

LAMPLIGHTER

28 Nisan
Shemini
1031
20 April
5772/2012

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

"And it came to pass on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel," begins this week's Torah portion, Shemini.

"Moses said: This is the thing that G-d has commanded you to do; and the glory of G-d will appear to you."

G-d's command was to build the Sanctuary.

The Children of Israel, under the guidance of Moses, Aaron and his sons, were busy for seven days making all the preparations that were necessary for its erection. It was in the merit of these seven days of training for the service of the Sanctuary that the Jewish people were worthy of G-d's presence descending on the eighth day, when the Sanctuary was actually built and the Divine Presence began to dwell within it.

What lesson can we derive from the fact that G-d's presence was revealed on the eighth day, after seven days of intense preparation?

Chasidic philosophy explains that the number seven is symbolic of the world as it exists in nature, subservient to natural law and order.

An example of this is the seven days of the week, which represent a whole and complete cycle. The number eight, on the other hand, represents a deviation from this natural order, and thus symbolizes that which is supernatural.

The numbers seven and eight are also significant when speaking about G-d:

Seven represents the type of G-dliness that is contained within the physical world and hidden within the laws of nature;

Eight alludes to G-d's supernatural and miraculous intervention in daily affairs.

Yet even that G-dly light which exists on a level above the limitations of nature is not totally disassociated from physical existence. On the contrary, the number eight is only reached after the number seven is attained.

Applying this principle to ourselves, we see that even though a Jew's service to G-d may be limited by the confines and constraints of circumstance, when he tries with all his heart to go beyond these limitations he is rewarded with an infusion of holiness that can only be granted from Above.

Accordingly, the seven days of preparation served to pave the way and ready the Sanctuary for G-d's holy presence to descend on the eighth day.

This principle holds special significance for us today, for even though we stand on the threshold of the Messianic Era, we are still bound by the constraints of the exile until Moshiach is actually revealed.

We must therefore bear in mind that our service now actively prepares the world for the Final Redemption and the open revelation of G-dliness that will prevail.

Recognitions

By Tali Loewenthal

In our journey through life we have many different kinds of experiences. Some are happy and boisterous; some are more sombre; some are just dogged day-to-day getting through what has to be done; some are serene and moving; some are inspiring.

According to Jewish teaching, through all this, at every step of our lives, we have an important relationship with the Infinite, with G-d the Creator and Inner Life of the Universe. Much of the time we may be completely unaware of this relationship. The joys or the worldly desperations of the moment hide it from us. At other times, there may be some kind of hint of recognition.

This week's Torah reading provides an intense and ecstatic example of recognition of G-d. The Jewish people, guided by Moses, had constructed the beautiful Sanctuary. It was a wonderful edifice manifesting many kinds of craftsmanship and artistry, expressed in gold, silver, copper, cedar wood and skilfully woven tapestries.

But the Sanctuary was intended to be more than that. The purpose of the Sanctuary was to be an abode for the Divine, a place where you could recognize G-d.

Directed by Moses, there had been a seven day long ceremony of dedication of the Sanctuary, making it not just a work of craft and art but a Divine dwelling. Our Parshah starts on the eighth day (Shemini means "eighth"). Moses made a statement which, even in our sacred Torah, which focuses on the holy, is striking in its directness: "This is what G-d has commanded you to do, so that the Glory of G-d will be revealed to you."

His instructions concerned bringing offerings at the altar. This took place. Then Aaron blessed the people with the Priestly Blessing. Then Moses and Aaron entered the Tent of the Sanctuary, and came out and both blessed the people. At that point, suddenly, G-d's glory was revealed in a practical way: a stream of fire which emerged from the Tent of the Sanctuary and ignited the offering on the altar.

At that moment the Jewish people recognized G-d. They shouted and prostrated themselves before the Sanctuary. They did not think of trickery, or pyrotechnics, as some people might today, in our later, technological, secular and cynical age. For the Jewish people with Moses it was a moment of recognition of the Divine.

However, asks the Lubavitcher Rebbe, what about us, more than 3,300 years later? What about an epoch when we do not see this kind of revelation? When the world seems to conduct itself according to very sober and rational rules, without apparitions of Divine fire?

One possibility is that although we do not see the revelation, we act as if we did. Our physical eyes and mind, well trained for assessing bank-statements and mobile-phone agreements, do not perceive G-d. But our souls do. Hence we should act accordingly, as if our conscious minds were also directly aware of the Divine, by dedicating ourselves to Torah teaching.

This can lead, suggests the Rebbe, to another possibility: when we do the right thing, guided by Jewish teaching, then sometimes, in some way, almost without our realizing it, we may actually experience moments of awareness and recognition. The Shabbat or festival table, the birth of a baby, a visit to the Western Wall of the Temple, a Jewish wedding -- moments of recognition of the Divine. Gentle, almost imperceptible. But real.

Slice of LIFE

A UNIQUE GUEST

By Yerachmiel Tilles

Nearly fifty years ago, Yitzchak, a young married Chasidic man, who lived in the Stamford Hill section of London, drove on one of his regular business trips to the north of England. His car broke down on the highway and he was forced to have it towed to the nearest town, to a garage there. The repair took many hours, and even before it was finished it became clear that he would never be able to get back to London before sunset.

So Yitzchak found himself stuck in a small town that he had barely heard of, where he didn't know a single person. His inquiries revealed that there was a synagogue, thank G-d, and he managed to rent a hotel room within walking distance and find a bit of food in a supermarket with kosher certification.

When Queen Shabbat arrived, Yitzchak walked to the synagogue. It was quite an impressive structure considering its location in an area not known for Jewish communities. Unfortunately, it felt desolate and even now at the start of Shabbat there was hardly anyone there. With great difficulty a minyan was finally assembled, yet most of its members did not appear to Yitzchak's eye to be particularly mitzvah-observant.

One of the religious-looking older men had a thick beard. He approached Yitzchak, shook his hand enthusiastically, and then without introduction or preamble asked him in not-so-fluent English and in an almost pleading tone if he would consent to be his guest for Shabbat. But when Yitzchak responded that he would be happy to accept the invitation. The old man's face lit up. Afterwards, they left the synagogue together. His host introduced himself as Yankel Frankovich.

The apartment was quite small. Yitzchak perceived simultaneously that Yankel lived alone, and yet the table in the middle of the room was set for two. His host saw the wonder on his face, smiled, and remarked that he so desired to have a guest that for years now he had been setting a second place in anticipation.

The meal turned out to be surprisingly enjoyable. Hours went by in Torah discussion and singing the songs of Shabbat until it was quite late at night. Yitzchak rose from the table, happy but exhausted, to return to the

hotel. To his shock, Yankel pleaded with him to remain and be his guest for sleeping over also. It seemed such an urgent matter for his host that Yitzchak felt he had no choice but to accept, even though he had already paid for his hotel room.

Throughout the night Yankel had prolonged severe coughing fits. In the morning Yitzchak tried to convince him not to walk to shul, but to stay home and rest. The old man refused to consider it.

In their long slow strolls back and forth between shul and home, the two men became friendlier and closer. Yitzchak was especially impressed with the strong faith of his elder companion and the whole-hearted innocence with which he related to and served the Al-mighty.

Finally, at the Third Meal, Yankel opened up about himself. He was born in Russia. When he was still a child, in the early stages of the Bolshevik Revolution, his grandfather decided that Russia was no longer a safe place for them to live, and the entire family uprooted to England. They settled in this same small town, where they lived in near poverty, but happily free of fear and persecution.

As a result of their pioneering presence, other Jewish immigrant families moved to the town as well. Eventually there was a significant Jewish community, and they built a fine synagogue. His grandfather and grandmother were hospitable to an extreme, and his grandfather always managed to come up with a generous donation to give to anyone who needed it, unless the person was too embarrassed to accept such a gift, in which case he would extent it as a loan.

With the passage of time, the community became caught up in the spirit of "progress." The younger generation mostly moved away to areas distant from their parents, and of the minority that remained, their children, the third generation, moved away too.

When Yankel grew up, his grandfather was already quite old and the Jewish population greatly diminished. He tried many times to convince his grandfather to move to a different city with a larger Jewish community, but he always refused, saying that since they were the founding pillars of the community, they were obligated to stay.

Before passing away, the grandfather requested that Yankel too not abandon the community by moving away. He told him that just the fact that in his house a Jew could find a place to stay and enjoy some kosher food was in itself justification for him to remain. "Who knows?" he concluded his request; "Perhaps someday a Jewish traveller will

show up, and you will be able to fulfil the blessed mitzvah of hospitality."

As Yitzchak realized that he was the guest that his new close friend had been awaiting all these years - decades even! - tears welled in his eyes. His elderly host tried to continue speaking, but another difficult coughing spell forced him to pause.

Finally he resumed. "Please don't feel sorry for me," he said. "Really the opposite is true. You can't know how much gratitude I feel towards you that you enabled me to have the merit of fulfilling the mitzvah of bringing home a guest. Now I feel that I have fulfilled my mission from my grandfather."

On Saturday night Yitzchak left as soon as he could to get home. But he promised Yankel to return to visit. He was concerned about his welfare and anyway he wanted to bring him a nice present.

A few days later he was able to travel north again. He drove directly to Yankel's house, but to his knock on the door there was no response.

Already worried, Yitzchak hurriedly drove over to the synagogue. He found the attendant in charge and asked him about Yankel. The man looked at him sadly and answered that the old man had passed away just that Sunday. "He came to shul, suffered a severe coughing attack, and died right here!"

Suddenly the synagogue manager's gaze focused more intently on Yitzchak, and he said, "One moment, aren't you the guest that was here this past Shabbat? I have something for you. Yankel left this package on his table, and it has your name on it."

With great emotion, Yitzchak hurried to open the package. Inside were a few books and a letter. He began to read:

"Yitzchak, my dear friend. I feel that my end is near. Your visit brought me so much joy and pleasure- genuine Yiddische nachas. I hope that the merit of the mitzvah of hosting you will stand for me in the World of Truth, where I will be soon. I bequeath my siddur and chumash to you, along with my heartfelt wish that you will succeed in raising your children in the path of Torah."

Yitzchak cried quietly. When he heard there was no one to say kaddish for the deceased, he promised that he himself would do it.

From that day on, Yitzchak made it a rule in his household that an extra place should always be set at the table, for any guest who might happen to appear. In addition to his own mitzvah, he wanted this practice to be an ongoing memorial for Yankel's dedication and love his entire live for the mitzvah of hospitality.

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

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ISSUE 1031

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Torah lists four animals that have only one of the two kosher signs and are therefore non-kosher - camel, hyrax, hare and pig. Each animal symbolizes one of the four nations which enslaved the Jews in exile. We are now in the last of these four exiles, corresponding to the pig - chazir in Hebrew. The word "chazir" means "return." After this fourth and final exile the glory of the Jewish people will "return" to the way it was intended. (*Vayikra Raba*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

20th of Iyar, 5726 [1966]

After not hearing from you for a very long time, I received your letter of May 6th, though in the meantime I inquired after you from time to time through our representatives in Philadelphia.

In your letter you ask my opinion as to whether a religious or charitable group may properly receive donations from a company which is conducting its business in an unethical way, at usurious rates of interest, etc.

Generally speaking, it is not my function to answer Shaalos [Jewish legal questions], for which there are special Rabbinical bodies in each city. Moreover, it would be impossible for me to give you a definitive answer to your particular question, in view of the fact that many important points of information are missing. For example, one essential factor is whether the acceptance of a donation from that company would be tantamount to an expression of approval of its methods, either explicitly or implied; or whether it can in no way be so mistaken by anyone, not even by the company itself, in which case it would be a question of in no way encouraging the policy of the company, but only giving it the Mitzvah of Tzedoko [commandment of charity], or withholding it. It is only after you have all these facts available and ready to be presented to a Rov [a rabbinic authority], that he would be able to give you his decision.

You do not mention anything about yourself and your affairs, from which I gather that all is in good order. And "in good order," insofar as a Jew is concerned, means that it is not stationary, but is progressing and advancing.

This brings me to the timely message of the present days of Sefira, the Counting of the Omer. It has been noted that in counting the Omer we use the cardinal numbers rather than the ordinal numbers. In other words, we say, for example, "Today is thirty-five days of the Omer, etc." rather than "Today is the thirty-fifth day of the Omer." This means that it is not a case where each day constitutes merely a single additional day, but each day constitutes a part of the whole and, in fact, complements the previous days. Considering that the counting of the Omer symbolizes the counting of the days of preparation for Shavuot, the Festival of the Giving of the Torah, the lesson of the Counting of the Omer, and the significance of each day of this period, are obvious.

With blessing,

6th of Iyar, 5735 [1975]

I am in receipt of your letter of 2nd of Iyar, and was pleased to read the good news it contained. May G-d grant that you should have good news to report also in the other matters which you mentioned in your letter, and should go from strength to strength in all matters of goodness and holiness.

With regard to the problem of concentration in prayer, generally useful advice is to daven b'tzibbur [pray with the congregation], or at any rate at the time when the tzibbur davens [congregation prays]. It is also helpful to daven from the siddur [prayer book], and even when one davens by heart - to keep the siddur open at the right place. Finally, it is good to follow the Shulchan Aruch's [Code of Jewish Law's] direction to give Tzedoko before davening on weekdays - bli neder [without making a vow].

As we are now coming from the month of Nissan, the month of Geulo [Redemption], may G-d grant you a growing measure of Geulo from all distractions and hindrances.

Hoping to hear good news from you.

With blessing,

CUSTOMS CORNER

"And you shall count for yourselves from the morrow of the Shabbat, from the day on which you bring the Omer offering, seven complete weeks they shall be; until the morrow of the seventh week, you shall count fifty days..." (Leviticus 23:15)

The "morrow of the Shabbat" referred to in this verse is the 16th of Nissan--the 2nd day of Passover, which begins tonight at nightfall. Thus 16th of Nissan also commences the 49-day "Counting of the Omer", which retraces our ancestors' seven-week spiritual journey from the Exodus to Sinai. Each evening we recite a special blessing and count the days and weeks that have passed since the Omer. The 50th day is Shavuot, the festival celebrating the Giving of the Torah at Sinai.

The Omer is counted every evening after nightfall, from the second night of Passover till the night before Shavuot.

Forgot to count the Omer at night? Count the following day, but without a blessing. On subsequent nights, continue counting with a blessing as usual. The blessing is made only if every day has been counted; if you missed a day, say the day's count without the blessing.

A WORD

from the Director

This Tuesday, 2 Iyar, marks a significant event in the world's countdown to Moshiach. On that day 70 years ago (in 5702 - April 19, 1942), the first letters of a unique Torah scroll, written specifically for the purpose of "greeting our Righteous Moshiach," were inscribed.

In truth, the project had been initiated by the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, several months before on Simchat Torah, but for various reasons the actual writing was delayed until 2 Iyar, which is also the birthday of the fourth Chabad Rebbe, the Rebbe Maharash, Rabbi Shmuel.

On 2 Iyar, 5702 the Previous Rebbe wrote:

"By Divine Providence and in the merit of our holy Rebbes, the opportunity to perform an extremely exalted mitzva has fallen to me: to arouse the world to immediate repentance and prepare it for immediate redemption by writing a Torah scroll expressly for greeting our righteous Moshiach. This was to have been done by me personally, but on Simchat Torah, while delivering a talk on the importance of loving one's fellow Jew, a thought occurred to me: Was I justified in concealing the truth and preventing others from participating in this great and holy endeavour? Thus I decided to announce it publicly, and with G-d's help I intend to write this special Torah scroll for Moshiach, may we greet him speedily in our days."

In fact, the Previous Rebbe insisted on paying for the entire undertaking himself. All monies that were donated he transferred to Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch, the educational arm of Lubavitch.

It took many years for the Torah scroll to be completed, but on 9 Shevat, 5730 (January 16, 1970) it was formally installed in 770 as Jews from all over the globe took part in the proceedings.

After placing the Torah in the holy ark, the Rebbe pronounced the "Shehecheyanu" blessing and ate a new fruit, thanking G-d for having "granted us life, sustained us and enabled us to reach this occasion." May it be G-d's will that we all recite this blessing very soon, thanking Him for bringing us His Righteous Moshiach.

J. I. Gutterick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

ANGELIC PLEASURE

The saintly Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk once recovered from a life-threatening illness. When his recovery was complete, his closest disciples mustered their courage to ask him what he had seen while hovering between life and death.

The Rebbe said that he would tell one thing he learned:

As I walked in the Garden of Eden, I saw among the most honoured souls a familiar face. He looked very much like Mottel the Bookbinder. To be sure, Mottel was a G-d-fearing Jew, an honest, hard-working bookbinder, but he was otherwise an undistinguished ordinary Jew, not even much of a Torah scholar.

"Is it truly you, Reb Mottel?" I asked the soul as I approached him.

"Yes, it is I," called out Reb Mottel happily.

"But how did you get to this exalted place?" I asked Reb Mottel quite innocently.

"When I was brought before the Heavenly Court, I was asked the usual questions. I had to admit that, regrettably, I had studied very little Torah. I didn't have much of a head for it. Besides, we were very poor, so I had to find a way of earning money to help my parents support the family. I was apprenticed, at an early age, to a bookbinder, I explained to the Court...

"They began the weighing of my mitzvot (commandments) and sins. On the right side of the scale, angels began putting all my good deeds. Then they pushed the scale down to make it weightier, saying this was for the joy and sincerity with which I performed the mitzvot. "But then other angels came forward and began to load my sins and misdeeds on the left scale. I watched with horror as my sins were added up. Most of the sins were truly not serious, and they happened because of my ignorance. But, though they were small, they were adding up dangerously, till they tipped the scale.

"As I stood there before the Heavenly Court, trembling and ashamed, an angel suddenly appeared with a worn-out siddur (prayer book) in his hand. Behind him was a line of wagons loaded with sacks.

"I am the angel in charge of stray pages from holy books. I go to every Jewish home, every shul and every Jewish school. I look to see the condition of the holy books. Whenever I see a worn out book, with crumpled pages and loose covers it gives me tremendous pleasure, for this is a sign that the books are in constant use. But when I see that some of these books are tattered beyond repair, I am troubled, for every holy book has a holy soul, and every page has a soul, which must be treated with care and respect.

"In the course of my travels I met this man here on trial. Ever since he was a child, Mottel loved his little siddur and would often caress and kiss it before closing it.

"When it came time for Mottel to be apprenticed, he told his father that there was nothing he would like more than to be a bookbinder.

"I have never seen a book-binder like Mottel," continued the angel in my defence. "He never got any pages mixed up, never missed a stitch, and always used the best materials. From time to time, he would go to the shuls in his town and collect holy books that cried out for attention. He took them home and worked late into the night to restore them, bind them and give them new life. He never charged for this and never even told anyone about it.

"I respectfully request that the Heavenly Court permit me to unload all the sacks of worn-out holy books to which Mottel the Bookbinder has given a second life, and put them on the scale with all his other mitzvot and good deeds.

"The Heavenly Court agreed. Long before the wagons were half unloaded, the scale with the mitzvot clearly outweighed the other side.

"Believe me, dear Rebbe," Mottel concluded, "I was as astonished as you were at what happened before my eyes at seeing me in this place of honour."

"I wanted to ask Mottel a few more questions," explained Rebbe Elimelech, "but at just that moment I began to recover. Reb Mottel's story speaks for itself. But let us also remember," Reb Elimelech enjoined his disciples, "that G-d never fails to give credit and reward for any good deed, even for such a seemingly trivial act as smoothing out a crumpled corner of a well-worn page in a holy book.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

And it came to pass on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel (Lev. 9:1)

Every day, Aaron, his sons, and the elders came to learn Torah from Moses without having to be called. Why, on this day, did Moses have to call them? Proverbs states, "The heart knows the bitterness of the soul." The Talmud explains that a person may have a premonition about something without being consciously aware of it. Aaron and the elders felt, in their hearts, that on that day - the eighth day of the consecration of the Tabernacle - a terrible calamity would befall the Jewish nation. Indeed, later that day, Aaron's two sons were killed. Moses therefore found it necessary to seek them out and urge them to come. (*Rabbi Shlomo Kluger*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 20 APRIL 2012



BEGINS		ENDS
5:29	MELBOURNE	6:25
5:28	ADELAIDE	6:23
5:08	BRISBANE	6:00
6:21	DARWIN	7:10
5:06	GOLD COAST	5:59
5:32	PERTH	6:26
5:09	SYDNEY	6:03
5:15	CANBERRA	6:10
5:15	LAUNCESTON	6:14
5:31	AUCKLAND	6:27
5:25	WELLINGTON	6:23
5:12	HOBART	6:12
5:05	BYRON BAY	5:57

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS SHEMINI
29 NISAN • 21 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:29 PM
	MINCHA:	5:40 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:10 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	TEHILIM:	8:30 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:35 AM
	THE MOLAD OF THE MONTH OF IYAR IS	
	SHABBOS THE 21 OF APRIL:	10:17 AND 3 CHALAKIM AM
	MINCHA:	5:30 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:25 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:30 PM
	MAARIV:	6:20 PM