

# LampLighter

3 Tevet  
Vayigash  
**960**

10 December  
5771/2010

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In the Torah portion of Vayigash we read about the reunion of Joseph and Benjamin: "And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck."

Our Sages tell us that each brother wept over the destruction that would occur in the other brother's portion of Israel. Joseph wept over the destruction of the two Holy Temples in Jerusalem, in Benjamin's portion, and Benjamin wept over the Sanctuary in Shilo, in Joseph's portion.

Symbolically, every Jew can build a "personal" Holy Temple in his heart, a place where the Divine Presence dwells. A Jew who conducts himself according to Torah causes G-d's Presence to dwell within him, thereby building a "Sanctuary." Doing the opposite prevents the Divine Presence from entering.

The destruction of the Temple is cause for grief. When Joseph prophetically saw that the two Holy Temples would be destroyed he burst into tears. When Benjamin saw that the Sanctuary would be destroyed, he was also overcome. So too it is with a Jew's inner Temple: When a person sees his friend's Temple being destroyed by his actions, it is painful to witness. He cries, for he is taking part in his friend's sorrow.

Yet we find something very strange. Joseph wept over the destruction that would occur in Benjamin's portion, but not over the destruction in his own territory. Similarly, Benjamin wept over the destruction of the Sanctuary in Joseph's portion, but did not grieve over the two Temples in Jerusalem. Why didn't each one weep over his own misfortune?

A similar reaction occurs when we witness the destruction of a fellow Jew's personal Holy Temple. A Jew weeps when he sees his brother destroying his inner Sanctuary, yet he does not weep when he destroys his own. Why is that?

The answer is that crying cannot rebuild. Crying lessens the pain, but cannot fix what was destroyed.

When a person destroys his own inner Temple, no amount of weeping can ever rebuild it. Instead, he should perform actual deeds, for "one positive action is worth a thousand sighs." Only mitzvot can reconstruct the ruined Sanctuary.

When a person sees another Jew's Temple lying in ruins it makes him sad. But he cannot help the other individual, as rectifying the situation is not in his hands. He may empathize and offer practical suggestions, but the other person has to do the actual work; only he can correct his misdeeds.

Joseph and Benjamin realized that lamenting their own sorrows would yield no practical benefit. Each brother would have to exert his own efforts to rebuild, by observing mitzvot and performing acts of goodness.

Let each of us rebuild the Sanctuary in our hearts, and together we will merit the rebuilding of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, that will never be destroyed.

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

## Holy War

By Yanki Tauber

"OhmyG-d! That man, over there — is he praying? That man is praying!"

"I think so. He said 'G-d'! I distinctly heard him say 'G-d'!"

It's a sign of the times that the sight of a person praying is cause for alarm. The expectation being that he is about to launch a terrorist attack or, at best, commit suicide.

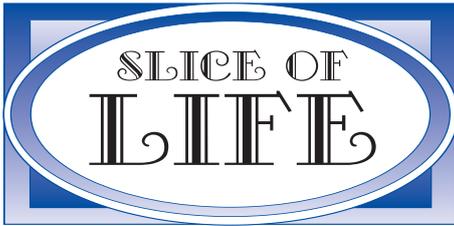
Religious people have long protested this prejudice, and rightly so. People who make it a habit to speak to G-d are not, on the whole, more violent than the general population.

Interestingly enough, however, in Jewish tradition, prayer is an activity with distinctly violent connotations. Our Sages point out that the Hebrew verb *vayigash* ("and he approached") is employed by the Torah to describe a person entering into battle as well as one engaging in prayer. Indeed, use of this word often implies a combination of the two — an approach that is both a plea and a confrontation (as in the case of Judah's approach to Joseph, which gives the Torah reading of *Vayigash* its name).

We are speaking, of course, not of the type of violence that is perpetrated with bombs or fists, but of a deeper, more spiritual violence. Prayer, in its truest form, is a confrontation — a confrontation between man and G-d, and a confrontation between the pure, unsullied self we cherish in the depth of our souls and the self we've made of ourselves in our daily lives.

How many times do we say to ourselves in the course of our day, "This isn't who I am! This isn't me!" We sense that we are in possession of a better self, a self that does not succumb to the countless compromises, great and small, we make to the "realities" of an imperfect world. But where is this inner self? When do we get to see it? Is it doomed to remain forever locked in some inner chamber of our soul, its voice muted and its influence negligible in our daily lives?

Prayer is when we open the gate that shuts in this inner self and release it, together with our regular self, into the arena of our heart to confront each other full face. The battle that ensues is always difficult, often indecisive, sometimes disappointing. But as long as it takes place on a regular basis, we know that the "spark of G-dliness" at the core of our soul is alive and well.



## The heart of the N.K.V.D.

There is no where that Jews suffered so constantly as in Russia. Even in Germany and Poland where millions of Jews were murdered there were occasional eras peace and prosperity for the Jews. Not so in Russia; the Czar, the Church, and the peasant population saw to it that they never had a moment of respite. But worst of all was Communism.

The Communists opposed G-d, destroyed Torah education and with it paralysed the minds and souls of almost the entire Jewish population.

So it was no wonder that observant Jews tried everything and almost anything to get out. But Stalin made it impossible to do so.

However, briefly after WWII a brief split in the Iron Curtain opened. It seems that in the course of the terrible war hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews fled from the Nazis over the border into Russia. Now, as soon as the war ended, the Russian and Polish Governments were allowing them to return; anyone carrying a Polish passport could leave Russia! Of course when the Jews heard this they immediately set to work.

But it wasn't easy.

Once one 'obtained' (i.e. bought a forged) passport, it was necessary to reach the border city of Lvov (Lemberg), buy train tickets to Poland, pass a special immigration board of Russians and Poles and finally take a train across the border to freedom during the course of which were also several 'checks'.

And there were even more problems; First of all, the passports cost astronomic prices, secondly, the secret police (N.K.V.D) were always on the lookout for forgeries and if caught the punishment was beating, imprisonment...or worse! Third, it was forbidden to remain in the city of Lvov over night without a special permit and finally, not everyone passed the 'special board'.

Eliezer was a young religious Jew from Buchara (Tashkent) who decided that he had to leave Russia. He acquired a Polish passport, got permission from his parents and began the long journey to Lvov. On the way he met other young men his age with the same goal and they decided to work together and help each other to get out. They rented a room with a back alley entrance where they intended to stay until they engineered their escape and began preparations.

But the very next day terrible news hit the thousands of Jews secretly hiding in Lvov; the board of Russian-Polish immigration had been

eliminated! No one could leave Russia to Poland anymore! The border was closed!

Jews began streaming out of Lvov while they still had time. There was no reason to stay and if they got caught they would lose their homes, jobs and possibly more and be cut off from all sides.

But the group of young men decided they would not give up so easily. They sat up the entire night trying to figure out what to do until one of them suddenly remembered something he had heard from someone; there was a rumour that a high official in the NKVD, perhaps a colonel, by the name of Boris Spokoyni dealt with exit visas and not only was he Jewish (although he denied it), but he had a warm spot for helping his fellow Jews!

Now, this was only a rumour and possibly it was a totally untrue one which meant it could be fatal. But they talked about it and decided it was worth the gamble. They first would try to acquire the forms necessary to request permission to leave (when the board ceased to exist so did the requesting forms), fill them out and pray to G-d.

Eliezer and another young man were chosen to carry out the mission.

In the middle of the night they furtively made their way to the NKVD building on Lenina 3 street, approached the guard, slipped a fairly large bribe into his hand and asked him for two things; ten request forms (which were, of course, outdated) and the address of Spokoyni.

The guard rubbed the rouble bills in his hand, briefly looked down at them and when convinced that they were of sufficiently large denominations, told the Jews to wait off to the side in the shadows, entered the building and returned with an envelope. They took it, walked for a half hour down the street and, when they were sure they weren't being followed, opened it. It contained ten blank forms and a small paper with an address scribbled on it.

They hurried back to the room, everyone filled out a form and, just before dawn Eliezer and his friend ran off to what they hoped and prayed was the right address.

They waited outside the house near some bushes until the door opened and out came a polished, immaculately dressed NKVD officer who lit a cigarette and began walking in their direction.

The sidewalk was empty. Now is the time. As soon as he got close enough they approached him and, almost weeping, pled for their lives, "We represent ten young Jews, please have mercy! Help us! We must leave Russia or we will die! Please help or we will commit suicide!" A warm sweat covered their bodies although it was a cold fall morning.

But Spokoyni just acted as though they didn't exist and kept walking. "Oh no!" Eliezer thought to himself. "We were wrong! If he calls the police on us we're finished!"

Then, after a few more steps he stopped, turned to them, narrowed his eyes and said, almost as though he got pleasure from their helplessness; "You missed the deadline! There are no more exit permits! How did you get my name anyway? Who gave it to you!? And my address!?" He angrily threw his cigarette to the pavement, crushed it out with his boot heel and suddenly looked deeply into Eliezer's eyes as though searching for something familiar.

He asked quietly, "Do you have the request forms?" Eliezer took them out of his coat pocket, the officer took them and stuck them into his pocket and whispered to Eliezer, "You know where my office is? Be there at eleven tonight. Come alone." And he walked into the distance.

"It could be a trap!" one of the group said when they returned. "Now he has all our names! It's evidence! What do you think? Maybe we should get out while we can." But when they took a vote everyone agreed they would stay and leave the rest up to G-d.

That night at eleven Eliezer was let in to the NKVD building, found Spokoyni's room and knocked on the door. He entered the room and Spokoyni locked it behind him.

He told Eliezer to be seated and again looked deeply into his eyes until two tears ran down Spokoyni's cheeks. He almost broke out weeping as he told his entire story.

Spokoyni said that essentially everything said about him was true despite his efforts to hide the facts. He even circulated rumours to the opposite so he wouldn't be flooded with requests that would draw attention. But he admitted that through his efforts thousands of Jews left Russia.

When he finished his short speech and dried his eyes Eliezer announced quietly that he too has good news; that night was the first night of Chanukah!

Spokoyni's eyes widened as though he had heard a message from another world and it was obvious that he was very emotional.

He looked around him to make sure that all the shades were down, went to the corner where there stood a candle stuck into a bottle in the event of a power shortage. He fumbled in his pocket, took out a match and Eliezer quietly said the three blessings as the officer repeated after him word for word and lit the candle.

As he gazed longingly into the flame the tune 'HaNairos HaLalu' quietly came through his lips.

After two days Eliezer and his friends got their permits to leave Russia and arrived in Poland. Several months later he even made it to Israel and today lives in one of the Chabad communities there, surrounded by children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

According to him he heard from reliable sources that Boris Spokoyni eventually was caught, tried and killed by a firing squad. But he succeeded in saving thousands of Jews, or to be more accurate; thousands of families!

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ISSUE 960

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

On the verse, "Remember the Sabbath to sanctify it," Rashi writes: "Take heed to remember the Sabbath constantly, so that if you encounter something special [such as a delicacy, in the course of the week], set it aside for Shabbat." The same applies to the future Redemption, referred to as "the Day which is entirely Sabbath and repose for life everlasting." Even when we are still in the weekdays of the exile, we should constantly keep in mind and prepare for the Redemption. (From a talk of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, 11 Sivan, 5744 - 1984)

# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



25 Sivan, 5712 [1952]

Greetings and Blessings!

I received your letter ... in which you describe the state of your business affairs, your considerable debts, etc. etc. You write further that you have a possibility of selling some of your properties, but that you find yourself unable to decide alone what you should do. Above all, it appears from your letter that you are dispirited, so that as a matter of course your trust in G-d has weakened.

The phrase I just used was "above all." As is stated in our holy sources in general and in the literature of Chassidus in particular, everything depends on bitachon, the attribute of trust. A man's trust is the measuring stick of the extent to which his material affairs are bound and fused with the Creator. If this fusion is complete, it is certainly impossible for anything to be lacking, because in the worlds Above, the concept of lacking is utterly non-existent.

In accordance with your request, I mentioned your name in connection with the fulfillment of your needs when I visited the holy resting place of my revered father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe. That said, since you asked for my advice, I hold that you should focus on toiling on yourself - to fortify your trust in G-d to the greatest extent possible.

In truth, having the attribute of trust means that even if according to the laws of nature one sees no way out, in one's mind it is beyond all doubt that everything will be good, in a way that is actually visible and manifest to fleshly eyes, with regard to having an ample livelihood, sound health, and so on.

From the perspective of the world Above, considerations of nature are quite immaterial. Accordingly, once a person raises himself up and adopts a stance that is even slightly above the ground - that is, he brings himself to the realization that since he is a believing Jew, [he is] utterly certain that there is no master over him but G-d alone - he can draw down [and actualize this certainty] here, too, so that in this physical world, too, considerations of nature will not affect him adversely (G-d forbid).

I firmly hope to G-d that if you will only fortify your trust to the utmost, you will immediately see a change in the Providence which governs your material business affairs and that your situation will begin to improve, and to proceed from good to even better.

In addition, it would be appropriate to immediately begin giving tzedakah (charity) as you used to do, and to increase your accustomed donations at least slightly. I look forward to hearing good news from you on all the above.

With blessings for material success, and may the teaching of the Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism] be fulfilled in your life - that the Holy One, blessed be He, grants Jews materiality, and they transform materiality into spirituality.

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24 Menachem Av, 5713 (1953)

I received your letter and pidyon nefesh (prayer request) and will read it at an auspicious time at the tziyun, the sacred resting place, of my father-in-law, the Rebbe.

I believe I have already written to you that you need to be more careful in guarding your physical health. Thus you are to be strict in following the doctor's orders and not take them lightly, for guarding one's health is also part of our holy Torah and is a mitzvah (commandment) similar to all other mitzvos.

Moreover, there is the well-known saying of the Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad chasidism] (quoted in HaYom Yom, entry for Rosh HaShanah eve): "We have absolutely no conception of how precious a Jew's body is to G-d" - and that which is stated many times in Chassidus needs no further proof [of its veracity].

When some people say that they are "mehadrin," [i.e., they observe mitzvos in the most scrupulous and beautiful manner,] and that is why they are not careful in guarding their health - in truth, such conduct is the very opposite of scrupulous observance.

Conduct yourself in the above manner [of taking care of your health], and G-d will grant you material as well as spiritual good health.

## A WORD from the Director

*When Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, he comforted them with these words:*

*"Don't be upset or angry with yourselves that you sold me to this place, for G-d sent me ahead of you to save your lives..."*

*He then seems to repeat himself by saying: "Now it was not you who sent me here, but G-d. He made me an advisor to Pharaoh, a master over all his household, and a ruler over the entire land of Egypt."*

*Why did Joseph repeat himself?*

*The Rebbe explains that Joseph was actually making two distinct points:*

*The first point is that of survival in exile, and the second point is the ability to flourish in exile. As his name Joseph (increase) suggests, he was not just about maintaining the status-quo; his life was one of continuous growth.*

*The lesson from the above: It is not enough to be a survivor; one must transform the adversity of exile into positive energy, by continuous spiritual growth in the spirit of Chanukah of adding a new light every night. This is how we will usher in the coming of Moshiach and the true and complete Redemption.*

*J.I. Gutnick*

The 10<sup>th</sup> of Tevet (next Friday) is observed as a day of fasting, mourning and repentance, in remembrance of the siege of Jerusalem. We refrain from food and drink from daybreak to nightfall, and add the *Selichot* and other special supplements to our prayers. (More recently, Tevet 10 was chosen to also serve as a "general *kaddish* day" for the victims of the Holocaust, many of whose day of martyrdom is unknown.) An ancient Jewish custom, which was revived by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, is to deliver words of inspiration and arousal to repentance on fast days. This tenth day of Tevet will be transformed to a day of joy with the coming of Moshiach speedily in our days. Amen.

CUSTOMS CORNER

# It Happened Once...



Every day the old water carrier passed the study hall with his pails. Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov ("Master of the Good Name") often stood outside the front door and talked with his disciples. Whenever he saw the water carrier, he interrupted their conversation and would ask him, "Berel, my good man, how are you doing today?" The water carrier would usually offer a polite response, "Baruch Hashem, Thank G-d!" and continue on his way.

But one day the water carrier had a look of melancholy in his face. "Rebbe, it's nice of you to ask a poor man, but how should I feel? Not good! No! Day in and day out I carry these heavy pails. My back hurts, I am getting older, you know... My boots are in tatters, but I have no money for new ones. My family is large. The burden is too much. My children need food, shoes and clothes and... ach, it's too much to even begin talking about... And those new houses at the end of the town want more and more water, and they are built up on the slope of the hill, and the water is so heavy, and I am so tired, so very tired..." And with a sigh he picked up his pails and walked away dragging his feet, with a twisted back and bent shoulders. He did not look back. The Baal Shem Tov said nothing.

A few days later the Baal Shem Tov again stood in front of the synagogue with his students when the water carrier passed by. "Berel, good to see you, how are you today?" The water carrier stood still. He beamed. "Baruch Hashem, Rebbe, I am doing fine. I have work, so I earn money to feed my family. I am blessed, because I have a large family, so many sweet children... I am happy that I can buy them food to eat and pay their teachers. And those new houses they recently built at the hill need a lot of water, that's extra income for me. Baruch Hashem! Thank you for asking a simple man how he is doing. Baruch Hashem, G-d is good to me!"

The Baal Shem Tov smiled and blessed him with some encouraging words. The water carrier lifted his heavy buckets and went joyfully on his way, and the water in his pails reflected the light of the sun.

The Baal Shem Tov's disciples were puzzled. Why was the old water carrier so much happier all of a sudden with his same pair of tattered boots and his same old pails of water?

The Master of the Good Name looked at his disciples and knew what they were thinking. "Did you hear what Berel just said?" he asked them. "He said Baruch Hashem, thank G-d, because he knows that all blessings and everything else comes from G-d. A few days ago he did not seem to remember that, he did not thank G-d for his lot, so he was depressed. Even when things are difficult, there is always so much to be thankful for, so you praise and thank G-d. You acknowledge that all you receive is from G-d and you feel better. Berel's pails are as heavy today as they were a few days ago, and he is still poor, but his perspective

has changed. Now he sees what is important and what is not, and he is very aware of the One who provides him with everything he has. As a result, he is happy and content."

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

**You shall tell my father of all my glory ("kevodi") in Egypt.** (Gen. 45:13)

The literal meaning of "kavod" is heaviness, weight or gravity. In other words, Joseph was asking his brothers to tell their father Jacob that despite his being in the spiritually unclean land of Egypt, he had managed to remain strong and connected to G-d. (*Butzina D'nehora*)

**And he saw all the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him.** (Gen. 45:27)

Rashi comments that with these wagons Joseph alluded to the very last subject in Torah he had learned with his father Jacob before being sold into slavery, that of the eglarufa (beheaded heifer). When Jacob saw the wagons (agalot - the same root word as eglarufa), he realized that his son was sending the message that he had not forgotten all that he had learned with his father so many years ago. We see from this that seemingly insignificant actions of the righteous are fraught with meaning and serve as lessons and examples for those who take heed. (*Maayana Shel Torah*)

**I will go down with you to Egypt; and I will also surely bring you up again.** (Gen. 46:4)

The Jewish people can rest assured they will eventually go out of exile, as the time must ultimately come for G-d to be revealed in the world. The only way this revelation can happen is for the Jewish people to be redeemed and their true advantage revealed in the world. (*Beit HaLevi*)

**Here is seed for you; and you shall sow the land.** (Gen. 47:23)

The righteous Joseph, the spiritual leader of every generation, gives each of us the encouragement and strength we need to worship G-d. But we must not rely solely on that which we receive from the tzadik; we must also sow the seeds we are given. (*The Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

### CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

#### PARSHAS VAYIGASH • 4 TEVET • 11 DECEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:16 PM
	MINCHA:	8:30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9:00 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:32 AM
	MINCHA:	8:15 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:21 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:25 PM
	MAARIV:	9:15 PM
FAST OF 10 TEVET:	FAST BEGINS:	4:13 AM
	MINCHA:	7:00 PM

#### CANDLE LIGHTING: 10 DECEMBER 2010



Begins	Ends
8:16 ..... MELBOURNE .....	9:21
8:03 ..... ADELAIDE .....	9:06
6:17 ..... BRISBANE .....	7:15
6:46 ..... DARWIN .....	7:39
6:17 ..... GOLD COAST .....	7:15
6:56 ..... PERTH .....	7:57
7:40 ..... SYDNEY .....	8:42
7:52 ..... CANBERRA .....	8:55
8:18 ..... LAUNCESTON .....	9:28
8:14 ..... AUCKLAND .....	9:19
8:27 ..... WELLINGTON .....	9:37

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.