

LAMPLIGHTER

12 Iyar
Acharei-Kedoshim
1033
4 May
5772/2012

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week we read two Torah portion's, Acharei and Kedoshim. At the very beginning of Kedoshim, there are three commandments: 1) "You shall be holy"; 2) "Every person shall fear his mother and his father"; and 3) "You shall keep My Sabbaths." The fact that these three mitzvot (commandments) follow one another is significant and indicates that they are interrelated.

The term "holy" in this instance means separation, as it says at the end of our Torah portion, "You shall be holy to Me, for [I, G-d, am holy, and] I have separated you from the nations...." The Jewish people must be separate from the nations of the world. And they must be separate specifically in those areas in which we are seemingly similar, such as eating, drinking, conducting business and so forth.

The ultimate purpose of a Jew's holiness and spirituality, though, is not egocentric - to be holy just for himself. Rather, as the Torah says of our ancestor Abraham, "in order that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of G-d..." So, one of the reasons for our remaining separate from the other nations is to be able to guide our children to walk in the ways of our ancestors. And this is why the mitzva to be holy is followed by "every person shall fear his mother and his father" - which alludes to the obligation of Jewish education.

Parents are the first educators. The mother and father must instill in their children the feeling that they are different from the rest of the world, that they are part of a holy nation.

The sequence in that verse is "his mother and his father," mentioning first the mother. For the mother is the foundation of the house, and the major part of the actual education is in her hands.

How does a person imbue his children, and himself, with the consciousness of being a holy nation? This is brought out by the third commandment, "You shall keep My Sabbaths."

The Sabbath is a sign between the Alm-ghty and Israel. It signifies belief in the creation of the universe. It strengthens and reinforces the certainty that the Alm-ghty is the Creator of the universe and continuously sustains and conducts it.

Shabbat was given only to the Jewish people, and not to the nations of the world. Observing Shabbat thus means to keep and guard the sign and covenant between Israel and G-d. This is done by strengthening our faith in the fact that Jews are not subject to the forces of nature but are under the specific and individual providence of G-d.

This, in turn, will bring us full circle. It will reinforce in us and our children the mitzva of "You shall be holy," to the point where our everyday activities will be infused with holiness.

(Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.)

"Pass the salt, please..."

By Naftali Silberberg

Feeling spiritual on Yom Kippur is easy. No eating, no business, no spousal relations, and long hours praying in the synagogue are conducive to intense angelic sensations. It's no wonder that so many religions place a premium on asceticism, demanding that their most devoted adherents divorce themselves completely from the temptations offered by the world. Celibacy, long hours of meditation, fasting, and life in a secluded monastery, are the surest path to a life of spirituality.

The Torah, however, has a very different perspective. This week's portion starts with a mention of Nadab and Abihu's deaths-partially a punishment for their spiritually-motivated decision to remain celibate. G-d wants us to walk a thin tightrope. He wants us to be married, go to work, and partake of lavish Shabbat and holiday meals-and at that very moment to be at the pinnacle of spirituality and holiness. A daunting task, to say the least. How does one simultaneously dwell in two contradictory worlds-the world of the spirit and the world of the flesh?

Every mitzvah is comprised of a body and soul. The body is the physical act which we are commanded to do, or which we are instructed to avoid. The soul is the lesson the mitzvah imparts, its message which we must implement in our lives. The prohibition against consuming blood, which is also discussed in this week's Parshah, as well as the process of its removal, teaches a powerful lesson pertaining to our approach to our relationship with the world.

We are not always fortunate enough to contend with the divine, or even with "humanity." On a daily basis we also have to deal with the "animalistic," completely non-spiritual aspects of regular life. Consumption of animal flesh is a metaphor for these moments of the day. Blood represents warmth, life and passion. The Torah enjoins us to remove all the blood from our worldly activities; to be involved in the world, to partake of its flesh, but without excessive enthusiasm or excitement.

How, you ask, is this possible? Through salt. Blood is removed from meat via a thorough salting process.

The Torah describes the covenant between G-d and His nation as a "salt covenant." The commentators explain that salt never decays, it remains eternally fresh; much as our relationship with G-d never expires or even becomes slightly stale.

Interestingly, the symbol of our relationship with G-d is a food item which is independently inedible-its primary purpose is to add wonderful taste to practically all other foods. Similarly, our relationship with G-d is not an end within itself, rather it is meant to give a spiritual "flavour" and meaning to all other aspects of our life.

We have to liberally sprinkle salt on every part of our life-on our workplace, on our dinner table, on our gym, and even on our vacation destinations. When our love for G-d and our desire to serve Him with every fibre of our being is our leading motivation, then all we do is for Him. We eat and exercise so that we have the strength to serve Him; we work to have the means to serve Him, etc.

And when life is salty, there's no need to run away to a monastery.

Slice of LIFE

Rabbi Routs Robbers

By Tuvia Bolton

Five foot three, sixty five years old, bespectacled and a bit bent-over, Mr. Schwartz (fictitious name) was depressed.

It happened gradually. For the first twenty years he lived there, it had been a completely Jewish area in Brooklyn; but then gradually the Jews started leaving. The Goldmans, the Bernsteins, the Fishers; his best customers were gone and more were on the way out. Things looked bad; the crime rate was soaring; it was becoming dangerous to walk the streets. The merchandise wasn't moving off the shelves and when it did he didn't bother to renew it. He began to feel out of place in his neighbourhood mini-market.

But he built it up from nothing and he didn't want to leave and begin somewhere else, and he certainly did not want to retire. On the other hand he was losing his desire to wake up in the morning.

Then one day he saw an article in the paper about a Rabbi in Brooklyn called the Lubavitcher Rebbe giving advice to people and he decided to give it a try.

He took the subway, got off at Kingston Avenue and Eastern Parkway, walked up the subway stairs to the street and then to the large red-bricked headquarters of the Lubavitcher Chassidim.

Bearded young men with pleasant eyes were bustling around in the halls and the song of Torah learning filled the air. Someone shook his hand, three people said Shalom Aleichem! and in no time he was in the office making an appointment, in three weeks he would have a private audience.

The night arrived. He was scheduled to see the Rebbe at 11:00 pm. He arrived at ten, but it wasn't until three in the morning that his turn came.

The Rebbe's room was brightly lit and unusually quiet. Bookshelves lined the

walls. The Rebbe was seated behind a large, mahogany desk, stacks of letters, books and papers before him.

Mr. Schwartz handed him the letter he had prepared. The Rebbe took it, read it carefully, looked up and asked quietly. "Do you want to leave the store or not?"

Mr. Schwartz began to explain the pros and cons but when he finished the Rebbe again looked at his letter and asked: "But what do you want? Do you want to leave or not?"

"No!" Mr. Schwartz answered as emphatically as he could. "I don't want to leave. I want to stay. But I'm afraid." The Rebbe waited for him to continue.

"I'm afraid of the gangsters and I'm afraid there won't be any customers left. But I don't want to leave. That's why I'm here."

The Rebbe looked at him earnestly, smiled and said: "There is nothing to be afraid of. Don't be afraid of the people. And don't worry about making money; you can make money there also. May G-d bless you and give you much success and good news."

Mr. Schwartz returned home a new man. He told his wife what the Rebbe had said and the next morning he went down to the store, began to order new stock and clean the place up. Sure enough, little by little people began to trickle in. There were more Jews left than he thought and some of the locals wanted to buy kosher products as well. Everything seemed to be working out. Until the robbery.

There he was, Mr. Schwartz, in the newspaper! It was a small picture of him standing with two huge policemen, one scratching his head in wonder looking at the bullet holes in the ceiling of the grocery.

The caption read 'Rabbi Routs Robbers' and underneath was an interesting story.

One evening, when Mr. Schwartz had just emptied the cash-register in his mini-market in Brooklyn and was about to come from behind the counter and close up, two huge men suddenly pushed their way in and closed the door behind them. One pulled out a gun while the other leaned over the counter and opened the cash register. When they found it empty

they began pounding and kicking the counter and tried to reach over it and grab the old man. But he just took a step back, out of their reach, and emphatically declared: "Get out of here, the both of you, or I'll call the police! You aren't getting a penny!"

The other robber, to prove he meant business, pointed the gun in the air, fired two shots and began screaming, "Give the money or else..." But the owner didn't budge. People started gathering outside and in the distance a police siren was heard. The robbers looked at one another and fled out the door knocking a few people over as they went.

The article concluded with a quote from Mr. Schwartz explaining how he kept his cool:

"I just did what the Lubavitcher Rebbe said. He said that I shouldn't be afraid. See! He was right!"

A Short Story about a Long Life

By Gutman Locks

The man was totally depressed.

He was standing by the side of the road speaking through the open window of my car. His wife had left him. He had no job. Each day was a burden, and worse yet, he was a burden to the world. In his words, he was "totally useless."

I tried to cheer him up with some words of hope, but he was firm in his belief. I left him with some optimistic thought and darted into a U-turn, happy to go on to something more cheerful.

Suddenly he screamed, "Stop!" I slammed on the brakes just in time to see an extremely fast moving car whiz by. I said to him: "If you hadn't called out, I would have been dead now. A few seconds ago you felt useless without purpose, and now you have saved my life! From this moment on, every good deed I do will also be credited to your account." His face lit up, as the many months of depression fell away.

There is a dawn, and even the darkest nights do pass. No one knows what the next moment holds and to deny hope is to deny the constantly demonstrated fact that, "This too will pass."

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

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ISSUE 1033

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In Psalm 122, we recite: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; those who love you [Jerusalem] will be serene." These are the words that Jews must utter in in exile. We must pray to G-d for the peace of Jerusalem, which will be attained with the ingathering of the exiles, for there will not be peace as long as the uncircumcised and the Ishmaelites war over the city. (*Radak on Tehillim*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

27 Shevat 5723 [1963]

Greeting and Blessing:

Your letter of January 14th reached me with considerable delay. You posed a number of questions regarding our Torah and mitzvot [commandments], faith and traditions, etc.

Needless to say, it is difficult to discuss adequately in a letter such questions as you raise. Since you write that you had occasion to spend time with Lubavitcher students, I trust you discussed with them some of these questions, and perhaps may have another opportunity to discuss them further. However, inasmuch as you have raised these questions, I will attempt to answer them briefly.

1. How can one be certain of the authority of the Tanach [Bible] in all its particulars? The answer to this is based on common sense, and if one approaches the question open-mindedly and without prejudice, one must come to this conclusion. To put it very briefly, and going back from our present generation to preceding generations, we have before us the text of the Tanach as it was transmitted from one generation to the other by hundreds of thousands of parents of different backgrounds to their children. Even during the times of the greatest persecutions, and even after the destruction of the Beth Hamikdash [Holy Temple], there always survived hundreds and thousands of Jews who preserved the text of the Tanach and the traditions, so that the chain has never been broken.

Now, assume that someone would come today and wish to add a new chapter or a new section to the Tanach, declaring this new addition to be of the same antiquity and validity as the other parts of the Tanach, it is clear that no one will accept it on the grounds of the simple question: if this is truly a part of the Tanach, how is it that we have not had it before? The same would apply to any question as to the dating of any particular section of the Tanach, which itself contains a record of the prophecies beginning from Moshe Rabbenu [Moses] to the latest prophets Zecharia, Haggai and Malachi.

2. You mention, in passing, certain theories by certain Bible critics. But, as you know, it is not a case where these people have a different tradition from ours, going back to all those ancient generations, but it is rather a case where this one or that one has come out with new theories or hypotheses which are not only speculative, but have been shown to be unscientific as well as illogical. For, according to them, it would be a case where thousands upon thousands of Jews have at one point or another suddenly changed their views and attitudes toward the Tanach in radical ways. With all the arguments about superstitions or mass psychoses, etc., such radical changes by hundreds of thousands of people of different backgrounds in different parts of the world, etc., are simply very farfetched and most illogical.

Furthermore, there is a basic difference between our Jewish tradition and those of other faiths, such as Christianity or Islam. For, whereas in the latter cases the traditions go back to one individual or a limited number of individuals, our traditions go back to a revelation which was experienced by a whole people at once, so that at no time did we have to place our trust in the veracity of one, or a few, individuals.

3. You mention the existence of other ancient codes among other ancient peoples, which are in many respects similar to the laws of our Torah.

I do not see what difference or contradiction this can have to the authenticity of the Torah. The point is that when a similarity of ideas is found between two peoples, it is necessary to ascertain which one derives from the other. More important still is not so much the similarity as the difference.

Thus, you mention Mesopotamia, and presumably you have in mind the code of Hamurabi. A careful comparison will show at once that the similarities are only superficial, but the differences are basic. For the Code of Hamurabi is permeated with a spirit of extraordinary cruelty, as for example in regard to the penalties for theft, etc., and the same is true of other similar codes, whereas the underlying principles of the laws of the Torah are uniquely merciful. However, the essential thing is, as mentioned earlier, that there is no proof whatever that the laws of the Torah have been derived from other ancient codes.

continued in next issue

CUSTOMS CORNER

Lag BaOmer (the 33rd day of the Omer count) celebrates the end of the plague amongst Rabbi Akiva's students, and the ascent on high of the soul of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. The mourning practices of the Omer period are suspended, which is why many three-year-old boys receive their first haircut on this day. Many visit the gravesite of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in Meron in northern Israel. It is customary to go on outings and to light bonfires; children play with bow-and-arrows to recall that "during the lifetime of Rabbi Shimon the rainbow (--a sign of the world's unworthiness, as per Genesis 9:14) was not seen."

The Lubavitcher Rebbe initiated the organization of parades of Jewish unity and pride on Lag BaOmer and on a number of occasions he addressed the parade held near his headquarters in Brooklyn in which thousands of Jewish children and their teachers participated.

A WORD

from the Director

This Sunday, May 6, is Pesach Sheini - the Second Passover.

Every year, on the fourteenth of Nissan, the Jews brought the Passover offering. This commandment was incumbent upon each Jew.

However, the Jews who were spiritually unclean, were forbidden to participate. They therefore complained, and cried out to Moses, "Why should we be different?" - How are we to achieve a similar level of closeness with G-d?

Moses, through Divine direction, informed them that, in fact, they would have a chance. On the fourteenth of Iyar they could bring the Passover offering.

This incident offers two lessons to us:

The Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, explained that Pesach Sheini proves that it is "never too late"; we always have a chance to make amends, improve.

An additional lesson relates to the way in which Pesach Sheini came about. According to Midrashic literature, the laws concerning Pesach Sheini were already "written in the Heavens." A new law wasn't created; G-d was just waiting for the people to request it.

Why is this so important? It is similar to the Third Holy Temple, which is all "ready to go" and missing only that we cry out for it. It is similar, also, to Moshiach, who is "just waiting for the signal" from us.

But, we must also remember that our request cannot be made mechanically. It must have the same quality of earnestness that our ancestors exhibited when they requested Pesach Sheini.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED

Once...

Israel Goy
By Menachem Brod

In the city of Krakow, Poland, there lived a rich Jew by the name of Israel who was famous for his stinginess. All attempts by the trustees of the community's various charity funds to elicit at least a token contribution from him were met with polite but adamant refusals.

Israel's utter heartlessness outraged and mystified the Jews of Krakow. How could a Jew be so indifferent to the needs of his brothers and sisters? People started referring to the rich miser in their midst as "Israel Goy" and the epithet stuck.

Years passed and one day the Krakow Burial Society received a summons to Israel's home. "I feel that my days are numbered," he told them when they came, "and I would like to discuss with you regarding the purchase of a plot for my grave."

"I'm not asking for any special location or a fancy gravestone. I have just one request: on my gravestone, I want it to be inscribed 'Here lies Israel Goy.'"

The members of the society exchanged glances: was the old man out of his mind? They spent a few more minutes at his bedside hoping to secure at least a modest sum for the community poor, but when they were met with refusal even at his death bed they left his house in exasperation.

The entire town was abuzz with this latest show of miserliness by "Israel Goy." How low can a man sink! Even at death's door he's refusing to share his blessings with the needy.

Eventually Israel passed away and was buried off to a side, on the outskirts of the cemetery. No eulogies were held, for what could be said of such a man?

The following Thursday evening, there was a knock on the door of the chief rabbi of Krakow, the famed Rabbi Yomtov Lipman Heller. In the doorway stood a man who explained that he had nothing with which to purchase wine, candles, challah and food for the Shabbat. The rabbi gave him a few coins from his private charity fund and wished him a "Good Shabbat."

A few minutes later there was another knock on the door, heralding a similar request. A third petitioner followed, and then a fourth and a fifth. Within the hour, no less than twenty families came to ask for the rabbi's aid to meet their Shabbat expenses. The rabbi was mystified: nothing like this had happened before in all his years in Krakow. Why this sudden plague of poverty?

As if on cue, there was another knock on the door. "Tell me," asked the rabbi after handing a few coins to the latest petitioner, "how did you manage until now?"

"We bought on credit at the grocer's," replied the pauper. "Whenever we needed food and did not have with what to pay, the merchant said it was not a problem -- he just wrote it down in his ledger. He didn't even bother us about payment. But now he says that that arrangement is over."

Investigation revealed that hundreds of families in Krakow had subsisted this way -- up to now. For some reason, none of the grocers, fishmongers and butchers were willing to extend credit any longer to the town's poor.

The rabbi called the town's food merchants to his study and demanded to know what was going on. At first they refused to tell him. But eventually the truth came out. For years, Israel had supported hundreds of the poorest families in Krakow. Every week the town's merchants would present the bill to him, and he paid in full. His only condition was that not a soul, not even their closest family members, should know. "If any one of you breathes a word of this to anyone," he threatened, "you won't see another copper from me ever again."

Rabbi Yomtov Lipman was shattered. Such a special person had lived in their midst, and they, in their haste to judge him, had insulted him and reviled him.

The day of the shloshim (30th day anniversary of the passing) the entire community gathered at Israel's grave-site. The rabbi himself eulogized Israel. "You," he cried, "fulfilled the mitzvah of tzedakah (charity) in its most perfect form you ensured that no recipient of your generosity should ever stand ashamed before his benefactor or feel indebted to him." The rabbi then expressed the wish that when his own time came, he should be laid to rest next to Israel.

The rabbi also instructed that the rich man's last wish be fulfilled. On the marker raised above the grave were etched the words "Here lies Israel Goy". However, one word was added to the inscription -- the word kadosh, "holy one". And so the inscription reads to this day on the gravestone adjoining that of the famed Rabbi Yomtov Lipman Heller in the old Jewish cemetery of Krakow: "Here lies Israel Goy Kadosh".

Thoughts THAT COUNT

For in the cloud I will appear upon the ark-cover (Lev. 16:2)

This teaches that we must never despair even in the worst of the times, for G-d's Presence rested upon Israel precisely "in the cloud." No matter how dark or hopeless a situation appears we must never give up or become dejected. (Rabbi Meir Shapira of Lublin)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 4 MAY 2012

BEGINS		ENDS
5:12	MELBOURNE	6:09
5:12	ADELAIDE	6:08
4:56	BRISBANE	5:49
6:14	DARWIN	7:05
4:54	GOLD COAST	5:47
5:18	PERTH	6:13
4:54	SYDNEY	5:49
5:00	CANBERRA	5:56
4:56	LAUNCESTON	5:56
5:14	AUCKLAND	6:12
5:06	WELLINGTON	6:06
4:52	HOBART	5:53
4:52	BYRON BAY	5:46



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS ACHAREI-KEDOSHIM

13 IYAR • 5 MAY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:12 PM
	MINCHA:	5:20 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:50 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:41 AM
	MINCHA:	5:10 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:09 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:15 PM
	MAARIV:	6:00 PM