

LAMPLIGHTER

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Parshas
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The period of the Jews' exile began, to a certain degree, with the destruction of the First Holy Temple in Jerusalem, and will only end with the arrival of Moshiach. Although the Temple was rebuilt and existed for a long time, this period is also considered part of exile, for the Second Temple was missing five key elements that the First Temple had.

Bilaam, the gentile prophet, alluded to the years of exile in his prophecy in this week's Torah portion, Balak. "He crouches and lies down as a lion and as a leopard; who shall make him rise up?" During the period of exile, the Jews have assumed a position of "crouching" and "lying down," as if they are bowed and resting. The Jewish People is not in full possession of its faculties and powers, and is bent and slumbering. Bilaam's words accurately describe the period of exile.

But even as the Jews are in exile, they are still likened to the lion and the leopard. When a lion crouches down, it is not in a position of weakness; the animal retains its power and potential to pounce even in this position. It is the lion's desire to lie down; it was not forced to by an outside power.

Even during the long exile among the nations, the gentiles do not have true control over the Jewish People. For, the exile only applies to worldly affairs; the exile has no influence over a Jew's performance of mitzvot (commandments). There is nothing in the world that can prevent a Jew from serving G-d and fulfilling His commandments.

The Previous Rebbe said: "Only the body of the Jew was subjected to exile and domination by the nations; the soul was not. It is our duty to make it clear to all that strangers have no authority over anything having to do with our religion, with Torah, mitzvot, and Jewish customs, and nothing in the world can change this fact."

It can sometimes appear to us that the world does indeed rule over the "lion" and the "leopard" - over the Jewish nation. This is because of the concealment of G-dliness which is characteristic of the exile, making it possible for us to be deceived into thinking that others can truly rule over the Jewish People. That is why, from time to time, G-d shows us open miracles and wonders - to remind us that "there is nothing else but Him."

These miracles, which occur in every generation, include those signs and wonders which are revealed through the righteous and serve to dispel the darkness and reveal the holiness in the world. They allow us to see, with our own eyes, that the Jewish People are indeed "lions" and "leopards," though "crouched" and "lying down." In reality, the Jew remains a free agent and the exile has no dominion over his true essence.

Don't Psychoanalyze!

By Shimon Posner

On the plane back to America, I was sitting next to a psychologist who mentioned to me how important it is for them never to psychoanalyze family members. One of the reasons: it's not fair. Of course, Jews were psychoanalyzing way before Sigmund invited people to lie on his couch—we just had no name for it.

For the non-professional, a greater danger is pseudo-analysis. "Oh, she always does that, she's so compulsive." "There he goes again with his bipolar." Worse: "The reason she always helps is because she's eager to please—it's her low self-esteem." "You know why he gives so much tzedakah? He needs to see his name on a building. Typical megalomaniac!"

Says who? Is it that simple to know everything going on in someone else's head? Are you always that accurate with what's happening in your own head? Secondly, what difference does it make? A good act with bad intentions beats a bad act with good intentions—and the pavement is a lot smoother.

Granted, giving it your best and things not succeeding the way you like is aggravating and unrewarding. We know that. And all G-d asks is that you do your best; the results are in His hands, we accept that. And that no action is ever wasted, good always accumulates, and whether results are immediately recognized or not is immaterial in the long run—and, from a G-dly, timeless (beyond quantum physics) perspective, redundant. We believe that. But that is not what we're talking about.

Look at it this way: Guy A helps old lady cross street because: the TV crew is filming, she has a big will, she has a wealthy nephew, etc. Guy B doesn't help old lady cross street because: the TV crew is filming, she has a big will, she has a wealthy nephew, and how dare you think he's so shallow! See, bottom line is, the lady needs help; your yin-yang harmony don't do much. As the Kabbalah puts it: Love and awe are what make a mitzvah soar. A mitzvah without love and awe is a bird without wings. Love and awe without a mitzvah is wings without a bird.

Okay, so action is it. But can intentions be improved, sublimated, sanctified? Well, now you're getting serious. But if you're not just doing it, then you're seriously not getting it.

The Parshah? When Pinchas acted decisively, he was ridiculed because his grandfather, a pantheistic priest, had done similarly: a plus-c'est-change chip off the old block in different circumstance.

No, G-d announced at the beginning of the Parshah, he did good; I alone know the inner workings of man. Judge him primarily by what he does. And unless you're in the business, your couch is for people to sit on—and if you're blessed with it, for overflow company to sleep on.

Slice of LIFE

Two Days in Africa

By Tuvia Bolton

This story occurred over fifty years ago. A well-known Chabad Chassid by the name of Rabbi Yosef Weinberg was a great Torah Scholar and successful lecturer and therefore often was invited to speak in various countries.

He lived in New York and before each journey he would inform the Rebbe (Rabbi Menachem Shneerson, aka The Lubavitcher Rebbe) and ask for a blessing. But one time he entered the Rebbe's room to inform him of an upcoming trip to Johannesburg and the Rebbe asked him if he planned to make a stopover on the way anywhere in Africa for two days.

When Rabbi Weinberg said no, that he was flying directly to Johannesburg, the Rebbe paused, gave him a penetrating look, continued the conversation and finished by blessing him with a safe and successful journey.

The next day Rabbi Weinberg was on his flight reading a book when the plane made a routine fuel stop in Dakar. In those days, even direct flights usually had to stop for refueling and Dakar, the capital of Senegal was one of the stops on the way to South Africa. But this time the captain announced that the delay would be a bit longer and suggested that the passengers wait in the more comfortable Senegal airport lounge.

They left the plane, were taken to the lounge, Rabbi Weinberg found a table in a quiet corner, opened his book and continued reading.

A young man's voice interrupted his thought.

"Please excuse me sir. Please pardon me for interrupting." He looked up and saw a well dressed young man. "My name is David Pinto, I live here in Dakar, I work for an oil firm here, and I just happen to be here in the airport. Please tell me sir, "are you Jewish? Are you a Rabbi?"

"Yes I am" answered Rabbi Weinberg.

"Ahh, Thank G-d!!! Boruch HaShem!! I thought so," he said excitedly as he sat down across from him grabbed his hand and began pumping it enthusiastically. "I have lived here in Dakar for almost four years with my wife and three children and it is so good to see a Jew!! Believe me, you're the first Jew I've seen since I arrived."

"You mean there are no other Jews here?" Asked Rabbi Weinberg.

"None at all" he replied. "I even looked around a bit, and found nothing! I even...well, except for making Kiddush for my family on Friday night I don't do any Jewish things anymore. I used to do a lot, I even have a pair of Tefillin but I stopped putting them on years ago. Am I glad to see you!!" The Rabbi spoke to him for a few minutes and it had an effect. Mr. Pinto, who was just waiting for some encouragement, promised to begin putting on Tefillin again and was interested in learning more.

They exchanged addresses, promised to correspond, and when the loudspeaker

announced the re-boarding, they hugged each other like old friends and parted.

In his seat on the plane, about fifteen minutes after takeoff, the Rabbi was beginning to concentrate on the book he opened again when suddenly something happened. The plane shuddered, the lights flickered, and everything lurched to the side. The people began screaming, while the captain's voice mumbled something from the P.A. system but there was too much noise - something was really wrong!

Through the windows, the terrified passengers could see one of the engines on fire pouring thick billows of black smoke!

The captain's voice was clear now. "Please fasten your belts. We are having trouble from one of the engines. We are returning to Dakar for repairs."

The plane dropped abruptly then steadied out again wobbling and shaking but miraculously making a safe landing where the shaken passengers once again left the plane and filed into the Airport.

They spent the night in the terminal waiting for news. Then, at dawn, the captain appeared, and announced apologetically that there will be a regrettable delay of two days until a new engine is installed, and they will be accommodated at a local hotel.

Everyone was disappointed but once in the bus on the way to the hotel, Rabbi Weinberg comforted himself with the thought that he could easily change the date of his lecture and now he could sit and learn Torah uninterrupted for a few days. At home and on the road there were always interruptions. Maybe this wouldn't be so bad after all!

Once settled in his hotel room, he prepared himself a cup of tea, sat down by the window, brought out a Talmud from his suitcase and began again to learn.

Suddenly the Rebbe's words jumped into his mind;

"Are you going to have a two day stopover on your journey?"

He thought for a moment, closed his book, left the room, locked the door behind him, walked into the street, stopped the first person that passed him, introduced himself as a Rabbi and asked if there were any Jews in the city.

But man he asked just shrugged his shoulders and walked away and so it was with everyone he stopped. Either they didn't understand English, or never heard the word "Jew" before or maybe Mr. Pinto was right when he said there are no Jews in Dakar.

"There must be Jews here" thought the Rabbi to himself. "I saw it in the Rebbe's eyes".

Just as he was thinking to himself, one of the people he asked earlier came back and pointed to a store and said "There is a Jew, I think."

And behold he was right!

The young manager of the store introduced himself as Clement Bajio. He was Jewish, 25 years old, born in Lebanon, had been working here in his uncle's store for the last eight years and was overjoyed to see the Rabbi.

"Here there is nothing Jewish, nothing at all." Said Clement. "No Synagogue, no books, not even one pair of Tefillin. It's like a desert. There are even four other Jewish families but no Judaism.

When I was young I used to do the commandments but not anymore."

"I will try to send books and Tefillin when I return to New York." Replied the Rabbi "But now, perhaps you would like to put on my Tefillin? Please come with me, they are in my hotel, unless you want to wait and I will bring them."

Clement immediately closed his store, and accompanied the Rabbi. To add to the excitement they even bumped into David Pinto; the man he had met earlier in the airport.. "Wow! What are you doing back here Rabbi? It is a miracle to see you again!"

The Rabbi told him of the near plane crash, introduced him to Clement and chided him saying, "You see, David? You have been here for years and haven't found one Jew and in just a few hours I have already found five families!

In the course of that day Rabbi Weinberg searched the telephone book for Jewish names and then went from store to store and succeeded in discovering a few more 'hidden' Jewish families. That evening he telephoned them all and invited them all for a meeting and the next day Dakar had a Jewish community... the first in it's history! The Rabbi spoke, many people actually cried from joy and they all promised to strengthen their Judaism.

For the remaining time that the Rabbi was in Dakar, Clement did not leave his side, and as he drove him back to the airport he opened his heart.

"Rabbi , ... my business here is very successful but recently I began thinking of getting married. After all I am 25 years old. But, you know, there are no Jewish girls here in Dakar but there are a lot of girls. So, to tell the truth I have been thinking about maybe ..."

"Listen Clement," said Rabbi Weinberg. "If you marry a non-Jewish woman your children will not be Jewish and neither of you will be happy. I advise you to close the business for a few days or even longer and go to France to look for a wife. I know some people there and they will help you. HaShem will help also, I'm sure. Don't worry."

They shook hands, and parted.

When Rabbi Weinberg reached South Africa, he immediately called the Rebbe's headquarters in Brooklyn, reported to one of the secretaries there all that happened in Dakar and asked if it could be arranged to send them books and Tefillin. When he returned to Brooklyn a few weeks later he learned that the Rebbe sent them several pairs of Tefillin, a lot of Jewish books in English and even (because Passover was approaching) Matzot, wine and Haggadat for Passover as well.

But there is more to the story.

Several months later, Rabbi Weinberg received an envelope in the mail containing a letter of thanks from Clement and David and a plane ticket to France.

In the letter they wrote that from the day they received the Rebbe's package, all the men have been putting on Tefillin every weekday, and everyone was even beginning to keep Shabbat. Not only that, but on Passover the little community made what was certainly the first Seder in the history of Dakar.

As for the plane ticket, it was a ticket for the Rabbi to attend Klement's wedding. He met a Jewish girl (also from Lebanon) in Paris just as the Rabbi suggested.

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Editor: Shlomie Naparstek

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

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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WEEKLY VIDEO



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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

The Emperor's New Clothes

B"H, 10 Mar-Cheshvan, 5716
Peace and blessing!

You asked: What should be your response when told that science allegedly has proof that the world has existed for more than 5715 years? Can this be answered with the famous statement of our Sages that G-d "built worlds and destroyed them?"

The meaning of that statement is not that G-d actually created earlier physical worlds. Rather, the intent there is to spiritual worlds, as recorded by the Alter Rebbe — based on the Arizal's writings — in his Torah Ohr on the portion of Shemot.

Their statement that science has proofs is absolutely false. Science has no proofs at all, only estimations built on flimsy foundations. It is hard to explain all of this in a letter of requisite length. The main point is, however, that the statement in scientific texts with regard to the world's having existed for several billion years, etc., is based on the following theory:

Since a specific number of years are needed (according to today's conditions, such as temperature, atmospheric pressure, wind movements, the proportions of elements in the environment, etc. etc.) for every hundred feet of sand accumulation at the banks of a river, and since there are mountains of this sand which are several miles high, therefore (if one is to assume that these mountains were gathered bit by bit from grains of sand, by the movements of this same river, and that all of the above conditions haven't changed in thousands of years) such and such number of years would be needed. This number is far more than 5715.

When one asks, however, where these grains of sand came from, they have no answer.

When one asks: Just as it is possible for grains of sand to have come to be at a certain point on a flat plain, may it not be possible that mountains too came into being all at once? Again, they have no answer.

When one asks: How do you know that five thousand years ago all of the conditions, of water, wind, river patterns, etc. were exactly the same as they are now? For this, too, they have no response.

When one asks, in addition to all of the above: If you are claiming that your proofs are scientific, how can it be that the results of the research into the age of the world according to astrophysics, according to archeology, according to geology, and according to radioactivity, all contradict each other, from one extreme to the other? For example, one concludes that the world can be no more than half a billion years old, while the other concludes that it cannot be less than two billion!

These contradictions are clear proof that all of these discussions and research are only theories built on thin air. Here is not the place to delve into this at greater length.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Is It Ethical to Regift?

Question: *Is it wrong to regift? My uncle just came back from Hong Kong and brought me a very expensive green tie with red zigzags. I would not be caught dead wearing it. But I have a friend with the same taste as my uncle who would love it, and it's his birthday next week. Is there any issue with me passing it on, rather than letting it gather dust in my closet?*

Answer: You need to think this through.

A gift is given to be yours. That means you can do with it whatever you wish. If you want to use the tie as a dishrag, sell it on eBay or make it your dog's scarf, no one can stop you.

But a gift is not just a gift; it is a sentiment, a thought, a feeling. Your uncle may have personally picked this tie out for you, thinking you would appreciate it. If he then sees it on your dog or on your friend or on eBay, he may be hurt. It is not the tie you have rejected, it is his thoughtfulness.

Then again, maybe he wouldn't care, or would never find out. Even so, there is an additional concern when you pass on a gift to a friend. You are fooling your friend. When he receives this expensive tie from you, he will feel indebted to you for your generosity. He will feel he must reciprocate when it is your birthday, and buy you something of real value. And unless he has an uncle who shares your fine taste, that may cost him.

By regifting the tie to your friend, you are scoring unfair points. He thinks you are being gracious by giving him such a valuable gift, when in actual fact you are dumping your unwanted merchandise on him. The Talmud calls this "stealing someone's goodwill."

So regifting may be perfectly kosher, but before you regift, ask yourself the following questions: Will anyone be hurt by my actions? Was this gift bought with me in mind, or could it have gone to anyone? Will anyone be misled?

You may have good taste in ties, but you don't want to leave a bad taste in anyone's mouth.

A WORD

from the Director

This Shabbat is the 17th of Tammuz and the fast usually commemorated on this date is postponed until Sunday. The Rebbe explained that there are two ways of explaining the fact that the fast is put off:

It is forbidden to fast on Shabbat, because no element of sadness should be associated with this day. In particular, this applies in regard to those fasts that commemorate national calamities.

The postponement serves as a foretaste of the revelation of the true nature of the date of the fast that will surface in the Era of the Redemption when, as Maimonides writes, "all the fasts will be nullified... and will be transformed into festivals and days of joy and rejoicing."

On an overt level, a fast day is obviously undesirable. The suffering endured on a fast is surely not pleasurable, nor appreciated. Nevertheless, the inner dimension of a fast is good, as the prophet states, "It is a day of will to G-d."

This contrast is openly expressed in regard to the 17th of Tammuz. On an obvious level it is associated with negative factors, the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem, which led to the destruction of the Holy Temple. Nevertheless, its inner, essential quality is good. This is even alluded to in the date itself, for 17 is numerically equivalent to the word "tov." This points to the intent of the exile, that it should lead the Jews to the Era of the Redemption.

The connection to the Redemption also relates to Shabbat which is a foretaste of "the era which is all Shabbat and rest for eternity." Moreover, the mitzva of delighting in the Shabbat by partaking of material delicacies is also paralleled by "the feast that G-d will make for the righteous in that future era." That feast will be an actual physical meal. For, as Chasidut explains, the ultimate reward of the Messianic Era will be experienced in this material world, as the souls are en clothed within the body.

May this take place immediately!

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED



Behind the Formality

By Malka Touger

"But the courts in Los Angeles annulled my marriage," Sharon insisted. "Rabbi, it happened such a long time ago, and it only lasted six hours -- a stupid mistake. Done, finished, forgotten forever!"

Rabbi Chaim Mentz, the Chabad-Lubavitch emissary in Bel Air, California, listened sympathetically. He really felt for Sharon and Andrew, a nice young couple who wanted him to officiate at their upcoming marriage.

"I understand how you feel, Sharon," he explained patiently. "But you see, Jewish law prohibits marriage if the bride or groom had been married before but not divorced according to Jewish law. A court annulment is not enough. A proper bill of divorce, a get, must be obtained."

Sharon and Andrew looked devastated.

"Don't worry," Rabbi Mentz calmed them. "We're dealing with a formality, but behind this formality lies the truism that everything a person does has meaning, and so no action should be taken lightly. I will assist you in the procedure and things will work out for the best."

"Yeah," Sharon thought to herself. "I wonder what good can come from adding extra hassles to my six-page-long list of things to do."

With the rabbi's guidance, Sharon contacted the Jewish rabbinical court (Beit Din) in Los Angeles, and in a matter of weeks she had the get in hand. The rabbi at the Beit Din wished her well. "Now you can go about planning your upcoming marriage with joy and peace of mind," he concluded warmly.

"We have it all planned already," Sharon assured him with a smile, "We're getting married on the fifth of December."

The rabbi shook his head with concern. "Oh dear, I'm sorry you didn't mention that earlier. You see, Jewish law requires that in a case such as yours, you must wait three months before marrying. As you have already demonstrated a high regard for the law, you will surely continue to do so as you begin your new life. May you be blessed in all your endeavors."

The first thing Sharon did was call Andrew, then she called Rabbi Mentz.

"Rabbi," she blurted. "I can't believe this! All our plans, the wedding, our honeymoon! You mean we have to reschedule everything?!"

Rabbi Mentz gently explained the law and its reasons, and encouraged Sharon and Andrew to abide by it. "Judaism maintains that G-d is the active third party in every marriage. You'll be demonstrating how important it is to have Him as a partner in your life."

After some consideration, Sharon and Andrew informed Rabbi Mentz that they would comply with the law, and they rescheduled their wedding for January 23, 2005.

On December 26, they realized just how vital to their lives their Third Partner was. This would have been one of the last days of the honeymoon they had originally planned, and they would have been spending it at the now famous Kaafu Atoll Maldives Hotel on Lankanfushi Island. The room they had reserved was one of those

swept away by the devastating tsunami of December 2004!

Purim In Persia Again

By Herschel Finman

In 1978 the Lubavitcher Rebbe requested that Tanya (the basic Chabad philosophical treatise) be printed in every Jewish community. (There have been more than 6000 editions of Tanya printed world wide.) One such printing was accomplished in Teheran, Iran. Two thousand copies were delivered to the local shul for distribution. Shortly thereafter, the Shah was deposed and Ayatollah Khomeini took power. One of the first orders for the new regime was the purging of all things non-Muslim. The Jews of Teheran were told their archives and store houses would have to be turned over to the authorities for inspection and destruction. They had two weeks to turn over their books.

A meeting was convened by the city's Rabbis. No plan was implemented but each Rabbi was to determine what to do before the two week period lapsed. The Rabbi of the Great Synagogue of Teheran left the meeting quite disturbed.

The next day he went to his office, where he was confronted by a squad of the police. They demanded that the Rabbi turn over his archives. He protested, saying that he had been given two weeks. They just shrugged and said, "We are here now. Give us the materials."

The Rabbi knew if he did not comply, he would be killed. But in the synagogue archives were ancient manuscripts from before the time of Mordechai and Esther. He resolved he would not give these away even though he risked being killed on the spot! Sensing that his last moments on Earth were near, he quietly said the Shema and the vidui confession prayer.

As they were leaving the office to go to the archives, one of the police noticed a large box of newly printed books. They inquired about the nature of these books. The Rabbi proceeded to give them a full overview of Chassidic thought and the themes of the Tanya. In the course of his explanations, he opened the book and taught a chapter of the Tanya to the police! The subject matter dealt with the totality of G-d's oneness.

The police were very impressed. They said that if this was the nature of the Jews' archives, they conformed to the new standards. And they left.

A short time later, the Rabbi moved to New York City where he served for many years as the Rabbi of a prodigious synagogue in Manhattan. At his first opportunity, the Rabbi went to Brooklyn and thanked the Lubavitcher Rebbe for saving his life.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Balak, the king of Moab, summons the prophet Balaam to curse the people of Israel. On the way, Balaam is berated by his donkey, who sees, before Balaam does, the angel that G-d sends to block their way. Three times, from three different vantage points, Balaam attempts to pronounce his curses; each time, blessings issue forth instead. Balaam also prophesies on the end of the days and the coming of Moshiach.

The people fall prey to the charms of the daughters of Moab, and are enticed to worship the idol Peor. When a high-ranking Israelite official publicly takes a Midianite princess into a tent, Pinchas kills them both, stopping the plague raging among the people.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 29 - 30 June	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	4:53	5:54
Adelaide	4:56	5:56
Brisbane	4:46	5:42
Darwin	6:14	7:06
Gold Coast	4:43	5:40
Perth	5:04	6:03
Sydney	4:38	5:37
Canberra	4:43	5:43
Launceston	4:33	5:38
Auckland	4:56	5:57
Wellington	4:43	5:47
Hobart	4:28	5:33
Byron Bay	4:41	5:38

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS BALAK • 16 TAMMUZ • 29 JUNE

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	5.00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	5.30 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.57 AM
	SHACHARIS	10.00 AM
	MINCHA	4.45 PM
SUNDAY:	FAST BEGINS	6.08 AM
	FAST ENDS	5.41 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	5.00 PM
	MAARIV	5.45 PM