

LAMPLIGHTER

5 Iyar
Tazria-Metzora
1032
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In the beginning of this week's Torah portion, Tazria-Metzora, the Torah deals with the laws of ritual impurity and how to purify oneself after becoming impure. A discussion of these laws follows the discussion in previous chapters pertaining to animals - which are pure and which are impure, and animal sacrifices.

"The same way that man's creation took place after all the other animals and birds, so are the laws pertaining to man to be found in the Torah after the laws dealing with animals," our Sages teach.

The Talmud and Midrash offer several explanations as to why man was created only after every other creation was complete. One of them is so that man would arrive in a world ready and completed and be immediately able to perform mitzvot (commandments). A second reason given is that if man's behaviour is not worthy and proper, one can say to him, "Even a mosquito was created before you, even an earthworm preceded you."

These two explanations express the dual nature of the essence of man. The first presents man in the role of the crown of Creation, for whom G-d prepared everything in advance. The second explanation stresses the relative unimportance of man as compared to all the other animals, to the point that even the mosquito came first.

The first reason stresses man's merit and is related to the soul of every Jew. The second explanation, stressing the unimportance of man, relates to the physical body.

By virtue of the G-dly soul, which is literally a part of G-d, man stands on a level higher than all other creations. This aspect of man cannot be changed even if, G-d forbid, he sins. However, because of his physical body, man is concurrently lower than even a mosquito; an animal does not have free choice and can only carry out the function for which it was created. Man is the only creature that can choose not to carry out G-d's will.

Because man has the ability to lower himself below all other animals, the laws pertaining to him are written in the Torah only after the laws pertaining to the animals.

This contradiction in man's nature raises the question, "How is it possible to be, at the same time, on both a lofty exalted level and yet lower than all other creatures?"

Man's sub-ordinance is hidden within a great virtue. Precisely because of man's corporeal nature, he is able to fulfil the purpose of Creation. G-d's will is that the lofty soul should come down and "clothe itself" in a physical body, to elevate and purify the body. The purpose of creation is that man ("adam" in Hebrew), created from earth ("adama") should uncover and fulfil the potential of his soul and elevate his corporeal nature.

The Power of the Seed

By Tuvia Teldon

Seeds seem to have very little importance in our lives. We try to genetically make lines of oranges that don't have them, we spit them out when we eat watermelons, and we avoid them like the plague if we have diverticulitis.

But if anyone asks me about where you see life's greatest mysteries, I talk to them about a seed. They are probably the most fascinating part of our world that exists, even more than the unexplored brain.

Think about it. This little tiny seed is basically a treasure-chest of DNA, prepared to give birth to any of a variety of beings.

Look around you. Probably the chair you are in came from a seed, the clothes you are wearing, the walls or panelling of the house you live in, almost all the food you eat, and last but not least - you and another 6 billion people (including all of their brains), all came from a seed.

But what does this have to do with life's mysteries?

Well, let's start by looking at a computer chip. Considering that it has so much information, it stands on its own as quite an accomplishment, the result of hundreds of brilliant patents.

It can be as small as the tip of a needle, but contains within it the programming data for controlling very technical and complicated bits of knowledge. It took many years of science to design it to function properly, and it can perform many functions simultaneously in fulfilling its purpose of carrying the information needed for the proper functioning of your computer.

Now let's take an orange seed. It contains within it all the DNA info that exists about growing a tree, with all the complications: photosynthesis, establishing roots, transferring water and minerals to its body parts, sprouting in season-all this while creating oranges and seeds that will propagate future generations of oranges. However, even though the orange seed is much larger than a computer chip, it has one incredible quality that a computer chip does not have.

It is programmed to transform itself into the very object about which it contains information.

This would be comparable to creating a computer chip that is programmed to convert itself into an iPhone, or a golf ball, or another seed. Modern computer technology is just beginning to talk about the possibility of having chips that can become something besides the chip itself.

If that doesn't pique your interest, add to this the fact that an animal or human seed is much more complicated than an orange seed, and a small fraction of the size of the smallest computer chip, and it grows to be something much more complicated than an orange tree. It has the ability to impregnate an egg, and merge its data immediately with it to be able to create a completely new type of living being (with unique features unlike any other). Put together all of this, and so much more information that we know about seeds, and we begin to realize that we are dealing with a biological creation that is truly beyond amazing in its scope, and complicated far beyond its small size.

The seed is one part of our universe that gives us a small glimpse into the infinite intelligence behind the creation and the functioning of our world.

So next time you spit out a watermelon seed, do it with respect for what that seed is.

After all, you came from one.

Slice of LIFE

This story takes place some 20 years ago just as the first Israeli-Lebanon war was winding down to an uncertain, one sided (our side) halt.

Chaim Dyan, who lives in Kfar Chabad and was in the army at the time, received a phone call from his commanding officer that he must appear at his base near Haifa (called Bat Galim) at 8:30 the next morning....or else.

Chaim thought to himself: "The base is two hours away, the sun rises at 6:00. That means that tomorrow morning I'll have to pray alone, rush the prayers to make it there on time."

He thought about it for a few more minutes and finally decided... no. That's no way to start the day and certainly no way to start an army stint. He would take his time, pray slowly and hope for the best. G-d will help!

The next morning he woke at the crack of dawn, went to the Synagogue, took his time praying and finished at... seven. He had an hour and a half to get there. But he had to hitch a ride; public transportation would take two hours.

'No problem!' He said to himself as he ran to the main road and stuck out his finger hoping for the best....."G-d will help!"

But no one stopped. He tried switching fingers, then arms, then poses, but nothing helped. He was getting tired, aggravated, and pessimistic as car after car whizzed by. But he had to keep reminding himself, "Everything is from G-d, I must be positive! Positive thinking will change the situation. THINK GOOD and it will BE GOOD!"

And sure enough, as soon as he began to think 'good' a car pulled over, screeched to a stop and the door opened. But just as he was about to ask if he could get a ride, a soldier in an air force uniform got out, slammed the door behind him and the car drove off leaving a thin cloud of exhaust smoke and ... another hitchhiker. The pilot, or whatever he was, stuck out his finger as well!

But five minutes later, just as he was thinking all was lost, a huge truck loaded with massive crates filled with oranges

pulled to a stop and the driver yelled out high up from his cabin, "One place!"

"A truck! Oy!" Chaim thought to himself, "It will take a year to get to Haifa, but on the other hand it's better than nothing. And maybe there will be a miracle."

But in the two seconds he was busy thinking, the other hitchhiker somehow managed to cut in front of him and slip up into the cabin of the truck! Chaim's anger instantly flared up. "I'll go up there, grab a hold of him and pull him out!! Why that.....!"

He battled internally; should he do it? Should he get mad? Should he go up? But something inside of him told him to let it go... anger is like idolatry, G-d will take care of it, I'll see it was all for the best etc.... until the passenger door slammed shut, the truck rumbled off into the distance and he was alone.

After another few minutes Chaim was really getting worried... what if no one stops!?

Suddenly sirens filled the air, an ambulance, sirens screaming, appeared as if from nowhere and screeched to a halt before him. It couldn't be offering him a ride, it's forbidden for ambulances to take riders. But the driver rolled down the passenger window and yelled "Hey soldier! You've got to help me! I got a soldier with shell-shock here, he's in bad shape and I need someone to talk to him non-stop to keep him awake. Can you do it?"

"Listen, where are you going?" Chaim asked the driver. "I need to get to Bat Galim and I'm really late."

"Jump in!" The driver yelled. "I'm going to the hospital in Haifa. I'll take you to Bat Galim. It's on my way! Just get in!"

Chaim got in the back door, sat next to the soldier who was laying catatonix on his back, eyes bolt open eyeballs dancing wildly in their sockets, mouth open totally unable to utter a sound, as the ambulance jetted forward and gained speed, sirens howling.

Chaim tried to get the soldier's attention so he talked about the weather. But it didn't seem to be working, the soldier was fading away, so he changed subjects, sports, news, but nothing worked till he talked about what he himself was interested in; Judaism.

He talked about G-d, the Torah, the commandments, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, while gradually the soldier turned and silently stared at him, open-mouthed, occasionally convulsing or twitching wildly for a second or two but apparently hanging on his every word.

The ambulance raced through red lights, around corners and swerved past traffic. Only once did it slow down to go around a huge traffic jam caused by a truck whose cargo had fallen off.... orange crates! It was the truck that had stopped for him!! Chaim looked briefly out the window and saw the air force soldier that had stolen his place standing helplessly in a sea of oranges on the road... It would be hours until anyone in that huge line would be able to give him a ride.

But the ambulance sped on and Chaim never stopped talking until it came to a screeching halt. The driver turned to Chaim and said. "Here it is! Bat Galim! Thanks a million! I'll make it alone, it's just a few minutes to the hospital! You did a great job."

The ride took one half an hour! Chaim jumped out in time to catch the last bus in his battalion that was pulling out! It was a miracle. He made it! He made the last bus!

Several years later Chaim was walking down the streets of Tel Aviv when a religious fellow in his twenties stopped him, shook his hand and asked. "Tell me? A few years ago wasn't it you that talked to me in that ambulance? I was in shock and you talked to me? Wasn't it you?"

When Chaim remembered and said yes the fellow hugged him and began crying like a baby. Sobbing aloud and hugging him for dear life.

"You saved me! You saved me!" He repeated, "And I remembered everything you said! Everything! It took me a while but I decided to learn about what you said. You know, about Judaism and the Rebbe, and now I'm a different person! You saved my life!"

By not fighting for his place in the orange truck Chaim got much more than he could possibly dream of! He saved a life and got to his base on time as well.

This story was told by Rabbi Tuvia Bolton who heard it from Rabbi Chaim Dyan himself.

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ISSUE 1032

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The first person, Adam, chose this name for himself, explaining that the letter "alef" of Adam alludes to G-d, Who is "One" (alef has the numerical equivalent of 1), and the "Chief" ("aluf" in Hebrew). The letters "dale" and "mem" of Adam spell "dam" (blood), alluding to man's physical component. Man is comprised of spirituality and physicality - soul and body. When a person achieves just the right mixture of both, then he becomes a true "adam" in the fullest sense which is why the numerical value of "adam" is equal to the numerical value of the word for Geula - Redemption. (Rabbi Pinchos Winston)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

11 Tevet, 5718 [1968]

Having heard of you through mutual friends to the effect that you are seeking the true path which each and every Jewish man and Jewish woman should follow in life, although it is always difficult to evaluate second-hand information, I trust the following lines may be helpful to you.

The importance of heredity in transmitting physical, mental, and spiritual characteristics is well known and obvious, even in the case of several generations. How much more so where a trait is transmitted and intensified over the course of many generations uninterrupted, when the trait becomes part and parcel of the very essence and being of the individual, his very nature.

It is also clear that when a person - as in the case of all living things - wishes to change an inborn trait which is deeply rooted in him, not to mention something that touches his essential nature, it demands tremendous effort, and the outcome is bound to be destructive rather than constructive, creating a terrible upheaval in him, with most unfortunate results.

I have in mind particularly the Jew, man and woman, who, belonging to one of the oldest nations in the world with a recorded history of over thirty-five hundred years, is naturally and innately bound up with the Jewish people with every fibre of his life and soul.

Hence, such sects or groups which tried to depart from the true Jewish way of life of Torah and Mitzvos [commandments] could not survive, as history has amply demonstrated. Such dissident groups uprooted themselves from their natural soil, and, far from being constructive, became the worst enemies of the Jewish people and their worst persecutors.

Only Jews who have faithfully adhered to the Torah and Mitzvos, as they were revealed on Mount Sinai, have survived all their oppressors, for only through the Torah and Mitzvos can the Jewish people attach themselves to the Superior and Supreme Power, G-d, who has given us the Torah and our way of life.

Since the Torah and Mitzvos and the Jewish way of life come from G-d and His infinite wisdom, they are not subject to man's approval and selection. Human reason is necessarily limited and imperfect. Its deficiencies are obvious, since with time and study it improves and gains knowledge, and personal opinions change. To confine G-d to human judgment would do violence even to common sense.

In our long history we have had the greatest human minds possible, who nevertheless realized their limitations when it came to the knowledge of G-d and His laws and precepts.

We have had great thinkers and philosophers, who not only fully accepted the Torah and Mitzvos, but have been our guiding lights to this day, while the dissident groups and individuals (whose number are very few) were cut off from our people and either disappeared completely, or, worse still, continued as painful thorns in the flesh of our people and humanity at large.

Anyone who is familiar with our history requires no illustrations or proofs of the aforesaid. I trust you will reflect on the above and you will cherish the great and sacred knowledge which has been handed down to each and every one of us, in the midst of our people, generation after generation, from the revelation at Mount Sinai to the present day.

Accepting this sacred tradition unconditionally and without question does not mean that there is no room for any intellectual understanding.

Within our limitations there is a great deal we can understand and which we can further enrich, provided the approach is right; our insight into His commandments grows deeper with our practicing them in our daily life and making them our daily experience. In this way the Jew attains true peace of mind and a harmonious and happy life, not only spiritually but also physically, and fully realizes how happy one is to be a son or daughter of this great and holy nation, our Jewish people.

Hoping to hear good news from you, and

With blessing,

CUSTOMS CORNER

One should always make a great effort to pray in a synagogue with the congregation. Even if he can pray in his house with a group of ten [a minyan], none the less "A multitude of people is a king's glory" (Proverbs 14: 28). Also the prayers of man are only heard in a synagogue, as it is stated "To hear the cry ["Rinah"] and the prayer" in the place of "the singing of joy" [another translation for "Rinah"] there shall be prayer, referring to the synagogue where the congregation chant songs and praises in sweet melodic voices, there is where the prayers are heard.

A WORD

from the Director

This past Tuesday, the second of Iyar (April 24 this year) is the birthday of the Rebbe Maharash, Rabbi Shmuel, the fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe.

When the Rebbe Maharash was seven years old, he was once tested in his studies by his father, the Tzemach Tzedek. He did so well in the test that his teacher was enormously impressed. Unable to restrain himself, he said to the Tzemach Tzedek, "Well, what do you say? Hasn't he done marvellous?" The Tzemach Tzedek responded, "What is there to be surprised about that 'tiferet within tiferet' does well?"

What is tiferet within tiferet? Tiferet is the sixth of the ten sefirot (Divine Emanations), and the third of the seven emotive attributes within Creation.

The Rebbe Maharash's birthday, the second of Iyar, takes place during the period of the Counting of the Omer when we count the seven weeks between Passover and Shavuot. Each of these 49 days is associated with a different combination of the seven emotive attributes. The second of Iyar is associated with tiferet within tiferet, i.e., beauty with beauty - an extraordinarily high spiritual level.

The second of Iyar is also associated with the Rebbe Maharash's characteristic pattern of conduct, known as "lechatchila ariber."

As the Rebbe Maharash would say, "People usually say, 'If you can't crawl under, try to climb over,' and I say, lechatchila ariber: 'Right from the outset, you should go over.'" This approach can and should be actualized by each one of us in our daily lives and when properly internalized will help us fulfil our individual mission in the world.

J. I. Guttentag

IT HAPPENED

Once...

Once there was a very rich Jew called Yitzchak, who was a follower of the great Tzadik and holy genius Rebbe Yisroel of Ruzin. Yitzchak was known for his warm heart and open hand. Every day his home was filled with the poor and hungry. But where he really shined was on Pesach (Passover). Every year more than a hundred guests graced his table to partake of the joyous celebration of Passover.

But the wheel of fortune turned and eventually Yitzchak's wealth dwindled until within months he found himself a pauper with almost nothing to eat.

He was forced to sell his businesses, his properties and even his furniture. But there was one thing that his wife refused to part with; the Kos Shel Eliahu; the cup we fill with wine for Elijah the Prophet (who was taken in a wind to heaven some 2,800 years ago and supposedly visits every Passover Seder) at the end of the Passover Seder. "Elijah will announce Moshiach and Moshiach is our only hope" she would proclaim.

Yitzchak was in no mood to argue with her. If poverty didn't convince her to sell it he surely wouldn't.... And deep down... he knew, or at least hoped, that she was right.

But the morning before the Pesach Seder their house was barren. Somehow they scraped together enough money for a bottle of wine, a few Matzot, some potatoes and a small piece of fish.

The morning of the Seder Yitzchak sat alone in the Synagogue and did his best not to weep. But it wasn't easy. The thought of days gone by and of the dismal future, haunted him.

Close to evening he tried to keep a smile on his face and a song on his lips as he walked home. But as he approached and saw his house in the distance his smile faded and he fell silent in awe. His house was..... ablaze..... with light! From inside..... it was filled with people! He shook his head as though trying to wake up. He rubbed his eyes and held his temples in disbelief and approached.

He opened the door and it was like a dream. His huge front-room was filled with guests around a long decorated table. Lights and candles were shining everywhere! He looked at his wife. She was dressed like a queen! She gazed back at him, her eyes sparkling with sweet tears of joy as she approached him, smiling from ear to ear, and explained.

"Just after you left this morning, a carriage pulled up in front of the house and an important looking Jew got out and knocked at our door. He said that many years ago he had been at our Passover Seder and never forgot it. He said that his carriage happened to break down here

yesterday and he just got it fixed. He wanted to know if it was all right if he spent the Passover with us again. But when I told him that we didn't have enough food for guests he insisted that money was no problem and he gave me five thousand guilders! Five thousand!!

"I tried to refuse. I told him it was a thousand times what we needed. But he insisted. In fact he even took the money back and gave it to his servants to buy food and hire workers to prepare it. He even bought new furniture and tapestries! It's unbelievable! In just hours the food and pots and everything were delivered, the stove was burning, the house was busy and people were coming from all over to help. It's a miracle! And soon he'll be here. He told me not to wait for him, that he would be a bit late but I'm sure he'll be here any moment and we can thank him."

That Seder night was probably the best and happiest that Yitzchak and his wife ever had in their lives and, sure enough, when the meal was almost finished, their rich benefactor appeared, hurriedly found a seat, and before anyone knew it finished his Seder quickly and quietly and approached them.

They thanked him profusely to which he replied. "I understand that you've been having a hard time financially. I bless you with greater riches than before." And with those words, he turned on his heels and left.

Sure enough, several of the guests that night were businessmen and as soon as the holiday ended, Yitzchak was back in business and in just a few weeks he was making money and giving charity like never before.

Months later Yitzchak visited his Rebbe and told him the entire story. The Rebbe put his head down for a minute, lifted it and said.

"That rich man was Elijah the Prophet. You merited seeing him once and your wife merited to see him twice! It was all in the merit of that cup and her simple faith. She was right; your only hope was Elijah."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

The flesh also, in which an inflammation was in the skin, and is healed (Lev. 13:18)

The Torah uses the words "and is healed" only in reference to a plague that occurs specifically in the "flesh." From this we learn that a person who is as humble and yielding as "flesh" will more readily recover from the trials and tribulations of life than one who is hard and inflexible. (*The Talmud and Rashi on Sota 5a*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 27 APRIL 2012

BEGINS		ENDS
5:20	MELBOURNE	6:17
5:20	ADELAIDE	6:15
5:02	BRISBANE	5:55
6:17	DARWIN	7:07
5:00	GOLD COAST	5:53
5:25	PERTH	6:19
5:01	SYDNEY	5:56
5:07	CANBERRA	6:03
5:05	LAUNCESTON	6:04
5:22	AUCKLAND	6:19
5:15	WELLINGTON	6:14
5:02	HOBART	6:02
4:58	BYRON BAY	5:51



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS TAZRIA-METZORA
6 IYAR • 28 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:20 PM
	MINCHA:	5:30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:00 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:38 AM
	MINCHA:	5:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:17 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:20 PM
	MAARIV:	6:05 PM