

# LampLighter

19 Kislev  
Vayeishev  
**958**  
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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

As related in this week's Torah portion, Vayeishev, when Joseph went at his father's behest to check on his brothers in Shechem he met a man "wandering in the field," who was actually the angel Gabriel. In response to Joseph's question if he knew where they might be, the man replied, "They have departed, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dotan.'" "

Rashi, the foremost Torah commentator, explains that with these words the angel was trying to warn Joseph to keep away from his brothers, who were intending to harm him. "They have departed" suggested "they have removed themselves from brotherhood," and "let us go to Dotan" meant they were looking for a legal way ("datot") to kill him. Nonetheless, Joseph ignored these veiled warnings and continued on his way.

Thus we see that in his desire to fulfil his father's request Joseph demonstrated true self-sacrifice, to the point that he was willing to endanger his life. Yet this in itself raises several questions: Jacob had asked Joseph to "go see the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring me back word." If Joseph were to be killed by his brothers, he would obviously not be able to report back to Jacob.

Furthermore, what justification did Joseph have for endangering his life in order to fulfil the commandment of honouring one's parents, when it is not one of the three mitzvot (commandments) a Jew is permitted to give up his life rather than transgress: idolatry, illicit relations and murder?

The great codifier of Jewish law, Moses Maimonides, explains that in certain circumstances it is indeed permissible to demonstrate this extreme level of self-sacrifice, even when it isn't "necessary": "If the person is tremendously great, pious and G-d-fearing, and sees that the generation is reckless [in observing that particular mitzva], he is permitted to sanctify G-d's Name and sacrifice his life for even a minor commandment, in order that the people see and take note."

Joseph was well aware that his brothers were lacking in the mitzva of honouring parents, which had been amply demonstrated by their behaviour in the incident of Shechem as well as in their antipathy toward him. He thus resolved to fulfil his father's wishes at all costs.

The same dynamics are also evident in the story of Chanuka, which we will soon celebrate. Strictly speaking, there was no need for Matityahu and his sons to risk their lives and engage in war against the Syrian-Greeks. Nonetheless, it was their willingness for self-sacrifice above and beyond the "letter of the law" that ultimately led to miracles and wonders.

In fact, in the merit of their deeds they found the "cruse of pure oil with the High Priest's seal," symbolic of the inner essence of every Jew, and merited "to institute these eight days of Chanuka to give thanks and praise to Your great Name."

*(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

## The Splattered Gem

*Told by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch*

Among the disciples of Rabbi DovBer of Mezeritch (the 2nd leader of the Chassidic movement, d. 1772) were many who argued that the sanctity of esoteric teachings revealed by their master must be safeguarded and shared only with a select few. Others, chief amongst them Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, were of the opinion that they must be circulated as widely as possible. They transcribed Rabbi DovBer's teachings, made many copies, and actively distributed them to the wider Jewish community.

One day, one of these transcriptions was discovered languishing in a mound of garbage. The sight of this caused great pain to all Rabbi DovBer's disciples, and renewed the critique of those who cheapened their master's holy words with their indiscriminate distribution. Rabbi Schneur Zalman responded with a parable:

"Once upon a time, he began his tale, there was a mighty king who had an only son. Wishing his son to grow in wisdom and might, he sent him off to explore faraway lands and far-flung islands. There the prince was to learn the nature of foreign plants and animals and brave dangerous terrain to capture exotic beasts and birds.

"One day, the news reached the king that his son, who was then on a faraway island, had fallen gravely ill, and that the doctors were unable to find a cure for his illness. A call was issued throughout the land, offering great reward. But all the great doctors, all the famed scholars, were silenced; for they knew no remedy or cure for the illness of the prince.

"Then there arrived a man who knew of a proven remedy for the illness of the prince. He described a certain precious stone which, if one would grind it to the finest of powders, mix it with a superb wine, and give it to the prince to drink—he would be cured.

"This gem, however, was extremely rare, and could not be obtained anywhere in the kingdom and beyond. The only specimen in existence was the centrepiece of the royal crown of the king. Removing this gem would mean destroying the crown—the king's most precious possession and the ultimate symbol of his sovereignty.

"At first, the king's ministers were overjoyed to discover the gem. But as soon as they realized that by removing the stone from the crown—the very crown with which their king was crowned—its entire glory would fade, they were extremely distressed. Nonetheless, they were forced to inform the king that the gem had been found.

"The king was overjoyed. He commanded that the gem be extracted, ground to a fine powder, and that the potion for his son be quickly prepared.

"But at that moment, terrible news reached the royal palace: the prince's condition had so deteriorated that his lips were sealed. So ill was the prince that he could take nothing, not even liquids, into his mouth. The experts and scholars assembled at the palace were certain that, under the circumstances, the king would surely direct that the stone not be ground so that the splendour of the royal crown could be preserved.

"How astounded they were to hear the king instructing them to hurry and crush the gem and to prepare the potion as swiftly as possible, and pour it into the mouth of the prince. 'Grind, pour, squander the entire gemstone,' said the king. 'Who knows? Perhaps a single drop will enter the mouth of my son and he will be healed!'"



## The Fifth Night

By Yanki Tauber

One of the legendary soldiers in the Lubavitcher Rebbe's army of teachers and activists who kept Judaism alive in Communist Russia in the darkest years of repression was Rabbi Asher Sossokin, who spent many years in Soviet labour camps for his "counter-revolutionary" activities. In one of these camps he made the acquaintance of a Jew by the name of Nachman Rozman. In his youth, Nachman had abandoned the traditional Jewish life in which he was raised to join the communist party; he served in the Red Army, where he rose to a high rank; but then he was arrested for engaging in some illegal business and sentenced to a long term of hard labour in Siberia.

Rozman was drawn to the chassid who awakened in him memories of the home and life he had forsaken. With Reb Asher's aid and encouragement, he began a return to Jewish observance under conditions where keeping kosher, avoiding work on Shabbat, or grabbing a few moments for prayer meant subjecting oneself to near-starvation, repeated penalties and a daily jeopardy of life and limb.

One winter, as Chanukah approached, Reb Asher revealed his plan to his friend. "I'll get a hold of a small, empty food can — the smaller the better, so it'll be easy to hide and escape notice. We'll save half of our daily ration of margarine over the next two weeks, for oil. We can make wicks from the loose threads at the edges of our coats. When everyone's asleep, we'll light our 'menorah' under my bunk...."

"Certainly not!" cried Nachman Rozman. "It's Chanukah, Reb Asher, the festival of miracles. We'll do the mitzvah the way it should be done. Not in some rusty can fished out from the garbage, but with a proper menorah, real oil, at the proper time and place. I have a few

roubles hidden away that I can pay Igor with at the metal-working shed; I also have a few 'debts' I can call in at the kitchen...."

A few days before Chanukah, Nachman triumphantly showed Reb Asher the menorah he had procured — a somewhat crude vessel but unmistakably a "real" menorah, with eight oil-cups in a row and a raised cup for the *shamash* (*The candle from which the Chanukah lamps are lit.*) On the first evening of Chanukah, he set the menorah on a stool in the doorway between the main room of their barracks and the small storage area at its rear, and filled the right-hand cup; together, the two Jews recited the blessings and kindled the first light, as millions of their fellows did that night in their homes around the world.

On that first night the lighting went off without a hitch, as it did on the second, third and fourth nights of the festival. As a rule, the prisoners in the camp did not inform on each other, and their barrack-mates had already grown accustomed to the religious practices of the two Jews.

On the fifth night of Chanukah, just as Reb Asher and Nachman had lit five flames in their menorah, a sudden hush spread through the barracks. The prisoners all froze in their places and turned their eyes to the doorway, in which stood an officer from the camp's high command.

Though surprise inspections such as these were quite routine occurrences, they always struck terror in the hearts of the prisoners. The officer would advance through the barracks meting out severe penalties for offenses such as a hidden cigarette or a hoarded crust of bread. "Quick, throw it out into the snow," whispered the prisoners, but the officer was already striding toward the back doorway, where the two Jews stood huddled over the still-burning flames of their candelabra.

For a very long minute the officer gazed at the menorah. Then he turned to Reb Asher. "*P'yat?* (Five?)" he asked.

"*P'yat*," replied the chassid.

The officer turned and exited without a word.

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## Teheran, 1980

By Eliyahu & Malka Touger

"I first met the Rebbe during the lifetime of his father-in-law and predecessor, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchack of Lubavitch," related Rabbi Avrohom Mordechai Hershberg, the past Chief Rabbi of Mexico. "I asked the previous Rebbe about a Rabbinic position I was offered in Chicago. He told me to consult his son-in-law.

"I spent nearly an entire night with the Rebbe. Our discussion covered tractate after tractate of the Talmud, and the scope of the Rebbe's knowledge and his genius totally amazed me. From that night onward, I maintained a relationship with the Rebbe, and I consulted with him regarding numerous personal and public matters."

In 1980, during the Iranian occupation of the American embassy, Rabbi Hershberg was scheduled to travel to Iran for a public service project. Because of the tense atmosphere at the time, many tried to persuade him to postpone his trip. The Rebbe, by contrast, encouraged him: "Go with blessing," he answered. "You are certain to light the Chanukah menorah in Iran."

Rabbi Hershberg was puzzled by the Rebbe's closing words. He was not necessarily planning to stay in Iran for Chanukah. But if he would, there was no question that he would light a menorah. He did not understand the Rebbe's reference, nor the emphatic tone in his words.

Afterwards, it became clear. Rabbi Hershberg's mission in Iran took longer than expected, during which time he developed a relationship with some Iranian officials. He knew that there were six Jews among the hostages in the American embassy and he asked permission to light the menorah with them. "Just as we have granted permission for a priest to meet with the Christian hostages on their holiday," the Iranians replied, "we will allow you entry as well."

And so it was in the barricaded American embassy in Iran that Rabbi Hershberg lit the Chanukah menorah that year.

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ISSUE 958

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Judah and Tamar had two sons, Peretz and Zerach. Peretz is the direct ancestor of King David and Moshiach. The Midrash notes that "Before the first enslaver of Israel (Pharaoh) was born, the ultimate redeemer of Israel (Moshiach's ancestor Peretz) was already born." G-d thus brought about the cure before the affliction. This "light of Moshiach" that was created with the birth of Peretz confers upon Israel the strength and ability to succeed in their exiles, to "break through" (the meaning of the name "Peretz") all the obstacles that try to impede their service of G-d until Moshiach is revealed. (*The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Shabbat Parshat Vayeishev, 5751 - 1990*)

# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



## A WORD from the Director

13 Kislev, 5723 [1962]

I was pleased to receive the news of your forthcoming Dinner on the 20th of Kislev, the day after the historic Day of Liberation of the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, author of the Tanya and Shulchan Aruch and founder of Chabad.

It is both timely and meaningful to recall the following episode from his life and teachings:

The Alter Rebbe shared his house with his oldest married son, Rabbi Dov Ber (who later succeeded him as the Mittler Rebbe). Rabbi Dov Ber was known for his unusual power of concentration. Once, when Rabbi Dov Ber was engrossed in learning, his baby, sleeping in its cradle nearby, fell out and began to cry. The infant's father did not hear the baby's cries. But the infant's grandfather, the Alter Rebbe, also engrossed in his studies in his room on the upper floor at the time, most certainly did. He interrupted his studies, went downstairs, picked the baby up, soothed it and replaced it in its cradle. Through all this Rabbi Dov Ber remained quite oblivious.

Subsequently, the Alter Rebbe admonished his son: "No matter how engrossed one may be in the most lofty occupation, one must never remain insensitive to the cry of a child."

This story has been transmitted to us from generation to generation; I heard it from my father-in-law of saintly memory. It was handed down because of the lasting message it conveys, one which is particularly pertinent to our time. It characterizes one of the basic tenets of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement - to hearken to the cry of our distressed Jewish children.

The "child" may be an infant in years, a Jewish boy or girl of school age, fallen from the "cradle" of Torah-true Jewish education, or it may be someone who is chronologically an adult yet an "infant" insofar as Jewish life is concerned, an infant in knowledge and experience of the Jewish religion, heritage and way of life.

The souls of these Jewish "children" cry out in anguish, for they live in a spiritual void, whether they are conscious of this or feel it only subconsciously. Every Jew, no matter how preoccupied he may be with any lofty cause, must hear the cries of these Jewish children. Bringing these Jewish children back to their Jewish cradle has priority over all else.

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The Eve of Yud Tes Kislev, 5724 [1963]

...In one of his well-known letters, the Alter Rebbe declares that the happy tidings of his liberation reached him when he was reading the verse (Psalms 55:19): "[G-d] has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle against me, for many were with me."

This Providential coincidence surely carries a message for every one of us. Indeed, every individual is in need of a personal liberation from all the difficulties and hindrances encountered in daily life which hamper the attainment of the goals which should be achieved every day, in both material and spiritual endeavours.

Thus, our Sages make the following meaningful commentary on the verse: "Said the Holy One, Blessed Be He: He who engages in Torah, and in acts of loving-kindness, and prays with the congregation, is regarded by Me as if he redeemed Me and My children from among the nations of the world" (Talmud, Berachot 8a).

In this way, our Sages emphasize that the personal redemption of every Jew, as well as of the entire Jewish people, together with G-d (so to speak), is directly linked with the dissemination of Torah, acts of benevolence ("duties toward fellow-Jews"), and prayer ("duties toward G-d").

Thus, every man or woman who is involved in these three things brings liberation and redemption to himself as well as to our people as a whole.

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The Eve of 19 Kislev, 5730 [1969]

The Festival of Liberation of the Alter Rebbe on Yud Tes (the 19th) Kislev, and the festival of Chanuka, though widely apart in historic perspective, have much in common in spirit and significance. It is therefore no accident that Divine Providence has brought both of them together in the same auspicious month of Kislev, within a week of each other.

The Alter Rebbe sought to illuminate Jewish life, even Torah life, with the inner light of the Torah and mitzvot [commandments], giving a new dimension of vitality and meaning to each and every Jew in his daily life. However, the light of Chabad Chasidus was threatened with extinction just as the light of the Torah and mitzvot was in danger in the time of Matathias. Thus, Yud Tes Kislev, the day on which the Alter Rebbe and Chabad were completely vindicated, may be considered a "festival of lights" much in the same way as Chanuka.

Similarly, both Yud Tes Kislev and Chanuka stress the importance of Jewish education in all its Torah purity, permeated with the spirit of self-sacrifice. It is no exaggeration to say that the dedicated workers of Chabad-Lubavitch are true heirs of the Hasmonaans of old. They render a most vital service in forming Torah outposts and strongholds in many parts of the world, in order to preserve and spread the light of the Torah and mitzvot, and to strengthen the foundation of Torah-true education.

*This weekend, (Friday) Jews the world over will celebrate Yud Tet (the 19th of) Kislev, the Chasidic "New Year." On this date over 200 years ago the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidut, was liberated from the infamous Spalerno prison in Russia.*

*Not merely a personal event, his redemption was an ideological victory for the revelation of the inner aspect of Torah, and a significant milestone in preparing the world for Moshiach.*

*Before 19 Kislev, the inner, esoteric part of the Torah - the Torah's "soul," as it were - was in a concealed state. Only its outer aspect - the "body" - was revealed to the majority of the Jewish people.*

*Human beings are also composed of a physical body and a spiritual soul. Unlike the body, however, the soul cannot be perceived by the senses, nor can the human intellect fully comprehend its essence. The soul's existence can only be determined by deduction - i.e., if the body is alive, there must be a soul that is animating it.*

*With the redemption of Yud Tet Kislev, the Torah's "soul" became revealed and apparent. Anyone can now learn its inner wisdom, and understand it on an intellectual level.*

*Furthermore, as the Jewish people and the Torah are one entity, the innovation of 19 Kislev affected all Jewish individuals on a personal level as well. The advent of Chabad Chasidut enabled the Jewish soul to illuminate the body to an unprecedented degree, making it easier for every Jew to serve as a dwelling place for G-d's Divine Presence and fulfil his mission in the world.*

*On such an auspicious day, when the same spiritual energy that was originally present comes down into the world, it is appropriate to rededicate ourselves to ensuring that all our deeds and actions help hasten Moshiach's revelation - the underlying purpose of the dissemination of Chasidut.*

*May everyone be inscribed and sealed for a good year in the study and ways of Chasidut.*

J.I. Gutnick

### Why Public Menorah's?

#### See the Light

For all Jewish holidays there is a mandate to celebrate the miracle. Enters Chanukah and an additional mandate is in order: publicize the miracle.

When the Rabbis first instituted the holiday of Chanukah, they instituted it with this injunction; and ever since, Chanukah has become synonymous with public display. Although the Mitzvah is to light the Menorah at home with your family, traditionally it is placed in a doorway or window, to publicize the miracle of Chanukah to the largest possible audience.

Because publicity is an essential part of the holiday.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe initiated a campaign to further publicize this miracle. In this day and age when people spend increasingly more time outside of the home, the Rebbe encouraged Jews to bring the light, warmth, and miraculous message of Chanukah right into the public thoroughfares.

#### But Why

Out of all the holidays why was Chanukah selected for "Publicizing the Miracle"?

Here's a thought: the cause for other holidays is that **we** were threatened, in danger, or in need. A miracle happened and **we** were helped. As a result of the miracle **we** continue to exist. Since the miracle happened to save **us**, it is **we** who celebrate.

The Chanukah miracle was slightly different. The Greeks didn't threaten us per se; they threatened the idea of a miracle.

They didn't mind if Jews lived or observed Jewish practices as long as it was seen as another culture, and not a Divine mandate. They didn't believe in holiness, G-d, or miracles. So a miracle happened to save the miracle. Therefore, it is the *miracle* that must celebrate.

And its celebration is having people know it exists.

So go ahead, help the miracle celebrate. Bring a Menorah to your office, display one at your Chanukah parties, and ask for one to be placed in your local mall and public squares.

## CUSTOMS CORNER

# It Happened Once...



A great calamity had befallen the Jews of Poland: the government had passed a series of decrees banishing the Jews from the villages and the countryside, where many leased inns, breweries and mills from the local landholders. Thousands of refugees poured into the cities, bereft of home and livelihood.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi took to the road, visiting Jewish communities throughout Poland and Lithuania to raise the large sums needed to feed and shelter the homeless and to bribe the government ministers to alleviate the decrees. Arriving in the town of Tulchin, he went to pay his respects to Rabbi Baruch, grandson of Chassidism's founder, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov.

"What brings you to these parts?" asked Rabbi Baruch.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman explained the purpose of his journey.

"Fundraising for bribes?" objected Rabbi Baruch. "Surely the matter can be dealt with without recourse to such mundane means. Could you not, instead, teach our Jews the *Echad* (lit. "one"; *The teaching of G-d's oneness which permeates all existence*) of my holy grandfather? That should suffice to annihilate the decrees of our enemies!"

"On the contrary," said Rabbi Schneur Zalman. "It is your grandfather's *Echad* that is causing all the trouble."

"Three hundred years ago," Rabbi Schneur Zalman explained, "the Jewish people were driven from Spain. They wandered from port to port and from land to land, but none of the kings of Europe would allow them to settle in their domains. Among the Jews were those who had managed to salvage a considerable portion of their wealth, and they offered huge bribes to the local rulers in return for a haven to rest their exile-weary bones; but they were repeatedly turned down. Why did the rulers of Europe, whose appetite for silver and gold was legendary, refuse these lucrative offers? Because this was but the earthly reflection of a drama that was unfolding in the heavens. The *sarim* (angels) who embody the spirit of these nations wanted nothing of the Jew in their domains. 'We know these Jews,' said they. 'No sooner do they settle in a new place than they erect houses of study and prayer where they study Torah and proclaim the unity of G-d. Soon the cry *Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad!* ("Hear O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is one!") will resound throughout our lands. And what will become of us? We shall disintegrate as darkness gives way to light and folly is banished by wisdom. No, we'll do without Jews.'

"But the angel of Poland had a different reaction. 'I have nothing to fear from the Jews,' said he. 'On the contrary, I shall only profit from their presence in my domain. Yes, they'll build study halls and study Torah, but they'll do so for their self-aggrandizement. Yes, they'll build synagogues and cry *Echad!*, but it will be their own piety that they are proclaiming, not the unity of G-d. The flow of spiritual vitality that G-d bestows upon His people will drain right out of their flawed vessels and into my own coffers.'

"The soul of Poland having acquiesced, events on earth followed suit. The King of Poland had his tallest knight mount his steed and hold his lance aloft, and the Jews amassed a pile of gold and silver that topped the tip of the raised lance. Thus, the Jews were permitted to settle in Poland.

"So passed close to three hundred years. Then your grandfather came along and taught the true meaning of '*Echad*,' and the angel of Poland began to have second thoughts. 'I agreed to accept the Jews of the old *Echad*, not the new!'

"Well," concluded Rabbi Schneur Zalman, "since we're not about to give up the *Echad* your grandfather has taught us, we need to throw some more silver on the pile."

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When the Czar's soldiers came to arrest Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi in 1798, the Rebbe consulted with Rabbi Shmuel Munkes: should he go into hiding, or should he allow himself to be taken to Petersburg?

Reb Shmuel advised his Rebbe not to run away. "Why not?" asked Rabbi Schneur Zalman. "The soldiers are coming to arrest me!"

Answered Reb Shmuel: "One or the other. If you are truly a Rebbe, then no harm will befall you. And if you are not—you deserve it! How dared you deprive thousands of Jews of their pleasure in the material world?"

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

### And he made him a coat of many colors (Gen. 37:3)

Chasidic philosophy explains that the coat was symbolic of a particular aspect of G-dliness (makif - which "envelops" creation like a garment) that is drawn into the physical world. Jacob bequeathed this ability only to Joseph, as he was the only one of the 12 brothers who was capable of accepting it. The brothers' jealousy of Joseph was, in actuality, envy of his superior spiritual abilities, which was later expressed on a more mundane level. (*Torat Chaim*)

### And they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him (Gen. 37:4)

The main component of all controversy is the absence of dialogue, the unwillingness to listen to what someone else has to say and understand it from his perspective. If people would really know how to talk to each other, most of the time they would discover that they have nothing to argue about. (*Rabbi Yonatan Eibeschutz*)

### What profit will it be if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? (Gen. 37:26)

The fact that we will be forced to conceal our deed indicates that it is wrong. "Wherever secrecy exists - thievery exists." (*Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk*)

## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

### PARSHAS VAYEISHEV • 20 KISLEV • 27 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:02 PM
	MINCHA:	8:10 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:45 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:30 AM
	MINCHA:	8:00 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:07 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:05 PM
	MAARIV:	8:55 PM
	CHANUKA MAARIV:	9:15 PM

### CANDLE LIGHTING: 26 NOVEMBER 2010



Begins		Ends
8:02	MELBOURNE	9:07
7:51	ADELAIDE	8:53
6:07	BRISBANE	7:04
6:39	DARWIN	7:31
6:06	GOLD COAST	7:04
6:45	PERTH	7:45
7:28	SYDNEY	8:29
7:40	CANBERRA	8:42
8:04	LAUNCESTON	9:12
8:01	AUCKLAND	9:05
8:13	WELLINGTON	9:21

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

### The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נבג"מ ז"ע

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