



LOUGHTON SHUL  
MORE THAN A SHUL

# INSPIRE

## BAHALOTECHA

### 21 SIVAN - 13 JUNE

## PAIN OR PRIVILEGE?

Okay, I admit it. I'm not sure how I would have behaved if I were in the position of the Jews back in the wilderness. We always criticise their lack of faith in G-d and the rough time they gave Moses. Even as G-d was providing them with the most incredible miracles — bread from heaven and water from rocks — they were busy moaning and groaning throughout. But would I have acted differently? Who knows? You think it was easy to live in a desert, even with all the miracles in the Bible? I suppose a lot depends on a person's attitude and perspective in life. Recently, I heard a powerful insight in the name of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, one of the outstanding authorities in Jewish law of our time (he passed away in 1986). He was speaking of the generation of Jewish immigrants to the United States who spawned what became known as the "lost generation." Why was it that the children of parents who were religious, or at least traditional, moved so far away from the Judaism of their parental homes? Rabbi Moshe argued that it could be summed up in one simple question of attitude. Did those parents convey to their children that Judaism was a burden or a boon, a pleasure or a pain? Was the constant refrain these children heard at home, Oy, it's hard to be a Jew! or Ahh, it is good to be a Jew! Was being Jewish in those early days in America something to sigh about, or something to celebrate and sing about? Whether children grew up hearing that Judaism was a pain or a privilege would determine whether they embraced it happily or escaped from it at the first opportunity. According to Rabbi Moshe, on that hinged the success or failure of an entire generation. Indeed, we know of many Jews who survived the Holocaust and because of their horrific experiences perceived being Jewish as a death sentence, G-d forbid. There were those who sought to run as far away as possible from Europe. Many found their way to Australia and became "closet Jews." Some never even told their children that they were Jewish. It was for this reason that the late Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, Rabbi Immanuel Jacobowitz argued that while Holocaust education was important, there was a danger in over-emphasizing the Holocaust in Jewish Day Schools. We want our children to see that Judaism is a blessing, not a curse. Our Jewishness should not be dark and depressing, but bright and joyous. I remember having a discussion with a group of businessmen some years ago where we were trying to put together a slide show to promote one of our local institutions. We were looking for a particularly powerful scene. One prominent doctor suggested that, for him, the single most powerful scene in Jewish life was the Rabbi walking into the house of mourning carrying his bag of prayer books. To him, that may have been powerful, but for me — as a rabbi — I'd never heard anything as depressing. What am I, the Angel of Death? The Jews in the wilderness had their own issues. We should try and learn from their mistakes and be more faithful and trusting in the leadership of the Moses of our own time. But beyond that, let us not whine and whimper about the challenges of Jewish life. Let us convey to our children that Judaism is a joy and a privilege. Then, please G-d, they will embrace it for generations to come.

**Question:**

**With all due respect, rabbi, I don't think you could possibly give me a satisfying answer to the following question. In the Torah it says, "And Moses was exceedingly humble, more than any man on the face of the earth". Very nice compliment, but who wrote this verse? Moses himself! Is that called humility?!**

**Answer:**

**Before I answer your question, allow me to make it even stronger. It also says in the Torah, "Moses spoke face to face with G-d", "No man like Moses ever lived" and countless other similar praises. How could Moses write all this if he is indeed humble? The question is based on a misunderstanding of what humility is. If being humble means thinking of yourself as a good-for-nothing lowlife then your question is a good one. But that's not humility. That's low self-esteem, which is the opposite of humility. Truly humble people recognise their own talents and achievements. But they don't take credit for them. They feel that their talents are gifts from G-d. They truly believe that their achievements are only due to the opportunities that came their way. No matter how successful, popular and gifted they may be, it won't go to their head, because they feel that it isn't their own accomplishment. Moses was more humble than any man on the face of the earth. He was fully aware of the amazing feats that he had achieved. He took the Israelites out of Egypt, led them through the desert, spoke to G-d on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights. No other human in history had reached such heights, and Moses knew it. But he truly believed that his greatness was a Divine gift, and had somebody else been given his opportunities they would have utilized them better than he did. He would look at the simplest of people and think, "If he was in my shoes, he would have been a better Moses than me." To see yourself as worthless is not humility; that's just being ungrateful. G-d has blessed each one of us with unique qualities, and we should be aware of that. In fact, only when we are aware of our self-worth can we be humble. We are humbled when we ask ourselves "I have been given the potential for greatness - have I used this gift?"**

## SHUL TIMES

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### Shabbat Times

Candle Lighting 9:06  
pm

Shabbat Ends 10:35 pm

### Friday, 12 June

7pm with our dear  
chazzan Anton Eriera

Kabbalat Shabbat on  
zoom

### Sunday, 14 June

10:00 am Cheder

### Monday, 15 June

Ignite

Prayer in 2020

8-9pm

### Tuesday, 16 June

8:00 pm A

conversation with  
Rabbi Dr Harvey  
Belovski

### Thursday, 18 June

8pm

Trust in the Almighty

## PARSHA SUMMARY

Aaron is commanded to raise light in the lamps of the menorah, and the tribe of Levi is initiated into the service in the Sanctuary. A "Second Passover" is instituted in response to the petition "Why should we be deprived?" by a group of Jews who were unable to bring the Passover offering in its appointed time because they were ritually impure. G-d instructs Moses on the procedures for Israel's journeys and encampments in the desert, and the people journey in formation from Mount Sinai, where they had been camped for nearly a year. The people are dissatisfied with their "bread from heaven" (the manna), and demand that Moses supply them with meat. Moses appoints 70 elders, to whom he imparts of his spirit, to assist him in the burden of governing the people. Miriam speaks negatively of Moses, and is punished with leprosy; Moses prays for her healing, and the entire community waits seven days for her recovery.

## HAFTORAH SUMMARY

This haftorah contains a vision of the golden Temple Menorah, whose daily kindling is discussed in the opening of this week's Torah reading. This prophecy was communicated by Zechariah shortly before the building of the Second Temple. The haftorah opens with a vivid depiction of the joy that will prevail when G-d will return to Jerusalem: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for, behold! I will come and dwell in your midst, says the L-rd." The prophet then describes a scene in the Heavenly Court: Satan was seeking to incriminate Joshua, the first High Priest to serve in the Second Temple, because of the "soiled garments" (i.e. sins) he was wearing. G-d himself defends the High Priest: "And the Lord said to Satan: The Lord shall rebuke you, O Satan; the Lord who chose Jerusalem shall rebuke you. Is [Joshua] not a brand plucked from fire?" I.e., how dare Satan prosecute an individual who endured the hardships of exile? "And He raised His voice and said to those standing before him, saying, 'Take the filthy garments off him.' And He said to him, 'See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I have clad you with clean garments.'" G-d then proceeds to outline the rewards awaiting Joshua if he and his descendents follow G-d's ways. The ultimate reward is, "Behold! I will bring My servant, the Shoot, " an allusion to Moshiach, the Shoot of David. Zechariah then describes a vision of a golden seven-branched Menorah. An angel interprets the meaning of this vision: "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel [descendent of King David, one of the protagonists in the building of the Second Temple], 'Not by military force and not by physical strength, but by My spirit,' says the Lord of Hosts." Meaning that Zerubbabel's descendent, Moshiach, will have no difficulty in his task, it will be as simple as lighting a menorah.

## WISHING ALL THOSE WITH YARTZEIT THIS WEEK CHAIM ARUCHIM

**Goldstone Loretta Mother Tuba bas Moshe Chaim 21 Sivan**  
**Piatkus Brian Mother Mindel bas Moshe Aharon 24 Sivan**

## JEWISH HUMOR

At the conclusion of the Shabbat services, the congregants of Beth Israel synagogue filed out toward of the sanctuary to the kiddush. As one of them left, he shook the rabbi's hand, thanked him for the sermon and said, "Thanks for the message, Rabbi. You must be smarter than Einstein." Beaming with pride, the Rabbi said, "Why, thank you!" As the week went by, the rabbi began to think about the man's compliment. The more he thought, the more he became baffled as to why anyone would deem him smarter than Einstein. So he decided to ask the man the following Shabbat. The next Saturday he asked his congregant if he remembered the previous week's comment about his speech. The congregant replied that he did. The rabbi asked: "Exactly what did you mean that I must be smarter than Einstein?" The man replied, "Well, Rabbi, they say that Einstein was so smart that only ten people in the entire world could understand him. But Rabbi, not even one person can understand you."

## RIDDLE OF THE WEEK

What breaks yet never falls and what falls but never breaks?

**Answer to last week's Riddle.**  
**2 years, his house won't go up at all because trees grow from the top, not the bottom.**

## STORYTIME

Long before Rabbi Meir of Premishlan was known as a tzadik (righteous person), his unusual kindness and compassion were demonstrated. Even as a young child he would go from door to door collecting money for the poor. Rabbi Meir was simply unable to bear seeing someone in an unfortunate situation. He would do everything in his power to relieve the other's suffering. At the same time, he was extremely modest and went out of his way to avoid drawing attention to himself. A year after he was married, he hired himself out as a tutor for an estate owner's children, a common way to support one's family in those days. It did not take Rabbi Meir long to realize that the wealthy landlord was a coarse individual. Nonetheless, the children seemed to be progressing nicely under his tutelage, despite their father's rough and boorish behavior. Rabbi Meir was particularly distressed by his employer's stinginess. Whenever a poor person knocked on the door asking for a donation or a crust of bread, he was treated condescendingly and with a tight fist. For the first few weeks in his new position Rabbi Meir tried to concentrate on his teaching and ignore what was happening. But as time wore on he found it increasingly difficult to restrain himself. One day, Rabbi Meir approached the owner of the estate and made a suggestion. "From now on," he proposed, "every time a poor person comes, I'd like to you give him a coin, which you can deduct from my salary." The landlord agreed to the plan, as there was no reason for him not to. From that day on, every beggar who arrived on the doorstep received a coin, and sometimes even a light meal to ease his hunger. In the meantime, the owner of the estate was carefully recording every penny that went to charity in his ledger. No one could understand the miserly landlord's sudden generosity, but at least the beggars were happy. Six months passed, and soon it was almost Passover and time for Rabbi Meir to go back home. Before he left, the owner of the estate called him in to pay him his salary. Taking out his ledger, he deducted all the coins and food he had "wasted" on the poor, and was shocked to see that nothing remained. And not only that, but Rabbi Meir actually owed him money! The landlord was furious. How could he, a smart and savvy businessman, have allowed himself to fall into such a trap? Rabbi Meir was banished from the estate without a penny in his pocket. Why, he was lucky to even have a pocket, as the landlord had briefly considered taking Rabbi Meir's overcoat as payment for the "damages" he had incurred, before changing his mind at the last second. Rabbi Meir, however, was not particularly upset by what had occurred. In fact, he was in a good mood. Passover was coming, he was going home, and there were many things in the world more important than money... Rabbi Meir was on the outskirts of Premishlan when something shiny in the road caught his attention. Looking closer, he saw it was a very valuable gold coin, worth far more than the entire salary he was supposed to have received as a tutor! Rabbi Meir, however, did not think along the same lines or in the same way as "regular" people. The whole way home his thoughts had been focused on higher, more spiritual matters. His initial reaction upon seeing the coin was hesitation. "Is this the way it has been decreed from Above that I derive my livelihood?" he thought to himself. "Does G-d really want me to make a living from the dust of the earth?" Rabbi Meir continued walking and did not bend down to pick it up. Rabbi Meir's wife was overjoyed to see him after a half-year's absence. Several days later, when her husband still hadn't mentioned any earnings, she thought it was strange, but having full faith in him she did not bring up the subject, assuming he had his reasons. By the following week she decided the time had come to allude, very delicately, to their financial situation. But her husband only responded cryptically, "Let's wait until tonight..." and left for the synagogue. In shul, money was soon the farthest thing from his mind. That evening, Rabbi Meir was in the study hall when the servant of one of the wealthiest inhabitants of Premishlan suddenly tapped him on the shoulder. Handing him a gold coin he said, "My master asked me to deliver this to you." Rabbi Meir jumped up as if bitten by a snake. "What is the meaning of this?" he inquired. The servant related that earlier that day his master had returned to Premishlan after a long journey, and had found the coin lying on the ground. After some deliberation he had decided to give it to a young Torah scholar, and Rabbi Meir's name had been drawn from a lottery. "I see this coin really was supposed to be mine..." Rabbi Meir smiled, pondering the ways of the Creator.

## FOOD 4 THE SOUL

The times in which we live are not ordinary times. Everything is suddenly changing, rearranging itself. Technology leaps ahead daily, affecting the way we do things, how we communicate, our concept of life and the universe. While an old world struggles to cling to its self-defeating patterns, the stage is set for a world as it is meant to be.