

LAMPLIGHTER

12 Av
Va'eschanan
Shabbos Nachamu
1096
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The Fifteenth of Av (Tu B'Av) is a special holiday, about which our Sages declared, "There were no days as festive in Israel as the Fifteenth of Av and Yom Kippur." The significance of Yom Kippur is obvious, but what was so exceptional about Tu B'Av?

In the times of the Holy Temple, an ample supply of wood was required for the altar. The season for felling trees began in the month of Nisan and ended on Tu B'Av, the warmest time of year when the trees dried out and there was little chance of worm infestation. By Tu B'Av, the weather became cooler; worms might possibly thrive, thereby invalidating the wood for use in the Temple. Tu B'Av thus marked the day on which the great mitzvah (commandment) of preparing the wood for the Temple was completed.

But what was so joyous about the fact that the trees were no longer cut? And what is the significance of cutting trees, anyway? After all, the trees were only cut in preparation for the mitzvah of bringing sacrifices; it was not a mitzvah itself.

To explain: Both Tu B'Av and Tisha B'Av are associated with the Temple. However, on Tisha B'Av we mourn the destruction of the Temple; on Tu B'Av we rejoice in a mitzvah that relates to the Temple's continued existence.

At present, the Temple does not exist in the physical sense and we cannot offer sacrifices. Nonetheless, in the past, it was the cutting of the trees that enabled our ancestors to fulfill this mitzvah; indeed, it epitomized the Temple's very purpose: to serve as a "House" for G-d in which sacrifices could be brought. This activity reached its culmination on Tu B'Av, which was why the Jews' rejoicing was so profound.

As is known, the Second Holy Temple was destroyed on account of the sin of baseless hatred. Tu B'Av, however, was characterized by a sense of unity. The wood that was cut for the altar caused a great benefit for all Jews - the atonement of their sins, as effected by the sacrifices. Without wood, there could be no sacrifices; thus the cutting of the trees was considered to be a very great mitzvah.

Tu B'Av was also known as "The Day of the Breaking of the Axes." On that day, all the axes used to fell the trees for the Temple were destroyed. Why were the axes not saved?

An axe is a tool made of iron. According to Jewish law, it is forbidden for iron to touch the stones of the Temple's altar, as in addition to its positive uses, iron can also be forged into weapons of destruction. Accordingly, once the axes had fulfilled their function, they were destroyed to preclude being used for unholy purposes.

Tu B'Av can thus counteract the negative elements of Tisha B'Av, especially the sin of baseless hatred. We must act toward our fellow Jew with "baseless love." The reason for the destruction of the Temple will thus be nullified, and we will merit the building of the Third Holy Temple, now!

Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Volume 24

To Study Our Children

By Dovid Hazdan

One of the sacred tasks of parents and teachers is to educate the next generation and to impart to our children the knowledge and values of our Torah. We cannot be content with our own study - we have to teach the young.

This mitzvah is featured in this week's Torah portion in the words of the Shema which we recite thrice daily: "...teach them to your children, to discuss them, while you sit in your home, while you walk on the way, when you retire and when you arise..."

What is intriguing is that the great codifier Maimonides, as well as R. Schneur Zalman's of Liadi in his *Code of Jewish Law*, present the laws relating to teaching Torah to our children before presenting the laws of studying Torah. It seems quite obvious that one cannot teach before studying. Why would the laws pertaining to teaching a child precede the adult's requirement to learn?

The power and advantage of a developed, adult, mature mind is magnified by life's experiences. The theoretical insights that are gleaned are enhanced and embellished by the wealth amassed through the challenges and circumstances of one's past.

But there is a deficiency and handicap in an adult's approach to absorbing the words of Torah. So often, objectivity, humility and serenity of spirit are casualties of preconceived ideas. Our entrenched frames of reference capture data into existing files predetermined and predefined. Our life's experiences have formed calluses on our attitudes and philosophies. We cling to familiar paths formed by habitual past journeys. We evaluate with prejudices and perspectives already firmly formed. We begin to judge by our decisions rather than decide by our judgments.

How often are we left unmoved by a truth because we are self-consciously aware of the ramifications of accepting such truths? We fit teachings into lifestyles rather than confront the challenge of change. We quote and emphasize to subjectively endorse and support, rather than to aspire and strive for uncharted new heights.

The laws of studying Torah are preceded by the laws of teaching a child, to remind us how to absorb the words of G-d. The learning of a young child - so eager, so fresh, so open, so inspired and so unencumbered by baggage - is like "ink written on fresh paper," - teaching us the art of true Torah study.

May our spiritual and intellectual journeys always retain the effervescence, passion and innocence of a child. May we, this Shabbat, find comfort, optimism and belief in a world about to be redeemed, by allowing ourselves to peer through the eyes and hope of a child.

Slice of LIFE

DISTANT JEWS

BY RABBI YOSEF Y. JACOBSON

It was the summer of 1996. As Lubavitcher *yeshiva* students, Rabbi Mendy Harlig and I were using our summer break to serve in the Lubavitcher Rebbe's "Peace Corps," to go to those areas of the world that don't have an emissary of the Rebbe nearby. We spent five weeks in Ireland, in the course of which we visited Jews from north to south, and east to west.

Our base was Dublin and we stayed at the Orwell Lodge Hotel. One day the manageress of the hotel, an elderly Catholic woman, said to us, "Are you the young rabbis referred to in an article in *The Irish Times*?"

The article had said that two rabbis from Brooklyn were visiting Ireland in order to connect Jews with their Jewish roots. It stated that we were not proselytizing non-Jews, only giving our fellow Jews an opportunity to learn of their tradition and to experience their Jewishness. I told her the article was indeed about us.

"Marvellous," she said, "I hope you'll visit my cousin Tony who lives in Wexford. He is married to Roselyn, a Jewish woman, and they have three lovely children." She wrote down their address.

"Can we have their phone number?" I asked.

"They don't have one," she answered. "They live in a rural area and the people there don't have phones. But it's not a problem. Take the address and go. When you get there, ring the doorbell and walk in. I know they'll be thrilled to meet you."

We got into our car and drove to the south-east tip of Ireland. We got lost a few times on the winding roads, but finally arrived at our destination.

The woman who opened the door stared in astonishment. I can't blame her! Picture the scene: two rabbis with black yarmulkes and beards had landed on her doorstep in this little village in Ireland, with no prior warning.

A few minutes later we were seated around her kitchen table talking. We met her three children: Rebecca - 22, Aaron - 19, and Sara - 15. They all felt very Jewish but had no way of expressing their Jewishness in any area of their lives.

Roselyn had arrived in Wexford 25 years earlier, and since then, had almost never met a Jew. It was amazing to discover how strongly they felt about being Jewish despite their utter disconnect from Jews and Judaism.

Roselyn and her children took the opportunity of our visit to ask us many questions they had had for years. But their big question was: Why do rabbis like you visit people like us, people disconnected from Judaism, people you don't even know?

I explained to them that every Jew, no matter his or her connection to a Jewish community, level of knowledge, and fulfillment of Jewish law, has a Jewish soul which is connected, with an inviolable connection, to G-d. The Jew is intrinsically and innately part of a covenantal relationship with G-d that began more than 3,300 years ago and has not ceased since. Our challenge in life is to express this holiness and G-dliness in our daily schedule and interactions.

I went on to explain that the Lubavitcher Rebbe said that every Jew is a divine diamond, and this is why we came to see her and the children.

We talked with the family for a long time. At the end of the visit, when we exchanged addresses and were saying goodbye, a thought popped into my head. I asked, "Did Aaron have a *bar mitzvah*?"

"No," said Roselyn. "There are no *bar mitzvah* classes in Wexford," she added with a smile.

"Maybe we can celebrate his *bar mitzvah* now?" I suggested. "The main part of the *bar mitzvah* - putting on *Tefillin* and praying to G-d in acceptance of the yoke of Heaven - can be done now."

Mendy brought *Tefillin* from the car, and Rebecca and Sara brought a camera to record the historic moment. A *bar mitzvah* in Wexford! Who would have believed it?

Aaron disappeared for a few minutes and then returned, wearing a green yarmulke which he found upstairs.

Everybody felt the momentousness of the occasion - the first *bar mitzvah* - and maybe the last - being celebrated in Wexford, Ireland.

The family watched in awe as Mendy put *Tefillin* on Aaron's arm and head for the first time in his life.

I explained that the seven times the *Tefillin* straps are wrapped on the arm symbolize the seven emotions contained by every soul, since the main point of *Tefillin* is to make the heart and mind subordinate to G-d. I told them that the point of the commandment of *Tefillin* is to connect and unite man's two components - the intellect and the emotions - with G-d.

Aaron began to say the "*Shema Yisrael*" prayer, word by word, after Mendy. And that's when the dam broke. Roselyn began weeping profusely. Her daughters followed, sobbing like children. Emotions that had been pent-up for ages broke through. Roselyn went over to her only son to hug him. Mendy and I stood there silently and humbly as we witnessed the spiritual storm overtaking this Jewish family.

We watched four "diamonds" returning to their source, to who they truly are.

We gave Rebecca and Sara each a candlestick and they promised to light Shabbat candles each Friday before sunset. When we finally said "goodbye," they all walked us out. I thought about how just three and a half hours ago we were strangers, and now we were parting from family.

The next day I began reviewing the events in my mind. What had happened in that moment when Aaron began saying the *Shema*? What made the family burst into tears? It certainly wasn't nostalgia, for they had no memories of anything like this.

What had happened was that for the first time in their lives, they were given the opportunity to connect to their inner souls, to their Divine spark, which was always there but lay dormant. When Aaron, wearing *Tefillin*, said the *Shema*, the spark in each of them ignited. There was no need to create or invent something new. All that was needed was to reveal that which was always present.

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ISSUE 1096

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In this week's Parsha we read of the obligation to teach our children Torah. Concerning the era of the Redemption it is written, "I shall pour My spirit upon your seed, and My blessing upon your offspring." This plainly refers, quite literally, to one's sons and daughters.

Hence, since all the revelations of the future depend on our present actions and divine service, propagating the Torah education of Jewish children becomes a matter of the utmost urgency, being that through it we prompt the future redemption.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d
5 Kislev, 5712 [1951]
Brooklyn

...I am not pleased. It appears from your letter that the trust in G-d that should be expected of a Jewish woman in general and of a Chassidic wife in particular is not present in yourself in appropriate measure. Accordingly, this affects your health and your household.

Every Jew, man or woman, should constantly keep in mind that G-d, who conducts the world at large, no doubt also conducts the microcosm of each of us. And just as He has a say in the big world, He certainly has a say likewise in our little personal world. One should depend on Him, trusting that He no doubt leads things in a good direction. Moreover, one should not interfere with this by one's uncertain trust in Him, or by factors that do not accord with the Torah - and one of these is [a lack of] marital harmony.

Until after the arrival of *Moshiach*, there is no person without a fault. Hence, just as one person has a fault, it is certain that so, too, the other has a fault. And just as one does not want to uncover and highlight one's own fault, one should also not highlight and magnify another's fault. This is how things should be between Jews in general; how much more so when the person under discussion is your husband and the father of your child.

My aim here is not to rebuke, but to make you aware that your situation is not as harsh as you perceive it to be, nor is it exceptional, as you imagine it to be. Each of you should overlook things, preferring to find ways of establishing domestic harmony. And once domestic harmony reigns, this is the vessel into which G-d pours blessing, and success, and good health, and a livelihood, and blissful contentment from one's children.

In my opinion, you would do well to ask your doctor for directives regarding your food and beverages and home management, and to act accordingly. And G-d will no doubt help you, so that everything will come about at the proper time, in a positive way, and successfully.

With blessings,

.....

By the Grace of G-d
2 Sivan, 5712 [1952]
Brooklyn
Greetings and Blessings!

Your letters of 9/4 and 2/5 reached me after having been delayed on their way here, and I was very happy to read that your wife's confinement went well and that she gave birth to a son who is named [...].

May G-d grant that you, together with your wife, should raise him and your older son to the study of Torah, to the marriage canopy, and to the practice of good deeds, and may you be granted an ample livelihood.

Your letter mentions your anxiety about your income. You ought to keep in mind something that is written in the holy books - that when a son is born, this is an auspicious sign of blessing in the household. That includes one's livelihood. In order to accelerate this, one needs to be strong in one's trust in G-d, for it is He Who "provides nourishment and sustenance for all," and seeks to do so "from His full hand."

Another thing to keep in mind is that one has to fashion vessels that will contain G-d's blessings. In general terms, this means studying Torah and observing the *mitzvos*; in particular, it means contributing *tzedakah*. If a person thinks that his livelihood is meager, he should donate more than previously. In that way he shows G-d that his charitable needs are greater [than heretofore], and as a matter of course He will then provide a greater income than heretofore.

May G-d grant that you and your wife both be firm in your trust, and that you will soon see the fulfillment of G-d's blessing for an ample livelihood.

With blessings for sound health for yourself and your wife and children, and for a happy Shavuot festival,

CUSTOMS CORNER

Chapter six of Deuteronomy (verses 4-9) contains the first paragraph of the Shema. In verse 7 we read: "And you shall teach them to your sons and speak of them-when you sit in your house, and when you walk on the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up."

Our Sages explained that the words "when you lie down and when you rise up" is a positive command to recite the Shema every morning and evening.

The Shema includes three paragraphs (click here for the Hebrew and English texts). The theme of the first (Deuteronomy 6:4-10) is the acceptance of the "yoke of Heaven," the second (ibid. 11:13-21) of the acceptance of the yoke of His commandments, and the third (Numbers 15:37-41) of remembering the Exodus from Egypt.

Our Sages tell us that the creation of the entire world is considered a worthwhile endeavour just for the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven that we enact during the daily recital of Shema. It is said that one who prepares himself for prayer in the proper way, puts on Tefillin, recites the Shema, and then prays, has fully accepted the yoke of Heaven. It is the necessary prerequisite to the entire Torah; accepting G-d's rule and giving your unwavering devotions to his will and command.

A WORD

from the Director

In this week's Parshah, Vaes'chanan, Moshe tells G-d that "You have begun to show Your greatness..." the question is asked: How could Moshe say that only in his time G-d began to show His greatness, when prior to him lived Yaakov Avinu, a great Tzaddik, for whom G-d performed miracles? The answer is brought that in Yaakov's time the Jews were very few in number, with only seventy people entering Egypt. In Moshe's time on the other hand, they were already a community of millions, which, when unified, constitutes the true greatness of G-d.

The lesson learned from this is that every Jew, both adult and child, must strive for the unity of the Jewish people. The way that this task is accomplished is through Ahavas Yisrael, love of a fellow Jew.

This is carried out to such an extent that, at the start of every day, each Jew, before beginning to pray for his own needs, binds himself to the entire Jewish people through the Mitzvah of "love your fellow as yourself" through proclaiming his acceptance of this Mitzvah. A Jew is then not alone, but is linked with each and every Jew, which exemplifies "Your [G-d's] greatness" in the fullest measure by showing how everything is truly unified, and his unity is true.

The cessation of Golus, exile, is dependent upon Jewish children, and then extending to the works of adults. Love of a fellow Jew should therefore begin with them, thereby binding each child with all other Jewish children, each influencing another to go in the ways of the "Torah that Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the congregation of Yaakov."

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

THE ENTICING PLATTER

At a Chassidic get-together (*farbrengen*) held in the early years of Chabad Chassidism, Reb Shmuel Munkes was doing the honours. The merry Chassid danced about the participants, pouring the vodka and serving the snacks, platters spread with bites of food to follow up the *l'chaim*.

Among the dishes which had arrived from the kitchen of Reb Nosson the butcher was a bowl of roasted lung, a most tasty delicacy. But for some reason, Reb Shmuel was reluctant to part with this particular dish. Throughout the evening he pranced about, pouring the *l'chaim* and serving food, with the bowl of roasted lung snug and elusive under his arm, deftly side-stepping all attempts to free it from his grasp.

Soon the Chassidim grew weary of Reb Shmuel's game and demanded outright that he hand over the bowl and its mouth-watering contents. The waiting Chassid ignored their angry demands and kept up his dodging dance. Finally a few of the younger Chassidim decided that Reb Shmuel's prank had gone far enough. They rose from the table, and soon the bowl and its bearer were cornered. But with a final leap and twist, Reb Shmuel dumped the roasted lung into the spittoon, and broke out in a merry Cossack dance.

The younger Chassidim sat to consider the gravity of Reb Shmuel's crime and decreed that a few well-placed stripes were in order. Without batting an eye, Reb Shmuel stretched himself out on the table and received his due. He then set out in search of more refreshments to keep the *farbrengen* going. But the hour was late, and the best he could come up with was a plate of pickled cabbage donated by one of the Liozna residents.

Upon seeing the replacement dish, the expressions on the faces of those who had already imagined the taste of roasted lung grew as sour as the kraut set before them. But soon a commotion was heard in the hallway. The town's butcher ran in, a most stricken look on his face: "Jews! Don't eat the lung!" he cried, "There has been a terrible mistake." It seems that the butcher was out of town and the *shochet's* wife mistakenly gave the butcher's wife a non-kosher lung to roast for the *farbrengen*.

Now it was the elder Chassidim who sat in judgment upon Reb Shmuel. The audacity of a Chassid to play the wonder-rabbi! By what right had Reb Shmuel taken upon himself to work miracles? Up unto the table with you Reb Shmuel, decreed the court.

After receiving his due for the second time that night, Reb Shmuel explained: "G-d forbid, I wasn't revealed 'inside information' regarding

the roasted lung. But when I entered into private audience with the Rebbe (Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi) for the first time, I resolved that no material desire would ever dictate to me. So I trained myself not to allow anything physical to overly attract me.

"When the bowl of roasted lung arrived, I found that my appetite was most powerfully roused, I also noticed that the same was true of many around the table. To be so strongly drawn by a mere piece of meat? I understood that something was not right."

When the Czar's soldiers came to arrest Rabbi Shneur Zalman in 5559 (1798), the Rebbe consulted with Rabbi Shmuel Munkes: should he go into hiding or allow himself to be taken to Petersburg? Reb Shmuel advised his Rebbe not to resist. "Why?" asked Rabbi Schneur Zalman. Answered Reb Shmuel: "One or the other: If you truly are a Rebbe, then no harm will befall you. And if you are not -- you deserve it! How dared you deprive thousands of Jews of their pleasure in the material world?"

Biographic notes:

Rabbi Shmuel Munkes (1834-1882), an elder disciple of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Chabad, was known for his fervent and creative Chasidic service. Stories abound.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

G-d commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and laws

From here is derived that it is forbidden to receive payment for teaching Torah: just as I (Moses) taught you the Torah free of charge, so too must you teach it for free. (*Talmud, Nedarim 37a*)

There is none else beside Him (4:35)

If the eye were allowed to see the spiritual vitality flowing from the utterance of G-d's mouth into every creation, we would not see the materiality, grossness and tangibility of the creation, for it would be utterly nullified in relation to this divine life-force... (*Tanya*)

You shall know today (4:39)

The foundation of all foundations, and the pillar of all wisdom, is to know that there is a First Existence, who brings all existences into being; that all existences of heaven and earth, and between them, derive existence only from the truth of His existence. (*Mishneh Torah, Laws of the Fundamentals of Torah 1:1*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 19 JULY 2013

BEGINS	ENDS
5:04MELBOURNE	6:05
5:06ADELAIDE	6:05
4:54BRISBANE	5:50
6:19DARWIN	7:11
4:52GOLD COAST	5:47
5:14PERTH	6:11
4:48SYDNEY	5:47
4:53CANBERRA	5:53
4:46LAUNCESTON	5:49
5:07AUCKLAND	6:07
4:55WELLINGTON	5:59
4:41HOBART	5:46
4:50BYRON BAY	5:46
6:58SINGAPORE	7:49



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS VA'ESCHANAN
12 AV • 19 JULY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:04 PM
	MINCHA:	5:10 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:50 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:58 AM
	MINCHA:	5:10 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:05 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:15 PM
	MAARIV:	6:00 PM