

# LAMPLIGHTER

3 Shevat  
Parshas Bo

1175

23 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*

## The Power of Revival

By Zalman Posner

The Jews as a people receive their first commandment in today's Torah portion. (The few preceding commandments were given to individuals—for example, Abraham was given the mitzvah of circumcision.) The reckoning of the calendar according to lunar cycles introduces Israel to formal Judaism. The lunar calendar must obviously have a special quality beyond its specific function, a pervasive characteristic, to merit its beginning Jewry's service of G-d.

The moon has phases of growth, decline, disappearance and rebirth. The sun is relatively constant, not appreciably different from day to day. The lunar calendar, rather than the solar, governs the religious life of the Jew, because it is more symbolic of that life. Fallible, easily tempted man is not expected to be an immaculate angel impervious to worldly distractions. Neither is man simply a higher form of animal life, not radically different from the beasts and hence not subject to restraints, free to indulge his passions.

In finding his place in the world, man may vacillate between the inspiration that elevates and the perverseness that misleads man. He is on a sort of spiritual seesaw, saintly and sinful in a confusing sequence. If we enjoy occasional moments of true religious inspiration, our failure to maintain those feelings may lead to disillusionment. We taunt ourselves (and others) with the sneering charge of hypocrisy if we do sin. Some may feel, with good cause, that the spark in the recesses of every Jew's heart is extinguished for them.

Here the lunar calendar has a lesson for us. The moon declines to the point of disappearance. But decline is as much a part of life as birth. Decline is not extinction. Like the moon, the Jew has the power of revival. The spark is never extinguished.

Then there is the process of change and of growth in live people, also implicit in the lunar cycle. The Jew is expected to add to his spiritual trove, to progress in learning (an all-but-forgotten Jewish virtue) and piety, in kindness and selfless charity, in developing better character traits. The Jew is constantly trying to perfect his deeds and himself. The sun, with its original and unchanging brightness, cannot teach man what the always changing, developing, growing and revitalized moon can.

# Slice of LIFE

Rabbi Shabtai Slavaticki is the Rebbe's Shilach in Antwerp Belgium.

He has a large congregation and is well respected by even non-religious Jews.

One Sunday he received a phone call from an older fellow, a successful diamond merchant, who said he had to talk to him urgently.

Rabbi Slavaticki, himself a very busy man, stopped everything and told the man to come over immediately.

A half-hour later he entered the Rabbi's office with a wild look on his sweating face as though he was about to burst out in tears. He was a heavy-set fellow, perhaps in his sixties, dressed in an expensive suit with an open collar and a new, black yarmulke on his head.

He asked if he could close the door, closed it, sat down, took out a handkerchief, wiped his forehead and began.

"Rabbi, about three months ago I decided to get more serious about Judaism and begin doing what it says in the Torah. Perhaps it was a bit too much to bite off at once but I took on myself Tefillin, eating kosher and keeping the Shabbat.

"Putting on Tefillin every morning wasn't that difficult, I had done it as a young man and it only took a few minutes of my time each day. Not only that but I actually enjoy putting them on and talking with Hashem every morning.

"And keeping kosher also was also no major problem ... I could afford it and I never really enjoyed not-kosher food anyway.

"But Shabbat was not so easy. First of all it was an entire day. Second, keeping the store closed was expensive. But the worst thing is I love working and I don't enjoy resting. So it wasn't easy.

"But I did it... and even started getting used to it. You know, there is a pride to being Jewish and.. well... it's just good to do the right thing. So for three months I kept Shabbos.

"But then, yesterday it happened. I was walking home in the morning from the Synagogue and I happened to pass by the street where my store is and I see the street is full of people... packed!!

"Long lines of important-looking people were standing in front of all the stores.... except for mine and suddenly I remembered! It was a special international gem day in Antwerp and all the diamond dealers, the biggest and the richest from the entire world came here to buy. It happens every year and this year it was yesterday... Shabbat!!

"But I said to myself... 'Shabbat is Shabbat... I'm not opening the store and that's it!!' And I started walking home. It would have worked but suddenly I heard someone yelling my name! It was the owner of the store next to mine.

What he was doing in the street I don't know but he was there and he came running up yelling like a madman. 'What happened?' he asks me, 'Are you feeling all right? Did something happen in your family? Where are you going?!!' he says "Its diamond day! Look at those lines!!"

"I told him that, thank G-d, everything was fine and started walking but he wouldn't let me go.

'Fine? Everything is fine!? Are you crazy or something! Today is Gem Day! Look!! Look!! You can make more today than in a month! Where are you going??!"

I tried to explain to him that I'm a Jew and today is Shabbat and... you know what he said? He said, 'Listen, give all the other Shabbats to G-d. This one is for YOU!!'

"I told him I had to go. Rushed home and tried to put the whole thing out of my mind. But I couldn't. I wanted to work! I wanted to sell gems! That's what I love doing, what I was brought up doing!! I took the Kiddush cup in my

hand but I couldn't think straight.

"So I told my wife and guests that I didn't feel good, that I had a headache. I went to my room, took a bottle of vodka, and drank five cups until I was so drunk I couldn't stand up and then flopped unconscious on my bed and slept for the entire Shabbat."

Rabbi Slavaticki listened patiently but didn't understand what the man wanted.

"I understand" he said, "But what can I do? What would you like me to do?"

"Rabbi," he said almost crying "I want to know what sort of repentance I have to make for such a terrible Shabbat! Can I give charity? Or maybe I should fast? Or maybe something else? Rabbi, what does it say in the books? "

Rabbi Slavaticki saw the simple sincerity of this Jew and couldn't hold himself back. His eyes filled with tears and he began to weep silently not being able to believe his ears, suddenly tears were running down his cheeks.

But when the man saw this he too began to weep. His eyes opened in horror and, shaking his head in disbelief said, "Rabbi, is it so bad? Is there no forgiveness for my sin? Is there nothing I can do?"

"You don't understand" The Rabbi replied. "Exactly the opposite!

"You know what I did yesterday for Shabbat? I sat at my Shabbat table with my family and guests, sang Shabbat songs, said words of Torah talked to my children and really enjoyed myself. I did everything that G-d wants a Jew to do.

"But you made a sacrifice! You sacrificed your money and your pleasure, you changed your nature. Whose Shabbat do you think is more pleasing to G-d; yours or mine? Yours for sure!!"

Adapted from "The Bait Moshiaich Magazine"

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ISSUE 1175

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

A person who can find good in everyone is in the category of Moshiaich...

Moshiaich will come to the defense of all of Israel, even the wicked. We now stand at an especially propitious time, for we have recently witnessed many miracles and great wonders around the world and the tzadikim of our generation have given testimony that we are on the threshold of the Redemption. (Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz)



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

2nd of Shevat, 5740 [1980]

Executive Director North American Jewish Students Network

## Greeting and Blessing:

Your letter of the 16th of Kislev reached me with some delay. Subsequently, I was gratified to be informed by the Lubavitcher activists who participated in the Convention that it was both an impressive and stimulating event. Of course, as our Sages emphasize, "The essential thing is the deed," and real Hatzlocho [success] is measured in terms of actual accomplishments in matters of Torah and Mitzvos. And if this applies to every individual, how much more so in the case of a Convention to which hundreds of young Jews have been brought together from different parts of the country. Thus, the fullest measure of the Convention's success will be reflected in the actual results, in tangible deeds and activities into which the Convention's aims, resolutions and spirit will be translated.

In view of your leading position in the organization and, especially, since you and your colleagues undoubtedly invested an enormous amount of energy, time and effort into the Convention, and "a person treasures his handiwork," you will surely wish to see the Convention achieve the maximum tangible results.

Needless to say, the above will largely depend on the follow-up, as is customary in such a case. It would be highly desirable that every participating student, and especially the group leaders, should receive copies of the resolutions, with an encouraging cover letter that would stimulate the actual implementation of the resolutions to strengthen Jewish knowledge, identity and commitment among Jewish students in the fullest possible measure.

At this time, approaching the Yahrzeit-Hilulo of my father-in-law of saintly memory on the 10th of Shevat, whose life and work is surely known to you, every one of us will surely remember his total dedication to the spreading and strengthening of Yiddishkeit, and how much he urged everyone to be involved in this vital activity.

We recall, particularly, that one of the first public pronouncements which my father-in-law made immediately upon setting foot in this country forty years ago was, "America is not different" - not different from any other place insofar as a Jew's commitment to the eternal Torah and Mitzvos is concerned. And in keeping with the principle that "action is the essential thing," he immediately threw himself into a determined all-out effort to make his vision a reality. How well he succeeded, with G-d's help, in this vital task is a matter of open record, as anyone who is familiar with the American scene, as it was then, and as it is now, can clearly see, especially on the campuses of the colleges and universities in all parts of this continent.

With prayerful wishes for your continued Hatzlocho in all above, and hoping to hear good news from you,

With blessing,

## CUSTOMS CORNER

### Sefer Torah [Torah scroll]

A person must treat a Torah scroll with great honour. It is a mitzvah to designate a special place for it and show respect and beautify that place.

One should not spit in front of a Torah scroll or hold a Torah without its mantle. A person who sees a Torah scroll being carried must stand before it until the Torah scroll is returned to its place or until it passes out of his sight.

In the synagogue, when the Torah is removed or returned to the ark, it is a mitzvah for everyone whom the Torah passes to accompany it to its place.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*In this week's Torah portion, Bo, we read about the mitzva of Tefillin. In fact, two of the paragraphs from our portion are among the four paragraphs handwritten on parchment by a scribe and contained within the Tefillin boxes. The verses are: "These words must also be a sign on your arm and a reminder between your eyes. G-d's Torah will then be on your tongue. It was with a show of strength that G-d brought you out of Egypt." (Ex. 13:9) and "These words shall also be a sign on your arm and a reminder between your eyes. All this is because G-d brought you out of Egypt with a show of strength.*

*"Have you put on Tefillin today?" That question has become a standard opening by Chabad-Lubavitch Yeshiva students and volunteers around the world as part of the Rebbe's Tefillin campaign.*

*In 1967, just prior to the Six Day War, the Rebbe initiated the famous Tefillin Campaign.*

*At that time, the Rebbe stressed that the fulfilment of the mitzva of Tefillin, in addition to its essential aspect as a commandment, is especially imperative at this time. It is important not merely for its protective quality as indicated in the Torah, "and they shall fear you" -- the fear that is instilled in the hearts of the enemies of Israel as a result of the observance of this mitzva -- but even more so for the Divine strength which the mitzva of Tefillin bestows upon defenders of Israel to vanquish the enemy in the course of battle.*

*The Rebbe appealed that each and every male of 13 years and older should observe this mitzva. He also urged that by every possible means, everyone should spread and foster the observance of this precept among his fellow Jews, particularly those in the Israeli military defence forces, their relatives and friends.*

*"Living with the times" this week includes literally living with the mitzva of Tefillin. So, have you put on Tefillin today (or encouraged your brother, son, husband or friend to do so)?*

*J. I. Gutterman*

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Rabbi Chaim Ibn Attar - known as the "*Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh*" - was a leading 18th century sage and kabbalist who lived in Morocco. There, he earned his livelihood as a silversmith. However, he always made Torah study his primary occupation, and his craft secondary. He would sit engrossed in Torah study, until his last coin was spent, and only then did he engage in worldly matters. But as long as he had money, he would not work.

Two emissaries from the court of the King of Morocco once came to him with a certain amount of gold. "The King has heard that you are the foremost expert in your craft," they said. "Therefore, he sent us to commission you to fashion a piece of the finest jewellery in honour of his daughter's wedding. You will be paid a princely sum. However, you must complete the work in ten days."

At that time, our master, Rabbi Chaim, still had enough money to cover his daily expenses. So, he refused the royal commission, explaining that he was not available for work at this time.

The two messengers were astonished by his refusal. And being vicious haters of the Jewish people, they were overjoyed to realize that now they had an excellent opportunity to denounce Rabbi Chaim. They returned to the palace and told the King that the Jewish silversmith had rebelled wilfully and disdained the royal commission, and thus had dishonoured the crown.

The King was also shocked, but declared that he would give the Jew one more chance, since his skills were unique. He told the messengers to go again and threaten the rabbi with dire punishments if he would not cooperate and accept the work.

But once again, Rabbi Chaim refused the work, insisting that he could not violate his principles and turn away from Torah study when he was not in need of money, not even for the King.

The two emissaries gleefully reported back to the King Rabbi Chaim's second refusal. Upon hearing, the King immediately commanded that Rabbi Chaim be cast into a den of lions, this being the punishment for treason.

When the police came to arrest Rabbi Chaim, he asked for permission to bring along a volume of Psalms and his Tallit and Tefillin. They laughed at him and exclaimed, "Do you think you are going to a hotel? You are on your way to be killed in a lions' den!" However, the Jewish sage paid no heed to their words, and packed his bag. Unsuspecting, his wife asked him, "Where are you going?" He answered simply, "I shall return soon."

They took their prisoner straight to the lions' den and threw him in. When the lion keeper heard, he strolled over to the cage, wondering if he would be in time to see the fierce beasts tear the Jew apart.

He was amazed by what his eyes beheld. There sat Rabbi Chaim, wearing his Tallit and Tefillin, reciting Psalms in a loud voice, while before him lay the three lions in a semi-circle, like students before their teacher, listening attentively to his words.

Overcome with fear, the lion keeper ran to inform the King. But the King refused to believe him and said he would come to see for himself.

When the King, accompanied by his royal entourage, arrived at the lions' den and saw this awesome sight, he became furious. He accused the keeper of having fed the lions instead of starving them for this occasion, as he had ordered.

The keeper replied that he had indeed fulfilled the King's instructions, but the King refused to believe him. He told the keeper to take a long pole and

place it through the bars to poke the lions to stir them up, because obviously they were lethargic from overeating.

The keeper did so, and almost lost his arm when the first lion he touched quickly leapt at him with teeth bared, snarling ferociously,

The King could no longer deny the evidence of his own eyes. He proclaimed before everyone, "Now I know that there is a G-d of Israel!" He commanded that Rabbi Chaim be retrieved from the pit, and when he emerged he asked him for an explanation of the miracle.

Rabbi Chaim answered, "I refrained from my work because of my immersion in the holy Torah; therefore the Torah protected and saved me!"

The King asked his forgiveness, and sent him home in peace and with great honour and many valuable gifts. When he arrived home, his wife innocently asked him how things had gone. He replied, "Alright, Baruch Hashem, but it is time to move to the Land of Israel. There aren't the proper conditions to study Torah properly here."

Biographical note:

Rabbi Chaim (ben Moshe) Ibn Atar (1696 - 15 Tammuz 1743) is best known as the author of one of the most important and popular commentaries on the Torah: the *Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh*. He established a major yeshiva in Israel, after moving there from Morocco. Chassidic tradition is that the main reason the Baal Shem Tov twice tried so hard (and failed) to get to the Holy Land was that he said if he could join the Ohr HaChaim there, together they could bring Moshiach. He is buried outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem.

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

And he called for Moses and Aaron at night and he said, "Rise up, go out from among my people." (Exod. 12:31)

When Moses approached Pharaoh after the plague of darkness, Pharaoh angrily said to him, "I am warning you not to see my face anymore, because on the day when you will see my face you will die." Thereafter Moses didn't return to Pharaoh. After the plague of the firstborn Pharaoh summoned Moses but Moses refused to come because Pharaoh had said Moses would die if he saw his face again. Pharaoh, knowing that he needed to see Moses, began to plead; "Now it is night. Since it is dark and hard to see my face, please come speak to me and take the Jewish people out of my country." (*Or Hachaim*)

Draw out and take for yourselves lambs...and kill the Passover sacrifice (Ex. 12:21)

The Children of Israel were commanded to purchase these lambs for the Passover sacrifice from the Egyptians. Because the Egyptians worshipped the lamb as a deity, it was disqualified for use as an offering. Buying it from them, however, would remove this taint and make it permissible, according to the law: "An object of idolatry sold by a non-Jew nullifies its status." (*The Rebbe of Sochatshov*)

Remember this day, on which you went out from Egypt (Ex. 13:3)

Why is the Exodus from Egypt so central to Judaism, considering that the Jewish people were later subjugated to other nations at other times in history? The answer is that the Exodus forever changed the nature of the Jew's soul. By virtue of the Exodus, every Jew became "free" on the ultimate, objective level, making it impossible to enslave his essence. (*The Maharal of Prague*)

### CANDLE LIGHTING: 23 JANUARY 2015

BEGINS	ENDS
8:22 .....MELBOURNE .....	9:24
8:11 .....ADELAIDE .....	9:11
6:28 .....BRISBANE .....	7:24
7:02 .....DARWIN .....	7:54
6:28 .....GOLD COAST .....	7:24
7:06 .....PERTH .....	8:04
7:49 .....SYDNEY .....	8:48
8:00 .....CANBERRA .....	9:00
8:24 .....LAUNCESTON .....	9:29
8:21 .....AUCKLAND .....	9:23
8:33 .....WELLINGTON .....	9:38
8:27 .....HOBART .....	9:34
7:28 .....BYRON BAY .....	8:25
7:00 .....SINGAPORE .....	7:51



### CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD  
PARSHAS BO  
3 SHEVAT • 23 JANUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:22 PM
	MINCHA:	8:30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9:00 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:58 AM
	MINCHA:	8:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:24 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8:00 AM
	SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:25 PM
	MAARIV:	9:15 PM