

LAMPLIGHTER

5 Tishrei
Parshas
Vayeilech

1365

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The Torah portion of Vayeilech teaches us about the commandment of Hakhel: During the times of the Holy Temple, the Jewish People made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem every seventh year to hear the king read the Torah aloud, "that they may hear and that they may learn and fear G-d."

At that time, the kohanim, or priests, surrounded the city of Jerusalem. With golden trumpets they signaled that it was time for everyone to assemble at the Holy Temple. In fact, this musical alarm was so important that, "any kohen who did not have a gold trumpet did not seem to be a kohen at all."

This curious comment needs further explanation. To understand what was meant, let us examine what exactly the kohen's job in the Temple was.

The kohanim were responsible for serving in the Temple, and performed many of the tasks associated with the worship there. Sounding the golden trumpets in the outskirts of Jerusalem was, however, only the preparation for the commandment of hakhel, and not part of the Mitzva itself. What, then was so important about this, that a kohen who did not participate was not considered a "real" kohen?

One of the most important and central services performed by the kohanim in the Temple was the burning of the ketoret (incense). Maimonides explains that the purpose of the incense was to dispel any offensive odors and make the Temple smell pleasant.

As with all aspects of Torah, this is understood on many different levels. It is explained in the Zohar that the kohanim were not merely interested in converting unpleasant smells to pleasant ones; the inner purpose of the ketoret was to dispel the foulness of the Evil Inclination.

The ketoret was composed of various inedible substances, among them chelb'na (galbanum), a particularly foul-smelling resin. The Talmud teaches that this ingredient symbolized all that was lowly and inferior. The task of the kohenim was to take the lowly and mundane and utilize it in the service of G-d. Their job was to elevate even the most mundane aspects of life and infuse the physical world with holiness.

This fundamental service of the kohanim found its most emphatic expression in the preparation for the commandment of hakhel. For seven long years prior to this day, the kohanim had been busy in the Temple elevating the physical world. Now it was their turn to elevate the entire Jewish People to a higher spiritual level.

To a certain extent, this was the "test" which determined a kohen's mettle. If he took his G-d-given task to heart, he would run to assemble his fellow Jews, and thereby prove that he was of priestly stock. If, however, he lazily remained at home, he "did not seem to be a kohen at all."

In a broader sense, every single Jew is also a kohen, as it states, "And you shall be a nation of kohanim (priests)." It is every Jew's task in life to go out into the world and "sound the trumpet," arousing his fellow Jews to reach spiritually higher and higher.

The Song that Testifies

By Naftali Silberberg

"And I will surely hide My face on that day . . . So now, write this song for yourself and teach it to the Children of Israel, place it in their mouth, so that this song shall be for Me as a witness regarding the Children of Israel" — Deuteronomy 31:18-19.

We inhabit a world where nothing is as it superficially seems, where the consciousness of every entity is at odds with its essence and its *raison d'être*.

The most basic concern of every species and every individual entity is its own preservation. Satisfying its needs and wants naturally trumps all other considerations.

In truth, however, "All that the Holy One, blessed be He, created in His world, He created solely for His glory" (Ethics 6:11). Every creation is a cog in G-d's master plan, whose objective is to bring glory to the Creator.

The Torah and the Jew share a unique bond because they both are exceptions to a universal rule. We are here to serve G-d. But our instincts tell us that we are here to serve ourselves.

The Torah and the Jew share a unique bond because they both are exceptions to this rule. The Torah is G-d's missive to this world; it has no personal selfish agenda. Its every word clearly expresses its purpose — serving the Creator. And the Jew? Thousands of years of anti-Semitism, humiliation, persecution and pogroms quickly dispel the notion that self-preservation is his primary motivation. Within the heart of every Jew blazes a divine soul which recognizes that serving G-d is its ultimate calling, and all personal needs, even life itself, is of secondary importance.

This relationship between the Jew and Torah expresses itself in the deep love and respect the Jew has for Torah. We are now in the High Holiday season, when many Jews who don't step foot in a house of worship throughout the year pay a visit to their synagogue. Pay attention to these precious Jews as the Torah is taken out of the Ark and passes their way. Watch as they lovingly and reverently kiss its velvet cover. The past year's Saturdays spent on the golf course... the non-kosher restaurants... the non-Jewish spouse... None of these matter at this moment. Right now, the Jewish soul has found its holy counterpart, and lovingly acknowledges this truth.

"And I will surely hide My face on that day."

G-d told Moses that the day would come when He would hide His face, when His presence and providence would be utterly concealed. This is true in a global sense, but as is the case with every word of the Torah, it is true in a personal sense as well. There will come a time when G-d's face which is within every one of His children will be hidden; when skeptics will doubt the very existence of a Jewish soul.

"So now, write this song for yourself . . . so that this song shall be for Me as a witness regarding the Children of Israel"

Write a Torah scroll. See how the Jew naturally reveres it. The testimony is incontrovertible. The Jewish soul still burns bright within the hearts of the progeny of Abraham.

"Teach it to the Children of Israel, place it in their mouth."

Now that the Jew's relationship with G-d and Torah has been established, it is time to live accordingly. The adoration for Torah should not be relegated to the High Holidays. Study Torah and place it in your mouth. Your lifestyle will then be in harmony with your truest self.

Slice of LIFE

A Mother's Letter

By Tuvia Bolton

Here is a story I recently heard from Rabbi Yisroel Brod here in Kfar Chabad.

The story centers on a thirty year old, non-observant Jew who we will call Joe. Joe had been orphaned at the age of five. His mother had been sick for a year or so before her passing and it's not clear what happened to his father but in any case, at five years old he was alone and bitter.

He was angry at his mother for leaving him; all the other kids had parents but him. He knew it didn't really make sense to hold a grudge, after all it wasn't her fault, but he did and it consumed him.

The years passed. Joe became totally estranged from Judaism; his mother had been religious so it was a sort of revenge.

One day he got an idea. He would go to the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

It's not so clear where he got this idea from or what his motivation was but he remembered that his mother mentioned this Rabbi a few times so he went. Perhaps he wanted to make trouble, perhaps he was just curious, perhaps bored but whatever the reason he made up his mind to visit the Rebbe's headquarters.

He had heard that the Rebbe only received guests at night and only once or twice a week. Figuring he had nothing to lose, one night he took a taxi to the Crown Heights area of Brooklyn to 770 Eastern Parkway and entered.

It was after midnight but the place was well lit, busy and lively just as at midday. Bearded young men with

friendly faces were walking about, others were vociferously learning Torah in a room off to the side, once in a while someone rushed by him in a hurry. A young man approached him, shook his hand and asked him if he could help and when Joe answered 'The Lubavitcher Rebbe' the young man pointed to a small hallway where a line of several people stood silently and nervously before a large closed mahogany door.

"They are waiting for Yechidut" the young man said. "The Rebbe is in there" and he pointed to the door "and they're waiting to talk to him alone. Some have been waiting for months for this meeting."

Joe went to the line, examined it for a few minutes from a distance and made his move. He went to the first man in line, tapped him on the shoulder and whispered. "S'cuse me. I have something really urgent. Really urgent! But I have to catch a plane. Please, it's really important and it will only take a minute, maybe less. Can I go in front of you?"

The man hesitated for a few seconds, looked Joe in the eyes, shrugged his shoulders, quietly said "Nu, Urgent? Nu, what can I say?" and let Joe get in front of him.

At that moment one of the Rebbe's secretaries, Rabbi Groner, entered the hall, noticed what was happening; that Joe was not there with permission, and he rushed to remove him.

But at that moment the Rebbe's door opened, someone came backing out, eyes red possibly from weeping, and Joe entered.

Rabbi Groner ran after him to pull him out but the Rebbe just made a sign to leave the intruder alone and Rabbi Groner had no choice but to retreat and close the door.

Joe sat in the chair next to the Rebbe's desk and said nothing. He just stared at the Rebbe, perhaps in defiance, perhaps in curiosity, and was silent. His plan was to make the Rebbe talk first.

The Rebbe looked at him for a few seconds and said with a European accent. "I know you."

Joe just pointed to himself, shrugged his shoulders, raised his palms upward, shook his head and

said, "Me? No, not me!"

The Rebbe continued, "I received a letter some years ago."

"Not from me!" He replied.

"About you."

"About me?" Joe said incredulously. "Who would write a letter to you about ME?"

The Rebbe stood, pulled a letter out of a cabinet, sat back down and put it on the table.

"Your mother."

Joe was shocked, he could see from afar that it was an old handwritten letter. Could it be from his mother?

"She wrote me twenty five years ago saying she was about to die and requested that I should pray for you. Here, you can read it."

The Rebbe turned the letter to Joe but kept his hand on it so Joe could not pick it up.

Joe read the letter. It was as the Rebbe said! His mother didn't just leave him! His insides were turning around, his head was spinning. He had been wrong all these years! She really did try her best to provide for him! Tears filled his eyes but he couldn't cry, the inner turmoil was too much and too sudden.

"Rebbe!" He begged "can I have this letter? Please, it is from my mother!" But the Rebbe pulled the letter back and said.

"I can give you a copy but the letter was written to me and it stays with me."

"But it's my mother!" Joe said with a broken heart not understanding why the Rebbe wouldn't just give it to him! It was his mother!! "Why not?" He whispered like a child.

The Rebbe answered "Every year, just before Yom Kippur I gather all the pupils in my Yeshiva; several hundred young men, and I bless them."

"So?" Joe interrupted.

The Rebbe continued "Before I bless them....I read that letter."

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

The Ten Days of Teshuva

The Ten Days of Teshuva, 5736 [1975]

...Inasmuch as we are now in the propitious days of Aseres Yemei Teshuva (Ten Days of Return), it is well to remember that this is the time of the year which our Sages identify with the verse, "Seek G-d when He is found, call on Him when He is near." This "nearness" is described as the "nearness of the Source of Light to its spark." May G-d grant that this be reflected in the daily life throughout the whole year, in all aspects, both spiritual as well as material.

Indeed, since all expressions used by our Sages, as all words of Torah, are exact, the said expression, "nearness of the Source of Light to its spark," is particularly meaningful. For, the proximity of the Source of Light increase the spark's flame and power, and so in the spiritual realm, where the nearness of G-d, the Source of Light and Source of Blessing, sets the Jew's heart and mind aglow with love of G-d and awe of G-d, stimulating him (and her) to observe and the channels and vessels to receive G-d's blessings in all needs, materially and spiritually.

With the blessing of Chasimo uGmar Chasimo Toivo [be fully sealed for good] and good things in all above,

5th Tishrei, 5736 [1975]

I received, with considerable delay, your letter of Elul 6, in connection with the Induction of your esteemed Rabbi Mordechai Gutnick.

However, a blessing is always timely, especially in the propitious days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, which our Sages identify with the verse, "Seek G-d when He is found; call on Him when He is near." This special nearness to G-d, the Source of Blessings, surely brings Divine blessings, materially and spiritually.

I am therefore pleased to take this opportunity of extending to you and the entire Congregation prayerful wishes that your association with your esteemed Rabbi be blessed with much Hatzlocho [success].

...As is well known, a Jewish congregation is called Kehilla Kadisha, a Holy Congregation. To make this a reality, it is the function of the synagogue to inspire each and all of the members and worshippers to carry the holiness of the Mishkan Me'at ("Small Sanctuary") into their homes and homelife, in fulfillment of G-d's desire "V'shochanti b'sochom" - "I will dwell among them" - within each and all of them.

Rabbi Gutnick has the additional distinction of being a Kohen, of whom it is written, "A Kohen's lips preserve knowledge and Torah is sought from his mouth" (Malachi 2:7). In addition to being the traditional teachers of our people, kohanim have been also chosen by G-d "to bless His people Israel with love," and these blessings include, of course, well-being and prosperity in every respect, materially and spiritually. May G-d grant that this be so for your entire Congregation with your esteemed Rabbi, and in a growing measure.

With prayerful wishes for a Chasimo uGmar Chasimo Toivo for a good and sweet year,

A WORD

from the Director

This Shabbat marks the anniversary of the passing of Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, mother of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. She passed away on 6 Tishrei, 1964.

Rebbetzin Chana was born in 1879 in Nikolaiev. She married the renowned scholar and kabbalist, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson. They had three sons. In 1939 Rabbi Levi Yitzchok was arrested because of his energetic work to preserve religious observance; a year later, he was exiled to Kazakhstan. When Rebbetzin Chana learned of her husband's location, she joined him, despite the difficulties and danger involved. Rabbi Levi Yitzchok passed away in exile. In 1947 Rebbetzin Chana succeeded in emigrating from the Soviet Union to the U.S.

Being that this coming week holds within it the awesome day of Yom Kippur, we present to you a short excerpt from Rebbetzin Chana's memoirs about Yom Kippur in exile in Kazakhstan:

"On Yom Kippur, my husband, a Rumanian Jew, and I, enclosed ourselves in our room. It is hard to set down on paper the emotions and the spiritual states that we experienced on that day.

Suddenly, we became aware of strange eyes peering at us through the window. As soon as the Rav realized what was going on, he went over to the door and threw it open wide. Our unexpected guest turned out to be a young Lithuanian Jew, also in exile.

Here, in exile, this young fellow worked as a wagon-driver. He related to us that while driving his wagon, he had caught a glimpse of the Rav and was struck by his appearance. He had decided to find out who this person was and where he lived. The lad felt that if he could be privileged to be with the Rav on this holiest of days, it would ease the weight of his sorrows and be a balm for his soul. Somehow, our young visitor had managed to locate us.

Half an hour later we heard a knock on the door. We opened it to find a frightened woman who, like the wagon-driver, yearned to be in the Rav's presence on this day. Not allowing the fast to deter her, she trudged four km in order to reach our house...

J. I. Gutnick

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Can I Bribe G-d with Charity?

Question: Dear Rabbi,

I often give tzedakah, charity, in memory of loved ones and people who have inspired me, but lately my motivations have changed. I've been donating to worthy causes in the hope of achieving something I yearn for and dream about - I want my daughter to get married. Is this still charity, or am I bribing G-d?

Answer: Actually, giving charity for personal gain is perfectly fine. According to the Talmud, "One who gives charity and says, 'on condition that my child is healed from sickness,' or 'on condition that I earn a reward in the afterlife' - is completely righteous." As you said, this seems strange. Is the donation not tainted when done for one's own benefit? Surely one should give with more altruistic motives.

But no. When it comes to giving charity our intentions matter little. The main thing is that the needy person or worthy cause is helped.

A philanthropist once came to Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi to complain that he felt he was giving charity without sincerity. "Without sincerity? Nonsense!" replied the Rebbe. "There is plenty of sincerity. Perhaps you are not sincere in giving charity, but the poor are very sincere in receiving your charity. Even if you don't mean it, they do!"

Don't get too preoccupied with intentions. When it comes to helping others, actions count more. If you are doing something good, even for selfish reasons, it is still good. And if selfish motives are what it takes to keep you giving charity, so be it.

Can G-d be bribed? I don't think so. Whether you will receive the particular blessing you seek is up to Him. But one thing is for sure, G-d does not remain indebted. Any good deed, whatever the motive, generates blessing and will be rewarded. Sometimes we see the results, sometimes we don't. But it is our good deeds, not good intentions, which make the world a better place.

IT HAPPENED



Caught in the Act

By Yerachmiel Tilles

It happened in Berditchev. On the first day of Rosh Hashana, during the repetition of the Shacharit prayer. In the shul of the great tsaddik, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak.

The Rebbe himself was leading the service. His sweet yet powerful voice permeated the shul, stirring the soul strings of all present and churning their emotions.

Tears streamed down many faces. Everyone was inspired to pray with much greater focused intensity than usual, from the depths of their hearts.

Just before Kedushah, when he started to intone the prayer that begins with the words, "L'ei-l orech din"-to G-d who conducts judgment," the tsaddik's voice quivered.

A current pulsed through the room. Every heart pounded as the holiness and seriousness of the occasion seemed to be climaxing. Each person felt as if he was standing at that moment before the Throne of Glory, and the Judge of the World was measuring and weighing their deeds of the past year as His gaze penetrated every heart and secret thought. The Rosh Hashana judgment was about to emerge!

When he came to the words of one of the final couplets, "L'koneh avadav b'din"-Who acquires his servants through judgment." R. Levi Yitzchak's voice cut off. He stood as if frozen in his place. His face turned white as a sheet. His eyes bulged. As his tallit began to slip off his head, it seemed as if his soul had flown off to higher realms.

All eyes riveted upon the Rebbe. Everyone shook in fear. What will be, what will be?

The veteran chassidim, however, realized that something special must be happening, even if they couldn't perceive it. They concentrated on thoughts of tshuvah, of regret for the past and good resolve for the future.

A few more seconds went by. Then, the color returned to the tsaddik's face. It was as if he had been restored to life. His face shone. With great joy he called out confidently, "L'koneh avadav b'din"-Who acquires his servants through judgment."

After the prayers, at the holiday meal, one of the elder chassidim mustered his courage and directly queried the Rebbe, "what happened during Shacharit? Did you see something in the upper worlds?"

Not one present ever forgot the Rebbe's extraordinary reply.

"I saw the Accuser carrying a huge sack on his back. Right away I felt uneasy. I realized that it was full of the sins of the Jews that he had managed to accumulate over the course of the year.

"I went over and peeked in to see what he had. Let me tell you, there was a full assortment: some nasty lashon hara talk, stinginess, baseless hatred, wasted time that could have been used for Torah study, and so forth and so on ad nauseum. Big ones, little ones-the sack was bulging and the Accuser was gleefully galloping toward The Throne.

"Oy! I thought to myself. 'What can I possibly do?' I couldn't come up with any plan. My spirits sunk.

"Suddenly the Accuser stopped short. His sharp eyes had detected a Jew committing a sin on Rosh Hashana itself. He dropped the sack and jumped off to pick up this new juicy item to top off his collection.

"As he disappeared from sight, I decided to look in his sack again to get a closer look at what he had. I went over and started examining the different transgressions. I quickly saw that the Jews who had done these things weren't really so guilty. The bitter harshness of the exile, their bleak poverty, the oppressive negative influence of the dominant cultures in which they lived and other extenuating circumstances all combined to coarsen the Children of

Israel and seriously weaken their Jewish identity and commitment, until finally they were mired in the filth and unable to resist temptation.

Those poor Jews! What could be expected of them? And anyway, what could these puny errors weigh against the callous murder, immorality and theft in which the host nations were sunk.

"As I took each particular sin and considered it in the light of these thoughts, it melted in my hand and disappeared as if it had never been! The pile shriveled and shrank, and soon was all gone.

"Just then, the Accuser returned. When his glance took in the empty sack, he shrieked grievously, 'Thieves! Thieves! They stole all my Jewish sins that I worked so hard to amass.'

"Then he spotted me. He recognized right away that it must be me that would do something like this to him. He flew over and grabbed me by my beard!

"Now, you should realize that when it comes to knowing Torah, the Accuser is no slouch! He demanded that I pay him back for what I stole, and not only that, but that I was obligated to pay him double! When I answered him that I didn't have anything to pay him with, he quoted the verse, 'if the thief can't pay back, he is sold into slavery.'

"With that, the Accuser seized me firmly and dragged me off to sell me. The first angel we encountered, though, adamantly refused to buy me. A Jewish slave? No way! It is too much responsibility. He'd be obligated to feed me and provide for my other needs, and at the same time have to worry about getting caught in false accusations and other problems. 'He who acquires a Jewish slave acquires a master for himself,' he quoted. 'Even if he were free I wouldn't take him,' he finished.

"So the Accuser offered me to the next angel we came upon,...and to a third and to a fourth. No one wanted to buy me. No one was interested at all. "Deciding it was hopeless, the Accuser took hold of me again and pulled me right up to the Throne of Glory, and set forth his case before the Al-mighty Himself! When he finished a voice was heard. 'I have made you and I shall carry; I shall sustain and I shall deliver" [see Isaiah 46:4]; I will buy him from you, O Accuser.'

"The Accuser stood slack-jawed. All his complaints were silenced. "At this point I revived, as you saw for yourselves. And now you know the explanation of 'Who acquires His servants through judgment': we are all servants of the Almighty, and only by serving Him can we escape the clutches of the Accuser. So let's do it!" concluded the tsaddik dramatically. "And in the merit of doing so, surely we will be inscribed and sealed for good."

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

The Parshah of Vayelech ("and he went") recounts the events of Moses' last day of earthly life. "I am one hundred and twenty years old today," he says to the people, "and I can no longer go forth and come in." He transfers the leadership to Joshua, and writes (or concludes writing) the Torah in a scroll which he entrusts to the Levites for safekeeping in the Ark of the Covenant.

The mitzvah of hak'hel ("gather") is given: every seven years, during the festival of Sukkot of the first year of the shemittah cycle, the entire people of Israel—men, women and children—should gather at the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, where the king should read to them from the Torah.

Vayelech concludes with the prediction that the people of Israel will turn away from their covenant with G-d, causing Him to hide His face from them, but also with the promise that the words of the Torah "shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their descendants."

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, ST KILDA EAST

PARSHAS VAYELECH • 5 TISHREI • 14 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA KABBOLAS SHABBOS	6.00 PM 6.30 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA SHACHARIS MINCHA SHABBOS ENDS	9.11 AM 10.00 AM 5.45 PM 6.49 PM
YOM KIPPUR: EREV YOM KIPPUR:	MINCHA FAST AND CANDLE LIGHTING KOL NIDREI SHACHARIS MINCHA FAST ENDS/MA'ARIV	3.00 PM 5.55 PM 6.30 PM 9.00 AM 4.30 PM 6.53 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS MNCHA MAARIV	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM 6.00 PM 6.45 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos		Yom Kippur	
	Begins	Ends	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	5:52	6:49	5:55	6:53
Adelaide	5:48	6:44	5:51	6:47
Brisbane	5:22	6:15	5:24	6:17
Darwin	6:25	7:14	6:25	7:14
Gold Coast	5:21	6:14	5:22	6:16
Perth	5:50	6:45	5:52	6:47
Sydney	6:28	6:23	5:30	6:26
Canberra	5:36	6:32	5:39	6:35
Launceston	5:42	6:42	5:46	6:46
Auckland	5:53	6:50	5:56	6:53
Wellington	5:51	6:51	5:55	6:55
Hobart	5:40	6:41	5:45	6:46
Byron Bay	5:20	6:13	5:22	6:15