you from touching the bare ground. In here, the inmates were deloused and shaved. Their blue and white striped uniforms were placed in a huge hot air oven to kill the lice burrowed deep in the seams. A sign outside the building reads "Disinfection."

In front of the gas chamber, a grainy black and white video of my great-grandfather - Yaakov Shimon Lezerowitz - plays in my head. He is turning for a last peek at a sky that will never turn light again. Zyklon B openings in the ceilings of the gas chambers mock me, allowing sunlight to beam onto walls that have been scraped and scratched at by hands straining to stay alive.

Even after leaving Auschwitz, the destruction remains in my mind, casting a shadow of doubt that leaves me frozen. Months later, I am studying chapter 18 of Genesis and a thought occurs to me. We find Abraham sitting outside his tent, in recovery from his recent circumcision. Through the blazing sun, three figures approach his tent. In pain from his surgery, but indomitable as ever, Abra-

ham runs to welcome them to his tent. A feast of amazing proportions begins – a calf per guest is slaughtered. Unmasking themselves as angels on a mission, one stands to bless Abraham's wife Sarah. The angel says, "At this time next year you will give birth to a child." Sarah, in understandable disbelief, laughs at the prospect of ever giving birth, doubtful that a body wracked by time and age could conceive.

Yet, despite her unwillingness to believe the unbelievable, Sarah ultimately gives birth to a beautiful child, Isaac.

Now, looking back, I remember a moment, one moment, of pristine clarity in Auschwitz that left me, once again, believing. It was as I stood at an oversized guestbook, its vanilla pages beckoning me to pen a thought.

I wrote: "*You are remembered. You are survived. Your deaths were in vain, but your lives were not. I have come back to this place to declare that we, the Family Lezerowitz, lives.*"

It was at that moment I finally shed a tear, no longer doubtful or indifferent. The miracle of Isaac's birth, the miracle of my existence. In plain-sighted reality, nothing is as impossible as it seems.

A Tree, An Orchard and a 5-Star Hotel

By Rabbi Simcha Levenberg

This week's Torah Portion focuses on the life and times of our patriarch Abraham, the first Jew. Every incident in his life is significant and contains valuable insights for us, his descendants.

The Torah states that, "Abraham planted an *aishel* (tree) in Beer Sheva" (Genesis 21:33). What should we learn from this? The importance of Arbor Day? That Abraham was a tree-hugging Hippie? How can the environmentally friendly person (who already carools, recycles, and refuses to shop at Home Depot or buy non-fair trade coffee) apply this teaching?

It is known that Abraham was in the business of welcoming guests. He invited complete and total strangers to come into his tent, eat his food, drink his wine, and relax from their journey. Abraham was a real *mentsch*.

It just so happened that he worked in the desert.

Due to a tremendous lack of shade he planted a tree. What better way to welcome a sweaty wayfarer than with a well-shaded seat?

As the saying goes, "two Jews three opinions"—so too in our case. The Talmud lists two other opinions as to the nature of this *aishel*. According to one opinion it was not a shade tree, but rather an entire orchard of fruit trees. Once again Abraham's focus was on the guests. Wouldn't it be lovely after a long trek through the desert to run into a ripe piece of fruit? I think so.

A third opinion maintains that Abraham built an entire five-star hotel complex, complete with a swanky lounge and full service restaurant. Yet again Abraham's objective was to provide fabulous service to the weary traveler. The lesson contained here is timeless and it is not a call to join the hotel industry or the Sierra Club. Abraham represents the embodiment of kindness. He did not merely give his guests the minimal requirements for survival – tepid water, stale bread, and a pinch of salt – rather he gave them fabulous food and displayed tremendous hospitality.

Each us has inherited Abraham's attribute of kindness, hence we have the capacity to give of ourselves in the same manner as Abraham. We can assist and help others not only with their vital necessities but rather we can go above and beyond the call of duty and help others in a truly limitless fashion.

Thirst for Truth

By The Lubavitcher Rebbe

Our Parsha begins by telling us that G-d appeared to Avraham while "sitting at the entrance of his tent, in the heat of the day."

Why was he sitting there? To look for guests. Avraham dedicated himself to deeds of kindness, feeding hungry wayfarers in an effort to heighten their awareness of G-d.

The ancient Prophet foresaw our generation. "Days are coming, [when people will be] hungry - but not for bread, thirsty - but not for water, but to hear the word of G-d." And there must be Abrahams ready to provide for them.

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