

LAMPLIGHTER

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Parshas Shemos
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

As we read in this week's Torah portion, Shemot, when G-d told Moses of his mission to redeem the Jewish people from Egypt, Moses replied, "Behold, I will come to the Children of Israel and say, 'The G-d of your fathers has sent me to you.' And they will say to me, 'What is His Name?' What shall I tell them?"

Why did Moses think that they would ask him this? Surely the Jews were familiar with the "G-d of Abraham"; certainly their forefathers had told them. And why wouldn't Moses know what to answer?

Our Sages explain that G-d has many Names. G-d is referred to according to His actions. Each of G-d's Names symbolizes a different way in which He interacts with creation. "Elokim" connotes G-d's attribute of justice; the Name "Havaya" connotes His attribute of mercy.

Thus the question "What is His Name?" really asks "How will the redemption from Egypt come about?" Will it be through G-d's attribute of justice or through His attribute of mercy?

But what difference would it make how the redemption happened? Isn't the main thing that their suffering would be coming to an end? Besides, isn't it self-evident that the redemption would be derived from G-d's attribute of mercy?

In truth, the question "What is His Name" is a very difficult one to answer. The Jewish people wanted to know how it was possible for G-d to have allowed them to suffer so terribly in Egypt. They wanted to know with which "Name" G-d had chosen to act, i.e., how it was possible for the redemption to come only after such a lengthy period of exile.

"What shall I tell them?" Moses asked. Even Moses was perplexed and did not know how to answer.

Replied G-d: "I Will Be What I Will Be...say to the people of Israel, 'I Will Be has sent me to you.' ...This is My Name forever, and this is My remembrance unto all generations."

What was G-d's answer to the question "What is His Name?" "I Will Be What I Will Be." Rashi explains that this means "I will be with them throughout their travail." G-d was telling Moses that He would accompany the Jews into exile and suffer together with them, as it were. The Jews would not be abandoned in Egypt, G-d forbid, nor would He ignore their pain. Not only would G-d be with them in Egypt, but He would share in their anguish and distress.

G-d said, "This is My Name forever - le'olam." In this verse, le'olam is spelled without the letter vav, alluding to the word helem - concealment. In exile, G-d's attribute of mercy is hidden. Surely G-d accompanies the Jewish people into exile, but His attribute of mercy is in a state of concealment, only to be revealed when the time for redemption has arrived.

The Anatomy of a Leader

By Naftali Silberberg

Who was Moses? Why, indeed did G-d choose this unknown Israelite refugee from Midian to lead His people out of Egypt and be the conduit for the transmission of G-d's wisdom to this world? Many answers have been given based on anecdotes recounted in various midrashic sources regarding Moses' accomplishments in his pre-leadership years. We, however, will attempt to cull an answer from the information provided in the Bible itself.

After the Torah describes Moses' birth and rescue from the Nile (incidents wherein he didn't actively or knowingly participate), we are told only three episodes about Moses—all very telling; all sharing the same theme: 1) Moses slays an Egyptian who is beating an Israelite. 2) Moses attempts to prevent the escalation of a skirmish between two Israelites. 3) Moses physically intervenes upon witnessing the unjust harassment of Jethro's daughters by the local shepherds.

Here's a person who isn't afraid to stand up for what is right. He won't just "mind his own business" when confronted by blatant injustice. And he doesn't just express his opinion to anyone interested, he takes corrective action—even if these actions are unpopular and may incur others' wrathful vengeance.

Does this sound a little like the role of the main character in countless movies and novels? Well here's where Moses' story becomes unique: when G-d approaches Moses, asking him to lead the Israelite nation out of Egypt, Moses refuses. Moses humbly but unsuccessfully pleads with G-d to send another person as messenger—Aaron, the Messiah, or ANYONE... This seems to be an extremely counter-intuitive response. Considering Moses' background, we would expect him to gleefully jump at the opportunity to be the hero sent on a mission to save an oppressed nation from the hands of an evil tyrant.

But Moses was also the most humble man to ever live. There wasn't a shred of ego in all his heroic exploits and he had no desire for fame or glory. True, when there was an injustice which required immediate attention he was the first person to jump into the fray; but in this instance Moses felt that others were equally qualified for the task, and he therefore had no interest in the mission.

And this is precisely why he was chosen. One whose feats are motivated by ego is not a true leader. His preoccupation with writing his own chapter in the annals of history will cloud his priorities and won't allow him to give the proper attention and respect to his charges. The genuine leader possesses a rare mix of fearlessness and humility.

Slice of LIFE

Tanya in Lebanon?!

In honor of the yartzeit (anniversary of passing) of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism and author of Tanya, we present this story about printing the Tanya in Lebanon. From a talk by Rabbi Aaron Eliezer Ceitlin,

In 1978, the Lubavitcher Rebbe initiated a campaign to print an edition of Tanya in every country in the world. When the Lebanon War broke out, the Rebbe directed Rabbi Leibel Kaplan (o.b.m.), the head emissary of Tzfat, Israel, to print the Tanya in Lebanon. It was to be printed in at least three Lebanese cities that once had thriving Jewish populations that were currently occupied by the IDF.

It was relatively easy for us to procure the printing equipment needed and Rabbi Kaplan worked on obtaining a permit to enter Lebanon. We began receiving nightly calls from the Rebbe's secretariat, requesting updates. We had received numerous assurances that we would get a permit, but the fact remained that we didn't.

Rabbi Kaplan suggested that we drive to the border without a permit and try to get into Lebanon. We set out on a Thursday and when we got to the border they wouldn't let us enter.

Each of us started focusing on a different mission; putting tefillin on with the soldiers and signing them up for their own letter in a Torah scroll being written for Jewish unity. I was given the task of trying to get the permit. However, after six hours of efforts, we still did not have it.

We set out to the headquarters of the IDF Northern Command. We presented our case before one of the officers. He told us that he knew all about the Rebbe. He advised us to return the next day when the Chief Military Rabbi of the IDF would be visiting the base. Perhaps he could help.

That night, I was unable to fall asleep.

It bothered me terribly that we had spent many days trying to fulfill the Rebbe's directive, and we had still not succeeded.

I immediately got dressed. I rushed over to the house of one of my colleagues. He eventually opened the door. "Hurry, get dressed! We're returning to the headquarters of the Northern Command to meet the commanding general and demand a permit!" He responded, "It's past midnight. Go get some sleep!"

"I am going to the army base whether you join me or not. If you wish to have a share in our success, then come with me. If not, I will go myself," I told him.

I drove quickly to the army base. When I got there I screeched to an abrupt stop and jumped out of the car. I yelled to the guard, "Where is the general?" The guard must have thought this was a real emergency, and he immediately opened the gate for me. A miracle.

I headed to the general's building. I entered and told the secretary that I needed to speak to the general immediately. I pleaded with her, "Please tell him that someone from Chabad is here to see him urgently on an extremely important matter." However, my words fell on deaf ears.

Out of sheer desperation, I told the secretary, "Just remember that I came to tell the general something extremely important and urgent - something relevant to the outcome of the war. And, it was you who did not allow me entry." When the secretary heard this, she agreed to relay my message to the general.

The secretary returned and told me to wait; the general would see me shortly. When I came face to face with the general, I could see that he was not in a very good mood, to say the least.

At that point, the secretary asked whether she could remain at the meeting. I jokingly replied that my message was classified as a military secret. When the general heard this, he burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. He laughed and laughed, and it took him a moment or two to compose himself. When he did, he seemed a lot calmer and friendlier.

I turned to the general and said, "I would like to present a matter which I feel

affects the whole outcome of the war. The Lubavitcher Rebbe, the leader of the generation, has requested that the Tanya be printed in Lebanon. Why? Don't ask me; I am not the Rebbe. However, I can say that Tanya is the seminal work of Chabad, and that the Rebbe has arranged for it to be printed all over the world. If he wants it done in Lebanon, it is obviously of utmost importance."

When I finished my 15 minute speech, the general asked, "Nu, so what do you want from me?" I explained that we needed a permit to get into Lebanon. He said, "No problem, you have my permission to enter Lebanon." He picked up the phone and instructed the officer at the other end to write out a permit for us to enter Lebanon. Over the phone, I could hear the officer respond, "To where in Lebanon? Based on the Rebbe's directives, we had decided to print in the cities of Tzor, Tzidon (Sidon) and Beirut. To my great relief and amazement, the general said, "You know what? Allow them to travel until Tzor."

I thanked the general and asked for his and his mother's names to send to the Rebbe. He said that I should just tell the Rebbe that the IDF Commander of the North provided the permit.

I headed to a nearby building to obtain the permit. A young officer opened the door. The officer said we could only enter after 4:00 a.m. This suited me quite well; it left me with just enough time to round up my colleagues for the hour-long drive to the border. The officer then asked if we had weapons. Of course, we were without weapons "Not to worry. I will have an army escort prepared for you; four soldiers on an armored jeep." Then he handed me the permit.

I quickly drove back to Tzfat to round up all the members of our group. When I woke them with the news, they thought I was out of my mind. But there was no denying that I had the permit in my hand, and we quickly set out to the border.

Our group entered Lebanon, and our successful mission served as the catalyst for many more missions into the war-zone of Lebanon.

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SOUL COFFEE

Before you scold a child, stop and think of who this is and where you stand.

This is a child of the Creator of the Universe.

And you stand before Him, scolding His child.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Wearing a "Shaytel"

With reference to the question of a Shaytel [wig], about which you wrote that you object to it on the grounds that it is old-fashioned, etc., let me say that the true approach to matters of the Torah and Mitzvos is not from the point of view of whether they are considered old-fashioned or new-fashioned. We observe the Torah and Mitzvos because they are directives from the Creator of the world and of man. It is self-understood that the Creator knows what is best for man and that He desires that man should be happy, and not only in the world to come, but also in this life. This is the reason why the Torah is called Toras Chaim, meaning that it is a guide to the good life on this earth.

Specifically on the question of a Shaytel, let me quote here the words of the holy Zohar (Part III, Page 126a) which are quoted in the Mishnah Brura, and I will quote only the positive results mentioned there, omitting the negative aspects following from the non-fulfillment: "Her children will be superior . . . her husband will be blessed with spiritual and material blessings, with wealth, children and children's children."

Considering the great reward which is promised to the woman and mother who wears a Shaytel, it should surely be worthwhile to do so even if the wearing of a Shaytel would entail serious difficulties and conflicts. How much more so where the objection to it, as you write, is only because it is "old fashioned." This is not a real objection, nor a valid one, and it is rather based on the "opinion" of others. Let me also add that even considering the general attitude towards this and other Mitzvos, there has been a radical change in recent years: one of respect and admiration for people who are consistent and live up to their convictions and ideals, and are not influenced by the mob. There may always be some individual who might make a joke about a person's convictions, but where a person is sincerely dedicated to his faith, such a person can only call forth respect and admiration. Furthermore, if you will eventually settle in a Jewish Orthodox neighborhood, you will find that other young women will wish to emulate your good example, and thus you will have the additional Zechus [merit] of being instrumental in influencing others in the right way. The reverse is also true, for a Jew must always consider how his or her conduct affects others. This should be an additional consideration why you should overcome your superficial objection to wearing a Shaytel.

It is no less important to bear in mind that marriage is called "an everlasting edifice," meaning that it is an everlasting institution which is of vital importance not only for the husband and wife, but also for future generations. Every parent desires to ensure the happiness of their children, and will do everything possible to take out the utmost measure of such insurance.

Of course you might point to this one or that one who do not wear a Shaytel. However, it is surely unnecessary to point out that every person may have a particular weakness, and if one is to follow the principle "He is wise who learns from every person," he will be wise to learn from only the person's strong and positive qualities and not from his weak ones.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

Cutting Down Fruit Trees

Question: Does Jewish Law forbid the cutting down of fruit trees?

Answer: The Torah says, "When you besiege a city for many days to wage war against it to capture it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them, for you may eat from them, but you shall not cut them down" (Deuteronomy 20:19). From this verse we derive that we may not uproot or cut down a fruit tree if we do not have an acceptable reason to do so.

What exactly is considered an "acceptable reason"? The answer is not so clear. Some halachic authorities say that only the wanton destruction of a fruit tree is prohibited, but if we need the place it occupies, then it is permitted. Others prohibit cutting it down for the sake of just having open space to stroll, but permit doing so when the space is needed to build on. Others are even more stringent, and say that needing the place is not justification enough. They argue that only if the tree is damaging the ground, and thus also the surrounding trees or vines which are more valuable, is one permitted to cut it down. Considering all the different opinions on this matter, it is advisable to consult with your own rabbi and discuss the particulars of your own situation, as there are numerous factors to consider.

Its interesting to note that the rabbis extended the concept underlying this precept, known in Hebrew as Bal Tashchit, to include any wasteful or destructive act perpetrated upon things that can be of benefit to man.

On a deeper level, this injunction teaches us the importance of not squandering on unworthy pursuits our talents, our time, and our other precious resources entrusted to us by G-d. It also underscores the Divine imperative for us to take matters concerning the preservation of our environment very seriously.

A WORD

from the Director

The 20th of Tevet, this past Wednesday, is the yartzeit (anniversary of the passing) of Rabbi Moses Maimonides, otherwise known as the Rambam.

In his major work, the Mishne Torah, the Rambam enumerates and details all the 613 laws of the Torah. He places the laws relating to the Jewish king, and Moshiach, at the very end of his work. The Rambam defines Moshiach as a king, who will not only redeem the Jews from exile, but also restore the observance of the Torah and the mitzvot to its complete state.

For many, this would seem a rather novel approach. Yet, the Talmud states that "the world was created solely for Moshiach." This being the case, we certainly must do everything in our power to hasten his arrival.

The 24th of Tevet (Thursday, January 22 this year) is the yartzeit of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman opened a new path which allowed the teaching of the previously hidden aspects of the Torah - Pnimitut HaTorah - to be comprehended through the intellect and thus reveal additional G-dliness within the world.

In Rabbi Shneur Zalman's magnum opus, Tanya, he writes: "The Messianic Era... is the fulfillment and culmination of the creation of the world, for which purpose it was originally created." This means that our spiritual service will reach its full completion only with the arrival of Moshiach. Thus, the fulfillment and culmination of the entire creation will take place when Moshiach is revealed.

The entire purpose, in fact, of the revelation of Chasidic philosophy was to hasten and prepare the world for the Messianic Era.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

The events of this story took place in Poland before the establishment of the great universities there. In those times, various aristocrats supported private schools of science called academies.

In the province of Lithuania there were three such academies, each supported by different princes. One, located near Vilna, was owned by Prince Radziwill, another, near Vitebsk, was owned by Prince Sheksinski, and the third, located on the shores of the Dnieper, between Dobrovna and Liadi, was owned by Prince Decrit. In those days, the Polish people were not very accomplished in the sciences, and the actual instructors at these academies were brought in from France.

On the property of Prince Sheksinski there was a big palace, and in its courtyard was a sundial. For two years the sundial had not functioned properly, and would not tell the correct time between the hours of two and five in the afternoon. The prince had already consulted many leading experts, scientists, and professors about this problem, but no one could figure it out. When the prince learned that there was a very wise Jew who was well known for his problem-solving, he sent for the Alter Rebbe (Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of Chabad Chasidut) to come to his property and help him discover the cause of the sundial's malfunction.

At first, the Alter Rebbe refused to go, heeding the advice of our Sages not to get involved in political matters, but after he was reassured that no precious time devoted to Torah learning would be wasted, he agreed, and traveled to the palace.

Although the Alter Rebbe spoke Polish well, he preferred to speak Yiddish, and so, his father-in-law served as translator. After examining the sundial several times during the problematic hours, he said, "It is brought down in the Talmud that the sun is directly overhead in the middle of the day, and that nothing can intercede between the sun and the earth during this time except for clouds. However, after noon, when the sun starts to go down, it is possible for various objects to interfere with the sun's rays. It is my opinion that there is a mountain to the south of us, at a distance of 12 to 15 parasangs.

It seems as if the trees growing on its peak have grown too tall and are obstructing the sun's rays between the hours of 2 and 5, preventing them from reaching the sundial. When the sun sinks a little further, the trees are no longer in the way, and the sundial works properly after this time."

The prince was amazed at the Alter Rebbe's reasoning, and sent a special emissary to find the area described to see if indeed it was so.

Upon hearing this, the head of the prince's academy, a leading engineer by the name of Professor Marseilles, ridiculed the opinion of the Alter Rebbe. He laughingly said, "The Jews imagine that all wisdom is contained in their Talmud. Zelig the doctor learns his medicine from it, Boruch the gardener learns how to prepare the soil for planting, and Zanvil the merchant learns how to cheat the landowners from this Talmud... Now, this character imagines that the sun's rays only reach the earth according to the Talmud!"

The Alter Rebbe replied to his criticism, saying: "Empirical

evidence is the axe which fells those who are arrogant in their belief in science."

"Is that also a saying found in your Talmud?" asked the professor.

"No," answered the Alter Rebbe, "it is attributed to the great Galinus, who also had to suffer with those who were arrogant."

Word leaked out about the Alter Rebbe's diagnosis of the problem, and before the prince could find the exact spot, a group of troublemakers found the trees which were obstructing the light and chopped them down without telling anyone. In this way they hoped to discredit the Alter Rebbe.

A few days later, when the grounds-keeper on the prince's estate reported that the sundial was in perfect working order, the prince was very surprised, but it was simply thought that the clock had spontaneously fixed itself.

Eventually, the Alter Rebbe's father-in-law heard the rumor that the trees had been chopped down in secret, and he found those responsible and brought them before the prince, demanding that they tell him what they had done. Admitting their guilt, the truth of the Alter Rebbe's wisdom was confirmed, and his fame soon spread among the ranks of the scientific community in Poland.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

The children of Israel multiply in Egypt. Threatened by their growing numbers, Pharaoh enslaves them and orders the Hebrew midwives, Shifrah and Puah, to kill all male babies at birth. When they do not comply, he commands his people to cast the Hebrew babies into the Nile.

A child is born to Yocheved, the daughter of Levi, and her husband, Amram, and placed in a basket on the river, while the baby's sister, Miriam, stands watch from afar. Pharaoh's daughter discovers the boy, raises him as her son, and names him Moses.

As a young man, Moses leaves the palace and discovers the hardship of his brethren. He sees an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, and kills the Egyptian. The next day he sees two Jews fighting; when he admonishes them, they reveal his deed of the previous day, and Moses is forced to flee to Midian. There he rescues Jethro's daughters, marries one of them (Tziporah), and becomes a shepherd of his father-in-law's flocks.

G-d appears to Moses in a burning bush at the foot of Mount Sinai, and instructs him to go to Pharaoh and demand: "Let My people go, so that they may serve Me." Moses' brother, Aaron, is appointed to serve as his spokesman. In Egypt, Moses and Aaron assemble the elders of Israel to tell them that the time of their redemption has come. The people believe; but Pharaoh refuses to let them go, and even intensifies the suffering of Israel.

Moses returns to G-d to protest: "Why have You done evil to this people?" G-d promises that the redemption is close at hand.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 20-21 January	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	8:24	9:26
Adelaide	8:12	9:12
Brisbane	6:29	7:25
Darwin	7:02	7:54
Gold Coast	6:28	7:24
Perth	7:07	8:05
Sydney	7:49	8:49
Canberra	8:01	9:01
Launceston	8:25	9:30
Auckland	8:22	9:24
Wellington	8:34	9:39
Hobart	8:28	9:35
Byron Bay	7:29	8:25

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS SHEMOS SHABBOS MEVORSHIM • 22 TEVES • 20 JANUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8.24 PM
	MINCHA:	8.30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9.00 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.53 AM
	TEHILLIM:	8.00 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	THE MOLAD FOR SHEVAT IS ON FRIDAY	
	5.36 (8 chalakim) PM FARBRENGEN FOLLOWING DAVENING	
WEEKDAYS:	MINCHA:	8.15 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9.26 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	8.30 PM
	MAARIV:	9.25 PM