

# LAMPLIGHTER

26 Av  
Parshas Re'eh  
Shabbos Mevorch  
**1309**  
18 August  
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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, R'ei, opens with a verse that establishes a foundation of the Jewish religion - free choice. G-d says to the Jewish people, "Look, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: the blessing, that you will hearken to G-d's commandments...; and the curse, if you will not hearken to G-d's commandments..." (Deut. 11:26-28)

Why did G-d create the world so as to necessitate blessings and curses? Why did G-d create something to stand in the way of good, to make it difficult for us to do what is appropriate and right?

Evil alternatives and negative opportunities exist to allow for free choice. If there was only good in this world - no chance for a person to behave in a questionable manner - a person could not freely choose to do good; he would be forced to do good for lack of alternatives, by default. In order to have options, there have to be at least two different routes. Then, a person can use the power of free choice given to him by G-d to choose the correct path.

Freedom to choose one path of action over another is a fundamental principle of Judaism. It is at the very core of the advantages of a human over other created beings. Other creatures do not have this option of free choice; their actions are based on natural instincts and environmental training. Only man has such an advantage.

The concept of reward and punishment revolves around free choice. If there is no choice, there is no room for reward and punishment. A person can only receive a reward for his good deeds because he has freedom of choice.

It is therefore understood that the existence of the opportunity to do "bad" is not to make a person evil, but the opposite. Wrong exists only to allow a person to choose right.

The opportunity to do that which is not good, therefore, wasn't created to prevent a person from accomplishing what he needs to. In fact, it is to push the person toward the correct path, a path to be traveled on in the midst of freedom of choice and desire.

Knowing that "bad" exists only to encourage us toward the good, also gives us the ability and strength not to be intimidated or overwhelmed by it.

## Not Just the Zeides and the Kaddish-Sayers

By Elisha Greenbaum

And you shall rejoice before the L-rd, your G-d, you and your son and your daughter . . . in the place in which the L-rd, your G-d, will choose to establish His Name.

Twenty years ago, many synagogues in Melbourne had two types of regular attendees: the zeides (grandfathers) and the Kaddish-sayers.

The zeides were there because they'd been bought up going to shul, and they kept on going. They came from Poland or Russia. They'd grown up the East End of London or were immigrants from South Africa and Zimbabwe (though they still referred to it as Rhodesia). They had accents and pacemakers. They had numbers on their forearm, wore hats when driving, and would start off almost every sentence with the words "In my day . . ." They came in a variety of packages, but they were all old, and they all sat by themselves.

Their children? They came to shul for a couple of hours on the first day of Rosh Hashanah and then showed up again for a slightly longer visit on Yom Kippur. Sure, they'd be there for their folks when they needed a lift to the doctor's clinic, and they would never miss a birthday party or Seder, but synagogue attendance was infrequent at best.

The Kaddish-sayers would unfortunately start coming to shul after the zeides stopped. Newly bereaved, with stubble beards and awkward yarmulkes perched at precarious angles, you'd see them stumbling over the Aramaic words throughout the week of shivah. If they were properly welcomed by the old-timers and suitably encouraged by the rabbi, they'd often keep coming back throughout the 11 months of mourning. Slowly, they'd make friends and familiarize themselves with the patterns and practices of shul. The Kaddish would roll more smoothly off the tongue, and they'd mark out a permanent pew for themselves. Many would even keep coming back after the year was up, guaranteeing a permanent minyan (quorum of ten) for the next class of Kaddish-sayers.

But it's not like that anymore. The old divisions have vanished. Now the average synagogue boasts an intergenerational lineup of attendees. Shul-going is fashionable and fun. People come to meet and make friends, and they plan their days and weeks around the services. People sit proudly next to their parents—fathers next to sons, mothers next to grandmothers—while the little kids flit back and forth between their parents (stopping off on the way to visit the "candy man").

When you consider the way shuls throughout the world have been revolutionized lately, you can't help but be enthused by the future prospects for Judaism. This is the best possible way to demonstrate that the building we're sitting in is a place where G-d has chosen to establish His name, and the incredible sight of Jews of all ages sitting in shul and praying to the one G-d is truly a reason to *rejoice before the L-rd*.

# Slice of LIFE

## Coming From the Other Side

by Batyah Sheindel Allcock

I entered the world in Guyana, in South America, with some difficulty after being delivered by my Great Granny. I showed no signs of life and needed a smack on the bottom and the shock of cold water to resuscitate me; I guess G-d decided I had a job to do here.

I lived in Guyana for the first ten years of my life with very limited awareness of the outside world; no TV, no newspapers, just chores, dirt roads, my parents and three brothers and two sisters, and religious Sunday school, taught by my Great Auntie Daphne. We were so isolated, we didn't know there was such a thing as snow elsewhere in the world.

Our family of eight migrated to Long Island, New York where my folks continued to raise us in a household where no pork or shellfish were allowed (my mother of blessed memory was violently allergic to both). We were constantly taught both in Guyana and Long Island that cleanliness is next to G-dliness. Growing up in my parents' home had an unexpected Jewish flavor. Of course, the house was clean and free of pork and shellfish! Also, my mother baked fresh bread for the family every Friday!

My mother was just naturally a holy woman, who believed in serving G-d every day, and lived for her children's education and well-being. She searched for a peaceful resolution to all difficulties, looking for the good and holy in every detail of life.

Before she passed on, she made the request from all of us not to be sad, nor overly mournful, but to move on with our lives and to be happy for her being able to move on in her journey.

She requested of us that the anniversary of her passing should be a day of happiness.

As I grew into an adult and the need for further guidance in my life arose, I did what she would have done and had done many times in her life: I turned to G-d and had faith in His caring love and His availability to my prayers, hopes, and needs. My mother taught us to "think good and it will be good" and that "from everything 'bad' comes something good."

Remembering the words my mother would say and her reactions to unhappy events, I started looking to incorporate G-d into my life, to learn and live as G-d intended us to live.

I was certainly ready and had made room in my life for a relationship with G-d. By my mid-twenties, I had graduated college, established a warmly furnished home, had a secure job and mobility. The American dream achieved! But having provided myself with all the important physical demands of society and having experienced many aspects of life in the physical world, I was feeling that there had to be more to life.

Why with all of these pleasures was my life still empty? Where is true happiness? What do I do now with all the physical accomplishments? I prayed to the Master of the Universe and was answered with guidance to Judaism. I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Yakov Greenstein who inspired me and who brought me to the Shabbat table of the Berk family in Manhattan. They welcomed me and showed me Shabbat and the wonderful Jewish way of life. I experienced a spiritual awakening, wherein I finally found the answers to my questions: Why, Where, What, How?

Why is my life empty? I was missing having a family of my own, a human being's true calling and ideal environment, where I could experience the daily giving and receiving of unconditional love and kindness.

Where is the true happiness to be found? In having G-d's Presence in every part of life, setting aside an entire day a week for only serving G-d and spiritual renewal, and making sure that the everyday eating, sleeping, working and marching through life be imbued with just a touch of the specialness I felt on Shabbat.

What do I do with the physical accomplishments, which are not an end goal in themselves? Apply it all

towards serving G-d.

How do I continue to transform myself and my surroundings to the positive and spiritual side of the world? By learning, through books, lectures, going to shul, observing Shabbat carefully and lovingly, living with a Jewish family in order to fully understand and learning in yeshivot (I have loved Machon Chana Women's Yeshiva in Crown Heights and am making plans to attend Machon Alta in Israel, G-d willing).

For my efforts to serve G-d by living according to His Torah, I was rewarded by receiving my Jewish soul on the seventh day of Iyar. This was the day on which my conversion was completed.

I am now the second of my siblings to become a Jew. My sister, Nicole, 16 months older, also converted about seven years ago. As children growing up together, Nicole and I would whisper to each other about the dread we shared of our grandmother's church. The two of us would plead with my mother not to send us. We found church to be uncomfortable when we didn't pay attention and depressing when we did. Nicole is now, thank G-d, happily married to my dear brother-in-law Morty Horowitz, and they are the proud parents of two precious daughters, Ariella and Robbin.

I have learned that the month of Iyar, the month of my birth in a sense, contains much Divine Providence. My conversion at this time is just one more manifestation of that which was already there. May I give special thanks to all my teachers, hosts, and friends who helped and supported me through this phase of my spiritual journey to a more beautiful and rewarding life.

I especially thank the Rebbe. All along I have been asking the Rebbe for help and for blessings. He has clearly been generous with both. I feel that he has welcomed me into his large family, and I am happy to say I am a Lubavitcher. Now I must make it my business to live up to that title, doing all that the Rebbe wants of me. With the blessing of the Rebbe, may Moshiach come soon.

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Editors: Shlomo Chaim Kesselman and Mendel Bacher

P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

I received your letter, in which you write about your anxiety in regard to the question of Parnosso [livelihood]. Needless to say, I am much surprised at you, that you should allow yourself to be so affected by this. For you surely know how often our Sages have impressed on us the importance of trust and confidence in G-d, in order that we realize that all difficulties encountered in life are only trials and tests of a passing nature.

To be sure, the question of Parnosso is one of the most difficult tests - nevertheless, G-d does not subject one to a greater test than he can withstand, as our Rabbis expressed it, "According to the camel, so is its load." The very trust in G-d is a vessel and channel to receive G-d's blessings, apart from the fact that such confidence is good for one's health, disposition, and therefore is also a natural means to the desired end. All the more so, since, as you write, you have noticed an improvement in recent weeks.

This should serve as an encouraging sign and greatly strengthen your trust in G-d. No doubt you also remember the commentary of my father-in-law of saintly memory in regard to the saying of our Sages that "Life is like a turning wheel," at which my father-in-law remarked that "When a point on the wheel reaches the lowest degree, it is bound to turn up wards again."

As for your request for advice, in my opinion you ought to set a period of time for the study of Pnimius of the Torah, namely, Chasidus, concerning which it is written in the Zohar (part 3, page 124b): "In the area of Pnimius HaTorah there is no place for negative things and evil," and as further explained in Iggeres HaKodesh, chapter 26.

In addition, I suggest that you should set aside a couple of pennies for Tzedoko [charity] every weekday morning before prayer, and also before Mincha [the afternoon prayer service]. Also to recite at least one Kapitel Tehillim [chapter of Psalms] every day after the morning prayers, including Shabbos and Yom Tov.

All the above should be Bli Neder [without making a vow], and at least until Rosh Hashanah. It would also be very good for you to know by heart several Perokim Mishnayos [chapters of Mishna], and at least one Perek Tanya [chapter of Tanya].

I am confident that the above, together with an increased measure of bitachon, [faith] will soon bring an improvement in your Parnosso.

In accordance with the teaching of our Sages ([Talmud] Bovo Basra 15,2) that money from a good and saintly source brings G-d's blessings, you will find enclosed a check from one of the treasuries for my father-in-law of saintly memory, to deposit to your business account, and may G-d grant that the prediction of our Sages will be realized in your case also.

Hoping to hear good news from you and with blessing,

P.S. Enclosed you will find a copy of a message which I trust you will find useful.

## QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

### Can I Disinvite My Brother From Shabbat Dinner?

**Question:** My mother insists on inviting my brother for Shabbat dinner every week. This brother opposes everything Jewish makes a point of not participating in any traditions and refuses to even cover his head for kiddush. All he does is eat, grumble, and leave. He has no respect. Is there any point in having him there?

**Answer:** You say he does nothing more than eat. But he does eat? That may be enough. There is a precedent for this in the Purim story.

Back in ancient Persia, a plot to kill the Jews arises. The Jewish Queen Esther invites her husband the king and Haman the wicked anti-Semite to a meal. She serves them food that she prepared, and Haman, who doesn't know she is Jewish, is described as being "happy and good-hearted" after the meal.

This is a strange way to describe such an evil person. Can a man who intends to annihilate an entire nation be called "happy and good-hearted"?

The Kabbalists explain that Haman was indeed a rotten man, but something touched him on this one occasion. The experience of sitting at Esther's table, eating her food, being in the presence of a righteous Jewish woman, was enough to reach even that cold and hateful heart, and for a fleeting moment Haman was good.

Of course that goodness was short lived. Haman went straight back to being the murderous villain that he had been a moment before. But a spark of goodness can never be lost. The Talmud says that Haman's great-grandchildren ended up converting to Judaism and becoming Torah scholars. Those souls were the sparks of goodness Haman experienced at Esther's table. The impact of that one meal only surfaced generations later.

Never underestimate the transformative power of a Shabbat table, the spiritual impact of a holiday meal, the embracing warmth of a Jewish home, and the profound influence of a Jewish mother. Just being there and eating her food can be enough to touch you forever.

Your brother is no Haman. He's not wicked, just disenfranchised. If Haman could be moved by just one meal, your brother can certainly turn around. You might not see immediate results. It might take years. It might take generations. You and I are only Jewish today because of the Shabbat tables of our great-grandparents.

Your mother has the wisdom of Esther. Your brother deserves his place at her holy table.

## A WORD

from the Director

*There is a famous story from the Midrash that relates to this week's Torah portion.*

*A very pious land-owner was punctilious about following the Torah's commandment to give one-tenth of his produce to the priests. When this righteous Jew saw his end approaching, he called his son and heir over to him and cautioned, "The Almighty has always been generous with us. I have always given 100 of our 1000 bushels to the priests. You must make sure to do the same."*

*That year, at harvest-time, the son followed his father's wishes. He gave 100 of the 1000 bushels as the tithe. The following year, however, he decided to "save" a little, and gave only 90 bushels. The next year, strangely enough, the fields only produced 900 bushels. Having incurred such a tremendous loss, the son decided to only give 80 bushels that year. And, low and behold, the following year the fields only produced 800 bushels.*

*Year after year, this scene repeated itself, until the once lush and prosperous fields were only producing 100 bushels. The son had still not gotten the message. His friends and relatives tried to intervene. They went to visit the son dressed in festive clothes, bringing along food and wine.*

*"We have come to celebrate your good fortune," they said.*

*"You mock me and my change of fate," he told them angrily.*

*"No," they contradicted him. "We have come to celebrate your elevated state," they said somewhat sarcastically.*

*"You see, in the past, your father gave 10% of his produce, 100 bushels, to the priests, and the rest remained for him. Now, it seems that G-d has elevated you to the status of priest. He is giving you the 100 bushels and keeping the rest for Himself."*

*No one ever became poor from giving charity. By giving charity we are assured that G-d's blessings will also be bestowed upon us generously.*

J. I. Gutnick

# Here's my Story

Personal Encounters  
With The Rebbe. Culled From JEM's  
'My Encounter' Project

## Tunisian Jews

The first Lebanon War in 1982 was a unique war, during which the Israel Defense Forces reached Beirut and conquered it, causing the expulsion of the Palestinian forces from Lebanon.

PLO chairman Yasser Arafat and his men went to Tunisia and established their command there. At that time, there was a small community there of about five thousand Jews in Tunisia.

After analyzing the facts, we in the Mossad came to the conclusion that, as a result these events, the Jews of Tunisia were in greater danger than before, and we felt that the time had come to evacuate this community to Israel.

Since the government of Israel was established, it has made it a policy to take responsibility for the fate of Jews living in foreign countries where they might be in danger. We feel that this is the responsibility of the State of Israel because it is the state of the Jewish nation. And since the State of Israel has the power and the ability to intervene overseas when needed, it has the right and the obligation to do so.

Thus, we began to work with the Jews in Tunisia. We sent people there to convince them to leave. But very quickly we encountered a problem. We identified an authority that was telling the Jews not to leave Tunisia. This was not a local authority; not the Tunisian government. It was the community rabbi! His name was Rabbi Nissim Pinson, and he was encouraging the Jews to stay in Tunisia. We quickly understood that Rabbi Pinson's authority flowed from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the leader of the Chabad movement, of which Rabbi Pinson was a part, and we reached the determination that we needed to see the Rebbe to explain the situation to him, so that he'd understand and encourage the Jews to leave.

Now, my interaction with Chabad goes back many years. I served in the Israeli Embassy in Washington from 1970 to 1974. In the context of my service there, I visited New York many times together with my wife and children. I visited the Rebbe's court and was present at his farbrengens. The General Consul of Israel, Naftali Lavi, arranged a meeting with the Rebbe for me.

I flew in from Israel and I arrived to the Chabad Headquarters for my appointment, which was scheduled for one or two o'clock in the morning. As I sat in the waiting room, I noticed the others who were awaiting their turn with the Rebbe; a mixed group of people. Each had their own reason for being there – one came for advice, another for direction, and another for his approval of some decision they had made. I waited. People went in and out, and I waited.

Finally, I was called inside and I met with the Rebbe. The two of us talked, he and myself, and no one else was in that meeting. To the best of my recollection, the meeting lasted about two hours. It began with a discussion of the situation of Tunisian Jewry. And the Rebbe immediately told me that he was the one who gave the directive not to leave. He had his own intelligence-gathering network with various sources, including the US government.

He had checked his information and had come to the conclusion that there was no special danger to the Jews of Tunisia, so he had directed

them not to leave. He said, "I believe we must sustain, to the extent possible, every Jewish community around the world. I recognize the role of the State of Israel – I personally support Aliyah, and I've instructed certain families to make Aliyah, but we mustn't just eliminate a Jewish community."

I explained to the Rebbe why we in Israel saw the situation differently. But, in the end, we remained with our different opinions – he was convinced that the Jews were in no special danger, and I that they were.

In our conversation it was apparent that he had a tremendous knowledge in the area of intelligence and intelligence gathering. And his connections were vast. He had connections with the White House and the State Department. He had connections in other places in the world with the powers that be. It was obvious that here was a man of the larger world, not of a small chasidic court.

He was also a man with a vision – a big vision – and he did not abandon that vision even for a moment. And his vision was expressed not only in theory, but also in action – sending his emissaries all over the world to serve the Jewish nation.

There is no doubt that in many places in the world, Chabad emissaries play a very important role in the continued existence of the Jewish people, and in the continued existence of the Jewish nation as a whole. When I served as Israel's ambassador to the European Union in Brussels, I met the emissaries of Chabad who worked there. And I also met those in Riga and in Sydney. And I believe that if Chabad did not exist, the situation of the continuity of the Jewish nation would be much worse. This tremendous contribution that Chabad is making – no other movement in the world gives such a contribution to our people. And in my eyes this is a great blessing.

*Efraim Halevy served as the director of the Mossad, Israel's national intelligence agency. He was interviewed at his home in August, 2009.*

## PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

"See," says Moses to the people of Israel, "I place before you today a blessing and a curse"—the blessing that will come when they fulfill G-d's commandments, and the curse if they abandon them. These should be proclaimed on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal when the people cross over into the Holy Land.

A Temple should be established in "the place that G-d will choose to make dwell His name there," where the people should bring their sacrifices to Him; it is forbidden to make offerings to G-d in any other place. It is permitted to slaughter animals elsewhere, not as a sacrifice but to eat their meat; the blood (which in the Temple is poured upon the altar), however, may not be eaten.

A false prophet, or one who entices others to worship idols, should be put to death; an idolatrous city must be destroyed. The identifying signs for kosher animals and fish, and the list of non-kosher birds (first given in Leviticus 11), are repeated.

A tenth of all produce is to be eaten in Jerusalem, or else exchanged for money with which food is purchased and eaten there. In certain years this tithe is given to the poor instead. Firstborn cattle and sheep are to be offered in the Temple, and their meat eaten by the kohanim (priests).

The mitzvah of charity obligates a Jew to aid a needy fellow with a gift or loan. On the Sabbatical year (occurring every seventh year), all loans are to be forgiven. All indentured servants are to be set free after six years of service.

Our Parshah concludes with the laws of the three pilgrimage festivals—Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot—when all should go to "see and be seen" before G-d in the Holy Temple.

## CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 18 - 19 August	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	5:29	6:28
Adelaide	5:29	6:26
Brisbane	5:10	6:04
Darwin	6:24	7:15
Gold Coast	5:08	6:02
Perth	5:34	6:29
Sydney	5:09	6:06
Canberra	6:16	6:13
Launceston	5:15	6:16
Auckland	5:31	6:29
Wellington	5:24	6:25
Hobart	5:12	6:14
Byron Bay	5:06	6:01

## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

### PARSHAS RE'EH SHABBOS MEVORCHIM • 26 AV • 18 AUGUST

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:29 PM
	MINCHA:	5:35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:05 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:40 AM
	TEHILLIM:	8:00 AM
	THE MOLAD FOR ELUL IS TUESDAY 10:44 (15 chalakim) AM	
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	FARBRENGEN FOLLOWING DAVENING	
WEEKDAYS:	MINCHA:	5:25 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:28 PM
	SHACHARIS:	8:00/9:15/10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	5:35 PM
	MAARIV:	6:25 PM