

# LAMPLIGHTER

2 Shevat  
Parshas Bo  
**1120**  
3 January  
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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Bo, we read of the Exodus from Egypt. Generally, it is explained that just prior to their departure from Egypt, the Jews eagerly circumcised themselves and offered the Paschal sacrifice. The Midrash Lekach Tov says otherwise. It explains that when Moses told the people to take a lamb and prepare to bring the Paschal sacrifice, his words fell on deaf ears.

The people simply were not interested. They were grateful to be freed from slavery, but leaving Egypt and going out into the desert did not allure them. On the fourteenth day of Nissan, Moses was the only one to bring a Paschal sacrifice.

So, why were the Jews redeemed? The Lekach Tov continues, stating that the savoury aroma of Moses' sacrifice spread throughout the entire land of Goshen where the Jews lived. Slowly, somewhat shamefacedly, each one appeared at Moses' door, requesting: "Your roast smells so good. Can I have a piece?"

Moses told them to circumcise themselves. So anxious were they to taste the meat that they complied. He then explained that this was not simply a piece of roasted meat, it was a sacrifice to G-d. They nodded in agreement, recited the blessing, and with appetite partook of the sacrifice.

When there is a difference of opinion among the Rabbis, our Sages say: "These and these are the words of the living G-d." What that means is that both opinions have important lessons to teach us in our Divine service.

From the Lekach Tov we can learn that it was Moses - and only Moses - who was interested in redemption. The people at large had other concerns. What motivated them to seek redemption? Moses' influence.

Let's explain: Obviously, the people did not relish being slaves in Egypt. Nobody likes being compelled to perform labour by a taskmaster.

But the exile began well before they were slaves. When they lived as free men in Egypt, they were not upset. After all, Egypt was a nice country with a thriving economy. Would it be so bad if that situation continued forever?

Moses differed. He himself was never enslaved. Nevertheless, he wanted to lead the people out of Egypt because the whole motif of exile was foreign to him.

What's the difference between Egypt and the Holy Land? In Egypt (exile), the water supply is from the Nile, while in the Holy Land, it comes from rain. In Egypt, you think there is a natural source for maintaining your existence, and in the Holy Land, you must look heavenward.

Moses wanted the people to look beyond the Nile and realize that it and other "natural, dependable sources" of influence also come from G-d. So, Moses says, "Wake up and live with the truth. Don't let Egypt and its norms control the way you think!"

The people didn't listen to Moses because they didn't understand. After all, they were raised in Egypt and that setting defined their mentality. Moses was simply speaking about a completely different frame of reference. But Moses wanted and ultimately succeeded in getting them to accept his level of understanding. When this happened, they were redeemed.

*Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe by Rabbi Eliyahu Touger, reprinted from Keeping in Touch*

## Let My People Go

By Yossy Goldman

The words ring out again and again in the biblical account of the Exodus story, as Moses repeatedly demands of the unrelenting Pharaoh that he grant the Jewish people their freedom.

Actually, the precise words that Moses conveys to the stubborn monarch in the name of G-d are, "*Shalach ami v'yaavduni*," "Let My people go so that they may serve Me."

It is interesting to see how some expressions and phrases become memorable and popular, while others just don't seem to catch on. "Let My People Go" became the theme song for the story of Egypt and the Exodus way beyond the Jewish community. It has been used as a catchphrase for a variety of political causes. Unfortunately, the last Hebrew word of the phrase somehow got lost in the shuffle: *v'yaavduni* - "that they may serve Me" - never quite made it to the top of the charts. The drama of the Exodus captures our imagination, while the fact that the purpose of leaving Egypt was to go to Sinai, receive G-d's Torah and fulfil Jewish destiny is less emphasized. The call to freedom excites the human spirit; the challenge of service and commitment, by contrast, doesn't seem to elicit as much enthusiasm.

I remember back in the early '70s, when Jews the world over were demonstrating for their oppressed brethren in the then Soviet Union, demanding of the Russian government that they allow Jews the freedom to leave if they wanted to. Their rallying cry was, "Let My People Go!" Sadly, they left out the *v'yaavduni*. We were so concerned about political liberties that we forgot a primary purpose of being free: to enjoy religious freedom and live fulfilled Jewish lives.

Indeed, for so many of our Russian brethren, obtaining their exit visas and acquiring freedom of movement did little to help them reclaim their spiritual heritage and identity. Seventy years of organized atheism behind the Iron Curtain left their toll. We are delighted that they can live in Israel (or Brighton Beach), but the fact remains that far too many remain outside of the Jewish community and its spiritual orbit.

In my own backyard, here in South Africa, this idea has become blatantly obvious. We have now enjoyed over fifteen years of democracy. There have been four free and fair elections where all citizens have had the opportunity to cast their ballots. It was a long, hard struggle, but political freedom has been achieved. And yet, while confidence levels in our country's future are at an all-time high, millions of people living here are still suffering from the very same hardships they endured under apartheid-ignorance, poverty and poor health. Nobel Peace Prize laureate Desmond Tutu has castigated the country's black leaders for allowing a situation where a small number of well-connected blacks have become enriched while the masses remain impoverished. HIV/AIDS is still public enemy number one, and even the family members of some of the most high-profile political figures have succumbed to the deadly disease.

It is clear that political freedom minus spiritual purpose equals disillusionment. Leaving Egypt without the vision of Sinai would be getting all dressed up with nowhere to go. It is not enough to let our people go. We have to take them somewhere. "That they may serve Me" means that we need to use our political freedom to experience the freedom and fulfilment of faith, and a life of spiritual purpose dedicated to G-d's service.

# Slice of LIFE

## The Priest & Tzedkah

A very talented Chabad Rabbi by the name of Rabbi Shochet, once received an invitation from an organization in Buffalo, New York to speak before a crowd of intellectuals, among which would be many priests and soon-to-be priests, on the topic of charity.

But he had his reservations about speaking to such a crowd and was in a dilemma. On one hand he wanted to educate people and speak but on the other hand he wanted to avoid interfaith debates, so he called the office of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi M. Shneerson, and requested from one of his secretaries to ask The Rebbe's advice.

The answer came immediately, The Rebbe said that Rabbi Shochet should accept the offer but he should take care to end his lecture with the story of the 'Rich Miser of Krakow'.

Although the Rebbe's insistence on that particular story seemed a bit unusual, Rabbi Shochet threw himself into the task and when the date arrived he flew to Buffalo and gave a fascinating two hour-long speech describing the unique Torah approach to giving charity. He explained that 'Tzadaka' (Charity) derives from the word 'Tzedik' 'Justice' implying money is not our own, rather it is G-d's and charity is nothing more than passing it on to those who justly deserve it. But as he finished and the crowd was about to applaud he held his hands up for silence and announced that he wanted to finish with the story of the Miser of Krakow as the Lubavitcher Rebbe had requested.

"Once in the city of Krakow almost four hundred years ago lived a rich Jew named Yisroel. No one really knew his last name and no one even cared, because the 'Yisroel' was an intolerable miser. He lived in a large, fancy home that seemed to invite the poor to ask for help, but if ever an unsuspecting money collector would knock on his door he would receive an abrupt 'No money!' and a door slammed in his face.

"Now, although it is forbidden to call people derogatory names, this old man was so stingy that eventually everyone began calling him 'Yisroel Goy' ('Goy' lit. Gentile) saying that only a non-Jew could be so callous to Jews. But it didn't help and unfortunately the name stuck.

"So it continued for many years and everyone almost completely forgot about the old skinflint, until one day the burial society (Chevre Kadisha) received a message from him to come to his bedside. He was dying.

"Here is two thousand dollars,' He announced to them in almost a whisper. "You're not going to get another penny from me so don't ask. I want you to bury me in a good spot, not near the fence or the garbage

dump, and write on my tombstone: 'Yisroel Goy'. He then said the 'Shma Yisroel' prayer, closed his eyes and passed away.

"No one knew exactly how old he was, maybe ninety, maybe more, but one thing for sure; no one wept at his funeral, in fact almost no one attended, and they also didn't bury him exactly where he wanted. But they did write what he wanted on his tombstone: 'YISROEL GOY'. And that was the end of a sad, unfortunate episode in the history of Krakow.

"Or so they thought.

"One cold afternoon, about one week later, the Rabbi of the city, Rabbi Yom-Tov Lipman Heller (author of 'Tosfos Yom Tov' on Mishna) heard a knock on his door and opened it to see some fifty hungry faces greeting him with pleading eyes. 'Yes, can I help you?' he asked incredulously, 'Who are you? Where are you all from?'

"We are from here, from Krakow.' One of them cried out, 'and we are hungry, we haven't eaten anything all day.'

"The Rabbi didn't understand what was going on but he invited them all in, found them all places to sit and while his wife was preparing something for them to eat, he heard the following story.

"It seems that these paupers had been going to the grocery store every day for as long as they could remember, taking what they needed, they only had to sign, and that was it. But since yesterday the grocery owner refused to give them anything, so they were all hungry.

"Very strange' thought the Rabbi to himself. 'So many hungry people! And all from here, Krakow! Could it be that they are lying? I must get to the bottom of this.'

"He waited for them to finish eating, told them to come to his home again tomorrow morning, put on his overcoat, told his wife that he would return shortly and walked out the door in the direction to the home of the town treasurer. When he saw the Rabbi he shouted, 'my house is filled with people!'

"I know, the Rabbi answered, they came to me also, different people that is, but hungry and all of them say that they are from Krakow. I simply don't understand it.'

"After everyone had been fed and the treasurer distributed some money for tomorrow's meals, both he and the Rav walked to the house of the Grocery store owner. He told them that every week he would bill the miser, 'Yisroel Goy', for all the food for the poor people of the town. He paid thousands each week, but warned him that if he told anyone, he would stop.

"When the Rav and the treasurer heard these words they looked at each other and began weeping. They had made a terrible error in judgment. The Rav declared a day of fasting and repentance for the entire Jewish quarter next day.

"After several hours of reciting psalms in the synagogue, the Rav stood at the podium and announced that they were all going to the graveyard.

"When they got there, the tombstone was covered with a large cloth but everyone's attention focused on the Rabbi as he stepped from the crowd, stood at the foot of the grave, back to the crowd, and began to speak to Yisroel Goy.

"Yisroel, Yisroel! We've come here today to say we are sorry.' He paused; the silence was broken by some muffled weeping from the crowd. 'I know you don't need our apologies but we are sorry! We're sorry that we were so cruel, crueller than we accused you of being. And we're sorry that no one was your friend and that no one really cared.' Now the cries were louder, almost everyone was sobbing. The Rav waited for silence, dried his eyes and continued.

"I know you wanted the words 'Yisroel Goy' written on your tombstone. Well I've done something that I hope you won't mind ...last night I had the stonemason add a word'. With this, the Rav pulled away the cloth to reveal that the inscription now read:

'YISROEL GOY... KADOSH' (Israel, a Holy Nation.)"

Rav Shochet had finished his lecture and the crowd showed their satisfaction with rounds of applause. After he had finished shaking hands and was making his way out the door one of the young men studying for the priesthood approached him and asked if it was possible to speak to him alone.

There was something strangely sincere in the young man's eyes and Rav Shochet set an appointment for the next afternoon in his hotel room. The young man appeared on time and after sitting down requested that the Rabbi repeat the story he told, and then when he finished, requested an explanation on several points. He listened deeply to the answers, he shook hands and parted.

Years later Rav Shochet, on a visit to Israel, was praying at the Kotel (Wailing Wall in Jerusalem) when a young, religious, bearded Jew approached him and shook his hand warmly. "Do you recognize me?" he asked, "I am the priest that visited you years ago in your hotel room."

Rav Shochet stared at him and was so astounded he couldn't speak. "Yes,' the young man continued 'you don't know what that story you told about the miser did to me. You see, my mother was Jewish but she didn't tell me. She kept it a secret. She escaped to America from Poland in the war and there she married a devout Catholic. You see, it wasn't so easy being a Jew in those times. Just before she died she told me that story, the same story you told, and added that we are related to that holy generous Jew that supported hundreds of people anonymously in Krakow hundreds of years ago." But I pushed that episode out of my memory. Rabbi, your story woke something that was sleeping in my soul and now I've returned to myself.

Rabbi Shochet now understood why the Lubavitcher Rebbe insisted on that particular story.

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

The prophet states in Isaiah that "a new Torah will emit from me". The Midrash comments on this verse that the Torah of today will be naught in the era of Moshiach. This does not mean that the Torah and its commandments that we have now will not be relevant or binding in that time, but rather that when the deep understanding of the secrets and deeper meanings of the Torah are revealed, our current understanding will pale in comparison.

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# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d  
24 Adar II, 5711 [March 8, 1951]  
Brooklyn, N.Y.  
Greeting and Blessing:

... I was extremely happy to read that you are working with your artistic talents, are preparing to hold an exhibition, and that you have already received favourable reviews in the press. Surely you will progress in the utilization of the talent that G-d has granted you toward the strengthening of Yiddishkeit and G-d-fearing behaviour.

As to the main point of your letter, in which you complain about your circumstances, your depression, your despair, etc., and express the wish that we should meet, so that we could discuss the matter face to face.

For two good friends to get together is always a positive thing and a spiritual pleasure for them both. But to put off [the resolution of your problem] until then, and in the meantime to remain in a state of despair, G-d forbid--who can allow himself such a thing?

You do not write of the causes which bring you to this state of mind, so I cannot go into their details to show you how these "causes" are but imaginary and stem from the evil inclination--that is, that even if there is some substance to them, the fact that they lead to despair and depression is folly...

I must therefore confine myself to a general comment with which I hope to illuminate your particular situation. My comment is based on the saying by the Baal Shem Tov--which my father-in-law, the Rebbe, would often repeat--that a person can derive a lesson in the service of G-d from everything he sees or hears about.

As you are surely aware, the primary talent of an artist is his ability to step away from the externalities of the thing and, disregarding its outer form, gaze into its innerness and perceive its essence, and to be able to convey this in his painting. Thus the object is revealed as it has never before been seen, since its inner content was obscured by secondary things. The artist exposes the essence of the thing he portrays, causing the one who looks at the painting to perceive it in another, truer light, and to realize that his prior perception was deficient.

And this is one of the foundations of man's service of his Creator.

As we know from the Torah--and particularly from the teaching of Chassidism--the entirety of creation stems from the word of G-d, and the word of G-d is what brings it into existence and sustains it in every moment of time. It is only that the divine power of tzimtzum (constriction) holds the divine life-force in a state of concealment and obscurity, and we perceive only its outer form (i.e., the physical reality).

Our mission in life--based on the simple faith that "there is none else beside Him"--is that we should approach everything in life from this perspective. That we should each strive to reveal, as much as possible, the divine essence in everything, and minimize, to the extent that we are able, its concealment by the externalities of creation...

So one must take great care that secondary and external matters should not obscure the essentials of life and its ultimate purpose.

A person might experience difficulties, trials and challenges in separating the good from the bad. But these are but the means by which to achieve the purpose of life--that his soul should elevate itself through its positive deeds in this world... So one must never allow the difficulties in overcoming one's trials, or even the fact that one might occasionally fail and stumble, to overwhelm the joy that one must feel as a child of G-d...

(A freely-translated excerpt from a letter)

## CUSTOMS CORNER

At the conclusion of a meal in which we ate bread, we say the Grace after Meals, thanking G-d for giving us sustenance. Before reciting the Grace after Meals, we rinse our fingertips. This washing is called *Mayim Achronim*, "final waters" (as opposed to *Mayim Rishonim* "first waters," which refer to the required hand washing before consuming bread).

During the course of a meal, it is highly likely that the hands became dirtied. The primary reason for *Mayim Achronim* is our desire to have clean hands when uttering G-d's name in the blessing we are about to recite. This is comparable to Temple service: when the Holy Temple stood in Jerusalem, a priest was required to wash and purify his hands before serving in the Temple.

Some of the laws and customs associated with *Mayim Achronim* include, brushing the still-moist fingertips over the lips and removing the water used to wash with from the table during the following blessings.

Additionally, no specific amount of water is required; as long as the fingertips are rinsed, and one should refrain from talking between the washing and the beginning of the Grace after Meals.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*In the beginning of this week's Parsha the Torah tells us that Hashem said to Moshe: "Come to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants so that I may show these signs of Mine in him." Rashi, a primary commentary on the Torah, says that G-d was telling Moshe to warn Pharaoh that if he did not allow the Jewish people to leave the land of Egypt, He would bring a plague of locusts upon Egypt.*

*At first this comment seems difficult to understand. The introduction to the warning given by Hashem is that He, G-d, has hardened the hearts of Pharaoh and his servants. This means that Hashem will make it very hard for them to acquiesce to Moshe's request, and in essence force them to fall prey to the punishment of locusts. Can being compulsorily caused by G-d to commit a sin possibly be deserving of punishment?*

*Based on the above we must say that even at the time that G-d Himself hardened Pharaoh's heart, the ability and freedom was still granted to Pharaoh to fight the inclination and free the Jews - otherwise his action could not have warranted punishment.*

*This teaches us a lesson about our own connection with Hashem. At times we may find ourselves in a state where we feel disconnected from Hashem, G-d forbid, and worse - unable to reconnect. We may even be at a point where the opposing inclination is so strong that it would seem that the connection to Hashem is being pushed away and forcibly apprehended from us. This week's portion shines a light into this darkness. If Pharaoh had the freedom to choose G-d over evil even at his blackest hour, surly a Jew, who is a "child of Hashem", can return to Him immediately.*

*May we all seize the opportunity to return to our Father in Heaven and speedily so, for the days of the redemption are very near.*

*J. I. Guterlich*

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

"MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE: ENOUGH ALREADY!"

There was a servant in the house of the *tsadik*, Rabbi Mordechai ('Motel'e) of Chernobyl, who used to stoke the fire in the winter stove. He was afflicted with severe psoriasis, and was covered from head to toe with painful boils and other skin eruptions. It seemed like he was always bleeding, whether from the disease itself or from being unable to refrain from scratching at the relentless itching.

Whenever the Rebbe saw him, he never said a word to him, even though he undoubtedly noticed the young man's terrible suffering. His household and his chasidim were astonished, for the Rebbe's tremendous empathy for Jews in pain of any form was well-known.

One day, upon rising early in the morning, the Chernobyler came upon the servant crying and groaning in pain, furiously scratching at his head and other parts of his body, with blood oozinG-down from all over. The *tsadik* lifted his eyes and said, "Master of the Universe: let it be enough already!"

That same day, the servant suddenly died.

Now the Rebbe's household and the chasidim were even more amazed. Realizing that the turn of events was certainly out of the ordinary, they pleaded with the Rebbe for an explanation. Finally, he told them the following story.

His father, the famous *tsadik* Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl, was desperately poor; the family was always teetering on the brink of starvation. There was, however, a certain rich person in the town who loved the *tsadik* very much, and he used to provide the Rebbe with nearly all his household needs.

It came to pass that when this rich man realized how dear he was to the Rebbe, it went to his head and he proposed to R. Nachum that the *tsadik*'s son marry his daughter. Of course, he would pay all the expenses of both sides as well as provide a handsome dowry, he confidently told the Chernobyler.

The Rebbe turned him down.

The man continued to argue and plead his case, but the Rebbe was steadfast in his refusal. As a result, the man transformed from the *tsadik*'s biggest supporter into his fiercest enemy. Not only did he cease his financial aid, he actively sought to aggravate him, and was constantly inventing new plots to make the Chernobyler's life even more difficult.

One time, he somehow found out that Rabbi Nachum's married daughter was due to go out of her house that night. His antagonism had so festered in him that he actually decided to hire some ruffians to pursue her through the streets on her way home afterwards. They did so in a brutish obnoxious manner, and she was forced to flee with all her might through narrow side streets and filthy back alleys. Finally she reached the haven of her home exhausted and upset. She crossed the threshold, collapsed on the floor, and fainted.

As you can imagine, this caused a great commotion in the Rebbe's home. It was only after immense effort that the household was able to bring her back to herself. When Rabbi Nachum found out that his daughter's suffering was a result of the rich man's evil plan, he was enraged.

Shortly thereafter, the rich man died.

When his case came before the Heavenly Court, the judges were about to issue a harsh judgment against him because of his aggression towards a great *tsadik* and the suffering he caused him. But then a defending angel arose and pointed out the rich man's large number of good deeds, his accomplishments in Torah-study, and how he had even generously supported the Rebbe and his household for many years.

Other heavenly beings joined in, pro and con. Finally it was decreed that that he would be given the chance to appease Rabbi Nachum. If he succeeded, he would be granted the rewards for the many good deeds he had accomplished in his lifetime.

He was assigned to two angels who would escort him to R. Nachum, and subsequently bring him back to the Heavenly Court.

The rich man's soul came to the Chernobyler and begged forgiveness for all the pain and aggravation he had caused him while still alive in this world. The Rebbe told him to enumerate one by one each of the offenses he had committed. At each one the *tsadik* responded, "I forgive him with all my heart."

Finally, they reached the episode with Rabbi Nachum's daughter. "NO!" cried out the Rebbe, "This I may not forgive. This was a crime against my holy ancestors and against Heaven; not just against my daughter and me."

Immediately the escorting angels took him and returned to the Heavenly Court, where a second decree was issued. He would be reincarnated again, and in his next lifetime would suffer from terrible physical afflictions.

After the Chernobyler passed away and his son Rabbi Mordechai succeeded him, Rabbi Nachum appeared to his son in a dream and asked him to take the youth with the skin diseases into his house. The second Chernobyler Rebbe did so. When he saw how much the man was suffering, he refrained from offering to help, because he knew it was an atonement for the sins of the man's previous life. Finally, however, Rabbi Mordechai could no longer hold back. He forgave the man for the abuse of his family, the soul's spiritual rectification was completed. Then the man's soul returned to heaven.

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

A man saw not his fellow, neither rose any from his place for three days (10:23)

There were six days of darkness... during the first three, "a man saw not his fellow"; during the last three days, he who sat could not stand up, he who stood could not sit down, and he who was lyinG-down could not raise himself upright. (*Midrash Rabbah*)

There is no greater darkness than one in which "a man saw not his fellow" - in which a person becomes oblivious to the needs of his fellow man. When that happens, a person becomes stymied in his personal development as well -- "neither rose any from his place." (*Chidushei HaRim*)

**CANDLE LIGHTING: 3 JANUARY 2014**

BEGINS	ENDS
8:28 .....MELBOURNE .....	9:33
8:15 .....ADELAIDE .....	9:17
6:29 .....BRISBANE .....	7:27
6:58 .....DARWIN .....	7:51
6:29 .....GOLD COAST .....	7:27
7:08 .....PERTH .....	8:09
7:52 .....SYDNEY .....	8:53
8:04 .....CANBERRA .....	9:07
8:30 .....LAUNCESTON .....	9:39
8:26 .....AUCKLAND .....	9:30
8:39 .....WELLINGTON .....	9:48
8:35 .....HOBART .....	9:45
7:29 .....BYRON BAY .....	8:28
6:52 .....SINGAPORE .....	7:44



**CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH**

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS BO  
2 SHEVAT • 3 JANUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:28 PM
	MINCHA:	8:35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9:10 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9:44 AM
	MINCHA:	8:25 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:33 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MON-FRI:	8:00 AM
	MINCHA:	8:35 PM
	MAARIV: SUN-FRI:	9:25 PM