

THE CHABAD WEEKLY

Vol 7, #14

Chabad of North Beverly Hills, 409 Foothill Rd. Beverly Hills, 90210

beverlyhillschabad.org

Rabbi Yosef Shusterman 310-271-9063

One of the main reasons that the Exodus from Egypt occupies such a central role in Judaism (we mention it daily in our prayers) is that this original exodus symbolizes the daily spiritual exodus that must take place in the life of a Jew. The Hebrew word for Egypt, "Mitzrayim," comes from the root word "Meitzar," meaning limitations and obstacles. It is up to every individual to liberate himself from his own internal limitations and boundaries, thus freeing his G-dly soul to express itself and seek spiritual fulfillment.

This week's Torah portion, Vaeira, tells of the very beginning of the events which led up to the Jews' triumphant liberation from bondage. By studying the circumstances of the Egyptian exodus, we see how we can apply these lessons to our own personal and spiritual journey as well.

The first plague to afflict the Egyptians was blood; every drop of water in the land was affected. Therefore, the first step toward spiritual liberation must also somehow be connected with transforming "water" into "blood."

Water symbolizes tranquility, coldness, and lack of emotional excitement. Blood, on the other hand, is a symbol of warmth, enthusiasm and fervor. The Torah asks every Jew: Do you truly want to leave "Egypt," to overcome your self-imposed limitations? The first thing you must do is turn your "water" into "blood." Transform your apathy and inertia into enthusiasm and love of Torah and mitzvot (commandments). Infuse your life with a warmth and fervor directed toward G-d and holiness.

A person may claim, "Is it not enough that I simply perform the mitzvot, study Torah, and avoid that which is forbidden? Am I not a good Jew even if I don't feel any enthusiasm for what I do?"

Chasidic philosophy explains that coldness and apathy are the source of all evil. When one is cool toward something, it means that he is totally uninterested in it. We see that when something truly close to the heart is mentioned, our pulse quickens and we "warm" to the subject. Coldness signals the mechanical performance of the commandments and leads to eventual spiritual deterioration.

The first action to be taken toward spiritual liberation is to replace our lukewarm dedication to Judaism with warmth and enthusiasm. We should be at least as equally enthused about Judaism as we are about other facets of our lives.

One of the practical ways this expresses itself is when we perform a mitzva in a particularly nice way. The desire to enhance our observance leads to our observing the precepts of Judaism out of love. This, then, is the first step towards going out of our own personal Egypt and ending our collective exile. (From: L'Chaim 5763, #751) – lchaimweekly.org

The river will swarm with frogs. They will come up and enter your home, your bedroom, and your bed... your ovens and your kneading bowls Exodus 7:28
The Talmud relates that when Chananiah, Mishael and Azariah (three Jewish officers in the court of Babylonian emperor, Nebuchadnezzar) faced the choice to either bow before an idolatrous image or be thrown into a fiery furnace, they took their lesson from the frogs which plagued Egypt in Moses' time. If the frogs entered the ovens of Egypt to carry out the will of G-d, they reasoned, we, certainly, should be willing to sacrifice ourselves for our Creator.

To the Jew, "self-sacrifice" is more than the willingness to die for his beliefs—it is the way in which he lives for them. It is the willingness to give up his very self—his most basic wants, desires and aspirations—for the sake of his relationship with G-d. Indeed, the Hebrew term for self-sacrifice, mesirat nefesh, means both "the giving of life" as well as "the giving of will."

Thus, the lesson of self-sacrifice is derived from a frog—a cold-blooded creature—who enters a burning oven. The ultimate test of faith goes beyond the issue of physical life and death; it is the willingness to go against the grain of one's nature for the sake of a higher truth. (Based on an address by the Rebbe, Shabbat Va'eira 5718 (1958)) – meaningfullife.com

An Eye and a Sigh

Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov once said to his disciples:

There once lived two neighbors, a Torah scholar and an impoverished laborer. The scholar would wake before dawn, rush to the study hall and study for several hours. He would then pray at length and with great devotion, hurry home for a quick bite of breakfast, and return to the study hall for more hours of study. After the noon meal he would go to market and engage in some minimal dealing--just enough to earn him his basic needs--then back to the study hall. After evening prayers and the evening meal, he would again sit over the sacred books till late into the night.

His neighbor would also wake early, but his situation did not allow for much Torah study: no matter how hard he struggled to earn a living, he barely succeeded in putting bread on the table. He would pray quickly with the first minyan at daybreak, and then his labor would consume his entire day and the greater part of his night. On Shabbat, when he finally had the opportunity to take a book in his hands, he would soon drop off from exhaustion.

When the two neighbors would pass each other in the yard, the scholar would throw the crass materialist a look of contempt and hurry on to his holy pursuits. The poor laborer would sigh and think to himself: how unfortunate is

my lot, and how fortunate is his. We're both hurrying---but he's rushing to the study hall, while I'm off to my mundane burdens.

Then, it came to pass that the two men concluded their sojourn on earth and their souls stood before the heavenly court, where the life of every man is weighed upon the balance scales of divine judgement. An advocate-angel placed the scholar's many virtues in the right cup of the balance scales: his many hours of Torah study, his meditative prayers, his frugality and honesty. But then came the prosecuting angel, and placed a single object on the other side of the scales---the look of contempt that the scholar would occasionally send his neighbor's way. Slowly, the left side of the scales began to dip, until it equaled, and then exceeded, the formidable load on the right.

When the poor laborer came before the heavenly court, the prosecutor loaded his miserable, spiritually void life on the left scales. The advocating angel had but one weight to offer---the sorrowful sigh the laborer would emit when he encountered his learned neighbor. But when placed on the right side of the scales, the sigh counterweighted everything on the negative side, lifting and validating every moment of hardship and misery in the laborer's life. (Adapted from the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe by Yanki Tauber) – meaningfullife.com

On This Date: Moses repeats Torah (1273 BCE)

On the first of Shevat of the year 2488 from creation Moses convened the Jewish people and began the 37-day "review of the Torah" contained in the Book of Deuteronomy, which he concluded on the day of his passing on Adar 7 of that year. Chabad.org

THE DAILY RECITAL OF TEHILLIM AFTER DAVENING¹ APPLIES EQUALLY TO CHABAD CHASSIDIC SHULS AND TO THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE ASHKENAZIC OR POLISH NUSACH² - MAY G-D BE WITH THEM.³ ON ACCOUNT OF AHAVAT YISRAEL, LOVE OF OUR FELLOW...AND ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE AND INNER PURPOSE OF SAYING TEHILLIM WITH A MINYAN, WHICH LITERALLY AFFECTS ALL OF ISRAEL, MATERIALLY IN "CHILDREN, LIFE AND SUSTENANCE," AND SPIRITUALLY ...WE MUST ENDEAVOR WITH EVERY MEANS POSSIBLE THAT IT BECOME AN ESTABLISHED PRACTICE IN EVERY SHUL OF EVERY NUSACH. (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM SHEVAT 1).

Home

A home is more than a house, it is a state of being. A home provides space and shelter not just for bodies, but for the human spirit.

Who creates this space? Mainly, the woman. As it says, "The wisdom of a woman builds her home."

From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe; rendered by Tzvi Freeman.

PARTICIPATE IN WEEKLY CLASSES

<u>Sunday</u>	8:00 AM	Gemara-Tractate Shabbos (men)
<u>Monday</u>	8:00 PM	Chumash (men and women)
<u>Tuesday</u>	8:00 PM	Gemara-Tractate Makos (men)
	9:00 PM	Tanya (men and women) with Rabbi Wolf
<u>Wednesday</u>	8:30 PM	Halacha and Tanya (women)
<u>Thursday</u>	10:00 AM	Chassidus (women)
	8:00 PM	Class for Beverly Hills Highschool Students
<u>Daily</u>	6:45 AM to 7:15 AM	Chasiddus
	Between Mincha and Maariv	Halacha

DAILY MINYONIM:

Shacharis: Mon-Fri: 6:00 AM and 7:30 AM
Sunday: 9:00 AM

Mincha/Maariv: 5:15 PM

SHABBOS PARSHAS VAERA

Shabbos Rosh Chodesh

January 23, 2004

Candlelighting:(Los Angeles) 4:56 PM

Friday Mincha: 5:10 PM

LATEST TIME FOR SHEMA: 9:31 AM

SHABBAT MORNING

- **Tanya** 8:45 AM
- **Shacharit** 9:30 AM followed by Kiddush, Cholent & Farbrengen
- **Chumash** 4:15 PM
- **Mincha** 4:45 PM followed by Seuda Shlishit
- **Shabbat ends** 5:56 PM

Kiddush is being sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Berel Meisel in memory of his father's yartzheit.

Seuda Shlishit is being sponsored by Ms. Margaret Novak-Datels in memory of Albert Dattels Yartzheit.

Yartzheits: Albert Dattels – Shevat 1, George Meisel – Shevat 4.

Happy Birthday to Benyamin Illulian, Melody Mahtaban & Chaya Riva Mayberg,

Happy Anniversary to David and Lynda Schnall.

GOOD SHABBOS!