

# LAMPLIGHTER

9 Iyar  
Acharei-Kedoshim  
24th day of the omer

1083

19 April  
5773/2013

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week we read two Torah portions, Acharei and Kedoshim. One of commandments contained in this week's Torah portion, Kedoshim, is ahavat Yisrael - loving one's fellow Jew.

"You shall love your fellow as yourself," the Torah enjoins us. This mitzvah is so important that Rabbi Akiva termed it "a great principle of Torah" - the key to observe all Torah and mitzvot (commandments).

Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Chasidism, sought out the unlearned Jew, whose simplicity and sincerity placed him on a higher spiritual level than many sophisticated scholars.

Commenting on the Talmud's statement that the Jewish people are the two pairs of G-d's "tefillin," the Baal Shem Tov likened the simple Jew to the Tefillin bound around the arm (symbolic of the deed), whereas the learned Jew is likened to the Tefillin worn on the head (symbolic of the intellect). Just as Tefillin are placed on the arm before the head, so too, practical deeds take precedence over intellectual knowledge.

Loving one's fellow Jew, therefore, involves respecting both the ignorant and the learned. In both these cases, however, the Jews in question are undeniably good. But what about those who are not? The Maggid of Mezeritch, successor of the Baal Shem Tov, demanded that we love the absolutely wicked and the righteous in equal measure! The underlying reason is that when one concentrates solely on the Jew's inner essence, all Jews are equal and worthy of being loved.

Yet even this kind of love is somewhat limited, for when we say that one type of Jew should be loved like another, it implies that certain differences between them do exist, no matter how minute.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism, taught that the love one Jew feels for another cannot be measured, much like the love between two brothers that stems from their very souls.

The commandment to "love your fellow as yourself" must therefore be taken literally: "as yourself." Just as self-love covers up a multitude of defects, so too must we love our fellow Jew with the same intensity.

Isn't this just a high ideal for which we strive but never hope to actually attain? Jews are different. Is it really possible to love a total stranger to the same degree one loves himself?

Yes! Although much has been written on the subject, suffice it to say that our love for each other is only a reflection of G-d's love for His children, the Jewish people.

Consequently, it is only natural that not only do we love G-d in return, but we extend that love to those whom He loves as well, without distinction.

In a deeper sense, however, the entire Jewish people may be said to comprise one collective whole, for the essence of every Jew is his soul, "a veritable portion of G-d Above." On this level, ahavat Yisrael is really loving ourselves, not some outside entity!

May we witness the greatest revelation of G-d's love for His children with the immediate Redemption by Moshiach.

*Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe*

## The Gift of Forgiveness

By Yisroel Susskind

*"Resentment is an acid that damages its container."*

From my perspective as a family therapist, the greatest treasure in our Torah-inheritance is the instruction to free ourselves of anger and resentment, especially in dealing with close relationships. Literally hundreds of sources in Jewish writings over the ages warn us that sustained anger is forbidden, destructive and ultimately irrational. The Biblical injunction is found in Leviticus 19:17-19, "You shall not hate your brother in your heart... You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge."

The Talmud goes on to note that "anyone who foregoes revenge merits that G-d forgives all of his sins." It further advises that G-d loves a person "who does not get angry ... and who does not insist on his due measure." Maimonides goes further, requiring a person to "wipe the wrong from his heart entirely, without remembering it at all." A contemporary psychologist will paraphrase this as "The challenge of relinquishing anger presents an incredible opportunity for personal growth."

Does this mean that we should be passive victims in the face of abuse? Absolutely not! The very same Biblical portion cited above tells us that we must verbally confront someone who has wronged us, in order to avoid hating him in our heart. We must do so directly and emphatically, but without hatred and without destroying the relationship. Similarly, we have an obligation to protect ourselves and not put ourselves in a vulnerable position where the offense may be repeated. At the same time, we need to do so without speaking hostilely or taking an action that goes beyond self-protection, without vengeance, or withdrawing into a cold, judgmental contempt, or prolonged silence.

Many counsellors report a recurring tragic family scenario: Over the years, a man has maintained an angry distance from a relative (a parent, child or sibling). Suddenly, the relative dies, and the man's love, long masked by a veneer of anger, erupts into awareness and the man is racked by regret and guilt. "How could I have wasted these years, when I could have....?"

Traditional Jewish philosophy offers us some protection from such tragedy. Torah says: 1) Do not believe that you cannot forgive...it is always your task to achieve forgiveness; 2) understand that anger and resentment are sustained by irrational thoughts...if you deeply examine your anger, you will identify and correct these cognitive distortions; 3) there is a negative force in the world that seeks to destroy closeness...that force is the source of those irrational thoughts; 4) in personal relationships, underneath anger there is hurt, fear and most importantly, a need to love and be loved.

Consider reaching out to someone in a spirit of loving forgiveness. May it be that, in the merit of your doing so, G-d chooses to reach out to us with the ultimate gift, bringing in the era of Moshiach.

# Slice of LIFE

## From Temple to Church to Chabad

On the marriage certificate from their fundamentalist Christian wedding in 1990, their names were listed as Roy and Pamela. On their ketuba [Jewish marriage certificate], their names are Levi Yitzchak and Penina Leah.

Pamela grew up in an assimilated Jewish home in Northern California where she attended the local Conservative synagogue for Sunday school.

"The Judaism I had been given wasn't enough. I needed a big G-d; I wanted to believe that the Bible is true." Instead, Pamela was expected to limit her spiritual yearnings to the few hours at Sunday school where she was taught that G-d doesn't have much to do with our lives and how to refute the miracles of the Bible.

Pamela remembers watching many of the Christian holiday television programs. For her, the holiday specials were just as enjoyable as the televised sermons and masses. And so, at the age of 13, after one very inspiring holiday special, Pamela offered her own prayer: "If all of this is real, show me a sign and I will believe that Christianity is true."

But no sign was forthcoming.

Pamela finished high school and left home to attend college. Right before her nineteenth birthday, her boyfriend broke up with her. At the ice cream parlor where she worked part-time, a co-worker, who was part of a fundamentalist Christian organization on campus, told her: "You're devastated because you don't have a relationship with G-d. The way to have a relationship with G-d is to accept [the Nazarene] into your heart. If you say this little prayer, you'll have a relationship with G-d. Say this short prayer, you'll feel better."

Pamela hesitated but then said the prayer. "I did feel better! And I suddenly felt that this was the sign that I had prayed for when I was 13 years old."

Pamela got involved with the missionaries on campus and, she says, was somewhat of a star. "I was special to the Christians because I validated them. Even non-fundamentalist, mainstream churches that don't actually missionize Jews give a tremendous amount of money to organizations whose main objective is missionizing Jews."

Pamela's parents told her to speak to their rabbi, but "he had no idea how to work with someone who had been missionized," she recalls. "He had no answers. He couldn't refute any of the missionary claims. He reinforced my feeling that Judaism doesn't have answers and that Christianity is true."

Pamela moved back home, at her parents' insistence, and began taking courses at the local junior college. She attached herself to the Maranatha Church which was preaching on her campus.

Two years later, in 1984, Roy Weese appeared in Pamela's life, sort of. Roy came from a Christian family and had been part of the Maranatha Church in Alabama. Unable to find an engineering job there, he wanted to try his luck in California. Roy began doing administrative work for the church in San Jose and looked for an engineering job.

Pamela had noticed Roy at church and was interested in finding out more about him. After a few years of very casual interaction, Pamela privately submitted his name to the church. From that time on she was not permitted to show any interest in him. If and when Roy submitted her name, they could date. Roy revealed to her six years later when she finally confronted him and asked him what he thought of her, "I've always wanted to marry you but I didn't think you would want me."

Pamela and Roy were married soon after that revelation in a "very Christian wedding." Pamela's parents did not attend. "I'd been missionizing to them for years, telling them that they were going to hell. I had hurt them too much," says Pamela.

Two weeks after they returned from their honeymoon, Pamela and Roy began looking for a new church. They had left the Maranatha Church after it had merged with another denomination.

"We began attending a fundamentalist church, but it was huge and wealthy and very fancy. We didn't feel as if we fit in. We went to a smaller church that was more casual but we just couldn't make friends. It was as if G-d was pushing us along, showing us that there was no place for us in Christianity. We tried a Messianic church but the services were long and boring. We were thinking about how we would raise our family. We wanted tradition, a short prayer service, nice music..."

Pamela and Roy decided to convert to Catholicism because, as Pamela explains, the Catholics seemed to have answers to the questions in the Bible that still disturbed them. "We were still searching for Truth."

The Weeses became disenchanted with Catholicism when they had major

disagreements with policies of the Pope. "My husband eventually shared with me that he had always had trouble with the trinity. 'Maybe we should see what Jews believe,' he suggested. Personally, I was tired of telling people that they were going to hell. I was tired of feeling guilty when I wasn't preaching."

Pamela decided to learn how to do things Jewishly. She went to a Jewish bookstore and bought "how to" tapes from Chadish Media. She called Rabbi Mordechai Rosenberg, of Chadish Media, who told her, "You must go to Chabad."

Pamela and Roy went to meet with Rabbi Yosef Levin, of Chabad of the Greater South Bay. "After talking with Rabbi Levin I realized that Judaism did have answers. Rabbi Levin was so nice to both of us," Pamela recalls. "He treated us both so well. He was totally non-judgmental."

Even though their experience had been so positive with Rabbi Levin, Pamela decided to speak with other rabbis because, "I didn't think my husband would want to be Chasidic. I went to another rabbi but he just kept telling us over and over again, 'Your marriage is a problem.' My husband was so hurt. Our marriage was all we had! We went back to Rabbi Levin which was the best thing that ever happened to us."

To show how serious Roy was about Judaism, he and Pamela separated. Roy built a shack in their backyard and slept there each evening. "We were very grateful with the rabbis who were supervising Roy's conversion during this whole process," says Pamela. Roy studied Torah and began observing some mitzvot. The Weese's moved to Palo Alto to be closer to the Chabad House and Roy built a new shack.

Later that year, the Rabbinic authorities of the town told Rabbi Levin that on Tuesday the following week Roy could undergo conversion. After the conversion, we began planning for our wedding.

"My parents wanted to give us a trip to Israel as a honeymoon, rather than make a lavish wedding," says Pamela. But she told them, "'This is the only real wedding I'm ever going to have.' My mother didn't believe I could pull together anything decent. But I found a dress and Rabbi Levin helped us get the JCC. We had a caterer, flowers, and Chasidic dancing. My mother said that had we booked the band a year in advance, we couldn't have done better!"

I am finally home, with my Jewish soul-mate. I feel proud of my heritage, and have answers of why I am a Jew. This void is gone, and my search of being a Jew is finally over after many years.

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield  
in conjunction with the  
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ISSUE 1083

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

One should not entertain the notion that the King Moshiach must work miracles and wonders, bring about new phenomena within the world or perform other similar deeds. A proof can be brought from the fact that Rabbi Akiva, one of the greatest Sages of the Mishnah, was one of the supporters of King Ben Kosiva, and would describe him as the King Moshiach. The Sages did not ask him for any signs or wonders. The main criterion for Moshiach to fill is the complete fulfillment of Torah, with its statutes and laws.



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

B"H 28th of Tevet

I received your recent letter and the previous one. Needless to say, I was somewhat taken aback by the tone of your letter. It is a good illustration of how it is possible for a person to read and learn and to receive instruction from books and teachers, and yet when it comes to actual experience all this instruction goes by the wayside.

I refer to the things which you have surely learned in the books of mussar and especially Chassidus about the tactics of the Yetzer Hara [inclination toward evil] to instill a spirit of depression, discouragement and despondency in order to prevent the Jewish person from fulfilling his Divine mission. This is the most effective approach.

If the Yetzer Hara would attempt to dissuade a person directly from fulfilling his mission, he would not be easily misled. However, instead, the Yetzer tries to discourage the person in all sorts of ways, using "pious" arguments which unfortunately often prove effective at least in some degree.

This is exactly what has happened in your case and I am surprised that you do not realize it. The proof is that from the information I have received I can see that you have accomplished a great deal more than you imagine...

Let me also add another important and essential consideration.

You surely know of the saying of the Baal Shem Tov that a soul comes down to live on this earth for a period of 70 to 80 years for the sole purpose to do another Jew a single favour, materially or spiritually.

In other words, it is worthwhile for a Jewish soul to make that tremendous journey and descent from heaven to earth in order to do something once for a fellow Jew.

In your case the journey was only from the USA to \_\_\_\_\_ and can in no way be compared to the journey of the soul from heaven to earth and however pessimistic you may feel, even the Yetzer Hara would have to agree that you have done not only a single favour but numerous good deeds and even only your work with the children of the kindergarten would have justified it.

Considering further that every beginning is difficult especially where there is a change of place and environment, language, etc., and yet the beginning has proved so successful, so one is surely justified in expecting that as time goes on and the initial difficulties are minimized and overcome, there will be a more than corresponding improvement in the good accomplishments...

As for your mentioning the fact that no one seems interested in your work, etc., surely you will admit that G-d, whose knowledge and providence extends to everyone individually, knows and is interested in what you are doing, especially as you are working in the field of education of Jewish children, boys and girls, which is so much emphasized in the Torah.

After all, to teach children to make a bracha [blessing] and to say the prayers, etc., this is living Judaism. (I need hardly to add that I too am interested in your work). If it seems to you that it has been left to you to "carry the ball" yourself, it is surely only because there is confidence in you and that since you have been sent to \_\_\_\_\_ you undoubtedly have the ability, qualifications, and initiative to do your job without outside promptings, etc.

Since one is only human, it is not unusual to relapse occasionally into a mood of discouragement. But as has been explained in the Tanya and in other sources, such a relapse should only serve as a challenge to bring forth additional inner reserves and energy to overcome the tactics of the Yetzer Hara and to do ever better than before.

I trust that since you wrote your letter, your mood and outlook have considerably improved and that this letter will find you in a completely different frame of mind. Nevertheless I am sending you this letter since one is only human and subject to changes of mind as mentioned above.

Finally I want to say that the above should not be understood to mean that if you do find yourself in such a frame of mind you should try to conceal it and not write about it, for our Sages say that "when someone has an anxiety he should relate it to others" for getting something off one's chest is a relief in itself.

One should also bear in mind, as the Alter Rebbe has stated most emphatically in the laws of learning and teaching Torah, that a person who is engaged in teaching children should especially take care of his health since it directly affects the success of his work.

I trust therefore that you are looking after yourself in matters of diet and rest, etc. and that you will always be in a state of cheerfulness and gladness.

## CUSTOMS CORNER

This coming Wednesday is Pesach Sheini. This "second Pesach" was originally enacted as a make-up opportunity for those who missed the first chance to bring the Passover sacrifice, either for being too far away from the temple or ritually impure. Nowadays, since we don't bring the sacrifice anyway, we commemorate the day by making sure to indulge in some Matzah, but simultaneously we are permitted bread and other *chametz* on the table.

In Chassidic terminology, bread and similar leaven is said to represent a puffed up sense of self-worth. Avoiding *chametz* on Passover is analogous to purging oneself of arrogance and ego. It's dangerous to overdose on conceit; addictive in the extreme and liable to distract a person from his or her true purpose. So we take the pledge and do whatever we can to eradicate vanity from our system.

By serving Matzah and bread together on the Second Passover, we demonstrate our success in having overcome our obsessions and cravings, and our new-found ability to sublimate our desires. Now that the addiction has been defeated, we can begin to enjoy and employ the luxuries of life in our service of G-d.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*This week we are commanded to "rise before the white-haired, and honour the face of the old man". The Torah considers old age a virtue and a blessing. It instructs to respect all elderly, regardless of their scholarship and piety, because the many trials and experiences that each additional year of life brings yield a wisdom which the most accomplished young prodigy cannot equal.*

*Modern society on the other hand dictates that one's later years be marked by inactivity and decline. The aged are made to feel that they are useless if not a burden, and had best confine themselves to retirement villages and nursing homes.*

*On the surface, the modern-day attitude seems at least partly justified. Is it not a fact that a person physically weakens as he advances in years? True, the inactivity of retirement has been shown to be a key factor in the deterioration of the elderly; but is it still not an inescapable fact of nature that the body of a 70-year-old is not the body of a 20-year-old?*

*Certainly, the physical health of the body affects one's productivity. Life is a marriage of body and soul, and is at its most productive when nurtured by a sound physique as well as a healthy spirit. But the effects of the aging process upon a person's productivity are largely determined by the manner in which he regards this marriage and partnership. Which is the means and which is the end?*

*If the soul is nothing more than an engine to drive the body's procurement of its needs and aims, then the body's physical weakening with age brings with it a spiritual deterioration as well – a descent into boredom, futility and despair. But when one regards the body as an accessory to the soul, the very opposite is the case: the spiritual growth of old age invigorates the body, enabling one to lead a productive existence for as long as the Almighty grants one the gift of life.*

*J. I. Guterlich*

## IT HAPPENED

## Once...

## THE PENANCE

It once happened that a simple wagon-driver who lived near Zlotchov did not manage to come home on time one Friday, and by the time he reached his home Shabbat had already begun. Deeply distressed, he told the local rabbi of the misfortune which had occurred to him for the first time in his life, and asked him to prescribe a penance with which he could atone for his transgression. Seeing how grieved he was over what had befallen him, the rabbi gave him a lenient reply: if he would bring a pound of candles to the synagogue in honour of Shabbos, his sin would be atoned.

Rabbi Yechiel Michil of Zlotchov was then a young man, and he used to spend all day studying in the *beis midrash*, study hall, of his hometown. Hearing of this incident, Reb Michil was shocked: for the violation of Shabbos - a pound of candles?! But he mentioned the subject to no one.

On Friday the wagon-driver duly brought his pound of tallow candles and put them where they belonged. But after he left, before the holy day had even begun, a dog broke into the shul and chewed them up. The wagon-driver was upset by this, but when he told the rabbi that his repentance had apparently not been accepted in heaven, the rabbi reassured him that it was only a mishap and nothing to worry about; he should simply bring a fresh set of candles on the following Friday.

This time, however, after he had lit them on Friday afternoon in honour of Shabbos, they melted so quickly that by sunset nothing was left of them. Broken hearted, he once again called on the rabbi who told him to try again the following week. But as soon as Shabbos had started, a sudden gust of wind blew them out.

More convinced than ever that his penitence was being rejected by heaven, he poured out his heart to the rabbi, who said: "It seems to me that that young man who sits and learns in shul is the one that is spoiling things for you. I would suggest therefore that you make the journey to the Baal Shem Tov and tell him the whole story."

When the wagon-driver arrived at Mezhibuzh, which was not far away, the Baal Shem Tov answered, as follows: "The penance that your rabbi gave you was appropriate. Next Friday take a pound of candles to *shul* once more, and I promise you that this time nothing will go wrong. And here is a letter which I would ask you to pass on to this young man called Reb Michil."

The wagon-driver came home with a happy heart, delivered the letter to Reb Michil, and when Friday came he did as instructed. And in fact this time nothing went wrong: the candles burned brightly in honour of Shabbos.

Meanwhile, when Reb Michil opened his letter-it was on a Tuesday or a Wednesday - he saw that the Baal Shem Tov requested him to visit Mezhibuzh, so he hired a wagon and set out without delay. The journey should have taken him only a few hours, but the horses strayed from the dirt track and wandered in all directions for days on end, until by the time they reached Mezhibuzh on Friday, there were only a few moments left before sunset and Reb Michil was extremely distraught.

When Reb Yechiel Michil approached the Baal Shem Tov, the Tzaddik said: "Reb Michil, I have saved you from violating the Sabbath...And now learn your lesson: that if a Jew through a mishap comes to transgress Shabbos, and he is earnestly grieved by it to the point that his heart is broken within him, then one pound of candles is quite enough penance for him."

## Biographical note:

Rabbi Yechiel Michil of Zlotchov (1731-25 Elul 1786), son of Rabbi Yitzchak of Drohovitch, was introduced by his father to the Baal Shem Tov at a young age. He also became a disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch. It is said that his sermons consistently aroused his listeners to repentance. Many of his teachings are collected in *Mayim Rabim*.

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

Who came close to G-d and died (16:1)

They approached the supernal light out of their great love of the Holy, and thereby died. Thus they died by "divine kiss" such as experienced by the perfectly righteous; it is only that the righteous die when the divine kiss approaches them, while they died by their approaching it... Although they sensed their own demise, this did not prevent them from drawing near to G-d in attachment, delight, delectability, fellowship, love, kiss and sweetness, to the point that their souls ceased from them. (*Ohr HaChaim*)

Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: You shall be holy... (19:2)

The easiest thing is to hide from the world and its follies, seclude oneself in a room, and be a holy hermit. What the Torah desires, however, is that a person should be part and parcel of "all the congregation of the children of Israel"--and be holy. (*Alshich*)

You shall be holy (19:2)

Sanctify yourself also regarding that which is permissible to you. (*Talmud, Yevamot 20a*)

The first dictum we heard from the Rebbe (Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi) was: "What is forbidden, one must not; what is permitted, one need not." (*Rabbi Mordechai of Horadok*)

## CANDLE LIGHTING: 19 APRIL 2013

BEGINS		ENDS
5:31	MELBOURNE	6:28
5:30	ADELAIDE	6:25
5:10	BRISBANE	6:02
6:22	DARWIN	7:11
5:08	GOLD COAST	6:00
5:34	PERTH	6:28
5:11	SYDNEY	6:05
5:18	CANBERRA	6:13
5:18	LAUNCESTON	6:16
5:33	AUCKLAND	6:29
5:28	WELLINGTON	6:26
5:16	HOBART	6:15
5:07	BYRON BAY	5:59



## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS ACHAREI-KEDOSHIM

9 IYAR • 19 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:31 PM
	MINCHA:	5:40 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:15 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:34 AM
	MINCHA:	5:35 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:28 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:35 PM
	MAARIV:	6:20 PM