

Lamplighter

5 Menachem-Av
Devarim
994
5 August
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah reading, Devarim, is the first portion in the fifth and last book of the Torah, Devarim (Deuteronomy). The entire book was related to the Jewish people in their 40th year in the desert. By that time, the majority of the Jews who had left Egypt were no longer alive; only those who would enter the land of Israel remained. The messages in this book were intended as a preparation to help them make this transition.

Devarim begins by noting the location of the Jews' final encampment before entering Israel. "These are the words that Moses spoke...on this side of the Jordan." At the end of Bamidbar (Numbers), however, this same place is referred to as "the plains of Moab, by the Jordan opposite Jericho."

"The plains of Moab" and "this side of the Jordan" are both names that describe the same physical location. And yet, each name has a different connotation:

"The plains of Moab" identifies the location by its connection to the land of Moab. "This side of the Jordan," by contrast, associates it with the land of Israel, identifying it as lying on the eastern shore of the Jordan river, with the rest of the land of Israel lying toward the west.

What are we to learn from the Torah's usage of two names for the same place? The answer is in the name of each of the two books, Bamidbar (literally "in the desert") and Devarim (meaning "the words"). Bamidbar relates the various encounters and experiences of the Jewish people during their 40 years in the desert, while Devarim, relates Moses' exhortations to the generation that was about to enter Israel, as preparation for the new lives they would be leading there.

At the end of the book of Bamidbar, the site of the Jews' encampment is referred to as "the plains of Moab," as it expressed their connection to a land whose status was non-Jewish territory.

In Devarim, however, it is referred to as "this side of the Jordan," for at that time, the Jewish people were focused on their imminent entry into the land of Israel.

We find ourselves now in the last minutes of exile, poised on the brink of the Final Redemption. Our present era is analogous to the one we read about this week.

"The plains of Moab" is symbolic of the exile and its completion; "this side of the Jordan" is symbolic of our preparation for Moshiach's imminent arrival. Indeed, "this side of the Jordan" is a most appropriate name with which to characterize our present transitional period, for it corresponds to the Jews' heightened state of anticipation in the 40th year of their going out of Egypt.

Moshiach's coming is imminent. We must prepare to greet him. May it happen now.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

How's Your Vision?

By Mendy Herson

What does it mean to be visionary, to have a vision for your life and pursuits?

In a basic sense, this means conceptualizing goals and objectives; it means considering future potential and focusing on a target for growth. It means recognizing that "now" isn't all that there is.

"Now" – disconnected from the future and its possibilities – can be stale and aimless.

"Now" is our reality; but vision can breathe commitment, animation and hope into that reality.

Vision brings optimism and direction; it is the North Star which guides the efforts that actually bring our dream to life.

The problem is that, with the passage of time, it becomes more difficult for the realistic person to continue dreaming. Disappointments eventually take their toll on the human psyche.

Which raises the question: When does one learn to adjust one's expectations and recognize that that dreams are..... just dreams?

Never.

While we should always be acutely aware of reality, warts and all, we can never stop believing in – and working toward – a brighter future.

Consider this: Our Holy Temple, along with our entire Jewish Commonwealth, was destroyed by the Romans almost two thousand years ago.

It's been rough ever since, and we're fully aware of our reality. Every year, on Tisha B'Av, the 9th of Av, we mournfully remember the destruction and recognize the pain of our own times.

Yet, interestingly, the preceding Shabbat is always observed as a "Shabbat of Vision." The Shabbat's reading from the Prophets begins with the words *Chazon Yishayahu*, the "vision of Isaiah" regarding the destruction of the Holy Temple.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, an eighteenth century legendary Chassidic master, taught a deeper reason for the moniker "Shabbat of Vision": Every year, he explained, on the Shabbat before our collective day of mourning, G-d shows us a Vision of the Future. We are shown a vision of a rebuilt Temple, a reconstituted People and better world.

G-d equips us for the mourning by ensuring that hope – the Vision – never dies; this Shabbat ensures that our sobering recognition of "now" doesn't smother our hope for the future.

I can't see this Divinely-granted vision with my physical eyes; but if G-d's showing it to me, it must be resonating somewhere in my soul.

So this Shabbat, I'll prepare to tackle reality on Tisha B'Av by first searching myself to find G-d's vision of a beautiful future.

Will you join me?



Greece Riots - Chabad Smiles

Greece was not a good place to be. Riots filled the streets, angry, violent mobs with grievances to the government set to the streets, destroyed property, set fires, battled the police and bedlam reigned.

Vacationers shunned the place, trips, hotel reservations and plane tickets were cancelled but for Rabbi Yoel Kaplan, the Chabad Representative in Sloniki, Greece it was just another challenge.

Rabbi Kaplan thrived on the unusual. His home, like all the thousands of Chabad Houses throughout the world, was open to the public 24/7 with the hope of helping Jews and Judaism... and that required expecting the unexpected.

In the days of the rioting there was nothing to do there. And even weeks after the rioting signs of vandalism were everywhere and tension filled the air but the Rabbi tried to resume his normal activities.

It wasn't easy; there were no tourists, certainly no Jewish tourists and after all the violence it seemed wise to just stay indoors for a few more weeks but the Rabbi had a job to do... there must be some Jews out there and then there were some things that were pressing like going to the post office daily.

But even such a seemingly simple task was fraught with danger. The post office was located in a part of downtown that was a youth hangout and had been hit the hardest by violence.

There were days that he took side roads to get there and used the back entrance, which meant a serious detour and time loss, just to avoid trouble.

But one day he was running late and forgot to worry for trouble. He headed straight for the post office but as he neared his goal he began to regret it. A group of ten or so healthy looking fellows, some of them with tattooed arms, punk hairdos and other bizarre and frightening body signs were staring at him with hatred in their eyes. His full beard, black hat, long black coat and entire Jewish demeanour were like a red flag before a maddened bull and he was a sitting duck for their frustrations.

He should have turned back, taken an alternate route and avoided them but something told him to just keep walking. From afar he heard the curses they directed at him first in Greek then, because they knew he spoke English, in English; all of them anti-Semitic.

He had experienced Greek anti-Semitism before. Usually he just ignored it but for some reason this time he glanced up, raised one hand and, as he got closer, said in as friendly a tone as possible "Hello, good morning!"

"Someone talking to you?!" the biggest of them replied sarcastically as the others got ready for some action.

Suddenly the Rabbi realized something. Just like Abraham, the first Jew, some 4,000 years earlier was alone in his quest to bring meaning into a hostile world, but trusted G-d to protect him (therefore we pray to 'The Shield of Abraham') so this same 'G-d of Abraham' would protect him now.

He smiled and said, "Maybe you weren't talking to me... but you certainly are talking about my people."

"That's right Jew!" The young man replied with burning venom laced with terms not fit to print, "About your cursed nation of thieves, liars and cheaters we certainly were talking. And we'll keep talking until you are exterminated etc."

The smile did not depart from Rabbi Kaplan's face as he calmly replied, "You look like intelligent people. You have no reason to hate me or any other Jew. In fact, if you knew the truth I'm sure you wouldn't treat any of us badly."

This was too much for the 'leader'. He was livid with anger as he made a fist, held it before the Rabbi's face and said, "I'm a trained boxer. Unless you want to taste a few of these you'd better get away as fast and far as possible and don't come back!"

Rabbi Kaplan realized that things were about to get out of hand, so he calmly turned to the others, blessed them warmly with a good day and good news and continued on to the post office.

But after he finished his business there and left the building something told him not to take a detour back home, rather to return the same way he came... through the crowd.

After all, he was only here to do good; the same G-d of Abraham that protected before would protect him now.

But this time when he passed the group something unexpected happened, they were quiet. He again blessed them with a good day and all of them answered "Same to you."

He continued walking and the 'boxer' that had threatened him previously approached him and stuck out his hand. "I want to apologize for what we said before. We thought about it and decided that you are right. We really know nothing about the Jews. Must be that we were affected by the media or what people say."

The Rabbi shook his hand, smiled and said. "Apology accepted. The fact is you should never judge anyone before knowing them and for sure you shouldn't hate anyone just because of their opinions. Here" Said Rabbi Kaplan as he took a calling card from his wallet and handed it to the 'boxer', "if you ever want to talk over a cup of coffee ... on me!"

If the Rabbi had doubts about talking to these people in the first place all of them melted away. Finally he would have a chance to dispel some of the hatred in the streets and maybe convince some of those fellows to live better lives.

A few days later he got a phone call. "Hey Rabbi, my name is Alexandros - remember me? I'm the fellow you gave your card to the other day. Were you serious about that cup of coffee? If so, I'm right outside your house."

Rabbi Kaplan was pleasantly surprised and in just moments he was introducing Alexandros to his wife and children. But then they sat down and the conversation began. His visitor had good questions and was a great listener but eventually, at the third or fourth cup of coffee, when the topic of 'Who is a Jew' came up and the Rabbi explained that only someone with a Jewish mother, or genuinely converts to Judaism, is considered a Jew, Alexandros got serious and began making interesting calculations.

He announced that his maternal grandmother had told him that she had once been Jewish!

Indeed, she had been an observant Jewess but in the war, after her husband and children were murdered by the invading Germans she ran and hid in the mountains for several years and, a few years later left Judaism and married a gentile. He figured that if she left that she was no longer a Jew. But the Rabbi set him straight.

Anyway, his grandmother then gave birth to a baby girl who later grew up married a religious Greek Orthodox man and become the mother of Alexandros! His mother.

Alex discovered that he himself was Jewish. He even took the Rabbi to visit his aged grandmother where she agreed to put a Mezuzah on her home and he agreed to put on Tefillin every day.

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ISSUE 994

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Our current "reality" is a dream, while the world of Moshiach is the true reality. In a single moment, we can all wake up from the dream of exile and open our eyes to the true reality of our existence - the perfect world of Moshiach. Everyone can immediately awaken himself from his dream, so that today, before we even say the afternoon prayers, in fact this very moment, we all open our eyes and see Moshiach, in the flesh, with us, here. (The Rebbe, Parshat Pinchas, 1984)

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



What Ought a Hungry Person Do First?

By the Grace of G-d
20th of Kislev, 5736 [November 24th, 1975]
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Rosh Chodesh Kislev [November 5th, 1975].

I was pleased to note your determination to advance in matters of Yiddishkeit [Judaism], in actual commitment as well as in gaining more knowledge. There is the assurance of our Sages that "He who is determined to purify himself, receives help from On High," and "A person sanctifies himself a little here on earth, and he is sanctified a great deal from Above." If even a "little" sanctification brings forth a great deal from Above, how much more so more than a little.

I trust that you are maintaining contact with the Lubavitch people in [...], who will surely be glad to help you in every way possible.

I would like to add a few words in connection with greater "awareness" which you mention in your letter – a point which my saintly father-in-law often emphasized by the following illustration: When a person is hungry or thirsty and desires to know how food and beverages satisfies hunger and thirst, the way to go about it is to actually begin eating and drinking to still his hunger and thirst, which will also enable him to better and more quickly understand the process of digestion. If he should attempt to reverse the order, and try to understand the process of digestion first, he will not have the mind or heart to understand it, and may never understand it. At first glance, it may seem puzzling how such physical things as food and drink can nourish and cultivate the mind. But the fact is indisputable. If this is so in the physical aspect of life, it is certainly so in the spiritual aspect of life. In order to develop a greater awareness and sensitivity and appreciation of Torah and Mitzvoth [its commandments], the first thing is to satisfy the hunger and thirst of the Neshama [soul] through the *actual* performance of the Mitzvoth in the daily life. If a Jew is in such a state that he does not even feel the pangs of hunger and thirst for Yiddishkeit, this makes it even more vital for him to begin with the actual observance of the daily Mitzvoth.

As usual, our Sages of blessed memory express the above in a few concise words, when they emphasized that the Torah was accepted by the Jewish people on the principle of *Nasseh v'Nishma*, putting Naaseh (we will do) *before* v'Nishma (we will understand).

At this time, before Chanukah, I send you prayerful wishes for a bright and inspiring Chanukah, and may all things go with you in a manner of "increasing the light," in accordance with the message of the Chanukah lights which are kindled in growing numbers from day to day.

With blessing,
M. Schneerson

A WORD from the Director

This Shabbat, the Sabbath before Tisha B'Av, (the fast of the 9th of Av) is known as Shabbat Chazon. The saintly Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev used to point out that the name Shabbat Chazon is from the word machazeh, meaning "vision," for "on that day everyone is shown a vision of the future Holy Temple."

What is the point of this vision? It is to inspire a Jew and encourage him: having caught a glimpse of the Third Holy Temple in all its heavenly perfection, all that is left for him to do is to bring it down to this world.

But surely not everyone "sees" this vision to the same extent! Some great people literally see a vision with their fleshly eyes, but as for others? So then, what is the point?

The Rebbe explains that this situation can be compared to an episode that took place to the Biblical Daniel. "I Daniel alone saw the vision [of a fearsome man]; the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them...."

Our Sages ask: "If they did not see the apparition, why the dread?"

And they answer: "Though they did not see it, their souls saw it."

In the same way, on Shabbat Chazon, the soul does see the future Holy Temple; moreover, this perception leaves an imprint on the individual, on his body and on his soul.

The question has similarly been asked: What is the point of the proclamations of Heavenly voices of which the Sages sometimes speak? Who hears them?

Chasidic teachings explain as above, that the transcendent Mazal hears the voice, and relays it soundlessly into the nether reaches of the soul that are garbed in the body.

J.I. Gutnick

The mourning laws of Tishah b'Av are relaxed after midday

As part of our mourning for the destruction of the Temple and the exile of Israel, we abstain from many pleasurable activities on the night and day of Av 9—starting with sundown on the eve of the day before, and concluding with the following nightfall.

Indeed, after midday of Tishah b'Av some of the restrictions are lifted.

Several examples:

- If one must go to work on Tishah b'Av, it should preferably be delayed until after midday.
- Tallit and Tefillin are worn during the afternoon prayers — instead of the customary morning.

• One may not sit on a normal-height chair on Tishah b'Av until midday.

Interestingly, this is because according to the Midrash, The birth of Moshiach occurred on the afternoon of Tishah b'Av. According to the writings of the Arizal, this is why the Nachem prayer is inserted into the Tishah b'Av Minchah service — "because then, Tishah b'Av afternoon, was born the Moshiach, whose name is 'Menachem'." ("Menachem" and "Nachem" are variations of the word "nechamah", consolation.)

CUSTOMS CORNER

It Happened Once...



The townsfolk of Nikolsburg were not Chasidim, and they disapproved of the seemingly odd behaviour of their communal rabbi, Rabbi Shmuel-Shmelke Horowitz, who was a Chassidic Rebbe. The most prominent burghers therefore called a meeting, decided to dismiss him, and instructed the synagogue attendant to inform the rabbi of their decision.

This *shammes* (synagogue attendant), who was a simple fellow, but honest and upright, asked them why they had suddenly decided to do such a thing.

"It is no business of yours," they told him brusquely. "Your job is to do as you're told."

But since the *shammes* pressed for an answer to his question, they told him simply that Rabbi Shmelke's odd behaviour made him unfit for the post of rabbi.

The *shammes* was insistent: "I know for a fact that our rabbi is a perfect *Tzaddik* (righteous man)."

His employers knew their *shammes* to be a truthful man, so they asked him: "How do you know that he is a *Tzaddik*?"

"Very well," he answered. "As you know, it is the custom in this city for someone to knock on the doors of all the Jewish townsfolk before dawn, to wake everyone up for the morning service of the Creator. And as the synagogue attendant, that task became mine. Every night I go a-knocking on my rounds. When I come to the rabbi's house, I usually drop in, and I always find him sitting up studying Torah; and next to him sits another man, whom I don't know. Well, one day I asked him who it was. He told me that it was Elyahu the Prophet, of blessed memory.

"One morning it happened that for some reason I came around later than usual, and saw the rabbi at the door of his house, holding two candlesticks. Two men were with him — one was the one I see there always, and the other wore a golden crown. The two men left and went their way, and the rabbi went back inside. I asked him who was the visitor with the crown of gold, and he told me that it was Menashe ben Chizkiyahu, king of Judah.

"When I asked the rabbi what business brought Menashe ben Chizkiyahu to his home, he explained that he was concerned regarding the outcome of a *Halachic* query that a certain rabbi had sent our rabbi that very day.

"He told me that in the city of that other rabbi there lived a Chassid, who had taken it upon himself to smash all of the icons and crucifixes in the local church. He was handed over to the courts, sentenced to death, and hanged. That city has a welfare brotherhood, whose task it is to give financial support to poor widows whose husbands have left them penniless.

"But when the widow of this poor Chassid came to them, and asked them for a little money, they refused, because they claim that their regulations only allow them to support the widows of men who have died a natural death, not the widows of men who have committed suicide — and they say her husband, by doing what he did, was such a man. Their dispute came up for adjudication by their local rabbi, and he referred the question to the rabbi of Nikolsburg.

"He said that he was in two minds over the whole business, when all of a sudden along came Menashe ben Chizkiyahu, and told him that he had been reincarnated in that very Chassid, in order that he should be able to set right the evil that he had done in his earlier life, when he had set up an image in the Temple. So he had come to ask our rabbi to see that the poor widow of that Chassid should get her due."

Lamplighter

Issue 1,000

With G-d's help, we will be publishing our **1,000th issue of the Lamplighter.**

We are preparing a special expanded edition.

We would be pleased to receive from you, our dear readers, your feelings, greetings and thoughts about our publication, which will be included in that special edition. Please write how you use this publication and how it may have influenced you in your spiritual journey. Please include any anecdotes in which the Lamplighter has played a role in changing the lives of your friends and acquaintances.

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CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS DEVARIM • 6 MENACHEM AV • 6 AUGUST

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:17 PM
	MINCHA:	5:25 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:55 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:51 AM
	MINCHA:	5:15 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:17 PM
EVE OF FAST OF NINTH OF AV • MONDAY AUGUST 8:	MINCHA:	4:00 PM
	FAST BEGINS:	5:38 PM
	MAARIV:	6:15 PM
FAST OF NINTH OF AV • TUESDAY AUGUST 9:	SHACHARIS:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	4:30 PM
	MAARIV:	6:06 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:25 PM
	MAARIV:	6:15 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 5 AUGUST 2011



Begins	Ends
5:17 MELBOURNE	6:17
5:18 ADELAIDE	6:16
5:03 BRISBANE	5:58
6:23 DARWIN	7:14
5:01 GOLD COAST	5:55
5:25 PERTH	6:21
5:00 SYDNEY	5:57
5:05 CANBERRA	6:04
5:01 LAUNCESTON	6:03
5:20 AUCKLAND	6:19
5:11 WELLINGTON	6:13
4:57 HOBART	6:00

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.