

# 3327 YEARS LATER!

by Rabbi Label Lam

*And you should know it today and return it to your heart that HASHEM is G-d in the heavens above and on the earth below and there is no other. (Devarim 4:39)*

The Rambam states that "the foundation of foundations and the pillar of all wisdom is to **know** that there is a prime source of reality- namely G-d". It is not a matter of belief or speculation but rather of knowledge. He continues, "The knowledge of this matter is a positive commandment, as it says, "I am HASHEM your G-d Who took you out of the land of Egypt..." The Kuzari asks, "Why such a small claim?" "I am HASHEM Who created heaven and earth" would be more grandiose.

The answer is that we were not there when the world was created but we did experience the Exodus from Egypt and the pronouncements on Mt. Sinai. This was a historical revelation and not a hysterical revolution. We, as a nation, were there and we witnessed it. That's how we know, but how do we "know today?!"

It was a glorious Sunday morning 25 years ago. My wife and I had just spent a beautiful Shabbos in Boston. We had two little boys in tow. We decided to travel north to visit Newburyport Mass. where my great grandfather lived most of his adult life and where I remember visiting him. Entering the city we found only strip malls. I was sure they had already "paved paradise and put up a parking lot".

Then like out of a time warp, there it was; the cobble stone street, the lake, the old court house, and a civil war cannon. As we stood there surveying the area a gentleman approached us and asked, "Are you people-Chassidim?" I told him, "No! We're just ordinary folk." He persisted, "Is there a convention going on?" I thought to myself, "Four Jews is a convention. Five would be an incursion, and six would already be an occupation."

I told him, "No! My great grandfather lived here after coming from Russia. He built that Synagogue down the block and his house is there across the street. I'm here to show my children where their great-great grandfather lived, worked, and prayed." The man stood at attention. Real tears streamed down his cheeks and with a quivering voice he declared, "When I see how you people keep your traditions from generation to generation you are truly G-d's chosen people." He backed up respectfully into the day and disappeared. My wife and I were stunned. What was that all about? We reasoned that this fellow just came out from one of those Sunday services where they were reading the Bible which is all about the Jews. However, when they look at the news they are surprised to find out how often those who seem to be the descendants of the ones mentioned in

"the book" represent causes that countermand the values of "the book". Something's wrong with this picture! A doubt is aroused about the veracity of "The Book". Behold, onto the Mall in Newburyport, Mass. strides a family looking hauntingly authentic, with Yarmulkas, and Tsitsis, and other overt signs.

I'm not saying that I am the paragon of virtue but something must have struck him. The "People of the Book" suddenly appear with loyalty to "the book" and all is confirmed true. We just walked out of the Bible- stepped down from Mt. Sinai, the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, witnesses to the giving of the Torah. "A matter is established by two witnesses", and here testify; the book and the people of the book. So it is written, "You are my witnesses, says HASHEM" (Isaiah 3:10). It was a glorious Sunday morning!

Our direct contact with Mount Sinai occurred 3327 years ago and here we are still animated by Torah and Mitzvos with its millions of minutiae resonating **3327 years later!**

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