

# LAMPLIGHTER

25 Nissan  
Shmini  
10th day of the omer

1081

5 April  
5773/2013

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The Torah portion of Shemini opens with a description of the eighth and final day of the consecration of the Sanctuary, the day when the Divine Presence first rested therein. The name of the portion - Shemini - means "eighth" and alludes to the special significance held by the number eight. Eight symbolizes that which is above the laws of nature and the boundaries of our physical world. It stands for that aspect of G-dliness which exists even beyond the realm of our human powers of description.

One would think that the contents of so lofty a section of the Torah would deal with correspondingly lofty subject matter - philosophy, belief in G-d, metaphysics - but we find that Shemini delineates the laws between kosher and non-kosher animals. Why such a mundane a subject for a Torah portion which is supposed to express so high a level of holiness?

In many instances, a fine line exists between that which is kosher and that which is forbidden. A kosher animal whose trachea and esophagus are only partially severed when slaughtered is not fit for consumption. A difference of only a fraction of a centimetre can determine whether or not the flesh of the animal is kosher or not, as Jewish law prescribes that both trachea and esophagus be more than half severed with one movement of the knife.

In our own lives, we also occasionally must make decisions which are as fine as a hair's breadth. Choosing between good and evil when the choices are obvious and blatant is much easier than making a decision between two extremely fine points. For such decision making, extra help from above is necessary.

The Evil Inclination sometimes disguises itself in a "robe of holiness." It discourages a person from performing a mitzvah through guile and doubt, presenting all sorts of seemingly plausible and erudite excuses. A person may become confused when the two paths of action before him both seem to have merit. The Evil Inclination can even make a sin appear to be an actual mitzvah.

How are we to overcome the wiles and cunning of the Evil Inclination? How can we be sure that the decisions we make are the right ones? By learning the lesson which is taught in Shemini.

Man alone, bound as he is by the laws of nature and the limitations of the human intellect, cannot always overcome his Evil Inclination. But when a person gives himself over to G-d, who is not bound by any natural law and is infinite, and asks His help to "distinguish between the unclean and the clean," one can indeed conquer the Evil Inclination and avoid falling into its net.

A Jew's connection to G-d is so strong that it cannot be split asunder by any power on earth. When a Jew does a mitzvah (commandment) - mitzvah comes from the Hebrew word for binding together and connecting - he ties himself to G-d with a supernatural strength. Armed with this power, we can see through the mask of the Evil Inclination when we are presented with even the finest points of contention.

*Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.*

## Why We Keep Kosher

*By Yossy Goldman*

To those of us in Jewish education, it is a continuing source of disappointment that so many Jews still believe the kosher laws to be out-dated. After all, they reckon, in the desert our ancestors needed to protect themselves from trichinosis and all sorts of diabolical diseases so some kind of dietary system was needed. But today, they argue, in an age of refrigeration, government inspection and modern hygiene standards, the kosher laws are archaic, anachronistic and quite dispensable.

How sad. The fact is that the kosher laws were never given to us for health reasons. If they happen to be healthy or provide good hygiene that is purely a fringe benefit. It may well be one of the perks but it has never been the reason.

I often joke that if the kosher laws were for health, then all the rabbis should look like Schwarzenegger! And those who don't keep kosher should look sickly. In fact, anecdotal evidence seems to prove the very opposite; your average religious type looks rather scrawny (or overweight) and the non-kosher guys are the ones with the big biceps!

So let it be stated categorically: kosher is not for our physical health but for our spiritual health. It is not for our bodies but for our souls. It is a Jewish diet to help Jews remain spiritually sensitive to their innate Jewishness.

While the Torah actually records no official reason for these laws, the rabbis and philosophers have speculated on their purpose. They act as a bulwark against assimilation, we are taught. On a simple level, if we keep kosher, inexorably, we will shop with fellow Jews, socialize with fellow Jews and remain close to Jewish communal life. A rabbinic friend of mine once asked a very high-profile Jewish businessman why he was about to marry a non-Jewish woman. Couldn't he find a "nice Jewish girl"? His reply was very revealing. "I just don't mix in those circles anymore, Rabbi." There is no doubt that had he still kept Kosher his life choices may well have been very different.

On a deeper, more spiritual level, keeping kosher keeps our Jewish souls sensitive to things Jewish. This is clearly a mystical concept and imperceptible to our physical senses, but according to our sages it is a fact. Just as too much red meat or fatty foods are bad for your cholesterol, non-kosher foods are bad for your *neshamah*. They clog your spiritual arteries and prevent those warm, healthy Jewish feelings from circulating through your consciousness.

Your favourite diet may build healthy bodies, but a kosher diet builds healthy souls.

# Slice of LIFE

## From the book entitled **Rabot Moftai**

Chiam Salominski was a dunce. That was the general consensus of his Bar Mitzva Class. In secular learning; math, history and biology, he was quite bright, well above average, but in Torah learning he was a dunce.

What could he do? He wanted so badly to please his father and learn Torah but it just didn't 'go'. As soon as the teacher told everyone to open their Gemoras (Talmuds) Chiam began daydreaming. And at the end of every class he had no idea what had been said.

His father was a holocaust survivor from Poland that had been taken away by the Germans with his entire family when he was just a young man in his early twenties. They were separated, scattered in various death camps and he finally ended up in Auschwitz where, despite the hunger, torture, disease and exterminations, miraculously survived.

He returned home to discover that his family had been murdered, his house had been occupied by Poles and he had nowhere to live.

So he moved to a relocation camp in Austria where after a year or so he met young Jewish lady who had also lost her family and they married. A year later their first child, Chiam, was born and a year after that they moved to America to the East Side in New York to begin a new life.

Chiam's father, despite all he had been through, was an observant Jew and even considered himself to be a Chassid; in Poland he was attached somewhat to the Rebbe of Sossov. He was determined that his son would also walk in the way of the Torah. He enrolled the boy in Torah academies and hoped he would be a Torah scholar - but he wasn't.

In fact, by the time Chiam reached the eighth grade he was at the bottom of the class. He managed to hide it from his father, but that was the bitter truth. There were children in that had memorized entire tractates of Talmud; hundreds of

pages, while the only thing poor little Chiam knew was one small Mishna of several lines that he had been forced to learn as a punishment for bad behaviour. The rest was an opaque blur of words and ideas he couldn't really relate to. He was a Torah dunce.

The winter of 1960 was a monumental date for his parents; they had accomplished the impossible! They, charred embers saved from an inferno of destruction, were going to celebrate the thirteenth birthday of their son!

Chiam was going to be Bar-Mitzva!

Chiam worked day and night on the small portion he was to read and a few days before the big day his father came home with more joyous news. He had arranged a private audience with the holy Lubavitcher Rebbe for both of them!! The Rebbe would bless Chiam before the big day!!

At first Chiam was also overjoyed. He even told all of his friends in school about it. But one of them put a needle into his balloon.

"Hey, don't you know that the Lubavitcher Rebbe always asks the Bar-Mitzva boys something about what they are learning in the Talmud? Chiam, what are you going to do? Do you even know what Tractate we are learning? If I were you I wouldn't go."

Suddenly everyone fell silent.

Chiam was confused and broken. It meant so much to his father...he had to go. But on the other hand his friend was right. What would he do if the Rebbe asked? And he was sure to ask! He asked EVERYONE! The thought of how embarrassed his father was going to be began to break his heart.

The day arrived. Chiam's father was dressed in his best suit and so was Chiam. The taxi-ride to the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, although it was less than a half-hour, seemed to take forever. Finally they entered the Rebbe's headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway, asked one of the young men there what to do and took their place in line before the Rebbe's door.

Just after midnight their turn came.

They entered together. Earlier, one of the Chassidim told his father that it wasn't

proper to shake the Rebbe's hand or to sit down even if the Rebbe asked, and sure enough when they entered the first thing the Rebbe did was extend his hand and tell his father to sit.

They remained standing. Chiam still remembers the sound of his knees knocking against the Rebbe's table as he stared transfixed at the Rebbe's kind face.

The Rebbe spoke seriously for several minutes to his father in Yiddish. His father offered an envelope containing a donation but the Rebbe told him to please speak to the secretaries about that and then turned to Chaim whose poor knees were knocking so hard he almost couldn't stand. But as soon as the Rebbe began speaking they stopped.

He asked if he understood Yiddish and Chiam replied yes. Then the Rebbe, without asking him what tractate he was learning asked him a Torah questions. Chaim winced, he was short of breath. But the Rebbe repeated the question and suddenly Chiam said the answer! Then the Rebbe asked another question and another and Chiam knew ALL the answers!! Each and every one!!

All the questions the Rebbe asked were on that one and ONLY Mishna that Chaim knew!

It was a miracle. How could the Rebbe possibly have known? No one but Chiam knew! But one thing was for sure; Chiam felt like the Torah genius of New York! He answered with such joy and certainty that for the first time in his life he felt that the Torah was his!!

When they went outside and the door closed behind them Chiam's his father turned to him, tears of joy running down his cheeks, lifted him and hugged him with all his might for several minutes. He was so overcome with emotion that he could not speak. In fact the scene was so unique that the Chassidim crowded around, thinking that perhaps the Rebbe had given them some special message to pass on to mankind.

And really he had: that if you see the good in every creation, especially every Jew, the results are miraculous.

Chiam was so encouraged that he eventually became the principal for secular learning in one of the Chabad elementary schools.

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

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ISSUE 1081

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

During the seven days of festivities following the wedding of the Rebbe Rashab in Elul 5635 [1875], the Chassidim celebrated with indescribable joy. On one of those days, his father the Rebbe Maharash sat at his window and watched them dancing in the garden in dozens of circles.

Turning to the two Chassidim who stood next to him, he said: "See, my children, how Chassidim are glad in the joy of a *mitzvah*. This is how Jews will dance in the streets when *Moshiach* comes!"



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

B"H, 8 Iyar, 5710

Greetings and blessings,

I found out, incidentally, that your emotions have become very volatile recently [and] that you are irritable.... Certainly, you heard from my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, and learned from his talks, and letters that there is nothing accidental in the world, but on the contrary, everything is controlled by Divine providence. On our part, we must try to align our deeds with the intent of the His providence. Who am I [to say that I] know the intent of His providence? Nevertheless, since I heard about the above, and it is possible for me to help - at least to a certain extent - I am therefore writing this letter.

The reason for your emotional volatility was not told to me, but it is likely to be your dissatisfaction with your present situation. The G-dly soul is not happy with your spiritual circumstances and the animal soul is not happy with your material situation. Therefore [you let] your body and your nerves just have their way.

It is difficult for me to give a particular answer to your assertions regarding your appraisal of your situation, because I have not heard those assertions from you directly.

I will therefore offer only a general answer according to my understanding of your situation. Since you have a greater vested interest in the matter than I do, according to Torah law, my testimony [and conception of the matter] is more trustworthy.

[My perspective] is that my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, established you in the path of light, i.e., Torah. Moreover, he did not remain content with this, and also granted you a portion in "the light of the Torah," i.e., that you and the teachers under your direction are Chassidim who study the teachings of Chassidism, whether profusely, in an average way, or at least to a limited extent. And you are able to instill the fear of Heaven into your students, which is the purpose of the Torah and its mitzvos.

This was not enough. From early on, my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, led you by the hand and directed you in all your affairs. You built a home on the basis of the Torah and its mitzvos. Thank G-d, you always had [the means to provide] for your sustenance and the sustenance of the members of your household and you have that now as well. And you have received blessings from my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, that this situation will continue in the future, and furthermore, that you will be able to give tzedakah generously.

[In brief,] this describes your spiritual and material situation. After all that, why are you so disturbed? That [although certain] things are granted you in hand, in addition, you have to work?! That this entails heartache?! That you must deal with simple people?!

The Rebbe's time and energy were certainly precious. He certainly had the right to demand more [from Above] than others and, nevertheless, he went through all [sorts of challenges] and [endured them] over and above [the norm].

Who then can come along and indulge himself and claim, "I don't want to do that!" (which inevitably leads to the assumption) "I can't do that," and [as a result, to the conclusion:] "I'm walking away. I'm all upset"?!

Is this the right approach, Reb....?

With good wishes for your wife and to all the members of your household, for blessing for all types of good.

## CUSTOMS CORNER

### Counting the Omer

"When you take this people out of Egypt," said G-d to Moses when He revealed Himself to him in a burning bush at the foot of Mount Sinai, "you shall serve G-d on this mountain."

It took seven weeks to reach the mountain. The people of Israel departed Egypt on the 15th of Nissan (the first day of Passover); on the 6th of Sivan, celebrated ever since as the festival of Shavuot, they assembled at the foot of Mount Sinai and received the Torah from G-d.

The Kabbalists explain that the 49 days that connect Passover with Shavuot correspond to the 49 drives and traits of the human heart. Each day saw the refinement of one of these sefirot, bringing the people of Israel one step closer to their election as G-d's chosen people and their receiving of His communication to humanity.

Each year, we retrace this inner journey with our "Counting of the Omer." Beginning on the second night of Passover, we count the days and weeks: "Today is one day to the Omer"; "Today is two days to the Omer"; "Today is seven days, which are one week to the Omer"; and so on, till "Today is forty-nine days, which are seven weeks to the Omer." Shavuot, the "Festival of Weeks," is the product of this count, driven by the miracles and revelations of the Exodus but achieved by a methodical, 49-step process of self-refinement within the human soul.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*On this Shabbos, it is customary to begin the recitation of Pirkei Avos, Ethics of our fathers. From at least the time of Saadia Gaon (10th century), it has been customary to study one chapter a week on each Shabbat between Passover and Shavuot; today, the tractate is generally studied in fact on each Shabbat from Passover to Rosh Hashanah, the entire cycle repeating a few times with doubling of chapters at the end if there are not a perfect multiple of six weeks. The tractate is therefore included in many prayer books, following Shabbat afternoon prayers.*

*In the course of such study, it is common to preface each chapter with the Mishnaic saying, "All Israel has a share in the world to come" (Sanhedrin 10:1), and to conclude each chapter with the saying, "The Holy One, blessed be He, wished to bestow merit upon Israel; therefore he gave them Torah and mitzvot in abundance" (Makkoth 3:16).*

*These quotes emphasize the unique dearness with which G-d holds every Jew, without distinction, for each Jew possesses a soul which is "a part of G-d from above." For this reason, each Jew will receive an actual portion, in the World to Come.*

*As a sign of this unconditional preciousness he also wishes to give us merit, and by doing so, strengthen our connection. Every mitzvah reinforces our unity. Similarly, regarding every action of our lives, G-d has dictated a way to carry it out. Everything G-d has commanded is only to positively enhance his beloved people, and we must reciprocate by doing all in our power to return the sentiment. By carrying out G-d's will, we show our devotion towards him, but must keep in mind that we only have that opportunity because of his love for us.*

*J. I. Guterlich*

## IT HAPPENED

## Once...

Some four hundred years ago in Europe, Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshitz, a great and famous figure, was eventually invited by the king for a private audience.

The king held himself to also be an intellectual and in wasn't long before he began peppering the Rabbi with difficult questions comparing Judaism to the other religions, trying to trip him up.

Of course in such cases it was as dangerous to win as it was to lose. One word against the king's religion could result in disaster as could an insufficient reply.

Finally the king asked the most difficult question of all; what does it mean when the Bible calls the Jews G-d's chosen people? How do we see they are different from any other people or religion? Exactly the opposite! They are outnumbered and belittled by all the other nations! Obviously the 'Old Testament' is speaking about days of old, but not now!

Rabbi Eibeshitz thought for a moment and answered.

"I can show your majesty the difference, but only on the condition that I have your majesty's word that no harm will come to the Jews from anything your majesty sees today."

The king promised, the Rabbi asked him to disguise himself as a common citizen so as not to be recognized and to follow him to the synagogue.

It happened to be in the middle of the holiday of Passover. Rabbi Eibeshitz stood on the podium and announced that after the evening prayer he wanted to make an announcement. The word spread like wildfire and in just moments the entire place was packed.

"You all know," The Rabbi said as the room fell silent. "That it is forbidden by Royal decree to be in the possession of silk. Well I want everyone to run home and bring all the silk he has hidden." (The Jews sold the silk to tailors or to other merchants to keep them from poverty).

In moments the room was empty and minutes later it was full again. Each man produced a roll or two of silk hidden under his coat. The Rabbi looked briefly at the rolls of cloth and then announced.

"Fine! Now I want everyone to take your silks back and appear back here as soon as possible with all the Chametz (unleavened bread and cakes, forbidden on Passover) you have in your homes."

The people looked at each other and then at the Rabbi in horror. "But Rabbi!" they blurted out "That is impossible. No one has Chametz! G-d forbid! No one would even dream of having Chametz on Passover! G-d forbid!!

Where could we possibly get Chametz from??"

"Very good!" Said the Rabbi "That is what I wanted to hear. Have a good holiday, all of you! G-d bless you all!!" And the people filed by the Rabbi, shook his hand and soon the Rabbi and the King were alone in the synagogue.

"Do you see?" the Rabbi said. Your majesty has soldiers and police everywhere and anyone caught in the possession of silk will be heavily fined and even imprisoned. And nevertheless you see that some of the Jews do possess silk.

But no one of those people ever saw G-d and He has no soldiers or police. In fact today a Jew can, G-d forbid, transgress all of the commandments and receive no fine, no imprisonment, not even a slap on the hand; no punishment what-so-ever! But despite all this, none would think to own Chametz.

That is why the Jews are 'chosen', not because G-d necessarily favours them (although we believe that soon Moshiach will make G-d, His Torah and His people precious to the entire world) but because we favour G-d, above all logic and reason!"

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

And it came to pass on the eighth day (9:1)

The number seven represents the cycle of creation; the number eight represents the "circumference"--that which lies beyond the perimeter of time and space. This is why the Divine Presence came to dwell in the Israelite camp on the eighth day. This is also alluded to in the saying of our sages (Talmud, Erchin 13b) that "The lyre of Moshiach has eight strings." (*Keli Yakar; Shaloh*)

Do not drink wine or strong drink... when you enter the Tent of Meeting (10:9)

Though the vine be supported by straight reeds and forked reeds, these cannot stand up under the weight of the wine in the grapes. So if wine's own mother cannot bear its burden, how then can you? (*Midrash Rabbah*)

And Moses heard this, and it was favourable in his eyes (10:20)

Moses was not ashamed to admit his error; he did not say "I did not hear this," but said, "I heard it and I forgot it." (*Talmud; Rashi*)

These are the animals which you may eat... (11:2)

The birds and many of the mammals forbidden by the Torah are predators, while the permitted animals are not. We are commanded not to eat those animals possessive of a cruel nature, so that we should not absorb these qualities into ourselves. (*Nachmanides*)

## CANDLE LIGHTING: 5 APRIL 2013

BEGINS		ENDS
6:51	MELBOURNE	7:47
6:48	ADELAIDE	7:43
5:25	BRISBANE	6:16
6:30	DARWIN	7:19
5:23	GOLD COAST	6:15
5:51	PERTH	6:44
6:29	SYDNEY	7:22
6:36	CANBERRA	7:31
6:40	LAUNCESTON	7:38
6:53	AUCKLAND	7:48
6:50	WELLINGTON	7:47
6:39	HOBART	7:37
6:22	BYRON BAY	7:14



## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS SHMINI  
25 NISSAN • 5 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	6:51 PM
	MINCHA:	7:00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	7:35 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10:30 AM
	MOLAD FOR THE MONTH OF IYAR	
	WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2013:	7:05 (15 CHALAKIM) PM
	MINCHA:	6:55 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	7:47 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	2:03 PM
	MAARIV:	6:40 PM