

# LAMPLIGHTER

5 Shevat  
Parshas  
Bo  
**1226**  
15 January  
5776/2016

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

At the close of this week's Torah portion, Bo, the Torah relates how the oppression and suffering of the Israelites in Egypt reached its height. So intense was the suffering of the Hebrews that Moses felt constrained to exclaim to G-d: "Why have You dealt badly toward this people... and You have not delivered Your people." Even Moses, who was utterly devoted and faithful to G-d, could find no explanation for the extreme misery and darkness of the Exile.

Soon, however a most remarkable turn of events took place. Immediately after this darkest hour of the Egyptian exile, the process of the redemption was set in motion by G-d. When all hope seemed to have been lost, precisely then did the first rays of hope begin to shine for the Jews.

It is a well-known fact that the darkest part of the night is just before dawn. Our Sages compare exile to night. So too, when the night of the Egyptian exile seemed blackest, when the suffering of the Jews reached such a degree that even Moses complained "Why have You dealt badly...", it was then that the rays of deliverance began to shine.

The Talmud states that while the other nations of the earth calculate the yearly cycle according to the rotation of the sun, the Jewish People base their calendar on the rotation of the moon. For the Jews are likened to the moon, whose light wanes and diminishes, and finally seems to disappear. But it is precisely at that point that the new moon is born, and begins to grow steadily. Jewish history throughout the ages reflects the "lunar cycle." In the Egyptian exile, after reaching the lowest depths of oppression, when the long night of exile seemed at its very darkest, it was then that the deliverance and renewal of hope began. Such was the case in each subsequent exile.

There is much inspiration and encouragement to be derived from the above. There are times in one's life when it seems that the "wheel of fortune" has reached the lowest point of its cycle for him. It appears to him that his situation is beyond hope. Yet he should not lose faith and fall into despair, but should bear in mind that the darkest hour of exile - of our people as a whole, as well as, the "exile" of each individual - comes just before the start of the redemption.

*Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.*

## Finding Freedom

By Yossy Goldman

*Free at last, free at last, thank G-d Almighty we are free at last.* Who said these words? No, it wasn't Moses but American civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King. But it could have been Moses - or for that matter any one of the millions of Jews who were liberated from Egyptian bondage.

This is the week when we read of the great Exodus. *Let my people go that they may serve Me* was the Divine call transmitted by Moses to Pharaoh. Now, if the purpose of leaving Egypt and Pharaoh's whip was to be able to serve G-d, so where is the freedom? We are still slaves, only now we are servants of the Almighty!

Indeed, countless individuals continue to question the merits of religion in general. Who wants to submit to the rigors of religion when we can be free spirits? Religion, they argue, stifles the imagination, stunts our creative style forever shouts instructions and lays down the law. Thou Shalt do this and Thou Shalt better not do that, or else! Do's and don'ts, rules and regulations are the hallmark of every belief system; but why conform to any system at all? Why not just be "me"?

Many Jews argue similarly. Mitzvahs cramp my style. Keeping kosher is a serious inconvenience. Shabbat really gets in the way of my weekend. And Passover has got to be the biggest headache of the year.

Long ago, the sages of the Talmud said it was actually the other way around. *There is no one as free as he who is occupied with the study of Torah.* But how can this possibly be true? Torah is filled with rules of law, ethics and even expectations and exhortations that we take the high road and behave beyond the call of duty. How could they say that Torah makes us free? Surely it is inhibiting rather than liberating?

Let me share an answer I once heard on the radio while driving in my car. It was during a BBC interview with Malcolm Muggeridge, the former editor of *Punch*, the satirical British magazine. *Punch* magazine was arguably England's most irreverent publication. It mocked and ridiculed the royal family long before they did it to themselves. In his latter years, Malcolm Muggeridge became religious and the interviewer was questioning how the sultan of satire, the prince of *Punch* could make such a radical transformation and become religious? How could he stifle such a magnificent free spirit as his?

Muggeridge's answer was a classic, which I still quote regularly. He said he had a friend who was a famous yachtsman, an accomplished navigator of the high seas. A lesson he once gave him in sailing would provide the answer to the reporter's question. The yachtsman taught him that *if you want to enjoy the freedom of the high seas, you must first become a slave to the compass.*

A young novice might challenge the experienced professional's advice. But why should I follow that little gadget? Why can't I go where I please? It's my yacht! But every intelligent person understands that without the navigational fix provided by the compass we will flounder and sail in circles. Only by following the lead of the compass will the wind catch our sails so we can experience the ecstasy and exhilaration of the high seas. If you want to enjoy the freedom of the high seas you must first become a slave to the compass.

The Torah is the compass of life. It provides our navigational fix so we know where to go and how to get there. Without the Torah's guidance and direction we would be lost in the often stormy seas of confusion. Without a spiritual guidance system we flounder about, wandering aimlessly through life. Just look at our kids when they're on vacation from school and are "free" from the disciplines of the educational system. Unless they have a program of some kind to keep them busy - like a summer camp - they become very frustrated in their "freedom."

Within the Torah lifestyle there is still ample room for spontaneity and freedom of expression. Not all rabbis are clones. To the untrained eye every yeshiva bochur looks identical - a black hat, glasses and a beard. The truth is that everyone is distinctively different; an individual with his very own tastes attitudes, personality and preferences. They may look the same but they are each unique.

We can be committed to the compass and still be free spirits. Indeed, there are none as free as they who are occupied with Torah.

# Slice of LIFE

It so happened, several years after the Lubavitcher Rebbe began leading Chabad in 1951 (tenth of Shevat 5711, exactly one year from the passing of the previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak ) that a certain businessman entered his office and asked advice and blessing for his business.

[The Rebbe often gave such advice and it was always accurate. One time he also advised the questioner to observe the Sabbath and put on Tefillin daily. When the man answered that it was too difficult the Rebbe replied. "You came from far away and spent much time to receive my advice on business although that is not at all my field. So why don't you take my advice in the field I AM an expert in, Judaism!?"]

Back to our story; The Rebbe handed him a small amount of money and said that he would like to be his partner in a business venture. The pleasantly surprised man, almost not believing his ears, gladly accepted the offer.

With such a partner, who could go wrong!?!]

The Rebbe continued; "Now we are partners. Neither of us will do anything in this endeavour without the other's consent. Good? Now my advice to you is to buy furs (the Rebbe told him which type) and then report back to me."

Overjoyed, the partner went out and after a few days of thorough pricing and searching he bought ten thousand dollars\* worth of furs (\*the exact amounts of all these transactions were not mentioned in the story I heard) and went back to report.

But the Rebbe was not pleased. "That isn't the type of investment I was thinking of. I meant a real investment; say, a \*half-a million dollars!"

The fellow almost couldn't believe

what he was hearing. A half-million?! He would have to borrow a fortune!! With mixed feelings he forced a smile and left the room.

Hesitant to go into such debt but encouraged by the Rebbe's optimism he, at first reluctantly but then with more enthusiasm, spent the next few days mortgaging all he had and borrowing huge amounts of money.

And there were other problems. He had to rent a massive warehouse for storage, and arrange a way to transport, and guard the furs. And it all cost money!

'But what did he care!' he told himself, 'he was going to make a fortune!! It would all pay off in the end!'

A week or so later he finished it all and was back reporting every detail to the Rebbe who congratulated him on the good work and reminded again him NOT do anything without his consent.

Satisfied and certain the prices would soar he went home, ate dinner with his wife and family and made several toasts to the Rebbe and to the new future. That night went to sleep with a smile on his face, certain that tomorrow's financial page would have bold news!!

But it didn't. The prices didn't soar. They stayed exactly where they were...day after day for a month. "Ahhh, of course!" our hero tried to comfort himself, "Heh heh!! What a fool I was to think it would happen instantly! Good things take time!!"

But after two months he really began to worry. Each day was costing him money. He had to pay for the storage, interest on his loans, his money was tied up, and worse of all...the price wasn't raising it was slightly DROPPING!!

He went back to the Rebbe and suggested that perhaps they should sell. But the Rebbe smiled and told him to be patient.

The price dropped steadily until two months later it was down 20 percent!!

He was desperate. Time was against him! He rushed to 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn (the Rebbe's headquarters) and again got permission to enter the Rebbe's room.

"Please, Rebbe" he asked wide eyed "The price is dropping. If I, that is, WE, sell now I can at least pay off the loans I took. I'm sure I'll make the loss up elsewhere. Let's sell before it drops even more!"

But the Rebbe again assured him not to worry. Everything would FOR SURE be all right.

But it wasn't. It's not that he didn't want it to be; he wanted it to rise, he believed it would rise. But it didn't.

In fact two months later fur prices were at an all-time low. 40 percent lower than when he bought. It was a catastrophe!! He would be wiped out for life! His head was swimming. He had heard so many good stories about the Rebbe. He had been so sure! It seemed so right! It was a, a mystery, maybe it was because of his sins, but he had to get out! That was CLEAR!!

"This will be the last time!!" He swore to himself as he again went to the Rebbe's headquarters, got permission to enter and poured out his heart. But the Rebbe refused to agree.

A week later he mechanically bought a newspaper, as he had been doing for the last months, and with a heavy heart opened to the financial page; furs were UP...four hundred percent!

He ran to the nearest payphone to call the Rebbe...and the Rebbe answered "Sell"!!

He was rich!!!

Immediately after he cashed the check he sped to 770 with wings on his feet, again got permission to enter and gave the Rebbe a big donation.

"Now," he said joyously to the Rebbe. "Let's make another partnership!"

"No," the Rebbe replied seriously, "You are a difficult partner."

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ISSUE 1226

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

In the beginning of the month of Nissan, Moses came to the Jews and said, "This month you will be redeemed." The people objected: "But G-d said we would be in exile for 400 years, and we have been in Egypt only 210 years!" Moses answered, "Since G-d wants to redeem you, He is skipping all these years." So too when the time comes for redemption, Moshiach will tell us, "This month you will be redeemed!" The Jewish people will object: "But G-d said we first must be enslaved by 70 nations!" Moshiach will answer, "Since we have been spread out in many countries, it is as if all the Jewish people went there. Therefore, we have fulfilled G-d's condition and this month we will be redeemed!" (*Pesikta Raboti, Parshat Hachodesh 7*)



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

B"H, Erev Rosh HaShanah, 5709

Greetings and blessings,

My letter and the *kuntreis* for *Chai Elul* certainly reached you. [Please] acknowledge your receipt of it.

At the end of the year, as I was reviewing your previous correspondence, I saw a question of yours that I had not answered as of yet. I ask forgiveness for delaying until the present.

The question: *Rashi's* commentary to *Michah* 6:9 states: "'The perceptive [man] discerns Your name' - This is the source for [the teaching] that everyone who recites each day a verse which begins and concludes with the same [letters] as begin and conclude his name will be saved by the Torah from *Gehinnom*." You ask: What is *Rashi's* intent in this statement?

[*Rashi*] is referring to the custom cited in many *Siddurim* - and it is also *Chabad* custom - to recite each day a verse that begins [and concludes] with the same letters as begin and conclude one's name. We, however, add to *Rashi's* teaching and recite this verse at the conclusion of [the passage] *Elokai netzor* in the *Shemoneh Esreh*. Thus [we recite the verse] several times each day.

As of now, I have found this custom mentioned<sup>1</sup> in *Sefer HaZechirah*, Vol. I; *Avodas Yisrael...* ([which states that] even a woman [should follow this practice]); *Siddur Nihora HaShaleim*. As of yet, however, I have not found it in the *Shelah*, the *Kitzur Shelah*, and the *Siddur Yaavetz*, although these are cited as sources by others.

With regard to [what we do in] practice, I asked my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*, and he told me that when he learned - and began - to pray, the Rebbe [Rashab ?"] - to differentiate between the living and those eternally alive - directed him to recite at the conclusion of the *Shemoneh Esreh* the verses:<sup>2</sup> "May G-d bring to consummation on my behalf...", and "He leads them out from darkness..."<sup>3</sup> (although [there is another verse] listed as a sign for the name *Yitzchak*: "G-d, O L-rd,... You protected... armed battle").<sup>4</sup> [He also told him] that [these verses] should be recited [after] every *Shemoneh Esreh*, on all days.

This must be made known: There are those who question whether the parenthetical statements in *Rashi's* commentary to the *Tanach* were authored by *Rashi* himself or by a later authority on Jewish customs. Support [for the latter argument is that] these customs are not cited by the *Rishonim*, nor in the texts of *Rashi's* disciples.

I found it stated that the notes of "?" were included in *Rashi's* commentary in the Amsterdam printing of the *Tanach* from the year 5460. In the Introduction, it explains that the intent is R. Ovadiah the prophet.<sup>5</sup> This text is not accessible to me to clarify the matter. Perhaps the above note to *Rashi's* commentary in *Michah* is among these notes.

To conclude with blessings for a *kesivah vachasimah tovah* for you and the entire company, M. Schneerson

[The dispatch of] my letter was delayed until after Rosh HaShanah. Enclosed are 3 *maamarim* of *Chassidus*. Please acknowledge your receipt of them. They are for the entire company which you headed from before. With blessings for *agmar vachasimah tovah*.

## CUSTOMS CORNER

### Showering on Shabbat

#### Hot Water

1. One may not wash one's entire body or even a majority of one's body in hot water on Shabbat, even if the water was heated before Shabbat, and even if he does one body part at a time. The same is true of pouring hot water over oneself
2. Many water heaters or boilers are made so that automatically when hot water is removed cold water is added. If this is the case, it's forbidden to remove hot water from the water heater, even if the water heater is turned off, because doing so will heat up the cold water which is added (which entails a violation of *Bishul*).

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*Since "from the Shabbos are blessed all the days of the coming week," it follows that the dates of this week, and specifically the tenth of Shevat, are associated with this week's Torah portion, Parshas Bo. This portion describes the Jews' exodus from Egypt, "On this very day, all the armies of G-d (Tzivos Hashem) left the land of Egypt."*

*The key to the Jews' departure from Egypt is their identification as "armies of G-d." A soldier stands in absolute self-nullification, giving himself over beyond the reaches of his intellect. Even when he sleeps, one can appreciate that he is a soldier.*

*When this self-nullification which transcends intellect permeates through and encompasses one's entire being -- as explained above in regard to faith -- a connection is established with G-d's essence. "The simple commitment of a common person is connected with G-d's transcendent simplicity." Thus, in the Chassidic discourse connected with the Previous Rebbe's passing, which we commemorate this week, Basi LeGani, the Previous Rebbe explains how the king squanders all the treasures of the kingdom on behalf of the common soldiers for they are the ones who are actively involved in carrying out the war.*

*Thus, when the Jews were identified as "the armies of G-d," "the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to them in His glory and redeemed them." Afterwards, for forty years, they internalized this service of self-nullification until they "attained [full grasp] of the Teacher's knowledge".*

*J. I. Guterlich*

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

One Friday night the Baal Shem Tov was about to make Kiddush when he suddenly laughed out loud. In the middle of the Shabbat meal he laughed again, and a few minutes later he laughed a third time. No one dared inquire why, but immediately after Shabbat his disciples approached the senior Chassid Reb Zev Kitzes and begged him to find out what was going on.

When Reb Zev Kitzes asked the Baal Shem Tov why he had laughed, the Tzadik replied that he would show him. He ordered his driver to ready the horses and wagon, and the entire group of disciples piled in for the ride. Throughout the night they traveled, without knowing their destination. When dawn broke they saw that they had arrived in the city of Kozhniiz.

After the morning service, the Baal Shem Tov asked that Reb Shabsai the bookbinder be summoned before him. The head of the Jewish community was very surprised by the Tzadik's interest in this particular individual. "What I mean to say," he explained, "is that I'm sure he's a fine and honest man, but he's not exactly what one might call a Torah scholar. In fact, he's a very simple person." Nonetheless, the Baal Shem Tov was adamant about speaking to him. Reb Shabsai the bookbinder was summoned, together with his wife.

When the two of them were standing before him the Baal Shem Tov said, "I want you to tell me what you did on Shabbat. Tell me the truth, and do not leave out any details."

"I will tell you everything," Reb Shabsai replied, "and if I've done something wrong, I beg you to show me how to make amends. I am a simple bookbinder," he began, "and when I was younger and stronger and could work long hours, my livelihood was plentiful. Every Thursday I would buy the necessities for Shabbat, and on Friday mornings close up shop at ten o'clock, in order to go to the synagogue to prepare myself for the holy day. Now that I am older, however," he continued, "I find that I cannot work so hard, and we have become quite poor. But I refuse to relinquish my former habit.

"This past week, Friday morning rolled around and I did not even have enough money to buy flour. But I decided that it would be better to suffer in silence than ask for charity. I asked my wife to promise me that even if the neighbours noticed we had no food, she would refuse to take any gifts. Rather, we would willingly accept whatever had been decreed from Above. Not having any other way to honour the Shabbat, my wife set about sweeping our humble home with a broom, removing the dust from every nook and cranny.

"That Friday night, instead of going home right after Maariv, I remained in the synagogue until everyone was gone. I was afraid someone might ask me why there weren't any candles burning in the window.

"Unbeknownst to me, while cleaning the house my wife had found an old dress with silver buttons on the sleeves. Overjoyed at her find, she had immediately sold them for enough money to provide a very sumptuous Sabbath meal. When I came home and saw the house brightly lit and the

table fit for a king, I was very disappointed, assuming that she had been unable to withstand the temptation of accepting charity. Nevertheless, I decided to say nothing that would disturb the sanctity of the Sabbath.

"I made Kiddush and we washed for the challah, but after the fish I couldn't control myself any longer. Very gently I chided her for having accepted our neighbours' generosity, but before I could even finish she told me what had happened. My eyes filled with tears of happiness, and without even thinking I grabbed her arm and began to dance with her around the table. After the soup I was again overcome with joy, and we danced for a second time, and for a third time after dessert. All in all, three times I was overwhelmed with gratefulness that G-d had allowed me to rejoice in the Sabbath directly from His holy hand. But Rebbe," he added worriedly, "If I've committed any sin, please tell me how to correct it."

At that the Baal Shem Tov turned to his disciples and said, "I want you to know that the entire entourage of heavenly angels was dancing and rejoicing with Reb Shabsai and his wife. That is why I laughed aloud those three times."

He then offered the couple a choice: Either they could live out their days in honour and wealth, or they could be blessed with a son in their old age (having been childless till then). Reb Shabsai's wife immediately chose to have a child, whereupon the Baal Shem promised she would give birth the following year, to a boy they should name Yisrael (the Baal Shem Tov's own name). He also asked to be invited to the Bris, so he could serve as Sandek and hold the baby.

Indeed, the child grew up to be one of the greatest sages of his generation, known as the Kozhniizer Magid.

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

For I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants (10:1)

When Pharaoh would soften, his servants and ministers would harden themselves; when they would soften, Pharaoh would harden; when both would soften, G-d would harden their hearts. (*Midrash HaGadol*)

Moses was distressed to see the forces of evil capable of such resolution and determination. So G-d said to him: they, on their own, do not possess such power. It is only because I have hardened their hearts... (*The Chassidic Masters*)

A mixed multitude went up also with them (12:38)

The Hebrew word rav ("multitude") has a numerical value of 202; the "mixed multitude" represents the 202 sparks of holiness that the Jewish people extracted from Egypt. (*The Kabbalists*)

Tell in the ears of your son and your son's son... that you may know that I am the L-rd. (Ex. 10:2)

In order to implant faith in the heart of one's children, there first needs to be "that you may know that I am the L-rd" - you yourselves must believe in and know G-d. (*Rabbi Yehoshua Rokeach*)

### CANDLE LIGHTING: 15 JANUARY 2016



BEGINS		ENDS
8.26	MELBOURNE	9.29
8.14	ADELAIDE	9.25
6.30	BRISBANE	7.26
7.01	DARWIN	7.53
6.29	GOLD COAST	7.26
7.08	PERTH	8.07
7.51	SYDNEY	8.51
8.03	CANBERRA	9.04
8.28	LAUNCESTON	9.34
8.25	AUCKLAND	9.27
8.37	WELLINGTON	9.43
8.32	HOBART	9.40
7.30	BYRON BAY	8.27

### CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS BO • 5 SHEVAT • 15 JANUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8.26 PM
	MINCHA:	8.35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9.05 PM
SHABBOS	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.56 AM
	MINCHA:	8.20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9.29 PM
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS	SUN-FRI: 8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	7.00 / 8.30 PM
	MAARIV:	9.20 PM