

Lamplighter

21 Tishrei
Shemini Atzeret-Bereishit

950

29 September
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Bereishit (Genesis), is the first portion of the entire Torah. It recounts the story of Creation and tells, among other things, about the creation of the first people.

We read that Adam was commanded by G-d not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. But Adam was not able to overcome his temptation and he ate the fruit.

According to the Midrash, the command not to eat the fruit was given after three-quarters of Friday had passed and was to be in effect only until Shabbat began. Adam and Eve were not to eat the fruit for only three hours!

When we consider that Adam was created by G-d, Himself, and heard the command from G-d, it seems amazing that he couldn't control himself for a mere three hours.

We learn from this episode the strength and guile of the yetzer hara (the evil inclination) - that aspect of our psyche which encourages us to go against G-d's will. The yetzer hara may camouflage its aim by trying to convince us that a commandment is too difficult or unimportant. Nevertheless, its real intention is to persuade us to go against G-d's will. Therefore, the more important a certain command is for a particular person, the harder the yetzer hara will try to dissuade the individual from performing the command. Even if the commandment is a very easy one, the yetzer hara will make it seem extremely difficult.

Thus, we can understand how Adam was tempted to eat the forbidden fruit. The yetzer hara employed its most compelling arguments to convince Adam to sin.

The yetzer hara's arguments are highly evident today. Many contend that if the "burden" of the Torah, the details and laws, would be lightened, all Jews would adhere to them. But this is not true. For, even if there was but one commandment - and that for only three hours - the yetzer hara would make it seem impossibly difficult and repressive.

We cannot overcome the yetzer hara by compromising the Torah. We must, rather, realize that we have all been imbued with the strength to overcome the yetzer hara's arguments and guile. If we draw on our G-d-given inner strength, ultimately we will be victorious.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Family Picture

We've all been through it. Whether it happens at a wedding, reunion, graduation, or just because the folks want one - getting everyone together, behaving, smiling and sitting still - long enough for the picture to be taken - can be quite an ordeal.

Finally everyone's lined up and - oops, two people want pictures taken with their cameras, just a second, they have to show the photographer which button to push and - at last!

Wait! The photographer wants one more shot just in case....

And as soon as the picture has been taken, everyone disperses immensely relieved that the ordeal is over and thank goodness no more family pictures for a while.

And yet, after a week, when the picture hasn't arrived, everyone calls Mom and Dad and asks when is it coming? Two weeks, three weeks; what's the delay, and did I look alright, and I should have worn a different outfit and I wonder if Sharon smiled (because of her braces) and - it's here!

As we look at the picture, we start reminiscing. This family picture evokes memories decades old - pleasant memories, strangely enough. Everyone frames his or her copy, displays it on the mantel or hangs it from the wall. This is my family; we tell anyone who comes into their house. We say it with pride, too. Oh, sure, we're still feuding with Martha, and Stuart hasn't called in almost a year, not since the picture was taken - but these are "in the family" squabbles. They're not as important as this picture, which shows who we are, which displays our unity and love - what we really feel about each other - to the world.

Our current month of Tishrei is like a family portrait. Oh, sure, we have our squabbles during the year, disagreements and differences of opinion, brought on by the pressures of trying to bring G-dliness into the world, of struggling against our natures. We have to make a living too, and that can be a source of conflict.

But all of this is on the surface. When it comes down to it, the Jewish people gather together, put aside their differences, and celebrate their unity - the spark of G-dliness within us all. That is, after all, the message of Tishrei - from Rosh Hashana, when we coronate G-d as our King, to Yom Kippur when we stand united, as we did at Sinai when receiving the second set of tablets, to Sukkot when we literally dwell under the same roof, to Simchat Torah, when all differences are lost in the joyousness of the dance.

And as we go through the year, we can look back on the "family portrait" - the way we spent the High Holidays and beyond, and how we absorbed its theme of Jewish unity, of love for a fellow Jew being the highest expression of love of G-d, and how that unity itself - our portrait together in Tishrei - evokes in G-d not just a fond memory throughout the year, but a desire to see us - all of us - united again, and this time forever, with the coming of Moshiach and the final Redemption.



The Happiest Man on Earth

By Mendel Jacobson

He sees the man dancing as if there are no worries in the world. His legs pump in a rhythm only his soul could produce. He looks like a flame, flickering on and on, reaching for a place beyond anything he has ever known. How could that man be so happy?

“Which man?”

Startled, the 14-year-old boy didn't realize he'd asked the question aloud.

“Which man?” His father asks him again.

“That man,” the boy points to the whirling man. “He must be the happiest man on earth.”

His father looks to where his son is pointing and sees the black-bearded man with five children in tow; his eyes fill with tears and he sighs. “That man just lost his young wife six days ago.”

“But then how can he be so happy, how can he possibly dance like that?”

“Because it is Simchat Torah and it is a mitzva (commandment) to dance and to be happy. This is what a Jew does; this is what a real Chasid does.”

Although this story happened before I was born, I have heard it many times.

The year was 1969 and, on the second day of Sukkot, the young man lost his wife to leukaemia. Every year, on Simchat Torah, the young man would take his five young children to a small shul (synagogue) in the East Flatbush neighbourhood of Brooklyn, where they would dance with the Torah and rejoice with the community. That year the young man did the same. The children's grandmother, their mother's mother, dressed them in their finest clothing and sent them off with their father to East Flatbush.

It was there, in that little shul, that this dialogue between father and son took place.

After the dancing in East Flatbush ended, the young man and his five

children walked back to Crown Heights. He dropped his younger children off at home with their grandmother and hurried to 770 Eastern Parkway, the central Chabad Synagogue, where the Lubavitcher Rebbe was about to begin a farbrengen (Chasidic gathering). Every year on Simchat Torah, before the dancing would begin, the Rebbe would speak for a number of hours, discussing the intricate energies of Simchat Torah and hakafot (circuits of dancing on Simchat Torah). At different times throughout the talk, the Rebbe would pause and the Chasidim would begin singing a nigun, a Chasidic melody sometimes dating back hundreds of years. The young man of whom we speak had the privilege to begin the nigunim at the Rebbe's farbrengens.

The shul at 770 Eastern Parkway was packed from floor to ceiling; people were clinging to bleachers and rafters just as they did to the Rebbe's every word. As the Rebbe finished the first part of his talk, he turned to the young man and motioned for him to say L'chaim (To Life!) on some vodka. The crowd, watching with awe, all knew the young man had just lost his wife and they were wondering what his choice of song would be.

Through the hush of thousands of people, a small but defiant voice could be heard: “Mi vadiom nye patonyem, ee v'agniom nye s'gorim,” a hope-filled Chasidic Russian song meaning, “We in water will not drown, and in fire will not burn.” As the Rebbe began emphatically swinging his arms, he suddenly stood up and the crowd became more and more excited, singing in a frenzy, “We in water will not drown, and in fire will not burn; we in water will not drown, and in fire will not burn.” Faster and faster they chanted, as if in a trance. Those present could not believe this little man, swinging back and forth, raising his voice from the depths of his soul, “We in water will not drown, and in fire will not burn,” as if G-d had not just taken his beloved wife, as if he was truly the happiest man alive.

Fast-forward 20 years. A call comes in to a major Jewish children's organization in Brooklyn.

“My name is so-and-so and I'm wondering if you could send some manpower to assist me with a Simchat Torah program I am hosting for the children of my community.”

“Sure,” the man working in the organization happily replies. “But, if I may ask, why are you hosting a children's program for Simchat Torah - are you a youth director at a synagogue?”

“No, I'm not, but when I was growing up, my father and I would go to a small shul in East Flatbush to celebrate Simchat Torah. One year, as I stood watching the people dancing in a circle, I noticed one man who looked so happy, as if everything in the world was perfect. I stood there transfixed, wondering how this man could exude so much joy. I asked my father and he told me that this man had just lost his wife but, because he is a real Jew and the Torah says to be happy on Simchat Torah, he is happy. This made a very big impression on my 14-year-old mind - that a Jew could put aside all his pain and suffering and be happy just because it's a mitzva was unbelievable to me - so on that day I made myself a promise: in the future, when I have the means to do so, I will help other Jewish children celebrate the true happiness and joy of Simchat Torah.”

Fast-forward another 17 years. On 23 Cheshvan, 2006, the hero of our story, Reb Hirsh Gansburg, the young man who lost his wife in 1969, completed his mission down on earth. Yet, his life - and the life of his wife - is as true and vibrant as ever. His children and grandchildren have built families and communities, bringing light into this universe; the people he has influenced continue to influence others.

The story of the young man has taught me much: even in the saddest of times, even when all seems lost, with a little joy, a little dance, a smile, everything can change.

And this much I know is true: “We in water will not drown, and in fire will not burn.”

How do I know, you ask? That man, the one who took his five children to dance in East Flatbush those 41 years ago happens to be my grandfather, may his memory be blessed.

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ISSUE 9/50

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Dream By Tzvi Freeman

You build a dream house. You start with a dream. The dream becomes a plan. The plan becomes a lot of dirty work. The dirty work becomes a house. If you are successful, it is the house of your dreams. - Dream, plan, dirty work, success. Why is this the fundamental strategy of all human endeavour? Because it is the story of the universe. Those who can feel the dream, those who can read the plan, see that we are now at the finishing touches.

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



Freely translated and adapted

Rosh Chodesh, Marcheshvan, 5743 [1982]

To the Sons and Daughters of Our People Israel, Everywhere,
G-d bless you all!

Greetings and Blessings:

We are coming from the month of Tishrei ... and taking into consideration the familiar saying to the effect that "as one prepares himself for the journey, so one proceeds," which is associated with the well known customs of proclaiming as Simchas Torah ends, "and Jacob went his way,"

This means that inasmuch as a Jew, every Jew, is, of course, a member of Kehilas Yaakov (the Community of Jacob), and is now about to set out on "his way," going into the "ordinary" months of the year that are not "abundant with festivals," but are largely taken up with matters of earning a livelihood and mundane affairs, this is the time to remind him that "his way" is the way of Yaakov as it has been designated by G-d, namely, the way of G-d, the way of "All your actions should be for the sake of Heaven," as behoves a descendant of Yaakov;

Considering further that although all Jews have the same task and purpose in life - complete dedication to the service of G-d, as our Sages expressed it: "I was created to serve my Creator,;" yet, coming down to actual conduct they are divided into three categories: men, women, and children (of pre-Bar-Mitzvah and pre-Bat Mitzvah age). Hence, this is reflected in the resolutions which have been adopted by them respectively, during Tishrei for the entire new year.

In light of all above, and also in view of the fact that a resolution made jointly by several persons, and more so by many people, in a congregation, is more certain to be carried out with greater *hatzlocho* [success] and in the fullest measure by each one, man and woman, I take the liberty of making the following suggestion and request, hoping that it will be acted upon:

It would surely be "right and proper and good and fitting" that "the heads of the people together with the tribes of Israel" everywhere gather together as soon as possible - men separately, as well as women and children separately (the children under their respective counsellors, of course) in order to reaffirm and, especially, to decide upon the proper ways and means of carrying out in actual reality and in the fullest measure, the good resolutions which each had made during the auspicious month of Tishrei, beginning with Rosh Hashana and in the propitious subsequent days, as well as to supplement those resolutions, if necessary,

The resolutions relating to speech, thought (these "too" are known to G-d), and certainly actions, since action is the essential thing: the resolutions made for the entire year, may it bring good and blessing to us and all our Jewish people.

It is surely unnecessary to underscore that in regard to good resolutions and good intentions there is always the assurance that G-d helps carry them out, and, indeed, even better and sooner than one expected -

Especially if these gatherings will be associated with, and continuous to, one of the daily prayers, together with words of Torah at the opening of the gathering, and with a donation to Tzedaka [charity] during the proceedings or at the conclusion:

For then there will be "brought into" the gathering the "three things on which the world stands: Torah, prayer and acts of benevolence. This begins with one's self, the so-called "small world," and on to the "world" in the ordinary sense, the world in which one lives, which is in need of a very, very strong blessing from the Creator and Master of the world that it should be a world that stands firmly, and not, G-d forbid, a world that shakes and stumbles etc., particularly as of recent times.

To conclude with blessings: May G-d grant *Hatzlocho* that the "writing and sealing for good" and the "sealing for good" which everyone received in the month of Tishrei, should materialize in the fullest measure, in the kind of good that is revealed and obvious, throughout the coming months and days, bringing good and blessing to us and all our people, to the extent of "open wide your mouth, (state all your desires), and I shall fulfil them,"

And soon indeed this will bring the realization of the main and essential blessing - the true and complete Geulo (Redemption) through Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

With esteem and blessing for *Hatzlocho* and for good tidings, in all of the above.

A WORD from the Director

Everyone dances on Simchat Torah, the greatest scholar and the simplest Jew. Everyone is equal; no one can tell who the Torah sage is and who has never even studied. All Jews are on the same level.

A person dances with his feet, not with his head. The feet are responsible for transporting the whole body, including the head. If people danced with their "heads" on Simchat Torah, their rejoicing would be limited, each person being only as joyful as his intellectual capacities allow. The Jew who studied more would be happier and would dance more intensely; the Jew who studied less would be less happy and take only a few steps.

The joy of Simchat Torah, however, is unlimited and knows no bounds. By dancing with our feet, we express a higher level of joy which transcends all intellectual understanding.

Everyone dances on Simchat Torah: the Jew who has never heard of G-d, and the Jew who has never had an opportunity to study Torah, who only knows that the Torah is something very precious. This knowledge alone causes him such happiness that he begins to dance, and his joy is so intense that it is immeasurable.

It is for this reason that Simchat Torah is not celebrated by sitting down and studying, for our happiness is not derived from how much Torah we understand. On the contrary, we dance with a completely rolled-up Torah scroll! Encased in its mantle, no one can even see what is written in it.

On Simchat Torah, everyone dances: the Jew who has studied much and the Jew who is just starting out on the journey, the learned scholar and the one who has no idea what Torah is all about; for on Simchat Torah all Jews are equal, rejoicing in the Torah with infinite joy.

J. I. Gutnick

Last Day in the Sukkah

Shemini Atzeret is the last day when we eat in the *sukkah* (although the blessing on the *sukkah*, recited before eating a meal, is not recited today). Shortly before sunset, many have the custom to enjoy a last snack in the *sukkah*, thus "bidding the *sukkah* farewell" until the following year.

Completing, beginning, and rejoicing with the Torah "Hakafot"

On Simchat Torah ("Rejoicing of the Torah"), we conclude, and begin anew, the annual Torah reading cycle. The event is marked with great rejoicing and the "hakafot" procession, held both on the eve and morning of Simchat Torah, in which we march and dance with Torah scrolls around the reading table in the synagogue. This is encapsulated in the following Chassidic saying: "On Simchat

Torah, we rejoice in the Torah, and the Torah rejoices in us; the Torah, too, wants to dance, so we become the Torah's dancing feet."

Get called up to the Torah!

During the Torah reading of Simchat Torah, everyone -including children under the age of Bar Mitzvah- is called up to the Torah; thus the reading is repeated numerous times, and each *aliyah* (call up) is given collectively to many individuals, so that everyone can recite the blessing over the Torah on this day.

It Happened Once...



One year around the time of the High Holidays, the daughter of the well-known *tzaddik*, Rabbi Meir of Primishlan, fell severely ill. As Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur passed, her condition worsened, and she seemed closer to death than life.

On Simchat Torah, Rabbi Meir was fulfilling the commandment to dance and rejoice with the Torah Scrolls, doing so with great enthusiasm, as every year. Great happiness prevailed among all the dancers.

But then, a small delegation of *chasidim* quickly burst through the doors of the synagogue and approached him, telling him that his daughter appeared to be in her final moments, G-d forbid, and he must do something.

The Rebbe hastened home and entered his daughter's room. When he perceived how critical the situation was, he immediately stepped out and stood by himself. Then the rebbe (who always referred to himself in the third person by his diminutive nickname, "Meirel") proclaimed:

"Master of the Universe! You commanded us to blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, so Meirel blew. You commanded us to fast on Yom Kippur, so Meirel fasted. You commanded us to live in a sukkah on the festival of Sukkot, so Meirel lived in a sukkah. You commanded us to be joyous on Simchat Torah, so Meirel is joyous.

"But now, Master of the Universe, you have made my daughter to be critically sick, and Meirel is obligated to accept this tragedy with joy, as it is written, "A person is required to bless on something bad that happens to him in the same way as he is required to bless on something good." So Meirel accepts his daughter's illness with joy, as you have commanded.

"However, Master of the Universe, there is also an explicit law that we are not supposed to mingle one joy with another...."

At that moment, they cried out from the room that the sick young woman had broken into a heavy sweat. Before their eyes her condition began visibly to improve. After a reasonable time she recovered completely.

It was Simchat Torah, and the disciples of Rabbi Mendel of Horodok, many of whom had journeyed for weeks to spend the joyous festival with their Rebbe, were awaiting his entrance to the synagogue for the recital of the *Atah Hor'eisa* verses and the *hakafot* procession. Yet the Rebbe did not appear. Hours passed, and still Rabbi Mendel was secluded in his room.

Finally, they approached Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, who had studied with Rabbi Mendel in Mezeritch under the tutelage of the Great Maggid. Perhaps Rabbi Schneur Zalman, who was revered and loved by Rabbi Mendel, would attempt what no other chassid would dare: enter the Rebbe's room and ask him to join his anxiously awaiting followers.

When Rabbi Schneur Zalman entered Rabbi Mendel's study, he found the chassidic master deeply engrossed in his thoughts. "The chassidim await you," said Rabbi Schneur Zalman. "Why don't you join them for the *hakafot*?"

"There are a hundred meanings to the verse *Atah Hor'eisa*," cried Rabbi Mendel, "And I do not yet fully understand them all. I cannot possibly come out to recite the verse without a proper comprehension of its significance!"

"Rebbe!" said Rabbi Schneur Zalman. "When you will reach a full comprehension of the hundred meanings of *Atah Hor'eisa*, you will discover another hundred meanings you have yet to comprehend..."

"You are right," said Rabbi Mendel, rising from his seat. "Come, let us go to *hakafot*."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

Simchat Torah

One year, during the dancing on Simchat Torah, the Baal Shem Tov cried out: "Israel, you holy people. What is the cause of your great joy? It is our holy Torah! Do the other nations ever rejoice while holding their sacred books? Where do they go in the time of their rejoicing - into their pubs! And we, the Jewish people, where do you find us in the season of our rejoicing? Inside the synagogues. And why are we dancing and singing? In honour of the holy Torah. When are we united, as one man with one heart? On Simchat Torah! Therefore, I say to you, Israel, my holy people! This day is a triple joy - the joy of the Torah, the joy of the Jewish people, and the joy of G-d."

G-d looked into the Torah and created the world. Man looks into the Torah and sustains the world. (*Zohar*)

And G-d saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good (Gen. 1:31)

Our Sages comment: " 'Good' - refers to the good inclination; 'very good' refers to the evil inclination." "The phenomenon of teshuva, repentance, could not exist without the creation of an evil inclination. Teshuva enables man to attain an even higher spiritual level and completeness than before he sinned; thus, G-d declared the creation "very good" only after Adam was created with this potential. (*Sefer HaSichot 5749, Vol. 1*)

Why doesn't the Torah state after the creation of man, "and it was good," as it does after all the other things created during the six days? Every other creature was created complete, with its nature and instincts ready to be applied to the world. Man, however, was created incomplete, and it is his purpose in life to perfect himself. Human beings are given free will and the responsibility for their own development and improvement. That is why it doesn't immediately state, "and it was good" - we must wait and see how man behaves before passing judgement. (*Klai Yakar*)

In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth

The Torah says: "I was the tool of G-d's artistry." An architect who builds a palace does not do so alone; he has scrolls and notebooks which he consults regarding how to place the rooms, where to set the doors. So it was with G-d: He looked into the Torah and created the world. (*Midrash Rabbah*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

SHEMINI ATZERET • 22 TISHREI • 30 SEPTEMBER

WEDNESDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	6:04 PM
	MINCHA:	6:15 PM
	MAARIV:	6:55 PM
	HAKAFOT:	7:45 PM

THURSDAY • 30 SEPTEMBER • SHEMINI ATZERET

SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
YIZKOR:	11:15 AM (APPROX)
MINCHA:	6:15 PM
MAARIV:	7:05 PM
LIGHT CANDLES AFTER:	7:02 PM
HAKAFOT:	8:30 PM

FRIDAY • 1 OCTOBER • SIMCHAT TORAH

SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
MINCHA:	6:15 PM
LIGHT CANDLES AT:	6:05 PM
KABBOLAS SHABBOS-MAARIV:	6:45 PM

SHABBOS BEREISHIT • 2 OCTOBER • 24 TISHREI

SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
MINCHA:	6:00 PM
SHABBOS ENDS:	7:03 PM

BLESS MONTH OF MAR CHESHVAN - NEW MOON:

FRIDAY 8 OCTOBER:	8:20:02 AM
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WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	7:15 PM
	MAARIV:	8:00 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 29, 30 SEPTEMBER, 1 OCTOBER 2010



29 th	30 th	1 st	2 nd
6:04 ... 7:02 ...	6:05 ...	MELBOURNE	7:03
5:58 ... 6:55 ...	6:00 ...	ADELAIDE	6:56
5:29 ... 6:22 ...	5:30 ...	BRISBANE	6:23
6:25 ... 7:14 ...	6:25 ...	DARWIN	7:14
5:27 ... 6:20 ...	5:28 ...	GOLD COAST	6:22
5:59 ... 6:54 ...	6:00 ...	PERTH	6:55
5:37 ... 6:33 ...	5:39 ...	SYDNEY	6:35
5:46 ... 6:43 ...	5:48 ...	CANBERRA	6:44
5:56 ... 6:56 ...	5:58 ...	LAUNCESTON	6:59
7:04* .. 8:02* ..	7:06* ..	AUCKLAND	8:03*
7:05* .. 8:06* ..	7:07* ..	WELLINGTON	8:08*

For the 30th one must light after the given times. For the 1st one must light before the given times and from a pre-existing flame only. * Indicating that Daylight Saving Time is in effect in your area.

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.