

LAMPLIGHTER

16 Iyar
Emor
31st day of the omer

1084

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In the beginning of this week's Torah portion, Emor, G-d warns the priests against becoming ritually impure through contact with a dead body, with seven exceptions: father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter or wife. A high priest is forbidden to become impure even for these relatives.

A general principle in Judaism is that G-d performs the same mitzvot (commandments) He commands the Jewish people. In this vein, the Talmud relates that a heretic once asked Rabbi Avahu how G-d, the ultimate 'priest,' was able to immerse Himself after He buried Moses and thereby became ritually impure. Rabbi Avahu replied that G-d 'immersed' Himself in fire.

Our Sages explain this exchange in several ways. The Tosefot comments that the heretic's question was not really about 'impurity,' as Jews are considered G-d's children, and a father is allowed to become ritually impure for his son. Similarly, the Zohar states that in the future, G-d will become "impure" in order to redeem every Jew from exile. But the question still remains. If G-d is a "high priest," isn't it forbidden to become impure even for His children?

In order to understand, let's examine the idea that G-d performs the same mitzvot we do. Obviously, this doesn't mean that G-d puts on a huge pair of Tefillin, or sits in an enormous celestial sukkah. It means, rather, that the mitzvah of Tefillin or sukkah exists above in a more refined spiritual form. In fact, the only reason the mitzvah exists in our physical world is because of its spiritual source up above! Nothing exists down here without a higher, spiritual counterpart.

When we say that G-d puts on Tefillin or sounds the shofar, we are discussing abstract spiritual concepts. As human beings in a physical world, we can accomplish these same spiritual processes by performing the mitzvah in a physical manner, i.e., with a horn of a ram, parchment of a Mezuzah, etc.

Nonetheless, even though there is a similarity between a mitzvah as it exists down here and as it exists above, it only applies in the positive sense. For example, if the performance of a particular mitzvah is restricted in any way due to the limitations of the material world, this does not imply that the mitzvah is limited above, as G-d is higher than all limitations.

Accordingly, the prohibition against the high priest becoming impure indicates that on the spiritual level, the high priest is above all impurity. In our world, however, given the limitations of the body, it could conceivably happen that a high priest might become impure. From this perspective, the Torah's prohibition is simply a "concession" to materiality, rather than a reflection of the essence of high priesthood.

In truth, the spiritual reality of the "high priest," i.e., G-d, is impervious to impurity. G-d's burial of Moses or redeeming us from exile has no effect on His true Essence.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Vol. 7

Speak Praise!

By Tali Loewenthal

The Torah provides spiritual guidance to each individual in every epoch. This guidance is relevant whether we live in the Iron Age or the Cyberspace Age. Human nature, human problems and human potential remain the same. The Torah comes from G-d, to obviate our problems and develop our potential to its highest level of possibility—and beyond.

Every word of Torah has this power, including the name of this week's Torah reading. The name in Hebrew is a single word: Emor, or "Speak!"

Of course, this single word is actually part of a sentence, where it has meaning in context. But as the name of the entire portion, honoured as such by many centuries of Jewish tradition, it also has a significance of its own. So we can ask: What is this word "Speak!" telling us to do? To speak about what? When and why should we speak?

The imperative statement "Speak!" seems to contrast with statements by the sages in favour of not speaking very much, such as "say little, but do much," "the best thing for a person is silence," and so on.

The implication is that there is a certain kind of speech which is to be recommended wholeheartedly. What is that?

There is an ancient Jewish idea that speech has an effect beyond the simple event in which A said something to B. The very fact that the words were pronounced has certain significance.

A negative example of this is the case of malicious speech, slander, or the term in Hebrew lashon hara. The Torah forbids speaking slander, and it is also wrong to listen to slander. In addition, the sages tell us that slander has a bad effect on the unfortunate person about whom it is uttered. Quite apart from the practical effect of the words, such as the defamation of character, the fact that they were said openly in some way concretizes their content.

By contrast, there is tremendous positive power in praise and in speaking well of people. The favourable words bring out the positive potential in the other person, even if at the time that one says those words he seems to exhibit only his bad aspect.

The sages tell us to "judge everyone for good," which is generally understood to mean trying to find an excuse for their negative behaviour. A further possibility is to find a way to praise the person. The spiritual effect is that this helps to enable the person's good qualities—which are hidden deep within him—to come to the surface.

The Rebbe links this idea with the fact that Maimonides tells us that a wise person "speaks always in praise of others, and never speaks negatively about people." The wise man knows the power of speech, and uses it to the best advantage of others. His positive words constantly encourage people, and spiritually have a good effect on them.

This is the kind of speech that the very name of our Torah reading is advising: speak praise of other people! It is good advice for parents, teachers, friends, spouses, neighbours—in fact, it is good advice for everyone.

Slice of LIFE

As you probably know, the goal of Chabad is to improve the entire world, beginning with the Jews, through Torah education. Put into high gear by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, in the Fifties and Sixties, the effects of this outreach began to be felt in various countries until, in the early seventies the Rebbe declared that he was going to "break the shell" of one of the biggest enemies of the Torah; atheistic free-thinking France.

He sent representatives to open Chabad Houses throughout the country, and the success was phenomenal! Within a year there were hundreds of young French Jews thirsting to learn Torah and live a Jewish life.

One of these representatives was one Rabbi Shmuel. Although he did not know a word of French, the Rebbe called him into his office and assigned him and his wife to a certain French city, blessing them and adding several times encouragingly. "It is important that you always be happy (b'Simcha) because the French people hate an angry face."

From the minute they arrived they also met with success, at first slowly and with many difficulties, but after two years there were almost a hundred children, all of them from non-observant backgrounds, learning in the large building Rab Shmuel had rented and converted into a school.

But then "lightning" struck. A government building inspector appeared on the premises and announced that he was checking the place.

For three days he poked around until finally he unceremoniously handed Reb Shmuel a long list of "hazards", and announced that if every fault on the list wasn't fixed, his school would be closed down. He estimated that the repairs would cost over twenty thousand dollars, and he gave him three months to complete the job...or else.

Reb Shmuel saw black! He had trouble even coming up with the monthly rent and teacher's salaries, how could he possibly come up with such a huge sum in such a short time? But he remembered the Rebbe's words about being b'Simcha and hoped for the best.

For the next two months he tried various solutions. He made a dinner, sent out letters of appeal and even asked a few rich people for donations, but nothing worked. In fact every time he thought about it he became depressed. Then suddenly he recalled a chance meeting he had over a month ago.

He had taken the express train to Paris and as fate would have it he accidentally got on the wrong coach. While he was searching for his seat another passenger interrupted and said

good heartedly, "You must have made the same mistake as I did. See your ticket? It says coach 18 and this is 17. No problem! See there are a lot of empty places. You can sit next to me."

The man turned out to be Jewish and a chief assistant for a French Parliament member. They talked for the entire two hours of the trip, and Rab Shmuel remembered that as they approached Paris the man gave him his calling card and warmly invited him to call him if he ever needed anything.

Funny he had never thought about it before but now he was desperate. He frantically searched his office and finally found the card! He called the number and when there was no answer decided to travel to the office in person.

But when he entered the building the secretary at the entrance had bad news. The man he was looking for was abroad on business and would not return for "quite a while."

Rab Shmuel didn't even have time to become depressed, suddenly behind him he heard people at the door saying, "Oh hello Mr. Blan, How are you Mr. Blan?" He turned and saw a young well-dressed fellow shaking hands with people and remembered that he had read in a newspaper somewhere that "Blan" was the name of the building commissioner for his city!

He said a prayer of thanks to G-d, excitedly walked over, shook the young man's hand and asked him if he was in fact the commissioner.

"Ahh, no no." He replied cordially. "You must mean my father. If you would like to meet him you can call and make an appointment. Here is his number." He said as he took a card out of his wallet.

Suddenly in a spirit of "chutzpah" he looked the young man in the eyes, smiled slightly and said, "I want YOU to call. It is very important."

Like magic, the young man shook his head yes, went to the phone and returned just moments later announcing that his father would see him at his office in two hours.

Two hours later Rab Shmuel was standing opposite the elderly commissioner explaining his terrible dilemma; in two weeks he was to be evicted, one hundred children would be on the street. He was hoping that the old man would give him a few rooms in some other building until he could arrange something else.

"Sit down please" Said the commissioner "Do you mind if I ask you a question, Rabbi?"

Rab Shmuel was a bit apprehensive but he sat down and said he would be glad to answer to the best of his ability.

"Tell me, Rabbi, what do you think about your Israeli Prime Minister Begin giving the Sinai desert back to the Arabs?"

Now Rab Shmuel was really in the "hot

seat". The French were notoriously leftist, pro-Arab and opposed to anything that reeks of racial oppression; especially if the Jews do it. One wrong word and he could say good-bye to his school.

But on the other hand The Lubavitcher Rebbe was very opposed to returning the Sinai.

It crossed his mind to try to be diplomatic and evade the question, but he shuddered at the thought and just blurted out. "Mr. Blan, I am a Chassid of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and he said that returning of the Sinai is a big mistake and will lead only to tragedy."

The old man looked at him deeply and said. "I just returned from Israel last month, I was there for a week. I'm even a representative here in France for the Weitzman institute. I want to tell you that the returning of the Sinai is the most insane thing in the world.....Completely insane!"

He then took out a Bible from a drawer put it on his desk and continued. "In this book it says that Israel belongs to the Jewish people. If G-d said it, that is good enough for me. No one has the right to give that land back! No one in the world!"

He paused again and said, "Rabbi, I'm going to write a letter about your school to the Building Minister in Paris. He is the one that makes the decisions not me, but I think everything will be all right. Please give me a call in a week."

A week later the Rabbi was again sitting opposite the commissioner waiting to hear the answer. The commissioner just spread a set of blueprints on his desk and said. "Do you understand blueprints? This, Rabbi, is your new building! It's yours. See? It's two stories high, and about three thousand meters square. Here I will call my driver and we will drive down to see it. You can move in whenever you want."

The Rabbi was dumbfounded! A huge building! Completely his! He was expecting only a few rooms! Even more amazing, in France there is a very strict separation of Church and State, this was probably the first building ever given by the French government to a religious institution!

When the Commissioner saw the joy in Rab Shmuel's eyes he said, "Rabbi, I want to tell you something. You know why I am doing this? You told me that you were a Chassid, right? Well, I asked one of my friends what a Chassid is and he told me that Chassidim are Jews that are always happy. That made me feel good. You know, I know several other religious Jews, but they aren't like you, they always have angry faces, and I hate an angry face!"

Rab Shmuel understood what the Rebbe meant with those exact same words over two years ago.

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ISSUE 1084

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Moshiach signifies the separation of the good from the evil. This is why he will come "only in a generation which is altogether meritorious or altogether sinful"; i.e., at a time in which there will be no mixture of good and evil. So long as Moshiach has not come, there is a mixture of good and evil in all the worlds: there is no good without evil and no evil without good.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

B"H, 17 Iyar, 5710

Greetings and blessings,

I was sorry to hear that you feel your health is weakening and that, in addition, you are not careful [in heeding] the directives of the doctor.

On several occasions, I heard the following statement from my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, in the name of his father, the Rebbe [Rashab]: "How dear is a Jewish body! For it, so much is sacrificed!" For it is well known that the Torah and its *mitzvos* were given to souls as they are enclined in bodies and not to angels.

If the Creator cherishes the body so much, [then,] as a matter of course, it is understood how much care a person must give to this article entrusted to him from Above.

Our Sages (*Berachos* 60a) informed us that a doctor was given license to heal. If so, the doctor is acting under the authority and the command of the Torah. Thus it is clear that if by listening to the instructions of a doctor one temporarily negates the observance of a desirable custom, the meticulous practice [of a particular *mitzvah*], or the like, the Torah will not remain a debtor. Through nullifying the custom or the meticulous practice for a brief time, one will receive the potential to add strength to his observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos* manifold times for a lengthy and good span of years.

With wishes for a complete recovery and much satisfaction from all of your descendants as per the everlasting blessings of my revered father-in-law.

M. Schneerson

B"H, 21 Tammuz, 5710

Greetings and blessings,

I received your letter. Thank you for the information contained therein.

May it be G-d's will that your stay - in a vacation spot together with your family - will lead to the desired benefit of [enhancing] the health of the body and strengthening it in an obvious manner, according to the adage of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, stated in the name of his father, the Rebbe [Rashab]: "How dear is a Jewish body! For it, so much Torah is poured out!"

See *Rambam, Hilchos Deos*, the beginning of ch. 4, "[Maintaining] a healthy and sound body is among the ways of serving G-d."

From this we can draw a most obvious inference to the importance of the health of the soul. If it is necessary to devote energy to this throughout the year, how much more so is it necessary to strengthen this endeavour with additional power during the time when we are occupied and showing interest in the health of the body[?!] [This is necessary] lest one come to a situation where the strength of the body [will lead to] the weakness of the soul (*Zohar* I, p. 180b).

I am not [writing] merely for the sake of rhetoric, but rather to arouse an undertaking, to use the days and the opportunity for restoring the health of the body for strengthening the soul, i.e., to add a fixed time for special study during this vacation period. [Also,] one should seek out opportunities to inspire others coming to vacation in your place or surroundings to Torah study, Divine service, and deeds of kindness, each person according to his own situation. Sometimes, it might be helpful to explain to them that we are not able to comprehend the secrets of the sublime providence. Perhaps the purpose they all came to this particular place was to add jewels to the crown of the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He...

M. Schneerson

CUSTOMS CORNER

Lag BaOmer

The 33rd day of the Omer count - this year, Sunday, April 28, 2013 - is a festive day on the Jewish calendar. It is celebrated with outings [on which the children traditionally play with bows and arrows], bonfires, parades, and other joyous events. Many visit the resting place (in Meron, northern Israel) of the great sage and mystic Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, the anniversary of whose passing is on this day.

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who lived in the second century of the Common Era, was the first to publicly teach the mystical dimension of the Torah known as the "Kabbalah," and is the author of the basic work of Kabbalah, the *Zohar*. On the day of his passing, Rabbi Shimon instructed his disciples to mark the date as "the day of my joy."

Lag BaOmer also commemorates another joyous event. The Talmud relates that in the weeks between the Jewish holidays of Passover and Shavuot, a plague raged amongst the disciples of the great sage Rabbi Akiva, "because they did not act respectfully towards each other." These weeks are therefore observed as a period of mourning, with various joyous activities prohibited by law and custom. On Lag BaOmer the deaths ceased and therefore these mourning practices are suspended and weddings, haircuts, music, etc. are permitted.

A WORD

from the Director

Lag BaOmer is a day of rejoicing on which Jews celebrate their unity by gathering Jewish children together. Significantly, it is the yahrzeit (the anniversary of the passing) of the great Talmudic sage, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, whose teachings highlighted the concept of unity by drawing attention to the verse, "How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to sit together."

Unity stems from shared roots, as with brothers who are bound together because they "share" the same father. Although they lead separate and sometimes very divergent existences, their fundamental common identity remains.

This concept is reflected in the vision of the prophet Zachariah in which the menorah symbolizes the Jewish people. The candelabrum which extends in seven branches symbolizes seven different paths of Divine service. Yet it was made of a single piece of gold, indicating that the Jewish people remain one unified entity despite their different qualities.

Difference need not lead to division. On the contrary, true unity comes from a synthesis of different -- and even opposite -- thrusts. Thus, we see that the patriarchs Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov represented different approaches to Divine service -- Avraham represented the love of G-d; Yitzchak, the awe of G-d; and Yaakov, the harmony between these opposites. Yet together, they established the one and unique spiritual heritage of our people.

This unity has a broader scope, encompassing all of mankind - non-Jews and Jews. Indeed, it extends beyond the human realm to include the totality of existence, since we all are G-d's creations.

This unity is not even bound by time as Judaism has always emphasized the importance of the continuity of tradition, denying the justification for a gap between generations. Rather, every family -- be it Jewish or non-Jewish -- should be an integral entity, communicating and passing down true values from generation to generation.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED

Once...

A Blessing For Aliyah

Many Eastern European Jews longed to live in the Land of Israel. However, the difficult conditions in the Holy Land, the expense of travel, and the dangers of the journey made this a serious undertaking. Chassidim would not attempt such a move without receiving a blessing from their *Rebbeim*.

Once a Chassid, who had a great desire to go to Israel, presented his request to many of the leading Chassidic Rebbes of his time, but none would give him a blessing to go. He then went to Liozna to consult the *Alter Rebbe of Chabad*, Rabbi Shneur Zalman.

"Discuss the matter with Rabbi Leib Sarah's," said the Rebbe. "Tell him that I sent you to seek his advice. If he agrees, you may go."

The Chassid knew that arranging a meeting with Reb Leib was no simple feat. Reb Leib was a hidden *Tzaddik* whose whereabouts were usually unknown.

"How will I even be able to find him?" the Chassid asked. The Rebbe told him to wait at a specific inn which Reb Leib would visit in the near future.

"But, how will I recognize him?"

"A wagon full of wandering beggars will arrive at the inn," replied the Rebbe. "They will engage in loud argument and squabbling. The one whose voice is heard above all the rest will be Reb Leib."

The Chassid travelled to the inn and rented a room. After staying there for two weeks, he was awakened one night by a commotion in the courtyard. Looking out, he saw a wagonload of beggars arrive at the inn. Precisely as the *Alter Rebbe* described, they were arguing loudly. One man, taller and louder than the rest, stood out among the noisy group.

Recognizing Reb Leib Sarahs, the Chassid hurried down to meet him. "I mustn't miss this opportunity," he thought, "for he is likely to disappear without warning." He approached the *Tzaddik* and presented his wish, mentioned that Rabbi Shneur Zalman had instructed him to seek the *Tzaddik's* guidance.

"Go to Berditchev," Reb Leib replied, "There is a tailor who lives on the outskirts of town. Order an overcoat from him. When the garment is ready, go for a fitting. As you put on the coat, the tailor will measure the button holes, humming a tune as he does so. While he is humming, ask him if you should travel to *Eretz Yisrael*."

The Chassid followed Reb Leib Sarahs instructions, and presented his request precisely at the time he was told.

"Go!" replied the tailor, "but continue to wear this overcoat."

The Chassid realized that the tailor must be a hidden *Tzaddik* and rejoiced at the outcome of the events. On the following day, he went back to the tailor's house, hoping to meet the *Tzaddik* again, but he was nowhere to be seen.

Later, he recalled having seen two apprentices assisting the tailor. He recognized one as the *Tzaddik* and Rebbe, Rabbi Nachum of Chernobel (known for his support of hidden *tzaddikim*), but could not identify the second one.

Biographical note:

Rabbi Leib Sarah's (1730-4 Adar 1796) was held in high esteem by the *Baal Shem Tov*. One of the "hidden *tzaddikim*," he spent his life wandering from place to place to raise money for the ransoming of imprisoned Jews and the support of other hidden *tzaddikim*. The Lubavitcher Rebbe stated the possibility that Rabbi Leib Sarah's and the Shpoler Zeide are the same person.

Rabbi Nachum of Chernobel [Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky] (1730-1797), is founder of a great Chasidic dynasty. The dynasty is named after the Ukrainian town of Chernobel, where Rabbi Nachum served as the *maggid*. He is author of the sefer "*Meor Einayim* (the light/brightness of the eyes)", a major work in Chassidic literature which brings insights to the weekly Torah portions.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

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... (23:15)

The word *sefirah*, "counting", also means "illumination." On each of the forty-nine days of the *Sefirat HaOmer* ("Counting of the Omer"), we refine, develop, and illuminate another of the forty-nine traits of our soul. (*Rabbi DovBer, the Maggid of Mezeritch*)

For it is a day of atonement, to atone for you before G-d (23:28)

[The sages say:] Yom Kippur atones only for those who repent. Rabbi [Yehuda HaNassi] says: Yom Kippur atones whether one repents or one does not repent. (*Talmud, Shevuot 13a*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 26 APRIL 2013

BEGINS		ENDS
5:22	MELBOURNE	6:19
5:22	ADELAIDE	6:17
5:04	BRISBANE	5:56
6:18	DARWIN	7:08
5:01	GOLD COAST	5:54
5:27	PERTH	6:21
5:03	SYDNEY	5:58
5:09	CANBERRA	6:05
5:08	LAUNCESTON	6:07
5:25	AUCKLAND	6:21
5:18	WELLINGTON	6:16
5:05	HOBART	6:05
5:00	BYRON BAY	5:53



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS EMOR
16 IYAR • 26 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:22 PM
	MINCHA:	5:30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:05 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:37 AM
	MINCHA:	5:25 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:19 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:25 PM
	MAARIV:	6:10 PM