

# LAMPLIGHTER

29 Av  
Parshas  
Re'eh  
**1204**  
14 August  
5775/2015

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Re'eh, touches upon numerous subjects, including the warning not to be involved with idolatrous practices, a list of kosher animals and non-kosher birds, the laws of tithes and a brief discussion of the three Pilgrimage Festivals.

The portion opens with the words: "See [re'eij], I set before you." G-d commanded Moses to convey to the Jewish people that they must consider and reflect on the holy words of Torah until they can actually "see" how G-d Himself takes care of each and every individual, great and small. G-d abandons all His other affairs, as it were, to provide every Jew with all his needs, "from His full, open, holy and broad hand."

It is not enough for a Jew to believe this on faith or understand it as an intellectual principle. A Jew must be able to "see" Divine Providence in the same way he can perceive a physical object with his fleshly eyes.

This, in fact, is the practical directive to be derived from this week's Torah reading, whose name "Re'eh" means "See":

Everything in Torah that a Jew learns should be "seen" rather than merely accepted or believed. In other words, a person should be so confident and sure of what he has learned that it is as if he can actually see it on the physical level.

This level of surety applies at all times and in all circumstances, whether it is "daytime" or "night-time" in either the literal or symbolic sense. A Jew must always strive to see the G-dliness and holiness in all his actions.

Even before drinking a simple glass of water we make the blessing "Shehakol -Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the world, that everything came into being with His word." We address G-d directly, recognizing that everything in the world was created and exists only because of His will.

By accustoming ourselves to always look for G-d's hand in everything around us; we will merit to "see" the fulfillment of the verse at the end of the Torah portion:

"Three times a year shall all your males be seen before the L-rd your G-d in the place which He shall choose." Our daily prayers will be answered, "May the Holy Temple be rebuilt speedily in our days," and "May our eyes behold Your return to Zion in mercy," with the coming of Moshiach and the Final Redemption.

*Adapted from talks on 20 and 21 Menachem Av 5749, and 22 Menachem Av 5750*

## Animals First

*By Lazer Gurkow*

The Torah requires that we feed our animals ahead of ourselves. Wake up and feed Spot before indulging in your breakfast. This doesn't mean that we must feed our animals with our last piece of bread while we die of starvation. Human life takes absolute precedence over animal life. But if we have sufficient funds to feed both, animals should be fed before mealtime. Very simply, the Torah is giving a humane message to put the needs of dependent creatures before our own.

If you are familiar with Chassidic philosophy, you know that oftentimes what seems to be a very simple statement in the Torah actually has a deeply spiritual subtext. On a metaphorical level, we each have an inner animal, a base nature that is entirely self-absorbed. Our task in life is to subdue our animal nature by reining in our impulses, or to sublimate the animal by making it more soulful.

This task is the reason for our soul's descent from the heavenly abode where it resided before we were born. The soul was perfectly content to serve G-d in its spiritual realm, where it beheld the divine, trembled in awe and melted in ecstasy. But it was given the mission to descend from heaven and enter the human body. Its purpose is not merely to continue to serve G-d on its own, though this remains the soul's greatest joy, but to teach the body and train our base animal nature to serve G-d.

Our soul would like nothing better than to seclude itself all day in prayer and meditation. But the soul didn't come here to improve itself; it can perfect itself much more freely in the spiritual realm from which it came. It descended to this material world to refine our animalistic urges, to transform a self-absorbed being into a selfless one. It must teach the animal the value of doing mitzvot and learning Torah. This is the soul's priority, and it must come first.

There is no question that this is a difficult challenge to the soul. It wants to soar to transcendental levels of sacred inspiration, and instead is made to spend eight to ten decades working with a stubborn, lazy and ignorant animal. But in return, the soul reaches a level it could never have achieved on its own.

Whereas before birth the soul indulged itself with spiritual absorption, the soul is now devoted to a cause greater than itself. After a hundred and twenty years, when the soul returns to its heavenly home, it will climb far higher than before.

By training the body to serve G-d, the soul carved out a little piece of the material world for G-d, creating an abode for G-d in the lower realm. This was G-d's original intention in creation, and the soul was given the opportunity to play a role in this cosmic purpose.

The soul descended to teach a selfish animal to become selfless, and in the process learned a lesson. Sacred as its spiritual ministrations were before its descent, it was, in a subtle sense, a selfish pursuit. The soul now reaps the benefit of its efforts and learns the lesson it labored to teach: that in the end, we are doubly rewarded when we put others first.

# Slice of LIFE

Rabbi Meir Friman ob'm of Kfar Chabad Israel was a great scholar and a true servant of G-d. He could pray for hours on end and his knowledge of spiritual matters was phenomenal. But you would never know it if you saw him on a normal day.

He always had a smile on his face, a joke to tell and a positive saying to lighten someone's burden. He was a man of action. They say that when one of the Torah schools in Kfar Chabad was bankrupt he mortgaged his house, gave the house to the school management and paid them rent on the house for the rest of his life.

Yom Kippur 1973; Synagogues throughout the world were filled with Jews praying for G-d's mercy on all mankind when suddenly war broke out. Egypt and Syria attacked Israel!

An army jeep came screeching to a halt before the Synagogue where Reb Friman was pouring out his heart to the Creator of the Universe, an officer appeared at the door, called out his name along with a few other Chassidim, loaded them up and they were on their way to the front.

It didn't take long for them to discover the details. The situation was worse than they could have imagined. The inept Israeli government literally allowed the enemy to attack and break through unprepared and undermanned defence lines from the north and south with no resistance.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands of Jewish soldiers were killed without a fight and the only thing standing between the invading murderers and Tel Aviv was .... nothing. The enemy was approaching and things looked bad.

When suddenly the Arabs stopped! If they would have continued the onslaught they could have claimed total victory in just hours ..... but they didn't. They inexplicably stopped!

Some say it was because their progress was so fast and easy they thought it was an Israeli trick to surround them so they stopped to check it out. Others say that their tanks forged so far in such a short amount of time they had to stop to allow their infantry to catch up.

But real truth was that G-d personally stopped them! An outright miracle!

This incomprehensible enemy delay gave the Israeli army a chance to regroup, bury their dead and set up defences but things still

looked very bad. The Israeli media with nothing optimistic to say only lowered everyone's morale. The 'invincible' Israeli generals of the Six-Day War were burying their heads in the sand. There was no leadership, no plan and almost no hope.

But then Sukkot arrived; the Holiday of Joy! (Five days after Yom Kippur)

Reb Meir was in the tank division that broke through the Suez where it was impossible to make a Sukkah but somehow on the second day of the holiday a fellow Chassid brought him a Lulav from somewhere and a bold idea crossed his mind. He would convince the commander, a staunch atheistic Israeli, to do the commandment and get the entire battalion to do it as well!

He left the Lulav in his tank, climbed out, crouched down and ran to the commander's tank some 400 feet from his and knocked on the lid.

The commander popped his head out. "What happened?! Why aren't you in your tank!!" He yelled.

"Today is Sukkot." Friman replied.

"So what? So what if it's Sukkot? Are you insane?? You want to get killed?! What are you doing here? GET BACK TO....."

"No sir" he replied politely with a smile on his face. "Today is Sukkot and I want you to take the Lulav and Etrog and shake them! It's a Mitzva!! (Good deed) And I want you to bring all the fellows to do it too."

The commander realized that Reb Friman knew what he was doing. It was Judaism; the only chance that he had to restore the spirits of his soldiers.

"Come on!" said Reb Meir "Why be so sad. You can't win a war if you're sad! We have to be happy!! After all its Sukkot today!!! We're going to win!!!"

The commander thought for a few seconds yelled behind him. "Anyone that wants to follow me, we're going to make a blessing on the Lulav in Reb Meir's tank!" and climbed out of the tank.

In just minutes they were gathered around Reb Meir taking turns putting on his Yarmulke, taking the Lulav and making the blessing.

Suddenly a deafening shriek over their heads filled the air followed by a massive explosion that knocked them all to the sand. They covered their heads with their arms. There were more explosions to follow. They all looked in the direction of the noise and saw a frightening scene. The commander's tank had been blown open like a firecracker and was in flames! Its ammunition was exploding! An Egyptian shell directly

destroyed the tank they should have been inside of.

They all rose to their feet, eyes wide as saucers, mechanically brushing themselves off, the commander was the first to recover from the shock. "You saved us!! Meir!! Your LULOV saved us!! He hugged Reb Meir and took the Lulav from him!

"From now on I'm in charge of the Lulav! Anyone and everyone must come to me and bless EVERY DAY!!!" And they began to dance to a lively Chassidic tune that Reb Meir sang.

But that was only half of the miracle.

The other half happened a few days later on Shabbat when the law is we don't shake the Lulav..... But we do make 'Kiddush'; namely lift a full cup of wine and declare thanks to G-d for giving us Jews the Holy Sabbath.

The only problem was that none of the soldiers were in a thankful or holy mood. In fact they were miserable.

They were stuck in the middle of the desert hiding from Egyptian artillery crowded in a camouflaged, makeshift bunker (the tanks were too hot and stuffy) waiting for orders that didn't seem to be in a hurry to arrive and praying they didn't get killed.

Again Reb Meir to the rescue. "Kiddush time!" He yelled out. But everyone was too depressed to even tell him to go away.

"Too dangerous." Someone mumbled. "Get back under cover."

But Reb Meir wanted to make Kiddush OUTSIDE and he wanted everyone to join him. It took a lot of nudging and cajoling but finally he succeeded. Everyone was standing around his tank as he raised the cup of wine (how he got the wine was a miracle not explained in the story).

Suddenly the air around them flashed! They were blinded! The ground thundered and snapped them like a huge rubber band in all directions.

A huge Egyptian shell hit!! A direct hit!!!

A few seconds later each rolled over in the sand to witness. No one had been injured but the bunker they had been hiding in had been transformed into a massive smouldering hole. The shell had hit the place they were just minutes ago!!

They all stood, examined themselves and screamed in disbelief. "You saved our lives twice!!!"

"Not me" Said Reb Meir, "It was your joy and the Creator that saved us all!!! But if you want to give thanks to someone," He concluded "give it to the Lubavitcher Rebbe who taught me and all his Chassidim to do everything to make people (especially Jews) genuinely happy."

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ISSUE 1204

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev asked his Chasidim, "Why did Moshiach tell Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi that he will come 'Today, if you listen to G-d's voice'? For, aren't we taught that G-d will first send Elijah the Prophet before that awesome day arrives?" Reb Levi Yitzchak answered himself, "Elijah comes to elevate everyone from their mundane tasks and prepare them for Moshiach. However, 'If you will listen to G-d's voice,' if we will prepare ourselves on our own, then Moshiach will be able to come 'today,' immediately, without the Prophet having to come first to prepare us." (*Siftei Tzadikim b'Haalotcha*)



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

In the days of Selichot, 5717 (1957)

An objective, unprejudiced survey of the long history of our people will at once bring to light the fact that it was not material wealth, nor physical strength that helped us to survive. Even during the most prosperous times under the united monarchy of King Solomon, the Jewish people and state were materially insignificant by comparison with such contemporary world empires as Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia. That it was not statehood or homeland - is clear from the fact that most of the time, by far, our people possessed no independent state and has lived in the diaspora. That it was not the language, is likewise clear from the fact that even in Biblical times Aramaic began to supplant the Holy Tongue as the spoken language; parts of the Scripture and almost all of our Babylonian Talmud, the Zohar, etc., are written in that language. In the days of Saadia and Maimonides, Arabic was the spoken language of most Jews, while, later, Yiddish and other languages. Nor was it any common secular culture that preserved our people, since that changed radically from one year to another.

The one and only common factor which has been present with Jews throughout the ages, in all lands, and under all circumstances, is the Torah and Mitzvoth [commandments], which Jews have observed tenaciously in their daily life.

To be sure, there arose occasionally dissident groups that attempted to break away from true Judaism, such as the idolatry movements during the first Beth Hamikdash [Holy Temple], the Hellenists during the second, Alexandrian assimilationists, Karaites, etc., but they have disappeared. Considered without prejudice, the Torah and Mitzvoth must be recognized as the essential thing and essential function of our people, whether for the individual Jew, or in relation of the Jewish people to humanity as a whole.

Hence the logical conclusion: The policy of imitating the other nations, far from helping preserve the Jewish people, rather endangers its very existence, and instead of gaining their favour will only intensify their antagonism. In like manner, those Jews who court the favour of the non-religious groups by concession and compromise in matters of Torah and Mitzvoth, not only undermine their own existence and that of our people as a whole - for the Torah and Mitzvoth are our very life, but they defeat even their immediate aim, for such a policy can evoke only derision and contempt; and justifiably so, for a minor concession today leads to a major one tomorrow, and an evasion of duty towards G-d leads to an evasion of duty towards man, and who is to say where this down sliding is to stop?

At this time, standing as we are on the threshold of the New Year, a time propitious for earnest introspection and stock-taking, I earnestly hope that my brethren everywhere, both as individuals and as groups (and the larger the group, the greater its potentialities and responsibilities), will recognize the Reality and Truth:

The essential factor of our existence and survival is our adherence to the Torah and the practice of its precepts in our every-day life. Let no one delude himself by taking the easier way out, nor be bribed by any temporary advantages and illusory gains.

The secret of our existence is in our being "a people that dwell alone" (Num. 23:9), every one of us, man or woman, believing in the One G-d, leading a life according to the one Torah, which is eternal and unchangeable. Our 'otherness' and independence of thought and conduct are not our weakness but our strength. Only in this way can we fulfil our function imposed on us by the Creator, to be unto G-d a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation," thereby being also a "segulah" for all humanity.

With prayerful wishes for a Kesivo vachasimo toivo, for a good and pleasant year, 'good' as defined by our Torah, which is truly good, both materially and spiritually.

With blessing

## CUSTOMS CORNER

Amen

Our Rabbis viewed the recitation of Amen very highly. In fact, they tell us that responding Amen is of greater significance than reciting the Bracha. The failure to recite Amen is considered a gross transgression, while responding Amen with great concentration opens the gates of Gan Eden. The letters of Amen are the root letters of the word Eemunah, belief or trust. By responding Amen one declares: "I believe in the bracha that I have just heard and I affirm its truth." Additionally, when responding Amen one should have in mind the beginning of the Bracha, "Baruch Atta Hashem", that Hashem's name is Blessed.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*Today is Rosh Chodesh Elul, starting a time of introspection and soul-searching. As the old year draws to a close, we take stock of our behaviour and make amends for any wrongs we may have committed. In preparation for the New Year, we conduct an honest assessment of our conduct, that we may be aroused to repentance and improvement of our Divine service.*

*During Elul, a Jew can almost sense the difference in the air. Everyone feels an inexplicable urge to draw closer to G-d, to increase in Torah and mitzvoth.*

*The G-dly soul that every Jew possesses automatically pulls him in the direction of holiness. However, there are two basic ways to motivate a person: the "carrot" and the "stick." Fear of punishment may yield the desired results, but it usually causes more damage than benefit.*

*Historically, it was against this backdrop that the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples first arose. In those days, itinerant preachers would "put the fear of G-d" into simple Jews by vividly describing the punishments that would befall them if they did not walk the straight and narrow.*

*The Chasidic approach, however, is the exact opposite. The Baal Shem Tov emphasized the innate worth of every Jew, the value of serving G-d with purity of heart, the immense power of prayer and the beauty of the Jewish soul.*

*On countless occasions the Rebbe has declared that the way to draw a Jew closer to Judaism is by spreading the light of Torah and mitzvoth. "One should explain to him the greatness of being a descendent of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...the 'only child' of the King of kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He, and that his soul is 'a veritable part of G-d Above.'"*

*In Elul, G-d's Thirteen Attributes of Mercy are manifested with particular intensity. It should thus be a time of only emphasizing the positive and increasing our love for our fellow Jew. In the merit of our good deeds (especially the mitzva of charity), each and every one of us will be found deserving, and G-d will inscribe us together with all the righteous.*

*J. I. Gutnick*

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Rabbi Yisroel of Ruzhin, a genius, miracle working, Chassidic leader who lived some two hundred years ago, was known as the 'Holy Ruzhiner' because of the intense G-dliness that emanated from his every action, word and even thought. His thousands of followers said that visiting him must have been very similar to visiting the Holy Temple as it put new joy and meaning into every moment of life.

But there were many G-d fearing, highly intelligent Jews that didn't believe in all this. They rejected him and all the other Chassidic 'Tzadikim' as well.

Such a person was Reb Yehoshua Charif. He had been one of the most brilliant students in the Yeshiva of Rabbi Akiva Eiger (one of the all-time Torah giants) and also one of Rabbi Eiger's relatives.

But as fate would have it this Reb Yehoshua Charif married a woman whose entire family were Chassidim, followers of the 'Holy Ruzhiner' and they - as well as his wife - pressured him constantly to at least visit their holy leader and have a look.

At first Reb Yehoshua refused outright, but when they didn't let up, he hit on an idea that he hoped would both get him some peace and quiet and might even wean his in-laws away from the Chassidim as well!

His idea was as follows: In the course of his Torah learning he had found an apparent contradiction between the Talmud and the Zohar (basic Kabbalah book) regarding the difference between vows (Nedarim) and oaths (Shavuos).

The Talmud explains that vows only are valid if they deal with existing things while oaths apply to even things which do not yet exist; for instance fruits that have not yet grown or money that has not been earned.

But the Zohar explains it exactly the opposite way; that oaths are limited to existing things while vows are not.

For several years he had been asking other Torah scholars to explain this apparent contradiction but none of them could.

He decided that he would agree to visit this Rebbe on the condition that he would answer this question, but with one hitch. Rather than verbally asking he would only think his question. If the Rebbe was such a super-Jew as his in-laws claimed then he should be able to read his mind and answer the question as well. But if not they would leave him alone.

They had no choice but to agree. So Reb Yehoshua, keeping his end of the bargain, travelled with his father-in-law to the Rebbe and the next day when they arrived and finally entered the Rebbe's synagogue it was packed with a lot of other Chassidim with the Rebbe sitting at his table before them totally oblivious to all of them. This went on for almost fifteen minutes and all the time Reb Yehoshua was thinking about his question as much as possible.

Then one of the more important Chassidim by the name of Reb Leib entered the room. The Rebbe invited him to sit down next to him and began engage him in conversation and everyone leaned forward and strained their ears to hear.

The Rebbe said, "True, people don't respect me as a learned person. Although the truth is that I finish all the books of the Talmud once a month.

"But my grandfather the Maggid of Mezritch was recognized by everyone

as one of the greatest Talmudic geniuses in the world and never the less once one of his enemies; a Misnaged who opposed the Chassidim, decided to test him by thinking of a question to see if the Rebbe could both read his mind and answer it.

"The question was about vows and oaths. The Talmud says one thing about them and the Zohar says another.

Reb Yehoshua couldn't believe his ears! The Rebbe continued;

"Well, My Grandfather gave one answer but I'll say an answer of my own.

"You know the souls learn Torah in heaven. There is even a 'Heavenly Court' to decide important matters. Well, the Talmud (Baba Metzia 86a), written over a thousand five hundred years ago, tells us that once there was an argument in heaven between the heavenly court and G-d!

"The Talmud relates that when they couldn't come to a conclusion they decided to call in an arbitrator from the living to decide who was right and they decided on Rabba Bar Nachmeini. He heard both sides of the argument and decided that G-d's opinion was correct!

"But surprisingly, the Rambam (Rabbi Moses ben Maimon) in his masterpiece on Jewish law which is the last word on such matters decides the law not according to G-d's opinion! The law is like the opinion of the heavenly court.

"The only way to explain this is that G-d desired that the opinion of the Rabbis (providing they are true Rabbis) can, at times, override His!

"So it is in our case regarding vows and oaths," the Holy Ruzhiner concluded. "The Zohar is stating the opinion of G-d while the Talmud represents the heavenly court!! So there is really no contradiction. That is my answer."

Then he turned to Reb Yehoshua and said, "Nu young man, are you ready to be a Chassid?"

Reb Yehoshua Charif not only became a Chassid, but he was one of the Ruzhiner Rebbe's most devoted followers.

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse (Deut. 11:26)

There are two different kinds of "today" - the "today" of blessing and the "today" of curse. Consideration of the present moment as an impetus for action can be either positive or negative: "If not now, when?" spurs a Jew on to do good, whereas "Eat and drink for tomorrow we die" leads him down the path of evil. (Rabbi Chanoch Henich of Alexander)

You are children of G-d, your G-d (Deut. 14:1)

The Baal Shem Tov deeply loved simple folk. He would frequently remark that love of the Children of Israel is love of G-d; when one loves the father one loves the children.

You shall not shut your hand from your needy brother (Deut. 15:7)

The first letters of this verse in Hebrew spell out the word "Tehillim" - Psalms. Reciting Psalms on behalf of a poor person is not enough; one must open his hand and give him material sustenance as well. (Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin)

### CANDLE LIGHTING: 14 AUGUST 2015

BEGINS	ENDS
5.25 .....MELBOURNE .....	6.24
5.25 .....ADELAIDE .....	6.23
5.08 .....BRISBANE .....	6.02
6.24 .....DARWIN .....	7.14
5.06 .....GOLD COAST .....	6.00
5.31 .....PERTH .....	6.27
5.06 .....SYDNEY .....	6.03
5.13 .....CANBERRA .....	6.10
5.10 .....LAUNCESTON .....	6.12
5.28 .....AUCKLAND .....	6.26
5.20 .....WELLINGTON .....	6.21
5.07 .....HOBART .....	6.10
5.04 .....BYRON BAY .....	5.58
6.56 .....SINGAPORE .....	7.45



### CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD  
PARSHAS RE'EH • 29 AV • 14 AUGUST

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5.25 PM
	MINCHA:	5.30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6.00 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.44 AM
	MINCHA:	5.20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6.24 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	
	SUN-FRI:	8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	5.35 PM
	MAARIV:	6.20 PM / 9.00 PM