

# LAMPLIGHTER

18 Sivan  
Parshas  
Beha'aloscha  
**1194**  
5 June  
5775/2015

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah reading, Beha'aloscha, describes the preparations for, and initial stages of, the journey of the Jews through the desert after having camped at Sinai for more than a year.

At Mount Sinai, the Jews received the Torah and soon after constructed the Sanctuary there. Yet, our people did not remain content with having achieved these spiritual heights. Rather than staying in the desert where G-d provided for all their needs, they set out on a mission - to journey to Israel.

The desert is barren and desolate. Yet as the Jews travelled through the desert, they transformed it, albeit temporarily, into a settled land, a place where crops, trees, and even flowers grew. For the Jews did not travel empty-handed. With them, they took the Torah that they had been given and the Sanctuary that they had constructed. G-d's presence, which rested within the Sanctuary, and which is given expression in our lives, brought about these positive changes in the surroundings in which they lived.

The Baal Shem Tov explains that the journeys of the Jewish people through the desert are reflected in the journeys of every individual through life. Some of the phases that we pass through may appear barren and desolate. Nevertheless, we must appreciate that this is only the external setting in which we are placed. It should not reflect our inner state - for G-d's presence accompanies us at all times and the Torah is with us in all surroundings.

In a similar vein, the journeys of the Jewish people through the desert also allude to the journeys of our people through the ages toward the Messianic Era. Accordingly, throughout history the Jews have wandered from country to country pursuing the Divine mission of revealing the sparks of holiness everywhere by utilizing physicality in fulfilling the Torah's commandments.

To explain this motif: Our Sages state that G-d exiled the Jewish people in order that converts should be enabled to join them. In addition to the simple meaning of this statement, Jewish mysticism expands the meaning of the word "convert" to refer not only to individuals who accept Judaism, but also to the sparks of the G-dly life-force which are hidden within the world's material substance.

When a Jew uses an object for a mitzva, he or she releases these hidden sparks of G-dliness and enables them to be overtly revealed. So from land to land have our people wandered, completing phase after phase of this mission.

In the process of doing so, they have made "the desert blossom." They have endowed the world with spiritual meaning and purpose, pushing it toward the culmination of this process; Moshiach's coming, when the G-dliness that pervades our existence will be manifest and apparent.

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

## Miriam's Courage

By Yitschak Meir Kagan

At the conclusion of the Parshah of Beha'aloscha we read how when Miriam had to live outside of Israel's desert encampment for seven days, "...the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in again" (Numbers 12:15).

Two million people, with all their leaders, their prophets, judges, elders and sages delayed their scheduled journeying to wait for one individual! For they remembered; they remembered how she had waited at the banks of the Nile to guard her baby brother Moses floating in the reed box in the river; they remembered how Miriam, a little girl, had moulded Israel's destiny and changed the course of history...

Amram, father of Aaron and Miriam, was the leader of the generation prior to the exodus from Egypt. When Pharaoh decreed "Every son that is born you shall throw into the river" (Exodus 1:22) Amram declared that it was useless to continue bearing children, and he divorced his wife Yocheved. All the Jews followed his example and divorced their wives. Then Miriam spoke up. Only six years old at the time and well aware that her father was righteous and the leader of the nation, she courageously voiced her conviction: "Your decree is worse than Pharaoh's! For Pharaoh only decreed against the boys; but you decree against boys and girls. Pharaoh is an evil man, and his decree may or may not be effective; but you are a righteous person and your decree will be effective."

Miriam declared that one must follow G-d's commands, including the precept to "...be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 9:1) without regard to "logic" or "rationale" and without regard to the consequences. Amram recognized the truth and sincerity of his little daughter's words. He immediately remarried Yocheved, and all Israel, inspired by his example, followed suit.

What was the result of Miriam's actions? Moses was born; and as soon as his mother placed him in the river, Pharaoh's astrologers declared, "Their deliverer has already been thrown into the water" and the decree (to drown all male children) was revoked.

The undaunted courage of a six-year-old girl, to "tell it like it is" even to the leader of the generation, effected the annulment of the evil decree while still in the exile of Egypt, and eventually brought deliverance, through Moses, not only for herself, for her parents and for her family, but for all Israel.

## Slice of LIFE

The year was 1981 in the Crown Heights district of Brooklyn New York; the neighborhood of a large group of orthodox Jews called the Lubavitcher (Chabad) Chassidim.

These Chassidim believe that each Jew must continue the job Abraham, the first Jew, began some 4,000 years ago and teach the world (beginning with religiously ignorant Jews) that there is a Creator. One of the ways they do this is by having representatives throughout the world, including Bukhara.

Today there are many Chabad Chassidim in that country, but in 1971 there were few. The ones that were there taught the Jews Torah and encouraged the performance of commandments but the communist Government there was always breathing down their necks.

One of those that escaped and himself became a Chabad Chassid was a young man, learning in the main 'Yeshiva' (Torah academy) in Brooklyn by the name of Reuven Chaimov.

Our story begins one wintry day as Chaimov was walking down the road in front of the Chabad Headquarters and saw an acquaintance he hadn't seen for several years.

It was Shalom (pseudonym), a not-so-religious Jew that had been a member in the communist party in Tashkent (big city in Bukhara) but rumours had it that Shalom had moved to Israel and became fabulously rich. What was he doing here in 'Chabad' territory?

Reuven greeted Shalom warmly but the latter seemed very removed and bothered by something. Reuven asked what the problem was and Shalom replied that he needed to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe as soon as possible but the Rebbe's secretaries said he'd have to wait for months. That's how long the waiting list was. He pleaded with Reuven to help.

Reuven was a very quiet and friendly person but suddenly he got brave, "Listen Shalom, I'll do my best but only on the condition that you'll do whatever the Rebbe says. Okay? Is it a deal?"

Shalom thought for a few seconds and replied, "Okay, but I'm not going back to Israel. No matter what he says...I can't go back there."

Reuven didn't ask questions. They shook hands, and he told Shalom to follow him into the main building (770 Eastern Parkway), entered the secretary's office and Reuven began pleading and begging until he secured an audience for Shalom in ten days' time.

The day arrived. But meanwhile Reuven had used the time to pump up Shalom's Judaism. He let him sleep in his dorm room, bought him a pair of Tefillin, taught him to pray like everyone else, and even taught him Torah several hours each day so Shalom entered the Rebbe's room ready for anything.

Reuven waited outside for his friend to exit a new man...and he didn't have to wait long. But he was in for a big disappointment.

In just a few moments Shalom came out with a totally blank look on his face. Reuven took him to a corner and tried to get him to open up and tell him what happened in 'there'. But the only answer he got was "Nothing special."

It was late at night. They returned to the dorm room and went to sleep but after just a few hours Shalom woke his roommate and announced that he wanted to tell him what the Rebbe said. Reuven woke, groggily washed his hands and face, came to himself and listened as Shalom spoke.

"You know that I was a member of the party in Russia. And as a card carrying Communist, together with a few bribes I became the manager of a big store and was a big shot in Tashkent. But then one day my father said that he wanted me to bribe some more people and get papers for all of us

to leave the U.S.S.R.

"I really didn't want to do it, I had a good position, money, everything! But I had to honour my father. He hated the communists and kept saying so out loud, so I didn't really have much choice. Anyway, I did as he said; I got the papers and we left... but I smuggled out a lot of money with me; over a half million rubles in cash. It was a fortune! So when I got to Israel I was already rich! And I invested it in diamonds and became even richer.

"But then, suddenly, my luck changed. I made a lot of wrong decisions and one day I found that I not only had nothing... I was a debtor! So I took out a big loan from the diamond exchange, of which I was a member; 350,000 dollars.... and lost that too! So they put a restraining order on me forbidding me to leave the country but I convinced them to let me come here to the USA to collect money. That's why I'm here. But things aren't working out here either ... so I can't go back."

"But what did the Rebbe say?" Reuven asked. "That's what I really what to know."

"Ahh, the Rebbe? Well, it was totally superhuman. You know, before I went in you told me to write him a short letter explaining my problem, right? Well, when I got in I gave him the letter and the Rebbe read it. Then he looked up at me and said, 'Before you left Russia you made a vow to give a tenth of your earnings to charity. But you haven't kept your vow. When you keep your vow your financial state will change for the better.'

"I never told anyone about that vow... never! How he knew such a thing is totally out of nature! But I'll do it! If I make money I'll give a tenth! I promise!"

And so it was, Shalom began giving charity and little by little, opportunities opened. He earned all his wealth back, repaid his debts and today owns a large, successful chain of diamond shops throughout America, Israel and Hong Kong, and his Judaism came alive in the meantime.

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*The Lamplighter contains words from sacred writings. Please do not deface or discard.*

ISSUE 1194

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Since we are essentially "one nation," it would seem appropriate that this oneness be reflected in the Jews' geographic location as well. Nevertheless, this is not so and our people are dispersed throughout the entire world. However, this dispersion was intended to give the Jews the potential to elevate the entire world through following the directives of the Torah. After this mission is completed, in the Messianic redemption, G-d will collect and unite all the Torah actions that were performed throughout the world and bring them as one to the Holy Land. *(The Lubavitcher Rebbe, 9 Sivan, 1989)*



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

23 Shevat, 5744 [1984]

This is in reply to your letter of January 23 1984, in which you write that you were born in a DP camp in Germany, a child of parents who survived the Holocaust, and you ask why G-d permitted the Holocaust to take place, etc.

No doubt you know that there is substantial literature dealing with this terrible tragedy, and a letter is hardly the medium to deal adequately with the question. However, since you have written to me, I must give you some answer. Hence, the following thoughts.

Jews - including you and me - are "believers, the children of believers," our Sages declare. Deep in one's heart every Jew believes there is a G-d Who is the Creator and Master of the world, and that the world has a purpose. Any thinking person who contemplates the solar system, for example, or the complexities of an atom, must come to the conclusion and conviction that our universe did not come about by some "freak accident." Wherever you turn, you see design and purpose.

It follows that a human being "also" has a purpose, certainly where millions of human beings are concerned.

Since the Creator created the world with a purpose, it is also logical to assume that He wished the purpose to be realized, and therefore, would reveal to the only "creature" on earth who has an intelligence to understand such matters, namely, humankind, what this purpose is, and how to go about realizing it. This, indeed, is the ultimate purpose of every human being, namely, to do his or her share in the realization of the Divine design and purpose of Creation. It is also common sense that without such "Divine revelation," a human being would not, of his own accord, have what exactly is that purpose and how to achieve it, any more than a minuscule part or component in a highly complex system could comprehend the whole system, much less the creator of the system.

The illustration often given in this connection is the case of an infant, whose lack of ability to understand an intricate theory of a mature scientist would not surprise anyone, although both the infant and the scientist are created beings, and the difference between them is only relative, in terms of age and knowledge, etc. Indeed, it is possible that the infant may some day surpass the scientist in knowledge and insight. Should it, then, be surprising that a created human being cannot understand the ways of the Creator?

It is also understandable that since every person has a G-d given purpose in life, he or she is provided with the capacity to carry out that purpose fully.

A further important point to remember is that since G-d created everything with a purpose, there is nothing lacking or superfluous in the world. This includes also the human capacity.

It follows that a person's capacity in terms of knowledge, time, energy, etc., must fully be applied to carrying out his, or her, purpose in life. If any of these resources is diverted to something that is extraneous to carrying out the Divine purpose, it would not only be misused and wasteful, but would detract to that extent from the real purpose.

*continued in next issue*

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*In this week's Torah portion, we read about the daily lighting of the seven-branched golden Menorah in the Mishkan by Aaron the Kohen Gadol.*

*King Shlomo writes: "The soul of man is the lamp of G-d." Just as a flame rises constantly upwards so man's soul is constantly seeking to rise higher. Aaron's lighting of the Menorah symbolized the task of all Jews, to "light up" the souls of the Jews.*

*Rabbi Sholom Ber of Lubavitch was once asked: "What is a Chasid?" and he replied, "A Chasid is a 'street-lamp lighter.'" In Rabbi Sholom Ber's days, a street-lamp lighter kindled each street lamp by hand. The lamps were there in readiness, but they needed to be lit. Rabbi Sholom Ber implied that a Chasid is one who goes out into the street, finds the lamps - Jewish souls - that need to be lit, and carefully and gently kindles them with his beauty, warmth and light of Torah and mitzvot.*

*Every Jew can be, and in essence is, a street-lamp lighter. Every Jew is obligated to search out other Jews whose souls remain ready but are not yet ignited with the fire of Judaism. And certainly, in his so doing, nothing will be detracted from the "streets lamp lighter's" own flame. For, as we all surely know, lighting one candle from another does not diminish the flame of the first. Rather, when two flames burn together they burn even stronger with less of a chance that one will be extinguished.*

*Let us go from flame to flame until the entire Jewish Menorah will be proudly lighted and together illuminate the darkness of the night of exile.*

*J. I. Gutnick*

### CUSTOMS CORNER

#### **Why do we light a special candle on the Yartzheit (anniversary of the passing) of a relative?**

The basis for this custom is the verses from Proverbs, "The soul of a man is the lamp of G-d" and "For the commandment is a lamp and the law is light." Just as a flame always rises upward in an attempt to return to its source, so, too, does the Jewish soul attempt to reconnect with G-d through the performance of mitzvot (commandments). And ultimately when the soul leaves the body it does return to its Divine source.

## IT HAPPENED

## Once...

Yaakov's parents died when he was just a little boy, but fortunately for him, an old blacksmith took him in after finding him one day by the wayside, tired and hungry, looking for a place to eat and drink.

The old blacksmith was a kind old man but had little use for learning. Thus, young Yaakov did not attend cheder (school) anymore, for the old blacksmith kept him in the smithy all day, teaching him the skills of the trade.

Yaakov might have forgotten how to read, let alone study, but he had in his possession a treasure with which he would not part for anything in the world. This was a thin volume of the Talmud, known as Chagiga, which the Rabbi had given him as a parting gift upon his leaving cheder.

Whenever Yaakov found a free moment, he would eagerly take out his Talmud -- the only holy book he had other than his prayer book -- and study it religiously. He loved his precious Talmud.

Thus he grew up with the old blacksmith, far away from any Jewish settlement. Only on festivals would they leave their isolated surroundings and travel to the nearest Jewish community to be with their fellow Jews. The rest of the time, except on Shabbos, they would be working in the smithy.

When the old blacksmith passed away, he left his smithy to Yaakov, for he loved him as a son. He had taught Yaakov to be a skilled craftsman. But even though the peasants and wagon-drivers liked Yaakov's work and were more than willing to pay the price he asked, he barely earned enough to "keep the wolf from the door," as the saying goes.

Yaakov lived in poverty with neither wife nor children, but he did not complain, for he had known poverty all his life. Solitude was no hardship for him either -- he was used to that, too. Yaakov studied his Chagiga page by page, line by line, and word by word. He did this over and over again with every spare moment, until he practically knew it all by heart.

It is hard enough for a Jew to live far from a Jewish community, but it is worse still for a Jew to die in such a lonely place. Yaakov was only in his fifties when G-d decided that he had finished his work on earth. He passed away with not a soul present to witness his last moments, bending over his treasure, the Talmud Chagiga.

Days passed and no one missed Yaakov. The doors of the smithy were closed, but the few who called thought he had gone into town. The Jews of the nearest town were going about their business as usual, when the quiet was pierced by the wailing of a veiled woman in white who ran crying through the streets. People ran out of their homes and businesses to see what all the noise was about. The rabbi, too, went out and tried to calm the distressed stranger.

"What is the trouble, good woman?" he asked her gently. "My poor husband has died and there is no one to see to his burial," she replied in sorrowful tones.

"Do not worry," he assured her. "I shall see to it that your husband will be buried in the proper manner without delay."

When the local inhabitants saw the rabbi walking with this strange woman in white, everyone turned out to inquire what it was all about. When they learned that the rabbi was escorting the woman home to attend her husband's funeral, they all closed their stores and businesses and followed.

By the time the procession reached the smithy where poor Yaakov lay -- still bent over his precious volume of Talmud -- the crowd had grown to include nearly every man, woman and child in the town.

When the rabbi saw the size of the crowd who had come to pay their last respects to the poor smith, he turned in astonishment to the woman and asked her: "Tell me, good woman, who are you and who was your husband that he seems to be deserving of so much honour?"

"My name is Chagiga," replied the veiled woman. "My husband was a good Jew who devoted fifty years to me. He treasured me and cared for me to the depth of his ability. Surely such a life's companion is deserving of the greatest honour."

"You are quite right," said the rabbi. "A Jew who honours his wife so, must indeed be a good and deserving man. It is fitting that all these people have come to do him honour."

The woman stepped aside to allow the rabbi to enter the room where Yaakov lay. As his glance fell upon the open volume, he saw the name "Chagiga." He turned to look at the woman but she had vanished.

It dawned on him that she represented the spirit of Talmud Chagiga. She had repaid the honour and esteem in which Yaakov had kept her throughout these long years.

Yaakov was buried with the greatest honour, and was laid to rest amongst the graves of the saintliest of Jews.

"Blessed is the man who honours the Torah," declared the rabbi, "that the Torah should thus honour him."

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

When you light the lamps (Num. 8:2)

"Do not think," G-d said to Moses, "that I am commanding you to kindle these lamps because I need their illumination. Rather, the purpose is to give the Jewish people merit if they fulfil My instructions diligently. As reward for lighting these lamps before Me, I will provide you with a Great Light in the World to Come. (*Bamidbar Rabba*)

And Aaron did so (Num. 8:3)

As the great commentator Rashi explains, "This is to give credit to Aaron, who did not deviate [from what he was commanded to do]." Indeed, it is commendable when teachers and educators live up to the same high standards they expect their students to uphold. When a teacher's personal life is in consonance with what he preaches, his influence on his students is that much greater, and his words are accepted without undue effort. (*She'eirit Menachem*)

## CANDLE LIGHTING: 5 JUNE 2015

BEGINS	ENDS
4.50 .....MELBOURNE .....	5.51
4.53 .....ADELAIDE .....	5.52
4.43 .....BRISBANE .....	5.38
6.10 .....DARWIN .....	7.02
4.40 .....GOLD COAST .....	5.36
5.02 .....PERTH .....	5.59
4.35 .....SYDNEY .....	5.34
4.40 .....CANBERRA .....	5.39
4.31 .....LAUNCESTON .....	5.35
4.54 .....AUCKLAND .....	5.54
4.41 .....WELLINGTON .....	5.44
4.26 .....HOBART .....	5.31
4.38 .....BYRON BAY .....	5.34
6.51 .....SINGAPORE .....	7.42



## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS BEHA'ALOSCHA • 18 SIVAN • 5 JUNE

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4.50 PM
	MINCHA:	4.55 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5.30 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.53 AM
	MINCHA:	4.50 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	5.51 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	8.00 AM & 9.00 AM
	MINCHA:	4.55 PM
	MAARIV:	5.45 PM