

LAMPLIGHTER

12 Shevat
Parshas
Beshalach
1227
22 January
5776/2016

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Beshalach, we read about the splitting of the Sea. This miracle prepared the Jewish people for the giving of the Torah and the Final Redemption.

Concerning the splitting of the sea, the Torah tells us that Nachshon ben Aminadav risked his life to jump into the Sea. It was only after Nachshon entered the Sea that the waters parted and the Jews were able to proceed.

Did Nachshon disregard his life by jumping into the sea? No! For Nachshon knew that G-d had taken the Jewish people out of Egypt for the sole purpose of giving them His Torah at Mount Sinai. Nachshon was guided by the desire to advance toward the Torah. It mattered not to Nachshon that a body of water obstructed his path; he jumped into the Sea.

Faced with a seemingly impossible situation the Jewish people had been of several opinions. Nachshon, however, was uninterested in any of their "options" - returning, waging battle or running away - for he knew that none of this would bring them closer to Mount Sinai. He was also not interested in arguments or calculations. There was only one solution: to go forward to Mount Sinai. And so he did so, with tremendous mesirat nefesh (self-sacrifice).

The portion of Beshalach is generally read on the Shabbat preceding or following the 10th of Shevat, the anniversary of the passing of the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn. The circumstances surrounding the splitting of the Sea contain a timeless lesson; so do the actions of the Previous Rebbe. For throughout his life the Previous Rebbe acted with mesirat nefesh and set an example for all future generations.

The Previous Rebbe did not specifically seek out mesirat nefesh; this was not his intent, as his sole objective was to spread Torah. He did not stop to consider if self-sacrifice was necessary, nor did he pay attention to the prevailing opinions and views of the other Jews of his time. To him, their arguments carried no weight at all. The only thing that motivated the Previous Rebbe was the need to get closer to Mount Sinai. Even if a "sea" stood in his way, he would jump in. What would happen next? That was G-d's concern, not his. This was immaterial to the Previous Rebbe. He simply did what he had to in order to reach Mount Sinai.

From this we learn a lesson to apply in our daily lives. Our function on earth is to serve G-d, to love His creations and bring them closer to Torah. Differences of opinion and approach are not our concern. Our only true goal is to draw nearer to Mount Sinai, and to do so without consideration for any obstacles that seem to obstruct our path.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Vol. 1

Tradition!

By Yossy Goldman

How important is tradition in Judaism? I don't just mean for the Fiddler on the Roof -- I mean for me, you, and all the rest of us. How strong is the need for tradition in the spiritual consciousness of Jews today?

Despite the effects of secularism, I would venture to suggest that there is still a need inside us to feel connected to our roots, our heritage, and our sense of belonging to the Jewish people.

But for vast numbers of our people, tradition alone has not been enough. And that applies not only to the rebellious among us who may have cast aside their traditions with impunity, but also for many ordinary, thinking people who feel that to do something just because "that's the way it has always been done" is simply not good enough.

So what if my grandfather did it? My grandfather rode around in a horse and buggy! Must I give up my car for a horse just because Zayde rode a horse? And if my Bobba never got a university degree, that means that I shouldn't? So, just because my grandparents practiced certain Jewish traditions, why must I? Perhaps those traditions are as obsolete as the horse and buggy?

There are many Jews who think this way, and who will not be convinced to behave Jewishly just because their grandparents did.

We need to tell them *why* their grandparents did it. They need to understand that their grandparents' traditions were not done just for tradition's sake, but there were very good reasons why their forebears practiced those traditions. And that those very same reasons and rationales still hold good today.

Too many young people were put off tradition because some cheder or Talmud Torah teacher didn't take their questions seriously. They were silenced with a wave of the hand, a pinch of the ear, the classic *When you get older, you'll understand*, or the infamously classic *Just do as you're told*.

There are answers. There have always been answers. We may not have logical explanations for tsunamis and other *tzoris*, but all our traditions are founded on substance and have intelligible, credible underpinnings. If we seek answers we will find them in abundance, including layers and layers of meaning, from the simple to the symbolic to the philosophical and even mystical.

This week's Parshah features the Song of the Sea, sung by Moses and the Jewish people following the splitting of the sea and their miraculous deliverance from the Egyptian armies. In its opening lines we find the verse, *This is my G-d, and I will glorify Him; the G-d of my fathers, and I will exalt Him*.

The sequence is significant. First comes *my G-d*, and only thereafter *the G-d of my fathers*. In the Amidah, the silent devotion which is the apex of our daily prayers, we begin addressing the Almighty as *Our G-d and the G-d of our fathers... Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*. Again, *our G-d* comes first. So it is clear that while *the G-d of our fathers* -- i.e. "tradition" -- most definitely plays a very important role in Judaism, still, an indispensable prerequisite is that we must make G-d ours, personally. Every Jew must develop a personal relationship with G-d. We need to understand the reasons and the significance of our traditions, lest they be seen as empty ritual to be discarded by the next generation.

Authentic Judaism has never shied away from questions. Questions have always been encouraged and formed a part of our academic heritage. Every page of the Talmud is filled with questions -- and answers. You don't have to wait for the Passover Seder to ask a question.

When we think, ask, and find answers to our faith, then the traditions of our grandparents become alive, and we understand fully why we should make them *ours*. Once a tradition has become ours, then the fact that this very same practice has been observed uninterrupted by our ancestors throughout the generations becomes a powerful force that can inspire us and our children for all time.

Slice of LIFE

Dr. R. was a well-known Jewish physician in New York. But as great a genius as he was in medicine he was a complete ignoramus in Judaism; he knew virtually nothing about the Torah and its commandments and had neither the time nor the interest to learn.

Until he met a young rabbi by the name of Yosef Tevel.

The year was 1988. Rabbi Tevel's father Avraham was ill and when they heard that the biggest expert on that illness was Doctor R. they went to see him. But as fate would have it, Yosef Tevel was a talkative Chabadnik who loved to discuss Judaism with non-religious Jews and Dr. R. was a good listener.

His father's illness demanded several visits and each one ended with a friendly conversation-debate about Judaism. Despite Rabbi Tevel's efforts to get him involved, to the doctor it was no more than an interesting pastime. But Rabbi Yosef didn't give up.

After his father was cured Rabbi Yosef continued the acquaintance and the discussions continued intermittently for four years. Then, one day in 1992 when he happened to visit doctor R. for some medical advice he noticed that the doctor seemed to be very perturbed about something. Until finally he blurted out,

"Is it true that your Rebbe, the Lubavitcher Rebbe you mentioned, is really a prophet? I've just heard that he was and that he did miracles! Is this true? Can you tell me one of his miracles?"

Rabbi Yosef tried to explain that the Rebbe's miracles only reflect his care and love for humanity (especially Jews) and they really don't prove much.... just as the miracles that Moses did didn't stop the Jews from worshiping the Golden Calf.

But the doctor insisted and pressed him until he had no choice.

"Okay," Rabbi Yosef said, "I'll tell you a miracle that happened to my father over twenty years ago." Dr. R. motioned for the Rabbi to sit opposite him and the Rabbi continued.

"My grandmother, my father's mother, was very ill. In fact the doctors had all given up on her. So my father got an appointment to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He took us all in with him; my mother and brothers and me and asked for the Rebbe's blessing.

"It was about three in the morning when

we finally got in. I thought that the Rebbe was probably knocked out from such a long day but it was as though he was waiting just for us. He greeted us, listened to our request, said that there was no need to worry about my grandmother; she would live for many more years (she, in fact, got better and lived ten more years) and then looked at us and said 'Whose birthday is it today?'

"We looked at each other and didn't know what to answer. It was the eighteenth day of the Hebrew month of Av and as far as we knew none of us had been born on that day. So the Rebbe proceeded to answer other questions my father asked, blessed us all and we all left.

"But that night my father couldn't sleep. He had been through the war when he was a child and due to all the terror and confusion didn't really know exactly when he was born. Not only that, those were the days before the Lubavitcher Rebbe suggested that everyone celebrate their birthday so no one really paid much attention to such things.

"So the next morning he visited my grandmother in the hospital, told her about the Rebbe's blessing and when he saw she was feeling better asked if she happened to know when he was born. 'Why certainly I know!' she answered. 'You were born on the 18th of Av!'

"My father was astounded! He rushed to the Rebbe's headquarters in Brooklyn to thank him and when the Rebbe saw him he just smiled and reminded my father to celebrate in a holy and happy way."

Dr. R. sat in deep thought for a few seconds and then something strange happened; he became excited! He had always seemed cold and objective but suddenly he unexplainably was like a bundle of fire.

"Listen Rabbi" he said to Rabbi Tevel. "You say the Rebbe wants us to celebrate our birthdays, right? Well, can you tell me MY Hebrew birth date? I really want to know!"

He told Rabbi Tevel his English birthday and the Rabbi called the nearby Chabad Headquarters and got the date.

It was the 13th of Elul... exactly the date of... that very day!!

Rabbi Tevel shook the bewildered doctor's hand, wished him a happy birthday, called his brother Pinchas, asked him to buy some cakes and drinks bring them to the doctor's office and twenty minutes later they were celebrating. The doctor was totally speechless with emotion and after he calmed down a bit he asked for permission to talk.

"First, Rabbi Yosef, I want to thank you for this wonderful celebration and for your

friendship all these years. Second, I want to tell you why I was so emotional today and insisted that you tell a miracle story.

"Last night at about three in the morning I got a phone call from a very good and close friend of mine; a non-Jewish professor. He apologized for the crazy hour, assured me it wasn't a joke and explained that he just had a dream that he felt that he had to tell me.

"He told me that a few years ago late one night he was skimming through the channels on his television when he chanced on an older Rabbi speaking vigorously in Yiddish. Of course he didn't understand a word but when he looked at this Rabbi he felt such awe that he simply couldn't turn the channel and the awe increased the longer he watched. On the screen it said 'the Lubavitcher Rebbe' and even gave a telephone number. So after the program he dialed it, said that he wanted to help in any way possible gave his number and requested that they contact him. Anyway, a few months went by and they didn't call him but he didn't let up. He called again and they told him that the Rebbe was ill (the Rebbe suffered a stroke in 1992) and advised him to write a letter. So he wrote a letter wishing the Rebbe a speedy recovery again stating his willingness to help and added ten questions about life that were bothering him.

"But when a few months went by and he didn't get a reply he got angry. He couldn't understand why someone in the Rebbe's office couldn't at least have the decency to acknowledge the letter.

He began to think that perhaps he made a mistake about this Rabbi.

"Then, last night he went to sleep and, behold! He had a dream! He saw the Rebbe walking in a large room accompanied by two other Rabbis. There were Chassidim everywhere but when the Rebbe saw him he stopped, turned to him, and thanked him for the letter and the good wishes. And then the Rebbe answered each of his ten questions one after the other!

"My professor friend was so excited he had trouble speaking but he felt it was so important that he had to call me immediately.

"That is why I was so excited today" The doctor continued. "If the Rebbe appeared to a gentile professor in his dreams just in order to calm him down, then maybe Judaism is much more real than both you or I think it is!"

The next day the doctor bought a pair of Tefillin and a Prayer shawl and began learning Judaism.

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield in conjunction with the Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

Editors: Ovadya Rogalsky & Tzali Reicher
P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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

ISSUE 1227

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The eternity of the Jewish soul within the context of our material world will be fully expressed in the Era of the Redemption, when the souls of all the Jews of all generations will be resurrected. Here too the analogy of a wedding can be used to describe the unification of the body and the soul. The ultimate Redemption of our people and of the world at large is not a remote promise. On the contrary, the Jews of our generation have been granted complete atonement and are now at the highest pinnacle ever of our national history. All the Divine service necessary to bring about the Redemption has been completed. All that is necessary is that we open our eyes and perceive that the Redemption is indeed a reality. (The Rebbe, 6 Shevat, 5772-1992)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

B"H, 25 Tishrei, 5708

Greetings and blessings,

I had thought that we would meet during Sukkos (for it has become customary for you to visit my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*, during these days) and wish each other a good *kvitel* for a good and happy year. Unfortunately, you were [unable] to come this year. I hope you and your family are all in good health.

One of the positive qualities possessed by priests, which is perpetuated even after the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, is blessing the people at the time of prayer. For synagogues are called "a sanctuary in microcosm."

One of the qualities that the ascent to the *Beis HaMikdash* brought about is, as *Chassidus* explains, that it would [motivate] the Jews to bow down. This was not merely an external activity, carried out with their bodies [alone], but it also involved their souls. They would nullify all the powers of their souls - their will, their intellect, and their emotions - to G-d. It is thus understandable that a synagogue where the inner [dimension of] bowing down is expressed in the most complete manner is more of "a sanctuary in microcosm," closer to the positive quality of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

A chassid experiences this when he prays in the house of study of his Rebbe. Every chassid is to a certain extent *batei* to his Rebbe. And when a chassid who is a priest blesses the people in his Rebbe's house of study, when compared to blessing them in an ordinary house of study, he is closer to blessing the people in the *Beis HaMikdash* (which was inordinately greater than blessing them outside the *Beis HaMikdash*; see the *mishnah*, *Sotah* 37b).

As you know, each year, on the morning of Simchas Torah, according to the order arranged by my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*, we sell the verses of *Atah Horeisa* on behalf of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch. This year, [because] you were not there, at the outset, I was unsure of what to do: a) to buy a verse on your behalf, and b) if yes, for which amount. [My uncertainty was reinforced by the fact that] you did not write to me concerning this.

Afterwards, however, I thought [as follows]:

- According to the Alter Rebbe's wording (*Tanya*, *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 16): "I am not unaware of the hardships of the present time when [the opportunity for earning] a livelihood has suffered a downturn.... Nevertheless, they are not acting properly... [by] closing their hand which had been open until now to give profusely and generously...."
- "For *tzedakah* is nothing but a loan to the Holy One, blessed be He.... who will repay one for his kindness many times [even] in this world...."
- "Also, one should be concerned... when his colleagues are included in a project involving a *mitzvah* and he is not included with them."
- As I once heard from my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*: "It is not appropriate to show [others] a way to decrease [their positive activities]."
- "One may act on behalf of a colleague if it will be to that person's advantage."

My conclusion was that from my side, I must consider and say that just as [you did] the previous year, you would purchase a verse and for the same amount (18 * \$18).

The verses from *Atah Horeisa* from the morning of Simchas Torah that were purchased for people who were not present were recited by my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*.

With blessings for everlasting good in all matters for you and for all the members of your household,

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Chairman of the Executive Committee

Under separate cover, I sent you our latest publications. Please acknowledge your receipt of them.

CUSTOMS CORNER

Proper Dress for a Man

- One should be careful to get dressed under one's blanket so as not to reveal skin that is usually covered. Therefore, if one is not wearing a shirt to sleep, one should put it on under the blanket rather than sit up and put it on.
- Similarly, in places where people walk around in socks and shoes even in the summer, if it is possible one should put on one's socks underneath the blanket; however, some are lenient regarding revealing one's feet.
- One should make sure to cover one's body at least up to the breast bone and on one's arms at least up to the elbow. Some are lenient regarding short sleeve shirts.
- There is what to rely on to change in a bathroom stall without being concerned about one being temporarily undressed, since it is a closed private area.

A WORD

from the Director

Tu B'Shevat is "the Rosh HaShanah of the trees." The connection between this holiday and our service is evident from the phrase: "for a man is like the trees of the field." Our Sages explain that a fruit tree serves as a metaphor for Torah sages and by extension, to the totality of the Jewish people since "all your sons are students of the L-rd."

We find the Jewish people referred to with the metaphor of land as the verse states, "You shall be a desired land". In particular, they share a special connection to the chosen land, Eretz Yisroel, and the seven species of fruit for which Eretz Yisroel is praised in the Torah.

Thus, we find each of these seven species employed as a metaphor for the Jewish people. The Jews are called, "the first of His grain" (referring to wheat and barley). Psalms describes the Jews as "a vine brought forth from Egypt" (grapes). Similarly, we find the metaphors of figs, "the first fruit of the fig tree in its season;" pomegranates, "your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates;" olives, "The L-rd called your name, 'a green olive tree, fair, with goodly fruit;" and a date palm, "Your stature is like a palm tree," and "the righteous will flourish like a palm tree."

Since *Tu B'Shevat* is the "the Rosh HaShanah of the trees," it generates new life energy for those dimensions of a Jew's service which are compared to trees.

G-d "sowed" Israel, His "produce", so that His glory would be revealed in an increased manner. In a more particular sense, the metaphor of planting or sowing the Jews in exile is relevant on a personal level and relates to the manner in which the soul descends into this world to elevate the body, the animal soul, and its portion in the world at large, making a dwelling for G-d in the lower worlds. Through our fulfilment of *Mitzvos* (which are also described by the metaphor of sowing), we draw down the revelation of G-dliness into the world.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812, founder of Chabad Chassidism) was raising money to ransom Jewish prisoners.

He went first to a city that was famous for its miser. It seems that this stingy man, despite his considerable wealth, was loath to share his blessings, no matter how worthy or urgent the cause. Rabbis and beggars alike avoided his home. Anyone who did unwittingly end up on his doorstep was offered a single rusty copper coin, which even the most desperate pauper would promptly refuse.

When Rabbi Schneur Zalman arrived in the town, the elders of the community graciously received him. But when he announced that he wanted to visit the house of the miser and wanted two rabbis to accompany him, he was met with serious resistance. The Rebbe was adamant, however, and they finally acquiesced and gave him the escort he requested.

The next afternoon the three of them were standing in front of the miser's mansion. Before knocking on the door, the Rebbe turned to his companions and requested that they not utter a word, no matter what they hear or see. Several moments later they were sitting in the luxurious front room, and the owner was returning from his safe with a small velvet money pouch.

"Yes," said the rich man. "A touching story indeed! Widows and orphans in captivity. Ah, the suffering of the Jewish people! When will it all end? Here, Rabbi, take my humble donation."

To the miser's surprise, the Rebbe seemed pleased by the gift. He was actually smiling at him warmly as he put the coin into his pocket and said, "Thank you, Mr. Solomons. May G-d bless and protect you always." The Rebbe then proceeded to write him a receipt, adding all sorts of blessings in a most beautiful script.

"Thank you again, my friend," said the Rebbe as he stood and warmly shook the man's hand, looking him deeply in the eyes with admiration. "And now," he added, turning to his two companions, "we must be on our way. We have a lot of collecting to do tonight."

As the three rabbis walked to the door, the Rebbe turned and bade his host yet another warm farewell. "You should have thrown it back in his face," hissed one of the rabbis after they heard the door close behind them.

"Don't turn around and don't say a word," whispered the Rebbe as they walked down the path to the front gate.

Suddenly they heard the door opening behind them and the miser calling: "Rabbis, rabbis, please come back for a minute. Hello, hello, please, I must speak to you, please... please come back in."

In a few minutes they were again sitting in the warm, plush drawing room, but this time the rich man was pacing back and forth restlessly. He stopped for an instant and turned to the Rebbe. "Exactly how much money do you need to ransom these prisoners?"

"About five thousand rubles," the Rebbe replied.

"Well, here is one thousand... I have decided to give one thousand rubles; you may count it if you want," said the miser as he took a tightly bound stack of bills from his jacket pocket and laid it on the table. The other rabbis were astounded. They stared at the money and were even afraid to look up at the miser, lest he change his mind.

But the Rebbe again shook Mr. Solomons' hand, warmly thanking him, and wrote him a beautiful receipt replete with blessings and praises, exactly like the first time.

"That was a miracle!" whispered one of the rabbis to the Rebbe as they left the house and were again walking toward the gate. Once more the Rebbe signalled him to be still. Suddenly the door of the house again opened behind them. "Rabbis, please, I have changed my mind. Please come in once more. I want to speak with you," Mr. Solomons' called out.

They entered the house for a third time as the miser turned to them and said, "I have decided to give the entire sum needed for the ransom. Here it is; please count it to see that I have not made a mistake."

"What is the meaning of this?" wondered the Rebbe's astonished companions after they had left the rich man's home for the third time that evening. "How did you get that notorious miser to give 5,000 rubles?"

"That man is no miser," said Rabbi Schneur Zalman. "No Jewish soul truly is. But how could he desire to give, if he never in his life experienced the joy of giving? Everyone to whom he gave that rusty penny of his threw it back in his face."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

G-d led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines (13:17)

The tribe of Ephraim had erred and departed from Egypt 30 years before the destined time, with the result that three hundred thousand of them were slain by the Philistines... and their bones lay in heaps on the road... G-d therefore said: If Israel behold the bones of the sons of Ephraim strewn in the road, they will return to Egypt...

Thus the verse says, v'lo nacham Elokim ("G-d did not lead them," which can also be translated as "G-d was not comforted"). This is comparable to a king whose sons were carried off as captives, and some of them died in captivity. The king afterwards came and saved those that were left. While he rejoiced over those that survived, he was never comforted for those that had died. (*Midrash Rabbah*)

And the angel of G-d that went before the camp of Israel removed and went behind them (Ex. 14:19)

When the Jewish people are worthy of G-d's benevolence they attain a level higher than the angels. The angel that until now had preceded them on their journey respectfully stood still and allowed the Children of Israel to pass on ahead. (*Kedushat Levi*)

And the sea returned to its strength (14:27)

On the third day of creation, when G-d made the dry land emerge from the waters and caused the waters to be gathered together into one place, forming from them the sea, He stipulated with the sea that it should split to allow the Israelites to pass through it on dry land and then overwhelm the Egyptians. Thus it is written, "and the sea returned to its strength (I'aitano) when the morning appeared." The word I'aitano ("to its strength"), by a transposition of letters, can be read litna'o ("to its stipulation"). (*Zohar; Mechilta*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 22 JANUARY 2016



BEGINS		ENDS
8.23	MELBOURNE	9.25
8.12	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
8.22	AUCKLAND	9.23
8.33	WELLINGTON	9.38
8.27	HOBART	9.34
7.28	BYRON BAY	8.25

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD
PARSHAS BESHALACH • 12 SHEVAT • 22 JANUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8.23 PM
	MINCHA:	8.30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9.00 PM
SHABBOS	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.56 AM
	MINCHA:	8.20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9.25 PM
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS	SUN-FRI: 8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
		MON-FRI: 6.20 AM
	MINCHA:	7.00 / 8.25 PM
	MAARIV:	9.15 PM