

LAMPLIGHTER

7 Shevat
Bo

1070

18 January
5773/2013

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Bo, speaks of the last three plagues visited on Egypt, and of the Jewish People's Exodus. It begins with G-d's command to Moshe that he go to Pharaoh to warn him of the impending plague of locusts. G-d, however, states that Pharaoh will not heed the warning: "For I have hardened his heart... in order that you tell in the ears of your child and your child's child that which I have wrought in Egypt."

From this we learn that the locusts did not come as a punishment for Pharaoh's refusal to heed the warning; G-d had hardened his heart so that he would be unable to agree to free the Jews. But if such is the case, isn't it unjust for G-d to punish Pharaoh with a plague, when G-d Himself prevented him from acceding to Moshe's demand?

The commentators explain that during the first five plagues Pharaoh had free will; he could have allowed the Jews to leave. It was only after Pharaoh rebelled against G-d - "Who is G-d that I should listen to His voice?" - that his free will was taken away. This punishment clearly fit the crime: Pharaoh questioned G-d's authority and boasted of his own might, so he was shown that he did not even have the power to make his own decisions. Pharaoh was thus fully subjugated to the will of G-d.

Furthermore, Pharaoh's behaviour during the plague of locusts underscored his impotence. When even his servants begged him to free the Jews - "Let the people go... Do you not yet know that Egypt is lost?" - Pharaoh immediately agreed and declared to Moshe and Aharon, "Go worship your G-d." But at that very instant G-d hardened his heart and Pharaoh was forced to renege on his promise.

Even with this explanation we are still left with a philosophical problem. Why did Moshe and Aharon have to go through the motions of issuing a formal warning if they knew that there was no chance Pharaoh would agree?

It is explained in Tanya, the central work of Chabad Chassidism, that even a person who is so sunken into evil ways that "he is not provided with a means to repent," even he can overcome and find his way back to righteousness. Even the most corrupt and abominable sinner can return to G-d.

If Pharaoh, totally self-centred, wicked and deprived of his free will, could have prevented the final plagues from befalling his nation by exerting supreme effort to overcome the hardening of his heart, how much more so is it possible for every Jew to overcome his negative character traits.

A Jew's G-dly soul is called "an actual part of G-d," and is in his possession always; the soul remains faithful to G-d even if the body commits a sin. A Jew always has the power to return to G-d and live in harmony with his true essence. G-d awaits the return of every single Jew, for he can only sin externally, as his internal nature is untouched and holy.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

The Geometry of Freedom

By Shlomo Yaffe

History tells us of many revolutions that began with sublime ideals and visions of liberty, only to be followed by deep disappointment and even greater tyranny and oppression.

The French revolution began in a magnificent blaze of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" and rapidly evolved into the Reign of Terror and the horrors of the Napoleonic Wars that so devastated Europe. In the end, the French exchanged bondage of neglect under the Bourbon Monarchs for bondage of abuse under the revolution. True freedom remained as elusive as ever.

The Russian people had suffered under the autocratic rule of the Romanov Kings for centuries. When they rose up in revolution in 1917, they and the world were filled with hope for a life of freedom and a new, more just and equitable society. This hope was slaughtered in the cellars and torture chambers of the Soviet secret police and frozen in the slave camps of the Gulag. The slavery to the Romanovs was paradise compared to the bondage, absolute lack of freedom, and the slaughter of millions in the new soviet state.

Attaining freedom is not merely about leaving a yoke of bondage behind; it is about a clear vision of a new paradigm for a better world. Otherwise, the revolution will be a true revolution -- it will revolve a full 360 degrees and the same ingrained patterns will reassert themselves, and sometimes even worse. A true revolution needs to be one of 180 degrees -- a whole new direction.

We see this theme articulated throughout the story of the exodus. At the burning bush, G-d tells Moses to instruct Pharaoh "Let my people go, that they may serve Me." Just letting the people go is not going to accomplish anything in the long run, if they're not headed toward something which is indeed the antithesis to Egypt - "that they may serve me".

During the wanderings of the Children of Israel through the desert, we find that every time there were those who raised the cry "Let us go back to Egypt." Did they want to suffer again as slaves? Surely not. The Torah is telling us is that abandoning the new vision and mission leads back to Egypt, perhaps a new Egypt, but slavery just the same.

All that is true world history is true of each individual person. The Hebrew word for Egypt, Mitzrayim, means "constraints." We suffer under the constraints of the habits we maintain simply because we had them yesterday. We are slaves to ingrained pathways of our lives and our world, because we are too busy dusting the covers of our Book of Life to read its pages.

When approaching this story in the Torah we put all else aside to concentrate on receiving the power of freedom that flows from G-d to each one of us. For this experience to have a lasting effect though, we need to remember that not only do we have to leave the old habits ("let my people go"), we need a vision and program of the new ("that they may serve Me"). Otherwise, we end up not far from where we started.

Slice of LIFE

Thousands of these holders were distributed. At times, people would err, and instead of addressing their letters to the Lubavitch Women's Organization, they would send them to the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

On one occasion, a woman living on Ocean Avenue in Brooklyn wrote to ask for the Shabbos candle holders. She too erred, and addressed her letter to the Rebbe. The Rebbe received the letter in the Friday mail. On Friday afternoon, he had his secretary, Rabbi Binyomin Klein, call Mrs. Esther Sternberg (who ran the Shabbos candle campaign) and ask her to see to it that this woman had the opportunity to light Shabbos candles that Friday.

Mrs. Sternberg is not one to take a request from the Rebbe lightly. With 45 minutes left before Shabbos started, she tried to get the woman's phone number, but was told it was unlisted. Then, noting that the woman's address was not far away, she resolved to deliver the candle holders personally. If the woman was not home, she would leave it with a neighbour.

Taking two of her daughters along, Mrs. Sternberg drove (flew!) to the woman's apartment. She rang the bell and knocked several times, but there was no answer. She tried several of the neighbours' apartments, but they too did not answer. Finally, a woman from an apartment down the hall replied that, yes, she knew the woman who had asked for the candle holders. She was an elderly lady, said the neighbour, and hard of hearing. That's probably why she had not answered her bell; she hadn't heard it ringing!

And so Mrs. Sternberg, her two daughters, and the neighbour all knocked hard on the woman's door. Eventually, an elderly Jewish lady answered. She was grateful to see visitors, and even more grateful when she found that she would be able to light Shabbos candles that week.

Mrs. Sternberg was happy to give the woman the candle holders, but couldn't help wondering: The woman seemed sincerely committed to the mitzvah; why then hadn't she lit candles before? "Don't you have candle holders of your own?" she asked.

"Of course I have Shabbos candles," the woman told Mrs. Sternberg, taking her into her kitchen and showing her a large silver candelabra on top of one of the cabinets. "But when my children moved me here," she explained, "they put my candelabra up there. Neither I nor any of my neighbours can reach it! That's why I haven't been able to light." (Apparently, this woman, as do many others, mistakenly felt that Shabbos candles had to be lit in a ritual candelabra.)

One of Mrs. Sternberg's daughters climbed up and brought down the woman's candlesticks. And so, thanks to the Rebbe's concern and Mrs. Sternberg's commitment, the woman was able to light candles in her own candelabra that Shabbos.

On another occasion, the Rebbe received a letter from a man from Bowie, Maryland, asking that Shabbos candle holders be sent to his daughter. Again, the letter arrived on Friday, and again, the Rebbe had his secretary ask Mrs. Sternberg to see to it that the girl lit candles that Friday.

This time, it was only 20 minutes before Shabbos when Mrs. Sternberg was contacted. She immediately phoned one of the shlichim in Maryland and asked if he could deliver candles to the girl. The shliach replied that Bowie was over two hours away; he had no way of delivering the candles in time.

Not seeing any alternative, Mrs. Sternberg located the family's phone number. The mother answered the phone. Yes, her husband had asked for the candleholders. She didn't light candles herself, but thought that it was a good idea for her daughter to light.

Mrs. Sternberg told her that she would be mailing the candle holders, but meantime, she would instruct her on how to make candle holders from aluminium foil so that her daughter would be able to

light that Shabbos. With no more than a drop of convincing, the mother agreed to join her daughter and light candles herself.

She listened diligently to Mrs. Sternberg's instructions, and wrote down the transliteration of the blessing word for word.

As they were talking, Mrs. Sternberg asked the woman if her daughter had any other friends who would like candle holders. The woman mentioned that there were several girls in her daughter's Hebrew School class who would probably appreciate such a gift. In her own Chaburah group, she could think of a few women, and she had some other friends...

All in all, when Mrs. Sternberg prepared the package of candle holders to send to Bowie, it contained more than 40!

On the following Friday, Mrs. Sternberg received another call from the Rebbe's office. "The Rebbe wants to know what's happening with the girl in Bowie," the secretary told her.

Mrs. Sternberg again called the woman. Yes, her daughter had lit candles the previous Shabbos, and they had received the candle holders in the mail. Everyone was overwhelmed. Women were talking about it all over town.

"Could you send more?" she wanted to know. "My daughter has other friends... and I have other friends...."

And so, the following week, Mrs. Sternberg sent an even larger order of candle holders to Bowie.

The following Friday, Mrs. Sternberg did not wait for a call from the Rebbe's office. Instead, she phoned her new friend in Bowie herself. Yes, the candle holders had arrived and the women were very happy. What's more, the woman's friends and neighbours wanted to meet some of the ladies who had reached out and brought Shabbos light into their homes.

A Shabbaton was arranged. Women and girls from Crown Heights came and shared a Shabbos encounter with the community.

So it was that a few words from the Rebbe snowballed into an ongoing positive Jewish experience.

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ISSUE 1070

MOSHIACH MATTERS

A man's spiritual labours should be imbued with a constant yearning for the Redemption, in the spirit of the phrase, "I await his coming every day." Our Sages taught, "What is the light that the House of Israel is awaiting? -- It is the light of *Moshiach*." Thus, too, they taught, "When a man is led into the Heavenly Court he is asked, '...Did you yearn for the Redemption?' "Since one is obliged to serve G-d constantly, all day long, it is clear that this hopeful anticipation should likewise be constant, all day long.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

B"H, Erev Shavuos, 5706

Greetings and blessings,

In response to your letter of 15 Iyar: I spoke to my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*, [concerning the matter] and he gave the following directives in addition to those mentioned in his earlier letter:

- According to the directive of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*, all publication of texts, collections of discourses, or the like from the organizations that are under the direction of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*, is centralized under the auspices of the Kehot Publication Society with the exclusion of [select] exceptions.
- Special permission is required from my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*, every time one of his letters, *sichos*, or *maamarim* are printed.
- Particular attention must be paid to the material that is printed together with statements of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*.

In accordance with the above, if you decide to continue publishing your Torah circular, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- Before printing any material, it must be sent to Kehot here. (It would be proper to keep a copy so that there will be no need to send the proofs back.) Only the material that is approved here may be included in the circular.
- Every circular must carry the Kehot seal that is found on our published material. Under the seal - and within the seal itself - should be added the words: branch of Jerusalem, the holy city.
- Obviously, you must be fiscally sound, i.e., you must have the means to pay for the publication.

To conclude with [Torah concepts relating to] the holiday of Shavuos: There is a well-known question (see the *maamar* entitled *U'Safartem*, sec. 3, in *Likkutei Torah*, the *maamar* entitled *HaChodesh HaZeh*, 5700, *et al*): Why [do the Ten Commandments begin]: "I am G-d your L-rd who took you out of the land of Egypt" and not "...who created heaven and earth"?

The resolution offered is that going out of one's boundaries and limitations, even those which exist within holiness, [the spiritual counterpart of the Exodus from Egypt,] is a very elevated concept and is made possible by the revelation which we received by the giving of the Torah, [the rung in G-dliness that is called] "I." The parallel to that in our Divine service is conducting oneself on a level above logic and understanding, negating one's individual wills entirely (*Likkutei Torah*, *Parshas Bamidbar*).

[One might ask:] Since one is found in "an Egypt of holiness," without any connection to the forces of evil, how is it possible for him to know what he must do if not according to his logic and understanding? How will he appraise himself?

This concept is also derived from the Giving of the Torah. Then as well there was a spokesman, Moshe, and G-d told him: "Behold, I am coming... and also, they will believe in you forever," [i.e., the revelation at Sinai established Moshe's authority]. This pattern must also be followed in subsequent [generations]. Everyone, even one who thinks that he is found in "an Egypt of holiness," must be connected and devoted - to the extent that he nullifies his own will - to the leader of his generation, who is "the extension of Moshe" in that generation.

Perhaps one can say that this is the allusion to the fact that the *yahrzeit* of King David, "the man established on high," is on Shavuos (*Talmud Yerushalmi*, *Beitzah* 2:4) and it is also the *yahrzeit* of the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the teachings of *Chassidus*. For the connection of a teacher to his student is dependent on intellect. This is not the case with regard to the connection between a Chassid and [his] Rebbe.

With blessings for the acceptance of the Torah with joy, and [with the blessing,] "Immediately to *teshuvah*; immediately to Redemption,"

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson
Chairman of the Executive Committee

CUSTOMS CORNER

Since any form of travel, whether by land, sea or air involves a certain degree of danger, notwithstanding that the desire to travel is preordained and caused by G-d, it is necessary to say a special prayer, commonly referred to as "*Tefilas Haderech*" for a safe and uneventful trip.

The recitation of *Tefilas Haderech* is an edict established by the sages, and it is just as important to observe it as any of the other rabbinical decrees. Thus, neglecting to say *Tefilas Haderech* is comparable to neglecting hand-washing before eating bread or failing to listen to the *Megilah* [on *Purim*], and one who does so is called an "*avaryan*" (transgressor).

Women have the same obligation in saying *Tefilas Haderech* as men do. Even though women are generally exempt from *Mitzvos* which are time-related, *Tefilas Haderech* is not categorized as such, since it is a prayer for a successful journey. Children should also say *Tefilas Haderech*.

The main text of *Tefilas Haderech* is the section beginning with the words "*Yehi ratzon*" and concluding with the words "*shomei'ah tefilah*." In this *Tefilah* we ask G-d to guide and lead us to our desired destination in peace and joy and to prevent us from encountering delays and dangers.

A WORD

from the Director

Since "from the Shabbos are blessed all the days of the coming week," it follows that the dates of this week, and specifically the tenth of Shevat, are associated with this week's Torah portion, Parshas Bo. This portion describes the Jews' exodus from Egypt, "On this very day, all the armies of G-d (Tzivos Hashem) left the land of Egypt."

The key to the Jews' departure from Egypt is their identification as "armies of G-d." A soldier stands in absolute self-nullification, giving himself over beyond the reaches of his intellect. Even when he sleeps, one can appreciate that he is a soldier.

When this self-nullification which transcends intellect permeates through and encompasses one's entire being -- as explained above in regard to faith -- a connection is established with G-d's essence. "The simple commitment of a common person is connected with G-d's transcendent simplicity." Thus, in the Chassidic discourse connected with the Previous Rebbe's passing, which we commemorate this Monday, Basi LeGani, the Previous Rebbe explains how the king squanders all the treasures of the kingdom on behalf of the common soldiers for they are the ones who are actively involved in carrying out the war.

Thus, when the Jews were identified as "the armies of G-d," "the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to them in His glory and redeemed them." Afterwards, for forty years, they internalized this service of self-nullification until they "attained [full grasp] of the Teacher's knowledge".

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

PATIENCE AND PEACE

In his younger years, Rabbi Yitzchak of Vorki was a man of wealth and prosperity. He used to journey periodically to the Seer of Lublin. On one such visit the Seer said: "If a reasonable opportunity were to come up for taking a job as a private teacher, it would be a good idea to take it."

Rabbi Yitzchak was certain that the Seer had erred and in fact had in mind some other person: why should a propertied man like himself be interested in the meagre stipend of a tutor? Out of respect, of course, he kept his thoughts to himself, and, after taking his leave, entered the Rebbe's Study Hall.

A moment later a villager from near Ternigrad called on the Seer and wept bitterly. His sons were growing up to be coarse because they lacked a good schoolmaster. He was prepared to pay whatever was requested, so long as he had a conscientious teacher for his boys.

"If you can pay forty gold rubles," said the Seer, "then I would suggest that you hire the young man who left this room just now, and your sons, G-d willing, will do well in their studies."

The villager went out, found Rabbi Yitzchak, and told him that he would be agreeable to paying the sum the Rebbe had stipulated, provided that he would travel back with him at once. Rabbi Yitzchak was now convinced that the Rebbe had really meant what he had said to him. What he still did not understand was why the Seer thought to make a schoolmaster out of him.

Nevertheless he accepted the Rebbe's orders without a second thought, and off he went. Before leaving Lublin, he managed to write to his wife, explaining why he was not yet returning home. After several days the received her reply: he had acted wisely in accepting this modest appointment, because the French, who were then at war with Russia, had marched through their town, and had plundered all their property. Even their fodder was gone.

Rabbi Yitzchak now began to teach Chumash to the villager's sons. They were not quick-witted, though, and they grasped not a word. Sorely vexed, he journeyed to Lublin, and told the Seer of his difficulties.

"Pray for them," advised the Seer.

This he did, and from then on, saw steady progress in this work.

Now, in the village, there was a regular *minyán*, of exactly ten men, and it once happened that one of them refused to join the others in prayer because of grievance he had against one of them. One of the other villagers quoted the patriarch Yaakov's blessing to his son Yissachar, "The Torah says. 'He saw that rest was good... and bowed his shoulder to bear' [Gen. 49:15], and commented, "This suggests that if a man understands that tranquillity is a good thing, then his is willing to bear anything, because whoever bears all the vicissitudes of life with equanimity and is never angry at another - has peace."

When the period of his employment came to an end, the villager asked him to stay on. Rabbi Yitzchak said: "Since I came here only because of my Rebbe's orders, I must ask him about continuing here."

Once in Lublin, he was told by his Rebbe that he no longer had to be a teacher. The Seer added: "Tell me, did you perhaps hear some quotable insight on the Torah in the village?"

Receiving no reply, the Seer asked again: "Is it possible that in half a year there, you heard nothing?"

Rabbi Yitzchak then recalled the villager's observation on patience and peace. He repeated it to the Rebbe, who said: "If so, then you've heard a great deal."

When after many years, Rabbi Yitzchak became a renowned Rebbe, he recounted this incident, and concluded: "Soon after this happened, I became wealthy once again, and gave away the stipend which I had earned as a tutor. As to the observation of that villager on peace and patience - why, I'm still working on it today."

Biographical note:

R. Yaakov Yitzchok Horowitz (1745 - 9 Av 1815), known as 'the *Chazer* (Seer) of Lublin', was the successor to R. Elimelech of Lizensk (1717-1787), and leader of the spread of chassidus in Poland. Many of his insights were published posthumously in *Divrei Emmes*, *Zichron Zos*, and *Zos Zichron*.

Rabbi Yitzchak Kalish (1779, died 22 Nissan 1848) was the founder of the Vorki dynasty in Poland. Previously, through travel with his teacher, Rebbe David of Lelov, he became a disciple of Rebbe Yaakov Yitzchak (the "Seer") of Lublin and of Rebbe Simcha Bunem of Pshischah. Some of his teachings and stories involving him appear in *Ohel Yitzchak* and *Hutzak Chein*. His son Rebbe Yaakov David founded the Amshinov dynasty, while his son Rebbe Menachem Mendel continued the Vorki dynasty.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters (10:9)

Pharaoh was willing to let the menfolk go, as long as the children remain behind; for as long as the younger generation remains "in Egypt," there would be no future for the people of Israel.

The "Pharaohs" of our day have the same attitude. If the older folk wish to cling to Jewish tradition, that is perfectly acceptable; but the youth should be raised in "the spirit of the times" ... (*Maayanah Shel Torah*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 18 JANUARY 2013

BEGINS	ENDS
8:25MELBOURNE	9:28
8:14ADELAIDE	9:14
6:29BRISBANE	7:26
7:02DARWIN	7:54
6:29GOLD COAST	7:26
7:08PERTH	8:06
7:51SYDNEY	8:50
8:02CANBERRA	9:03
8:27LAUNCESTON	9:33
8:24AUCKLAND	9:26
8:36WELLINGTON	9:42
8:30HOBART	9:38
7:30BYRON BAY	8:26



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAR STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS BO
7 SHVAT • 18 JANUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:25 PM
	MINCHA:	8:35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9:10 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:55 AM
	MINCHA:	8:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:::	9:28 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	2:03 PM
		8:30 PM
	MAARIV:	9:20 PM
		9:30 PM