

# LAMPLIGHTER

7 Nissan  
Parshas  
Metzora  
**1395**  
12 April  
5779/2019

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In the Passover Haggadah, we say: "Even if we are all wise, all men of understanding, and all know the Torah, it is a mitzva (commandment) for us to tell of the exodus from Egypt." This quote indicates that the point of the Seder is not merely an intellectual experience. For after all, if we are wise and know the Torah, then we also know the story of the Exodus.

Instead, the intent is that the Seder enables us to relive the Exodus, to realize - as we say later in the Haggadah - that "not only our ancestors [were] redeemed from Egypt, but [G-d] redeemed us as well." Every Seder is an opportunity for each one of us to leave Egypt.

What does it mean for us to leave Egypt, when many of us have never seen that part of the world?

Mitzrayim - the Hebrew name for Egypt - shares a connection with the term meitzarim, meaning "boundaries" or "limitations." Leaving Egypt means going beyond those forces that hold us back and prevent us from expressing who we really are. The idea of leaving Egypt reminds us that, in a certain way, we are all slaves.

Each one of us has a soul which is "an actual part of G-d." This is the core of our being, our real "I." But we find ourselves in Egypt, for there are forces, both external and internal, that prevent us from being in touch with this spiritual potential and giving it expression.

The Seder night is a time when these forces do not have the power to hold us back. For Passover is "The Season of Our Freedom." From the time of the Exodus - and indeed, from the beginning of time - this night was chosen as a night on which the potential is granted to express our G-dly core. Every year, at this time, within the spiritual hierarchy of the world, there is "an exodus from Egypt." All restrictions fall away and transcendent G-dliness is revealed.

This spiritual awakening filters down within our souls, prompting us to tap our spiritual core, express our unbounded G-dly potential, and leave Egypt, i.e., to break through any and all restraints.

This experience should not remain an isolated spiritual peak. Instead, Passover should initiate a process of endless growth, empowering us to continuously breakthrough ever subtle levels of limitations and express our spiritual potential at all times.

This concept is reflected in the Lubavitch custom not to recite the passage "Chasal Siddur Pesach" ("The Passover Seder is concluded") which others say at the end of the Seder. The intent of the omission is to emphasize that our Passover experience should be ongoing. Throughout the year, we should look to the Seder as the beginning of a pattern of new growth and spiritual expression.

## Good Gossip

By Elisha Greenbaum

Sickness stalked the streets of Vilna in 1848; an epidemic had struck, and dozens of townsfolk had succumbed. Every house was filled with the dead and dying. Depression and despair were rampant.

In times of sickness and sorrow, the mind craves answers. People want to know why things are going so spectacularly wrong, and if there is anything they can do to change the situation. People look for someone to blame.

Rabbi Yisroel Salanter, the great ethicist and scholar, was approached by a congregant with grave accusations against the family of one of the leading citizens of the town. The informer was privy to certain distasteful details about a respected family, and he was determined to share his knowledge with the rabbi.

"After all," he argued, "who knows if the plague isn't divine retribution for their sins. Perhaps if they can be made to repent, many lives might be saved."

Rabbi Yisroel refused to listen. "It's too easy to point the finger," he said, "blaming everyone else for the tragedies and hardships of life. But tattling and negativity is not the Jewish way. Far better to direct our efforts towards self-improvement and correcting one's own conduct than to focus on the failing of others."

We learn in this week's Torah reading about the metzora: During Temple times, a man or woman who had gossiped or spoken negatively about others would often develop symptoms of tzaraat - a leprosy-like condition that renders the sinner ritually impure. As part of the purification process, the metzora would be exiled from home for a few weeks and forced to live alone, outside the city borders, until the symptoms dissipated.

Rabbi Yisroel continued to explain that the sin of lashon hara, speaking negatively about others, is not necessarily the same as lying. Gossiping is evil, and honesty is no defense. You could be saying the unvarnished, absolute truth, but it's still a sin. The metzora is sent to solitary confinement not just to wait for his tzaraat to cure, but to reflect on the lack of judgment that caused the sickness in the first place.

Before rushing to blame others or to indict someone else, do an honest analysis of your own behavior. Spend a few weeks in the company of your own thoughts, and you may very well come to realize that the cause of your troubles is yourself.

# Slice of LIFE

## Learning to Yearn

By Rhona Lewis

I was always drawn to the picture hanging next to our front door. It was a long, rectangular bronze etching of black, hunched figures standing in front of a massive wall. The round copper Seder plate next to it didn't draw me in the same way. I didn't like the Star of David mounted on a plate, embellished with a deep-green stone. But the picture of the wall magnetized my soul.

"That is the Kotel, referred by the world as the 'Wailing Wall,'" my father told me one day when he found me craning my neck to stare up at the picture.

"How can a wall wail?" I asked, the naivety of a child tingeing my question.

The wall doesn't wail; people do. It is the only wall left of the Temple we once had."

I longed to join those hunched figures crying at the wall, because even though I wasn't exactly sure what to cry about, I knew that I wanted to be part of a longing for something great. I knew that one day I too would cry for the Temple and whatever it represented. It took the journey of a lifetime to learn how to yearn for it.

My daughter, Estie, learnt faster than me. Immersed in a life of Torah, she has always known about the great Temple that we once had. She is no stranger to yearning for the glory of our past. So when her school announced the theme for this year, Yearning for Redemption, she was very excited. Art projects, wall paintings, lectures, songs, competitions, key rings—everything reflects this theme. One evening, a special event was organized in an auditorium to draw mothers into the yearning.

I noticed the Levites first. Dressed in a flow of white fabric, their slim waists bound with electric-blue sashes. Their flutes, cymbals and violins poised for the melody that once shattered hearts of stone. Then I saw the Kohanim, the tribe of priests. Their hands outstretched under prayer-shawls of cream fringed with black, they blessed the crowd silently. The scene urged me to remember the glorious Temple we once had, urging me to yearn for what we have lost.

At an unseen signal, the magic dissolved and the schoolgirls, seventh-graders, leapt down the bleachers to greet their mothers. Within a few moments, a choir of eighth-

graders cloaked in electric-blue sequins rose onto the staggered stage. The lights dimmed as the melody unfurled. Centuries-old words of longing for redemption whispered their way round the hall. Soprano voices pierced the night, begging G-d to comfort Jerusalem. Dreams of a Jerusalem of old wove into notes of hope. Finally, a promise of future redemption soared forth and mingled with the sobs of the audience.

There were over a hundred girls on the stage, but I saw only one—my daughter Estie. When the songs were over, she ran to me and I hugged her tight. My cheek wet hers. My love for her soared through my veins. But it went further. I was tremendously proud and grateful to be there with her—bound together in yearning for something greater than ourselves. Because it hadn't always been like that.

Fired up and inspired, I took Estie to the Kotel a few days later. As the number 1 bus labored its way through the neighborhood of Meah Shearim, I watched the three soldiers sitting across the aisle. One, possibly of Iraqi descent, was busy on his cell phone. His long limbs, missing the sap of confidence, pressed awkwardly into the seats around him. He shifted self-consciously, his knee brushing the old man opposite him. The old man, a large knitted kippah on his head, read ceaselessly from the book of Psalms held in his work-worn hands. Thick tufts of black hair curled out of his ears. Estie watched him praying. Or perhaps she was mesmerized by the hairs.

The bus skirted the edge of East Jerusalem and passed Damascus Gate. I watched the elderly German couple further down the bus. Casually dressed. His square jaw was firm. His lips set. Her neat grey bob never moving despite the rocking of the bus. Round the old Ottoman walls of the Old City we drove, past Herod's Gate. The cemetery on the Mount of Olives rose in the distance. Past it, to our left, lay the wide expanse of ancient Jerusalem, known as the City of David. The French teenager opposite me smiled. She hugged the rucksack on her knees tightly. The bus heaved to a halt outside Dung Gate, the entrance to the Wailing Wall's plaza.

We all piled out: the soldiers with their guns, the tourists with their cameras, the girl with her rucksack, and Estie and I. All of us drawn to G-d's ruined House of Prayer. Drawn with longing for the day when we would hear the Kohanim, see the Leviites, watch the pilgrims. Because Isaiah promises us that "... My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (56:7).

We spent an hour at the Kotel. I tried to pray without interruption, but the medley of other people was a distraction that beckoned often. Who can resist gazing at the pure white of brides sweeping towards the Wall? The delicate twitter of French drew me. The rolling romance of Italian nudged into my consciousness. And then a collective outburst of the Nishmat prayer, recited by those who have been miraculously delivered from danger, thundered around us.

"Why are you saying Nishmat?" I asked one of the Ethiopian girls who was still holding a photocopy of the prayer in her hands when Estie and I prepared to leave the Kotel plaza.

"We're from Haifa. We escaped the fire," she answered. The fire. The worst fire in the history of Israel. The fire that claimed forty-two lives, consumed ten thousand acres of forest and sent seventeen thousand people racing from their homes. I nodded humbly, sure that our prayers had mingled with the prayers of all those gathered here and had risen to the Heavens on wings of tears.

Estie and I climbed the stone stairs to the Old City. In a cozy café, I treated her to chocolate rugelach and bought myself a cappuccino. She had remembered to bring the sky-blue folder that every girl in her school is filling as part of the year's theme. Together we read through the pages she had delicately decorated with her glitter pens. Word by word, image by image, the great Temple, the Beit Hamikdash, appeared before us, rebuilt in its glory.

We saw the towering glory of white and gold. We read of the miracles that replaced the rules of nature here: the smoke from the pyre rose heavenwards in a perfectly straight pillar; any dirt that fell was immediately swallowed up into the ground. Although thousands of people came on pilgrimage during the festivals, there was never any crowding, and people had about two meters of space around them to bow in comfort. King Solomon had planted trees that bore fruit of gold; when the wind blew, the fruit would fall and the Kohanim would gather the fruit to sell. The smell of incense filled the streets, and women didn't need to perfume themselves.

As I watched Estie's eyes sparkling brighter and brighter the more we read, I realized that we were now part of the bronze picture on the living-room wall of my childhood. I was a link in the chain that stretched from the Beit Hamikdash that had once stood to the Beit Hamikdash that would soon be rebuilt, and I was helping my daughter forge her own link. Together we were yearning for something greater than ourselves, for the days of Moshiach.

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ISSUE 1395

E"H

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# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

## A unique letter to a supporter of the Rebbe's work

This letter was sent to R. Yaakov Katz of Chicago, one of the initial supporters of Lubavitch activities in America.

15 Menachem Av, 5711,  
Brooklyn.

Greetings and blessings,

I just received the letter you sent yesterday and I am hurrying to answer [and share with you] another miracle inspired by my revered father-in-law.

I was distressed the entire time that, on the day before Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av, at the Ohel, I was not able to convey that you had sent your regular check for the Rebbe's concerns. Since the Rebbe once told me not to press you for money — as I once related to you — I wasn't able to do anything about this. Now, I see that the Rebbe gave you the idea directly — or to employ the wording you used in your letter — "my heart troubled me." This can be understood as being similar to [the effects of] the proclamations from Above which bring about good thoughts and resolutions in a person's [mind] that he had not prepared himself for, as explained in Likkutei Torah, Parshas Ki Seitzei (p. 36d), and at greater length in the maamar entitled Az Yashir, 5700. I assume that you are in possession of that maamar....

May G-d help you, not only not to minimize your good practices, but rather to increase them, as our Sages state: "Proceed higher in holy matters."

In particular, Divine providence is evident in this in the fact that all this transpired on 15 Av, concerning which our Sages state with regard to Torah study (the conclusion of tractate Taanis): "From this date onward, one who increases, will have increases granted him." From this it is understood that Torah study has an effect on the person's conduct with regard to the mitzvos and, in particular, the mitzvah of tzedakah. Thus, when the term mitzvah is used without any modifier, the intent is the mitzvah of tzedakah which is equivalent to all the other mitzvos (see Tanya, ch. 37; Iggeres HaTeshuvah, ch. 3; Iggeres HaKodesh, Epistles 3-4, the conclusion of Epistle 5, Epistles 6, 8-10, and 12).

With blessings for success in your personal concerns; may you, with happiness and gladness of heart, transform the material into spiritual.

## QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

### Ancient Dress

By Tzvi Freeman

**Question:** I have always loved to sing, especially Jewish prayers, and I'd love to lead the singing of the Friday night prayers at my synagogue. I know that this is not traditionally approved of, and it makes me feel a little like a modern day Yentl.... However aren't there women in the Torah that sing, such as Deborah and Miriam? I want to honor the Jewish tradition, but at the same time there are no men in our synagogue who can sing with the same effect upon the congregation.

**Answer:** As human nature stands today, the reasoning of the sages of the Talmud is still very apparent: Men listening to a woman's voice — especially a woman that they know and can see — are not necessarily carried to spiritual heights, but unfortunately often in the opposite direction. Women don't seem to understand this — they seem to have very high opinions of us. But even at the time of the splitting of the Red Sea, when all the people were at a great spiritual high, even then, Miriam took the women aside to sing separately from the men.

In a society where relations between the sexes is unbounded and extra-marital relationships are the norm, in such a context a woman singing in shul may not stand out. But in a society where marriage is holy and jealously guarded, a woman singing in public is a precarious crack in the dam.

Perhaps you know this Halacha already: Even though Judaism celebrates the love between parents and children, you're not supposed to hug and kiss your kids in shul. The reason? Because the shul is a place for love of G-d and any other expression of love will distract from this.

I have to admit that I, personally, would not be able to pray with proper concentration in a situation where a woman is singing with a beautiful voice. If you will excuse my bluntness, there isn't room in the heart for both G-d and the other feelings that would be aroused.

My daughter loves to sing and so do her friends. They get together and sing nigunim (Chassidic melodies) for hours. They make concerts on occasion for women only. It is beautiful to see teenage girls getting together without the competition over who is impressing the guys. To them, it is purely a spiritual affair with music.

Soon will be the days of Moshiach when G-d will remove all that is negative and base from the heart of man and we will all sing together a new song.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*This past Sunday, the second day of the Jewish month of Nissan, we commemorated the anniversary of the passing in 1920 of the fifth Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom Dovber, known as the Rebbe Rashab.*

*Before his passing, the Rebbe Rashab told his son and successor, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok (the sixth and previous Rebbe), "I am going up to heaven; my writings I am leaving for you."*

*A brief perusal of the Rebbe Rashab's writings brings to light the following gems:*

*"A single act is better than a thousand groans. Our G-d lives, and Torah and its commandments are eternal; quit the groaning and work hard in actual spiritual work, and G-d will be gracious to you."*

*"Cherish criticism, for it will place you on the true heights."*

*"When Moshiach will come, then we will really long for the days of exile. Then we will truly feel distress at our having neglected our avoda (spiritual work); then will we indeed feel the deep pain caused by our lack of avoda. These days of exile are the days to prepare ourselves for the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our time, amen."*

*"And this is the main thing in these last moments before Moshiach, that we don't go according to our intellect and our reasoning. Rather, we should study Torah and perform mitzvot (commandments) above and beyond what reason dictates."*

*May we immediately merit the Final Redemption, when all righteous Jews (and all Jews are considered righteous!) will be resurrected with the Revival of the Dead.*

*J. I. Gutterman*

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

## The Czar's Army's Iron Pots

By Tuvia Bolton

Zalman was a successful businessman. He had made millions of rubles in his metal business, but now that same business was threatening to end his life.

Several months earlier, he had landed an immense government contract to supply all the cooking utensils for the czar's army. The deal was worth a fortune, a real blessing from G-d . . . until he received a summons to appear in the imperial court on charges of thievery and treason!

It seems that someone reported to the government that Zalman was making the pots a bit thinner than promised. He had received funds for 100,000 tons of iron, but really only used 90,000, thus cheating the government out of a pretty penny.

To make matters worse, the report was true! He did it. Everyone did it. That's how things were in czarist Russia.

But that didn't change anything. If he would be found guilty, which he almost certainly would be, it would be the end of him.

Zalman did not give up, however; there was still a ray of hope. Being a follower of the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, he would go to him and hope for a miracle.

But when he arrived, he was told that the rebbe wasn't receiving visitors until further notice. This meant that the doors could open any minute, or it could take several days.

With no other choice, Zalman sat in the waiting room, with about twenty other people who had come for help, reading Tehillim (Psalms).

The Rebbe had seven sons, and the youngest, Shmuel, who was seven years old at the time (and eventually would become the fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe), was wandering around the room, occasionally talking to the visitors. When he came to our businessman and asked him why he was there, the latter, hoping that maybe somehow it might help him get in to the rebbe, told the child his entire story, finishing with a sad word about how his only hope is the rebbe, and now the rebbe won't see him.

The boy listened carefully, promised that he would see what he could do, left the waiting room, and entered his father's study.

Minutes later he returned, approached the businessman, and told him quietly: "You see that man sitting near the door, also reading Tehillim? He needs one thousand rubles for his daughter's wedding. Give him the money he needs, and G-d will take care of your upcoming trial."

Of course our hero promptly gave the charity. Sure of victory, he told the boy to thank his father for the blessing, and left the premises a new man, full of optimism and hope.

One month later, Zalman was standing confidently in the courtroom before the judge. He didn't even bother hiring a lawyer. After all the Rebbe said that G-d would take care of everything; and, in any case, the best lawyer in the world couldn't help anyway.

The judge examined all the papers, first those of the prosecution, then of the defendant, pausing several times to look up at the litigants. Finally he removed his reading glasses, held his head erect, and declared, "Very severe accusations, very severe indeed. If the accused is guilty as charged, the punishment will be at least twenty years, do you understand?" The prosecutor nodded his head, as did the defendant, who was beginning to wobble.

The judge put his spectacles on once more, silently read the briefs again, and again looked up, pushed his glasses up onto his forehead, thought for a while, and announced: "The only way to settle this is to actually weigh all the

pots and pans."

"But, your excellency," exclaimed the prosecutor, "that will take months, and at such expense to the country. Your excellency has before him the testimony of reliable witnesses . . ."

Our hero was really sweating now. If the pots were weighed, he was finished.

"That is my decision!" said the judge. "Tomorrow the army will send one hundred wagons to bring all the vessels to the courtroom for weighing." He raised his gavel, pounded it on the huge table before him, and announced, "Court adjourned!"

It took over a week to organize the wagons, travel to the factory and load them all up, and then another week or so to bring them to the court, weigh them and record the results. But when it was all finished and the results were brought to the courtroom, the tension was so thick you could almost cut the air with a knife. Word of the trial reached the newspapers, and the courtroom was packed.

The judge entered after everyone was seated, took his place behind his huge desk, picked up the papers and read carefully. The courtroom was silent.

After several minutes he looked up at the defendant, squinted his eyes as though in sheer hatred, and spoke almost theatrically.

"Mr. Zalman, you . . . you lied to the government!"

The Judge was holding the papers in both hands and leaning forward on his desk, peering over them at the accused, almost completely out of his chair. Zalman was swooning. He wiped his brow with his handkerchief. He thought he was about to faint.

The guards moved a few steps closer to him. The prosecutors looked at each other from the corners of their eyes and faintly smiled.

"You declared to the Russian Government that you needed one hundred thousand tons of iron. You took funds for one hundred thousand tons of iron!"

The judge was now standing, leaning with his entire body over the table, holding the papers in one hand, shaking them in the air as he spoke, and almost whispering, hissing at poor Zalman . . . "And you really used . . . one hundred and twenty thousand tons! Those pots weighed twenty thousand tons more than you reported.

"Mr. Zalman, you are a patriot!"

Two days later our hero was waiting again in the rebbe's front room, this time to thank him for the miracle. But when he was finally sitting opposite the rebbe and began thanking him, the rebbe was surprised. He didn't remember ever giving such a blessing.

"But your son, Shmuel, told me . . ." said the businessman.

The rebbe summoned his son, who admitted that he had done the whole thing on his own.

"But how did you give him such a blessing? How could you have been sure that it would be all right?" his father asked.

"Simple," answered the boy. "I saw in heaven all the weight of that charity jumping onto his pots on the scale. It was obvious that it would be more than a few thousand tons . . ."

## PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Last week's Parshah described the signs of the metzora (commonly mistranslated as "leper")—a person afflicted by a spiritual malady which places him or her in a state of ritual impurity. This week's Torah reading begins by detailing how the recovered metzora is purified by the kohen (priest) with a special procedure involving two birds, spring water in an earthen vessel, a piece of cedar wood, a scarlet thread and a bundle of hyssop.

A home can also be afflicted with tzaraat by the appearance of dark red or green patches on its walls. In a process lasting as long as nineteen days, a kohen determines if the house can be purified, or whether it must be demolished.

Ritual impurity is also engendered through a seminal or other discharge in a man, and menstruation or other discharge of blood in a woman, necessitating purification through immersion in a mikvah.

## CANDLE LIGHTING



Shabbos 12 - 13 April		
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	5:40	6:37
Adelaide	5:38	7:42
Brisbane	5:17	6:08
Darwin	6:25	7:15
Gold Coast	5:15	6:07
Perth	5:42	6:35
Sydney	5:19	6:13
Canberra	6:26	6:21
Launceston	5:28	6:26
Auckland	5:42	6:37
Wellington	5:38	6:35
Hobart	5:26	6:25
Byron Bay	5:13	6:05

## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, ST KILDA EAST

### PARSHAS METZORA • 7 NISSAN • 12 APRIL

<b>FRIDAY NIGHT:</b>	MINCHA	5.45 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	6.15 PM
<b>SHABBOS DAY:</b>	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.32 AM
	SHACHARIS	10.00 AM
	MINCHA	5.30 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS	6.37 PM
<b>WEEKDAYS:</b>	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	5.40 PM
	MARIV	6.25 PM