

LAMPLIGHTER

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In the Torah portion of Mikeitz, Joseph orders his servants to hide his goblet in his brother's bags. He then sends a messenger to overtake them on the road. When the brothers learn that they are accused of stealing, they reply, "Far be it ("chalila") from your servants to do such a thing!"

One of the explanations offered by Rashi on the word "chalila," which is generally translated as "G-d forbid" or "heaven forefend," is derived from its root in the word "chulin," meaning profane or derogatory. The word also connotes common, i.e., anything that is not related to holiness. The brother's reply to Joseph's messenger thus not only denied their participation in the theft, but expressed a much deeper concept: that the very idea of their involvement in anything other than the realm of holiness was absurd. In other words, the brothers were on such a high spiritual level that relating to the mundane, physical world was somehow incongruous.

Each one of the Twelve Tribes embodied a different path in the service of G-d. And while not every individual Jew is blessed with all of their unique character attributes, there are certain general aspects of their service that we all share in common. The brothers' declaration of "chalila" thus contains a practical lesson to be applied in our daily lives.

A Jew must know that his entire being - his very essence - is holiness. The Jew and the secular realm are two entirely different worlds. The mundane level of existence does not truly pertain to the Jew, to the point that involvement in the material realm is essentially foreign to him.

This extremely high level is not only something the Jew must feel inwardly, but must also be reflected in all of its external manifestations. The nations of the world should be able to see that, to the Jew, the very notion of "mundane" is just as incongruous as the notion of stealing. Indeed, it is this concept that was proudly articulated by Joseph's brothers to the Egyptian messenger.

Of course, the Torah commands that a Jew work within the framework of the physical world. "Six days shall you labour, and do all your work." But the intention is not that the Jew lower himself to the level of the profane; on the contrary, it implies the exact opposite. A Jew is required to involve himself in the world for the purpose of elevating the material plane of existence to holiness. This demonstrates that all his deeds are for the sake of heaven, and brings sanctity into the world.

(Based on the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

How to Make Great Kids

By Shimon Posner

Have you ever met someone truly great? A giant? Have you felt the awe of their presence that is only enhanced when they extend themselves to you, when they draw you in? If you haven't yet, you have something to look forward to.

Some thirty-five years ago, a promising philosophy student at Cambridge set out to meet the great Jewish thinkers (and doers) of the times. He met the Rebbe, he asked questions and the Rebbe answered. Towards what he believed was the end of the interview, the Rebbe said that he too would like to ask a question, namely: "What are you doing for Jewish life in Cambridge?"

The student, Jonathan Sacks, is now chief rabbi of The British Commonwealth (and regardless of imposing titles, he truly, actually is great). When he assumed the chief rabbinate BBC interviewed him. They asked what made him become a rabbi. He responded that the Rebbe's question -- what are you doing for Jewish life in Cambridge -- started him on that road.

Sacks speaks of the great personalities he met, how he sensed their greatness. In the Rebbe's room he sensed something else: he sensed his own greatness.

He maintains there is a common misconception about the Rebbe; that the Rebbe created followers. Sacks insists that he did not; he maintains that the Rebbe created leaders.

"And you shall raise the (flames of) the candles." Kindle those flames, encourages the Talmud, until they burn steady and strong, until they neither flicker nor waver. Then and only then are they ready for you to remove the fire with which you kindled them and you can move on to your next candle.

I am now raising my grandchildren's parents. Many of my students are now rabbis and rebbetzins. I pray that like Jonathan Sacks, they sense their own greatness.

Slice of LIFE

Rabbi Avraham Hershberg, until his passing, was the chief Rabbi of Mexico. Before the holocaust he was one of the most successful pupils in Yeshiva (Torah Academy) Chachme Lublin in Poland and just as the war began he miraculously escaped from Europe to the U.S.

In America his talents didn't go unnoticed and soon after he arrived he was offered a job as Rabbi of an orthodox community in Chicago but he said he would only accept if there was a Yeshiva there where he could teach Torah.

But there was no such Yeshiva in Chicago at the time and it didn't look as though there ever would be. So he asked around and was told that the only one who could break the spiritual ice of America was Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, the sixth Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch.

Rabbi Hershberg travelled to Brooklyn, told the Rebbe his problem and after a short pause the Rebbe declared "There will be a Yeshiva in Chicago!"

The next day ten young Chassidim travelled to Chicago, established a Yeshiva and Rabbi Hershberg had a job and a Yeshiva where he could teach Torah as well.

In 1950 Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak passed away and his son-in-law Rebbe Menachem Mendel, became the seventh Rebbe of Chabad. Rabbi Hershberg's connection to the new Rebbe was no less than to his predecessor. So when he got an offer to be the Chief Rebbe of Mexico he asked for the Rebbe's blessing and afterwards was always consulting the Rebbe for blessings and advice.

Especially when he got an offer to visit hostages in Iran.

In 1979 the secular, pro-American regime of Iran was overthrown by a radical Islam government led by Ayatollah Khomeini. In the chaos that followed, Iranian students took over the American embassy and held the fifty five staff-members as hostages there for almost a year and a half.

How is this connected to Rabbi Hershberg? Well it seems that even before the Islamic Revolution he had been very involved in a massive secret program directed by the Lubavitcher Rebbe to smuggle thousands of Jewish children out of Persia and give them Jewish educations in America and Israel.

So when the Red Cross got permission from the Iranian government to send a group of clergymen to visit the embassy hostages, the Rebbe used his influence to get Rabbi Hershberg included in the group.

Preparations were made and just before they left, Rabbi Hershberg visited the Rebbe to ask for a blessing. He was afraid. Iran wasn't exactly a safe place for foreigners, especially Jewish ones and he and his wife were worried that he might not return!

But the Rebbe calmed him down. He told him there was nothing to worry about and blessed him with success. But he reminded him to be sure to light Chanukah candles.

Being that it was over two months before Chanukah, Rabbi Hershberg was a bit puzzled. But he began to understand when the trip was pushed off for sixty days.

They would arrive a day before Chanukah!

If it hadn't been for the Rebbe's admonition he probably would have lit his Menorah in his hotel room every night. But now, the first thing he did when they arrived was ask permission to light a Chanukah Menora in the besieged embassy. He figured that surely there was at least one Jew there.

Amazingly permission was readily granted and even more amazing when they were face to face with the hostages and it didn't seem there was even one Jew there, when he took out his menorah suddenly six of them stepped forward and announced that they were Jewish!

If he hadn't brought in that Menorah many of them might have never revealed their Judaism, perhaps not even to themselves!

These poor Jews had been hostages for a long time and the tension and uncertainty had definitely taken its toll. They looked tired and miserable. But as soon as the first candle was lit the faint yellow light spread over their faces and for the first time since their captivity, they actually sang and danced!

But that was just the beginning.

The next day Khomeini invited all these clergymen to participate in a massive public prayer with an attendance of almost one million people!

Rabbi Hershberg relates, "We were standing on a platform with Khomeini and other important figures and I looked out at the sea of humanity before us. Then, at one point in the prayers everyone, all one million people, all dropped to their knees and then put their heads to the ground. Everyone bowed down! That is, everyone

except for me! I simply never even considered doing it.

"Well, after the prayers two officials approached me and told me that Khomeini wants to talk to me. I thought to myself, that's it! At least I'll die for the sake of Judaism. But then remembered the Rebbe's blessing and became calm. I followed them with the greatest optimism and when I got to Khomeini a few of his servants told me that he demands an explanation as to why I didn't bow down.

"So I calmly approached him and explained in the most positive way that I could muster up that I'm a Jew and I don't understand their prayers. Therefore I am not able to bow down without knowing what they are saying and to whom they are bowing.

"Well, he was really impressed with that answer, I think he liked my simple straightforwardness and when I saw that, I asked him if I could meet with him privately at some time.

"Miracle of miracles... he agreed! The next day we met in his room and, after a short friendly conversation I asked him to please be more kind to the Jews in his kingdom and he promised to consider it.

"It was hard to believe how the Rebbe's blessing turned everything around. I don't know why Khomeini put me on that stage with him but it was a miracle! It comes out that there were either a lot of Jews in that huge crowd or the prayer had been televised but my appearance on that stage made a tremendous impression on all the Jews who saw it, and the next day I heard that thousands of Jews packed the synagogues, many for the first time in their lives!

"Not only that, but Khomeini kept his promise! That next Elul (the last month in the Jewish year) he passed an edict saying that for the entire month Jews were allowed to break the curfew and walk in the streets at 4 a.m. to their Synagogues for 'Slichot' (a series of early morning prayers said before Rosh HaShanna)."

On the plane returning home Rabbi Hershberg began to understand the greatness of the Rebbe. Not only did his blessings come miraculously true above all expectations but even more, the Rebbe demonstrated a love and care for others that was even more miraculous:

When the Rebbe told him to light the Chanukah Menora it put him in a positive state of mind that he could actually illuminate the darkness of Iran. That is what gave him the ability to speak to Khomeini with such certainty.

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ISSUE 1014

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Chanukah and Moshiach have an intrinsic connection. The candles of the Menorah are eight, the reason for that is, in order to have the power to overcome the darkness of the world, we need to draw a G-dly revelation which transcends the limitations of the world - 7 resembles the limitations of the world, like the seven days of the week, eight however resembles a level much higher than the limitations of the world. When Moshiach comes, then too will we have a revelation of G-d's infinite light which is totally higher than the realms of the world. This is also why we find a few things in the days of Moshiach related to the number 8, like the harp the Messiah which will have 8 chords.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Chanukah, 5715 (1954)

...In this connection, and apropos of Chanukah, it would be timely to reflect on the significance of the Chanukah Lights. Although all Mitzvoth [commandments] issue from One G-d, the perfect Unity, there are many aspects to every Mitzvah, just as the complexity of our physical world is likewise created from His Mitzvah. Nevertheless, the performance of the Mitzvah, accompanied by an appreciation of its significance, is definitely beneficial.

With this in mind, I wish to point out what I consider very significant in connection with the significance of Chanukah, as it is emphasized by the Chanukah Lights, specifically by the two conditions attending the performance of this Mitzvah: (a) The light is to shine forth "outside" and (b) the light is to grow every night by the addition of one more candle each night of Chanukah. Thus, the message of Chanukah is to bring home to every Jew his duty to spread the "light" of the Torah and the "candles" of the Mitzvoth, especially in times of darkness, and to do so with ever growing effort.

A man's influence is generally limited, either to his immediate environment, his family and friends, or if he is a teacher or lecturer, to a wider circle. The journalist, however, whose words and thoughts enjoy wide currency through the printed word, enjoys a much greater influence; he is less limited in space, since the printed word travels far, and in time, since it endures on record.

Thus you are privileged to have far greater opportunities in exercising influence than the average person, to help illuminate the darkness of the night with, I trust, ever growing effect. These are not mere opportunities, for as everything in Nature strives to transform itself from a state of potentiality to actuality, so all human potentialities must be actualized for the general good, the true good. The way of Providence is inscrutable. Although logically, as the Chanukah candles indicate, one should begin by lighting up his home first, and then seeing to it that its light dispels the darkness outside as far as possible, the process is sometimes reversed; bringing light to others far away, brings success in carrying the light closer home.

I send you my prayerful wishes for success in your personal affairs, which is closely associated with your public work and your influence, all the more so, since in addition to being a son of the "kingdom of priest and a holy nation," you are actually a kohen among Jews.

With blessing,

CUSTOMS CORNER

Continuation from last week regarding the laws of the Amida and the repetition of the cantor.

1. In the 6th blessing- 'Slach' (forgive...), the custom is to tap our knuckles on our chest.
2. In the 9th blessing- 'Buraich' (bless...) when we reach tvuasa l'tovah (...its produce for good) the custom is to have in mind wheat for Matsah, grapes for Kidush, and the Esrog.
3. It is a custom to recite a verse [or verses if you have more than one name] which begins and ends with the same Hebrew letters as your Hebrew name (ask your local Rabbi for the correct verse).
4. There are Halachic authorities who say that it is proper to stand by the repetition of the Amida.
5. When the cantor reaches the Kedusha (after the 2nd blessing) we straighten our feet and we say the verses of the Kedusha before the cantor, some have the custom to keep standing with their feet straight until the cantor finishes the 3rd blessing- 'Ata kadosh' (you are holly).
6. On the days when Tachanun is not recited, after the cantor finishes the last blessing he says y'hiyu l'ratzon to himself and then says the kadish [yisgadal...].

A WORD

from the Director

During these days of Chanuka we emphasize the miracles that G-d wrought for our ancestors, "In those days, in our times." The first miracle was the victory of the small Jewish army over the vastly superior and more numerous Greek army. The second miracle, and this is the miracle which we symbolically celebrate each time we kindle the Chanuka menorah, is the miracle of the one small cruse of pure olive oil which lasted for eight days rather than the one day for which it was intended.

That G-d was and is willing to perform miracles for His people shows His tremendous love for us. But, G-d's expression of love for us depends on our expression of love for each other. Thus, in addition to the love we should show a fellow Jew because he is our brother; we must show him additional love because G-d loves him. The importance of loving our fellow Jews is emphasized by the fact that this course of conduct will enable each person, his family, and the entire Jewish people, and ultimately the whole world, to leave the exile in the immediate future.

The Chanuka lights that we kindle in our home on each night of Chanuka are a symbol of G-d's love for the Jewish people. They have their source in G-d's light, in the light of the miracle of Chanuka, a miraculous light. As we kindle the Chanuka lights on the remaining nights of Chanuka, let us remember the miracles they represent, the Source of the miracles, and why G-d performed those miracles for us. And let these thoughts spur us on toward greater love of our fellow Jew, especially including, of course, those closest to us.

May we merit not only the lights of Chanuka this year; but also the Great Light of the Final Redemption, through the revelation of Moshiach, NOW.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED

Once...

The Wheel of Life

By Shoshannah Brombacher

A haughty and wealthy young merchant once came to visit the great chassidic master, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov.

People seeking an audience with the Baal Shem Tov usually came asking for guidance in their service of the Creator, or for advice and blessing in their material affairs. But this visitor lost no time in explaining that he had no special needs or particular problems which required any intervention or blessing. In fact, a rather lucrative business deal had brought him to a nearby town, and since it was so close, and having heard so many fanciful stories about the chassidic master, his curiosity led him to see for himself what all the talk was about.

"Well," said Baal Shem Tov, "if there's nothing you feel that I can help you with, perhaps you'd like to stay for a while and listen to a story?" The man agreed and so the Baal Shem Tov began:

"Once upon a time there were two childhood friends who were inseparable as they grew up together. However, when they became adults, their ways parted. One became wealthy and the other was very poor. In order to save his family from hunger, the poor man sought out his childhood friend and asked the rich man for help. The wealthy man did not hesitate. 'Didn't we always promise each other that we'd remain friends forever and share in everything that we have?' he reminded his friend, and offered him half of his fortune.

"As often happens with the passing of time, the wheels of fortune reversed, and the one who had before been wealthy was now very poor, while the friend to whom he had earlier given half his fortune had become quite rich. Confident that he would now receive reciprocal help from his now wealthy friend, the poor man sought him out and explained his situation. But instead of helping him, the man with the newly acquired wealth refused to part with any of his fortune.

"Time again witnessed a reversal of fortune, so that the poor man became rich and the rich man again became poor, as each returned to their original situations. Now it happened again that the one who had before refused to part with any part of his fortune began to feel the hopeless despair of impoverishment, and went to his friend begging for forgiveness. The man who was now wealthy readily forgave his former childhood friend, but this time he insisted that the friend give him a written agreement that if he were ever in need again, the friend would share his blessings with him.

"Well, in the passing of time the two men again experienced reversals of fortune. But, true to form, the man who had signed the note refused to honour it, and his friend and his friend's family found themselves homeless and penniless.

"Years passed. The two men died. When they came before the heavenly court to account for their lives, the mean-spiritedness of the selfish man's life weighed heavily against him and he was condemned to punishment, while the forever kind and forgiving friend was sent to his eternal reward in paradise. However, the good friend could not accept the destiny of his fellow's soul and petitioned the Heavenly court that, in spite of selfish and shameful manner in which his friend had repeatedly treated him, he nonetheless still loved him and did not wish to see him suffer on his account.

"The heavenly tribunal was in an uproar," the Baal Shem Tov continued his tale. "This was certainly a very unusual case! It was decided that the only way to solve this case was to return both men to earth, so that the sinful man would have one last opportunity to atone for his egotistical behaviour. And so, the sinful man was returned as a prideful wealthy merchant while the other was returned as a common street beggar.

"And so it came to pass that, one day, the righteous beggar knocked on the door of the rich man begging for food. He had not eaten for a long time and was literally on the verge of starvation. But he was rudely and callously turned away. And so, the beggar died . . ."

At this point in the story, the rich man, with tears streaming down his face and a lump in his throat, could barely speak. "Yes . . . yesterday . . . yesterday I turned a beggar away from my door . . . Later I heard that a beggar was found dead in the street. Was . . . was he the beggar in your story?"

No answer was necessary. By now the tears were flowing freely. The man was overcome with remorse and repentance. He was desperately anxious to know how or what he could do to make amends for his shame.

The Baal Shem Tov explained that his former friend, the beggar, had a widow and orphaned children, and that he was to go and give three-quarters of his fortune to that family in order to atone for his sin.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

For 12 years Joseph languished in the dungeon without anyone lifting a finger to help him. Yet when the time came for him to be freed, he was brought out "hurriedly," in great haste. One moment he was a lowly prisoner, the next, a free man elegantly attired and brought before the king. From this we learn that when the right time comes for G-d to take us out of exile, He will not wait even a split second longer than necessary. At that precise moment Moshiach will come to redeem us. (*Chofetz Chaim*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 23 DECEMBER 2011

| BEGINS | | ENDS |
|--------|------------|------|
| 8:24 | MELBOURNE | 9:30 |
| 8:11 | ADELAIDE | 9:15 |
| 6:25 | BRISBANE | 7:23 |
| 6:53 | DARWIN | 7:46 |
| 6:25 | GOLD COAST | 7:23 |
| 7:05 | PERTH | 8:05 |
| 7:48 | SYDNEY | 8:50 |
| 8:00 | CANBERRA | 9:04 |
| 8:27 | LAUNCESTON | 9:37 |
| 8:22 | AUCKLAND | 9:27 |
| 8:36 | WELLINGTON | 9:46 |
| 8:32 | HOBART | 9:44 |
| 7:25 | BYRON BAY | 8:24 |



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS MIKAITZ
28 KISLEV • 24 DECEMBER

| | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| FRIDAY NIGHT: | CANDLE LIGHTING: | 8:24 PM |
| | MINCHA: | 8:35 PM |
| | KABBOLAS SHABBOS: | 9:10 PM |
| SHABBOS MORNING: | TEHILIM: | 8:30 AM |
| | SHACHARIS: | 10:00 AM |
| | LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: | 9:37 AM |
| | THE MOLAD OF THE MONTH IS | |
| | SUNDAY DECEMBER 25 | 7:20 AM AND 17 CHALAKIM AM |
| WEEKDAYS: | MINCHA: | 8:20 PM |
| | SHABBOS ENDS: | 9:30 PM |
| | SHACHARIS SUN-FRI: | 9:15 AM |
| | MINCHA: | 8:35 PM |
| | MAARIV: | 9:25 PM |