

# LAMPLIGHTER

16 Iyar  
Parshas Bechukotai  
31st day of the Omer

1139

16 May  
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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's parshah, Bechukotai describes the Jubilee year, the 50th year of the agricultural cycle in the land of Israel. At this time, ancestral property that was sold was returned and servants were freed. To explain: When the Jews entered the Holy Land after their journey through the desert, every member of the people was given a plot of land. If they - or their heirs - sold that land, in the fiftieth year of the agricultural cycle, that land was returned to the seller.

Similarly, if a person sold himself as a servant, he was to be released after six years. If he, nonetheless, desired to remain a servant, he was allowed to do so, but in the fiftieth year, he is also set free.

What a lesson in self-renewal! We are always saying: "If I were given a second chance, things would be different," and here Torah law establishes the concept of a second chance as a binding obligation.

The spiritual dimensions of the Torah's laws are applicable in all times and in all places. Thus although in a practical sense, the Jubilee is not practiced in the present age, in an abstract sense, it is a continuous lesson for all of us.

No matter what our present state is, G-d is giving us the wherewithal to start anew and change the direction of our lives. At every moment, we are being granted spiritual and material blessings that enable us to turn our lives around and bring about goodness for ourselves, our families, and the people around us.

Our Sages teach: "A rich man is rich only due to his mind-set. A poor man is poor only due to his mind-set." A truly wealthy man is confident that even were he to be set down in a jungle with nothing to his name, he would be able to establish himself financially in a matter of time. Conversely, a person with a poor man's mentality will soon find himself impoverished even after he was given great wealth.

What makes a man wealthy? Our Sages teach us: "Who is wealthy? One who is satisfied with his portion." That doesn't mean that he does not want to make more money; he may, but he does not feel pressured to do so. He feels the luxury of being patient, of waiting for opportunities, and then using them to the maximum of his capacity.

A poor man, by contrast, is not satisfied; he feels that he must make money. He is obsessed with want and need and those feelings cause him to act rashly, trying this scheme and to make it big.

What's the inevitable result? He loses, but he's lost far more than money. He's lost his life, because his energy and his dreams were focused on the money that he felt he had to make. Instead of enjoying life for what it is, sharing quality time with family and friends, he was always looking to what it could be when he made the money.

It doesn't have to be that way. It's not too late. The Jubilee teaches us that we can start anew. We all have the resources, because the fundamental resources are inside. Each one of us possesses a soul that is an actual part of G-d. That spiritual spark gives us the potential to bring about good and well-being for ourselves and the people close to us.

*From Keeping in Touch by Rabbi E. Touger, published by Sichos in English*

## "Louder!"

By Yossy Goldman

One section stands out from the rest in this week's Parshah. It is known as the Tochachah, "The Rebuke." There we read a whole litany of disasters that will befall our people should we turn our backs on G-d and abandon His way of life. The tradition is that the *baal korei* (Torah reader) himself, without being called up, takes this *aliyah*; and when he reaches the relevant section, he lowers his voice, to soften the blow of these terrible curses.

For 24 years, I produced and hosted South Africa's only Jewish radio show, *The Jewish Sound*. Once, my guest on the air was Rabbi Shlomo Riskin of Efrat, Israel. He told the story that as a child growing up in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, one Shabbat he went to *daven* in the *shul* of the Rebbe of Klausenberg, Rabbi Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam (1905-1994). Originally from Romania, the Klausenberger Rebbe was a spiritual giant of a man who had lost 11 children in the Holocaust, and never sat *shivah* because he was preoccupied with saving as many lives as he possibly could. After the war, he settled in America and developed a large following. Subsequently he relocated to Israel and, among other things, established the Laniado Hospital in Netanya.

That Shabbat - Rabbi Riskin related - "The Rebuke" was being read. When it came to the part of the curses, the reader did what he always did. He lowered his voice and read in a softer tone. Suddenly, the Rebbe shouted in Yiddish, "*Hecher!*" ("Louder!"). The reader was confused. He was simply following the tradition of generations. Perhaps he was not hearing right, so he continued reading in the softer tone. "*Hecher! Hecher!*" thundered the Klausenberger Rebbe. "Let the Almighty hear what is being read! All the curses have already been fulfilled. Now, there must be only blessings for our people . . ."

We have endured more than enough of exile, wanderings, pogroms and persecutions. The curses, in all their tragic, cataclysmic imagery, have actually materialized. Now there must be only goodness, happiness, warmth and blessing for the people of Israel.

At the end of The Rebuke, G-d says: "I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember, and I will remember the Land . . ."

Not only will the Almighty remember us, the Jewish people; He will also remember His Holy Land, our Land of Israel. Perhaps we might interpret this as a message to the anti-Semites of the world who hide behind their anti-Zionist or anti-Israel rantings and ravings. "I will remember the Land"-a message also to the nations of the world who claim to be our friends, the shrewd manipulators who are expert in political backstabbing in Washington and London. "I will remember the Land"-a message to our own Jewish fantasiers who would undermine their own brothers with their hopeless attempts at appeasing mortal enemies. To all of them, the G-d of Israel says: "I will remember the Land." I will never forsake My land or My people.

And as He remembers us, let us remember Him and our covenant. May we prepare for Shavuot and the giving of the Torah with earnestness and joy. May G-d and His people always remember each other. Amen.

# Slice of LIFE

## FROM HEBRON TO MERON

In the year 5660 (1900), a Jew named Ozer Razin journeyed from Riga, Latvia to Jerusalem, bringing with him his young son Shmuel. Shmuel was a child who possessed great spiritual ambition and R' Ozer was convinced that his potential could best be fulfilled by his spending the years of his youth in the rarefied atmosphere of the Holy City where his uncle, Yedidiah Grodner, resided.

Reb Yedidiah and his wife grew deeply attached to the boy. They enrolled him at the Eitz Chaim Yeshiva, from which blossomed forth many of the great Torah personalities of the next generation. In addition, Reb Yedidiah studied with Shmuel privately for an hour a day and also hired a tutor to sharpen the boy's learning skills.

In one of his letters home, Shmuel wrote: "I have now completed *Mesilat Yesharim* (the classic ethical work by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato) for the first time and I feel as if I have been transformed into a different person. When Uncle Yedidiah learns *Mesilat Yesharim* with me, tears stream down his cheeks. He told me that many of the Jews here in the Old City are 'living Mesilat Yesharims.' My dream is to be like them."

Two years after Shmuel's arrival in Jerusalem, tragedy struck. He became afflicted with a mysterious eye disease which caused his eyesight to grow steadily weaker as time passed. Doctors could not identify the cause of the illness and were at a loss to prescribe medication. They predicted that at the present rate of deterioration, it would not be long before young Shmuel was completely blind.

His uncle and aunt were overcome with anguish. They hurried in vain from doctor to doctor hoping to find a cure. They prayed and distributed tzedaka as a source of merit for Shmuel's recovery.

As time passed and the situation worsened, Reb Yedidiah took to rising at midnight and would remain awake the remainder of the night praying tearfully. At dawn, he would make his way to the Western Wall and continue to pray that his nephew, who had shown such promise, be granted his full eyesight once again.

One winter evening, the dreaded moment arrived. As Shmuel sat learning with his private tutor, Rabbi David Lebel, he was suddenly plunged into darkness. He had become totally blind.

Amazingly, Shmuel retained his composure at that tragic moment. After telling his tutor what had happened, he said, "Please say the words slowly from now on and I will repeat them after you, word by word."

Meanwhile, Shmuel's aunt ran from the house and summoned the neighbors. One of them brought to the house Professor Sukmeinski, a renowned ophthalmologist who had been sent to Jerusalem by Baron Rothschild to help curb the rash of eye-related ailments which were plaguing the city's residents.

After examining Shmuel, the Professor ruled out surgery and declared that there was yet a very slim chance that the boy's eyesight would return. There was nothing left to do but pray.

Days passed with no improvement. At night, Yedidiah and his wife would listen as Shmuel would recite the bedtime *Shema* and then utter his own prayer: "Master of the Universe, is it for earthly pleasures or treats that I am asking? All I desire is that my eyes be illuminated by the light of Your holy Torah. Please, Merciful G-d, heal my eyes so that I may once again see the written word and study it without impediment."

Two weeks passed with no change in Shmuel's condition. Reb Yedidiah felt that his nephew was in desperate need of a change of routine, so he arranged for the boy to spend some time at the home of Shimon Hausman in Hebron.

Reb Shimon was a highly regarded communal activist, a kind-hearted man who never tired of serving his brethren. His heart melted with compassion upon hearing of Shmuel's plight. He readily agreed to take the boy under his charge for an unlimited amount of time.

In those days, the city of Hebron was led by two towering Torah personalities. **Rabbi Shimon Menasheh Chaikan**, a renowned kabbalist, was the city's Ashkenazic Rav, while its Sephardic community was led by **Rabbi Chaim Chizkiyahu Medini**, author of the Sdei Chemed encyclopedia.

A close relationship existed between these two pure and holy scholars, and it was known that they met together somewhere in the city each night. Exactly where and what they did was a secret known to no one but themselves, although it was said that at midnight, the two prayed together at a holy site, possibly the Tomb of the Patriarchs, for the abolishment of harsh decrees.

One day, Shimon Hausman was struck by an idea. Perhaps, if he would go with Shmuel in the darkness of night and meet these two great men, they would bestow their blessing that the child's eyesight be restored. The thought of implementing this plan filled R' Shimon with dread, for to confront them during their nightly meeting might be overstepping the bounds of propriety and could possibly invoke their indignation. But he was willing to take the risk for Shmuel's sake.

Night after night, Reb Shimon, his hand firmly clenching that of Shmuel, took to walking near the homes of the two rabbis. Finally, one night as they were standing near the courtyard of Rabbi Shimon Menasheh's house,

the door swung open and the two rabbis emerged.

R' Shimon Hausman approached and, trembling with fear, he placed the boy squarely between the two *tzadikim*. He then disappeared into the darkness without offering a word of explanation.

His actions were, indeed, correct; no explanation was necessary. The *tzadikim* immediately sensed the child's predicament. Rabbi Shimon Menashe grasped Shmuel's right hand, the Sdei Chemed his left, and the three began to walk together in the darkness.

Shmuel related the details of his woeful tale. When he had finished, the Sdei Chemed asked him, "what were the last words that you learned before the moment when you could no longer see?"

"I was studying tractate Chulin, page 36a," the boy replied; "and the last words that I read were 'Upon whom are we to rely? Come let us rely upon the words of Rabbi Shimon.'"

"That is your solution!" the two *tzadikim* exclaimed. "You must go to Meron to the tomb of **Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai**, upon whose merit you can surely rely! Go there and pray that in R' Shimon's merit, G-d Al-mighty should heal you."

The next morning, R' Shimon brought Shmuel back home to his uncle in Jerusalem and soon after, Reb Yedidiah and his nephew set out by donkey for Meron.

The trip in those days, over rugged terrain, was a difficult one for anyone, even more so for a middle-aged man leading a young blind boy. But nothing could prevent them from reaching their destination. They arrived at the tomb of Rabbi Shimon and entered the *beit midrash* at the site, with the intention of not leaving the area until their prayers were answered.

Day after day, the two remained there, their every waking moment dedicated either to heartfelt prayer or intensive study. On the fifth day, as they prepared to recite the Book of Psalms with Shmuel repeating after R' Yedidiah word by word, the boy suddenly exclaimed, "Uncle - I can see the outline of your body! I can see the outline of the objects near you!" Indeed, his eyesight had begun to return.

They remained there a total of thirteen days, until Shmuel's eyesight was fully restored. On that day, the two held hands in an ecstatic dance, as they sang the *Lag b'Omer* song of R' Shimon's praises which concludes with:

*Torato magen lanu, hee meirat eineinu, hu yanleetz tov alienu, adoneinu Bar Yochai.*

"May His Torah shield us, it is the light of our eyes, he will intercede for good on our behalf -- our master, Bar Yochai."

And they added a stanza of their own:

"Upon whom can we rely? Come, let us rely upon Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai!"

[From *Yerushalayim shel Maalah* (The Heavenly City) by Menachem Gerlitz, as published in *Lag B'Omer* by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman (Mesorah Publ.) and adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles.]

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ISSUE 1139

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Today, exile is no longer what it used to be. Although we still suffer the spiritual ruthlessness of exile, its more blatant expressions are fading away: today, a Jew can live practically anywhere in the world in freedom and prosperity. But to feel comfortable in exile is actually the greatest exile there can be; the ultimate symptom of alienation from one's essence and source. To feel comfortable in exile - to perceive it as a viable, even desirable, state of affairs - is to live in contradiction to G-d's daily *regret* of exile. The Jew who lives in harmony with G-d will always regard the exile state as abhorrent and undesirable. (The Week in Review)



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d  
the 25th of Adar I, 5730  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dr. Zeev Greene  
c/o Lubavitch House  
115 Stamford Hill  
London N.16, England

Greetings and Blessing:

I duly received your letters, as well as your inquiry through Rabbi Hodakov in regard to a visit in Eretz Yisroel. No doubt you promptly received my reply, but for the record I will repeat it here. It is that in general it is a very good thing to do, and if it is possible for you to arrange properly for your children to remain in London during your visit to Eretz Yisroel, it would be advisable to do so, so as not to disrupt their studies, etc. But if this is not possible, then you will of course take them with you. However, I trust that you will be able to arrange this, since this arrangement, in my opinion, would be preferable. I further trust that your visit in Eretz Yisroel will not be a hurried one.

I do not know the schedule of President Shazar, and cannot therefore say it with certainty, but I trust that for various reasons, President Shazar will be pleased to meet with you and Mrs Greene. I suggest, therefore, that when you arrive, you should get in touch with Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin (Yona St. 5 in Jerusalem). I believe that Rabbi Zevin will be able to find out about the possibility of your meeting with the President, and I trust that despite the undoubtedly full presidential schedule, there would be an opportunity for you to get acquainted and visit with the President. Mr Shazar speaks English as well as Yiddish, while with Rabbi Zevin you will have no problem to converse in Yiddish.

Last but not least, I want to express my very profound gratification on the report of your various public appearances in England, and the impact which they have had. I am confident that the impressions and benefits will be lasting.

I am also very gratified to note from your correspondence that you have found the visit in England very useful from your personal aspects and your scientific work. As I had occasion to mention before, this area is also related to your spiritual work, inasmuch as your scientific successes obviously will increase also your influence in the area of spreading Torah-Yiddishkeit.

Please convey my personal regards and appreciation also to Mrs Greene. I have heard that she has contributed in no small measure to the general success of your visit in London.

With prayerful wishes for continued and growing Hatzlocho, and

With blessing, /signature

## CUSTOMS CORNER

### Responsibility for a Fellow's Religious Obligations

In the Book of Leviticus we read: "Each man will stumble over his brother." Our sages learn from this verse that every Jew is responsible for the actions of his fellow Jew. The verse is to be understood as if saying: "Each man will stumble over the sin of his brother." This responsibility is referred to as *arvut* (guarantor ship).

The following are some of the practical applications of this concept:

- The concept of *arvut* allows even one who is currently not obligated to recite the blessing on a mitzvah (e.g. he has already donned his own *tallit* and recited the appropriate blessing) to do so for the benefit of another who does not know how to recite the blessing.
- One may not however, recite a blessing over a food for another's benefit if the reciter of the blessing is not actually eating. The fact that another wants to eat is not considered a "shared responsibility."
- An exception to this rule is when consuming the food or beverage is a mitzvah—such as *Kiddush* or the blessing on matzah at the Seder; in such an instance one may say the blessing for another (who is incapable of doing so) though the reciter already performed the mitzvah.

*Arvut* is also the basis for the mitzvah of rebuking a fellow who is sinning.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*We find the following difference of opinion between the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud concerning Shabbat.*

*The Babylonian Talmud states that if the Jews keep two Sabbaths, we will be immediately redeemed. In the Jerusalem Talmud it states that if the Jewish people keep one Sabbath we will immediately be redeemed. Which one is it? How can these two opinions be reconciled?*

*The era after the coming of Moshiach is likened to the Sabbath, and is, in fact, called, "The day which is entirely Shabbat and forever rest".*

*There are various forms of rest. We can refrain from heavy physical labour, thereby giving our bodies their much needed rest. We can also have a less physical, but more spiritual type of rest which also rejuvenates the body, a rest from the worries and cares of the mundane world and a subsequent concentration on spiritual matters.*

*Thus, when we observe Shabbat, we are actually observing both physical and spiritual rest.*

*With this in mind, we can reconcile the seeming difference of opinion between the Jerusalem and the Babylonian Talmud. If the entire Jewish nation keeps both aspects of Shabbat on one Sabbath, we will immediately be redeemed.*

*Indulge yourself this Shabbat in a truly restful and rejuvenating experience. Observe and celebrate Shabbat in all its beauty and simplicity and taste some of the tranquillity yet to come.*

*Have a wonderful and restful Shabbat.*

*J. I. Gutnick*

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

## DIG DEEP

Once, Rabbi Dovid Leikes, one of the main chasidim in the *Chevrayah Kadisha* ["holy fellowship"--special inner circle of disciples of the Baal Shem Tov], was speaking with several followers of his son-in-law, Rabbi Mottel, the Chernobyler Rebbe. "Do you have perfect faith in your Rebbe?" he asked them.

None of the men responded.

After a pause Reb Dovid persisted, "So? *Nu?*" Finally, one of the Chernobyl adherents responded with, "Who can say he has perfect faith?"

Reb Dovid nodded and continued. "My friends, let me tell you a story about faith. Once, several of us in the Fellowship spent a Shabbos at an inn with the *Besht* [acronym for 'Baal Shem Tov']. As was his custom, the Third Meal went late into the night, while the Rebbe told us of the mystical insights he had received while meditating, praying, and studying Torah during that Shabbos.

"When he finished speaking, we recited the 'Blessings for After a Meal,' and then the Evening Prayer followed by *Havdalah* [the ceremony for transition from Shabbat to weekday]. Immediately afterwards we sat down together with the Baal Shem Tov for *Melaveh Malka* [the Saturday Night *mitzvah* meal].

"After a few minutes, the Baal Shem Tov turned to me and said, 'Reb Dovid, reach into your pocket and take out a *gulden* [a valuable gold coin], please, and buy us some mead [honey wine] from the inn keeper.'

"I was still wearing my Shabbos clothes and of course I never carry money on Shabbos. Yet, without thought or hesitation, I reached into my pocket to take out a *gulden*, as my Rebbe had requested. And - the most amazing thing happened! I found a *gulden* in my pocket!"

The disciples of Reb Mottel Chernobyler, after hearing this story, commented to Reb Dovid, "You know, that is really not so amazing. It's just another miracle story about the *Besht*."

"Yes, I suppose that is so," said Reb Dovid. "But I did not tell you the story in order to show that the Baal Shem Tov does miracles. My point is that my faith in my Rebbe was so great that I decided to reach into my pocket for the *gulden*, knowing full well that just a moment before there was nothing there.

## CHOKING ON A SIN

Rabbi Baruch Neustadter, a well-known Talmudic scholar, was a follower of the *tzadik*, Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk. He often travelled to Lizhensk in order to spend Shabbat with the revered Rebbe.

One Saturday night, as Rabbi Baruch was bidding the rebbe farewell, the Rebbe Elimelech said to him as follows: "Know that every *mitzvah* in the Torah makes us holy. For instance, we are forbidden to eat meat that was cooked together with milk. A Jew who keeps this *mitzvah* becomes

pure to such an extent that his organs cannot digest this combination. If milk and meat were to enter his throat together, he would not be able to swallow, but would instantly cough them up."

After these words and the rebbe's final blessing, R. Baruch took his leave. But he was puzzled. Why, of all topics, did the rebbe choose to speak about milk and meat just as he was departing? He pondered this for a while, but could come up with no answer, so he let his mind turn to other matters as he journeyed home.

A few weeks passed. R. Baruch was in the *beit midrash* [study hall] one night, learning Torah. Suddenly one of his children burst into the shul. "Tatte, come quickly!" the child exclaimed breathlessly, grabbing his father's hand. "Mama was eating supper and a piece of meat got stuck in her throat! She can't breathe! Hurry!"

The two ran out of the *shul* and hurried home. R. Baruch found his house full of neighbours trying all sorts of remedies and tricks to save his wife. The poor woman was lying on a bed, her face blue and her eyes popping, struggling to breathe as she attempted to dislodge the meat that was obstructing her airway. But nothing seemed to help. A doctor had been summoned as well, and he arrived on the heels of R. Baruch, but he was no more successful than the rest in helping the choking woman.

"If only I could ask the Rebbe in Lizhensk to pray for her!" R. Baruch thought desperately. The Rebbe... Lizhensk... and then it struck him like lightning! The rebbe's cryptic message during his last visit lit up his mind, and he knew just what to do.

R. Baruch quickly prepared a glass of hot milk. Prying his wife's mouth open wide, he poured some of the beverage inside. And just as he hoped would happen, the moment the hot milk touched the meat that was stuck in her throat, his wife began to cough and retch. It only took a moment for the meat to be dislodged. The rebbe was right: the body of an observant Jew could not digest that which is forbidden. Within a very short time his wife was breathing freely and was completely recovered.

Rabbi Baruch hastened to Lizhensk to thank the rebbe for his advice. But the Rebbe Elimelech only smiled...

# Thoughts THAT COUNT

If you walk in My statutes (Leviticus 26:3)

The word "if" is to be understood as a plea on the part of G-d: "If only you would follow My statutes..." (*Talmud, Avodah Zarah 5a*)

I will give your rain in due season (26:3)

At times when people do not usually go out, like the eve of Shabbat. (*Talmud; Rashi*)

And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit (26:3)

In the days of Moshiach, every species of trees will bear edible fruit. (*Torat Kohanim; Rashi*)

## CANDLE LIGHTING: 16 MAY 2014

| BEGINS |            | ENDS |
|--------|------------|------|
| 5:01   | MELBOURNE  | 6:00 |
| 5:03   | ADELAIDE   | 6:00 |
| 4:49   | BRISBANE   | 5:43 |
| 6:11   | DARWIN     | 7:02 |
| 4:47   | GOLD COAST | 5:41 |
| 5:10   | PERTH      | 6:06 |
| 4:45   | SYDNEY     | 5:41 |
| 4:50   | CANBERRA   | 5:47 |
| 4:44   | LAUNCESTON | 5:45 |
| 5:04   | AUCKLAND   | 6:02 |
| 4:54   | WELLINGTON | 5:55 |
| 4:40   | HOBART     | 5:42 |
| 4:45   | BYRON BAY  | 5:39 |
| 6:48   | SINGAPORE  | 7:39 |



## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS BECHUKOTAI

16 IYAR • 16 MAY

|               |                           |                    |
|---------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| FRIDAY NIGHT: | CANDLE LIGHTING:          | 5:01 PM            |
|               | MINCHA:                   | 5:10 PM            |
|               | KABBOLAS SHABBOS:         | 5:40 PM            |
| SHABBOS:      | SHACHARIS:                | 10:00 AM           |
|               | LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: | 9:45 AM            |
|               | MINCHA:                   | 5:00 PM            |
|               | SHABBOS ENDS:             | 6:00 PM            |
| WEEKDAYS:     | SHACHARIS:                | SUN-FRI: 9:15 AM   |
|               | MINCHA:                   | MON-FRI: 8:00 AM   |
|               | MAARIV:                   | MON-THURS: 5:05 PM |
|               |                           | 5:55 PM            |