

LAMPLIGHTER

18 Teves
Shmos

1017

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Shemot, we read the incident where Moses came upon two Jews (Datan and Aviram) in the midst of an argument. When one man lifted his hand to strike the other, Moses cried out, "Rasha! (Evil one!) Why do you strike your fellow?" Moses called him a rasha even though he had not yet delivered the blow, as the very act of raising one's hand against another person is forbidden.

Any individual who lifts his hand against another is termed a rasha, even if he does not actually hit him. But why is it prohibited to raise one's hand? Why is it considered such a serious transgression?

To explain:

Man was created for the sole purpose of serving his Maker, to learn Torah and perform mitzvot (commandments) in accordance with G-d's will.

The human body is comprised of many different limbs, each one of which must be properly utilized in the service of G-d. Some mitzvot are performed with the feet, others through the power of speech, and yet others with the nose. Each and every limb has a specific purpose, designed to carry out its own particular commandments.

So too has the human hand been created to perform G-d's mitzvot. There are many commandments that are done with the hands: donning tefilin, building a suka, lighting Shabbat candles, etc.

The hand is especially suited to perform the mitzva of tzedaka (charity). With our hands we take a coin and give it to a poor person or place it in a tzedaka box, as the Torah enjoins us: "You shall surely open up your hand."

The primary function of the hand is to do good for others. When a person argues with his fellow man and lifts his hand as if to strike him, he is using that hand to bring him harm - the opposite of the purpose for which it was created.

For this reason Moses called the man "evil one," for it is evil to use the hand which G-d has created for good in a negative fashion. Indeed, it is a serious transgression to pervert the potential for good into a potential for evil. Moses therefore became angry even before the blow was delivered.

A person who hits his fellow and causes him pain commits a sin "between man and his fellow man."

A person who lifts his hand in anger, even though he does not strike the other person, commits a sin "between man and G-d" by distorting the very purpose for which the hand was created.

Let us therefore use our hands - and all our limbs - to carry out G-d's will and serve Him. For that is the true purpose for which man was created.

(Adapted from *Likutei Sichot, Volume 31*).

Why We Have Children

By Yanki Tauber

At a certain point in our lives we begin to understand that though we may have chosen to bring children into the world, this was not a "choice" we made--at least not in the conventional sense of the word.

We begin to realize that though we may have become parents because we wanted to, we could not have wanted otherwise. That something very deep and true inside us compelled us. Though it would be wrong to say we were "compelled", since the compelling force was none other than our deepest self.

Having children is an act of faith. Faith that the world is going somewhere good. Faith that in our children's lifetimes it will be a better place than it is now. How do we know this, when there's so much evidence to the contrary? We just do.

Having children is an act of trust. Trust in He who creates and sustains the world anew each moment of time, that He will provide what is needed to sustain one more partner to His grand plan. Who could have a child if they first had to prove that they could "afford" it? If parenthood required a license, like for operating a motor vehicle or practicing law, who would pass the test? Yet somehow we know that if we bring a child into the world, G-d will provide the resources to nourish them body and soul. As He did for our parents, who were perhaps no worse, but most likely no better, equipped for the task than we.

And having children is the ultimate self-assertion. It says: I am, and I shall continue to be. Forever.

Was Moses Ever Wrong?

By Yanki Tauber

More than three billion people -- half the human race -- base their ethos and belief system on his teachings. The people he founded have endured, under impossible conditions, for 33 centuries, confounding all historians. He's universally regarded as the ultimate lawgiver, the model leader, the quintessence of wisdom.

Yet in the very first chapters of the Torah's account of Moses' life (recorded, incidentally, by Moses himself), we read of a major blunder he made. A case in which this wise and devoted leader completely misjudged his people.

When G-d appeared to Moses in the burning bush instructing him to return to Egypt and free the Children of Israel from the yoke of slavery, Moses' reaction was, "They're not going to believe me."

A reasonable assumption, one might say. At that point, the Children of Israel had been in exile for 210 years, 86 of them as slaves. Hebrew babies were being cemented in walls. Along comes a man who has been absent for decades. "I'm your redeemer," he says, "I've come to take you out of Egypt. G-d sent me."

Isn't it reasonable for Moses to ask for some sort of proof he might present? A letter of recommendation in the form of a miracle or two he could perform, to back up his story?

G-d is furious with Moses. He gives him the miracles he asks for (three of them), but makes it clear that they are necessary only because he, Moses, thinks them necessary.

The first thing you must know about your people, G-d rebukes Moses, is that they are believers.

Slice of LIFE

Some fifty years ago the day before Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) the Rabbi Betzallel Shif was in the airport terminal of Tebilsa (Capital of Georgia- Gruzia). He suddenly discovered that he had somehow misplaced his flight ticket. He searched his pockets and suitcases but found nothing. He would have to spend the night in the airport hotel. He was given a small two bed room in the terminal hotel. When he woke at dawn he discovered that someone else, who had probably missed a plane after his, was sleeping in the other bed. He quietly put on his Tefillin and Talis (Phylacteries and prayer shawl) faced the corner and prayed the Morning Prayer as silently as possible.

But when he finished he was unpleasantly surprised to see that his 'roommate' had woken and was sitting in a chair, dressed in an army uniform, staring at him intently. In Communist Russia this only spelled trouble. The marks on his uniform indicated that he was a colonel. He asked the Rabbi what he was doing. The Rabbi explained and as he was talking he noticed that the officer's eyes were red and a stream of tears ran down his cheeks. When the Rabbi finished explaining, the colonel asked if he could put on the Tefillin as well! Rabbi Shif, helped the colonel to put them on and after he finished praying he shook the Rabbi's hand and asked for his address. Some six months later, only a week before Passover there was a knock on his door and when opened it there stood the colonel! They hugged each other warmly. "Rabbi, I want you to return home with me and show my two children and wife what a real Passover Seder night is like" said the colonel. But Rabbi Shif had to refuse saying he couldn't leave his old mother alone for Passover. When the Colonel heard this he again almost burst into tears. "OY! Your mother! Oy! Because I didn't honour my parents they suffered so!" and he began to tell his sad story.

He had been born and bred in a Chabad Chassidic family. His grandfather had been a well-known, gifted Chassid by the name of Rabbi Peretz Chein, and his parents who had great hopes for him, gave him the same

name. They were sure he, too, would be a Chabad Chassid; devoted to making the world a better place according to the Torah, like his grandfather.

But it wasn't to be. Peretz became close with a fellow his age called Peter, who's goal in life was to be a ranking officer, unfortunately he eventually got Peretz enthused as well. Peretz's parents protested but they were helpless. Together he and Peter enlisted in the navy and began to rise up in the ranks until both became officers, each receiving a coveted golden handled sword made of the finest tempered steel. This sword became Peretz's pride and joy to the point that several times a year he would return home to show off his accomplishments. Each time he returned home all the Chassidim tried to just say hello and be friendly so as not to drive him away but finally one Chassid by the name of Itzci Raskin couldn't hold himself back. "What is that stupid sword doing on you?" he shouted at Peretz in front of everyone. "Aren't you ashamed?! The grandson of Peretz Chein with a sword?!" Peretz left the room blazing with anger and at that moment decided he would cut the cord. He changed his name to Pheter, and resolved to erase his 'useless' Jewish identity.

Years later, after he and his friend Peter rose to the level of majors, it was announced that Stalin (cursed be his name) was going to make a personal visit to their base, of course everyone worked feverishly to polish and prepare every inch of the place for 'Father Stalin'. One day before the awaited visit, a group of KGB agents visited the base which was routine before such an important occasion. They began questioning the officers one by one in private but when it came Pheter's turn, they began telling him details of his life that no one knew, except for his friend Peter. Obviously they just wanted to show him who was boss. There was nothing in their tone that was incriminating but it was certainly embarrassing. Peter had betrayed their friendship!

Pheter went to his room, and began to get angry. After all he had done for Mother Russia! Was this a way to be treated? Who needs this crazy government?! Suddenly the words of Itzci Raskin rang in his ears "What is that stupid sword doing on you? Aren't you ashamed? The grandson of Peretz Chein

with a sword?!" In a fit of insanity he pulled out the sword, stuck it deeply into the wooden floor and pushed it to a side until it broke almost in half. Then he took the unbroken half and began hacking away madly against a metal pipe in his room until it was dull, chipped and almost useless and his anger subsided.

Suddenly a whistle blew! Stalin was here! Pheter, came to himself, put the half-sword back in its sheath, and rushed out the door. But when he arrived in the greeting room Stalin wasn't there, only KGB agents. They read aloud, "The following officers will follow us for intensive interrogation." And they read out five names, one of which was Pheter's." The Admiral of the base stepped forward and angrily shouted at the agents. "What do you want from these men!?! These are the best men in the service! They are loyal soldiers of Mother Russia! What is their crime?!?" "Their crime is conspiracy to murder Comrade Stalin!!" said the KGB agent, looking knowingly at Peter as the other agents put their hands on their gun holsters. But the Admiral did not lose his composure. "Nonsense! And tell me, how, in your imagination did they plan to carry out this crime?!" "How?" Replied the agent. "With THIS!" he exclaimed and deftly pulled Pheter's sword from its sheath and held it up victoriously. But suddenly he felt that something was wrong, he looked at what he was holding in his hand and gasped. "This criminal, he knew we suspected him! That's why he broke the sword." The KGB agent said, trying to justify himself. "Fool!" Yelled the Admiral, "If he really had such a stupid plan and really thought you suspected him then he wouldn't have brought his sword at all, would he!?"

Pheter continued, "It was a miracle! And the shouted words of that Chassid Raskin saved me! On that day I decided to return to Judaism but I didn't know how. I simply kept putting it off for years until I saw you back then in the airport I knew it was another miracle.

Pheter was in constant contact with Rabbi Shif from then on. He changed his name back to Peretz and returned totally to Judaism and, as a sign of appreciation, gave Rabbi Shif his broken sword as a present. After the iron curtain fell he moved with his family to Florida and the two of them are still in close contact.

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ISSUE 1017

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In the beginning of Parshat Shemot the Torah lists the names of all those who came to Egypt. This seems strange; their names were already mentioned in previous Parsha's?! The Medrash comments on this; "because of their redemption from [from Egypt] were they mentioned here" (and the Medrash goes on to show how each tribes name signifies and is connected to the redemption). The amazing lesson we have from here is that the true essence of exile is redemption; the descent of exile is only an external one and is a stepping stool towards the ultimate redemption. This can surely help us stay focused in our present state, knowing the true essence of exile. May we merit this speedily in our days.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

What We Understand

The following is a free translation of a letter by the Rebbe dated Nissan, 5724 (March-April, 1964):

In answer to your query, in which you ask to explain the concept of shechinah (the divine immanence; lit. "indwelling"), which is mentioned many times in the teachings of our sages:

The concept is extensively expounded upon, particularly in the books and discourses of chassidic teachings—you can look it up in the indices published in the back of Tanya, Torah Ohr, Likkutei Torah and other works. Here I will offer a brief explanation, obviously not a comprehensive one, as space does not allow.

Since G-d is the ultimate perfection and is free of all limitations and definitions, it is self-evident that, in the words of the Alter Rebbe, "The fact that He creates universes does not express what G-d is." At the same time, He is, as Maimonides writes in his Laws of the Fundamentals of Torah, "the one who brings every existence into being; all existences exist only as derivatives of His ultimate existence" and the one whom "all existences are utterly dependent upon Him." It is also obvious that just as no creature can comprehend the nature of G-d's creation of reality ex nihilo, so, too, no creature can comprehend the nature of G-d, even the nature of G-d as the creator of the world and the source of every existence.

In the words of the great Jewish philosophers: "If I knew Him, I would be Him."

So though a person realizes and understands that nothing can create itself, and that one must therefore conclude that the created reality has a source that generates its existence, this is only proof of the existence of the Creator, not an understanding of what He is, even as "Creator."

Nevertheless, G-d desired that the divine influences upon creation... and the divine immanence in the world should also include elements that the human mind can comprehend. In the words of the sweet singer of Israel, "When I see Your heavens, the work of Your fingers..." Indeed, this includes an instruction to man regarding the service of his Creator: "Lift your eyes upward, and see who created these..." (As the Alter Rebbe elaborates on this verse in a discourse that is also the basis of Sefer Hachakirah, authored by his grandson, the Tzemach Tzedek.)

This aspect of the divine reality—that which pervades our world to the extent that it can be discovered by G-d's creatures—is what is meant by the term shechinah, i.e., that which dwells within and manifests itself.

It is important to emphasize that one cannot categorize the divine reality into various aspects or areas, G-d forbid; it is only that from the perspective of the contemplating creature, there are things that he can comprehend and things that he cannot comprehend. In truth, however, there are no categories, in the plural, but a singular, utterly abstract reality.

Consider the soul of man: obviously, it is not divisible into 248, 365 or 613 components; nevertheless, the observing eye differentiates between the vitality of the foot and the vitality of the brain, though both are of a single essence—the soul that vitalizes the body. How much more so (to distinguish ad infinitum) is it so regarding the divine reality. Thus, when we say that the shechinah is present in the Holy Temple, this is not to say, G-d forbid, that only that "aspect" of the divine that is called shechinah is there, but to stress that there the divine reality is present in such a way that it "dwells within" and "clothes itself" to the extent that it is observable with our physical eyes, in the fact that "the space of the ark did not take up space," in the ten miracles that regularly occurred in the Holy Temple, and so on.

As we said, the above is but one approach to explain the concept of shechinah; many other approaches, and many other points in this approach itself, are elaborated in a number of books and discourses of chassidic teaching.

My hope is that you have set times for the study of the teachings of chassidut every day, and to an even greater extent on Shabbat, the day sanctified to G-d.

With esteem and blessings for a happy and kosher Passover,

CUSTOMS CORNER

CUSTOMS REGARDING THE GENERAL PRAYERS

1. When one recites any verses that come from Tanach he must make sure to mention every word clear, so that if one word ends with the same letter the next word begins with, he should make sure to make a little gap in between these two words.
2. When one mentions the name of Hashem with the letters 'yud', then 'hey' then 'vuv' then 'hey', he should have in mind that G-d always existed, exists now and always will exist, and that he our master. When he mentions the name with the letters 'alef' then 'dalet' then 'nun' then 'yud', he should have in mind that G-d is our master. When he mentions the name 'elohim' he should have in mind that Hashem has the might and the power.

A WORD

from the Director

This coming Sunday (January 15), the 20th of Hebrew month of Tevet, is the anniversary of the passing of Rabbi Moses Maimonides, otherwise known as the Rambam.

In his major work, the Mishne Torah, the Rambam enumerates and details all 613 laws of the Torah. He places the laws relating to the Jewish king, and Moshiach, at the very end of his work.

In the introduction to these laws he states that the Jews were commanded to fulfil three mitzvot upon conquering and entering the Land of Israel: To appoint a king; to wipe out the descendants of Amalek; and to build [G-d's] Chosen House.

It would seem that these mitzvot should have been mentioned much earlier in his work if they were, in fact, so important.

However, the Rambam chose to organize the Mishne Torah in this fashion to emphasize that the true and complete performance of all the mitzvot of the Torah will be attained when a king rules over Israel.

The Rambam then defines Moshiach as a king, who will not only redeem the Jews from exile, but also restore the observance of the Torah and its mitzvot to its complete state.

For many, this would seem a rather novel approach. Yet, the Talmud states that "The world was created solely for Moshiach." This being the case, we certainly must do everything in our power to hasten his arrival.

What is within the power and reach of each individual, great and small?

Good deeds, charity, studying concepts associated with Moshiach and the Final Redemption, fostering peace between family, friends, and co-workers, and actively waiting for and anticipating Moshiach's his arrival each and every day.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Shlomi and Mendel had been friends from youth. They went to elementary and advanced Torah school together, entered into business together and now succeeded together.

They were so busy making money that neither had married yet; they simply had not found the time. And then there was the problem of religion.

It seems that as they rose to riches they had left not only their financial pasts but their Jewish ones also. Travel had 'opened their eyes'; the black and white pages of the Torah did not compare to the colourful landscapes and free lifestyles of Berlin, Paris or Vienna.

One they were traveling to Minsk for an important business deal. They had made good time today, the weather was beautiful and their spirits were high.

They stopped in a village on the way and entered an inn in order to have a meal and a good night's sleep.

When they requested a menu from the innkeeper he stared at them deeply for a few seconds and asked in a pleasant tone, "Excuse me, but aren't you gentlemen Jewish?" They smiled and looked at each other briefly with raised eyebrows "I can bring you kosher food; it will just take a few minutes longer. Do you want to wait?"

"No, no, just bring us some good meat and wine. Don't worry about the price, just make it the best you have."

"Fine," the innkeeper replied, "just wait here for a few minutes" and the old man left the room. They sat back and lit up cigarettes, blowing smoke rings in the air.

Suddenly the door burst open and the innkeeper entered like a wild animal, his face red as a beet with a murderous look in his eyes. His sleeve was rolled up baring a muscular arm and in his upraised hand he held a huge razor-sharp hatchet.

"You are going to die!!" he screamed, "I am a robber and a murderer, and you two fat Jews are just what I've been waiting for!! Put your hands on the table and don't move. One move and I start chopping!" He raised the hatchet even more menacingly, as though any instant he would bring it sweeping down upon them.

"NO!!! NO!!!" They screamed, weeping, hands glued to the table, petrified with fear. "OH G-d PLEASE NO!!!"

"AAAHH" Said the innkeeper "You Jews like to pray eh? You don't look it, do you!! Well, you know what? If you want to pray I'm giving you a few more minutes. Get up! Hands on your heads!" he then pushed them into a small bedroom on the first floor. "You have five minutes. The window is boarded, don't think you can save yourselves."

As soon as the bedroom door closed the two men fell to the ground and began weeping to G-d for forgiveness. What good was their money now? Every moment they had wasted on foolishness returned and burned like poisonous needles in their hearts. All they wanted to do was to clean their sinful souls before the end. They tried to remember prayers from the prayer book, they were sobbing, begging and pouring themselves out to G-d.

Ten minutes later the door opened gently and the innkeeper stood with a kind smile on his face. The hatchet was gone and he even bent over to help them to their feet.

"I wasn't really going to kill you" he said apologetically, "G-d forbid, I'm not a murderer or even a thief. Are you both all right? Sorry that I scared you, but I had to do it." He was brushing them off. They couldn't believe their eyes, was this a dream?

"Let me explain" The innkeeper escorted them back to the table sat opposite them and continued.

"About twenty years ago in the middle of winter, there arrived at my inn here a whole group of about 30 religious Jews. They told me that their Rabbi is laying in one of the carriages sick and needs a place to sleep. Everyone in this village hates Jews and I didn't really want to give them a place either, but I went out and took a look at their sick Rabbi.

"Well, I want to tell you that I never saw anything so pure and Holy in my life, it made me feel like a little baby and I almost started crying. I let him in. and after short time he passed away. But before he died he requested from me that if ever two Jews enter and refuse to eat Kosher food I should frighten them and threaten them even with death, but G-d forbid not to harm them. And you are the first Jews since then that fit that description"

Our two heroes were so affected by the story that they travelled to Haditch and discovered that the Holy man was Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the author of the Tanya and first Rebbe of Chabad. They prayed and wept at his grave and then travelled to Lubavitch to the Rebbe's successor, Rebbe Menachem Mendel and completely returned to Judaism.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

And behold, it was a weeping boy... and she said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children" (Ex. 2:6)

How could Pharaoh's daughter have recognized that the child was Jewish, just from his cry? This is because a Jewish cry is unique; even when he weeps, a Jew is filled with hope. (*Rabbi Mordechai Chaim of Slonim*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 13 JANUARY 2012



BEGINS		ENDS
8:27	MELBOURNE	9:30
8:15	ADELAIDE	9:16
6:30	BRISBANE	7:27
7:01	DARWIN	7:53
6:30	GOLD COAST	7:27
7:09	PERTH	8:08
7:52	SYDNEY	8:52
8:04	CANBERRA	9:05
8:29	LAUNCESTON	9:36
8:25	AUCKLAND	9:28
8:38	WELLINGTON	9:45
8:33	HOBART	9:42
7:30	BYRON BAY	8:27

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

**PARSHAS SHMOS
19 TEVES • 14 JANUARY**

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:27 PM
	MINCHA:	8:35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9:10 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:51 AM
	MINCHA:	8:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:30 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:35 PM
	MAARIV:	9:25 PM