

LAMPLIGHTER

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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, air 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 fulfilment 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 birth right 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 fulfilment 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 will enable 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.

(Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe).

Telling Stories

By Yanki Tauber

Haggadah means "the telling" and that's what we do at the seder table--we tell a story. The oldest, most popular kind of story there is -- the Happy Ending kind. That's how the Talmud instructs us to conduct the seder: "Begin with the bad stuff, and end with the good."

As is usual in the Talmud, the Sages, while agreeing in principle, debate the details. Shmuel says that the bad beginning is, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt", and the good ending is, "G-d took us out from there with a mighty hand and outstretched arm." Rav says our story includes the larger picture, starting with how "In the beginning, our ancestors worshipped idols" and culminating in our election as G-d's chosen people at Mount Sinai.

(So which story do we tell at the seder? Both of them, of course, which is one of the reasons why it takes so long to get to the chicken soup.)

All living creatures communicate with each other in some way. But only humans tell stories.

Only men and women contemplate a chaos of facts, events and experiences spanning days, years, even centuries, isolate a number of them in their minds, draw lines of causality and significance between them, and thus create a story--a piece of life that means something and leads somewhere.

This is why, explain the Chassidic masters, the Talmud considers the "toil of speech" a most basic component of man's special role as a "partner with G-d in creation." G-d created an awesome, intricate, yet in many ways a still-undefined world; our storytelling completes the work of Creation, imparting to it coherence and significance.

Once upon a time, many years ago when we were little, we knew the importance of the story. We appreciated how central the act of storytelling is to who and what we are, to our job to make sense of our world and take it somewhere. Then we got old, and tired, and lazy, saying to ourselves: "What is, is. It means nothing; let it be."

Which is why we need lots and lots of kids at the seder.

Slice of LIFE

TAKES TWO TO DEAL

By Yerachmiel Tilles

One early Friday afternoon as I was leaving the men's mikveh in Los Angeles, a young man stopped me and asked me directions to a certain address. I knew the location--it wasn't too far away--so I explained to him clearly how to get there.

Then, as I was about to get in my car, I decided I could do better. After all, there was plenty of time till Shabbat began, and I wasn't that busy. I quickly walked back and offered the young man to drive him, assuring him that it was not much out of my way.

As we were driving, I asked him what he does. His reply was, "I bring people closer to G-d." I was surprised; he didn't look the type. I'm used to meeting Lubavitchers that do this, but this was a clean-shaven fellow with a wide necktie and the front brim of his hat rolled up.

I asked him where he was from and he said that he was from Lakewood (the location of a famous non-chasidic yeshiva in New Jersey). I subsequently found out that the supervisor of the yeshiva had indeed sent a select group of 10-20 young men to various locations in New Jersey to work in "bringing Jews closer to G-d."

I thought the expression amazing. Just that morning someone had brought to my attention a letter from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, written in response to someone who described his activities with those same words, "bringing people closer to G-d." The Rebbe's strong answer was, "How do you know that you are closer to G-d than they? Maybe they are closer than you! Who can know what is inside the soul of a Jew?"

The Rebbe went on to advise him that if he would keep this in mind and approach each Jew humbly, he would probably have much greater success.

I decided to share these thoughts with my passenger and see how he would react. He smiled. "You should know," he said, "most of the people I work with have addiction problems with gambling, drugs,

or whatever. We try all sorts of ways to get through to them, including outings to various places, and so far the only activity that is consistently successful is when we take them to the Ohel (the burial site of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Queens, NY, not far from Kennedy and LaGuardia airports)!

"Now I take large groups there on a regular basis. Usually we go first to a Knicks game at Madison Square Garden in Manhattan, or something else entertaining, and then we go to the Ohel in Queens!"

He asked if he could tell me a story. "At his point you can tell me anything!" I answered enthusiastically.

"One of the fellows I took to the Ohel has a more prosaic background. In fact, he is quite an intelligent and ambitious young man, and a year ago was on the waiting list for one of the very best law schools in the country. He wrote to the Rebbe that if he would be accepted, which surely would lead to a good job afterwards, he promises to put on tefilin twice a week and pray with a minyan.

"Subsequently he was accepted. But he never got around to the tefilin and minyan part.

"During the second semester of his first year he received an unexpected phone call from his mother. He could tell right away from her voice that she seemed quite agitated. 'What happened, Ma? What's the matter?' he queried anxiously.

"Do you have some involvement with the Lubavitcher Rebbe? You never told me about it."

"I don't know what you are talking about. Of course, I don't," he replied, forgetting about or not taking seriously the letter he had deposited in Queens.

"Well, I never did either. But I'm calling to tell you that the Lubavitcher Rebbe has appeared to me in a dream several nights now. He keeps saying, 'I kept my side of the agreement; why doesn't your son keep his?'"

"Needless to say, from that day on he religiously put on tefilin and prayed in a minyan."

Editor's P.S.

The truth is, it has taken me a few years to complete this much of the story. The impetus to finally finish is that my son telephoned me from the Western Wall, excited by a story he had just heard. It was this same story, from the young man himself!

STEADY HANDS

An elderly Jew with a large black Yarmulke once appeared at the Chabad counter in Ben Gurion Airport in Israel. When he was asked if he would like a cup of coffee gratis, he answered that he would, but only if it was full to the brim.

The perplexed chasidim standing behind the counter did as he said; they filled the cup, with his constant encouragement, to the point that the slightest quiver would cause it to spill. Then to their amazement the old fellow lifted the cup without spilling a drop and drank it.

When he finished he smiled proudly and said, "I did that to show you how great your Rebbe is!"

"I'm not a Chabad chasid," he explained "My name is Rabbi Baker and years ago I was the Rabbi of a large shul in New York City. We had a mikva for women and everything. But then, like so many shuls in the U.S.A, the older people either died or moved away and the neighbourhood filled with gentiles. The board of directors of the shul began hinting that they would like to sell out and make a nice profit, but I strongly opposed it.

"First of all, it is forbidden to sell a Synagogue and, not only that, men kept coming to shul and women kept using the mikva. Furthermore, an interesting thing was happening. The lady that was in charge of the mikva told me that almost every evening the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Schneerson, would call her up, ask her how she was feeling and encourage her work.

"This continued for several months. Then, one evening while I was in the middle teaching a class in Talmud in the shul, she burst into the room and shouted almost hysterically that someone had put a large lock on the mikva door.

"I understood that it must have been the directors trying to discourage women from coming but I didn't know what to do. I am not the strongest of people and I held myself to be an honourable Rabbi.. certainly not one to go fighting battles.

"Well, I don't know how I did it but I ran to my car, somehow found a metal saw, ran to the lock and began sawing away in public. A bunch of people even stopped to look but I didn't care. About a half hour later the door was open and the women were able to enter.

"The next day the mikva lady told me that the Rebbe called her the previous night after the incident, and when she told him what I had done, he said, 'Blessed be the hands that sawed off that lock.'

"That is what I wanted to show you," the elderly Rabbi concluded. "Today I am over ninety one years old, yet you see that my hands are steady as a youth's. Clearly it is because of the Rebbe's blessing."

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The Lamplighter contains words from sacred writings. Please do not deface or discard.

ISSUE 1029

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In the days of Moshiach there will be a stupendous revelation of Divinity. For G-d, who is known as "the tzaddik (righteous one) of the world," this revelation will be a kind of "teshuva" (repentance) - for having withheld this light from His people throughout all the years of exile. (Or HaTorah, Vayikra, p. 235)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

11th of Nissan, 5720 [1960]

I received your letter of the 29th of Adar, and may G-d grant that you have good news to report on the matters about which you write in your letter.

As we are approaching the Season of Our Freedom, I trust that you will take time out to reflect on the significance of this great festival, recalling the enslavement in Egypt, which was not only a physical enslavement but also a spiritual one. Yet, because of the great faith of the children of Israel in G-d, they were liberated from bondage, and received the Torah, thus giving them true and complete freedom. The simple message of it is that no Jew should ever give up hope, and should always strive to free himself from the influences and limitations of the environment, as well as from internal temptations, and make steady strides along the path of Torah and mitzvot.

As for your personal problems, the best advice is that you should try to think as little as possible of your inner problems, until you completely dismiss them from your mind. This means not even thinking about their harmful aspects or how to overcome them, but completely disengaging your thoughts from those problems and engaging them in matters of Torah and mitzvot [commandments]. Another good method is to try to be among people as much as possible.

... May the forthcoming Season of Our Freedom bring you true freedom from all the distracting thoughts and from all temptations and diversions, both external and internal, so that you can serve G-d with the fullness and gladness of your heart.

Wishing you a kosher, happy and inspiring Pesach [Passover],

via telegram 6th of Nissan, 5734 [1974]

I am delighted to associate myself with the Pre-Dedication Celebration for the new Landow Yeshiva Centre - Oholei Torah School.

The timeliness of the event is underscored by the fact that it is taking place in the auspicious days when the Nesi'im (Princes of the Twelve Tribes) brought their individual contributions to the dedication of the altar of the newly erected Mishkan (Sanctuary) in the desert on the way to the promised Holy Land. The connection is obvious, since every sacred House of Prayer and House of Study is termed Mishkan Me'at, a Sanctuary in Miniature.

Moreover, it is written in our sacred sources that the Mishkan is essentially indestructible, which, by extension, applies also to the sacred Houses of Study and Prayer. Indeed, our Sages declare that in the future (in the time of Moshiach) all Houses of Prayer and Study in the Diaspora will be transplanted into the Holy Land.

Reflecting on the eternal nature of the project that you, and we, are celebrating, it should even further "encourage the energetic" to make the utmost effort with the utmost joy and inspiration, for it is truly an everlasting investment bearing everlasting dividends.

Inasmuch as we are soon to celebrate the Season of Our Liberation, Pesach, may G-d grant that the new Centre, which is designed to bring true liberation to Jewish children through Torah-true education, will bring true liberation from all negative aspects to each and all of the friends and supporters who are privileged to participate in the project, and the fulfilment of the prophecy of the Sages quoted above.

With esteem and blessing for a kosher and inspiring Pesach,

CUSTOMS CORNER

Fast of the Firstborn

Firstborn males over the age of Bar Mitzvah (13) are obligated to fast on the 14th of Nissan, in recognition of the miracle that occurred during the "Plague of the Firstborn". The prevailing custom, however, is for the firstborn to exempt themselves from the obligation to fast by participating in a *seudat mitzvah* (a meal marking the fulfilment of a mitzvah), such as a *siyyum* – a festive meal celebrating the conclusion of the study of a section of Torah).

Passover Seder Tonight

The 8-day festival of Passover--also called "The Festival of Matzahs" and "The Time of Our Freedom"--begins tonight at nightfall.

In the evening, we conduct a *seeder* ("order") -- a 15-part ritualistic feast that encompasses the observances of the Passover festival: telling our children the story of the Exodus as described and expounded in the Haggadah; eating the matzah (unleavened bread), the bitter herbs dipped in *charoset*, and the *afikoman* (an additional portion of matzah eaten as "dessert" in commemoration of the Passover offering); drinking the four cups of wine; and numerous other symbolic foods and rituals commemorating both our slavery in Egypt and our liberation on this night.

A WORD

from the Director

This coming Friday night, April 6, the holiday of Passover begins and we celebrate the first Passover seder. Among the many customs and laws that surround the seder is the obligation to drink four cups of wine, to recall the four expressions of redemption written in the Torah.

When G-d told Moses that He would free the Jewish people from Egyptian enslavement, He used four different terms:

1. "V'hotzeiti - I will take you out,"
2. "V'hitzalti - I will save you,"
3. "V'ga'alti - I will redeem you,"
4. "V'lakachti - I will take you."

These four expressions correspond to the four decrees that Pharaoh issued against the Jews: the decree of hard labour, the decree that the midwives should kill all male children, the decree that all baby boys should be drowned in the Nile, and the decree to withhold from the Jews the straw necessary to make bricks, even though the quota of bricks to be filled wasn't decreased. For each additional act of cruelty, G-d promised to free His people.

However, if we continue reading the Torah, we come across yet a fifth expression of redemption, "V'heiveiti - I will bring," meaning that not only will G-d take the Jews out of their misery, but He will continue to take them out until they have reached the land that He has promised to them. This is considered the last term of redemption, the one that will be fulfilled with the coming of Moshiach. This fifth term is also symbolized by a cup of wine at the seder, Elijah's cup.

The Rebbe notes that the custom of Elijah's cup is not mentioned in the Talmud or in any of the earlier texts regarding Jewish law. Its earliest source is in the writings of the sixteenth century. This is attributed to the fact that pouring a cup for Elijah is an expression of our faith in the coming of Moshiach, and with each passing year the feeling of anticipation grows stronger and more widespread.

This year, may we see the fulfilment of our anticipation as we conclude the seder with the words, "Next year in Jerusalem," when G-d will fulfil His fifth and final promise with the revelation of Moshiach and the Redemption.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

THE ANGELS OF A CHILDLESS MOTHER

It was Passover of 1756, and the followers of the holy Baal Shem Tov sensed that something was terribly wrong; the Baal Shem Tov certainly was not in his usual buoyant Passover spirit.

On the night before the Passover Seder, the Baal Shem Tov told ten of his closest disciples to say Tikun Chatzot (a midnight prayer to commemorate the destruction of the Temple) with great concentration. While they were saying this prayer, Reb Tzvi ran in and cried, "Lord of the Universe, the Rebbe fainted and fell onto the floor of his study."

The next morning, the Baal Shem Tov recited the prayers in a despondent mood. After he finished, he expounded about 'trust in G-d', explaining, "True and complete faith in G-d occurs only when a person can't see any way to overcome a problem. At that very moment, the person must believe without a doubt that G-d will save them. Most importantly, the person has to demonstrate this trust and faith in G-d by having a joyful attitude. Such an attitude shows that the person has no doubt that they will soon, with

G-d's help, overcome their problem." At that point the Baal Shem Tov's mood noticeably changed.

That night, in the synagogue of the Baal Shem Tov, the special evening prayers for Passover were chanted with great enthusiasm.

Afterwards, his close disciples sat around the Seder table of the Baal Shem Tov, eagerly anticipating the Rebbe's insights on the Haggadah. But to their disappointment the Baal Shem Tov just read the text quietly to himself.

Near the end of the Seder, the Baal Shem Tov closed his eyes. Then suddenly, the Baal Shem Tov started laughing. "Thanks and praise to G-d. Now you shall know that even the simplest Jew has the power to change a Heavenly edict," he exclaimed,

The Baal Shem Tov then began to explain, "Yesterday morning, a terrible edict was decreed in Heaven against the Jews of a nearby village. The non-Jewish peasants in that village were planning to attack the Jews on the first night of Pesach."

"I prayed with all my strength, and I even had you help me. But we couldn't overcome the Heavenly decree. I finally gave up and put my trust in G-d that the decree would be rescinded. Right then I started to feel joyful. When we sat down to the Seder, the hour for the execution of the decree had arrived. I didn't see any hope for those Jews living in that village.

"During this time, a childless couple that are among my followers, and who live in the village where the decree was to be executed, were sitting at their Seder Table. Although they are simple, unlearned Jews, they are exceptionally kind, devout and full of good deeds. When they reached the

section of the Haggadah about the Egyptians throwing the new born baby boys into the Nile, the wife started to cry.

"The wife said, 'If G-d had blessed me with a son, I would not let anyone hurt him. And I certainly would not have let anyone treat my son that way.'

"The husband stood up for G-d saying, 'G-d is righteous in all that He does, it's only that we can't see or understand why it is good for us.'

"But the wife retorted, 'Why isn't G-d more compassionate? How could He have treated us like that? Even if we do sin, we are still His children.'

"And so the argument went back and forth as they progressed through the Haggadah. Simultaneously, the case against the Jews of their village was being argued before the Heavenly Court. The defending angels were more persuasive when the wife presented her arguments and the accusing angels were more persuasive when the husband presented his rebuttals. I really couldn't tell what the outcome would be.

"Finally, after completing the fourth cup of wine near the end of the Seder, the husband couldn't think of another answer to his wife's arguments against G-d's behaviour. So he conceded, 'My wife, you're right. G-d should have treated his children better.'

"They both got up and began to dance around the Seder table. At that very moment, the decree in Heaven against the Jews of their village was annulled," the Baal Shem Tov concluded.

The disciples were mesmerized by the story. Then, the Baal Shem Tov told them to all place their hands on the shoulders of the persons sitting on each side of them. The disciples then saw a vision of the husband and wife dancing together around their Seder table celebrating the liberation of the Jewish people from Egypt.

Said the Baal Shem Tov with a little chuckle, "They should only know that they are also celebrating the liberation of the Jewish people of their own village."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

The custom of filling a fifth cup of wine for Elijah the Prophet at the seder table is relatively recent. Although always practiced by some, it has become more widespread only in the last few generations. One explanation for this is that this practice is intimately connected to our faith in the coming of Moshiach, for Elijah the Prophet will be the one to herald the redemption and the Messianic era. As the time for our redemption grows near, it is reflected in our religious practices. (*Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 6 & 7 APRIL 2012

BEGINS			ENDS
6th	7th		8th
5:48	6:44	MELBOURNE	6:42
5:46	6:40	ADELAIDE	6:39
5:22	6:14	BRISBANE	6:13
6:29	7:18	DARWIN	7:17
5:21	6:12	GOLD COAST	6:11
5:49	6:42	PERTH	6:40
5:26	6:20	SYDNEY	6:18
5:33	6:28	CANBERRA	6:27
5:37	6:35	LAUNCESTON	6:33
5:50	6:45	AUCKLAND	6:44
5:47	6:44	WELLINGTON	6:43
5:35	6:34	HOBART	6:32
5:19	6:11	BYRON BAY	6:10



For the 6th one must light at the given time. For the 7th one must light after the given time, and from a pre-existing flame only.

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PESACH
15-16 NISAN • 7-8 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT • APRIL 6 • EVE OF PASSOVER:		
FINISH EATING CHAMETZ BEFORE:		10:28 AM
SELLAND BURN CHAMETZ BEFORE:		11:25 AM
CANDLE LIGHTING:		5:48 PM
MINCHA:		6:00 PM
KABBOLAS SHABBOS:		6:30 PM
SATURDAY • APRIL 7 • 1ST DAY OF PASSOVER:		
SHACHARIS:		10:00 AM
LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:		9:31 AM
CANDLE LIGHTING (AFTER):		6:44 PM
MINCHA:		5:45 PM
MAARIV:		6:45 PM
SUNDAY • APRIL 8 • 2ND DAY OF PASSOVER:		
SHACHARIS:		10:00 AM
MINCHA:		5:45 PM
MAARIV:		6:40 PM
HOLIDAY ENDS:		6:42 PM
CHOL HAMOED:	SHACHARIS MON-THURSDAY	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:50 PM
	MAARIV:	6:35 PM