

# LAMPLIGHTER

11 Sivan  
Parshas  
Naso

1248

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Nasso, we read, "When a man or a woman utters a Nazirite vow... he shall abstain from new and old wine... grape-beverages, grapes and raisins..."

The term "Nazir" (Nazirite) has two meanings: it denotes "separation; keeping aloof" - in the sense of his obligation to keep away from grapes and grape-derivatives and it derives from Nezer (crown; diadem), as it says, "Nezer (the crown) of his G-d is on his head... he is holy to G-d" (Num. 6:7-8).

We are confronted by a paradox. On the one hand the Nazirite is called "holy to G-d," thus a man of lofty spiritual stature. On the other hand, his separation from worldly things could be criticized by the Talmudic retort, "Is it not enough for you what the Torah has already forbidden you?" (Yerushalmi, Nedarim 9:1) - Because man's purpose is to infuse himself and the material world with sanctity. However:

Maimonides concludes the laws of the Nazirite as follows: "He who vows unto G-d by way of holiness (as opposed to mere abstinence for its own sake) does well and is praiseworthy. Of him it is said, 'the crown of his G-d is upon his head... he is holy unto G-d.' Scripture considers him equal to a prophet, as it is said, 'I set up prophets from your sons and Nazirites from your young men' (Amos 2:11)."

This verse of Amos relates also to the time of the redemption. Then, too, there will be Nazirites who will attain the ultimate holiness, above and beyond that of earlier times. With the coming of Moshiach, a person will be a Nazirite not for the sake of simply separating from worldly matters, because these will then no longer impact negatively upon us. For in the Messianic era, "good things will be abundant and all delightful things accessible like dust, and the singular preoccupation of the entire world will be to know G-d." Thus it will be the consummate form of the holiness of being a Nazirite.

The laws of a Nazirite teach us a most significant principle about our belief in the coming of Moshiach.

Halacha (Torah-law) decrees: If one declares, "I undertake to become a Nazirite on the day that Moshiach will come," then if he made this vow on a weekday he is forever bound by it from that very moment. If he made his vow on a Shabbat or a festival day, it will become operative from the next day onwards, forever, but not on that day itself. For it is uncertain whether Moshiach will or will not come on a Shabbat or Yom Tov, which, therefore, precludes making the vow operative on that day (Eruvin 43b; Hilchot Nezirut 4:11).

This demonstrates clearly the fact that "the day that Moshiach will come" is a possibility that applies to each day. Thus we say in our daily prayers, "every day (and all day long) we hope for your salvation"; or in the version of the Thirteen Principles of the Faith: "I await his coming every day."

[From *Living with Moshiach*, adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe by Rabbi J. Immanuel Schochet, Kehot Publication Society]

## Living Life to the Fullest

By Elisha Greenbaum

There is an enigmatic passage in this week's Torah portion. The twelve tribal princes of Israel got together to plan their donations to the Tabernacle. These were the most wealthy and influential Jews of their generation, uniquely privileged to represent their tribes and duly appreciative of the honour. In addition to their donations on behalf of their constituencies, they decided to personally donate the wagons used to transport the walls of the Tabernacle through the desert.

Between them they stumped up the money to buy six wagons.

On the face of it, this looks ridiculously frugal. If you do the math, as the Talmud does, each of those wagons would be overloaded with huge beams of wood that would need to be stacked so high that it would have been unwieldy to the extreme just to move off the spot. Surely it would have been far easier to buy more wagons and transport the lot in relative ease.

It's not as if the princes were struggling financially; they could have easily doubled their donation and paid for a whole wagon each. Surely one could expect a higher standard of magnanimity from the princes of Israel. Why live life on the cheap if you can afford to travel in style?

### If You Need Something Done, Give it to a Busy Person

The possibilities are endless. Some people play solitaire, others frequent blogs. It is scary to consider how much time is being wasted every moment of the day. What percentage of your average day would you consider productive, in contrast to the hours spent mindless paper-pushing, watching TV, checking inboxes and taking unnecessary trips to the coffee machine?

It is too easy to live life relaxed, doing just enough to get by but not really working up a sweat. We are all guilty of occasional laziness and need constant reminders that time isn't just sitting still and waiting for us to get going.

And that's the point the Torah is trying to make. If you can somehow manage to load the whole cargo on to six wagons, you have no right to spread it out over twelve. The extra weight might be a burden, yet we have hidden reservoirs of strength helping us maintain the load. The purpose of our creation is to serve G-d, and we dare not lay off from the job for even a second.

I have unique gifts and abilities that only I have been granted. If I slack off, the entire world will be the poorer for my indolence. There is a job to be done that only you can do and if you are not up to the effort you'll be letting the whole side down. By living life to the fullest; piling on the pressure and welcoming the strain, we justify the gift that is life.

# Slice of LIFE

The bitter cold chilled the officer's bones and fear made his heart tremble. Ivan was not a coward, but the rumours of the sadistic Bolsheviks who were nearing the city of Rostov frightened him terribly. He paced the streets, waiting anxiously for the light of day. He was oblivious to the two men following at his heels, not making a sound.

Suddenly he felt powerful hands grabbing him. He screamed a loud and bitter scream, but the two held him. In the morning the body of the officer was found with the warning: "Beware! The Bolsheviks are coming!"

The Jews were the most shaken by news of the Bolsheviks' approach, as the study of Torah and observance of its precepts was a serious crime to the Bolsheviks. There was only one part of the city where life went on as usual, where fear of the Bolsheviks was not felt: in the Yeshivah called Tomchei Temimim.

The yeshiva students continued their studies without disruption. They drew their strength from their Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom Dovber of Lubavitch - the fifth Rebbe of the Chabad dynasty. The Rebbe encouraged them to study and pray as usual, and the yeshiva bustled with life.

It was Zundel the Beggar who brought the news: "The Bolsheviks are on their way into the city!" Soon Rostov became a city of flames and the Bolsheviks beat and killed anyone they chanced upon.

Thus passed several weeks. The holiday of Purim was approaching. The Rebbe isolated himself and didn't speak to anyone. The students could not make peace with the Rebbe's isolation. They remembered the great joy of Purim, when Jews celebrate the victory over Haman who tried to "destroy, kill and annihilate."

And then it was Purim. Not a soul smiled. Finally, two Yeshivah students who could no longer bear the thought of Purim passing in such a manner summoned up their courage and entered the Rebbe's room. After a few silent moments they heard the Rebbe's voice: "The Bolsheviks are in the city. I cannot exist together with them. But for the sake of Purim, we'll forget about the situation. Go buy plenty of vodka and let there be light for the Jews!"

The good news spread through the city and the Yeshivah students took their places for the Purim gathering. The Rebbe spoke and all listened. When the Rebbe concluded, an older Chossid began singing a soulful Chasidic Niggun (melody). Everyone joined in, singing from the depths of their hearts. Suddenly the door burst open. At the entrance stood a Chossid. "The Bolsheviks are coming," he cried out in fear.

The singing stopped at once; everyone was gripped with terror. The Rebbe, however, disregarded the news, and began softly singing a Niggun. The melody touched and calmed the frightened crowd. Having concluded the melody, the Rebbe began saying a Chasidic discourse. The room was silent; the only audible sound was the Rebbe's voice.

Suddenly the silence was broken by loud knocking. The Rebbe continued speaking as though nothing was happening. After a few moments one of the members of the Rebbe's family said: "Rebbe, the Bolsheviks are demanding that we let them in. If they see us gathered here it will be our end...G-d forbid." The Rebbe interrupted the discourse and said, "Open the door for them."

In the doorway stood two tall and fearsome looking Bolsheviks, their eyes darting all about, hungry for prey. "What is this gathering? What is going on?"

Trembling, one of the Chasidim called out, "This is the Rebbe Sholom Dovber of Lubavitch. He is teaching Torah to his Chasidim. The Rebbe is busy with his talk and he cannot be bothered." He could hardly believe the words that came from his mouth. The two soldiers were astounded at the Chossid's nerve, and they turned on their heels and departed.

"An open miracle!" the Chasidim exclaimed to one another. They felt protected and sang with greater fervour. Thus passed two hours. So immersed were they in their joy, that they did not hear the Bolsheviks knocking again... "Rebbe, what shall we do?" several frightened Chasidim cried out.

The Rebbe freed himself from his thoughts and said, "Open for them! I don't fear them." The Chasidim understood that another great miracle was about to occur. The Bolsheviks burst through the door, their weapons in hand. The Rebbe ignored their threatening presence and said, "We will begin saying some words of Torah." The Rebbe raised his voice and began, "Amalek is first among the nations but his end will be destruction" (Num. 23:20).

The Bolsheviks' faces softened. They returned their guns to their holsters, and watched with growing perplexity as the Chasidim listened to the Rebbe. They looked at one another and then, without a word, turned and left.

The Chasidim thanked G-d for miraculously saving them and for giving them their Rebbe in whose presence evil had no power.

Everyone was deeply moved, feeling in their hearts without knowing why that this would be their last gathering with the Rebbe. Painful tears flowed from their eyes, tears of parting.

A week after Purim the Rebbe became very weak, and on the second of Nissan his soul departed in holiness and purity.

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ISSUE 1248

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Rabbi Yosef ben Kisma's students asked him when Moshiach would arrive. He answered by quoting the verse, "This is the law of the burnt-offering" (6:2). We can understand this in light of our Sages' statement that one who studies the law of the sacrifices is considered having brought the actual offerings in the Beis Hamikdash. Our Sages also state that Moshiach's arrival depends on Teshuvah. We can therefore appreciate that the study of the sacrificial laws plays a significance role in Moshiach's arrival, for they complete our atonement as if we had offered the required sacrifices. (*Kedushas Yom Tov/Yalkut Moshiach uGeulah al HaTorah*)



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

10th of Sivan, 5712 [1952]

I trust that the Festival of Shavuoth, the Season of Our Receiving the Torah, gave you welcome opportunities to reflect upon the profoundness of the Torah and what its dissemination means to Jews in particular and to humanity at large.

I trust also that there were moments of particular inspiration in recalling the various thoughts which you and I had been privileged to hear from my father-in-law of sainted memory.

It has been my custom to convey to you a thought apropos of the festival, and I am taking the liberty of doing so again.

There is a statement in the Midrash to the effect that "If anyone tells you there is science among certain non-Jews, you may believe it; but if one tells you that there is Torah among them, do not believe it."

This terse statement contains an indication of the radical difference between general science and the Jewish religion which, to be sure, is also a profound science, though "partly" in the realm of the unfathomable.

The cardinal difference is this: Science in general has two weak points. First, it is based on certain postulates which science cannot substantiate or prove satisfactorily, and which, consequently, may be accepted, rejected, or substituted by contrary postulates.

In other words, the entire structure of science rests at bottom on unscientific principles, or, better, on premises which cannot be scientifically substantiated.

Second, science in substance is a theory declaring that if there is Cause A, there must follow Effect B, and if Effect B is to be prevented, Cause A must first be eliminated (that is assuming the postulates in question to be true).

In other words, science can never tell us, "Do this," or "Do not do that." It can only maintain that if we desire to attain B, we must first accomplish A, and if B is undesirable then A should be avoided.

That science in subject to the above mentioned two limitations is understandable, science being the product of the human intellect; for since man's abilities are limited, he cannot devise anything absolute.

This explains weakness One. As for weakness number Two, inasmuch as all men enjoy equal rights, science cannot a priori dictate any course of human conduct. The most it can do in this respect is to predict, on the basis of the experience and knowledge at its command, that a certain chain of reactions or effects is likely to follow from a given cause. Here men of science enjoy a certain advantage over the less experienced or initiated.

The said two weaknesses of science make the cardinal superiority of the Torah plainly evident.

The very word "Torah" - meaning teaching, instruction - indicates it. For the ultimate purpose of the Torah is not to increase man's knowledge per se, but to instruct him to conduct his life to the fullest advantage of himself and the community at large. As a matter of course it provides all the knowledge necessary for the attainment of this ultimate purpose.

Inasmuch as the Torah is not the product of man but Divinely revealed at Sinai, a fact which is substantiated by undeniable multiple evidence which must be fully accepted even on scientific grounds, i.e. being given by G-d the Absolute, its foundations are likewise absolute truths, not mere supposition.

Furthermore, since G-d is the Creator of the universe and of mankind, He is not limited to the process of cause and effect, but stipulates a positive and absolute system of human conduct, of definite do's and definite don'ts.

That is why the Torah is called *Toras Emes*, the Law of Truth, for its teachings are absolute and its foundations are not postulates but absolute truths, hence its consequence must also be absolute truths.

It is also called *Toras Chaim*, the Law of Life, to show that it is not just a science whose application is arbitrary, but a system of obligatory daily living.

This is why the dissemination of the Torah is so vital. For in the final analysis the important thing is not the amount of knowledge man acquires for its own sake. To insure that man acts consistently in the best interests of himself and society, or else grope in darkness, confused by conflicting ideas and theories around him and perplexed also by conflicting emotions and instincts within him, inherent in all human beings - this is the question, and the Torah is the answer.

May we all, you and myself included among the rest of our people, be receptive to the Divine influences emanating from the Torah and mitzvot [commandments], in the true spirit of Shavuoth, the festival of our Receiving the Torah from G-d at Sinai.

## CUSTOMS CORNER

### Blessings for Food & Other Occasions

Few activities are as instinctive as eating: it is a basic bodily need, requires no thought or advance preparation, and is, largely, for us today, readily available. And yet the Torah demands from us that before putting anything in our mouths, or otherwise taking pleasure from G-d's world, we pause for a moment, recite a few words to ourselves, and only then proceed to enjoy. And with these words, this simple blessing, we have transformed the most prosaic of acts into something holy.

How? By acknowledging G-d as the source of all sustenance, recognizing that the earth and its bounties belong to Him, and expressing our gratitude to Him for providing it for us. All this with the words: "Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe..."

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*The Torah portion this week begins, "The Lord spoke to Moses saying: Lift up the heads [take a census] of the sons of Gershon". In reference to counting a group of people, the Torah uses the term "lifting the heads", which seems like a strange usage of words. What connection does counting have to lifting?*

*When counting an assemblage of items, the only change that occurs in the objects is that post-counting they take on importance as individuals. Before they were counted they were a group of "many" things, if one went missing there would still remain a multitude. After the counting though, there is a specific number and each individual is an integral part of making up the whole. If there are 100, when missing 1, regardless of which, there will only be 99.*

*Same applies to the Jews as individuals. Counting is the means with which G-d shows his endearment and the preciousness that each one holds in his eyes. Nothing, and specifically a Jew, was put in this world without a reason. Every single person and every single existence on earth was placed here to accomplish a detail in the divine plan, and that detail cannot be carried out by any other being. Before the census the significance of every entity was not as openly apparent, but following it, the status of every Jew was "uplifted" to the state that it is recognizable on every Jew that without him the nation is lacking and is not a complete unit.*

*Perhaps the Torah is hinting to us how a Jew is able to express this uniqueness he possesses, as well. When created, every person is equipped with different powers: the power of speech, the power of emotions, intellect etc. The Torah tells us: how is a Jew able to stay above, to not get lost in the mix of people, to remain an important individual when the population of the world constantly increase and his existence becomes [seemingly] gradually less and less significant? "Lift the head", use out the brain G-d gave you for Torah learning. Elevate yourself and your intellectual faculties, given to you by G-d himself, to strengthen your connection to him and do your part in the world as a Jew.*

*J. I. Gutnick*

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Rabbi Shmuel Hanagid was a medieval poet who lived in Moslem Spain from 993-1056 of the Common Era. One of his most prized possessions was a tiny Torah scroll he had written on special parchment, which he always carried with him wherever he went.

Rabbi Shmuel Hanagid's love for calligraphy was passed down to his sons, who even as young children demonstrated an aptitude for lettering. By the age of 8, his son Yehosef had already transcribed his father's book of poems, Ben Tehillim. Another work, entitled Ben Mishlei, was copied by his son Elyasaf at age 6½. Rabbi Shmuel wanted his third book, Ben Kohelet, to be copied by his son Yehuda, but the boy unfortunately passed away before he could do so. Rabbi Shmuel Hanagid was grief-stricken, as he had loved his son very much. In the end he transcribed the book himself, and dedicated it to the boy's memory.

Rabbi Shmuel had many enemies. When he came under attack, he was forced to defend himself and wage war. He was a fearless and successful fighter, but it was during one of these battles that he lost his precious manuscript, Ben Kohelet. He was especially distressed by the loss, as it was the only copy in existence.

Rabbi Shmuel returned home to what he hoped would be a life of tranquility and scholarship. However, this proved impossible, as he found himself besieged by numerous requests for holy books from Torah scholars near and far, who complained about their desperate shortage. (Remember, this was before the invention of the printing press, when all reading materials had to be painstakingly copied by hand.)

Rabbi Shmuel thus became the founder of a famous institute for copying Jewish holy books, with a large number of scribes in his employ. Indeed, he was responsible for developing a new method of "mass" production, whereby transcribers would sit in a half-circle around a single "reader" in the middle and faithfully reproduce his words.

Thanks to Rabbi Shmuel Hanagid, Jewish holy books became much more readily available to the common man. He also took pains to bind them in attractive bindings. Copies were sent to far-flung Jewish communities around the world. Apprentice scribes flocked to the new school, begging to be accepted. It was said that Rabbi Shmuel Hanagid could determine a person's character just by looking at his handwriting.

One day a potential scribe arrived at the school and asked to be accepted as an apprentice. When Rabbi Shmuel asked him to provide a sample of his calligraphy, he took one look at the handwriting and pronounced him to be a professional plagiarist. The man was immediately taken aback, and admitted that he had been involved in producing forgeries. However, he said that he was happy to have been found out, and promised to amend his ways. Rabbi Shmuel decided to

take him on as a student.

Several years passed, until one day the former plagiarist brought Rabbi Shmuel a copy of the Tractate Bava Metzia he had transcribed for his approval. After inspecting his work, Rabbi Shmuel told him that he could see from his writing that he had been "cured," and would never again fall prey to temptation. The man was so happy that he kissed his mentor's hands and gave him a small manuscript as a token of his affection. Rabbi Shmuel could hardly believe his eyes: it was an exact copy of his book, Ben Kohelet, that had been lost years before!

The student then told Rabbi Shmuel that as a result of his former criminal associations he had met a man who boasted of having written a book of poetry. Indeed, the man was very fond of quoting "his" poems at length. By that time, the student was well acquainted with Rabbi Shmuel's work and recognized his style. He realized that the poems could have only been authored by him, and learned them by heart, word for word and line by line. He then transcribed them into a book as a gift for his wonderful teacher, who had refused to give up on him and given him a second chance.

Rabbi Shmuel Hanagid's joy knew no bounds. Not only had he been proven a good judge of character, but the beloved manuscript he had thought was lost to him forever was restored to him in its entirety.

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

If a man's wife goes astray (5:12)

A person does not sin unless a spirit of folly enters into him. (The word the Torah uses for the sotah's "going astray," shtut, also means "folly" and "insanity.") (Talmud, Sotah 3a)

The priest shall write these oaths in a scroll, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water (5:23)

Great is peace! To make peace between husband and wife, the Torah instructs that the name of G-d, written in holiness, should be blotted out in water. (The text of the oath administered to the sotah included the divine name.) (Talmud, Chullin 141a)

May G-d bless you and keep you (6:24)

With G-d's blessing comes His protection of the blessing. A mortal king has a servant in Syria, while he himself lives in Rome. The king sends for him. He sets out and comes to him. He gives him a hundred pounds of gold. He packs it up and sets out on his journey. Robbers fall upon him and take away all that he had given him and all that he had with him... But when G-d blesses one with riches, He also guards them from robbers. (Midrash Rabbah)

### CANDLE LIGHTING: 17 JUNE 2016



BEGINS		ENDS
4.50	MELBOURNE	5.51
4.53	ADELAIDE	5.52
4.43	BRISBANE	5.39
6.12	DARWIN	7.04
4.40	GOLD COAST	5.37
5.01	PERTH	5.59
4.35	SYDNEY	5.34
4.40	CANBERRA	5.40
4.30	LAUNCESTON	5.34
4.53	AUCKLAND	5.54
4.40	WELLINGTON	5.44
4.24	HOBART	5.30
4.38	BYRON BAY	5.35

### CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD  
PARSHAS NASO • 11 SIVAN • 17 JUNE

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4.50 PM
	MINCHA:	4.55 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5.25 PM
SHABBOS	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.55 AM
	MINCHA:	4.45 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	5.51 PM
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS:	SUN-FRI: 8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	4.55 PM
	MAARIV:	5.40 PM