

Jewish Fun Facts

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THE HINDA INSTITUTE Helping INDIVIDUALS Ascend

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

- ◇ There are 22 letters in the Hebrew Alphabet.
- ◇ Jewish people pray 3 times a day, 4 times on Shabbos and festivals, 5 times on Yom Kippur.
- ◇ Kosher animals have split hooves and chew their cuds.
- ◇ A blessing is said before and after eating food.
- ◇ According to the Jewish law, anyone who is born of a Jewish mother, counts as a Jew no matter what.
- ◇ After King King Solomon's death, the Jews split in two kingdoms.
- ◇ 8 days after a baby is born, a ceremony is held, call the Brit Milah.
- ◇ Jewish girls become adults at age 12 and boys at age 13.
- ◇ Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the forefathers of the Jewish people.
- ◇ Judaism believes in afterlife and the coming of Moshiach.
- ◇ The Tanach is comprised of 24 books.
- ◇ Jewish people worship at synagogues, and any educated member of the congregation can lead a service.
- ◇ A yarmulke or kippa is a cap worn by Jewish men. The custom isn't rooted in the Bible but evolved out of the belief that G-D is watching from above.
- ◇ Shabbos, the Sabbath or day of rest, begins Friday at sundown and lasts until Saturday at nightfall.
- ◇ A four cornered garment must have Tzitzis/strings attached to the corners.
- ◇ There are 12 tribes of Israel.
- ◇ The Western Wall in Jerusalem is the last remnant of the Holy Temple complex.
- ◇ Jews pray facing east, towards Jerusalem.
- ◇ G-D promised the land of Israel to The Jewish people.
- ◇ The Jewish year can have 353, 354, 355, 383, 384, or 385 days.
- ◇ The Menorah in the Temple had 7 branches and the Chanukah Menorah has 8.
- ◇ Passover is celebrated 7 days in Israel and 8 outside of Israel.
- ◇ There is a blessing to recite when seeing a rainbow or lighting.
- ◇ 10 Jewish men over the age of 13 make a Minyan.
- ◇ The Torah is read on Monday, Thursday, and Shabbos.
- ◇ There are 613 commandments in the Torah, 248 positive one and 365 negative.
- ◇ The daily Amida has 19 blessing.
- ◇ In Judaism there are 4 different New Year Days.
- ◇ Finding someone a job to be self-sufficient is the highest level of Charity.
- ◇ Baseball player Sandy Koufax refused to play in the first game of the 1965 World Series because it fell on Yom Kippur.
- ◇ The oldest US shul still standing is the Touro synagogue in Rhode Island. Its construction was completed in 1763.
- ◇ The Jewish wedding takes place under an open sky, with just a flimsy canopy (chuppah) covering the bride and groom.
- ◇ There is a Mitzvah to be healthy.
- ◇ The Sanhedrin, the chief court of law in the ancient Jewish tradition comprised of 71 rabbis.
- ◇ Jewish law teaches to tie ones left shoe first, then the right shoe.
- ◇ Jewish people wait one hour after eating dairy to eat meat and 6 hours after eating meat to eat dairy.
- ◇ White clothing is worn on Yom Kippur.
- ◇ The first Seder can not fall out on a Sunday night.
- ◇ A Jewish year has 12 or 13 months.
- ◇ Moses lived for 120 years.
- ◇ A traditional food eating on Shabbos afternoon is called Cholent. It is a mixture of potatoes, beans, and meat and cooks all night long.
- ◇ The 10 commandments are recorded twice in the Torah.
- ◇ On the first day of the Jewish new month called Rosh Chodesh, women refrain from certain activities including laundry.
- ◇ Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah are the foremothers of the Jewish people.

Jewish Story

BY Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

This week we learn of the battle between Esav and Jacob.

The word Torah means "teaching" and every word and idea in it contains a positive message on how to improve and put meaning into every moment of our life.

So what is the point of telling us that twin brothers, sons of Rivka and Isaac the founders of Judaism couldn't get along? What positive message is this?

Also, in the end of the portion Isaac wanted to bless only Esav forcing Isaac to disguise himself to get the blessing. Why couldn't Yaakov just bless both of them equally and put an end to the quibbling?

To understand this here is a story I heard several years ago.

The scene is a cattle slaughtering house in Argentina. The bearded Jews were all Shochatim ('Sho/cha/tim); religious Jews trained in all the details of 'ritual' slaughtering. They had come from all over the world, about fifty of them, to work there for a few months, earn enough money to support their families and return home.

The work was hard with long hours, the slaughterhouse was a good hour's drive from town and they were tired. But the guard refused to open the gate to let them out. "Hey open the door already!!" one of them pounded on the gate. "Open!"

It was raining, the bus was waiting for them outside the gate and the Rabbis were aggravated and wanted to get home.

They began yelling to open up. "HALLO!!" one of them who knew a bit of Spanish yelled and waved at the guard sitting in his little booth on the side; "Que Pasa?" Que Pasa el Porta?" But it didn't help, the guard refused to open up.

"No no!" the guard yelled back, followed by something in Spanish.

"He says he won't open the door till everyone is here" the Spanish-speaking shochet explained, "He says someone is missing and he's not opening till he's here."

"NO one is missing!!! He's probably drunk. Just tell him to open up!!" shouted one of the men. "He's making us crazy!! Open up already!! We want to go home and we have a long ride ahead of us!"

But the guard wouldn't budge. So they talked it over between them; they had to come up with a plan of action.

"Listen," one of them suggested, "either we force him to open the door or we make a count and see if he's right. Maybe someone IS missing." And sure enough.... One man was missing!

NO one could figure how it happened, but they counted again and Zalman the Chabad Chassid wasn't there.

Zalman was a small, quiet fellow so they didn't notice his absence, how the guard noticed no one could figure out, but now besides wanting to go home they began to get worried about their colleague. They went back to the factory to find him.

They searched and called his name for a half hour to no avail. He had disappeared into thin air.

"Hey! Maybe he didn't come today", one of them suggested.

"No, he was on my shift," said another. "I even talked to him today. But where is he?"

They looked in the offices, in the kitchen, in the restrooms, maybe he fell asleep. Until someone yelled out, "I found him! Here he is! Call an ambulance! Come quick!! Help!! Help!!!"

It seems that Zalman had entered one of the huge freezer rooms and while he was deep inside someone closed the door and turned off the lights. Maybe Zalman had become confused, or perhaps he tripped in the darkness, but in any case when they found him he was lying unconscious on the floor almost frozen to death.

They pulled him out, covered him with blankets and began rubbing his body, and by the time the ambulance arrived it wasn't needed; he was already on his feet, drinking hot soup and ready to go home. It was nothing short of a miracle and of course they couldn't stop telling Zalman how the guard was the one who saved him.

When they all returned to the gate the guard smiled, pressed the button that opened the door and everyone filed past shaking his hand and blessing him. No one knew Spanish well enough to explain to him what happened but when it came Zalman's turn he gave him a big hug, looked him in the eyes and said "Muchas Gracias Amigo."

But there still remained a few mysteries. First, how did the guard notice one Jew from fifty was missing? After all, they all looked and even dressed pretty much alike. Was he some sort of genius?

The shochet that knew Spanish went back to ask him and several minutes later returned with the explanation.

"The guard said that he has no idea which one Zalman is. Just that every morning when we arrived and everyone would file past him, the only one that would say 'hello' to him was Zalman. Then when we finished every day the same Zalman was the only one that would say goodbye to him on the way out!

"So today he remembered that he had heard a 'good morning' but no 'good bye' so it wasn't hard for him to figure out that someone was missing! Zalman's greetings saved his life.

But that wasn't the end of it. They had another ques-

"I found him! Here he is! Call an ambulance! Come quick!! Help!! Help!!!"

tion. Zalman was probably the most introverted of the entire crowd!

"Of all people, why was it you that always said hello?" they asked him.

"I'll tell you why" Zalman answered. "Did you ever see the Lubavitcher Rebbe giving out dollars, for several years tens of thousands of people would file by the Rebbe every Sunday morning to receive a blessing and a dollar directly from him to give to charity. Or did you ever see the Rebbe saying "Lechiam" to thousands of Chassidim, at a Farbringin (Chassid gathering) one by one? Well I did and it really changed me.

"I thought to myself, if such a great man as the Rebbe can give so much love and attention to so many people, I should at least be able to say hello to everyone.

"So I decided that even though it's completely against my nature, I'm going to do it. Looks like it saved my life."

This answers our questions.

The teachings of Chabad Chassidut explain that everything and every character mentioned in the Torah is also found within us.

For instance, the twin brothers Jacob and Esav are two opposite 'drives' or 'souls' present in us; a Natural one and a G-dly one. And just as these twins struggled for dominance even before birth so our two souls fight constantly to dominate what we think, say and do ("Tanya" chapter 9)

As we saw in our story. Zalman's NATURAL tendency was to be quiet, but he felt it his G-dly task to be friendly. And because his desire to do what is right dominated his desire to be natural... his life was saved.

And ironically it was saved from freezing. The natural soul strives to cool us off to anything relating to Torah and Judaism; to freeze us. While the G-dly soul is warm and active to do what the Creator wants.

That is the reason Isaac wanted to bless Esav.

The Talmud (Shabbos 89b) states that the future redemption will come only in Issac's merit.

And it is explained why in Chassidic books.

Isaac dug wells. He revealed water where there was none; transforming deserts and wastelands to fertile oases. This is the same reason G-d created this world and put us into it; this world (analogous to Esav) is like a desert; threatening and void of meaning. Our job, like that of Isaac and Yaakov is to bring blessing to the entire creation. That is why Isaac blessed Esav: he thought he could refine and elevate him at once.

But, Yaakov knew better. He realized that it would be a long and difficult process and would require the Jews to 'disguise' themselves and dress in garments of nature: i.e. be involved in the world and simultaneously refine our OWN natures; blessings alone will not suffice.

And that will be the accomplishment of Moshiach. Moshiach will transform and reveal the 'living water' within everyone and everything; and even the evil people will turn to the Creator as we say thrice daily in the prayer 'Alenu'.

That is why Isaac wanted to bless Esav. He thought the time had come for redemption and that even the evil in him could be transformed. But Jacob knew better. He foresaw that it would have to wait.

But now, almost 4,000 years later, the time has arrived.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe announced that the world is ready for transformation. Now it is easier than ever to transform our natural desires to G-dly ones. And soon even the evil forces of destruction will be transformed to serve the Creator and improve His creation. All the gentiles, even the enemies of the Jews, are ready to hear about the seven Noahide commandments and admit the eternal truth of the Torah.

That is the eternal message of our section; today we can warm up the world and succeed in doing what Isaac began some four thousand years ago! All that is lacking could be just one more good deed, word or even thought and we will all be rejoicing with ...

Moshiach NOW!!

Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

Jewish Joke

Max, a Vaadnik (union head) is addressing a union meeting at a certain unnamed Israeli government-owned company.

"Comrades - Haverim. We have agreed on a new deal with the management. We will no longer work five days a week."

"Hooray!", goes the crowd.

"We will finish work at 3 PM, not 4 PM."

"Hooray!", goes the crowd, again.

"We will start work at 9 AM, not 7 AM."

"Hooray!"

"We have a 150% pay rise."

"Hooray!"

"We will only work on Wednesdays."

Silence...then a voice from the back asks, "Every Wednesday?"

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NOTICES:

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Upcoming Holidays:

CHANUKAH: December 12-20, 2017 is the Holiday of Chanukah. Please put in a request to your Chaplain at least 45 days in advance (October 28, 2017) to observe this holiday.

What is Bitachon?

Real Confidence

By Rabbi Tzvi Freeman

(Sephardi: bē-tā-ḥon Ashkenazi: bi-TĀ-khon) מַבְטָחִין root: בטח
Related words: Secure, Confident, Promise

What it is

Generally translated as “trust,” bitachon is a powerful sense of optimism and confidence based not on reason or experience, but on emunah. You know that “G-d is good and He’s the only one in charge,” and therefore you have no fears or frets.

Like emunah, bitachon is super-rational. The person who holds such an attitude will always be able to point out the positive side of life’s experiences, but it’s obvious that his or her bitachon is not based upon these. It is not an attitude based on experience, but one that creates experience. It says, “Things will be good because I believe they are good.”

On the other hand, bitachon is not a strategy to manipulate the universe. Your belief does not create good—the good in which you are so confident is already the underlying reality. Your belief only provides the means by which that reality can surface.

There are varying degrees of bitachon, according to a person’s degree of emunah. One person may have emunah that although things right now are not good, they are all for the good (eventually). A higher, yet more enlightened emunah is that everything right now is good—even when it superficially looks terrible. See When Bad Is Good for the stories of Rabbi Akiva and Nachum Ish Gamzu that illustrate how these two attitudes can play out in the resultant bitachon.

When it’s needed

Unlike emunah, bitachon does not live inside a person in a uniform state. Most of the time it’s fine sitting in the background: You go about your business the best you can, with perfect faith that “G-d will bless you in whatever you do,” and therefore it’s not your own smarts or hard work that will provide success, but “G-d’s blessing is

what makes a man rich.”

But then, situations arise from time to time when you can’t see any natural means by which you can get out of this. At that point, bitachon needs to wake up and step up to bat. Rather than saying, “Woe is me! Who can help me?” you say, “My help is from G-d, who makes heaven and earth—and therefore can do whatever He wants with them.”

What it does

Bitachon carries with it a profound, albeit subliminal cosmology: Even a simple Jew believes that G-d can provide for our needs despite all odds—even contravening the natural order—yet without breaking a single law of nature. Healing will come through a good doctor, profit will come through better clientele—yet the doctor and the clientele are only channels for the real healing and profit straight from G-d’s blessing. In other words, we find in bitachon a G-d beyond nature, within nature.

Which explains why when a Jew is in trouble, he or she first takes care of spiritual matters—such as checking tefillin and mezuzahs, pledging charity or some other mitzvah, spending more time in Torah study—before dealing with the material urgency at hand. First get the blessings in place, then deal with the channels through which they will come.

How to get it

For any person, bitachon can be a source of tranquility and happiness through the vicissitudes of life. Many read the story of the manna (Exodus 16) every day to strengthen their bitachon. Reading and telling stories of others who lived on bitachon also helps. But nothing helps more than meditating deeply upon the deep relationship we each have with the Source of All Good, and putting that conviction to work for you whenever necessary.

http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1405289/jewish/Bitachon.htm

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