

Lamplighter

16 Nissan
Shabbat Chol Hamoed

873

10 April
5769/2009

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The central theme of Passover is freedom - the liberation of the Children of Israel from the Egyptian oppressors. The celebration of this freedom is of such importance in Judaism, that we are required to relive the Exodus from Egypt every single day. "In every generation a person should consider himself as if he himself went out of Egypt."

But exactly what type of freedom were the Jews granted when they left Egypt? Did we not remove the yoke of Pharaoh only to replace it with an even greater yoke? "When you take the people out from Egypt they shall serve G-d," Moses is told. G-d took the entire Jewish People out of slavery in Egypt only on condition that they become subservient to Him! Observing the Torah and its 613 commandments is certainly a heavy yoke. Is it not a contradiction to claim that the Jews were freed from bondage if they afterward found themselves in a new sort of servitude?

The concept of freedom is relative, dependent on many factors. That which constitutes freedom for a plant is quite different from the freedom demanded by an animal or a human being. A tree requires good soil, abundant rain, and sunshine to thrive. But those same conditions would present the very opposite of a free existence for an animal, which is not rooted to the ground and must enjoy freedom of movement, in addition to sufficient food and water.

Moving up the ladder of creation we see that the same freedom that suffices for an animal does not constitute freedom for a human being. If we were to fulfil all a person's physical needs, yet not allow his intellect to be satisfied, this would be a terrible deprivation. Freedom for man includes the recognition that he possesses a need to fulfil his intellectual yearnings, to develop his full potential as a human being.

And yet, even intellectual fulfillment is not true freedom for a Jew. His Jewish soul must also be taken into consideration, that "veritable piece of G-d" which is the birthright of every member of the Jewish nation. Even when this soul is clothed in a physical body it maintains its intimate connection with its G-dly source. A Jew can only find true freedom and fulfillment when his soul is afforded the opportunity to strengthen that bond with G-d through the Torah and its commandments.

That is why our Sages said, "A truly liberated person is one who engages in the study of Torah." Torah for the Jew is as essential to his existence as water is to a fish. Contrary to being a yoke, Torah is our very life. Just as a fish can live only in water, the Torah is the Jew's only appropriate medium.

Freedom, therefore, is that which enables every single organism in the world to live up to its full potential. For a Jew, whose soul is his true essence, genuine freedom is that which will allow him to draw closer and closer to G-d - learning Torah and performing mitzvot (commandments).

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

The Nile Syndrome

By Yanki Tauber

The prophet Ezekiel describes Pharaoh (of Passover fame) as "the giant crocodile who crouches in his rivers, who proclaims, 'My river is mine, and I made myself...'"

I made myself? Sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? Somehow, I had this impression of Pharaoh as a pretty smart guy. Why would a smart guy come out with a ridiculous statement like, "I made myself"?

But we do that all the time. We crouch in our rivers proclaiming, "I made myself. I invented myself. I define myself!"

We go even further, setting our self-definition as the standard against which everyone else is measured.

I define life, we proclaim, for myself and for everyone else. When does life begin? When I decide it's "wanted." When should it end? As soon as I decide it's not "worth" living.

What is a "productive" life? A life that produces things that I think are important and desirous. What is a "wasted" life? Ditto in reverse.

What should I be doing with my life? The one to ask, obviously, is the one who made me - me.

"In every generation," says the Talmud, "and each and every day," adds the Tanya, "a person should see himself as if he, himself, has come out of Egypt."

We dumped Pharaoh in the Red Sea more than 3,300 years ago, but we're still shlepping him with us wherever we go. For we each embody our own private Pharaoh.

Liberating ourselves from Pharaoh is a daily challenge. Not because we failed yesterday, but precisely because we succeeded. Yesterday we liberated ourselves from the blatancy of our ego, so yesterday's subtle ego is the blatant ego of today's more refined self.

All of life's challenges ultimately flow from that same Nile Syndrome, the ego's cry of "my river is mine, and I made myself"; all of life's rewards are but variations of the daily Exodus in which we climb one level higher in the life-long journey out of Egypt.



The Three Visits of Elijah the Prophet

By Yaakov Brawer

Twenty-eight years ago, I attended a farbrengen (Chassidic gathering) in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn and set eyes on the Rebbe for the first time. The year that followed was truly a year of miracles, not the least of which was a visit by Elijah the Prophet.

On the first night of Passover my family and I, suffused with the wonder of our newly discovered Chassidism and aflame with inspiration, were seated around the Seder table. I had never before experienced a Seder with such spiritual delight and longing for redemption.

At the conclusion of the meal, the cup of Elijah was filled and my six year old son, candle in hand, was sent to open the front door, an old fashioned, ponderous wooden structure that was secured with a heavy iron latch. The door could be seen clearly from where I sat. However, before my son could take a step, the door unlatched and swung wide open. No one or at least no one visible, was there. My son dropped the candle and ran to his mother. I hesitantly got up and went to the open doorway. The night was clear and there was not as much as a breeze.

With us that Passover was my parents' housekeeper, a simple, devout, G-d fearing Catholic woman. She had come to us a few days before and stayed on to help with the children. During the Seder, she stayed in her room, which was at the top of the stairs on the second floor. When she came down the next morning, she told us that during the night, she had heard the front door open and that she was suddenly and inexplicably overcome by an intense, awesome feeling of fear.

My second encounter with Elijah occurred on the following Passover. In the interim, we had moved from Boston to Montreal. As Passover approached and we immersed ourselves in the seemingly endless scrubbing, kashering, buying, and cooking, the exertion was sweetened by anticipations of the Seder. Moreover, in light of the experience of the past year, it was not unreasonable to hope that Elijah would visit us, once again, in person.

The night of Passover arrived and the Seder was conducted with joy and expectation. In due course, the cup of Elijah was filled and I

sent my (now) seven year old and his four year old brother to open the front door. Our home in Montreal occupied the second story of a duplex, so that the front door was downstairs. I heard the children open the door, and then I heard screams of terror and the sound of their feet scrambling up the steps.

They burst into the dining room, faces white with fear, and they babbled and clung to me as if there very lives were threatened. Although their agitated jabbering was totally unintelligible, I wondered whether Elijah had not appeared this time in visible form. After all, it all made a great deal of sense. When Elijah had arrived last year, I was not yet worthy to behold his presence. Now, however, after a whole year of studying Tanya, and donning the additional "Rabeinu Tam" tefillin as per Chassidic custom, and after having been to the Rebbe a half a dozen times—perhaps I had reached the state of personal perfection necessary for a full revelation of Elijah.

I disengaged myself from my hysterical offspring and went downstairs to greet the prophet. What I encountered, however, was something else. There, at the entrance, was not the angelic figure of Elijah, but two massive dogs sitting on the front porch. I now understood the children's delirium. My kids would cross the street if they saw a miniature poodle leashed to its owner two blocks away. At a distance of one block they would begin to tremble and whimper. These two dogs were truly grotesque. They looked like those prehistoric carnivores whose fossilized remains populate the LaBrea tar pits. They placidly sat on my porch contemplating me with mild curiosity. I could not imagine what they were doing there.

I closed the door and dejectedly climbed the stairs. How was I to explain to my family that after six trips to the Rebbe, a year of learning Tanya, and putting on Rabbeinu Tam's tefillin in addition to the regular, requisite pair, I was worthy to be visited on Passover night by a couple of dogs? As it turned out, however, they weren't ordinary dogs.

On the following morning in shul, I was approached by one of the Yeshivah administrators who asked if I could take a guest for the midday meal. One of the supporters of the Yeshiva had a son who was studying law at an American school, and while there, he had become attracted to Torah learning and Jewish observance. He was now home, visiting his parents for Passover, and this administrator thought it would be a good idea if I spoke with him. I readily agreed.

We were introduced, and following the morning prayers, my children, my guest and I set out for home. As we reached my house, my guest became excited and exclaimed "I don't believe it! This can't be real".

I asked him what the excitement was about. My guest told me that he had come to Montreal the day before Passover. With him, were his two pet dogs. Just before the Seder at his parents' home, the dogs escaped and ran out into the street. By the time their absence was noticed, they were nowhere to be seen, and my guest took to the streets to search for them. Hours later, he found them, very far from home, in a strange neighbourhood, sitting on someone's front porch. That someone was me.

Providence had guided those monsters, his "pets", to my house. The experience left a deep impression on all of us and I felt particularly uplifted. If Elijah did not exactly come in person, at least he sent his dogs.

My guest and I became friends and in time, he embraced Torah completely, married, and raised a wonderful Chassidic family.

The third visit, which occurred the following year and has been repeated ever since, is somewhat less dramatic. Following grace after the meal, the cup of Elijah is filled, and my grandchildren go to the door, candles in hand. The door is opened, the appropriate verses are recited and that's it. Although it would be improper and incorrect to refer to it as a "no show", it is a very low key visit.

In truth, intuition notwithstanding, this third visit is the most momentous of all, but one must know how to appreciate it. Last year, while spending Passover with my eldest son (the six- and seven-year old in the above accounts) he related a story about the Rebbe of Kotsk that puts this third visit in proper focus.

One year the Kotsker Rebbe promised his Chassidim that Elijah the Prophet would be revealed at his Seder. On the first night of Passover, the Rebbe's dining room was crammed with Chassidim. The air was electric with anticipation and excitement. The Seder progressed, the cup of Elijah was filled and the door opened. What happened next left the Chassidim speechless. Nothing. Nothing happened. There was no one there.

The Chassidim were crushed. After all, the Rebbe had promised them a revelation of Elijah. The Kotsker, his face radiating holy joy, perceived their bitter disappointment and inquired as to what was the problem. They told him. "Fools!" he thundered. "Do you think that Elijah the Prophet comes in through the door? Elijah comes in through the heart."

The true light of redemption comes from within. Miracles provide inspiration and cause us to direct our attention and efforts to spiritual truths. The ultimate miracle, however, is not the abrogation of nature, but the transformation of the natural into the G-dly.

Although the redemption from Egypt came from "without"—it was orchestrated and produced entirely by the Almighty. Our Sages tell us the future and ultimate redemption will be the product of our own effort. Indeed, the whole point of liberating us from Egypt was to provide us with the opportunity to refine ourselves and the world around us to the extent that Divine Will which is the hidden source and root of all of existence becomes openly manifest.

This is what we achieve when we struggle to overcome the ego-centric inertia of worldly life. Every small, private, inner step on the path to spirituality and goodness is a step toward the Redemption. The Torah-study, good deeds, and character refinement with which we occupy ourselves all year open the door (of the heart) to Elijah the Prophet and all that he represents.

When the cup of Elijah is filled this Passover and the front door is opened, don't concentrate on the doorway. If you peek into your heart, there's a very good chance that you will behold the holy prophet smiling back at you.

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield in conjunction with the Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA
Phone (03) 9525 8190
Email: lamplighter_weekly@hotmail.com
Internet: www.lamplighterweekly.com

Editors: Shneur Wilhelm, Boruch Shalom Ajzenszmid
The Lamplighter contains words from sacred writings. Please do not deface or discard.

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



Leaving Egypt

11th of Nisan, 5721 [1961]

To Our Brethren Everywhere: G-d Bless You All

The Exodus from Egypt, the focus of the festival of Pesach, occupies a central place in Jewish life, on both the collective and individual level. As such it is a source of instruction and inspiration, not only in its general theme, but also in every detail and aspect of it.

One of the fundamental features of the message of the Exodus from Egypt is the unlimited faith - the absolute reliance on Divine Providence - which found expression in the Exodus from Egypt. A whole people, several million in number, eagerly leave a well-settled and prosperous country, with all its fleshpots and material blessings, and go out on a long and perilous journey even without provision.

Moreover, they do not follow the well-trodden and shorter route (through the land of the Philistines) which, although possibly entailing war, was more logical by far than crossing the vast and desolate desert. For in war there is a chance of victory, and even in defeat there is a chance of escape and survival for many, whereas the chances of survival in the desert without food or water were, by all laws of nature, virtually nil. Nevertheless, they follow the obviously "irrational" route solely on the word of Moshe speaking in the name of G-d.

Considering also that this takes place after spending 210 years in a highly agricultural country, where nomadic life was despised. Egypt was a land of fertile soil, independent of rain and climatic inclemency, richly irrigated by the faithful Nile River. It was, in short, a land completely secure in natural resources and natural laws and conditions.

"Since the days of your departure from Egypt" and to the present day, these aspects of Yetziyat Mitzrayim, the Exodus from Egypt, namely, the absolute bitachon in the Divine Providence and its implementation in life, down to the daily conduct in accordance with the Divine precepts, regardless of the dictates of human considerations and natural laws, must be the indispensable companion and guiding light, in the experience of our people as a whole, and in the daily life of the individual Jew in particular, every where and at all times.

When the non-Jewish world, and even those of the Jewish world who have strayed from the true Jewish way of life, challenge the observant and practicing Jew saying, "You, like us, live in a materialistic world, in the midst of a highly competitive society facing a desperate struggle for economic survival, how can you escape subservience to the idolatry of the land (be it the dollar, or the fear of being 'different')? How can you adhere to a code of 613 precepts which 'burden your life and limit your competitiveness at every side and turn?"

Yetziyat Mitzrayim provides the clue.

As in the case of the Exodus of Egypt, when the Jews responded to the Divine call, disregarding rational considerations, and breaking with the past, it turned out that precisely the application of this principle in actual life was the road to their true happiness, and not only spiritually (receiving the Torah and becoming the G-d-chosen people and holy nation), but also materially (in coming to the Promised Land, flowing with milk and honey).

So it is today and always. By means of the Divine Law and mitzvot, the Jew attaches himself to the Creator and Master of the World, and liberates himself from all "natural" restrictions and limitations, thereby attaining true happiness, materially and spiritually.

"Know Him in all your ways." Jews are enjoined to know, remember and permeate with holiness every aspect of the daily conduct and activities. In doing so the observant Jew may frequently face the above-mentioned challenge and test. Therefore, the Jew has been enjoined, "Remember your deliverance from Egypt, every day of your life." Remembering and identifying oneself with the aspects of Yetziyat Mitzrayim is a source of limitless strength to make every day meaningful and full of true Yiddish life. As my father-in-law, of saintly memory, emphasized, "The festival of Pesach irradiates not only every day, but every moment of the Jew's life."

With the blessing of a kosher and Happy Pesach,

A MITZVA A DAY

Positive Commandment 204: Returning a Lost Article
Did you ever lose something valuable? Did you go back to the place where you thought you lost it and try to find it? Wouldn't you have been happy if someone had returned it to you? The Torah commands us to try to find the owner of a lost article and return it to him as the passage says: "You shall surely bring it back to him" (Exodus 23:4)

A WORD from the Director

In the Passover Haggada, we read the questions of the four children: one wise, one wicked, one simple and one who doesn't even know which questions to ask. The Rebbe has spoken numerous times about the four children and their relationship to all Jews today.

What unites the four children is the fact that they have all come to the Seder table. Even the wicked child comes, albeit asking his question, "What is the meaning of this service to you?" At least he has some connection to Judaism, however small it may be.

Nowadays, in our generation, we have the phenomenon of a fifth child. This is the Jew who is so far removed from Judaism that he does not even know that there is such a thing as a Seder, or if he does know, chooses not to attend one. He might not even know that it is Passover! This Jew is not included among the four children because he is not even present.

Our obligation, the obligation of our generation, is to find these "fifth children" and draw them closer, with love and affection, to Torah, Judaism, and mitzvot.

In the recent past and probably even today, some people used to symbolically leave an empty seat at the Seder for Jews who could not attend one because of oppressive governments.

Although this is a beautiful gesture, it would be so much more appropriate to set aside a seat and fill it with a fifth child, someone who would otherwise not be attending a Seder.

A kosher and happy Passover to all of our readers and may we all celebrate this year in Jerusalem!

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Since, "He (G-d) fulfils the desire of those who fear Him," and, "You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living being," G-d will surely fulfil the desire of every Jew. That desire is expressed at the conclusion of the Book of Psalms, "Let every being that has a soul praise G-d." Each Jew has a soul which is "a part of G-d from above" and thus, wherever a Jew is, he can "praise G-d." This activity of praising G-d, especially when it is initiated by the person himself (and not as "bread of shame") will hasten Moshiach's coming. (*The Lubavitcher Rebbe, 11 Nissan, 5751-1991*)

J.I. Gutnick

It Happened Once...



It was in the weeks preceding Passover that one of the disciples of the Baal Shem Tov was overcome with a burning desire to see Elijah the Prophet. The disciple knew that it would require much purity of mind and soul and that generally the Baal Shem Tov discouraged such endeavours. However, the longing to have the great Prophet reveal himself was so intense that he couldn't distract his mind from the thought. After much deliberation and soul-searching, he decided to ask the Baal Shem Tov for his holy advice.

To the chassid's surprise, the Baal Shem Tov agreed to help him prepare himself for this life-transforming undertaking. The Baal Shem Tov gave the chassid an extensive list of preparations. Upon completing the list, the chassid reported back to the Baal Shem Tov whereupon he was told to load a wagon with food, wine and matzahs, and to travel to a nearby village where he was to spend the first two days of Passover with a certain family in the village. There, surely Elijah the Prophet would be revealed.

The chassid travelled to the village with mixed feelings of joy and trepidation. Would he truly merit seeing the prophet? A little while later, the chassid arrived at the village and found the dilapidated hut of the impoverished family with whom he was meant to celebrate the two Seders and fulfil his heart's desire of seeing Elijah the Prophet.

"Shalom Aleichem - Peace to you" he announced to the man who answered the door. "I am a chassid of the Baal Shem Tov, and he sent me here to spend the two Seder nights of Passover with you. I've brought everything we will need for the holiday with me, enough food for your entire family and even new clothing for your children."

The man stood at the door dumb-founded. His wife came to the door and she, too, could not believe her eyes as she looked out at the overloaded wagon. The couple soon composed themselves and invited the traveller in.

The Seder night was unforgettable. The woman, her husband and their five children had never been in the presence of one of the Baal Shem Tov's holy pupils. They had never heard such rich Torah thoughts said in such clear and simple words that they could all easily understand. They had also never had such a royal feast at their Seder.

The chassid, for his part, did not forget even for one moment why he had come. At every stage of the Seder that first night, the chassid waited with eager anticipation for the Elijah the Prophet to appear.

They drank the four cups of wine, ate the traditional foods, explained each sentence of the Hagadah with joy, sang the traditional holiday songs and even danced until the wee hours of the night. But Elijah did not reveal himself to the chassid.

At the second Seder, the same wondrous scene repeated itself for the family and their guest. The Torah insights, the joy, the food, the singing, the dancing. But this night, too, Elijah the Prophet did not appear to the chassid.

When three stars appeared in the sky the following evening, and the chassid had not merited seeing Elijah the Prophet, he was heartbroken. He thanked the family for their hospitality and returned to the Baal Shem Tov.

During the journey back, the chassid wondered what had happened. Surely the Baal Shem Tov was not wrong when he had told the chassid that Elijah would reveal himself in that village family's home on Passover. Elijah

must have been there and the chassid had somehow not merited seeing him. Perhaps he had dozed off for an instant at the Seder without even realizing it and had missed seeing the Prophet.

When the chassid arrived at the Baal Shem Tov's court, he poured out his heart to his master. He repeated every detail of the past few days, waiting expectantly to hear how or why he had missed Elijah the Prophet.

The Baal Shem Tov thought for a moment and answered, "Go back to the village. Let your horse graze by the window of the house. There you will find your answer."

Without hesitation the chassid travelled back to the village. As he brought his horse to graze by the window of the home, he overheard a conversation between the husband and wife:

"What did you think of our guest?" the wife said to the husband.

"What do I think?" he replied "I think we should thank G-d and the holy Baal Shem Tov for sending us his chassid! The words of Torah, the beautiful explanations, the bountiful food. It was amazing!"

"That was no chassid," she interjected emphatically. "That was Elijah the prophet! I am absolutely sure that was Elijah the prophet."

Now the chassid understood. If we want Elijah the Prophet to appear, we have to be Elijah the Prophet.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

And he returned to the land of Egypt; and Moses took the staff of G-d in his hand (Ex. 4:20)

While Moses certainly demonstrated to Pharaoh the proper honour due a king, he nonetheless "took the staff of G-d in his hand" in all his dealings with him - prideful in his Jewish heritage, imbued with an attitude of G-dly assurance, and without any feelings of inferiority. (*Likutei Sichot*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

SHABBOS CHOL HAMOED PESACH

17 NISAN • 11 APRIL

SECOND DAYS OF YOMTOV PESACH

21-22 NISSAN • 15-16 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT: CANDLE LIGHTING 5:43 PM
MINCHA: 5:55 PM
KABBOLAS SHABBOS: 6:20 PM

SHABBOS MORNING: SHACHARIS: 10:00 AM
MINCHA: 5:40 PM
SHABBOS ENDS: 6:40 PM

CHOL HAMOED: SHACHARIS SUN - TUE: 9:15 AM
MINCHA: 5:45 PM
MAARIV: 6:35 PM

TUESDAY • 14 APRIL • 20 NISSAN • EVE OF 7TH DAY OF PESACH
CANDLE LIGHTING: 5:37 PM
MINCHA: 5:45 PM
MAARIV: 6:20 PM

WEDNESDAY • 15 APRIL • 21 NISSAN • SEVENTH DAY OF PESACH
SHACHARIS: 10:00 AM
MINCHA: 5:45 PM
CANDLE LIGHTING: AFTER 6:39 PM
MAARIV: 6:20 PM

THURSDAY • 16 APRIL • 22 NISSAN • EIGHTH DAY OF PESACH
SHACHARIS: 10:00 AM
YIZKOR: APPROX. 11:15
MINCHA: 5:45 PM
YOMTOV ENDS: 6:33 PM
ABLE TO EAT CHOMETZ: 6:25 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 10, 14 & 15 APRIL 2009

BEGINS		ENDS	
10 ^h	14 ^h	15 ^h	11 ^h 16 ^h
5:43	5:37	6:39	6:40 6:33
5:42	5:36	6:31	6:36 6:30
5:19	5:15	6:07	6:11 6:06
6:27	6:25	7:14	7:16 7:13
5:16	5:11	6:04	6:12 6:07
5:45	5:40	6:33	6:38 6:32
5:22	5:17	6:11	6:16 6:10
5:31	5:25	6:23	6:29 6:22
5:46	5:40	6:36	6:41 6:34
5:42	5:36	6:33	6:39 6:32

For the 10th & 14th one should light before the given times. For the 15th one should light after the given time and from a pre-existing flame only.

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נב"מ ז"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.