

# LAMPLIGHTER

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Emor  
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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

## Numbers

By Yanki Tauber

The name of a Torah portion alludes to the common thread that runs through the entire narrative. Thus, although this week's Torah portion, Emor, contains many different ideas, the name itself is significant and expresses the central theme of all of them.

The literal meaning of the Hebrew word "emor" is "say." It implies an ongoing action, a perpetual commandment that applies in all places and in all times.

Emor teaches us that thought is not enough; a person must carry the thought process one step further and express what he is thinking in speech as well. Speaking requires the person to weigh and assess his thoughts, working them over in his mind until he comes to a satisfactory conclusion.

Yet why is merely thinking insufficient? Because as human beings, we cannot know what is going on in someone else's mind; if our thoughts are not expressed verbally, no one else can derive any benefit from them. Thus the Torah commands us to "say" - to reveal our good thoughts and ideas, and to share them with our fellow man.

In accordance with the commandment "And you shall love your fellow as yourself," a Jew is obligated to share whatever good he possesses with others. Good thoughts, thoughts that have meaning and significance, are in this category, for expressing them can bring enjoyment, enlightenment and encouragement to our fellow Jew.

The way in which our thoughts are expressed is also important. The Jew is required to convey them in an effective and pleasant manner so they will have the desired effect on the listener.

Significantly, the name of the Torah portion is Emor (say), and not "Daber" (speak). Daber is a harsher term, implying the use of strong language to convey a point. Emor, by contrast, implies a softer kind of speech, and a more pleasant way of communicating.

The commandment to reveal our thoughts to our fellow man and exert a positive influence on others must be carried out in a tender and loving manner. Threats and intimidation have no place in the Jew's vocabulary. Every Jew without exception is worthy of being addressed with affection and respect, regardless of their spiritual standing or actions.

This then is the lesson of this week's Torah reading: Having good thoughts is not enough. In order to have a positive influence on others we must reveal them verbally, and in the most pleasant manner possible.

*(Adapted for Maayan Chai from Hitva'aduyot 5742)*

Numbers are funny things. On the one hand, they seem utterly devoid of meaning: think of the sterility of bureaucracies or the banality of an address like "25 20th Street." On the other hand, consider how numbers are used when we say things like, "Eighteen years' experience in the business"; "A \$450,000 home"; or "This is our child. She's three."

Counting something makes it real to us: only when we have assigned it a quantity can we understand what it means to us and how we can use it. Imagine that you are given a chest full of gold coins. You thank your benefactor and take it home. As soon as the door is securely bolted, what's the first thing you do? Count them, of course. Sure, it feels great to be able to say, "I'm a rich man." But if you want to do something with your riches, you have to know: How much?

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"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... And you shall proclaim that very day a holy festival" (Leviticus 23:15-21)

The people of Israel departed Egypt on the 15th of Nissan, celebrated ever since as the first day of Passover. Seven weeks later, on the 6th of Sivan --marked on our calendar as the festival of Shavuot -- we assembled at the foot of Mount Sinai and received the Torah from G-d.

Every year, we retrace this journey with a 49-day "Counting of the Omer." Beginning on the second night of Passover, we count the days and weeks. "Today is one day to the Omer," we proclaim on the first night of the count. "Today is two days to the Omer," "Today is seven days, which are one week to the Omer," and so on, until: "Today is forty-nine days, which are seven weeks to the Omer." The fiftieth day is Shavuot.

The Kabbalists explain that we each possess seven powers of the heart --love, awe, beauty, ambition, humility, bonding and regality -- and that each of these seven powers includes elements of all seven. These are represented by the seven weeks and forty-nine days of the Omer count.

Every Passover, we are granted a treasure chest containing the greatest gift ever given to man -- the gift of freedom. It is also a completely useless gift. What is freedom? What can be done with it? Nothing, unless we open the treasure chest and count its contents.

So on the second day of Passover, after we've taken home our treasure, we start counting. We count seven times seven, because the gift of freedom has been given to each of the seven powers and forty-nine dimensions of our soul. Indeed, what use is a capacity for love, if it is a slave to external influences and internal neurosis? Of what value is ambition, if we are its pawn rather than its master?

Each evening for these seven weeks, we open our treasure chest and count another coin. We count our loving love, intimidating love, beautiful love, ambitious love, humble love, bonding love and regal love. We assign a number to the regality of our awe and to the beauty of our humility.

We count them all--and then we present ourselves at Mount Sinai.

# Slice of LIFE

## ONLY ONE DID NOT FAINT

One of Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu's early predecessors as Rishon L'Zion, Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel, was Rabbi Yitzchak Nissim, who had a special appreciation and admiration for the CHIDA (Rabbi Chaim-Yosef-David Azulai). One of Rabbi Nissim's friends was Dr. Shlomo Umberto Nachon, a native of Livorno (Leghorn), where the Chida lived the end of his life and was buried.

In the late 1950s, Dr. Nachon learned that the Italian authorities wished to build a highway through the Jewish cemetery of Livorno. He quickly informed Chief Rabbi Nissim and, understanding the urgency of the situation, they decided it was time to move the Chida to Eretz Yisrael. Dr. Nachon made the arrangements with the authorities in Livorno, and in 1960 Rav Nissim commissioned, after much coaxing, the then 31-year-old Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, who was known to be intimately familiar with the Chida's writings, to head a team of esteemed Sephardic rabbis (which included Rabbi Yisrael Abuhatzzeira, the Baba Sali, and his brother the Baba Haki, Rabbi Yitzchak Abuhatzzeira, chief rabbi in the city of Ramle, who was an expert in Jewish burials in his native Morocco) for the reintering of the bones of the Chida in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Eliyahu related that when he arrived at Lod Airport with the other rabbis, he met with the agency representative who had brought the bones of the Chida in a small wooden coffin. When the Rav saw it, he was appalled "What is this?" he asked. "The bones of the Chida are rolling around in a miniature coffin? How can such a thing be?"

He asked that a larger coffin be brought, so that the bones could be transferred to it and be laid out properly for an honourable burial. Then he requested that the Baba Haki's driver go with his driver, and that they immerse in a mikva [ritual bath], and afterwards buy a Phillips screwdriver to open the coffin.

When they returned, Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu made a large hole in the bottom of the new large coffin so that there would be no barrier between the bones and the soil upon burial, but temporarily closed the hole with a stopper. Then the small coffin was inserted into the larger one.

Rabbi Eliyahu had the small coffin opened, whereupon he put his hand in to arrange the bones. But after a few moments he trembled and closed his eyes. Saying in a broken voice that he had no power to do it, he asked pleadingly that the Chida himself put his own bones in order!

Immediately a powerful, almost explosive sound was heard, the coffin began to shake, and a rattling sound -- made by the Chida's remains striking the coffin's walls -- was heard. All the other rabbis fainted on the spot. Rav Mordechai did not faint, explaining afterwards that his absorption in the mitzva helped him remain conscious.

It was beyond belief! The banging and shaking continued until, bone by bone, the entire skeleton was arranged perfectly -- in the merit of the holy rabbi, the Chida!

"G-d will grant you special Providence, and bring my remains out of this place." [Gen. 50:25]

"He said to me, 'Can these bones live?'...As I prophesied, there was a roaring sound, and the bones came together and joined one another.... 'I am going to open your graves; I will take you out of your graves, My People, and bring you to the Land of Israel.'" [Ezek. 37:3, 7, 12]

Thousands accompanied the funeral procession from the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sanhedria to the cemetery at Har HaMenuchos. At the burial, Rav Eliyahu described the events that had taken place as "Nisei nissim--absolute miracles."

At a later date Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu announced that whoever needs personal salvation can go to pray at the grave of the Chida (just like at other great holy sites -ed.).

It is no wonder that when Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu passed on to his heavenly great reward fifty years later that he was buried near the Chida on Har HaMenuchos!

## A KABBALIST'S VISIT TO THE CITY OF KABBALAH

During his first visit to Israel in 1921, Baba Sali, then a young man in his thirties, came to the city of the kabbalists, Tsfat. There, he met many great Torah sages, among them the renowned Rabbi Shlomo Eliezer Alfandri, who was already past one hundred years of age. The two sat and discussed Kabbalah for a long time.

During this sojourn in Tsfat, the miraculous kabbalistic powers of Baba Sali were revealed. Rabbi Moshe Shetrit, who was one of his first attendants and about twelve years old at the time, described the events that took place.

"One day, not long after we arrived in Jerusalem, the Rav asked me to call a taxi so that he could visit the holy city of Tsfat. When we arrived, he was greeted by the leading rabbis of the community and escorted to an apartment. After he rested, he summoned me and asked me to find the person who held the key to the Ari Synagogue, for he wished to pray there. Everyone was amazed because this shul had been locked up for a long time and visitors were not allowed. We were told this was because many people had mysteriously lost their lives there.

"The Rav went to the Mikvah of the Holy Ari of blessed memory and I went to find the key to the barred synagogue. The people of the city led me to an old man. When I requested the key, he refused. I explained that Baba Sali had sent me, but he remained steadfast in his decision not to give me the key. 'I will not give the key to anyone,' he declared. 'It would be as if I am taking a life.'

"I pleaded with the man and said that I could not return to the Rav without the key. After a while he reluctantly consented. But he said that both Baba Sali and the key would have to be bound to a rope so that they could be retrieved afterwards, so sure was he that the outcome would be tragic.

"He accompanied me to the synagogue, and I gave the Rav the key. The old man sat on a large rock nearby, trembling in anticipation of the coming tragedy. Baba Sali instructed me to hold on to his tzitzit and go in with him. We passed through the synagogue's outer gates and then entered the courtyard.

"The Rav walked along the right side of the courtyard and then entered the synagogue, imbued with intense religious fervour. When he opened the door, the inside of the synagogue was bright with light. Although it was nearly dusk, shining daylight filled the room!

"Baba Sali then pushed aside the curtain in front of the Holy Ark, unfastened the door, and opened a Torah scroll. For several minutes he read from it. Afterwards we sat down on one of the benches in the synagogue. The Rav turned to me and said, 'You can let go of my tsitsit now.' We prayed Minchah and then departed. When we walked out, the old man ran to Baba Sali and embraced and kissed him, speechless with joy.

"This visit became the talk of the city, and thousands flocked to the synagogue, now that the Rav had opened its doors."

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*The Lamplighter contains words from sacred writings. Please do not deface or discard.*

ISSUE 1034

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Talmud states: "It is written in Isaiah, 'In its time' i.e., the Redemption will come at its appointed time, but immediately after it is also written, 'I will hasten it.' Yet there is no contradiction: If the Jewish people are worthy, then G-d will hasten it; if they are not worthy, it will come in its time." This refers not only to two possible times for the Redemption, but also to two possible modes of Redemption: "I will hasten it" describes a Redemption in which our people will immediately soar to the loftiest heights. "In its time" describes a Redemption in which the ascent will advance slowly and by gradual stages. (Or HaTorah)



## IT HAPPENED

## Once...

Itzi (Short for Yitzchak) was born and raised in a religious home but shortly after his Bar Mitzva party he began chumming around with gentiles friends till eventually he stopped doing the commandments and by the time he was 16 had left home and was 'free'.

The business he formed with one of his gentile friends succeeded tremendously and by the time he was in his twenties he was already a millionaire with a mansion, servants, properties, forests and more. The world was his and Judaism was no more than a bone in his throat.

He hated religion but most of all he hated the Chassidic 'Rebbs' so you can imagine Itzi's glee when he heard that a well-known group of actors was presenting a satirical stage play on the famous Chassidic Rebbe, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev. And to add fuel to the fire it was to be staged in the theatre in the city of Berditchev!!

Itzi had to see this! He couldn't miss it! He bought a front balcony seat and looked impatiently forward to Saturday.

Friday arrived. Early that afternoon Itzi told his driver to prepare his carriage for the trip from Brod, where he lived, to Berditchev. But as they neared the city suddenly a genius thought popped into his mind. He could do something all the gentiles in the crowd could never do!! See the Rebbe!!

He heard from someone that the "Shul" (Synagogue) was just one street from the theatre, he could go there, see the Rabbi at his prayers, and make it back in plenty of time before the play. Then he would really appreciate the humour!

Itzi fixed his tie, straightened his hat, stood erect and entered the Synagogue. He found a prayer book and stood in the crowd like everyone else. Suddenly the room became silent and all eyes turned to the door. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak entered. He walked hurriedly to the podium in the front of the Shul, raised his hands to heaven and then he began to sing the first lines of the Shabbat prayers.

Suddenly Itzi lost his identity. All the experiences, successes, thoughts, words and deeds since his Bar Mitzva seemed to peel off, paper thin, and fade into nothing. He became lost in the beauty, power, longing, depth and fullness of each word the Tzadik (totally holy Jew) sang. It was as though he entered a time tunnel where there was no past or future.

An hour later when the prayers finished and the Synagogue emptied out Itzi approached the gabbai (sexton) who was waiting to lock up, and asked if he could find him a place for the Shabbat meals. The Gabbai invited him to his home where Itzi, deep in thought, just picked silently away at his food and after the meal he took him back to the Shul where Rebbe Levi Yitzchak was sitting before several tens of

his Chassidim singing and occasionally interrupting with words of Torah. Itzi sat down and just stared at the Rabbi till 2 a.m. when the Rabbi stood and left the room.

That night Itzi did not sleep. He sat in the Shul until dawn, then he just waited for the Rabbi to enter and then gazed at him throughout the Morning Prayers until the moment he left. That evening, when the Shabbat was over, Itzi approached the holy Rabbi and asked if he could have a word with him.

Hundreds of times in his life Itzi had felt certain and followed his hunches, but never had he ever been more certain of anything as he was now. It was as he had woken from a dream. Up to now he imagined that he himself was g-d but in fact the great, rich, atheistic Itzi was, nothing more than a mere creation. G-d is creating him constantly! It was obvious! The Creator loves him infinitely more than he could ever love himself.

And somehow looking at this Chassidic Rabbi made him feel all this!

He asked the Rabbi if he could prescribe a path of 'tshuva' (lit. return) for him for his sins.

"What sins have you done?" Rabbi Levi Yitzchak asked.

"What HAVE I done!? Better ask which sins haven't I done."

Tears began to cloud Itzi's eyes.

"If so," The Tzadik answered "You have to become a totally different person; someone that has never sinned. Go back home, sell all your possessions, give half to the poor and then come back here."

Itzi did as the Tzadik said and within a week's time he returned to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and returned to Jewish consciousness. In time he married, and lived to see children and children's children living a life of Torah and Mitzvot.

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

He [Ben Azzai] used to say: Do not regard anyone with contempt, and do not reject anything, for there is no man who does not have his hour and no thing which does not have its place. (Ethics of the Fathers 4:1)

There is no man who does not have his hour when circumstances favour him. Similarly, there is nothing which does not have its place which the Holy One has designated as its proper place. All creatures and every single detail of creation forms the totality and completeness of the world. Accordingly, one may not despise any person or anything in the world. (*Maharal of Prague*)

## CANDLE LIGHTING: 11 MAY 2012

BEGINS		ENDS
5:05	MELBOURNE	6:03
5:06	ADELAIDE	6:03
4:51	BRISBANE	5:45
6:12	DARWIN	7:03
4:49	GOLD COAST	5:43
5:13	PERTH	6:08
4:48	SYDNEY	5:44
4:53	CANBERRA	5:50
4:48	LAUNCESTON	5:49
5:08	AUCKLAND	6:05
4:58	WELLINGTON	5:59
4:44	HOBART	5:46
4:47	BYRON BAY	5:41



## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS EMOR

20 IYAR • 12 MAY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:05 PM
	MINCHA:	5:15 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:45 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:43 AM
	MINCHA:	5:10 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:03 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:10 PM
	MAARIV:	6:03 PM