

L'Chaim

The Yeshiva Centre – Chabad NSW Headquarters

WWW.YESHIVA.ORG.AU

Living with the Rebbe



This week's Torah portion, Va'eira, contains the four expressions of redemption: "vehotzeiti - and I will take you out," "vehitzalti - and I will save you," "vega'alti - and I will redeem you," "velakachti - and I will bring you."

Each one of these terms refers to a different historical exile, of which there have been four. (Our present exile, the fourth, is the final exile after which there will be no others.) "And I will take you out" refers to the Jewish people's redemption from Egypt, and so on with each of the above phrases.

Va'eira contains an additional expression, "veheiveiti - and I will bring you to the good land." This fifth term of redemption alludes to the Final Redemption with Moshiach.

In this week's Torah portion G-d promises to bring us the ultimate Redemption. Whenever G-d promises to do something good, He never reconsiders his decision or regrets it. G-d has willed that a good thing can never be nullified. His promise to redeem us can therefore never be abrogated, G-d forbid. It is axiomatic that the Holy One, Blessed Be He, must fulfill His promise to bring Moshiach.

According to halacha (Jewish law), if a person sets a fire and the fire spreads, the one who set it is responsible for any damage it causes. Even if he did not intend for the fire to spread in that direction, he is obligated to reimburse anyone who incurs a loss. The very act of lighting the fire causes him to assume responsibility, even before any damage has occurred.

If halacha mandates this level of responsibility when it comes to loss or injury, how much more so does this hold true when it comes to good! Consequently, the full and complete Redemption is already in existence, even before it has completely come about. The Redemption exists even now; all that is necessary is that it be revealed to us.

Recognizing that the Redemption already exists, and that all that is missing is the stage of revelation, makes it easier for us to contend with the exile's difficulties and overcome its trials and tribulations, especially in recent generations.

We must never allow ourselves to be overpowered by the exile. Rather, we must continue to act with the power of holiness, which will cause all of the exile's concealments and difficulties to disappear. In this manner we will merit to see the Redemption with eyes of flesh, speedily in our day.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Volume 1

Inauguration

Regardless of how one voted (or would have voted), most people recognize the historical significance of the inauguration of Barack Obama as president of the United States. Much will be written about the pressures and expectations, even if the United States wasn't in the middle of multiple crises. Many a pundit will have much to say about perspective, comparisons and who knows what else.

But all that comes after the inauguration, and right now, we want to look at the inauguration. It's a capital event (pun intended), complete with pageantry, formality, a speech, and a party.

Sort of like a Bar or Bat Mitzva. Because if we consider what an inauguration is, what the word means, we'll see that there's a lesson to be learned from the majestic performance, from the grandeur and the ceremony.

An inauguration is of course a "ceremonial induction," a formal transference, or commencement, of power and responsibility. The inauguration is itself the first act, the beginning of a new operation, or course of action.

So the parallel to a Bar/Bat Mitzva is obvious. That's when a Jewish boy or girl becomes "formally inducted" into being Jewishly responsible, when they have to keep mitzvot (command-ments). Prior to that, it was a "training exercise." Bar or Bat Mitzva is "a new course of action," when more, not less, Torah study is expected.

We can make an easy analogy, therefore, between the inauguration of Barack Obama - symbolic, significant, transformative - and the inauguration of a Jewish boy or girl into a life of Torah and mitzvot - more than symbolic, certainly significant, definitely transformative.

That's the easy analogy, and the parallels of promise and potential are obvious. But there's another parallel, one that's a bit more subtle. For that, we have to go back to the catch-phrase of another inauguration - it's morning again. (That was Reagan's.)

Because Judaism sees inauguration not as a once-in-a-lifetime, or even a once-in-a-while event, a ceremony or celebration that occurs rarely; all that pomp and extravagance - one can afford to be lavish for a one-time event, maybe. But every day?

Judaism teaches us that every day is an "inauguration," a new beginning, the start of a new course of action, and the commencement of a new responsibility.

The new course of action is creation itself. For creation is created anew, "inaugurated," every day. Indeed, every moment, as the prayer book says: "... in His goodness He renews each day, continuously, the work of Creation."

But it is not Creation alone that is inaugurated each day, each moment.

Every Jew, as a Jew, is inaugurated each morning, as his or her soul returns. This, in a sense, is the meaning of the Modeh Ani - the prayer we say upon first awakening in the morning: "I offer thanks to You, living and eternal King, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great."

So the question becomes, if we "inaugurate" each day simply by waking up and, as Jews, acknowledging G-d and thanking Him for our souls, what's the first act? How do we first exercise our power, fulfill our responsibility as "inaugurated" souls? What's the course of action?

The answer should be obvious: We begin the day with prayer and Torah study, in the way our Sages taught. Thus each morning we inaugurate the day, the world, and our souls.

The Yeshiva Centre 701
invites you and your family to attend a
special Farbrengen and Lunch in honour

SHABBOS MEVORCHIM SHEVA'AT

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



Thoughts that Count

And I appeared (va'eira) (Ex. 6:3)

The word "va'eira" is in both the past and present tense, indicating that the revelation of G-dliness that existed in the times of our forefathers continues to exist today as well. Every Jew possesses the quality of Abraham (love of G-d), the quality of Isaac (awe of G-d), and the quality of Jacob (mercy); the revelation of these inner traits is akin to G-d's revelation to the Patriarchs. (*Ohr HaTorah*)

But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs (Ex. 7:12)

From Aaron's staff we learn about the resurrection of the dead that will take place in Messianic times: If a lifeless staff, a dry piece of wood, can be transformed into a living entity, how much more so can a human being, consisting of a physical body and soul, be restored to life! (*Zohar*)

Parsha in a Nutshell

G-d reveals Himself to Moses. Employing the "four expressions of redemption," He promises to take out the Children of Israel from Egypt, deliver them from their enslavement, redeem them and acquire them as His own chosen people at Mount Sinai; He will then bring them to the Land He promised to the Patriarchs as their eternal heritage.

Moses and Aaron repeatedly come before Pharaoh to demand in the name of G-d, "Let My people go, so that they may serve Me in the wilderness." Pharaoh repeatedly refuses. Aaron's staff turns into a snake and swallows the magic sticks of the Egyptian sorcerers. G-d then sends a series of plagues upon the Egyptians.

The waters of the Nile turn to blood; swarms of frogs overrun the land; lice infest all men and beasts. Hordes of wild animals invade the cities, a pestilence kills the domestic animals, painful boils afflict the Egyptians. For the seventh plague, fire and ice combine to descend from the skies as a devastating hail. Still, "the heart of Pharaoh was hardened and he would not let the children of Israel go; as G-d had said to Moses."

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN AND SPIRITUAL LEADER



This Shabbat, 28 Tevet, is the birthday of Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, o.b.m., the Lubavitcher Rebbe's mother. Born into an aristocratic rabbinical family in 5640 (1880), she married Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, the Rebbe's sainted father, in 5660 (1900).

In 1939 Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was arrested and sent into exile in Kazakhstan for the "crime" of upholding Yiddishkeit. Disregarding the considerable danger (indeed, her husband would pass away there a few years later), the Rebbetzin chose to accompany him to the far reaches of the Soviet Union and suffered along with him.

In all, Rebbetzin Chana was separated from her son, the Rebbe, for 20 years. The following are some anecdotes she related about him as a young child:

During a pogrom in Nikolaiev, many women and children had taken shelter in a certain hiding place, among them the Rebbetzin and her sons. When some of the children began to whimper the Rebbe went over and calmed them down one by one, this one with a pat on the cheek, another by covering his mouth with his hand for a few seconds. The Rebbe was not even five at the time.

When the Rebbe was ten years old he competed with his brothers as to who could learn the most languages. It took the Rebbe only a few weeks to master each new language. In fact, the Rebbe once saved someone's job by translating a Russian letter for him into English.

A short time before she passed away, the Rebbetzin remarked to a relative, "May G-d give [the Rebbe] strength. You don't know what you have. I'm not saying this because I'm his mother, but because it's true."

Pinchus Feldman

Rabbi Pinchus Feldman OAM

Smile its Friday

Maurice Goldblatt was showing off. He said to his friend Sam, "I bought a hearing aid yesterday. It cost me \$2,000. Sam said, "That's expensive, isn't it?" Maurice replied, "Yes, but it is state of the art." "What kind is it?" Sam asked. "A quarter to twelve," said Maurice.

The RV Rebbe by Mayer Duvid Hanson

The title "RV Rebbe" was bestowed upon me by one of my fellow congregants, in recognition of the outreach work that my wife and I do in the RV (recreational vehicle) parks of America, searching out and encouraging our fellow Jews that we meet on our travels. These days, we spend winters in Florida in an RV Park. There are a few Jews here, and we try our best to reach out to them and set a good example (a friendly chat, a tasty Shabbat meal).

So, how did I get to be the RV Rebbe?

Although I grew up in the very Jewish neighborhood of Boro Park, in Brooklyn, surrounded by yeshivas, I went to public school. On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, my father went to services with my Uncle George; my mother, my brother and I, all stayed home.

We didn't celebrate the Sabbath or the Jewish holidays, but I did go to Talmud Torah after school and on Sundays, where I learned to read and write Hebrew. (My father, brother and I would go horseback riding early Sunday morning before Sunday school. I would go to classes still in my riding breeches and boots.)

When it was time to prepare for my Bar Mitzva, my father bought me a pair of tefilin. The rabbi wanted me to memorize the Haftorah and its tunes but I found it too difficult and finally dissolved in tears one night at the dinner table. My father arranged private lessons for me with a different rabbi.

I was Bar Mitzva in the same synagogue where my parents had gotten married and where my father and Uncle George went for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur services. I had a party that Sunday and then my involvement in Jewish activities went into hibernation for many years.

At college I studied electrical engineering. I took a job in New Jersey, where I met my wife-to-be, Judi, at one of the Friday night parties our house full of Jewish bachelors used to host. Judi and I got engaged a month after we met and we married four months later in the synagogue my wife had attended as a child.

Over the next years our connection to

Judaism was very casual. We joined a Conservative temple that happened to be less than a block from our first home in Fort Lee, New Jersey. When we moved a few years later to Monsey, New York, we joined the big Reform temple in Spring Valley. We went to services periodically on Friday nights and always on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

When our first child, Sharon, was old enough, we sent her to the temple's Sunday school. One day she announced to us that she wanted to "be Christmas" and we knew we had to make some changes. Around that time, our temple announced that they were sponsoring a "long range planning weekend." This was during the 1970s "Marriage Encounter" movement. We signed up.

Throughout the weekend, there were various discussion questions asked. The one question that my wife and I remember to this very day is: Who do you want your daughter to marry? The choices were: An Israeli army officer, a Unitarian Harvard law professor, or an Orthodox Jewish Businessman. Although none of the choices suited us, my wife and I independently selected - you guessed it - the Orthodox Jewish businessman.

At the end of the weekend, we were urged to follow up with a commitment to do at least one thing more Jewish. My wife decided we might consider having a special dinner in the dining room on Friday nights and she would light Shabbat candles. That was the start of our spiritual journey. It was a slow process and we progressed at a pace that was comfortable for us.

We eventually left the Reform congregation we had joined when the rabbi responded to my question of why he didn't wear a kipa all the time with the answer that we didn't belong in Reform anymore. Although we were insulted at the time, he was right.

We sent our two youngest daughters to the local conservative

day school. Soon after that, I dug out my tefilin and started praying every day at home, though I didn't really know what I was doing. We started keeping kosher, but we would still eat fish out in non-kosher restaurants.

A major step forward in our spiritual journey was when, at age 49, I decided that I wanted to spend my jubilee year in Israel and we actually found a way to do it!

While in Israel, I started to wear a kipa all the time and when we returned to Monsey, I decided to continue to do that - even at work. I still remember how difficult it was for me to walk into the very prestigious bank where I worked that very first time wearing a kipa.

A number of years ago, we discovered Chabad. Now, what does a Chabad rabbi want a Jew to do? Another mitzva, of course! At the time that we met Rabbi Aaron Dovid Gancz, of the Chabad Jewish Center of Suffern, we used to leave Friday afternoon with our RV for a camping weekend. This involved driving on Friday night. In the summer we would venture even further, for a camping vacation at one of the western National Parks. We would drive furiously through Saturday to reach our destination by Monday night. Rabbi Gancz would, at every opportunity, urge me: "Duvid, all you have to do is make the commitment (not to drive on Shabbat) and the rest is easy." I would reply, "How can I give up our free and easy camping lifestyle?"

Eventually, with some help from G-d, we decided to make the commitment and began to observe Shabbat. My wonderful wife, who now goes by her Jewish name Zissel, is truly a righteous woman and has been in step with me throughout this entire journey.

So, if you're ever in an RV park, and you need some help, feel free to ask if anyone has seen the RV Rebbe lately. Or better yet, contact your local Chabad-Lubavitch Rabbi or Rebbetzin who will surely be there for you.

Published by

The Yeshiva Center

Chabad NSW Headquarters

36 Flood St. Bondi NSW 2026 Australia

Dean and Spiritual Leader:

Rabbi Pinchus Feldman OAM

Rabbinic Administrator:

Rabbi Yossi Feldman

Director of Outreach

Rabbi Elimelech Levy

Email lechaim@yeshiva.org.au

Moshiaich

We must increase in light, and not just any light, but specifically the light of simcha (joyousness). Since simcha "breaks all boundaries and limitations," it breaks through the person's limitations, the limitations of this world, and the limitations imposed by this dreadful darkness of exile...

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe, 15 Shevat, 5739 - 1979)

It Happened Once

The Baal Shem Tov loved the hours and days he spent wandering alone through the beautiful and isolated forests and hills of the Carpathian mountains. There, in solitude, he could think, learn and meditate on the greatness and the revealed wonders of the Creator.

This beautiful corner of the world was lush with the bounties of nature, but virtually empty of humanity. However, it was the haunt of a cruel and vicious band of robbers and murderers who attacked any hapless soul who happened to be passing through the countryside.

This robber band had been preying on travellers for many years, and they and their terrifying chief had become a frightening legend. The chief's name was Dabash - and he was, strangely enough, a Jew, albeit one who had descended to the lowest levels of humanity. The very mention of his name struck fear into the hearts of the villagers who lived in the settlements dotting the mountains, for no one who had fallen into his clutches had ever escaped alive.

Dabash had gotten word of a strange individual who dared to wander the mountain passes of his private domain. Summoning his most loyal followers, Dabash cried, "Find this arrogant fool who dares invade my province, and bring him to me!"

The robbers quickly set out to capture the Baal Shem Tov. But try as they might, they could not find him. Whenever they were sure that he must be right around the next bend, he eluded their grasp. "It's downright spooky," remarked one of the robbers, and they all nodded in agreement. This man was definitely something out of the ordinary. Finally, after scouring the surroundings for miles around, they were forced to report back to Dabash that they had failed in their mission. He was furious, for never had his will been thwarted. "I'll have your heads for this!" he screamed at the shaking men.

Slowly they managed to calm the robber chief. Finally, at the end of their tale, Dabash was curious enough to set out himself to try to capture the elusive Jew. Dabash led the way scaling rocky precipices and bounding over swift running streams.

Suddenly, a man appeared before them emerging from the distant trees. "That's him," they said in awe.

Dabash was happy at the opportunity for confrontation at long last, but the Baal Shem Tov spoke first: "I have come to save you the trouble of looking for me."

"Do you know who I am?" queried Dabash boldly. "Of course. I see it written all over your face! And not only that, but I know that you have regrets very often for the terrible sins you have committed. Is it not true that after you drink you always cry?"

"That's true," Dabash answered, "but it's not unusual. Lots of people do the same, although I don't understand why I cry when I do."

The Baal Shem Tov replied, "I will explain it to you. When a person is drunk, his essence, his innermost feelings that are normally hidden, can be revealed. Even inside you, a man who has abandoned the most basic human rules of life, burns a tiny spark. That spark is called the 'pintele Yid,' and it is the cause of your regrets. Why, even now, you feel bad that you have approached me with violent intentions."

When Dabash heard this he felt a stab of recognition deep inside. "Whoever harms this holy man will feel my sword!" he barked at his men.

"Just one question," said Dabash. "I and my men roam these mountains in search of victims to rob, but you? Why are you wandering about in this hills?"

"Let me explain it to you in this way:

"Once a king announced that he would grant any request his subjects made. Two of the king's subjects wanted the same thing - to visit the royal palace. The king granted them both their requests.

"They were allowed to enter the palace for only one hour. But the men had different reasons for desiring to enter the palace. One wanted to take as many treasures as he could fit into his pockets. The other wanted only to be near his beloved king.

"G-d fills the entire world, but here, surrounded by the wonders and beauties of nature we can feel the closeness of G-d.

"You see, Dabash, you and I are both here in the 'royal palace,' but our reasons are quite different."

With those words, the Baal Shem Tov turned and disappeared among the dense trees. Dabash was confused. He felt a surge of shame, but at the same time, he cried to his men to pursue the Jew.

Again there was no trace of him. In his rage, Dabash massacred a score of his men. Legend has it that afterward Dabash fled far away and became a penitent. In any case, the people of the Carpathian mountains never heard of him or his robber band again.



Candle Lighting Times Friday 23 January 2009

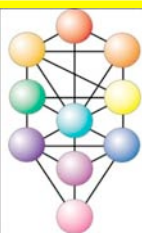
City	In	Out
Sydney	7:49pm	8:48pm
Brisbane	6:28pm	7:24pm
Surfers Par	6:28pm	7:24pm
Melbourne	8:23pm	9:25pm

Dedicated in Loving memory of

ראובן בורסאן

Richard Brosan

20 Teves



In times of turmoil good advice
is priceless

Financial Planning, Life Insurance,
Superannuation and Investment Advice

Katriel Warlow-Shill (CPA)
770 Financial Planners Pty Ltd
Tel 1800 770 607

Authorised representative No. 331792 for Synchro
(ABN 33 007 207 650) AFS License No. 243313

THE YESHIVA CENTRE
CHABAD NSW HEADQUARTERS
INVITES YOU TO AN EVENING OF INSPIRATION
ENTERTAINMENT AND SOLIDARITY FEATURING

PIANIST, COMPOSER
AND WORLD CLASS
ENTERTAINER
ETHAN BORTNICK



TUESDAY
17 FEBRUARY



SINGER AND
ACTOR
TROYE SIVAN

GALA DINNER 2009

This event is part of worldwide Hakhel celebrations

ת"ב