

# LampLighter

7 Shevat  
Bo  
**914**  
22 January  
5770/2010

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Bo, discusses the Jews' spiritual preparations for the exodus from Egypt. When G-d decided to take the Jewish people out of Egypt, He saw that they were bereft of mitzvot. There was not one mitzva in whose merit they were worthy of being redeemed!

What did G-d do? He gave them two commandments with which to prepare themselves before the exodus: the blood of the Pascal sacrifice (the Jewish people were commanded to slaughter the Passover offering and put its blood on the door posts and lintels of their homes), and the blood of brit mila (the commandment to circumcise themselves on the night of the exodus from Egypt). It was in the merit of these two mitzvot that the Jews were redeemed.

These particular commandments were chosen by G-d because they represent the two dimensions of our Divine service: "depart from evil" and "do good."

"Depart from evil" means to rid ourselves of negative character traits and refrain from committing transgressions; "Do good" means to strive to strengthen our positive character traits and increase our performance of good deeds.

The Jewish people's G-dly service in Egypt was defective on both counts, both in the sphere of "departing from evil" and "doing good." The Jews did not sufficiently distance themselves from wrongdoing, due to the negative influence of the Egyptian environment. Nor did they engage in doing mitzvot or performing acts of goodness.

Thus, in order to be redeemed, they had to correct their behaviour in both directions.

The blood of the Pascal sacrifice signified the Jews' unequivocal dissociation from the evil of their surroundings. The Egyptians were idolators, and the lamb was one of their primary deities. Yet the Jews were commanded to take this "deity" and sacrifice it to G-d! By doing so the Jewish people irrevocably cut themselves off from the Egyptians' depravity. This was the mitzvah given to correct the Jew's lack in "departing from evil".

By performing brit mila, the Jews entered into an eternal covenant with the Creator, and rectified their lack in the area of "Do good".

"Depart from evil" and "do good" are thus both components of the process of redemption from Egypt, as it states, "When you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve G-d upon this mountain."

"Depart from evil" refers to the exodus from Egypt.

"Do good" refers to the Jewish people's acceptance of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

Everything in the Torah is a lesson for every generation. This is even more so regarding the exodus from Egypt, which we are commanded to remember every day. This we do by avoiding evil and increasing our performance of good deeds. When we act accordingly we will merit to leave this exile, and greet our righteous Moshiach.

## The Head

By Yanki Tauber

The Zohar refers to Moses as the *raaya meheimna* of Israel — a phrase that translates both as "faithful shepherd" and "shepherd of faith." The latter sense implies that Moses is Israel's faith provider — a source of, and conduit for, their faith in G-d.

When the Torah speaks of Israel's faith in G-d it says, "They believed in G-d and in Moses His servant" using the very same verb to connote Israel's belief in Moses and in the Almighty. In its commentary on this verse, the Mechilta goes so far as to derive from this that "one who believes in Moses believes in G-d."

The Talmud applies the same to the sages and Torah scholars of all generations. It asks, "Is it ... possible to cleave to the Divine?" and replies: "But whoever attaches himself to a Torah scholar, the Torah considers it as if he had attached himself to G-d."

A fundamental principle of the Jewish faith is that there are no intermediaries between G-d and His world. So what roles do our leaders and Torah scholars play in regard to our faith in, and attachment to, G-d?

Rabbi Schneur Zalman explains in the Tanya, that in understanding the father/child metaphor, we will understand our relationship with G-d. He quotes the Torah, "You are children to the L-rd your G-d," says Moses. While in Egypt, G-d called us "My firstborn child, Israel."

A microscopic bit of matter, from the father, triggers the generation of life. In the mother's womb, a single cell develops and differentiates; soon it emerges into the world as a thinking, feeling, and achieving human being.

What originated in the father's body is now a distinct and (eventually) independent individual. On a deeper level, however, as it states in the Talmud, "A son is a limb of his father." In the child's consciousness lies the truth: he is his father's child, an extension of his being. In body, they have become two distinct entities; in essence, they are one.

The various individual parts of the human being comprise a single, integrated whole; it is the *person* who sees, speaks, and is aware. Therefore, the toenail of the child, as it is connected with the brain, is no less one with the father than is the brain itself.

If the toenail were to cut itself off from the brain, then it would cut itself off from its own centre of vitality and consciousness. This might seem to sever even its awareness of parental origins. In other words, the consciousness of the unity of the child's limbs and organs with the father's essence is dependent upon maintaining a connection with the child's mind, which facilitates their awareness of this unity.

Israel, too, is comprised of many "organs" and "limbs." There are the great sages of each generation. They are the minds of the Jewish "body". Israel also has a heart, those who exemplify compassion and piety; and hands, its builders and achievers. Each forms an integral part of the body of G-d's firstborn.

But like in the analogy of the father and child, each part of the child has to be connected to the brain to have awareness of the bond to the father, so too in the "body" that is Israel. It is our life-bond with our "mind" — the sages and leaders of Israel — that both integrates us as a single whole and imbues us with our connection to our Creator and Source.

True, a Jew can never sever their bond with G-d. We can choose, G-d forbid, to disassociate ourselves from the leaders whom G-d has implanted in our midst, banishing our relationship with Him to the subconscious of our soul. Or we can intensify our bond to the "mind" of Israel, making our bond with the Almighty a vibrant reality in our lives.



## The Previous Rebbe Sat Right There

Once, a Lubavitcher chasid, Rabbi Michael Vishetzky, went to visit a Rabbi Rabinowitz in the rabbi's synagogue in the Bronx, New York. Rabbi Vishetzky was surprised when he noticed that Rabbi Rabinowitz sat at a corner of the table rather than the head of the table. "No one sits in that place," the elderly rabbi told Reb Michael. When the rabbi noticed Reb Michael's surprise, he began to tell him the following story.

"When I came to America, I was privileged to meet with the Previous Rebbe. I told him everything that had happened to me in Europe and asked him what I should do with my life. The Previous Rebbe said, 'Since you are a Torah scholar, you should look for a position as a community rabbi.'

"Soon after that, I was recommended for a position in this shul (synagogue), here in the Bronx. I asked the Previous Rebbe if I should take the job. The Previous Rebbe said, 'A shul is a shul, and so it's very suitable. But I don't like the shammas (sexton).'

"Why did the Rebbe mention the shammas? I wondered. The Previous Rebbe saw that I was confused and repeated, 'A shul is a shul, but I don't like the shammas.'

"Time passed. Everything seemed to be going smoothly until I found out that the shammas was not pleased with me. After the passing of the shul's previous rabbi the shammas had assumed many responsibilities and had become the unofficial rabbi. He felt that I had pushed him aside and he began to cause trouble

for me. Eventually the situation became unbearable.

"When it became too much for me, I went to see the Rebbe, who had assumed the leadership after the passing of the Previous Rebbe on the tenth of Shevat, 1950. Before I even had a chance to open my mouth, the Rebbe said, 'My father-in-law said that a shul is a shul and he did not like the shammas. Continue to serve as rabbi in the Bronx. As for the antics of this shammas, he will soon need to worry about how long he will keep his job.'

"I was amazed by the Rebbe's words. When I had spoken with the Previous Rebbe, no one else had been in the room, and I had never discussed the matter with the present Rebbe.

"A few nights later I couldn't sleep. At daybreak I decided to go to shul a little earlier than usual. On my way, I was surprised to meet the president and manager also walking toward the shul. The manager pointed to a light in the windows of the shul. It looked suspicious. We quietly opened the door and walked in. The shammas was holding the tzedaka boxes and emptying the money into his pockets. Needless to say, we fired him.

"The next few years passed peacefully. Then something even more incredible happened. The shul shared an adjoining wall with a butcher's shop. Business went very well for the butcher, and the shop soon became too small. He found a much larger shop, and sold the old shop to the shul as the congregation needed more space. After some friendly negotiations, a deal was struck. The whole transaction was conducted without a written contract.

"A few years later the butcher began to look for a storeroom. When he couldn't find one, he remembered that there was no official contract with the shul. Without any scruples, the butcher went to the shul management and asked them to give him his shop back. He hired a lawyer and was positive that the court

would decide in his favour as there had been no written contract of sale.

"After a short court case, the shul board received a court order telling them to vacate the premises by a certain date. If they disobeyed, the police would be called in. The date was drawing near. I went to the Rebbe for a blessing.

"When I described the situation, the Rebbe said, 'My father-in-law told you clearly that a shul is a shul. Everything will turn out the way it should.'

"The night before the critical date, I had a dream which I will never forget. In the dream I went to the shul and I saw the Previous Rebbe sitting in the chair at the head of the table - the very same chair which I never let anyone sit in. Standing next to him was the Rebbe. He said, 'Don't worry. G-d will let everything turn out for the best.' He then looked toward the Previous Rebbe. 'The Rebbe told you that a shul is a shul. What do you have to worry about?'

"I stood there in astonishment. The Previous Rebbe was right there, even though he had passed away ten years ago. I was still marvelling at this extraordinary sight when I woke up. I ran to shul as fast as I could. A crowd had gathered outside the shul and people were arguing with the policemen who had blocked the entrance. They had started to remove the furniture. Then something very dramatic happened.

"On a nearby street, in the butcher's large shop, a light fixture fell suddenly from the ceiling. The butcher was knocked unconscious. When he regained consciousness, his first words were, 'Please, stop emptying the shul.' When the police arrived, the butcher admitted that he had made false accusations against the shul. He had, indeed, received payment for the old shop.

"Now you understand why I don't let anyone sit in that chair. The image of the Previous Rebbe sitting there will be in front of my eyes forever," Rabbi Rabinowitz said as he finished telling his story.

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ISSUE 914

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Concerning the phrase in Genesis, "...until Shilo comes," Rashi says this refers to Moshiach. The numerical equivalent of the Hebrew words meaning "Shilo comes" is the same as the word, "Moshiach." Furthermore, the word "comes" is numerically equivalent to the word echad, "one." When there is unity among Jews, and in particular, when Jews unite in speaking about Moshiach, they will bring the Redemption through Moshiach. (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn)

# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



# A WORD from the Director

11th of Shevat, 5719 [1959]

I was pleased to receive regards from you through the delegation from Boston which came to participate in yesterday's farbrengen [Chasidic gathering] on the occasion of the Yahrzeit [anniversary of the passing] of my father-in-law of saintly memory. Your name was thus brought to my attention during the farbrengen and, as you know, it is always an auspicious time when Jews get together for a sacred purpose connected with the Torah and Mitzvos, and especially on such an occasion as yesterday's to honour the memory of one who has truly dedicated his life to this sacred cause, and who has founded numerous Torah institutions where the students are brought up to follow in his path with true dedication.

It is especially an auspicious time to receive G-d's blessings for those who devote time and energy in support of his institutions and, moreover, take a leading role and inspire others as I hope is the case with you and, as I further hope, that you will continue your good efforts in an ever-growing measure.

I still recall the pleasure of your visit when we discussed those important matters, and I hope to receive good reports about your good efforts in this direction with growing vigour and in good health and happiness.

I will remember you in prayer when visiting the holy resting place of my father-in-law of saintly memory, at a propitious time, for consistent good health.

Hoping to hear good news from you,

With blessing,

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8th of Shevat, 5734 [1974]

Greeting and Blessing:

I duly received your letter, in which you write about your birthday. May G-d grant that it should usher in a year of increased Hatzlocho [success] in all your affairs, especially to go from strength to strength in the study of the Torah and the observance of the Mitzvoth.

As we are about to observe Yud Shevat, the Yahrzeit [anniversary of the passing] of my father-in-law of saintly memory, I trust that you are familiar with his life and work. One of the main instructions that every one of us should derive from the inspiration of this day is to rededicate ourselves to the spreading and strengthening of Torah and Mitzvoth to the utmost of our ability, bearing in mind that we are fortunate to be able to do it in freedom and security, without the perils and difficulties which the Baal HaHilulo had to face for the greater part of his life.

May G-d grant that you should have good news to report in all above, including also good news about your family.

With blessing,

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Dr. -

Greeting and Blessing:

I duly received your letter of December 30th, in which I read with interest about your new position. This is undoubtedly a true promotion, both professionally as well as in the opening up of new horizons in your work for the spiritual benefit of the many, and when the two are coupled it is indeed a true and complete promotion.

May G-d grant that this be the forerunner of further advancement in the same direction; which is indeed a natural aspiration, as our Sages declared, "He who possesses 100, desires to possess 200, and he who possesses 200, desires 400." This indicates that the ambition grows with success, and having advanced, one is not satisfied with the previous increment. The same, at least, should be true in the spiritual sense.

We are now in particularly auspicious days, as we are about to observe the Yahrzeit-Hilulo of my father-in-law of saintly memory, on the 10th of Shevat. Inasmuch as Tzadikim [the righteous], the faithful shepherds that they are, continue to take care of those whom they had taken care of in their lifetime on this earth, it is certain that my father-in-law of saintly memory is a faithful intercessor in behalf of the institutions which are carried on in this spirit, and those who are actively engaged in their support and expansion.

With blessing,

*"I came into my garden..." With these words, a quotation from the Song of Songs, the Rebbe began the interpretation of a Chasidic discourse of the Previous Rebbe that marked the Rebbe's official acceptance of the leadership of Chabad-Lubavitch.*

*This took place sixty years ago, on the Tenth of the Jewish month of Shevat (January 25 this year).*

*When one speaks of "the garden," especially in a Jewish context, the garden that automatically comes to mind is, of course, the Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden was the idyllic place where all was perfect. And, in fact, before Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge, all was perfect! There was no hunger, no strife, or illness. Food was plentiful, life was blissful. Even animal-life existed on a unique plane, with the wolf and the lamb living together peacefully; the bear and the eagle living in harmony.*

*Our Sages teach that the perfect state the world will achieve in the Messianic Era is a hearkening back to the Garden of Eden. Though to us it is only "natural" that people should be sick, hungry and illiterate, that there should be strife amongst neighbours and war between nations, the true nature of the world is as it was in the Garden of Eden.*

*The Rebbe's leadership throughout the past sixty years has been to empower the individual to recreate his own Garden and enter it, together with all of humankind.*

*As we enter this new year of the Rebbe's leadership, may each and every one of us maximize and actualize our own potential through increasing the performance of good deeds, of Mitzvot, and of Torah study. Then we will be able to come into the Garden together with all of our loved ones, may it happen NOW!*

J. I. Gutnick

The Shabbat before the yahrtzeit (or on the Yahrzeit if it falls out on Shabbat), it is customary to receive an aliyah to the Torah, and if possible, to read the Haftorah. It is also traditional to sponsor a Kiddush on this Shabbat in memory of the deceased. In addition, if the Yahrzeit falls on a day when the Torah is read (Monday, Thursday, Rosh Chodesh, etc.) it is proper to receive an aliyah on that day. After the conclusion of the Torah reading, the son of the deceased recites the kaddish.

A 24 hour candle is kindled before sunset on the eve of the Yahrzeit. If available, a beeswax candle should be used. [The Hebrew letters of the word beeswax, form an acronym of the verse "and those who repose in dust will awaken and rejoice."]

On the day of the Yahrzeit, the sons of the deceased recite the Kaddish at all three of the daily prayers. If possible, the sons should also lead the prayer services. Five candles should be burning throughout the prayers, corresponding to the five elements of the soul: Nefesh (Vitality), Ruach (Spirit), Neshamah (Soul), Chayah (Life), and Yechidah (Essence).

Although all Torah which is studied in honour of the departed is beneficial for the soul,

this is especially true with the study of Mishnah as the word "Mishnah" contains the same letters as the word "Neshamah" – soul. Therefore it is customary to study Mishnah on a Yahrzeit. If at all possible, it is recommended to study a chapter of Mishnah for every Hebrew letter of the deceased's name. Each chapter of Mishnah should begin with another Hebrew letter from the deceased's name.

One should give additional charity on this day in honour of the departed soul. If the Yahrzeit is on Shabbat, the charity should be given on Friday.

It is proper to pay a visit to the gravesite of the deceased on the Yahrzeit. While at the burial place, it is customary to recite the following Psalms: 33, 16, 17, 72, 91, 104, and 130. Afterwards, the verses of Psalm 119 which start with the Hebrew letters of the deceased's name are recited.

## CUSTOMS CORNER

# It Happened Once...



The Jews of Vitebsk, were not, if you want to know the truth, known to be generous givers to charity. When money needed to be raised for a worthy cause, it was no simple matter to extract hard currency out of them without applying a good deal of pressure. To their credit, however, it must be said that the Vitebskers could always be counted on to provide food for the hungry; indeed, the Talmud states that giving ready-to-eat food is greater than giving money to charity because it provides immediate relief, while the benefit of money is indirect.

One day a chassid from Vitebsk came to see the Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch (the third Chabad Rebbe, 1789-1866). He told the Rebbe that his only son was about to be drafted into the Russian army. Previously, only-sons were exempted automatically, but this year there was a new, tough policy and their precious child was in danger. "Please, Rebbe," he entreated, "help us, save us."

Rabbi Menachem Mendel shook his head sadly: "I'm sorry; I cannot help you in this matter."

The chassid pleaded and cajoled every way he could think of, but the Rebbe's answer remained the same, "I cannot help you."

This chassid happened to be close with the Rebbe's youngest son (and eventual successor) Rabbi Shmuel (1834-1882; known as the *Maharash*) — the only one of the Rebbe's seven sons who still lived in Lubavitch. When he left the Rebbe's room, he hurried directly to call on Rabbi Shmuel and told him his problem. Rabbi Shmuel promised that he would do his best to influence his father, but when he went to the Rebbe and spoke on the chassid's behalf, he too was told, "I cannot help him at all."

Two days before the draft was to take place, the chassid sent a representative to plead his case with the Rebbe once more, but again the Rebbe insisted there was absolutely nothing he could do.

Shortly thereafter, the Rabbi Menachem Mendel summoned his son to his study and asked him to bring a *Midrash Tanchuma*. The Rebbe leafed through it to the week's reading of *Mishpatim*, and showed his son section 15 there, concerning the verse, "If money you will lend" (Exodus 22:24):

*Says the Holy One, blessed be He: "A poor person was struggling for his life, to escape starvation, and you gave him a coin and saved his life. I promise that I will pay you back 'a life for a life': If tomorrow your son or daughter will be seriously ill or in any life-threatening situation, I will remember the good deed that you did... and I will repay you 'a life for a life.' "*

Rabbi Shmuel was perplexed. What did his father have in mind in showing him this passage?

A few days later, the news reached Lubavitch that the chassid's son had been released, and for no apparent reason. The Rebbe was visibly delighted by the report.

The Rebbe's son was very curious to find out the course of events that had transpired, especially since his father had repeatedly said that he couldn't do anything about the matter. The next time he had to be in Vitebsk, Rabbi Shmuel told his driver to detour to the house of that chassid.

The chassid was happy to see him, and honoured, and invited him in. Rabbi Shmuel asked him to describe what had happened on that day his son was supposed to have been drafted.

"Nothing special," answered the chassid.

Rabbi Shmuel requested that he ask his wife the same question, and she too said she didn't remember that anything unusual had taken place.

"Wait a moment!" she then exclaimed. "I do remember something. I'll tell you.

"That very day, a poor person came to the house and asked us to give him something to eat. At first we told him that we were so worried about our son who was going to be drafted that day that we really couldn't deal with him. But then he pleaded with us: it had been a long time since he had eaten anything at all and he was starving, and how could it be that a Jew did not have time or food for another Jew who was so hungry! We realized our mistake and served him a huge meal, from what we had prepared to be a special farewell meal for our son. None of us had the appetite to eat anyway, because we were so upset. Then..."

At this point Rabbi Shmuel interjected, "Thank you, I've heard enough. Everything is clear now."

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

**This month shall be unto you the beginning of months** (Ex. 12:2)

Each month when we sanctify the new moon we say, "David, King of Israel, is living and enduring." Every month, when the moon diminishes and seems to disappear for a short time, there is no doubt in our minds that it still exists and that it will eventually reappear. Similarly, although its reign is now in a period of dormancy, we have faith that the House of King David will rule in all its glory with the coming of Moshiach. (*Rama*)

**And in order that you may tell in the ears of your son...and you shall know that I am G-d** (Ex. 10:2)

How can a parent imbue his children with a sincere faith in G-d? "You shall know that I am G-d" - you yourselves must believe in G-d first, before you teach your offspring. (*Rabbi Yehoshua Rokeach*)

**They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place** (10:23)

The worst kind of darkness is when a person does not see his brother or extend his hand to help the needy. When one ignores his responsibilities and makes believe that the problems of others don't exist, the end result is that he himself will suffer and not be able to rise. (*Chidushei HaRim*)

**And you shall eat it in haste** (12:11)

Why the big rush when the Children of Israel finally left Egypt? Didn't their extreme haste give the mistaken impression that they had to escape quickly? Pharaoh actually wanted them to leave; they could have departed at a more leisurely pace. However, leaving Egypt was not a mere geographical move for the Jews; it was a moral step in the right direction. It was a step away from the world of spiritual degradation they had become accustomed to in Egypt. When a person desires to sever his connection to evil, it must be done all at once and not gradually. A person must grab the first opportunity that presents itself to escape from a negative influence. (*Chasidic teachings*)

### CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

#### PARSHAS BO 8 SHEVAT • 23 JANUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:23 PM
	MINCHA:	8:35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS :	9:05 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LAST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:58 AM
	MINCHA:	8:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:25 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN- FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:25 PM
	MAARIV:	9:15 PM

### CANDLE LIGHTING: 22 JANUARY 2010



Begins		Ends
8:23	MELBOURNE	9:25
8:12	ADELAIDE	9:12
6:29	BRISBANE	7:25
7:02	DARWIN	7:54
6:27	GOLD COAST	7:23
7:06	PERTH	8:04
7:49	SYDNEY	8:48
8:01	CANBERRA	9:01
8:24	LAUNCESTON	9:30
8:22	AUCKLAND	9:23
8:33	WELLINGTON	9:38

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

### The Lubavitcher Rebbe

זצוקללה"ה נב"מ זי"ע

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