

# Chayus

## A Shabbos Stimulus

### THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In Loving Memory of Itta bas Yosef Mordechai ז"ל and Tzvi Daniel ben David ז"ל Ainsworth

Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

הקהל  
Hakhel

From  
Sichos In English

### *The Task of Our Generation*

Bringing Moshiach now, constitutes the unique task of our generation. This is particularly emphasized this year, a Hakhel year, when we are commanded to “gather the nation: the men, the women, and the children.” This is one of the Mitzvos of the Torah: G-d tells us that this year is uniquely suited to gathering the entire Jewish people, even very young children. They are to be assembled in the Temple and addressed by the King. In our time, the latter can only come about when, in the near future Moshiach, who will be our king, will rebuild the Temple.

Whenever any army is faced with a new and special task which must be quickly accomplished, it takes in new reserves, new soldiers, in addition to those it previously had. Similarly, in regard to G-d's army, in order to hasten the victory and bring Moshiach speedily, in addition to all the children that are already enrolled in Tzivos Hashem and all of those of the previous generations, G-d sends new reserves and new soldiers, new Jewish children, boys and girls to learn Torah and fulfill Mitzvos, the latter being the weapons of G-d's army. This will accomplish, in the fastest way possible, the task which G-d has assigned to our generation, particularly in this year, a Hakhel year, bringing about the Messianic redemption Now.

*The Lubavitcher Rebbe, 1st day of Chanukah, 5748*

סיפור חסידי

Once Upon a Chasid

By Yanki Tauber  
Published by Kehot Publication Society

### *Selfless to a Fault*

*But when will I do something for my own self?* (Vayeitzei 30:30)

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch recounted:

There was a time when they used to say the truth. And it worked.

Once a chassidic businessman came to my grandfather [the fourth Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch, Rabbi Shmuel, 1834–1882]. This was a man who always kept *Gates of Light* and *The Gate of Faith*<sup>1</sup> in his breast pocket, and was fluent in both.

During his private audience with the rebbe, the latter inquired as to his daily schedule. “What do you do before the morning prayers?” asked the rebbe.

The chassid replied that he studies the G-dly concepts which are expounded upon in the teachings of Chassidism, and then meditates upon them during his prayers and afterwards. The rebbe continued to go

1. Two books of chassidic philosophy by Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, known for their depth and profundity.

through the chassid's entire day: every available minute or thought was likewise occupied in the pursuit of the divine.

"And what of the reading of the Shema before sleep?"<sup>2</sup> the rebbe finished. Then, too, the chassid "meditated in Chassidus."

"So you are forever thinking of G-d," said the rebbe, "but when do you think of yourself?"

The chassid fell in a dead faint.

The rebbe summoned the servant Reb Pinyeh Leib to carry the chassid out of the room and revive him. "One needn't faint," the Rebbe remarked, "one should *do* . . ."

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2. Traditionally a time for soul-searching and stocktaking of the bygone day.

לקוטי שיחות

A Sicha

By: [ProjectLikkuteiSichos.org](http://ProjectLikkuteiSichos.org)

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

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## *Tools for Transforming A World*

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### **The Verses:**

Yaakov left his home in Be'er Sheva and traveled to Charan, the home of his uncle Laban. On his way, he encountered G-d and made a vow before continuing his journey:

"Yaakov uttered a vow, saying, 'If G-d will be with me, and He will guard me on this way, upon which I am going, and He will give me bread to eat and a garment to wear; and if I return in peace to my father's house, and G-d will be my G-d. Then this stone, which I have placed as a monument, shall be a house of G-d, and everything that You give me, I will surely tithe to You'" (*Bereishis* 28:20-22).

### **The Question:**

There are four elements in Yaakov's words: two are conditions of the vow that G-d must uphold, and two are promises that Yaakov will fulfill if those conditions are met.

According to Ramban, the conditions are 1) If G-d will be with me... and He will give me bread to eat and a garment to wear; and 2) And if I return in peace to my father's house.

Yaakov's two vows are 1) G-d will be my G-d; and 2) this stone, which I have placed as a monument, shall be a house of G-d, and everything that You give me, I will surely tithe to You.

Rashi understands the phrase "and G-d will be my G-d" as part of the conditions, that Yaakov's children will be faithful to G-d, just as he was.

Clearly, Yaakov was not selfishly promising to follow G-d *only* if he would be rewarded. The objective of his journey was to fulfill the vow, the conditions were merely the tools he needed *in order* to fulfill it.

What is the significance of these four elements in Yaakov's spiritual journey?

### **The Explanation:**

Yaakov's journey from his parental home to Laban's Charan represents the journey of the soul from the spiritual environment of heaven to the material confinement of earth. The objective of this journey is to gain spiritual advances in three areas:

- 1) The soul's connection to G-d is deepened and enriched by engaging with the darkness of the world and emerging unscathed. Like the penitent who grows closer to G-d because of his encounter with sin, the soul draws closer to G-d by remaining committed to Him even in the darkness of this world.
- 2) By observing Torah and mitzvos, the soul "proliferates" spiritually.
- 3) By living as a Jew within this world, the soul elevates the material world and transforms it into a home for G-d. As a result, the soul reaches even deeper levels of intimacy with G-d.

Ranking these accomplishments in terms of novelty, it is the third, creating a home for G-d, that

is most striking. For as long as the soul is engaged in mitzvos, or even in transforming mundane experiences into moments of spiritual connection, it is still in the very nature of the soul to seek out connection with G-d. But when the soul connects the material reality, whose nature is to be separate and divorced from G-d, to G-d, then the infinite reach of G-d is exposed—that even the foreign, material reality can be filled with G-dliness.

In order to accomplish this, the soul must reach a place of total transcendence from its own spiritual desires and become selflessly dedicated to G-d. Then, the soul can affect this realization of transcendence within the world itself, revealing the essence of G-d within the world.

It follows, that the soul reaches its apex through its engagement with the world.

Now we can understand the four elements of Yaakov's vow. The two conditions are aligned with his two promises:

- 1) "He will give me bread to eat and a garment to wear." This alludes to the soul's performance of Torah (food) and mitzvos (clothes).
- 2) "And if I return in peace to my father's house." This alludes to the soul revealing G-dliness within its mundane interactions. This is the

theme of "return," of repentance, of finding G-dliness in a place of darkness.

These two acts of service elicit two "rewards."

- 1) "G-d will be my G-d," this is the spiritual advance the soul experiences as a result of its performance of Torah and mitzvos.
- 2) "This stone, which I have placed as a monument, shall be a house of G-d," the actual transformation of the material world, the stone, into a home for G-d.

### **Rashi and Ramban:**

Ramban incorporates the inner, mystical reading of the text. Therefore, he appreciates that the soul's advance is part of the "reward." That is why he understands the phrase, "and G-d will be my G-d" as part of the vow, the culmination of the soul's work.

Rashi, however, reads the text with a simple, straightforward perspective. In this view, the soul's only objective is to simply be dedicated to G-d; any notion of reward, even spiritual, is absent. Thus, Rashi reads the phrase, "and G-d will be my G-d," as part of the service of soul, the conditions, and the only reward that is important is "this stone... shall be a house for G-d," the realization of G-d's will to have a home in this world.

*Likkutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 243ff*

## *Help From G-d Himself*

*"A song for ascents. I raise my eyes to the mountains, from where will my help come? My help is from G-d, the Maker of heaven and earth" (Tehillim 121:1-2).*

This psalm was either said by Yaakov himself, or at least written to capture his experience when he received a vision as he slept at the site of the future *beis hamikash*. It is a Song of Ascents, referring to the ladder that ascended into the heavens.

Yaakov raised his eyes to the mountains, referring to Avraham and Yitzchak. He saw the first *beis hamikdash* (in Avraham's merit) crumble, and the second *beis hamikdash* (in Yitzchak's merit) destroyed. He cried, "From where will my help come? If these most powerful souls could not prevent the destructions, what hope is there for me and the third *beis hamikdash* that is destined to be built in my merit?"

Looking into the future, he found his answer. "My help is from G-d Himself, for He will keep the third *beis hamikdash* forever!" Indeed, it is stated, "I will be a wall of fire around it, says G-d" (*Zechariyah* 2:9).

## Sanctifying the Beautiful

“And Yaakov lifted his feet, and he went to the land of the people of the East” (Vayetzei 29:1).

It was at this moment that our forefather Yaakov departed from his own self-centered physicality and elevated his conduct turning it fully to the service of G-d.

This transition is hinted at in the words:

“Yaakov lifted,” i.e., elevated, “his feet”—his path and conduct, and left his “land,” i.e., physicality, in favor of the portion of the “people of the East, i.e., G-d. [The Hebrew word קדם (“East”) is related to the word קדמות, which can mean “primordial” or “ancient.”]

Yaakov thus began the path of the righteous, who have the characteristic to turn and cleave to the primordial G-d.

(OT 40)

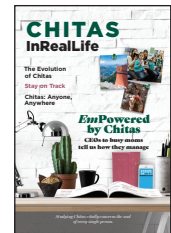
Upon Yaakov’s meeting with his wife-to-be, Rochel, the Torah states (Vayetzei 29:17-18): “...Rochel had beautiful features and a beautiful complexion. And Yaakov loved Rochel.” Yaakov loved her because Yaakov’s attitude was to constantly dedicate all worldly beauty to G-d, and upon seeing the physical beauty and attributes of Rochel, he saw the potential to dedicate worldly beauty to the praise of G-d.

(OT 42)

### מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת Shabbos Chitas / Rambam Guide

Book	Section
Chumash – Rashi*	Vayeitzei, 7th Aliyah
Tehillim*	Chapters 49 – 54
Tanya*	Kuntres Acharon Essay 4. עמ' קנח- אך עוד זאת... עד עמ' קנח- מהנברא.
Rambam – Sefer Hamitzvos*	Positive Mitzvah #107
Rambam – One Chapter*	Sefer Mishpatim – Hilchos Sh'eilah U'Fikadon, Chapter 3
Rambam – Three Chapters**	Sefer Taharah – Hilchos Tum'as Meis Chapters 15 – 17

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