

LAMPLIGHTER

23 Tishrei
Parsha Bereishit

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

Sequence is of crucial importance in the study of the Torah. Giving one subject precedence over others endows it with prominence. In this vein, it is significant to note how Rashi, the commentator who seeks to reveal "the simple meaning of the Torah's words," begins his commentary on the Torah. Rhetorically, he asks why the Torah does not begin with the description of the mitzvos which the Jews were commanded to fulfil and instead recounts the narrative of creation and the formation of the Jewish nation.

The answer Rashi gives is that even when we are in a situation where we require the generosity and favour of non-Jewish powers, we need to understand that they do not control the fate of our people. For example, if the nations of the world tell the Jews; "You are robbers, for you have taken forceful possession of the lands of the... nations," the [Jews] will reply, "The entire world belongs to G-d. He created it and He gave it to whom He saw fit."

Rashi associates this teaching with the verse, "The power of His works He declared to His people," emphasizing that it is not the shifting socio-economic forces in the world at large that mould the fate of our people, but rather "the power of His works."

This lesson has been expressed throughout the course of our nation's history. Even in times of persecution and oppression, when outwardly, their fate appeared to depend on the decisions of foreign powers; the Jews knew that G-d was the source of their deliverance.

This approach does not imply that we should rely on faith alone. On the contrary, the Torah obligates us to employ all the natural means at our disposal and not to rely on miracles. Nevertheless, the natural means which we employ cannot alone promise success, for success depends on G-d. Needless to say, an approach which reflects a lack of faith in G-d will not have positive consequences.

This lesson is particularly relevant at the present time. The Jews must realize that their security and well-being is a matter between them and G-d alone. Even when we are in a situation where we require the generosity and favour of foreign powers, they do not control the fate of our people. Our people's destiny is dependent on "the power of His works."

This is the message which the Jewish people must communicate to the nations of the world -- that G-d has given us the Land of Israel and that He determines our security and well-being.

Relaying this message will influence world opinion, for the Torah is accepted by all nations. When the Torah's message is communicated to them straightforwardly, politely and without apology, they will listen.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

In the Beginning

By Lazer Gurkow

The High Holiday season has drawn to a close. The drama of Rosh Hashanah, the elevation of Yom Kippur, the joy of Sukkot and the dancing of Simchat Torah all passed in a frenzy. There were services, rituals, programs and oh so much food. The pace was frenetic, and at times I couldn't wait for it to end. But now that it has ended I feel a void. The colour and energy of these days are now behind me. Ahead of me yawns a long year that seems dull by comparison. It is the sweet sadness of reaching the end.

But then something changed. Just after we chanted havdalah and said goodbye to the holiday something inside me drove me to hold on to the holiday's charm. I began to look forward and planned new classes, programs and activities. I started looking for ways to channel the energy of this wonderful month into the drudgery of the every day, and as I did, I felt the gloom lift: my heart once again skipped a beat, a warm glow re-entered my soul.

"Look to your past only to take a lesson for your future." As a child this lesson was always driven into me. The moment we chanted *havdalah*, the holidays slipped into the past. The choice was now ours: we could return to the dreary, work-a-day world and let the past month remain a vivid memory, or we could pour the passion and energy we had just experienced into the days ahead of us.

The key is the immediate turn around. As soon as yesterday ended we allowed tomorrow to begin. Lag time or down time allows the magic to slip away, leaving tomorrow bereft. Furthermore, allowing the magic to slip away leaves the past impotent, unable to impact or benefit the future.

This is the message of the Torah reading on Simchat Torah. On the last day of the holiday we read the final verses of the Torah. We mark this joyous occasion with great fanfare, but we do not allow the celebrations to slow us down. The moment we finish the Torah, we turn around and begin again.

Our sages taught that the prosecuting angels complain to G-d that Jews study the Torah, but once they have concluded their studies, they turn away. We respond to this charge on Simchat Torah by denying ourselves even a moment of lag time between concluding our study and recommencing it. Reaching the end of the Torah does not drive us to book a vacation and recover from the effort. On the contrary it drives us to make immediate use of our knowledge as we begin another cycle of study.

This is also the message of the Torah portion we read this Shabbat: Bereishit - "In the beginning." Every moment in life is a beginning. The previous moment has slipped into the past and this moment begins anew. We do not waste time dwelling over the moments that have passed. Instead we embark on immediate beginnings, but beginnings that follow from previous conclusions. For every beginning is informed by the lessons we have learned and enhanced by the inspiration we have gleaned in the past.

Indeed, as the holidays slip into the past, and the long weeks of winter stretch out before us, we haven't a moment to waste. We must harness the majesty and sanctity of the holidays to the work before us in the days to come. Let us begin at the beginning and let us begin at present; we cannot begin soon enough.

Slice of LIFE

This story occurred some twenty years ago in New York as Mr. Fogel (fictitious name) a middle-aged Chabad Chassid was listening to a tape of one of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's speeches while driving home late one evening from work. He had heard this one particular one tens of times but for some reason he liked it.

But suddenly one sentence really struck him. It was as though the Rebbe was speaking directly to him. :

"As is known, the Baal Shem Tov said that a soul can come into this world for seventy, eighty years just to do a favour for someone, especially a fellow Jew."

Suddenly Mr. Fogel became lost in thought. 'Could it be that I could live my entire life and never fulfil my purpose! Could such a thing really happen? After all who knows the secret ways of G-d if not the Baal Shem Tov?'

He became serious. His eyes even began to fill with tears and he began to pray. 'Please, Hashem, guide me to do what I'm supposed to do, I don't want to miss my purpose!'

Deep in thought he began to imagine the hundreds (today there are thousands) of Chassidim all over the world going 'out of their ways' to wake up Jews. Nothing is more important... nothing! But what about him?!

When he came out of his reverie he realized that he was in a strange place and it took him a few seconds to figure out what happened. He had passed his turn-off, gotten off the expressway several stops too late and now was in a different district of Brooklyn.

He was looking for a place to make a U-turn when something caught his eye. To his right, at the side of the road was an older man standing before the open hood of a stalled car.

The street was unusually empty so Mr. Fogel slowed down, opened his right side window and had a better look. The fellow looked up at him and signalled. It didn't look suspicious so he pulled over and asked what was wrong.

"Ahh! What rotten luck! I can't figure it out." The fellow yelled out. "The thing just died on me! Now I'm really stuck!! A tow truck stopped about ten minutes ago but

they wanted six hundred dollars to tow me home! Six hundred! And I only live fifteen minutes away!"

Mr. Fogel pulled his car even closer and the fellow continued.

"And I'm stalled in a no parking zone. Look at this! Even if I caught a taxi... if I leave the car here ... they'll tow it away."

"Fogel pointed to a spot about fifty yards ahead and said "Just don't worry. G-d will help. Here, look over there! About a hundred feet away is a place you can park. See! I'll push you. Get in your car and I'll push you. Then you can take a taxi home."

"Thanks!" he yelled back as he walked to open the door to his car. "But I've been waiting here for a long time and not one taxi has passed... look! The road is deserted. But I guess you're right. Worrying doesn't help."

Mr. Fogel was totally convinced that this fellow was telling the truth. So after pushing him to the parking place and the fellow locked his car up, he offered to take him home. After all it was only a fifteen minute ride.

The old fellow couldn't stop thanking him. He got into Fogel's car and kept talking. "Wow! Thanks a million! I really appreciate this!! Now all we have to do, my wife and I that is, is order a cab." He looked at his watch, "Whew! It's really late! I hope we don't miss our plane. We're flying to Florida to visit our daughter and the plane is leaving in an hour."

"Listen" said Mr. Fogel "It's no problem. You know what. I'll take you to the airport, after all it's only a half hour drive and my wife won't worry. Just don't ask questions. As soon as we get to your house get your wife and suitcases and let's go! You have no time to waste."

The old fellow tried weakly to protest but realized that this Chassid was right, so in no time he and his wife were in the car and before they knew it were at the airport.

"I can't thank you enough" said the old man as he pulled his suitcase from the trunk. "Listen, you got to let me pay you! Here, do me a favour... take a hundred dollars." He pulled a bill from his wallet. "Nu! It's the least I can do. Just take it!"

But Fogel would have no part of it. "Sorry, my friend! First of all thank G-d I don't need the money. Second, it was a favour so I don't want the money. And third it was no big deal; the whole thing took less than an hour and I enjoyed it, so I don't even deserve the money."

But the old man insisted, even took another hundred out and kept pushing it at Fogel saying "Just take it. Nu! Don't argue. Just take it."

Until finally Mr. Fogel said, "Excuse me but you're Jewish, right?" the fellow shook his head yes. "So, listen, if you really want to repay me then, you know what? Put on Tefillin. Do you put on Tefillin? Do it every morning for a month."

The man shook his head no. In fact it was exactly what he did not want to hear. Tefillin?! No way!! I'm not doing any Mitzvos! No MITVOS! Not me!"

"Alright, so then don't put on Tefillin." Fogel replied. "You were the one that wanted to pay. As far as I'm concerned you don't owe me anything but if you want to pay, this is what I want. Nu? What do you say? Just buy yourself a pair of Tefillin and put them on when you can... Okay?"

The old fellow looked at Fogel with foggy eyes for a second, shook his head reluctantly and said ... "All right. I'll do it!"

Then he half-heartedly shook Fogel's hand, looked at his watch and ran to get a luggage cart.

As soon as he was far enough away, his wife approached Fogel with tears in her eyes, dabbed them with a small kerchief and said. "Thank you! G-d just sent you!"

She spoke in a low voice, keeping an eye on her husband to make sure he was involved with the cart but, although she tried to hide it, she was obviously very emotional, her eyes were red from crying.

"You don't know what you just did. It was a miracle! We are holocaust survivors. We met after the war, got married, moved here to New York and agreed that we wouldn't do anything Jewish. Nothing. We were mad at G-d, you know." She started crying again.

"But as we got older I began to yearn for the things from my mother's house.. You know, like lighting candles before Shabbat. But each time I mentioned it my husband said 'NO MITZVOT!! Our children got married, we are alone in the house but he still says 'No Mitzvos!!'

"So, yesterday I felt so bad ... that I did something I haven't done since the war.... I prayed.

"I begged G-d to send some miracle to change my husband's mind. And now you came You are a miracle!!

"I'm sure that this Shabbat we will have Candles."

[Adapted from Ohrtemimim.org]

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ISSUE 1161

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The light which the Jewish people yearn for is the light of Moshiach, as it says in Genesis, "G-d saw the light that it was good."

This teaches us that G-d yearned for Moshiach and Moshiach's deeds even before He created the world and hid this light for Moshiach and his generation under his Divine throne. (*Pesikta Rabbatei, ch. 36*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

...One of the central teachings of *Shemittah* is conveyed in the order of the verses and words by which the Torah defines the institution of *Shemittah*, namely: "When you will come into the land... the earth shall rest a Sabbath unto G-d. Six years shalt thou plant thy field," etc. (Lev. 25:2-3).

The order of the text seems to be reversed, for the six work years precede the Sabbatical rest year, and not vice versa. Hence, the text should have first mentioned the six years of planting, and then decree the resting.

However, order in Torah is also Torah ("instruction"). The arrangement in the text mentioned above, relating to *Shemittah*, is significant and instructive in that it teaches the proper approach to life. It is expressed as follows:

When one "comes into a land" and desires to establish his way of life, which involves "working the soil," it is necessary to bear in mind that the first and foremost, as an idea and as a goal, is "Sabbath unto G-d"; not the "earthly" and material, but the spiritual and sacred. This approach will ensure one against being submerged by the material and mundane aspects of life. Moreover, bearing *constantly* in mind the above idea and goal, will transform the six drab working years; they will lose much of their drabness and become more refined and meaningful. Furthermore, the change and elevation of the six years will raise to a higher plane also the seventh year; from a "Shabbos unto G-d" to a "Shabbos Shabboson [Shabbat of Shabbats]" unto G-d (v.4), with a dedication and solemnity of a higher order.

Similarly, in the daily life there are those aspects which have to do with material preoccupation (to earn a livelihood, etc.) and "common" necessities, such as eating and drinking, etc. - all those aspects wherein there is "no preeminence in man over animal". But there is also the area of "earthly rest" - of breaking away from the mundane leading into "Sabbath unto G-d" - turning to holiness and G-dliness, through setting aside times for prayer, Torah study, and the fulfillment of Mitzvot.

Here, too, the teaching of *Shemittah* is that it is necessary to begin the day with the idea and approach that, although it may be necessary later in the day to engage in "mundane" activities, the essence and purpose of these things are - to attain a "Sabbath unto G-d." In this way, even the mundane aspects will attain refinement and real content, while the aspects of holiness and G-dliness will be intensified and elevated to a higher order. This is the way to attain a complete and harmonious life.

Standing on the threshold of the *Shemittah* Year, we pray that the Almighty help each and every one, man and woman, to begin the year with the above-mentioned approach: That not the material, but the spiritual is the essence and goal in life; that the "earthly," the material has a *raison d'être* only if it is permeated with the idea of "the earth shall rest a Sabbath unto G-d" - which is when the material serves and fulfills the higher aspirations of holiness and G-dliness. It is only then that all the days in the year, and all the activities of each day, will reflect the "preeminence of man over animal," and give evidence that man was created in the Divine "image and likeness," living accordingly; while those moments and periods which are characterized as "Shabbos" will in turn rise to the sublime heights of "Shabbos Shabboson."

Then will surely also be fulfilled the Divine blessing that goes with *Shemittah* - "And I will command My blessing upon you" (v.21) - in a supernatural way...

[Excerpt from a letter by the Lubavitcher Rebbe]

CUSTOMS CORNER

Shabbat Bereishit

The Shabbat after Simchat Torah is Shabbat Bereishit -- "Shabbat of Beginning" -- the first Shabbat of the annual Torah reading cycle, on which the Torah section of Bereishit ("In the Beginning") is read. The weekly Torah reading is what defines the Jewish week, serving as the guide and point of reference for the week's events, deeds and decisions; Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi called this "living with the times." Hence the theme and tone of this week is one of beginning and renewal, as we launch into yet another cycle of Torah life. The Rebbes of Chabad would say: "As one establishes oneself on Shabbat Bereishit, so goes the rest of the year."

Shmittah

Every seventh year, residents of the land of Israel are reminded that the land that flows with milk and honey is God's property and domain. He grants the bounty of the six "regular" years and He commands that the land lie fallow during the seventh year, the *shmittah* year. During this period, landowners are required to relinquish ownership of their produce-whatever grows on their property must be made accessible to all. In this way, *shmittah* also serves as an antidote to greed and stinginess. Special halachot regarding the sanctity of the produce also prohibit their disposal as well as their profitable sale. Produce grown in Eretz Yisrael during the *shmittah* year retains its *shemittah* status even if exported.

A WORD

from the Director

This week is Shabbat Bereishit, when the very first chapter of the Torah is read in the synagogue. "In the beginning G-d created the heaven and the earth." When you think about it, however, G-d's decision to start the Torah off with these words is surprising. The Torah is not a book of history; its narratives contain huge gaps in chronology, tons of details on some subjects and not even a mention of others. Rather, the Torah is a practical guide for the Jew to apply in his daily life. Why, then, is it so important for us to know that G-d created the world?

As Rashi, the foremost Torah commentator explains, the knowledge that G-d created the world establishes that it is He alone Who sets the rules. G-d is the sole Authority, the only Arbitrator of what is moral and what is not. G-d created the Land of Israel, allowed other nations to live there for a specified time, then willingly took it from them and gave it to the Jewish people. It's G-d's world, so to speak, and He can certainly do with it whatever He wants.

In fact, G-d's creation of the world is the starting point from which all else follows. It is what distinguishes objective, G-d-derived morality from man-made codes of behavior. Because G-d is the Creator, only He can determine what is just. Take killing, for example. In contrast to modern sentiment, the Torah says that under certain circumstances, putting someone to death is the moral thing to do, but suicide and euthanasia are wrong. Why? Because when it boils right down to it, the Torah's laws transcend any human legislation.

As we read in this week's Torah portion, man was created "in G-d's image" - the same G-d Who determines right from wrong. But after all, He did write the definitive book on the subject...

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev and Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk eagerly joined the townsfolk in the mitzvah of marrying off the young couple, two orphans who had been brought up by members of the community.

Just as the wedding was about to begin, news spread that kidnapers were looking for young men of draft age. The hapless victims of such ruthless men would be enlisted in the Czar's army for 25 years. Often their bereaved families never saw them again. All the young men fled into hiding, but the bridegroom was so preoccupied with his wedding preparations that he neglected to hide, and so he was the only young man found.

When the terrible news became known, grief replaced the former happy bustle. The bride was inconsolable. Rabbi Menachem Mendel, who had helped arrange the match, came to the young woman and said, "I promise that this very day your groom will be returned to you." The words of the Tzadik gave her strength and calmed her. Rabbi Menachem Mendel rushed to the office of the military attach., where he found a drunken officer sitting at the desk. He made an impassioned plea for the release of the groom. "You filthy Jew! You could be executed for trying to bribe an officer of the Czar! Why I wouldn't even take 3,000 rubles as a bribe to free the boy. Maybe I wouldn't take 5,000!"

When the Tzadik heard those words his heart filled with hope. Obviously, the officer was open to bribes; now he had to figure out a way to raise the astronomical sum. He went to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak who answered, "Even if all the townspeople give everything they own they would not raise this sum."

"Nevertheless," replied Rabbi Menachem Mendel, "We must go to each and every house and see what we can gather, for the boy must be saved."

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak agreed and suggested that they bring their colleague, Rabbi Shneur Zalman with them to help persuade the people.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman agreed, but on two conditions: they must make a list of potential donors, and only he had the final say of how much each person should contribute. They agreed to the conditions and wrote out a list. When it was finished, Rabbi Shneur Zalman added an improbable name to the top of the page, that of the infamous Votetz (formerly Velvel), a fabulously wealthy Jew who was notorious for his lack of charity. Not only did Rabbi Shneur Zalman add his name to the top of the list, but he insisted that they visit him first.

When they were admitted to Votetz's mansion, Rabbi Shneur Zalman explained the tragic plight of the young couple and begged him to participate in this great mitzvah.

"I will join in ransoming the young man," said Votetz. He opened his safe ceremoniously and withdrew a copper penny, green with age. Rabbi Shneur Zalman took it and solemnly thanked the miser, adding, "May G-d grant you many more opportunities to perform mitzvot." The three tzadikim headed to the door, but Rabbi Shneur Zalman's companions were aghast at such impudence.

Then a voice rang out saying, "Please don't leave yet." They turned to see Votetz withdrawing two heaping handfuls of coppers from his safe and offering it to Rabbi Shneur Zalman. Again he thanked the miser profusely,

heaping blessings on him for his good deed. The scenario repeated itself ten more times, and each time Votetz increased his donation substantially, until he had given the three rabbis the entire enormous sum of 5,000 rubles.

Money in hand, Rabbi Menachem Mendel ran to the military attach., who gladly accepted the bribe, ordering his servant, "Bring the crippled Jew out. How dare they pass off a cripple as a proper military recruit!"

Together, the rabbis and the groom proceeded to the waiting wedding celebration. As they walked a carriage flew past. They caught a glimpse of the drunken officer just before the racing carriage plunged over a bridge into the black, raging waters below. They tried to rescue the officer, but the carriage, horses, and driver had sunk into the rushing water. As they walked in the darkness, the bridegroom's foot hit a hard object. It was a metal strongbox, which contained not only the 5,000 rubles, but other valuable objects as well.

The three rabbis and the shocked bridegroom hurried back to town where the wedding took place with great rejoicing. Later that evening, Rabbi Shneur Zalman explained, "I knew that we couldn't hope to raise so much money from the townspeople, and yet, since Rabbi Menachem Mendel had sworn the groom would return, it had to happen. Velvel-Votetz was our only hope. I knew that once he had offered a copper penny to a beggar who threw it back in his face in disgust. Velvel was insulted, but not only for his personal honour. Even more painful to him was that his new god, money, had been put to shame. He resolved never to give more than a penny to anyone who would ask, and each time he offered the same pathetic copper penny. Of course, his offering was always greeted with the same disdain, and his anger continued to mount. For some 20 years that same penny lay in Velvel's safe until I accepted it from him.

"It is written, 'Make for Me an opening as wide as the eye of a needle and I will increase it to admit the largest wagons.' Once the tiny breach had been made in Velvel's heart, G-d was able to make it big enough for him to provide the entire ransom himself."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

The Torah's first word, Bereishit, is an acronym for Bet reishit -- "two firsts" (in Hebrew, the second letter of the alphabet, Bet, stands for the number two). This is to say that the world was created for the sake of two things called "first" (reishit) -- the Torah (*Proverbs 8:22*) and the people of Israel (*Jeremiah 2:3*). (*Rashi; Midrash Rabbah*)

In the beginning G-d Created (Genesis 1:1)

"Bereishit barah Elo-kim" has the Sofei Teivot (the last letters of consecutive words) "Emet" - Truth. Our Rabbis tell us (*Talmud, Shabbos 55a*) "Hashem's signature is Emet", it is the custom of an author to set his mark with an acrostic of his signature at the start of his book. Thus Hashem signs his name at the very beginning. (*Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Peshischa*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS BEREISHIS

23 TISHREI • 17 OCTOBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:20 PM
	MINCHA:	7:25 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:00 PM
SHABBOS:	TEHILLIM:	8:00 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:48 AM
	The Molad of the month Cheshvan:	
	Thursday, October 23, 2014	9:02 (16 CHALAKIM) PM
	Farbrengen following Davenning	
	MINCHA:	7:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8:20 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	SUN-FRI: 9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	MON-FRI: 8:00 AM
	MAARIV:	7:30 PM
		8:20 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 17 OCTOBER 2014

BEGINS	ENDS
7:20MELBOURNE	8:20
7:13ADELAIDE	8:10
5:38BRISBANE	6:32
6:26DARWIN	7:16
5:37GOLD COAST	6:31
6:11PERTH	7:07
6:51SYDNEY	7:48
7:01CANBERRA	7:59
7:16LAUNCESTON	8:18
7:20AUCKLAND	8:19
7:25WELLINGTON	8:27
7:17HOBART	8:20
6:37BYRON BAY	7:31
6:35SINGAPORE	7:24

One must light at the given time (not after), from a pre-existing flame only.

