



L'Chaim

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Living with the Rebbe



"I will give this people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians, and when you depart, you will not go empty," G-d tells Moses in our Torah portion, Shemos.

According to the Midrash, G-d promised that the Egyptians would willingly pay the departing Jews with gifts of gold and silver "so that Abraham would not be able to claim that G-d had fulfilled the first part of the covenant - 'and they will be enslaved and tortured' - but not the second part - 'and afterward they will leave with great wealth.'"

This explanation, however, is insufficient. How could this be the only reason G-d fulfilled His promise? Doesn't G-d fulfill His promises all the time, as it states, "For G-d is not a man who tells falsehoods"?

To explain:

The huge amount of gold and silver that was given to the Jews just prior to the Exodus served a dual purpose: to punish the Egyptians for their cruelty, and to reward the Jews for their 210 years of suffering. But which one of these was the primary purpose - reward or punishment?

Was the benefit derived by the Jewish people secondary to the main objective of punishing the Egyptians, or was their enrichment the primary goal, and the loss it represented to the Egyptians only secondary?

The Talmud relates that in the time of Alexander the Great, the Egyptians demanded that the Jews return the riches they had acquired generations before.

The response of Geviha ben Pesisa, the leader of the Jews, was that the gold and silver rightfully belonged to the Jews as "the wages of the six hundred thousand whom you enslaved in Egypt."

This answer provides us insight into why it was necessary that the Jews "find favor in the eyes of the Egyptians," and why Abraham's potential claim had to be refuted:

For there to be the fullest measure of justice, G-d wanted the Jewish people to be rewarded in the same open manner as Abraham's service was conducted in the world.

Just as all mankind was witness to the Jewish people's enslavement, so too was it necessary for the entire world to see the Egyptians making reparations of their own free will.

Chasidic philosophy explains that the inner meaning of the "great wealth" that was taken by the Jews when they left consisted of the "sparks of G-dliness" that were hidden in Egypt. The service of the Jewish people enabled these sparks to be redeemed and restored to their G-dly source above.

Nonetheless, the primary objective of the entire experience in Egypt was the betterment of the Jews themselves, whereas the elevation of the sparks was only secondary. For the inner purpose of the exile was the spiritual elevation that was achieved thereby, the main reason for the Jews' going into exile in the first place.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot of the Rebbe, Vol. 21

Parade

Everyone loves a parade. We don't need much of an excuse to celebrate. The Fourth of July? Have a parade. Your team just won a championship? Have a parade. A dignitary is coming to town? Have a parade.

There's nothing quite like a parade to stir the hearts, to instill a sense of pride - be it for country, team, organization, whatever. The rousing music, the colorful floats, the marchers so well choreographed, the specialty acts - parades gather a community together, makes it feel unified and triumphant.

We have Jewish parades, too. On Purim, Lag B'Omer, even Chanuka. And these stir our Jewish pride, raise our Jewish awareness, increase our Jewish identity and association with things Jewish.

So parades are good things, and Jewish parades are really good things. But what is it about parades? What makes them special? We have other gatherings, other rallies, other ways of expression our enthusiasm, celebrating our victories, etc. But everyone will agree, there's something special about a parade.

If we think about it, we'll realize that two things separate a parade from a rally or party or other form of celebration. One is that a parade is always moving, and the other is that the leader is always in front.

At a rally, or a party, or a circus, or any other gathering, the leader is either in the center or opposite everyone else, like on a stage. So even when everyone else is a participant - not just an audience watching, but engaged in the rally - there's a difference between what the leader's doing and what everyone else is doing.

And so you might think you're part of the action when you're not, or vice versa.

But in a parade, you can't make that mistake. You're either in the parade, or you're watching the parade go by. (And most of us, if it's a really good parade, don't want to just stand and watch. We want to get in line and march along, even if we have to join in at the end.)

And you can't make that mistake because if you're in the parade, you've got to play "follow-the-leader." The leader is always out in front, and the parade goes where he wants it to. You can't be opposite the leader of a parade; you have to be behind him.

The other unique thing about a parade is that it's always moving forward. Oh, it may pause for a rest, but it's a temporary pause - like the encampments of the Jewish people in Sinai on their way to Israel. Unlike some other gatherings, whose beginning, middle and end may not be well-defined, a parade always starts in a specific place and proceeds, even if the route's a bit crooked sometimes, to a definite end and well known destination.

And, in a spiritual sense, that's why everyone loves a parade. Because we are part of the great march of Jewish history. The Leader of the parade is, of course, G-d - it is His pathway and route that we follow.

But isn't it exciting knowing that, even if we are the last "float" in the parade, we're part of it and we're nearing the finish, the end of the parade route, the time when "the whole world will be filled with knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean bed"?

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SHABBOS MEVORCHIM SHEVAT

Parshas Va'eira
24 January - Teves 28

To take place following
Musaf at 10:00am
Tehillim 8:15am

at The Yeshiva Centre
36 Flood Street, Bondi

RSVP info@yeshiva.org.au



A Thought that Counts

And depart (lit. "go up") out of the land (Ex. 1:10) It is only when the Jewish people reach their lowest level that their ascendancy begins, alluded to in this verse: The Jews will "go up" when they have fallen to the level of "land," the earth, upon which everyone treads. King David voiced a similar sentiment in the Psalms when he said, "For our soul is as low as the dust, our bellies have cleaved to the earth," only to immediately declare, "Rise up and help us, and redeem us for the sake of Your graciousness."

(Medrash Tanchuma)

Parsha in a Nutshell

The Children of Israel multiply in Egypt. Threatened by their growing numbers, Pharaoh enslaves them and orders the Hebrew midwives, Shifrah and Puah, to kill all male babies at birth. When they do not comply, he commands his people to cast the Hebrew babies into the Nile.

A child is born to Jocheved, the daughter of Levi, and her husband, Amram, and placed in a basket on the river, while the baby's sister, Miriam, stands watch from afar. Pharaoh's daughter discovers the boy, raises him as her son, and names him Moses.

As a young man, Moses leaves the palace and discovers the hardship of his brethren. He sees an Egyptian beating a Hebrew and kills the Egyptian. The next day he sees two Jews fighting; when he admonishes them, they reveal his deed of the previous day, and Moses is forced to flee to Midian. There he rescues Jethro's daughters, marries one of them - Zipporah - and becomes a shepherd of his father-in-law's flocks.

G-d appears to Moses in a burning bush at the foot of Mount Sinai and instructs him to go to Pharaoh and demand: "Let My people go, so that they may serve Me." Moses' brother, Aaron, is appointed to serve as his spokesman. In Egypt, Moses and Aaron assemble the elders of Israel to tell them that the time of their redemption has come. The people believe; but Pharaoh refuses to let them go, and even intensifies the suffering of Israel.

Moses returns to G-d to protest: "Why have You done evil to this people?" G-d promises that the redemption is close at hand.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN AND SPIRITUAL LEADER



The yahrzeit of Rabbi Moses Maimonides, known as the Rambam, is 20 Tevet (coinciding with Friday, January 16 this year). On numerous occasions, the Rebbe discussed the connection between the Rambam, his magnum opus Mishna Torah, and the Redemption.

"The name Rambam is an acronym for the Hebrew words meaning, 'I will multiply My wonders in the land of Egypt,' an allusion to the wonders associated with Redemption. Similarly, the Rambam's spiritual service involved giving Jews in Egypt - in the night of exile - a foretaste of the Redemption.

"Firstly, he lived in Egypt and it was there that he composed his magnum opus, the Mishna Torah. As he explains in his introduction, the Mishna Torah was composed because of the difficulties of exile, because the Jews were unable to derive halachic rulings from the Talmud and needed an auxiliary source.

"Nevertheless, the text that the Rambam composed gave the Jews a foretaste of the Redemption - reflected in the fact that it includes laws which will only be relevant in the Era of the Redemption when the Holy Temple will be rebuilt, and in the conclusion of the text which focuses directly on the Era of the Redemption.

"Since on the yahrzeit of a tzadik, 'the totality of his deeds, teachings, and service is revealed and...' "brings about salvation in the depths of the earth," ' it follows that the Rambam's yahrzeit grants us further potential to anticipate the Redemption.

"This particularly relevant in the present age when the Jewish people have completed the service required of them in exile. Everything is ready for the Redemption - all that is lacking is for G-d to open our eyes and allow us to realize that we are sitting at the feast of the Redemption

The Rebbe concluded: "As a catalyst for this, we must reflect an attitude of Redemption in our lives, showing how even within the exile, we can experience Redemption."

Pinchus Feldman

Rabbi Pinchus Feldman OAM

Smile its Friday - A young Jewish mother walks her son to the school bus on his first day of kindergarten. "Please behave, my bubaleh," she says. "Take good care of yourself and think about your mother who is waiting for you, tataleh!" "And come right back home on the bus, my shepseleh." "Remember, your Mommy loves you a lot, my ketzeleh!" At the end of the school day, the bus returns. She runs to her son and hugs him. "So what did the love of my life learn on his first day of school?" she asks. "I learned my name is David," is the boy's response.

Torah on Board by Mina Gordon

It was the night before Rosh Hashana. My teenage son Mendel was excited but a bit apprehensive. He was scheduled to fly from Melbourne to Adelaide, a one-hour flight, to help Rabbi Yossi Engel for the High Holidays. This was the first time he would be going to Adelaide, and he was asked to bring a Torah scroll. "Ma," he asked, "what if the airline gives me trouble about taking the Torah on the plane? I've heard that they've become very strict lately. I don't want to have to send it with the luggage."

I tried to reassure him. I reminded him of the time his father had taken a Torah scroll to Tasmania, and how the non-Jewish man sitting next to him on the plane was so excited to see the Torah that he offered to drive him wherever he wished to go upon landing.

"But that was years ago, before all these security regulations. I've been told that the airline might give me a hard time."

There wasn't much I could answer, so I wished him success and reminded him that he was acting as the Rebbe's emissary and that he had the Rebbe's blessings.

The next afternoon, in the midst of a flurry of preparations for Rosh Hashana, Mendel called to tell me how things had gone.

"You won't believe what happened. As I walked through the airport, people came over to kiss the Torah and wish me a 'Shana Tova' (a good year). When I got to the gate, however, the Qantas airline employee asked if I was planning on carrying that large item into the cabin. She wanted it to go underneath with the luggage. I explained that this is a very holy object, and I must carry it on board with me. She said that she's not sure if this could be allowed.

"I waited to see what would happen, knowing I had tried my best and the rest was in G-d's Hands. A few minutes later she called me over. 'Go down the corridor and through that door. Someone wants to talk to you.' A man in a pilot's uniform was waiting for me. I wondered what would happen next. The pilot looked at me and looked at

the precious Torah in my hands, and gave me a big grin. 'Shana Tova!' he said, 'I'm Mordechai. Shall we put the Torah in the cockpit next to my tefilin?'"

It turned out that Mordechai, a.k.a. Captain Mark DiVeroli, probably the only commercial pilot in Australia who flies with his talit and tefilin next to him, just "happened" to be flying the plane my son was taking.

Even though Mordechai offered to keep the Torah in the cockpit, Mendel preferred to hold it for the duration of the flight or keep it next to him. Mordechai agreed, and arranged for Mendel to have a spare seat next to him for the Torah. After landing, the pilot told Mendel that he'd be back in Melbourne in time for Rosh Hashana, and that he would be at the shul of Rabbi Motty Liberow, the Chabad Rabbi of Hamerkaz Shelanu Community.

Mordechai also told him that he usually stays in the cockpit before the flight, and for some reason this time decided to walk over to the galley, where he heard the cabin crew talking about the Jewish boy who wanted to bring a large holy object onto the plane. "If I had stayed up front as I usually do, I would not have known about it," he said, "and I could not have helped."

"Well," I thought to myself, "G-d has a way of sending us little love notes to let us know that He is always with us. I must share this."

As soon as I finished speaking to my son, I called Dini Liberow and told her what had happened. The pilot was a more than a bit surprised when Rabbi Liberow told the story to his congregation that Rosh Hashana, and then pointed to Mordechai, sitting among them, as the hero of the story.

After Mendel came back to Melbourne, he kept in touch with Mordechai the pilot. Before Chanuka, he called him to ask if he wanted a menorah sign for his car. Mordechai was happy to comply. "I was actually involved many years

ago in the Rebbe's menorah campaign," he said. "I used to live in Adelaide, working for a small airline company. I had always dreamed of getting a job with a large commercial airlines like Qantas, but I never managed to get an interview.

"One year, about 20 years ago, a yeshiva student came to Adelaide to put up a public menorah. The student needed someone to help him out, and as I always had my day off on Wednesdays, I was happy to volunteer. I didn't know much about Chabad or the Rebbe, but it sounded like a nice idea for a place like Adelaide. I mentioned to my boss that I was planning to help put up a public menorah on Wednesday, my day off. 'Don't count on it,' he said, 'I want you to come in to work this Wednesday.'

" 'But I made a commitment, because I always have Wednesdays off!' I pleaded.

" 'If you don't come in on Wednesday, then don't come in on Thursday, either,' he said.

"I helped the student install the menorah on Wednesday, and went to work on Thursday. 'What? You're here? I told you not to come in if you miss Wednesday.' And I was fired.

"I wasn't very happy about losing my job, but wanting to make the best of it, I called the student, and offered to help out some more, as now I had plenty of time on my hands. The student really felt bad about my situation, and immediately asked me for my full Hebrew name and my mother's name. He sent a fax to the Rebbe's office asking for a blessing for a job for me. A little while later he told me, 'Don't worry, you've got a blessing from the Rebbe; it will all work out.' Shortly afterwards, I received a totally unexpected phone call. Qantas airlines wanted me to come in for a job interview. Thanks to the Rebbe's blessing, I landed the job that I had always wanted!"

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Moshiach

ma t t e r s

At the end of the exile, the negative forces that reject the existence of G-d are strengthened (the "klipa" of Apikorsus). That is what the prophets meant when they foretold a war between Gog and Magog, a battle over the reality of G-d's presence on earth.

(Keter Shem Tov Hosafot 400)

It Happened Once

This coming Tuesday is 24 Tevet, the anniversary of the passing of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism.

Anticipating Napoleon's evil designs to attack and conquer Russia, Rabbi Shneur Zalman (the first Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch, known as the Alter Rebbe), instructed his family to be ready to flee at a moment's notice.

The famous spiritual mentor, Rav Shmuel Gronem, noted: "The Alter Rebbe said, 'Napoleon is a very powerful evil force, and I fear that I will have to have self-sacrifice in order to humble him.'"

Secretly the Alter Rebbe instructed his Chasidim to spy against Napoleon's army. The Alter Rebbe wanted nothing less than a total collapse of Napoleon's power.

In his eyes, the French leader was the greatest threat to the heart and soul of Judaism. Behind his abolishing the restrictions that existed was a veil hiding his true intentions. What Napoleon wanted to accomplish with his revolution was a refusal to accept any authority, which in turn would weaken religious adherence.

For this reason, the Alter Rebbe refused to live in Napoleon's conquered domain for even a short period of time. When he heard of the approach of the French army he fled with his entire family, assisted by the Russian forces.

The Alter Rebbe insisted that every possession of his be removed from his house, no matter how insignificant; he then gave instructions that his house be burned down. Some say that the Alter Rebbe had reason to believe that Napoleon engaged in sorcery, and so he took stringent precautions that none of his things would fall into Napoleon's hands.

The rapid advance of Napoleon's army made it impossible for the Alter Rebbe to rest, and he was forced to constantly be on the run. His hope was to reach the Jewish community of Poltava before Rosh Hashana.

In his diary, the Alter Rebbe's son and successor, Reb Dovber, wrote: "On the eve of Rosh Hashana my father, the Alter Rebbe, confided to me, 'I am extremely pained and worried about the battle of Mazaisk [known as the battle of Borodino], since the enemy is becoming stronger, and I believe he [Napoleon] is also going to conquer Moscow.' He then wept bitterly, with tears streaming down his face.

"On Rosh Hashana, my father again called me to him and

happily told me the sweet and comforting news: 'Today, during my prayers, I had a vision that the tide has changed for the better and our side will win. Although Napoleon will capture Moscow, he will eventually lose the war. This is what was written today in Heaven.'"

With the rout of Napoleon's army, the Alter Rebbe could proceed toward Poltava. On Friday, the eighth of Tevet, the entourage arrived in the city of Piena. As soon as he arrived there the Alter Rebbe changed his plans. He began organizing a relief campaign to aid all Jews who had been affected by the war, sending out emissaries to raise funds and organize and coordinate efforts.

No one could foresee the rapid deterioration of the Alter Rebbe's health. As the Rebbe for many thousands of Chasidim, the Alter Rebbe finally paid the heavy price of worrying about the sufferings of the Jewish community, the difficult traveling conditions (especially for someone of advanced years) in an unusually cold winter and his anguish in general about Napoleon's influence and effect on the Jewish nation. On Monday, the 18th of Tevet, he became bedridden.

Five days later, on Saturday night, the 24th of Tevet, he wrote a note stating that one of the main purposes of a soul's descent into this world (in addition to Torah study) is to do a favor for another Jew in whatever way possible. A short while after writing this he passed away.

Rabbi Dovber noted that in one of the greatest acts of self-sacrifice, the Alter Rebbe put his own life in mortal danger against the evil ways of Napoleon.

Indeed, the Alter Rebbe's ill-fated prophecy about Napoleon came to be, for the humbled last remnants of Napoleon's army retreated from Russia the exact time of the Alter Rebbe's passing.

Shortly before his passing, the Alter Rebbe said: "Anyone who will hold on to my door handle, I will do him a favor in this world and the World to Come."

The third Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch, the Tzemach Tzedek, explained that "my door handle" does not merely mean studying the Chasidic teachings of the Alter Rebe, but also practicing ahavat Yisrael (love of a fellow Jew) - in this manner one must also follow the Alter Rebbe.

Excerpted from "Dates in Lubavitch" by Rabbi Sholom D. Avtzon



Candle Lighting Times Friday 20 January 2009

City	In	Out
Sydney	7:51pm	8:51pm
Brisbane	6:30pm	7:26pm
Surfers Par	6:29pm	7:26pm
Melbourne	8:26pm	9:29pm

Dedicated in honour of
the Shloshim of
Rabbi Menachem Mendel Hacoen Feldman Z"l

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