

# LampLighter

14 Shevat  
Beshalach  
**915**  
29 January  
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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

After the miraculous Splitting of the Red Sea in this week's Torah portion, Beshalach, Moses leads the Jewish men in singing their praises of G-d, and Miriam, the prophetess, leads the women in their song of thanks.

The Torah tells us that the joy experienced by the women was far greater than that of the men. "And all the women went out...with tambourines and dances."

In fact, the Midrash relates that when the heavenly angels wanted to add their voices to the "Song of the Splitting of the Red Sea," G-d told them that they must wait until the women had finished.

The exile in Egypt was much harsher for the Jewish women than for their husbands. Of all Pharaoh's decrees against the Children of Israel, the harshest one, which broke the heart of every Jewish mother, was: "Every son that is born you shall throw into the river." The pain and suffering experienced by the Jewish women was more intense than all the hardships the men were forced to endure. Therefore, when salvation came, the joy they felt was much greater as well.

The stories in the Torah teach us lessons which we can apply in all generations. Pharaoh's decrees against the Jewish people have appeared again and again, throughout history, in various forms. Their aim, however, has never changed. The Egyptian Pharaoh sought to kill Jewish babies by drowning them in the Nile; later despots sought to destroy Jewish souls in ways equally dangerous, although not always as obvious.

In our days, when most Jews, thank G-d, live in relative safety and security, the decrees of Pharaoh imperil the spiritual existence of the Jewish people. "Pharaoh" rears his head in the guise of popular culture and the winds of arbitrary and capricious conventional wisdom, which threaten to sever the Jewish people from the eternal and timeless values of the Torah. "Pharaoh" seeks to immerse and drown the minds of impressionable Jewish children in the waters of whatever is, at the moment, trendy and fashionable.

The threat is not all that different from the one faced in Egypt, because Jews cannot exist for long without their faith in G-d and the study of Torah. Jewish children need a solid Jewish education to ensure the continuity of our people.

Today, just as in Egypt, the main responsibility of safeguarding our greatest national treasure, our children, from negative influences, lies with the Jewish mother. Jewish women have, throughout the generations, been granted the power to set the proper tone in the home and make it a place where their children will flourish and grow up to be good Jews.

In this way Jewish women will see true satisfaction from their children and merit to sing G-d's praises at the Final Redemption, speedily in our days.

*(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

## Roots of Resilience

By Rochel Holzkenner

In 1981, nine-year-old Jimmy Beveridge and his three brothers went hiking in the Palomar Mountains of California, while their folks stayed back at the camping site to prepare lunch. Jimmy separated from his brothers and got lost. Four hundred searchers joined to search for Jimmy, and he was found after four days. The end of the story was devastating. He had died of hypothermia. In his memory, some members of the search team developed an educational program designed to teach children to stay safe in the wilderness. They publicized a simple lifesaving principle: if you are lost, stay put and hug-a-tree until help arrives.

There is something very grounding about trees. They are solid, stationary and easy to hug. With roots knotted firmly in the soil and a dense net of branches that dance at its head, trees can help anchor a lost and disoriented person in a very unique way.

The Torah tells us (Deuteronomy 20:19), "*For man is a tree of the field.*" Man is called a tree of the field as if to say, if you want to know something about yourself, look at the tree. We share an identity of sorts. In fact, according to kabbalah, a tree is like a mirror that reflects my best self.

When interpreting the passage above, our sages are replete with thought-provoking insights about the lessons learned from a tree. For one, a tree needs to be attached to its life source, the soil, in order to grow. Animals, too, depend on the soil for sustenance, yet they don't need to be glued to the earth in order to survive. But the tree is stationary, constantly soaking up the earth's water and vital nutrients.

In the human tree, roots represent our faith. The trunk, branches and leaves symbolize our intellectual and emotional faculties. Finally, the fruit of the tree is our ability to create new life, and to affect others.

One of most admirable traits of the tree is its resilience. Like all perennial plants, they thrive through all four seasons. Many trees can withstand winds at speeds of sixty miles-per-hour or more; and a tree can live to be over two thousand years old!

Resilience is a nice trait. It's one that I constantly struggle to hone. But there are so many ups and downs in life that my boat of serenity seems like it's always being rocked. There are always several things I'm worried about at any given point in time. (Does that come with being a Jewish mother?) Yesterday, someone sent me an insulting email and almost ruined my afternoon. I recited a mantra to myself – be resilient, be a tree.

The key to the tree's strength is its thick roots, and the root of the soul is faith in G-d. The Hebrew word for faith is *emunah*. *Emunah* shares the same etymology as the Hebrew word *omen*, a skilled worker. Faith, like any good skill, needs to be cultivated and honed. And a psyche that is sated with faith in G-d is like a tree that is continually attached to its source of life. It is resilient and durable, and can withstand the winds of life with grace.

So, perhaps there is another dimension to the hug-a-tree principle. It's too easy to get lost and distracted in the dense forest called life. Instead, I can get acquainted with the lessons of a tree, the ability to stay centered. If I'm aware that G-d runs the world and He loves me, my boat is not that easy to rock.



## Euphoria in Emporia

by Dr. David Lazerson

I run an experiential, hands-on music program at the Quest Center in Hollywood, Florida for students with profound special needs, including Autism, Down syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, medically fragile conditions, and other challenges. The Quest Center is part of the Broward County public schools.

Unbeknownst to me, my district superintendent, principal and fellow teachers had nominated me to be inducted in the National Teachers Hall of Fame (NTHF). When I was informed that I had been selected, I had to confess that, up to that point, I had never even heard of a Teachers Hall of Fame.

A few days after I was notified that I had been selected, I received an email from the NTHF, located in Emporia, Kansas. The jam-packed schedule of events would include media sessions and interviews, roundtable discussion groups, meeting with various educational leaders and dignitaries, local tours, dinner receptions, and it would all culminate with the Friday evening official induction ceremony. They stated that if there were any issues at all, I shouldn't hesitate to contact them. I emailed them back with my two issues: Shabbat and kosher food. This was followed by a quick, one word response: "Huh?"

The induction ceremony was scheduled to end around 9:00 p.m.; it would already be Shabbat. My wife Gittel and I searched online, and finally found a cute Bed & Breakfast a mere half mile away from Emporia State College, the venue for the event. Since this place was considerably more expensive than the hotel, we offered to pay the difference. The NTHF would hear nothing of the sort. "We'll put you up at the Bed & Breakfast. It's our pleasure!"

But they were just getting warmed up. Within days, the kosher food issue was settled as well. The NTHF would bring in

all the goodies, including all the special foods for Shabbat, from Kansas City. How could we refuse?

With these details taken care of, I could now focus on the real tasks at hand and prepare for this major event. Being elected to the NTHF automatically puts one in a position of being a spokesperson for education. I would also be going as a national representative for special education. I needed to be clear headed about where I stood on the important issues facing America today. I would be asked, on national radio and TV, my opinions on all sorts of education-related issues, everything from No Child Left Behind, to why so many new teachers simply pack up and leave the field. Plus, and here was a critical factor, I would be wearing a kipa on my head. Thus, I would be representing not only my field of special education but also the Jewish people. It was a unique opportunity to make a real Kiddush Hashem (sanctification of G-d's name) - if all went well, of course.

To keep things flowing smoothly, whenever the inductees spoke for the media, we spoke in alphabetical order. My last name, Lazerson, put me fourth out of the five inductees. So I was surprised when at our ceremony rehearsal (rehearsing for the Friday evening event which would end at 9 p.m.), they had me speak first. "I don't want to rock the boat here," I protested.

"No," they insisted. "We don't want you to have any problems with the Sabbath and using a microphone!"

Thursday morning, in our first responsibility as a group, the NTHF had us meet with over 150 high school students from across the state of Kansas. They were all thinking of becoming teachers and wanted to interview us. Several of the students wanted to know what my kipa symbolized and many, to my surprise, asked for my autograph. I couldn't help but feel pride for my profession. Here were high school teens asking for an autograph - not from a professional football or baseball player, not from a rock 'n roll star, not from a handsome face of the screen... but from a teacher. Suddenly I felt inside, yes, there is hope for America.

The events of the next two days were intense, busy, and lots of fun for us. At

the actual induction ceremony, I spoke long before Shabbat began.

I ended my talk with that famous line from the Talmud: I learned a lot from my teacher; More from my colleagues, but most from my students. Despite facing incredible difficulties and challenges day-in/day-out, they almost always have a smile on their faces. They teach us to love and to give and to appreciate the "small" things in life - the stuff we so often take for granted, which, of course, are really the big things.

The real surprise came later that Friday evening. Gittel went back to our B&B to light candles, then walked back to meet me at the ceremony. As Shabbat came in with the setting sun, the induction ceremony came to a close. Now it was party time! The reception would be held over at the hotel. The other inductees did their best to convince us to go.

"You sure we can't kidnap you? You know, just push you two into the open back seat of the car? Please!" They motioned to a waiting car with the back door open.

We had to graciously decline as we started to walk to our nearby lodging. My parents had come, as well as some friends from Miami, and our host family as well, so we had a good group for Shabbat dinner. About 40 minutes later, five or six carloads of people pulled up in front of the B&B. It was a loud, rowdy group and at first I thought it was some sort of college frat group.

Then they came under the porch lights. It was the entire reception group; all the inductees and their families, the university and school dignitaries, the media people, and The NTHF people.

"We all decided," someone yelled, "if Laz can't come to the party, the party comes to Laz!"

We had tears in our eyes and simply couldn't believe it.

That night, we sat and answered questions... about kosher, Judaism, Shabbat. We told our guests about the seven laws of Noah for non-Jews. It was a magical Shabbat in Emporia; one that taught me the lessons of reaching out, of teaching and of helping others. I learned that the really important things in life are not measured or counted in dollars, but in matters of the human soul.

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ISSUE 915

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Ezekiel's vision concerning the time of the Third Holy Temple includes the prophecy (ch. 47:12): "And by the stream, upon its bank, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for food, whose leaf shall not wither, nor shall its fruit fail; it shall bring forth fresh fruit every month, because the waters for them flow from the Sanctuary; and their fruit shall be for food, and their leaves for healing."

# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



## GROWTH IS THE SIGN OF LIFE

The central and focal point of this month is the New Year for Trees, which brings to mind the well-known Biblical analogy, "Man is like a tree". This analogy embraces many aspects, general and particular. Since this analogy is given by the Torah, the Torah of Truth, it is certain to be precise in all its aspects, each of which is instructive in a general or particular way, for every one of us, man and woman.

This is the purpose of every detail of the Torah (the word Torah comes from the word Horaah, meaning, "instruction"); to induce everyone to reflect on it and derive practical instruction from it in everyday life.

Accordingly, I will refer to some general points of the said analogy.

To begin with, the essence of a living tree is, above all, that it grows; its growth being the sign of its being alive.

The purpose of a tree is to be, in the words of the Torah, "a fruit-tree, bearing fruit after its kind, whose seed is within it". That means that the goal of the tree is to produce fruit with seeds from which will grow trees and fruits of the same kind.

Indeed, the perfection of a tree lies in its ability to produce trees and fruits to all posterity.

To translate the above points in human terms:

A human being must grow and develop continuously, however satisfactory the level may be at any given time. This is also indicated in the expression of our Sages (whose sayings are concise but profoundly meaningful) "ma'alim b'kodesh," which means that a person needs to constantly increase in holiness.

Similarly in regard to the second point: A human being should produce "fruit" for the benefit of many others beside himself; this benefit needs to be full of delight.

The meaning of "delight" in this context becomes clear from the distinction in regard to the seven species of produce with which the Land of Israel is praised in the Torah. The land of Israel is, "A land of wheat and barley, and vine, and fig, and pomegranate, a land of olive oil and (date) honey." Wheat and barley are staples, necessary for human sustenance, while the fruits of trees are sustaining and nourishing, in addition to being enjoyable and delightful.

As to the third point: One must strive to produce "fruit-bearing fruits," so that the beneficiary enjoying these fruits should in turn become a "fruit-bearing tree" like the benefactor.

Needless to say, the "fruits" of which we are speaking here, are those which our Sages specify, saying, "The fruits of Tzadikim (which includes every Jew and Jewess, as it is written, "And Your people are all Tzadikim") are mitzvot and Good Deeds."

These are some of the basic teachings of the New Year for Trees, which have an immediate practical relevance to each and every Jew, man and woman. There is a further allusion to this in the meaningful Jewish custom of eating various kinds of fruit on this day.

When a Jew firmly resolves to proceed from strength to strength in all matters of Torah and mitzvot, both in regard to himself, and in disseminating them in his environment, he has the assurance of realizing his fullest potential. He will be "like a tree planted by streams of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season; its leaf also shall not wither, and whatever he does shall prosper."

This will be until the time will be ripe for the fulfillment of the promise, "the tree of the field shall yield its fruit," in the plain sense, meaning that then all trees will bear edible fruit.

# A WORD from the Director

*Tu B'Shvat, the New Year of the Trees, is upon us. This year Tu B'Shvat falls on Saturday, January 30. But what does that have to do with us, other than eating some extra fruit, etc?*

*Let's take a moment to consider the fruit for which the Land of Israel is blessed as enumerated by the Torah:*

*Two of them, wheat and barley, are grains. The other five, grapes, pomegranates, figs, olives, and dates, are fruits.*

*One difference between grain and fruit is that grain is a staple food, necessary for the maintenance of our well-being. Fruits are delicacies, eaten for pleasure.*

*Tu B'Shvat gives us the potential to carry out our service, not only according to the very minimum necessary to maintain our existence, but rather in a manner that leads to pleasure — our own and our Creator's.*

*There is another area in which grain and fruit differ. When grain is harvested, though there is an abundant increase in quantity, the grain is of the same nature as the kernels which were originally planted. In contrast, the seed of a fruit tree is of an entirely different nature than the fruit that is later harvested.*

*Similarly, in regard to our service of G-d, the metaphor of fruit trees alludes to a service which is not limited to the basic necessities, but rather generates pleasure. It reveals the potential for growth, not only a quantitative increase, but also, a leap to a higher level, a new framework of reference altogether.*

*Since Tu B'Shvat is the "New Year of the Trees," it generates new life energy for those dimensions of a Jew's service which are compared to trees.*

*May we all truly avail ourselves of this new life energy to fulfill our potential in making this world a fitting home for G-d and G-dliness.*

*J. I. Gutnick*

### Customs for Tu b'Shvat

On this day it is customary to partake of the fruit which the Holy Land is famous for: olives, dates, grapes, figs and pomegranates.<sup>1</sup> If you are tasting any of these fruit for the first time this season, remember to recite the Shehecheyanu blessing on one of these fruit; otherwise recite the Shehecheyanu on a different fruit you have yet to eat this season.

### Blessing for fruit:

**Baruch attah Ado-noy Eh-lo-hay-nu Me-lech ha-oh-lam, Boray pe-ree ha-etz.**  
[Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.]

### Shehecheyanu blessing:

**Baruch attah Ado-noy Elo-hai-nu Melech ha'olam she-he-che-yanu, v'kee-manu, v'hee-gee-anu l'zman hazeh.**

[Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us and enabled us to reach this occasion.]

This day is not one of the major holidays, and all forms of work are permitted. However, due to the festive nature of the day, we omit the Tachanun from the prayers. When Tu b'Shvat falls out on Shabbat, we omit the Av Harachamim from the Musaf service and Tzidkatecha from the Minchah prayer.

Some have the custom to eat carob. The master kabbalist the Arizal would eat fifteen types of fruit on this day!

Our sages tell us that the birds in the sky joined our ancestors in their singing after the miracle of the splitting of the Reed Sea; for this reason it is customary to put out food for the birds for this Shabbat (to avoid the possibility of transgressing the laws of Shabbat, the food should be put out before Shabbat).

## CUSTOMS CORNER

# It Happened Once...



The story begins with a 'Farbrenge' (Chassidic gathering) of the Chassidim of the previous Lubavitch Rebbe in France shortly before WWII. The Rebbe's son-in-law (who in another ten years would become the next Lubavitch Rebbe) was also present and he was the main speaker, but some of the other Chassidim also spoke.

One of them told of a miraculous experience that he had two years earlier. After escaping death in Russia, the previous Rebbe had to move his headquarters to Poland, and many Chassidim moved there to be with him. But, in the course of his stay, the Rebbe told many of them to leave Poland and settle in other countries. For instance, the one telling the story was one of a group of five that the Rebbe told to go to France.

Now, back in those days this was no small task; they had several borders to cross, among them dreaded Germany. To make matters worse, one of them had a passport which was not valid, and no time to get a new one. The Rebbe had after all told them to leave immediately.

On the trains, one of them would lie on the bench and the other four would sit on him, covering him with their long winter coats to avoid the passport checks. They even managed somehow to pass all the other borders. But the check post at the German border was notoriously dangerous, especially for Jews, and for Jews with no passports it was almost suicidal.

They decided on some sort of plan, but as they neared the front of the line for the passport check, they heard shouting and screaming from inside the inspection centre. There was the sound of a pistol being fired, followed by a moan and silence. They tried to look as confident as possible, but were really trembling inside. If it wasn't for the Rebbe's blessing, they would all have turned back and returned to Poland on the spot!

To their amazement, when the first Chassid got to the window, the official snatched his passport from his hand and stamped it without asking questions! He did so with the second as well. He began talking on the phone and stamped the remaining three passports without even looking at them!

However, their problems were far from over; the place was full of cruel eyed policemen and soldiers checking and rechecking everything and everyone that moved (probably that is where the shots came from). Strangely the police paid no attention to them! They walked through the station unnoticed, as though they were invisible, hailed a taxi, and left. One half hour later they were in a telegraph office sending a message back to the Rebbe ... they were free! It was a miracle!!

The Rebbe's son-in-law listened attentively to the story. When it finished he asked for the exact date and time of the miracle, and when he heard the answer he smiled and said, "Now I understand something that has been a mystery to me these last two years.

"The Rebbe, my father-in-law, had to have a nurse come in every day and give him an injection because of his health. (After his imprisonment and torture in Stalin's prisons he became increasingly paralysed).

"One day the nurse came in and saw a frightening sight: the Rebbe was sitting rigidly in his chair, eyes slightly open and completely unresponsive. She was sure that he was having a catatonic attack of some sort, and immediately called the Rebbe's wife. When the Rebbetzin entered she began weeping frantically, but before they called a doctor they called for me.

"When I entered I also was shocked at first, but then I noticed something that made me realize that there was nothing to worry about; it was almost imperceptible but the Rebbe's lips were moving, he was saying or reciting something!

"I bent down and listened and then straightened up and announced that there was, in fact, no cause for alarm ... the Rebbe was saying "Az Yashir Moshe" (The song that the Jews sang after crossing Yam Suf. (Shmot 15:1 -19))! After ten minutes the Rebbe opened his eyes and returned to normal.

"I never asked the Rebbe for an explanation, but now I have it. It was the exact same time that your miracle was occurring. The Rebbe was passing you all through the German inspection like Moshe passed the Jews through the sea!"

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

### And Israel saw the great power which the L-rd had shown on the Egyptians...and they believed in G-d (Ex. 14:31)

Even though the Jewish people had witnessed many wonders and miracles firsthand they still needed to have faith in G-d. For faith is on a higher level than sight; indeed, it enables a person to see more than the physical eye can ever observe. (*Chidushei HaRim*)

### And they believed in G-d (Ex. 14:31)

The Hebrew word for faith, emuna, has a dual meaning. Etymologically, it is related to the word meaning to train or accustom oneself, and also to the word for power and strength. However, these two meanings are interrelated. In the merit of emuna, i.e., by virtue of the strength and certitude of the G-dly soul, a Jew is able to overcome the downward pull of the animal soul and ascend from one spiritual level to the next, till he merits the very highest revelations of G-dliness. Indeed, the Jewish people merited to sing the "Song of the Sea" solely because of their emuna. (*Sefer HaMaamarim 5680*)

### I will put none of the diseases upon you which I brought on the Egyptians; I am the L-rd Who heals you (Ex. 15:26)

A "house doctor" who isn't paid according to how many visits he makes has a vested interest in keeping his patients well. Rather than curing people once they're ill, his whole aim is to keep them healthy in the first place. Similarly, G-d is our "in-house doctor", Who has given us the Torah for our spiritual health. When we follow His "prescription" by observing the commandments, it prevents all kinds of spiritual maladies. (*Torat Moshe*)

### G-d will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace (Ex. 14:14)

G-d will only fight your battle on the condition that you "hold your peace"—remain quiet and avoid controversy and disagreement amongst yourselves. (*Shaar Bat-Rabim*)

## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

### PARSHAS BESHALACH 15 SHEVAT • 30 JANUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:19 PM
	MINCHA:	8:30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS :	9:00 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LAST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10:02 AM
	MINCHA:	8:15 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:19 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN- FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:20 PM
	MAARIV:	9:10 PM

### CANDLE LIGHTING: 29 JANUARY 2010



Begins	Ends
8:19	9:19
8:08	9:07
6:26	7:21
7:02	7:53
6:24	7:20
7:03	8:00
7:45	8:44
8:19	9:22
8:18	9:18
8:28	9:31

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

### The Lubavitcher Rebbe

יצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

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