

LAMPLIGHTER

15 Adar
Ki Tisa
[Shushan Purim]
1025
9 March
5772/2012

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In the Haftorah which accompanies this week's Torah portion of Ki Tisa we read about Elijah the Prophet and his famous confrontation with the prophets of Baal. Elijah addressed the Jewish nation and said, "How long will you waver between the two? If G-d is truly G-d, then follow Him, and if it is Baal, then go after him."

Elijah told the Jewish People: your inability to choose between the two alternatives is the worst possible spiritual path, even worse than choosing outright idolatry.

How can anything be worse than idolatry - ascribing G-dly powers to an object? Is it not better to reach some sort of compromise, to maintain a belief in G-d, but to nevertheless incorporate some elements of paganism? Why did Elijah say that it is preferable, G-d forbid, to actually worship idols?

Maimonides wrote that the worship of idols arose from human error, from a faulty understanding of the natural world. When some people looked at the physical forces governing the world, they mistakenly believed that those forces themselves should be worshiped, not realizing that it is G-d who causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall.

When a person worships an idol, be it one made of stone, or the planets and stars in the sky, he thinks that by placating these objects he will receive more blessings in his life. This, then, is the difference between a true idolater and a Jew who straddles the fence, never making a clear choice between idolatry and worship of the One, true G-d.

An idol worshipper may one day arrive at the conclusion that idolatry is wrong and return wholeheartedly to G-d, after having admitted his error. But it is far more difficult for a person who is "straddling the fence" to realize the error of his ways and see that he is committing a sin. For his part, he thinks that he is still a good Jew, for he still maintains the outer semblance of Jewish observance.

An idolater, even one who believes in a false god, believes that his god is the source of all life. He seeks spiritual truth, albeit in the wrong direction. But one who professes to believe in G-d yet secretly pledges obedience to an idol seeks not truth, but convenience and comfort. He wants to benefit from both worlds, covering all possible bases.

A person who vacillates is also more detrimental to those around him. An idol worshipper is more easily avoided, and not likely to lead others astray, who could be deceived by outward appearances.

Elijah's message holds true for us today. It is far easier to avoid obvious pitfalls in spiritual matters than to stand on guard against finer, less conspicuous compromises. But it is these finer points which ultimately define our intellectual honesty and our faith.

(Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.)

Good as Gold

By Yanki Tauber

A New York Times article once examined what Americans are doing with their money these days. One family installed palm trees on their Hamptons property which they fly to Florida each winter (the palm trees, not the property). A woman hired a "personal secretary" to tend to her hairdresser appointments, and then hired an assistant to the secretary. "It's like cats," she explained. "You need two of them so that they can keep each other company while you're away."

A similar problem plagued the Children of Israel more than 33 centuries ago. They had drained Egypt of its wealth, and then the Red Sea spewed out the jewels that had adorned the drowned Egyptians. So they, too, had too much gold. But back then, people had a more direct approach to things. Instead of devising all these ingenious ways of saying, "Hey, look! I have more money than I know what to do with! But don't worry! I'll keep on working my hardest to have even more!", they cast a calf of pure gold, put it up on a pedestal, and worshipped it.

How did G-d address the gold-sickness of His newly chosen people? He didn't abolish gold. He didn't even take away theirs. He told them to use their gold to build Him a Sanctuary.

Compulsive overeating is a horrible disease: it's unhealthy, it can even kill you. But the urge to eat is not only healthy---it's vital to life itself.

The same is true of every negative phenomenon. There is nothing intrinsically bad in G-d's world: every evil is a perverted good, every psychosis a healthy instinct gone awry.

So before we get all riled up over that woman with the two secretaries, let us try to understand the tendency of humans to splurge, flaunt and luxuriate in their wealth. We understand why we need food; we understand why we need shelter; but why do we crave gold?

In essence, the craving for gold is a yearning for transcendence. It is man saying: I am not content to merely exist and subsist; I want to exalt in life, I want to touch its magnificence and sublimity.

Of course, flying your palm trees to Miami each winter is not sublime. It's pathetic. It is a gross distortion of the noblest strivings of the human soul. The answer, however, is not to squelch these strivings, but to purge them of their negative expressions. Use your yearning for gold to make a home for G-d.

Slice of LIFE

Shortly before the Six-Day war the Lubavitcher Rebbe announced to his Chassidim that, since every Jew is essentially holy and that the commandment of Tefillin not only brings out this holiness but also puts fear into the heart of our enemies, therefore they should see to it that every Jew in the world, especially those in Israel and more especially the Israeli soldiers should put on Tefillin.

The idea worked; his Chassidim went into action and hundreds of thousands of Jews in Israel and elsewhere put on Tefillin, many for the first time in their lives. The rest is history; the ridiculously outnumbered Israelis miraculously destroyed all their enemies and a clear sign was given to the entire world that G-d is with us and wants us to inhabit the Holy Land.

But after the war the Rebbe told his followers to continue with the Tefillin campaign.

Our story begins shortly after the Six-Day war. A young Chassid from Australia came to visit the Lubavitcher Rebbe in his headquarters and Yeshiva at 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn.

The students there implemented the Campaign by going out with Tefillin every Friday for a few hours to unaffiliated Jews. The Australian fellow, who we will call Avraham, announced that he would buy some refreshments for the road. He ran to the nearby grocery store, bought some Kosher cookies, fruit and drinks and jumped into the car with a bunch of fellows that were going to a nearby hospital and they were off.

No one had eaten breakfast so he began pulling out food from his bag. But to his chagrin one thing he bought; a small box of Hamantashin (triangular cookies filled with chocolate that are traditionally eaten on Purim) was avoided by everyone. Purim had passed almost three months ago!

Needless to say no one even opened the box and the Hamantashin were left behind in the car untouched while they went to do the work of the Rebbe.

They met with much success; many of Jews in the hospital agreed to put on Tefillin, some for the first time in years, and

some for the first time since they had left concentration camps in Poland.

But then they came up against Max.

Max must have been close to ninety and as soon as they entered his room he shouted, "What do you want here? Get out! Go jump in the lake!!" They explained that they were only asking people to put on Tefillin

But he didn't let them finish. "I'm just as close to G-d as you! I don't need your boxes and your rituals!! I have my own commandments. Now get out!!" And he rolled over with his back to them."

The young Chassidim didn't want to leave on such a bad note so one of them held out some of the fruit the Australian had bought and said in the most friendly way he could muster up, "Hey, no hard feelings. We're leaving, we're leaving! Okay? But maybe you'd like a piece of fruit before we leave?"

"Fruit?" The old man turned to them and scoffed. "What, you think they don't have fruit here? Why don't you bring me something good? You know what? You want me to put on Tefillin? Well then" he said mockingly, "bring me a Hamantash!! I haven't had a Hamantash for forty years!! That's right! A Hamantash from Purim."

He was sure that the last thing they would have was a three month old cookie.

All the fellows stared silently and unbelievably at Avraham who got the hint and ran from the room like a jet. Less than five minutes later he returned, out of breath, with the box of old Purim cookies that he had almost thrown into the garbage.

The old man couldn't believe his eyes as Avraham opened the box and handed him a Hamantash. He took it, examined it, sniffed it (it was still edible!) and even took a small bite (the fellows reminded him which blessing to make beforehand) and, for the first time in forty years, actually began to smile... !

The Chassidim broke out in a Purim song and danced.

"Nu?" The old fellow said as he rolled up his sleeve. "I don't know where you got that hamantashin but you got me in a corner! Where are the Tefillin?"

It was the beginning of a long friendship. Chassidim came to visit him every day thereafter until he announced that he bought a pair of Tefillin for himself.

This 2nd story took place when this week's Torah portion was being read. The great and famous Torah genius Rabbi Yosef Ber Soloveichik came to visit the Lubavitcher Rebbe on Shabbat in Brooklyn to hear him speak to thousands of his Chassidim.

He and the Rebbe had been old acquaintances; they had learned at the same time some thirty years earlier in the University of Berlin in France.

As soon as Rabbi Soloveichik entered the Synagogue the Rebbe stood up in his honour and did not sit till his illustrious guest was seated next to him. They spoke warmly for several long minutes while the Chassidim sang and sang until the Rebbe turned to the crowd, they fell silent and he resumed speaking.

When Rabbi Soloveichik left, the Rebbe again stood until he had gone.

Afterward Rabbi Soloveichik was asked what was his impression of the Rebbe.

He replied, as was his custom, with an example from the Torah.

"A question is asked on this week's Torah section. We see that after the Jews sinned with the Egel, Moses broke the First Tablets, asked G-d for forgiveness and G-d forgave them and gave a second set of Tablets like the first ones. The Torah then tells us that when Moses descended from Mount Sinai with these Second Tablets his face shone with such indescribable holiness (34: 29) that he had to cover it.

"The question is, why didn't his face shine when he brought down the first Tablets? Why only now with the second ones?"

"And the answer that is given is that Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the First Tablets as the greatest Torah Scholar in the world; G-d Himself had personally taught him everything!

"But when Moses descended with the second Tablets it was after they had sinned with the Golden Calf and he had devoting himself with total self-sacrifice, heart and soul, non-stop to saving them ... each and every one! It was no wonder that his face shone with holiness.

"The Rebbe as I knew him thirty years ago" Rabbi Soloveichik continued, "was the greatest scholar I had ever seen (incidentally the Rebbe said something similar about Rabbi Soloveichik). He knew literally everything, all the books all the commentaries, by heart and was totally devoted to the Torah.

"But now after he has been devoted to saving all the Jewish people with every fiber of his being for all these years.... his greatness is totally indescribable... like Moses with the second Tablets."

Published by **The Chabad House of Caulfield** in conjunction with the **Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.**

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ISSUE 1025

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Our Sages highlight the connection between children and redemption by interpreting the verse, "Do not touch My anointed ones (meshichai)" (Chronicles I 16:22), as referring to Jewish children. Why are children given this title? - Because they have no other genuine concern besides Mashiach. A child truly wants to live in a world of peace, harmony, knowledge and joy, and these are the very qualities that will characterize the Era of the Redemption. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Shushan Purim Katan 5752 - 1992)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

28 Adar, 5721 (1961)

The principle of unity is the essence of Judaism, since Abraham first proclaimed monotheism in a world of idolatry, which came to full fruition at the revelation at Mount Sinai.

For true monotheism, as professed by us, and as explained in the Jewish religion, is not only the truth that there is only one G-d and none with Him, but that there is "nothing besides" Him (ein od milvado), that is the denial of the existence of any reality but G-d's, the denial of pluralism and dualism even the separation between the material and spiritual.

It is interesting to note that the more the physical sciences advance, the closer one approaches the principle of unity even in the world of matter.

For, whereas formerly it was the accepted opinion that the plurality and compositeness in the material world can be reduced to some 100 odd basic elements and entities, and physical forces and laws were regarded as being separate and independent, not to mention the dichotomy between matter and energy.

But in recent years, with the advancement of science, the basic elements themselves were reduced to several more elementary components of the atom, viz. electrons, protons and neutrons, and even these were immediately qualified as not the ultimate "blocks" of matter, until the discovery was made that matter and energy are reducible and convertible one into the other.

It is well known that the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of general Chasidus, taught, and Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the founder of Chabad Chasidus, explained and amplified, that every detail in human experience is an instruction in a person's service to his Maker.

Thus, what has been said above about the advancement of science, exemplified also the progress of human advancement in the service of G-d.

Man possesses two apparently contradictory elements, no less incompatible than the incompatibility of matter and spirit, the counterpart of which in the physical world is matter and energy.

I refer to the Divine soul and animal soul, or, on a lower level, the Yetzer Tov and the Yetzer Hora (the inclination toward good and the inclination toward evil). But this incompatibility is evident only in the infantile stage of progress in Divine service, comparable to the plurality of elements and forces which were presumed to exist in physical nature.

But, just as the appreciation of the underlying unity of nature grew with the advancement of science, so does perfection in the Divine service lead to the realization of the essential unity in human nature, to the point where the Yetzer Tov and the Yetzer Hora become one, through the transformation of the Yetzer Hora by and into the Yetzer Tov, for otherwise, of course, there can be no unity and harmony, since all that is holy and positive and creative could never make peace and be subservient to the unholy, negative and destructive.

And in this attained unity the Jew proclaims, [Shema Yisroel] "Hear O Israel, G-d our G-d, G-d is one."

This is also what our Sages meant, when they succinctly said - as they often compress far-reaching ideas into a few concise words - that the words, "And you shall love G-d, your G-d, with all your heart (levovecho)," which immediately follow Shema Yisroel, mean: with both your Yetzers, with the Yetzer Hora, as with the Yetzer Tov.

CUSTOMS CORNER

1. One is accustomed to saying the following four things, he merits to receive the 'shechina'; "do it for the sake of your name, do it for the sake of your right hand, do it for the sake of your Torah, do it for the sake of your holiness" (we say this at the end of Shmoneh Esrei).
2. If one began Shmoneh Esrei on the assumption that he is obligated to pray because he hadn't prayed yet, but then he remembered that he had actually prayed already, he should not finish the Shmoneh Esrei, rather he should stop where he is holding.
3. If one's Talit fell off in the middle of Shmoneh Esrei, if it did not totally fall off, he may rap himself again in the Talit, if however it fell off totally, then he may not rap himself in the Talit, lest he'll make an interruption in the Shmoneh Esrei.

A WORD

from the Director

We are in the week of Purim now.

One of the most important concepts and most powerful lessons of Purim is the knowledge of what the essence of a Jew is;

The Jews in those days were in the best state possible, they had connections to the king that ruled over the entire world, Esther was the queen, Morechai was the king's personal advisor, what could be better, and when the king made a party he actually invited the Jews too, that was not usual for those days.

The Jews took the offer, but of course they did, if they just did not show up that may sound rebellious against the king, the problem was that they actually began to enjoy it, they started getting involved in the party.

Jews and gentile will never be able to truly assimilate, the Jew by nature is different, this is as a result of the unique connection the Jew has with G-d, "the chosen nation" means that G-d chose the Jewish nation from amongst all nations and set them aside, he set them aside by giving them direct connection, a connection that transcends all limitations of nature, (take a look at Israel, not one Jew died as a result of the 39 scud missiles which were fired on Israel in the 1st gulf war, and back in 1967 in the 6 day war when the Jews miraculously defeated all the surrounding countries, the world was saying this will be another holocaust, and after the war all the military experts were forced to admit that this was a "modern day miracle", in the Yom Kipur war when only one unite of soldiers held back the Egyptian forces, and the list goes on and on...) but when the Jews don't appreciate this that's when things become dangerous, we place ourselves under the rule of nature where the nations of the world want to get rid of the Jews.

How did the miracle of Purim occur? When the Jews repented, they reactivated the 'miraculous connection' and they were saved.

So the 'miracle' of Purim is in a sense the natural state of a Jew.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED

Once...

PURIM TREATS FROM HEAVEN

In the town of Berdichev, the shul of the famous Rabbi Levi Yitzchak began to fill up even before the sun had set. Eagerly people crowded in to hear the reading of Megilat Esther that would take place that night.

But where was Rabbi Levi Yitzchak? The day before Purim is The Fast of Esther, and so the evening service ought to have begun a little earlier than usual. Everyone was waiting for their beloved Rebbe to lead the prayers, but he was not there.

In fact, the Berdichever had been ready to join every-one else in shul, when his secretary told him that a woman wanted to see him. In a glance, the Rebbe realized that she was very poor. She stood there apologetically, holding a chicken in her hand, asking the Rebbe if it was kosher.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak examined the chicken carefully. Then he sighed. No, the chicken was not fit to be eaten. It was not kosher.

Tears welled up in the poor woman's eyes. "Oh no," she sobbed. "What will I do now? My husband is sick, and there is no food in the house for the children. We spent our last pennies to buy this chicken. I hoped the soup would help my husband, and fill the stomachs of the children. They are so hungry. Now what will I do?" the woman cried.

"Do not worry," said the Berdichever. "G-d is very great. He manages to feed the whole world every day. He will feed you and your family too. Purim is a time of miracles, and G-d has many ways of taking care of you."

After the woman had left, the Rebbe went home. Delicious smells of the Purim meal filled the house. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak went straight to the kitchen, and began gathering up all the food he could find.

He made his way to the outskirts of town where the poor woman lived. The door to her house was not locked, and Rabbi Levi Yitzchak went in. "Is that you, Sara?" her husband called weakly from his bed. "What happened with the chicken?"

"Don't worry. A happy Purim, G-d has sent you Meshalach Manot (the traditional edible presents) for Purim," the Rebbe replied. Then he quickly set the table neatly and hurried back to shul.

As soon as Rabbi Levi Yitzchak took his usual place in shul, the evening service began, followed by the reading of the Megilah. Nobody had left early, even though they had waited so long. Every-one wanted to hear the Rebbe read the Megilah.

They were not disappointed. That year the Megillah reading seemed full of new meaning, especially when Rabbi Levi Yitzchak read the parts about celebrating Purim by sending presents of food to friends, and giving charity to the poor.

Everyone seemed to get the point. In their hearts they realized that they had to try to have more feeling for others, more love of fellow Jews, and to care for the needs of other's. Somehow, listening to the Berdichever, everyone found themselves deciding to make extra efforts to fulfil these mitzvot better.

After shul, when the Rebbe's wife went home, she was startled to see that all the food she had prepared was gone! Had they been robbed?! Aghast, she turned to her husband. But Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's face was glowing with pleasure. The Rebbetzin knew her husband well, and understood

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immediately what must have happened. She put up a kettle of water for tea for them to break their fast. Then she pulled out leftovers from here and there, and scraped together some food for a Purim meal.

Meanwhile the poor woman returned to her home. To her amazement, she found her husband and the children all excited. The table was decked with food, and delicious aromas filled their little cottage. "I heard someone come in. He said it was Meshalach Manot from Heaven," her husband explained. "By the time I got up to see who it was, he was gone. It must have been... Elijah the Prophet himself!"

The woman, her husband, and the little children all began to laugh and dance with joy that they had not known in years.

The next morning, unable to contain their excitement, the children told their friends about the great miracle, that Eliyahu had visited their home. The children of the town told their parents. And their parents understood why their Rebbe had been so late in coming to shul the night before.

Taking their hint from the Rebbe, people outdid them-selves sending generous presents of food to the poor family, and in sending food and charity to all the poor of the city.

Of course, they did not forget their own Rebbe, who had given away his own last morsels of food. Everyone knew that he did not like to accept presents, but on Purim it was a Mitzvah. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak had to accept it.

CANDLE LIGHTING: 9 MARCH 2012

BEGINS		ENDS
7:31	MELBOURNE	8:26
7:25	ADELAIDE	8:19
5:53	BRISBANE	6:45
6:47	DARWIN	7:36
5:52	GOLD COAST	6:44
6:24	PERTH	7:17
7:04	SYDNEY	7:58
7:13	CANBERRA	8:07
7:24	LAUNCESTON	8:22
7:31	AUCKLAND	8:26
7:34	WELLINGTON	8:31
7:24	HOBART	8:23
6:52	BYRON BAY	7:44



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMEN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS KI TISA
16 ADAR • 10 MARCH

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING: MINCHA: KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	7:31 PM 7:40 PM 8:10 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS: LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: MINCHA: SHABBOS ENDS:	10:00 AM 10:22 AM 7:30 PM 8:26 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI: MINCHA: MAARIV:	9:15 AM 7:30 PM 8:20 PM