

# LAMPLIGHTER

3 Cheshvan  
Parshas  
Noach

1369

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Noach, tells the story of the great flood visited upon mankind because of their improper behavior toward one another. After the floodwaters receded and Noah and his family were able to leave the ark, Noah planted a grapevine which he had brought with him. He made wine from the grapes and quickly became intoxicated. Noah fell into a drunken sleep, laying naked in his tent. One of Noah's sons, Cham, saw his father lying naked and told his two brothers about what he had seen. Shem and Yafet immediately went in to cover their father.

Shem and Yafet were so careful not to look at their father's nakedness when they went to cover him that "they went backwards, and their faces were turned backwards, and they did not see their father's nakedness."

The story is slightly puzzling. It is clear from the fact that Shem and Yafet walked backwards that they did not see their father. Why, then, does the Torah add the apparently redundant words: "...and they did not see the nakedness of their father"?

There is a saying of the Baal Shem Tov that if a person sees something wrong with someone else, it is a sign that he himself has a similar fault. He sees himself, as it were, in a mirror - if the face he sees is not clean, it is his own face which is dirty.

Can we not see a genuine wrong in someone else without being at fault ourselves?

Divine Providence is present in every event. If we see bad in someone, it is to show us our own failings which need correction. Man is blind to his own shortcomings. He needs to see them exemplified in someone else, to force him to reflect on himself and see their counterparts in his own life.

The task of the Jew, however, is not only self-perfection; it is also the improvement of others: "You shall surely rebuke your friend, even a hundred times." Surely, then, when he sees his friend's failings, Providence intends him to help to correct them, not only to introspect on his own weaknesses.

When one sees a fault in another Jew, he should ascertain whether - with tact and delicacy - he can help the person correct the fault or failing.

But when one finds oneself seeing this wrong not as something that he himself must correct, but just as a failing in his fellow this is evidence that the fault is a "mirror."

Therefore, after saying that Shem and Yafet turned their faces away from Noah, the Torah adds, "and they did not see their father's nakedness." It is emphasizing that not only did they physically not see him, they were not even aware of his fault as such - they were concerned only with what must be done (which was to cover him with a mantle).

## Internationalists or Isolationists

By Elisha Greenbaum

I recently met an old school friend from my days at Melbourne's Yeshiva College. We fell into conversation about the time we spent there from age three till graduating at eighteen.

He has nothing but good memories from the time he spent in Yeshiva. His family was not particularly religious, but he never felt excluded from the group, nor did he suffer from any associated stigma. Until today he retains friendships from all ends of the spectrum and, though he does not regularly pray or study Torah, is still proud of the skills and knowledge he gained while at school. He'd love to send his kids to yeshiva too.

His wife, however, doesn't believe in the concept of Jewish schooling. From her perspective, an exclusive school, attended by children of one faith, is discriminatory and snobbish. She wants to send their kids to public schools where they'll rub shoulders with children of all colors and backgrounds and they'll learn to get along with everyone.

Personally, I disagree. It is a utopian fantasy to believe that just by hanging out together internecine conflict and differences of opinion will simply disappear. Assimilation didn't save the Jews of Germany.

However, doesn't she have a point? Is it the ideal position for a Jew to be locked off from the world, isolated in a self-imposed ghetto? We were tasked with being "a light unto the nations" and we can't do our job if we stay home and hibernate.

On the other hand, many will argue that it's not healthy to send one's child to a school where not all the student body are similarly inclined. Is not allowing our precious children to mix with friends who hail from non-religious (or non-Jewish) homes an unacceptable risk?

So who's right, the internationalists or the isolationists? Should we stay home and play with our own ball or accept the risks of playing in the game out there on the street?

I believe that the story of Noah and the Flood provides the answer to this question.

The Baal Shem Tov interpreted G-d's command to Noah to "go into the ark" as an instruction for all ages. We should be prepared to turn our back on the world by retreating into an ark of Judaism. There is nothing to be ashamed of hanging out with your own tribe and protecting oneself from the flood of contemporary culture.

However the Lubavitcher Rebbe once pointed out that this was not the final instruction that Noah received. There comes a time when you have to be ready to "leave the ark." You've laid down reserves of knowledge and skill, you've spent your childhood years studying G-dliness, now is the time to head off into the great wide world and share your gifts with others.

We have nothing to be ashamed of for wanting to protect ourselves behind walls of faith, but neither do we have a right to turn our back on those who come to learn. There is no excuse for ignoring or avoiding the world, but it is recommended that first you spend some time protecting yourself by acquiring knowledge.

Send your kids to a Jewish school. All Jews are made to feel welcome there and the sum of the parts make up a glorious whole. Let them stay there during their formative years, and you can be sure that when the time comes for them to head out and conquer the world they'll be all the better for the experience.

# Slice of LIFE

## A Drunken Shabbos

By Tuvia Bolton

Rabbi Shabtai Slavtitzki is the Rebbe's Shilach in Antwerp Belgium.

He has a large congregation and is well respected by even non-religious Jews.

One Sunday he received a phone call from an older fellow, a successful diamond merchant, who said he had to talk to him urgently.

Rabbi Slavtitzki, himself a very busy man, stopped everything and told the man to come over immediately.

A half-hour later he entered the Rabbi's office with a wild look on his sweating face as though he was about to burst out in tears. He was a heavy-set fellow, perhaps in his sixties, dressed in an expensive suit with an open collar and a new, black yarmulke on his head.

He asked if he could close the door, closed it, sat down, took out a handkerchief, wiped his forehead and began.

"Rabbi, about three months ago I decided to get more serious about Judaism and begin doing what it says in the Torah. Perhaps it was a bit too much to bite off at once but I took on Tefillin, eating kosher and keeping the Shabbat.

"Putting on Tefillin every morning wasn't that difficult, I had done it as a young man and it only took a few minutes of my time each day. Not only that but I actually enjoy putting them on and talking with HaShem every morning.

"And keeping kosher also was no major problem ... I could afford it and I never really enjoyed not-kosher food anyway.

"But Shabbat was not so easy. First of all it was an entire day. Second, keeping the store closed was expensive. But the worst thing is I love working and I don't enjoy resting. So it wasn't easy.

"But I did it... and even started getting used to it. You know, there is a pride to being Jewish and.. well... it's just good to do the right thing. So for three months I kept Shabbos.

"But then, yesterday it happened. I was walking home in the morning from the Synagogue and I happened to pass by the street where my store is and I see the street is full of people... packed!!

"Long lines of important-looking people were standing in front of all the stores.... except for mine and suddenly I remembered! It was a special international gem day in Antwerp and all the diamond dealers, the biggest and the richest from the entire world came here to buy. It happens every year and this year it was yesterday... Shabbat!!

"But I said to myself... 'Shabbat is Shabbat... I'm not opening the store and that's it!!' And I started walking home. It would have worked but suddenly I heard someone yelling my name! It was the owner of the store next to mine. What he was doing in the street I don't know but he was there and he came running up yelling like a madman. 'What happened?' he asks me, 'Are you feeling alright? Did something happen in your family? Where are you going?!' he says 'Its diamond day! Look at those lines!!'

"I told him that, thank G-d, everything was fine and started walking but he wouldn't let me go.

"Fine? Everything is fine!? Are you crazy or something! Today is Gem Day! Look!! Look!! You can make more today than in a month! Where are you going?!"

I tried to explain to him that I'm a Jew and today is Shabbat and... you know what he said? He said, 'Listen, give all the other Shabbats to G-d. This one's for YOU!!'

"I told him I had to go. Rushed home and tried to put the whole thing out of my mind. But I couldn't. I wanted to work! I wanted to sell gems! That's what I love doing, what I was brought up doing!! I took the

Kiddush cup in my hand but I couldn't think straight.

"So I told my wife and guests that I didn't feel good, that I had a headache. I went to my room, took a bottle of vodka, drank five cups until I was so drunk I couldn't stand up and then flopped unconscious on my bed and slept for the entire Shabbat."

Rabbi Slavtitski listened patiently but didn't understand what the man wanted.

"I understand" he said, "But what can I do? What would you like me to do?"

"Rabbi," he said almost crying "I want to know what sort of repentance I have to make for such a terrible Shabbat! Can I give charity? Or maybe I should fast? Or maybe something else? Rabbi, what does it say in the books?"

Rabbi Slavtitski saw the simple sincerity of this Jew and couldn't hold himself back. His eyes filled with tears and he began to weep silently not being able to believe his ears, suddenly tears were running down his cheeks.

But when the man saw this he too began to weep. His eyes opened in horror and, shaking his head in disbelief said, "Rabbi, is it so bad? Is there no forgiveness for my sin? Is there nothing I can do?"

"You don't understand" The Rabbi replied. "Exactly the opposite!"

"You know what I did yesterday for Shabbat? I sat at my Shabbat table with my family and guests, sang Shabbat songs, said words of Torah talked to my children and really enjoyed myself. I did everything that G-d wants a Jew to do.

"But you made a sacrifice! You sacrificed your money and your pleasure, you changed your nature. Whose Shabbat do you think is more pleasing to G-d; yours or mine? Yours for sure!!"

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# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

## “Not merely pushing through one day after another...”

By the Grace of G-d  
13 Menachem Av, 5712 [1952]  
Brooklyn  
Greetings and Blessings!

It pained me to be told that you are still downhearted, and I understand that this is also the spirit in your home.

I have no desire to become involved in a lengthy discussion as to whether the claims that have been made are justified or not. Obviously it takes no great effort to understand why your spirits are as they are, after the calamity that took place (May no one know of such things!).

Nevertheless, Jews in general, being believers, and chassidim in particular, should cleave to G-d, our L-rd, steadfastly and overtly — as it is written, “And you who cleave to G-d, your L-rd, are all alive today.”

Now, being truly alive means not merely pushing through one day after another. Being truly alive means that one's life should lack nothing of whatever you and your wife need materially and spiritually. However, it can happen (G-d forbid) that perhaps one does not deserve to receive such blessings from the Holy One, blessed be He. Concerning such a situation it is written in the holy Zohar: “If, from down here below, a person shows a luminous countenance, in the same way does a luminous Countenance shine upon him from Above. In this spirit it is written, ‘Serve G-d with joy’: the joy of a mortal elicits upon himself another, Supernal joy. Similarly the world below, being thus crowned, draws down [blessings upon itself] from Above.”

In brief: When one fortifies his trust that G-d will provide reasons to make him happy, and cheerful, and when one is so strong in this trust that it influences his daily life, he thereby draws down [these reasons for being happy] from Above. Moreover, even one's fleshly eyes can then see that the trust was vindicated.

May G-d grant that you and your wife and all your family should witness this, palpably, as soon as possible.

Looking forward to good news,

## QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

### Us and G-D

**Question:** Dear Rabbi Moss

*My name is Yael and I am 9 years old. I have a question for you. Why does G-d set us challenges if he knows our future? And if we do the wrong thing how can he be mad with us?*  
From Yael

**Answer:** Dear Yael,

That is a fantastic question. You must have a very deep mind, because this is the question that all the great minds ask. I will try to give you an answer.

Do you know the song, “G-d is here, G-d is there, G-d is truly everywhere”? If G-d is truly everywhere, then I have a problem — where are you? And where am I? How can you be there if G-d is also there? If someone is sitting in a chair, I can't also sit there! If a room is full of people, I can't fill it with more people! So if the world is full of G-d (because He is everywhere) where are we?!

The answer: G-d can do anything. He can be everywhere and let us be here too. So really He is everywhere — even the place that I'm in. But He makes it seem to me like He isn't there so I can exist.

The exact same thing applies to my choices. How can I choose if G-d already decided? If G-d knows what I will choose, then there's no room for my choice?

The answer: G-d can do anything. He can know what I will do and let me decide too. He can know but make it seem to me like He doesn't know, so I am free to choose.

So why are we rewarded or punished if G-d knew anyway what we would do? Because we don't feel that G-d knew. We feel that we chose freely. And we are right. Just like we exist freely, because G-d hides Himself from us, so we choose freely because G-d keeps his knowledge to Himself.

If we would feel that G-d knows what we will choose, we wouldn't be able to choose anymore. And if we could feel that G-d is here, we wouldn't feel that we were separate from Him. That's what will happen when Moshiach (the Messiah) comes — we will realize that we are really part of G-d. And we won't have free choice anymore. That's why we have to do a lot of good now — while we still have the choice!

## A WORD

from the Director

*This coming Tuesday is the seventh day of the Hebrew month of Cheshvan. In the times of the Holy Temple, the Jewish people traveled to Jerusalem for the festivals of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot, the seventh of Cheshvan marked the end of the pilgrimage season surrounding the festival of Sukkot, according to our Sages. During Sukkot, the entire Jewish people were in Jerusalem. For the Jews living on the Euphrates River, the furthest reaches of the Holy Land, their journey home took fifteen days and thus, was concluded on the seventh of Cheshvan. It was beginning on the seventh of Cheshvan that the prayer for rain commenced, once all of the pilgrims were comfortably home again.*

*This fact, of the delay of the prayers for rain until the last pilgrims reached their homes, is relevant to the concept of Jewish unity.*

*During the pilgrimage festivals, the essential unity of the Jewish people is expressed. However, that unity applies to the essential oneness that binds our people together, while transcending our individuality. The unity expressed by the seventh of Cheshvan relates to Jews as individuals. Jewish unity remains even after each Jew returns to his own home and his individual lifestyle.*

*The seventh of Cheshvan is the final stage of Jewish unity that was begun during the month of Elul (the days of preparation for Rosh Hashana) and enhanced throughout all of the days of month of Tishrei. May we continue to work on and enhance Jewish unity in every way possible until the ultimate revelation of total Jewish unity and the unity of G-d and the entire world with the coming of Moshiach, NOW!*

J. I. Gutterman

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

## A Beggar's Blessings

By Yerachmiel Tilles

During the time of the Baal Shem Tov, there were two tailors, let's call them Reb Moshe and Reb Itzik, who lived in Vilna. These tailors were only average in their skills and sewed clothes of the poor people that lived nearby. Since there were so many other struggling tailors in their city, they decided to become partners and travel from one small village to another, plying their trade. Being that many of the small villages did not have a tailor, they were able to make a modest living.

After many years of travel, on their way back to Vilna with their earnings, they stopped in a small village. There they met a Jew that earned his living by collecting taxes for the local poritz (the nobleman that owned the town and surrounding area). Noticing that the tax collector seemed very downcast, they asked him what was wrong. At first he wouldn't say, but after a bit of coaxing, he told them his story.

The daughter of the poritz was about to be married and he (the tax collector) was asked by the poritz to find some tailors to make the bridal gown. The tax collector brought in the finest, most fashionable tailors and materials from all the nearby large towns, but none of them satisfied the poritz or his wife and daughter. Now it was close to the time of the wedding and the poritz warned the tax collector that if he couldn't find a decent tailor, he would be thrown out of the village, or worse.

The two tailors looked at each other and said, "Listen, we're tailors and we can sew the bride's wedding gown."

The tax collector began to laugh. "You two?" I've brought the best tailors here and they weren't good enough. So how can I recommend you two that sew clothes for the common folk? What can you possibly know about sewing a wedding gown for the daughter of a nobleman?"

"That may be true", answered the tailors, "but clearly it is divine providence that we are here, and what do you have to lose anyway? The poritz is behaving so crazily that he might even be crazy enough to like our work."

The tax collector, accepting that he had no alternatives, introduced the two tailors to the poritz. To the amazement of all concerned, the poritz not only allowed them to sew a sample, but was thrilled with it when it was completed. He commissioned the tailors to make the entire bridal wardrobe and paid them well upon its completion. He also called in the tax collector to thank him for finding such excellent tailors and told him that he could keep his position.

When the wife of the poritz saw how happy the tailors were that the tax collector could keep his job, she called her husband to the side. "Look, if these Jews are so happy that the tax collector wasn't thrown out of the village, why don't you tell them about the last tax collector that we threw into the dungeon? Maybe they'll pay a ransom to free him."

The poritz told the tailors about the last tax collector that he imprisoned together with his family in his underground prison for not paying his dues. They had been there so long that they were begging to die.

"So how much does he owe you?" asked the tailors.

"Three hundred silver rubles," answered the Poritz.

The first tailor, Reb Moshe looked at the other, "what do you think?"

"What can I say?" said Reb Itzik. "If it were not such a huge amount I would agree. How wonderful it would be to perform the great mitzvah of redeeming captives. But we've been working for years to get our money."

"Listen, brother, said Reb Moshe, I still want to do it, if possible. So let's dissolve our partnership and split our money."

After dividing all the money, each one's share, amazingly, was 300 silver rubles.

Reb Itzik, not wanting to give away all of his money, tried also to dissuade Reb Moshe from doing so. But to no avail.

Reb Moshe gave his three hundred silver rubles to the poritz and the pitiful family was released. The family thanked Reb Moshe profusely.

The two tailors left and returned to Vilna. Reb Itzik used his savings to open a prosperous store. Reb Moshe, now penniless, fell on hard times.

He had to beg just to eat, and soon became very depressed.

One day, Reb Moshe stopped a businessman, a flax merchant, and asked for money to buy food, and the man responded "What will I get in return for giving you charity?"

"I'll give you my blessings," said Reb Moshe.

"The blessings of a fool" thought the businessman, as he gave him some change.

That day his business was with a supplier with whom it was always particularly difficult to close a deal. This time, however, when he arrived at the man's farm, it went very smoothly. "Could it possibly have anything to do with the blessing of that silly depressed-looking pauper?" he wondered to himself, before dismissing the thought with a smile and a shrug. Still, the next time he had to deal with that same tough supplier, the merchant decided to find Reb Moshe, give him a donation and ask for his blessing again. Once more, the transaction went well and so the merchant decided to give a donation to Reb Moshe and receive his blessing before every major business transaction. Within a few months, he was significantly wealthy!

Up to now, the businessman had not told a soul about the blessings he got from the melancholy beggar. But then, he began telling his friends and family the secret of his success. Before long, the word had spread around and people thronged to get blessings from Reb Moshe. They found that his blessings really did work, much to their surprise and glee.

As time passed, the Baal Shem Tov happened to hear about Reb Moshe and his blessings. Subsequently, when a few of his chasidim were about to leave for Vilna, he asked them to invite Reb Moshe to visit him in Mezibuz. Reb Moshe was thrilled to receive the invitation and gladly accepted.

When they met, the Baal Shem Tov asked Reb Moshe, "Do you know why the gift of blessings had been given to you?" To this, Reb Moshe answered, "To tell you the truth, I have no idea."

So the Baal Shem Tov asked Reb Moshe to recount his life story. Reb Moshe finally got around to telling the Baal Shem Tov the story about the wedding gown and his payment for the release of the prisoners of the poritz.

"That's it!" exclaimed the Baal Shem Tov. He asked Reb Moshe to stay with him in Mezibuz and soon succeeded in healing him from his depression. He also taught him Torah in depth, to the extent that Reb Moshe also became a great Tzaddik. He even wrote a book explaining some of the mysteries of the Kabbalah.

## PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

G-D instructs Noah—the only righteous man in a world consumed by violence and corruption—to build a large wooden teivah ("ark"), coated within and without with pitch. A great deluge, says G-d, will wipe out all life from the face of the earth; but the ark will float upon the water, sheltering Noah and his family, and two members (male and female) of each animal species.

Rain falls for 40 days and nights, and the waters churn for 150 days more before calming and beginning to recede. The ark settles on Mount Ararat, and from its window Noah dispatches a raven, and then a series of doves, "to see if the waters were abated from the face of the earth." When the ground dries completely—exactly one solar year (365 days) after the onset of the Flood—G-d commands Noah to exit the teivah and repopulate the earth.

Noah builds an altar and offers sacrifices to G-d. G-d swears never again to destroy all of mankind because of their deeds, and sets the rainbow as a testimony of His new covenant with man. G-d also commands Noah regarding the sacredness of life: murder is deemed a capital offense, and while man is permitted to eat the meat of animals, he is forbidden to eat flesh or blood taken from a living animal.

Noah plants a vineyard and becomes drunk on its produce. Two of Noah's sons, Shem and Japheth, are blessed for covering up their father's nakedness, while his third son, Ham, is punished for taking advantage of his debasement.

The descendants of Noah remain a single people, with a single language and culture, for ten generations. Then they defy their Creator by building a great tower to symbolize their own invincibility; G-d confuses their language so that "one does not comprehend the tongue of the other," causing them to abandon their project and disperse across the face of the earth, splitting into seventy nations.

The Parshah of Noah concludes with a chronology of the ten generations from Noah to Abram (later Abraham), and the latter's journey from his birthplace of Ur Casdim to Charan, on the way to the land of Canaan.

## CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 12 - 13 October	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	7:16	8:15
Adelaide	7:09	8:06
Brisbane	5:36	6:30
Darwin	6:25	7:15
Gold Coast	5:35	6:29
Perth	6:08	7:04
Sydney	6:48	7:44
Canberra	6:57	7:55
Launceston	7:11	8:12
Auckland	7:16	8:14
Wellington	7:20	8:21
Hobart	7:12	8:14
Byron Bay	6:34	7:28

## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, ST KILDA EAST

### PARSHAS NOACH • 3 CHESHVAN • 12 OCTOBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	7.20 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	7.50 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.50 AM
	SHACHRIS	10.00 AM
	MINCHA	7.10 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS	8.15 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	7.25 PM
	MAARIV	8.10 PM