

# LAMPLIGHTER

25 Teves  
Parshas  
Va'eira  
**1330**  
12 January  
5778/2018

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The first seven of the ten plagues are enumerated in this week's Torah portion, Va'eira. The plagues were the prelude to the liberation of our ancestors from Egypt. The thrilling and dramatic way in which the Children of Israel experienced sudden and complete transformation occurred in both the physical and the spiritual realms.

Physically, the change was extremely dramatic. Imagine the bitterness of our ancestors' slavery: Egypt was a country from which no slaves had ever escaped or left; they were completely in the power of a Pharaoh who bathed himself in the blood of Jewish children to alleviate his leprosy; they were broken in body and spirit by the cruelest forms of forced labor.

Yet, suddenly Pharaoh's power was broken. The entire people was liberated. The former slaves emerged from slavery as free people, bold and dignified, "with an outstretched arm... and with great wealth."

The Jewish people's spiritual liberation was no less sudden and dramatic. After having sunk to the lowest degree of unholiness, to the point of pagan idol-worship, they suddenly - at the time of the crossing of the Red Sea - perceived G-d, revealed in His full Glory. Seven weeks later (commemorated today by the holiday of Shavuot), they all stood at the foot of Mount Sinai, on the highest level of holiness and prophecy. G-d spoke to each one of them individually, without any mediator, and declared; "I am the L-rd your G-d."

There is an additional reason for the hasty departure from Egypt. In theory, once Pharaoh gave them permission to leave, the Jews could have left Egypt at their leisure. However, the Exodus was not just from a geographic Egypt. It was primarily an exodus from the evil and impurity in which the Israelites had become immersed. For this reason, it was imperative for the Jews to leave swiftly.

Not just on the holiday of Passover, but each and every single day, we are commanded to remember the Exodus from Egypt. The instructive message to us all that stands out from the events in this week's Torah portion is that each Jew has the inner capacity and actual ability to transform himself in a short time, suddenly, from one extreme to the opposite.

## Do the Bullied Become Bullies?

*By Elisha Greenbaum*

I was listening to a radio discussion about bullying. According to the presenter, the data suggests that there is a correlation between being bullied as a child and growing up to be a bully oneself. People were calling in to tell of their experiences of being picked on in the schoolyard, and whether they felt that their early experiences had impacted their later life. It was a fascinating and thought-provoking discussion.

Parenthetically, one guy admitted that he had been a bully as a child. He told a few stories of how he used to terrorize his playmates, and how he'd slowly come to realize how wrong his behavior had been. He sounded justly proud that he no longer felt the desire to persecute innocent victims.

I was actually quite impressed with him, until he let slip that he was currently employed as a parking inspector. I guess some things never change.

Or do they? Can one truly break away from the evil that others did, and resolve to act with generosity and understanding to others? Are we condemned to blindly repeat our childhood experiences, without hope or recourse for a better future, or can we exercise free choice? How terrifying a prospect that the ordeals of one's past should determine one's future behavior towards others. How can a victim ensure not to become a perpetrator?

The Jews in Egypt were slaves. They were the victims of decades of brutality and lifetimes of indignity. They were defeated and demoralized, and a steady diet of cruelty was their daily lot. Suddenly, Moses and Aaron appeared, bearing the promise of freedom and free will. They were soon to be released from their servitude, and would be able to act in any way they chose. Would they have the emotional strength to move on from the hardships of their past, or would they treat others as they themselves had been treated?

"So the L-rd spoke to Moses and to Aaron, and He commanded them concerning the children of Israel." The Jerusalem Talmud explains that this first commandment the children of Israel received from G-d was the directive that a Jewish slave is to be freed within six years.

On the face of it, this seems so incongruous. Of all the mitzvahs in the Torah, was this the most important instruction that Moses and Aaron needed to share at this juncture? Surely there were more weighty matters to introduce to their attention. What a time to instruct them about the care and treatment of their servants—when they were still slaves themselves!

The commentators explain that the reason a Jew has no right to enslave his fellow in perpetuity is because G-d alone is our Master, and we can belong to no one other than Him. Even in the rare circumstances where a man sells his services, submitting himself to the authority of another, that power is temporary and must be exercised with caution.

By introducing this commandment while they were still enslaved, G-d was showing the Jews a way to break out of the cycle of violence and intimidation that is the usual lot of those who were once misused. Even in the dark times, they were reminded that everything comes from G-d, and that He is the source of all. By connecting themselves with a higher power, they managed to overcome their bitterness, and substitute kindness for cruelty.

Even those most abused can have the ability to overcome. By connecting oneself to G-d and surrendering to His mission, one undergoes an exodus from the cruelty of his past, and is given a chance to enjoy his own personal redemption.

# Slice of LIFE

## Lioness of G-d

by Aaron Goldsmith

It was a few weeks before Chanukah, 2003. Our synagogue in Postville, Iowa, was viewing a video of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. A clip was shown where a man had told the Rebbe that his name was Robert and that he had never received a Jewish name. The Rebbe told him that since the name "Robert" begins with the letter "R," which has the same sound as the Hebrew letter "Raish," Robert should take the name Reuven. I found this interesting but did not think much about it afterwards. and did not think much else about it.

I was at the end of my last term as City Councilman. Postville had become a center for media attention, the subject of multiple documentaries, countless articles and even a book. Hadassah Magazine had come to do its own feature about our community.

Postville offered a most striking story about how a group of Lubavitcher Chasidim had developed a substantial presence in a quaint, all-white and all-Christian Iowa farm town. The pursuit of a reliable kosher meat source became a success story about diversity.

Postville's Rabbi Aron Schimmel put together a fantastic Chanukah program and invited

all of the Jewish Community and the non-Jewish neighbors as well. Booths offered potato latkes, kosher pizza and the chance for children to make their own menorah.

Moshe Yess, an entertainer and singer, made everyone laugh and sing. He told his classic joke about his return to Torah Judaism and that he has once been a "Hippie" but was a "Chippie" (a cross between a chasid and a Hippie).

The highlight of the evening came when we lit the menorah, with the participation of Postville's Mayor. I noticed that there was a photographer at the event and I found out that she had been sent by Hadassah Magazine.

The following day I walked into the kosher store and saw the photographer looking a little out of place. I introduced myself and asked her if she was enjoying her visit. She responded that she was having a nice time. I asked her if she learned anything new. She replied, "Yes, I learned the difference between a Hippie and a Chippie!"

I was surprised at her answer, not because she remembered one of Moshe Yess' lines from the night before but because she did not "look Jewish" and yet she was able to pronounce the guttural "ch" of "Chippie."

I asked the young woman, "Are you Jewish?" and she answered, "Yes!" I then asked her what her name was and she said, "Arwin."

"Arwin?" I said in surprise. I

had never heard that name before. "What kind of name is it?" "My parents were involved with eastern philosophies and the name came from that," she told me. I asked Arwin if she also had a Jewish name but she shook her head "no."

We spoke for a few moments about how one can acquire a Jewish name and I offered to help her. She was very happy at the idea. I remembered the video clip of the Rebbe that I had seen a few weeks earlier and my mind went straight to a name that begins with the Hebrew letter "alef," similar to the "A" that begins the name "Arwin." I thought that "Ariella" would be a good fit but before I told this to Arwin, I told her that I would return with a suggestion in half an hour.

I went to my office and searched in a list of Hebrew female names. "Ariella" just seemed to fit. I went back to Arwin and suggested the name Ariella. She smiled and said, "That sounds so beautiful, what does it mean?" I told her that it is the feminine form of "a lion of G-d."

She became very serious and said "you are not going to believe this, but 'Arwin' means lioness of G-d!"

We talked briefly about the Lubavitcher Rebbe and Robert, Divine Providence, and the gift of prophecy that G-d gives to Jewish parents in choosing their children's names. Arwin-Ariella was moved by her own little Chanukah miracle. And perhaps the Hadassah photographer who came to capture images of Postville's Jews ended up capturing a new image of herself!

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ISSUE 1330

### WEEKLY VIDEO



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Torah lectures and Jewish insights



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

## On Employment in Response to Mental Depression

By the Grace of G-d  
12th of Nissan, 5734  
[April 4, 1974]  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

Following the pleasure of our meeting and conversation after the Farbrengen last night, I wish to add here in writing some thoughts which, for obvious reasons, I did not wish to express in the presence of others, namely, in regard to your son.

I am in agreement with the opinion of your brother-in-law mentioned in your letter, especially as he is a physician. I believe that the best help that can be given your son, in general, is to get him to work.

I should only add, and I trust your brother-in-law would concur, that in view of the fact that this would entail a change in your son's way of life for a period of time, it would be well if his job would, in the first stage at any rate, meet two conditions: Firstly, that it would not impose on him too much responsibility, so that he would not be frightened or discouraged by it. On the other hand, it should have a more or less rigid timetable and schedule, so that he would get used to a routine and orderly life, which, in my opinion, is the overriding consideration. If it is the kind of work which he might consider beneath him, it might be explained to him that it is only a start, and temporary, and, indeed, the first step to advancement. It is well known that here in the USA people at the top often take pride in the fact that they worked their way up from the bottom of the ladder.

After he adjusts himself to a part-time occupation of several hours a day, he could probably be induced to work half a day and in due course a full-time job.

Needless to say, the above is in addition to what we spoke about the importance of his feeling that his parents and friends have the fullest confidence in him . . .

. . . I reiterate my prayerful wishes to you and yours for a joyous Festival of Liberation, and may the Festival of Our Freedom bring you and yours true freedom, freedom from anxiety material and spiritual, from anything that might detract from serving G-d wholeheartedly and with joy.

And to carry over this freedom and joy into the whole year. Wishing you and yours a Kosher and inspiring Pesach,

With blessing,  
M Schneerson

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*This Shabbat we bless the month of Shevat. The first day of Shevat is on Wednesday of this coming week, coinciding with January 21 this year.*

*Shevat is the eleventh month of the Jewish year, counting from the month of Nisan (the first month for numbering the months). The number eleven is a very special number. For, while the number ten represents fulfillment and completion, eleven transcends all levels. It is even higher than completion.*

*Jewish mysticism explains that the number eleven refers to Keter - the Divine crown. Ten is connected with intellect and emotions. Just as a crown is placed on top of the king's head, the crown symbolizes the will and pleasure of G-d which transcends all limitations.*

*On the first day of Shevat, Moses began speaking to the Jewish people the words which are contained in the book of Deuteronomy, known as the repetition of the Torah. Moses spoke to the Jewish people for 37 days, admonishing them for their past behavior, inspiring them for the future, blessing. At the conclusion of these 37 days, on the seventh of Adar, Moses, the faithful shepherd of the Jewish people, passed away.*

*Other special days in the month of Shevat are: the tenth of Shevat, which is the anniversary of the passing of the Previous Rebbe and the ascent to leadership of the Rebbe; Tu B'Shevat or the 15th of Shevat which is the New Year for Trees; the 22nd of Shevat which is the anniversary of the passing of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson.*

*May we very soon see the actualization of the lofty concept of Shevat, eleven - completion, with the complete Redemption, NOW.*

*J. I. Guterlich*

## QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

*With Rabbi Aron Moss*

### My 9-Year-Old Wants to Understand G-d's Ways

**Question:** Dear Rabbi,

*This question is from my nine-year-old daughter. I started answering and realized I was not talking on her level. Can you help? "Why would a supposedly good, just and loving G-d allow so much suffering in the world?"*

**Answer:** Explain to your daughter in child friendly words.

You are a bright nine-year-old. There are many things that you can understand, but your baby brother would not understand. For example, does your baby brother ever get a rash? I'm sure he does. So what happens when a baby has a rash? Mom applies cream to ease it. The poor little baby screams as his tender skin is stung by the ointment. But mom keeps going, ignoring the screams. As hard as it is for her to inflict pain on her baby, she does it, because she knows that it is for his good.

Imagine it would be possible to ask the baby how he feels about the situation. He would probably say, "I am being hurt by the very person who is supposed to love me and care for me the most! My own mother has no mercy. She ignores my cries. Why is this happening?"

And there would be no answer anyone could offer. There is no way in the world we could explain to a baby that no, it is not hurting, it is healing. Yes it is painful, but it is only being done in order to prevent pain and make you better. A baby simply can't understand anything beyond the pain he is experiencing.

We are all like that baby. In front of G-d, even the wisest and smartest person is like an infant. We look at the world and we see the suffering and we ask why. And no one can give us a satisfying answer. We can't understand; all we can do is cry from the pain. G-d is moved by our cries, it pains Him to see our pain. He understands us. We don't understand Him.

The gap between our minds and G-d's is even wider than the gap between a baby's mind and an adult's. The baby will one day reach adulthood, and he too will come to understand the ways of his parents. But we will never reach G-d. We cannot begin to understand G-d's ways.

But the baby still loves his mom, even though he doesn't understand her actions. We too need not understand G-d to love Him. Somehow, all the suffering in the world is a healing, and every painful experience is there to teach and to fix. Why does it have to be this way? G-d knows. We don't.

Mom knows what she's doing. So does G-d.

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

by Shlomie Naparstek

The veteran Chassid, Rabbi Uziel Chazanow, was born and raised in Russia during the pre-revolutionary years. As a child he had gotten a taste of Chassidus from his dear grandfather who taught him Tanya. As young boys, Uziel and his brothers would argue to no end about the different then-prevailing ideologies. While young Uziel was adamantly opposed to the ideas of communism, his brothers, and especially the one closest to him in age, Grisha, strongly endorsed it. Grisha would speak about equality and total bliss that the communist reign will bring about but Uziel did not want to hear any of it. Back and forth they argued each stubbornly holding on to their own beliefs. As a young teenager Uziel, set out on his life ambition to learn in the great Lubavitcher Yeshiva, Tomchei T'mimim, infused with his early taste of Chassidus. Unfortunately, throughout the years of the first world war and the revolution, he lost contact with his family and did not see the members of his family for many years to come. After the Communists took over and they launched a war on religious Judaism, Uziel and his fellow students went on self sacrifice to ensure the continuation of just that, even at the cost of their lives. Time and again they went out of their way to perform yet another ritual, prayer or build a Mikve for the Jewish communities through the Soviet Union. Many of Uziel's friends were caught and never heard from again. Uziel, personally, learned the art of Shechitah (ritual slaughtering) to aid his brethren in that aspect. Many years passed during which time Uziel married and raised a family, all under the Stalinistic oppression and always on the run from the authorities for his illegal activities. One night, as Uziel was making his way home from an illegal slaughtering, done underground, with his knife still concealed within his cloak, he had a sense that someone was following him. Uziel started running, but the all elusive pursuer was hot on his heels. As he rounded a corner he felt a hand grasp his shoulder from behind and capture him in a vise-like lock and a voice calling out "Uziel"! He turned around to see a well built, smartly dressed Russian soldier. Along his lapel, Uziel noticed a row of colorful metals, apparently this soldier was no ordinarily one. He was an officer or even a general. But then after taking a closer look at his face, Uziel noticed something familiar. Slowly it dawned on him that standing before him was Grisha, his brother that he hadn't seen for so many years! "Uziel," said Grisha, "it is dangerous for us to talk now but just tell me where you reside and I will come for a secret visit later." After giving his brother the address, Uziel rushed home and waited for his brother to appear. Later that night there was a knock on the door and in walked Grisha. After embracing for a short moment, Grisha said to Uziel, "Unfortunately, I cannot stay for too long or I will be putting my life in danger. As you see I have joined the communist party, and the Russian army as well. But before I leave I must ask you one question. Do you remember those arguments that we used to have? Do you remember how I used to try to convince you of the major advantages of the communist way? My dear brother, it was not only me. Millions of people thought that with the coming of communist rule, all of life's problems would be solved

and that our country will finally reach its height of glory. We were all totally convinced of the benefits of equality and of the extreme socialist ideology. But you, Uziel, were adamantly opposed. You held back against the social current with remarkable strength. Your opinion differed from that of the your entire family. Now, so many years down the line I can tell you with total conviction that you were totally right all along, on every single last point. My friends and I, although too scared to voice it even to each other, all realize that we have become mere slaves to a horrible dictatorship and all in the name for the "good" of the motherland. Tell me, my dear brother, how did you know and how did you see those major flaws ahead of time when the society around you didn't?"

Do you know what Uziel replied? He brought out a lesson from the Chumash! "I am no prophet" replied Uziel, "However there is one principle that I have had from day one and upon it I run my life. Regarding the story of Avraham's descend down to the land of Plishtim, the Torah relates that King Avimelech asked Avraham why he had lied about Sara, that she was his sister which in return nearly caused him to sin with her. Avraham replied the following words: כי אמרתי רק אין יראת אלוקים במקום הזה והרגוני על דבר אשתי – he had seen that there is no fear of G-d in that place and that enough sufficed for him to suspect the populace of murder to acquire his wife!

You see, I use this principle as my guide in life. You ask me how I saw the flaws in the new system. You ask me how I knew of all the problems it would bring and how it would eventually turn into a devastating dictatorship. To be honest with you, I didn't! I heard the same arguments as you and as everyone else and I have the same impressionable mind as everyone else. Yet I saw that there is no fear of heaven amongst these people, I took my leap of faith and came to the conclusion that it will never be good!"

## PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

The greater part of the Torah reading of Ha'azinu ("Listen In") consists of a 70-line "song" delivered by Moses to the people of Israel on the last day of his earthly life.

Calling heaven and earth as witnesses, Moses exhorts the people, "Remember the days of old / Consider the years of many generations / Ask your father, and he will recount it to you / Your elders, and they will tell you" how G-d "found them in a desert land," made them a people, chose them as His own, and bequeathed them a bountiful land. The song also warns against the pitfalls of plenty—"Yeshurun grew fat and kicked / You have grown fat, thick and rotund / He forsook G-d who made him / And spurned the Rock of his salvation"—and the terrible calamities that would result, which Moses describes as G-d "hiding His face." Yet in the end, he promises, G-d will avenge the blood of His servants, and be reconciled with His people and land.

The Parshah concludes with G-d's instruction to Moses to ascend the summit of Mount Nebo, from which he will behold the Promised Land before dying on the mountain. "For you shall see the land opposite you; but you shall not go there, into the land which I give to the children of Israel."

## CANDLE LIGHTING



|            | Shabbos 12 - 13 January |      |
|------------|-------------------------|------|
|            | Begins                  | Ends |
| Melbourne  | 8:27                    | 9:30 |
| Adelaide   | 8:15                    | 9:16 |
| Brisbane   | 6:30                    | 7:27 |
| Darwin     | 7:01                    | 7:53 |
| Gold Coast | 6:29                    | 7:26 |
| Perth      | 7:09                    | 8:08 |
| Sydney     | 7:52                    | 8:52 |
| Canberra   | 8:04                    | 9:05 |
| Launceston | 8:29                    | 9:36 |
| Auckland   | 8:25                    | 9:28 |
| Wellington | 8:38                    | 9:45 |
| Hobart     | 8:33                    | 9:42 |
| Byron Bay  | 7:30                    | 8:27 |

## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

### PARSHAS VA'EIRA • 25 TEVES • 12 JANUARY

|               |                           |                                |
|---------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| FRIDAY NIGHT: | MINCHA                    | 8.35 PM                        |
|               | KABBOLAS SHABBOS          | 9.05 PM                        |
| SHABBOS DAY:  | TEHILIM                   | 8.00 AM                        |
|               | LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA  | 9.43 AM                        |
|               | SHACHARIS                 | 10.00 AM                       |
|               | MOLAD WILL BE             | Wednesday 2.25 (2 chalakim) AM |
|               | FARBRENGEN AFTER DAVENING |                                |
|               | MINCHA                    | 8.25 PM                        |
| WEEKDAYS:     | SHACHARIS                 | 8.00/9.15/10.00 AM             |
|               | MINCHA                    | 8.35 PM                        |
|               | MAARIV                    | 9.15 PM                        |