

LAMPLIGHTER

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Vayikra
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

All of Me

By Rabbi Ben A.

This Shabbat is unique as reflected by the fact that three scrolls are taken out for the Torah reading. We read the weekly portion, Vayikra, from one scroll, the Rosh Chodesh (New Moon) reading from another, and the special Hachodesh reading from the third scroll.

This is a rare phenomenon. There are many occasions when two Torah scrolls are taken out, but taking out three scrolls is extremely uncommon.

Significantly, each of the readings concerns the first of the month of Nisan, the date of this Shabbat. The portion of Vayikra was communicated to Moses on Rosh Chodesh Nisan, the day the Sanctuary was erected. The Hachodesh reading was also communicated to Moses on Rosh Chodesh Nisan (a year previously). Furthermore, it relates the mitzva of sanctifying the months and thus shows a special connection between the ordinary Rosh Chodesh passage and Rosh Chodesh Nisan.

Surely we can derive a lesson in the service of G-d from the above concepts.

The prayer recited when a Torah scroll is removed from the ark begins,

"Whenever the ark set out, Moses would say, 'Arise, O L-rd, and Your enemies will be dispersed; Your foes will flee before You.'"

This verse is relevant to every Jew, even in the present era, for every Jew possesses a spark of Moses within his soul. This spark brings about "Arise O L-rd," an increase in the service of holiness, and "Your enemies will be dispersed," the nullification of undesirable influences. Thus, taking out the Torah scrolls reflects both services of "turn away from evil" and "do good," the two prongs of our service of G-d, and endows that service with new strength and vigour.

Taking out three Torah scrolls represents a chazaka, a strengthening and reinforcement in regard to our service which is above the ordinary, the revelation of a miraculous pattern of conduct. Furthermore, the chazaka established by the three Torah scrolls on Rosh Chodesh Nisan does not relate to a miraculous sequence of events as it exists above the worldly plane, but rather to the service of drawing this miraculous source of influence into contact with the natural order, elevating our ordinary conduct.

This week's three readings can thus be seen as a progression. The Hachodesh portion introduces the concept of a miraculous order of conduct. The Rosh Chodesh reading describes how this miraculous order of conduct can influence our ordinary lives, and Vayikra reveals how this fusion of the supra-natural with the natural can become a permanent and fixed dimension of our existence.

May this chazaka lead to our service in the Third Holy Temple, where "we will give thanks to You with a new song for our redemption and for the deliverance of our souls."

(The Rebbe, Parshat Vayikra 5751)

"A man who shall bring from you an offering to G-d...."-
Leviticus 1:2

This week we begin the third of the Five Books of Moses, the Book of Leviticus, which deals primarily with the sacrificial offerings brought on the altar in the times of the Temple.

What is the significance of the many animal sacrifices commanded in Leviticus? Why does G-d want us to get close to Him by bringing an animal to be slaughtered and consumed by fire on the altar?

One way of understanding this is that the animal one brings as an offering to G-d is symbolic of our own inner animal, our instincts and primal desires that we must bring into alignment with G-d's will. When we wish to approach G-d, we cannot do so merely with the spiritual side of ourselves; we must draw near to Him with our selfish and animalistic nature as well. We surrender that part of us that is resistant to G-d and make it submissive to Him so that it too may seek to do His will. The animal is then consumed in fire on the altar; its material existence is converted into warmth and light. The very stuff that had epitomized base instincts becomes fuel for G-dly revelation.

When we in recovery seek to give ourselves over to G-d, it is not just our holy parts we offer Him. As it says in the Seventh Step prayer, "My Creator, I am now willing that You should have all of me, good and bad."

We don't try to destroy our instincts; we give them up to G-d. That means that they are now His to use for His glory. One might say that we are taking those very same character defects that drove us far from G-d and giving them right back to Him to do with as He pleases. It's not for us to try and determine which parts of us G-d has use for. We just offer all of ourselves to Him and let Him decide.

This idea may sound abstract but it isn't. We see how old character traits, when surrendered to G-d's will, actually become assets in recovery. For instance, one who could manage to make sure to never miss a day of drinking, once he surrenders to G-d, may find that same quality expressed in a fixation to never let a day go by without a meeting. When people say things like: "You should spend as much time working on your recovery as you used to spend on your drinking," it's not just meant as a way of counteracting an old habit but, more than that, redirecting it and giving it to G-d.

As long as there is a G-dly fire burning on the altar - that is, excitement and enthusiasm for doing G-d's will - then even the coarsest animal can be converted into bright, glowing energy and G-dly light.

Slice of LIFE

CAPTURED BY A NINE-FOOT COBRA

By Lazer Brody

Sergeant Sammy Adler, USMC, crouched shin-deep in the mud of the Vietnamese jungle less than a mile from the Laotian border. The Vietcong had been smuggling massive amounts of armaments into South Vietnam by way of Laos. His company's mission was to ambush the smugglers, confiscate the arms shipment, and capture whomever they could for interrogation.

An annoying mosquito buzzed in Sammy's ear, and a leech bit his wrist. He didn't dare slap himself, for the slightest noise could reveal his position to an enemy ambush. The mission therefore called for radio silence, which necessitated the three platoons of Company C to maintain eye contact with each other.

A heavy dawn mist descended on the jungle. The fog was so thick that Sammy barely saw Captain John Willis, his company commander, from a distance of three feet. Willis scribbled a note and passed it to Sammy: "Platoon B, 0800, green east".

Sammy looked at his watch and nodded in understanding. His orders were to crawl over to Platoon B, one hundred yards to the right, and to inform the platoon leader that at exactly eight a.m., all three platoons would leave their present position and approach the Laotian border due east of them.

Sammy slithered inch by inch in the mud. His life depended on his absolute silence. He looked at his watch again - five minutes after seven. He took a deep breath and continued, first an elbow, then a knee, another elbow, then another knee. He stopped dead in his tracks: A roundish brown object, the exact size and shape of antipersonnel mine, was right before his nose.

The "mine", none other than a turtle, stuck its head out and laughed in Sammy's face, and then crawled away nonchalantly. He exhaled deeply in relief, and continued in the direction of Platoon B.

Forty-five minutes expired; Sammy wiped the mud off the face of his watch, and

read the time - ten minutes to eight. The fog lifted, but a heavy rain drenched the already saturated jungle.

All along the seemingly endless one hundred yards to Platoon B's position, Sammy kept track of his crawling pace. He counted four hundred movements of nine inches each, the equivalent of one hundred yards. He should have reached Platoon B by now, but saw nothing other than mud and jungle.

A minute before eight: What a mess, Sammy thought. In sixty seconds, Platoons A and C will be moving east, and Platoon B hasn't been informed yet. Where in daylight is Platoon B? Where am I?

"Chikachikachik! Chikachikachik!" The cobra's forked tongue almost touched Sammy's nose. The snake snarled, exposing his two deadly fangs, and braced to an attack position.

Sammy froze - he thought that the pounding of his pulse could surely be heard for miles away. In a few split seconds, he envisioned his entire life flashing before his eyes. What a pathetic way to go, he lamented, killed by a cobra in the muck and mire of a Vietnamese jungle, ten thousand miles from home. He couldn't ask the cobra for a stay of execution until he had a chance to send a postcard to Mom and Dad.

Sammy's M-16 rifle lay in a futile silence beside him. His commando knife remained idle in its scabbard, as did the three assault grenades in his ammo belt. He didn't dare move a muscle. Beads of salty sweat from his forehead traversed his right eyebrow and then dripped down and stung his right eye. Wiping his forehead was out of the question.

Jungle survival school taught him that only a bronze statue lives through an encounter with an irate cobra. I'm a bronze statue, Sammy thought to himself; I'm a bronze statue.

Chikachikachik! Chikachikachik!" The cobra continued with his head cocked in a foreboding assault position. The snake seemed to lock itself - only his tongue darted periodically to and fro.

The cobra was massive - eight, maybe nine-feet long and no less than ten inches thick. It maintained direct eye contact with Sammy. An entire hour transpired, then another hour.

Eventually, the rain stopped and the sky cleared. The sun was in the treetops directly overhead, indicating that the time was approximately twelve noon. Sammy heard the staccato of machine-gun fire and the thuds of mortar shells in the distance. The snake wouldn't let Sammy budge; it had been holding the exhausted, nerve-shattered Marine at bay for four hours already.

Every muscle in Sammy's body cried out in

pain. His neck was as stiff as granite, his fatigues were soaked, and the unbearable winter dampness seemed to chill the fibres of his soul.

Another two hours passed. Each minute was a trial of a lifetime. Sammy kept thinking to himself, "One more minute, one more minute. I'm still alive. Hold on, Adler, one more minute! You can stick it out for another minute. Thank you, G-d, for letting me live another minute."

G-d? When did He come on the scene?

Sammy surprised himself. He never prayed in his life. His parents never practiced any form of religion, even though his grandparents were religious Jews. Sammy Adler was raised American - baseball, apple pie, The Marine Corp, and nothing else.

The snake seemed to alter its facial expression from threat to understanding. The minute Sammy thought about G-d, he could have sworn that the snake nodded its head, as if to say, "You're correct, soldier!" At that very instant, the snake uncocked its head, performed a perfect West Point "at ease" and "about face", and slithered away to the thick of the jungle.

Sammy's head dropped like a two-ton anchor. He broke out in a cathartic sob, and his entire body shuddered for a good five minutes, releasing the pent-up tension from within. He looked at his watch - seventeen hundred hours, or five in the afternoon.

Who could ever believe it? A U.S. Marine had just been held captive for nine hours in the custody of a nine-foot cobra. Were it not for his aching muscles and the leech bites all over his body, he wouldn't have believed it himself.

After several minutes of massaging his legs, he was able to stand. He didn't have much time, for nightfall was less than an hour away. The last nine hours felt like nine years.

Sammy, a superb navigator, began walking in the direction of the company bivouac - exhausted mentally and physically, but alive. He arrived at the clearing by the river, in the proximity of his platoon's ambush position, and received the shock of his life: Captain John Willis and the Marines of Company C's three platoons were slaughtered to the last man in a counter-ambush.

The realization of the miracle hit Sergeant Sammy Adler like a ton of bricks: The Almighty had sent a gigantic cobra to guard over him. Were it not for the cobra, he would have returned to his company's position and would have been slaughtered too. Nine hours of unimaginable stress and suffering, with a deadly cobra staring him in the face, turned out to be the blessing of his life, a divine revelation in the jungles of South Vietnam, February 1969.

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ISSUE 1027

MOSHIACH MATTERS

One of the maxims of Chasidic teachings is that "Joy breaks boundaries." To this we might add that joy breaks the bounds of evil and hastens the coming of Moshiach, concerning whom it is written, "The one who breaks through will ascend before them." (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

16th of Cheshvan, 5734 (Fall, 1973)

Here I wish to refer to one point in your latest letter, where you wrote about the difference between the Six Day War and the so-called Yom Kippur War, in that G-d's miracles were more obvious in the Six Day War, etc.

As a matter of fact, there were ample miracles, and quite obvious ones, in the last war. The overall miracle, which has now been revealed, although not overly publicized, is the survival after the first few days of the war, when even Washington was seriously concerned whether the Israeli army could halt the tremendous onslaught of the first attack. Slowly and gradually some details are being revealed also in the Israeli press as to how serious was the danger in those early days of the war.

The greatest miracle was that the Egyptians stopped their invasion for no good reason only a few miles east of the Canal! The obvious military strategy would have been to encircle the few fortified positions in the rear, and with the huge army of 100,000 men armed to the teeth, to march forward in Sinai, where at that point in time there was no organized defence of any military consequence. This is something that cannot be explained in the natural order of things, except as it is written, "The dread of the Jews fell upon them," in the face of their intelligence reports about the complete unpreparedness of the Jews in Israel at that time.

There are also scores of reported miracles in various sectors of both fronts, which need not be recounted here.

The essential point of this whole tragic war is that it could have been prevented, and, as in the case of medicine, prevention is more desirable than cure. For, at first glance, the accomplishments of the physician in curing the sick seem more impressive by the dramatic results than preventive medicine where there could be some delusion that sickness would somehow be avoided, but in truth it is much better, of course, to be spared the pain and anxiety of sickness altogether, by immunization. The latter approach is the way of G-d, as it is written, "All the sickness...I will not afflict upon thee, for I, G-d, am thy physician" (Ex. 15:26).

Now it is quite evident how important and urgent was the appeal made last summer, centred on the verse, "Out of the mouths of babes and infants You have ordained strength (oz), to still the enemy and avenger." All the more so since in the present situation the "enemy and avenger" has made no secret of his intentions.

If recent events will have taught everyone the basic lesson that Jews have no one to rely upon except G-d Himself, and that the real strength of our people lies in the Torah and mitzvot, called "oz," as it is written, "HaShem oz l'amo yitein"--then the sacrifices will not have been in vain. Certainly every one of us must redouble our efforts to bring this realization closer to all our fellow Jews everywhere.

CUSTOMS CORNER

Matzah:

It is customary to avoid eating Matzah from thirty days before Passover.

Learning the Laws:

Starting from the day of Purim (which is thirty days before Passover), one should start teaching and learning the laws of the holiday [and this applies even more when we reach the period of two weeks before the Holiday]. However, since the laws are available in print and everyone can learn it on his or her own, it is no longer customary to teach it so much publicly. Rather each one should review the laws on his own until they know it well.

A WORD

from the Director

This coming Shabbat we bless the new month of Nisan. On this Shabbat we read the special portion called "Parshat HaChodesh," which begins with the words, "This month will be for you the head of the months."

This refers to the month of Nisan, known as the "month of our Redemption," for in the month of Nisan we were redeemed from Egypt. In addition, our Sages interpret the words, "this month will be you--for your Redemption."

There is a very beautiful description in Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov's work, "The Book of our Heritage" about the concept of redemption: "The word 'redemption' applies only when one emerges from darkness into light. One who has never experienced the suffering of bondage and oppression cannot appreciate redemption. The very essence of redemption is the freedom which comes from the oppression itself. Had the Children of Israel never been enslaved, they would never have experienced true freedom. Once they were enslaved, the slavery itself gave rise to the redemption and from the midst of the darkness, and only from that darkness, the light burst forth. Thus said our Sages: The Israelites said to the Holy One, 'When will you deliver us?' G-d answered, 'When you will have reached the lowest depths, at that moment I will redeem you.'

"The future redemption will also burst forth from the midst of darkness. At the very moment when every heart trembles at the point of despair, the glory of G-d will shine forth. And when will that moment be? In the month of Nisan, for G-d has appointed it as a time of redemption. Every misfortune which befalls Israel during this month is nothing else but an assurance that the deliverance is about to begin.

"When G-d chose the Jewish people as His nation He established for them a month of redemption, a month in which the Jewish people would be redeemed from Egypt, a month in which they are destined to be redeemed in the future."

May we merit the true and complete redemption of the entire world even before the beginning of the "Month of Redemption."

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

NAPOLEON'S RED VELVET ROBE

Napoleon Bonaparte and his French armies began their invasion of Russia. Napoleon had dreams of conquering the vast Russian army. On the way, he passed through the town of Lelov, where lived the renowned Rabbi Dovid of Lelov. When the monarch heard about the saintly man and his powers of prophetic vision, he decided to visit him. "Let's see what he will tell me about whether or not I shall succeed in my campaign," he thought.

He covered up his royal garments with a soldier's winter overcoat, and thus disguised as a plain soldier, he entered the humble abode of the Lelover Rebbe.

"What can I do for you?" asked the Rebbe.

Napoleon unbuttoned his soldier's coat and revealed his kingly robe. "I am Napoleon Bonaparte," he declared. "They say that you can see into the future. What is my future? Will I succeed in conquering Russia?"

"What if my answer displeased Your Majesty - will I be punished?" Reb Dovid first had to be reassured.

"You have my word that I shall not punish you, no matter what you say," the emperor promised.

"Then I don't have good news. You will suffer total defeat," replied the Lelover rebbe.

The emperor's face burned red with rage. Clenching his fist tightly, he hissed, "Rabbi, if you turn out to be wrong, you'll be in deep trouble."

Napoleon and his armies continued on toward the heart of Russia - the capital city of Moscow. They won one victory after another. They captured Moscow. But when they turned back toward France, they found that the Russian winter had set in. The soldiers suffered from lack of food and from the bitter cold. Their morale was low. Now when the Russian soldiers attacked them, Napoleon's troops were too weak and dispirited to fight back. They were forced to retreat. Subsequently they were attacked by the armies of Austria and Prussia.

Napoleon was forced to run for his life. The once glorious monarch fled from one city to the next. Soon he neared the town of Lelov. He remembered the Rebbe and what he had foreseen. "That rabbi - he turned out to be a holy man after all," Napoleon mused. "I must stop by and concede to him that he had seen accurately." He found Rabbi Dovid Lelover's house.

"Rabbi," he admitted, "you were right after all. I would like to leave you my royal velvet mantle to remember me by."

Reb Dovid thanked Napoleon for his gracious gift and the monarch continued his flight. Eventually his enemies caught him, captured him, and sent him into exile.

The Lelover kept the cloak. It was a rich, soft, bright red velvet cloak - altogether magnificent. Reb Dovid was not interested in beautiful garments and material possessions. He treasured the mantle because it represented something else to him: the fact that the Gentile nations of the world and their monarchs recognize that the Jews are a G-dly nation. To him it meant that the following verse had come true: "And all the nations of the world will see that G-d's name is upon you and they shall fear you" [Deut. 28:10].

When Rabbi Dovid passed away, the mantle was inherited by his son and successor, Moshe. Rabbi Moshe Lelover took the royal mantle with him when he and his Chassidim moved to Israel. There he built a synagogue and yeshiva. For the curtain on the holy ark, Reb Moshe had Napoleon's majestic cloak cut and sewn to fit on the Aron Kodesh.

THE REBBE STRONGER THAN A COSSACK

R' Mordechai Dov of Hornsteipel fell ill with a violent cough. He went to consult doctors in the city of Kiev, and was told that it would be necessary to sear one spot on his body with a burning-hot lance. The doctors told him in advance that the treatment was extremely painful; so painful, in fact, that the patient had to be tied to a chair in order not to move during the process. "There will be no need to tie me," the Rebbe answered quietly. "I will not move."

The doctor began the treatment and the Rebbe, true to his word, did not move a muscle. He did not emit as much as a groan as his skin was scorched with a searing-hot metal stick. Amazed at this incredible willpower, the doctor remarked to the Rebbe's son, who was standing nearby, that just the day before he had performed the identical treatment on a Russian Cossack. The moment the hot lance had touched the Cossack's skin, he had jumped out of his seat -- ripping open the restraint that bound him -- and escaped through the window.

The Rebbe, who overheard, surprised them all with his response: "Believe me, when a Jew comes to me and pours out the troubles that weigh down his heart, when he so desperately needs help and there is no way to help him, that pain burns more fiercely within me than even a burning-hot lance."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

If any one of you bring an offering to G-d (Lev. 1:2)

Chasidic philosophy interprets this verse to mean that the personal offering each one of us brings to G-d must truly be "of us," from our innermost part. Yet a person might hesitate, thinking that a mere mortal can never bridge the gap between the finite and infinite. We must therefore remember that our relationship with G-d is, in actuality, dependent only on our initiative. Once that initiative is taken, nothing can stand in the way of communion between man and G-d. (*The Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 23 MARCH 2012



BEGINS		ENDS
7:09	MELBOURNE	8:05
7:05	ADELAIDE	7:59
5:38	BRISBANE	6:29
6:38	DARWIN	7:27
5:36	GOLD COAST	6:28
6:06	PERTH	6:59
6:45	SYDNEY	7:38
6:53	CANBERRA	7:47
7:01	LAUNCESTON	7:58
7:11	AUCKLAND	8:05
7:10	WELLINGTON	8:07
7:00	HOBART	7:58
6:36	BYRON BAY	7:27

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS VAYIKRA
1 N ISAN • 24 MARCH

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:09 PM
	MINCHA:	7:20 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	7:50 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10:26 AM
	MINCHA:	7:00 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8:05 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	7:10 PM
	MAARIV:	7:55 PM