

LAMPLIGHTER

27 Elul
Nitzavim
1052

14 September
5772/2012
and Rosh Hashana
5773/2013

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The opening verses of Nitzavim begin: "You are standing this day, all of you, before the L-rd your G-d, your heads, your tribes, your elders...all the men of Israel...from the hewer of your wood to the drawer of your water."

Concerning these verses, the Midrash states that the Jewish people are likened to a bundle of straw. Each one individually is weak and can be easily broken, but once the straw is gathered into a bundle it is impossible to make it bend. So too is it with the Jewish people. When we are bound together and stand united we are powerful in the face of our enemies. Indeed, unity is the vessel for containing G-d's blessing, as we say in our prayers, "Bless us, our Father, together as one."

In truth, there is no power in the world that can dominate the Jewish people. But if such is the case, how is it possible for any bad to befall them? This only occurs if the individual Jew causes a tiny rift in his bond with G-d that allows external factors to enter. It is this self-induced damage in the relationship between G-d and His people which brings about a lack of unity and makes the Jews vulnerable to harm. When peace and unity reign, the Jews are impervious to attack.

How does the tiny breach first emerge? When a Jew's attention to mitzvot are gradually left by the wayside.

Thus the first step in fortifying our spiritual defences is to make sure that this initial fissure is never allowed to form. How? Through Jewish unity.

Human nature is such that a person is often unaware of his own shortcomings. "All sins are concealed by love." Indeed, our self-love prevents us from being objective. We cannot perceive even great flaws, how much more so the smaller ones. However, when Jews come together, each one can see the shortcomings of his neighbour. A good friend's gentle admonition can cause us to correct our ways, thereby strengthening our fortifications against the Evil Inclination.

This is one of the reasons the Mittlerer Rebbe (Rabbi Dov Ber, the second Chabad Rebbe) encouraged his followers to acquire a friend for this specific purpose: to encourage and inspire each other along the path of Torah and mitzvot. He explained that when two Jews unite to improve themselves and their relationship with G-d, their two G-dly souls are fighting only one Evil Inclination, and it is far easier to emerge victorious.

If this was true generations ago, how much more so is it applicable in our own times, when the darkness of exile has intensified.

By maintaining our Jewish unity we will remain invincible, as it states, "You are standing this day, all of you."

Adapted for Maayan Chai from Likutei Sichot, Volume 2

What Kind of G-d Would Ask You to Sacrifice Your Son?

By Yanki Tauber

Sceptic: I assume even you guys have a problem with G-d not only condoning, but actually asking for the sacrifice of a human life as a demonstration of faith? If you are OK with that, you're no different from the suicide bombers who believe they're killing themselves and scores of innocent men, women and children because G-d wants them to...!

Now, I know that in the end Isaac isn't killed. But that's almost besides the point.

Believer: No, that is the point. After Abraham demonstrates the depth of his faith and commitment to G-d with his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, G-d commands Abraham, "Do not reach out your hand to the lad! Do not do anything to him!" G-d makes it clear that He does NOT want us to offer human sacrifices to Him.

The Torah expressly forbids human sacrifice, and calls it an "abomination." We serve G-d by living a G-dly life and giving life to others, not by dying and killing. Judaism celebrates life and mourns death, not vice versa.

Sceptic: But if that was the case, why couldn't G-d simply have revealed Himself to Abraham and said: "Abraham, I know that all your neighbours are heavily into this, sacrificing their kids to their gods, but listen, that's not what I want. I want you to be the father of a people who shun this kind of thing, and teach everyone else how bad it is."

Believer: But if G-d did only that, what would everyone have said? "Oh, that's Abraham, with his no-sacrifices-needed religion. He calls it a "life-affirming" faith, but he's just a wimp. The simple truth is that he's not as committed as we are. He's like the fancy politicians who ride limousines—until it affects their own pocket or comfort."

Now if G-d and Abraham hadn't staged their scary little show on Mount Moriah, then it wouldn't be true in reality. It may be true in theory, but theories don't necessarily mean anything in real life. Unless Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son for G-d was actually experienced by him in the most tangible way, the first Jew could not have forged a commitment to life that's as powerful as the evildoer's worship of death.

The Akeidah shows that though we serve G-d by living, our commitment to life comes from a place no less powerful and absolute--indeed, far more powerful and absolute – than the suicide bomber's pursuit of death and destruction.

Abraham demonstrated that we are prepared to give our life for G-d – that we recognize that there is a truth and reality that is greater than our own existence and we are absolutely committed to serving this higher truth. So when G-d tells us that that's not what He wants from us – that He wants us not to die and kill for Him but to live and nurture life as His "partner in creation" – our pursuit of life is motivated and empowered by our commitment to G-d, and is as absolute and as powerful as its source.

The whole point of Judaism is not to die for G-d, but to live for G-d. But unless you're prepared to quite literally die for G-d, you cannot truly live for G-d.

Slice of LIFE

Sam was brought up in a typical American non-observant Jewish family, and when he entered University, he joined a group of hippy's and together with that, he threw off the little Jewish identity he had.

"Religion is restrictive, G-d is nature, The Torah is unreal, pleasure is everything" were his mottos.

But it wasn't long before he was tired of drugs and wild parties, and was drawn to more lasting, "spiritual" pleasures. He joined a cult that was a mixture of nature worship and pure idolatry, and felt right at home.

His parents had long ago given up on him, and didn't even know where he was. And he meanwhile became progressively more involved in his new cult, that slowly revealed itself to be a branch of a very organized missionary movement following the Gospels.

The big day was arriving. Sam would be initiated into the inner-circle of believers. But part of the ritual involved building a large fire on an altar. This extraordinary experience was to save his Jewish life.

As he was searching through the forest for twigs and fuel for his "magic" fire, he noticed an old page from a newspaper entangled in some weeds. A bit surprised to see such a thing in the middle of the forest, he added it to his bundle, but as he did, he noticed a picture of a white bearded rabbi with interesting eyes.

He didn't pay it much attention, but when he finally got back to the altar and unpacked his bundle he noticed it again. This time he looked at it for a second, again noticing those eyes, and then stuffed it into the wood on the altar and struck the match.

But, although it seemed to be a calm day, a wind blew the match out, and then the second. "Strange" he thought to himself as he tried to figure where to stand, to block the wind from blowing out the next match.

He then saw the picture again peeking out from between the pieces of wood. He plucked it out of the woodpile, stuffed it in his pocket, told his peers that he was going into the woods to collect more fuel, and when he was sufficiently far from the others, took out the picture and read the caption.

"A New Year's Message from the Lubavitcher Rebbe".

Those eyes seemed to be begging him to stop and think before going too far.

He stood in the woods just staring at the picture for a few minutes. Then turned and walked silently back to town.

A few months later he was walking down a street on the campus, and saw the same picture on the front of a building called "Chabad House". It wasn't long before he was learning Torah with Rabbi Daren - the Chabad House manager on Campus. A few months later he decided to live like a Jew.

A distraught stranger once appeared on the doorstep of Rabbi Aharon of Belz (who lived in Tel Aviv in his later years after his miraculous escape from the Nazis). There was no doubt that the stranger was not a traditional Belzer Chasid. When the Rebbe's attendant explained that it was not the usual time for visitors, the man declared that he would not leave until he was admitted. After a brief consultation with the Rebbe, the attendant let him in.

From the other side of the closed door, the attendant was shocked to hear the Rebbe raising his voice. He could not imagine what could have prompted the saintly Rebbe, who was the epitome of refinement, to employ such a tone of voice when speaking to someone else. The whole matter was quite curious.

A short time later the man walked out. His eyes were swollen and red from crying. Without uttering another word he was gone.

Not long afterward, the Ohr HaTzafun ("Light of the North") synagogue on Ibn Gabirol Street acquired a new attendee. The gentleman in the light-coloured suit and beret showed up every morning and took the same seat. His first day in shul, he had asked someone to find him a volume of Tractate Brachot. Opening the Gemara to the first page he had then asked, "And where is Rashi's commentary?" The helpful congregant had pointed out the small letters on the inner margins.

Taking the huge tome with him into a corner, the stranger had sat a long time staring at the text. For the first few days he hadn't even turned the page, a look of intense mental exertion on his face. The man was strangely quiet, almost inanimate. Every day around noontime, after several hours of study, he would close the volume and leave.

Over the next few weeks the man gradually found his voice. One could tell that he understood what he was learning, and indeed, was enjoying himself. The man always studied the Gemara with Rashi's commentary. One finger was always on the text; another was always on Rashi's explanation.

Over the course of time the other congregants grew accustomed to the stranger. They referred to him as the "baal teshuva," [someone who had

recently returned to religious observance], but despite their attempts the man seemed uninterested in emerging from his shell of isolation and loneliness.

And so the situation continued for many years: ten, 15, maybe even 20...

Eventually it came to the attention of the Belzer Rebbe's attendant that the mysterious gentleman who sat and learned Gemara in the Ohr HaTzafun synagogue was none other than the visitor who had insisted on seeing the Rebbe so many years before. In the end, the man revealed his secret:

His name was Levi Yitzchak; he had been named after the famous Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, from whom he was descended. Born in Russia, he had attended cheder as a child. But after the Bolshevik Revolution his parents had been forced to send him to Communist schools, where every last vestige of Judaism had been uprooted from his heart.

Years ago he had come to Israel, where he expected to live out his life much as he had till then. One day, however, seemingly out of the blue, he found himself thinking about his late parents. Their memory soon became an obsession; no matter what he did, he could not rid himself of it. The disparity between his present lifestyle and his early childhood was just too great; his conscience bothered him night and day.

Then one night he had a dream, in which an elderly Rabbi appeared to him. The next morning, he was even more agitated. Wandering the streets of Tel Aviv he had entered synagogue after synagogue frantically searching for relief from his dreams, but to no avail.

Sometime later he happened to visit the study hall of the Belzer Rebbe. When he saw the holy tzadik he recognized him as the nocturnal visitor of his dream. That very day he had insisted on speaking with him and had poured out his heart, including his plan to do away with himself. "I've already forfeited the World to Come," he had wept bitterly, "and in this world I can find no peace."

Upon hearing these words the Rebbe had raised his voice and thundered, "What are you saying? G-d forbid that you should do such a thing. G-d forbid, do you hear me?" After a long talk the Rebbe had put his holy hand on Levi Yitzchak and said, "The tikun [rectification] for your soul will be to study Gemara with Rashi's commentary -- a lot of Gemara with Rashi. Now go home and begin a new life."

Levi Yitzchak had followed the Rebbe's advice, and his peace of mind was soon restored. And ever since, not a day went by that he didn't learn Gemara with Rashi.

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ISSUE 1062

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In the Amida prayer recited daily throughout the year, we beseech G-d for the true and complete Redemption. In the Amida of Rosh Hashana, we intensify our prayers with five blessings in which we implore G-d to sanctify His Name on the Holy Temple, for His sovereignty, for the kingship of the house of King David, and similar references to the Redemption. Thus, throughout our Rosh Hashana prayers, we should surely pray for the complete Redemption! (*The Rebbe, 2nd day of Rosh Hashana 5744-1984*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Freely translated

Days of Selichos, 5715 [1954]

On the eve of Rosh Hashanah I extend my prayerful wishes to my brethren, every Jew and Jewess in the midst of our people Israel, the time hallowed traditional blessing of "Shono toivo umesuko" - a good and sweet year.

The celebration of Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the year, has been ordained by our Torah to take place on the anniversary of the Creation, but not on the first day of Creation. It has been made to coincide with the sixth day of Creation, the day when Man was created.

The significance of this day, and of this event, is not in the fact that a new creature was added to Creation, a creature one plane higher than the rest of the animal kingdom, as the animal is superior to plant, and plant to mineral.

The significance lies in the fact that the new creature - Man - was essentially different from the others.

For it was Man who recognized the Creator in and through Creation, and, what is more, brought about the elevation of the entire Creation to that recognition and thus to the fulfillment of its Divine design and purpose, since such recognition and appreciation of the Creator is the ultimate purpose of the Creation.

One of the main distinguishing features which set Man apart from all other creatures is the free choice of action which the Creator bestowed upon him.

Man can use this special Divine gift in two opposing directions. He may, G-d forbid, choose the way leading to self-destruction and the destruction of everything around him; or, he can choose the right way of life, which would elevate him and the Creation with him to the highest possible perfection.

And to help us recognize and choose the right path, we were given the Torah, which is Divine and eternal, hence, its teachings are valid for all times and in all places.

It is not possible for man to make this choice unaided, merely by virtue of his intellect, for the human intellect is limited. The intellect can only serve to discover and bring forth that inner absolute intuition and faith in things which lie beyond and above the realm of the intellect; the faith and intuition which are the heritage of every Jew, therewith to illuminate his entire being and to guide him in his daily living to a life inspired by Torah and Mitzvoth [commandments].

On Rosh Hashanah man stands not only before the Divine Judgement, but also before his own.

The verdict of his own judgement, with regard to the future, must be: that he takes upon himself to fulfill his duty, that is, to work toward the fulfillment - in himself and in his surroundings - of the call:

"Come, let us worship, bow down, and kneel before G-d our Maker," a call for absolute submission to G-d was first sounded by the first man, Adam, on the day of his creation, on the first Rosh Hashanah.

This can be attained only through a life inspired and guided by the Torah.

And that he must once and for all abandon the opposite road, which can only lead to destruction and doom.

Let no one think: who am I and what am I to have such tremendous powers of building or destruction.

For we have seen - to our sorrow - what even a small quantity of matter can do in the way of destruction through the release of atomic energy. If such power is concealed in a small quantity of matter - for destructiveness, in denial of the design and purpose of Creation, how much greater is the creative power entrusted to every individual to work in harmony with the Divine purpose, for in this case one is also given special abilities and opportunities by Divine Providence to attain the goal for which we have been created: the realization of a world in which "Each creature shall recognize that Thou didst create him, and every breathing soul shall declare: 'G-d, the G-d of Israel, is King, and His reign is supreme over all.'"

With the blessing of Kesivo vachasimo toivo [written and sealed for good]

CUSTOMS CORNER

Rosh Hashana is the day of judgment for all humankind. On this day man is judged as to the events of his life during the forthcoming year.

"Good Year"

On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, we extend to one another greetings of Leshana Tovah Tekatev Vitechatem, "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year."

Tashlich

In the afternoon, the *Tashlich* prayer service, in which we ask G-d to "cast away our sins in the depths of the sea", is recited at a body of water (sea, river, lake, pond, etc.) containing fish.

The 10-days of repentance

The 10-day period beginning on Rosh Hashanah and ending on Yom Kippur is known as the "Ten Days of Repentance"; this is the period, say the sages, of which the prophet speaks when he proclaims (Isaiah 55:6) "Seek G-d when He is to be found; call on Him when He is near." Psalm 130, *Avinu Malkeinu* and other special inserts and additions are included in our daily prayers during these days.

A WORD

from the Director

The Midrash (Jewish proverbs) relates that when Abraham's guests wished to bless him for his generous hospitality, he would say to them: "Has the food you have eaten been provided by myself? You should thank, praise and bless He who spoke the world into being!"

If they refused Abraham would - alternatively- demand payment for the food they had eaten, which under the circumstances, was an astronomical price. When the guest would realize the predicament he was in he would relent and proclaim: "Blessed be the G-d of the world, from whose providence we have eaten."

What value, we might ask, was there in such an unwilling proclamation, extracted under duress? Was this not a mere mouthing of words, devoid of any conviction as to the truth of the One G-d or any desire to thank Him for His providence?

Let us answer this based on one of the many teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. This entails an important lesson about the essence of a Jew. And Rosh Hashana is certainly a good time to put some thought to it.

Abraham had a vision of humanity which convinced him that every positive deed, word or thought does have value, no matter how "superficial" or "hypocritical" it might seem to a less discerning eye. When Abraham looked at his guests, he only saw creatures of G-d, men and women who had been created in the Divine image and possessed a potential, inherent to the very essence of their being, to recognize their Creator and serve His will.

Most often, a kind word and a helping hand will bring to light this inner potential. At times, however, a soul might be so encrusted by negative influences and a corrupted character that a certain degree of "pressure" must be applied to quell its resistance to a G-dly deed. (Of course, any use of such "pressure" must conform to the dictates of G-d's Torah, whose "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its pathways are peace"--as in the case of Abraham's fully legitimate demand for payment.)

Abraham understood that no human acknowledgment of G-d can ever be "hypocritical." On the contrary: a denial of G-d is the ultimate hypocrisy, for it is at variance with the person's quintessential being. When a creature of G-d proclaims "Blessed be the G-d of the world from whose providence we have eaten," nothing can be more consistent with his or her innermost self.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

It was the day before the Jewish holiday of Rosh HaShanna in the town of Lubavitch, Russia, and Fival was going insane with worry.

His debts had reached unbearable proportions, and his lone asset; his hotel, hadn't had a guest for almost a half a year. The night before, his tormented soul didn't let him sleep. And now, at the crack of dawn, he was already wandering the deserted streets of Lubavitch in aimless gloom like a madman.

Suddenly he heard a voice call out to him from on high.

"Fival, what is wrong? What brings you here?"

Startled, Fival looked up to see that it was none other than the Rebbe Maharash (the fourth Rebbe of Chabad. Called the MaHaRaSh meaning "our teacher the Rav Shmuel"). He was standing on the second floor balcony of his home looking down at him like a king, but with the eyes of a good friend, waiting for him to answer.

Fival was terribly embarrassed to have stumbled into the saintly Rebbe's yard, and had an urge to just run away, but he couldn't hold back his sorrow.

"Rebbe, what will become of me, oy Rebbe! I have so many debts I'm going crazy!"

"But what about your hotel?" Asked the Rebbe

Poor simple Fival was trying to hold back the tears as he just waived his hand and shook his head blurring out, "No good!".

The Rebbe became silent for a moment and then spoke in a very quiet voice, but Fival heard every word clearly.

"Fival, I see a lot of people coming to your inn for the Holiday. It's still early in the day; you still have a lot of time. Prepare for at least one hundred guests."

Simple Fival did not believe his ears. "One hundred, Rebbe?! Thank you Rebbe, thank you!"

He stood for a moment as though putting himself in gear, then yelled out another few "Thanks" to the Rebbe and ran out of the yard stumbling over his feet as he went. He went directly to the butcher shop and from there to all the other food stores.

Somehow he convinced each storeowner to just give him another chance, and an hour later returned home laden with parcels. He woke his wife, told her the good news, ran outside and hired a few of the locals to help with the preparations, and after several hours of joyous hard work everything was prepared for the onslaught of guests. Which would arrive at any moment.

But they didn't. It was already five in the afternoon. In two hours the holiday would begin and there was still no sign of any guests.

By six thirty Fival was running in and out of his house, first looking up and down the road in both directions for guests, and then back inside to check the pots

"Are you sure you heard the Rebbe correctly?" His wife began nagging him. "What will we do with all this food? it will spoil, Fival. It's a quarter to seven!!" But Fival was just sitting with his head in his hands.

Suddenly, ten minutes before the holiday the door burst open and several Jews frantically rushed in shouting, "Have you got a place for us to sleep!?"

Fival took his head out of his hands, half-heartedly looked at them and asked. "How many are you?"

"About three hundred all together! We were on our way to Vitebsk but we took a wrong turn. Do you have a place?"

It seems that his wife had been yelling at him at such volume that neither of them noticed the multitude of wagons that had arrived.

The guests had to settle for cramped rooms and smaller portions of food, but miraculously everyone was tremendously satisfied, and after the holiday they paid Fival royally for his hospitality.

Fival went to the Rebbe to thank him. When he did, he couldn't help asking the Rebbe why he didn't just tell him that the guests would arrive so late and save him the tension and aggravation.

"I was looking from very high" explained the Rebbe. "From there even large distances seem very small".

Thoughts THAT COUNT

Day of Judgment

It is the way of the world that if a person has a judgment pending against him, he dresses in black, wraps himself in black, lets his beard grow for the uncertainty of the outcome. Israel, however, is different. They dress in white; they eat, drink and rejoice, in the knowledge that G-d will perform miracles on their behalf. (*Jerusalem Talmud, Rosh Hashana, ch. 1*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS NITZAVIM
28 ELUL • 15 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT: CANDLE LIGHTING: 5:52 PM
MINCHA: 6:00 PM
KABBOLAS SHABBOS: 6:30 PM

SHABBOS MORNING: SHACHARIS: 10:00 AM
LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: 9:16 AM
MINCHA: 5:50 PM
SHABBOS ENDS: 6:49 PM

ROSH HASHANA • 1-2 TISHREI • 17-18 SEPTEMBER
SUNDAY NIGHT: CANDLE LIGHTING: 5:53 PM
MINCHA: 6:00 PM
MAARIV: 6:45 PM

MONDAY MORNING • 17 SEPTEMBER • 1ST DAY OF ROSH HASHANA
SHACHARIS: 9:00 AM
SHOFAR BLOWING: 11:00 AM (APPROX)

A CHILD MINDING FACILITY WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM 10 AM
MINCHA: 5:50 PM
TASHLICH: 6:00 PM
LIGHT CANDLES AFTER: 6:51 PM
MAARIV: 6:50 PM

TUESDAY MORNING • 18 SEPTEMBER • 2ND DAY OF ROSH HASHANA:
SHACHARIS: 9:00 AM
SHOFAR BLOWING: 11:00 AM (APPROX)

A CHILD MINDING FACILITY WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM 10 AM
MINCHA: 6:00 PM
MAARIV: 6:52 PM

FAST OF GEDALIAH • 19 SEPTEMBER • 4 TISHREI
FAST BEGINS: 4:55 AM
SHACHARIS: 9:15 AM
MINCHA: 5:50 PM
FAST ENDS: 6:40 PM

WEEKDAYS: SHACHARIS SUN-FRI: 9:15 AM
MINCHA: 6:05 PM
MAARIV: 6:45 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 14, 17 & 18 SEPTEMBER 2012

BEGINS				ENDS	
14th	16th	17th		15th	18th
5:52	5:53	6:51	MELBOURNE	6:49	6:52
5:48	5:49	6:46	ADELAIDE	6:44	6:46
5:22	5:23	6:16	BRISBANE	6:15	6:17
6:25	6:25	7:14	DARWIN	7:14	7:14
5:21	5:22	6:15	GOLD COAST	6:14	6:15
5:50	5:51	6:46	PERTH	6:45	6:47
5:28	5:29	6:25	SYDNEY	6:23	6:25
5:36	5:37	6:34	CANBERRA	6:32	6:34
5:42	5:44	6:44	LAUNCESTON	6:42	6:45
5:53	5:54	6:51	AUCKLAND	6:50	6:52
5:51	5:53	6:53	WELLINGTON	6:51	6:54
5:41	5:43	6:44	HOBART	6:41	6:45
5:20	5:21	6:14	BYRON BAY	6:13	6:15

For the 14th one must light BY the given time (at last resort one may light only up until 18 minutes after the given time). For the 16th and 17th one should light at the given time or any time AFTER that

