

# LAMPLIGHTER

23 Shevat  
Parshas Mishpatim

1123

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

One of the commandments contained in this week's Torah portion, Mishpatim, is "If you will lend money to any of My people." Lending money to a poor person is considered a mitzvah (commandment).

According to our Sages, G-d performs all of the same mitzvot He commands the Jewish people to observe. "He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel." The Torah's "statutes" and "judgments" are G-d's statutes and judgments! Thus, G-d too observes the mitzvah of "lending money to the poor," as it were.

Let us examine exactly what is involved in the transaction of a loan:

A loan consists of one person giving money to another, even though he is not obligated to do so. The money is a gift; the borrower does not give anything in exchange. Nonetheless, the person on the receiving end of the transaction is obliged to eventually repay the giver.

The Holy One, Blessed Be He, observes all of the Torah's commandments. G-d's "loan" to us, however, consists of the strengths and abilities He endows us with to succeed in our daily lives.

These gifts are not measured, nor does G-d grant them only to the deserving, just as monetary loans are not made solely to those in dire need. And yet, they are still "loans" and must therefore be repaid. But how do we repay our debt? By utilizing our strengths and abilities to carry out our Divinely-appointed mission in life, observing G-d's "statutes" and "judgments" in fulfillment of His will.

The second half of the above commandment reads "You shall not be a creditor to him, nor shall you lay upon him interest." It is forbidden for a lender to pressure the borrower into repaying his loan. He may neither ask for his money nor cause him distress. If the loan has not yet been repaid it is obvious that the borrower does not have the money to do so. In fact, the lender may not even show himself to the borrower, that he not be made to feel any embarrassment or shame.

G-d also observes the prohibition against being a creditor. G-d could easily demand payment by punishing His children and inflicting pain and suffering, but He does not. For it is forbidden for a creditor to cause sorrow to those who are in his debt. Instead, G-d acts toward the Jewish people with kindness and mercy, granting them all manner of revealed and open goodness.

*Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Volume 1*

## Help the Poor Body!

*By Moshe Bogomilsky*

"If you see your enemy's donkey lying under its load, you might want to refrain from helping him; [however], you must surely help with him." (Exodus 23:5)

Before Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, known as the Alter Rebbe, became the first leader of Chabad, he once travelled to raise money for an important charitable cause. He came to the home of a wealthy man who, sensing that he was not one of the ordinary charity collectors, offered to have him stay and teach his children in return for the entire sum he hoped to raise.

After a short stay, he informed his host that he was leaving because he could not tolerate the conduct of the people of the city. His host asked him what he meant, and Rabbi Shneur Zalman replied, "You torture the poor." The host thought that he was referring to a recent meeting to determine how to raise the money for a tax. It was decided that first the poor should give as much as they were able, and whatever was missing would be made up by the rich. He realized that Rabbi Shneur Zalman was right: the poor should not be bothered at all. Let the rich give as much as they can, and the poor won't have to give anything. Immediately he arranged a second meeting, and it was decided that the rich should first give what they could afford.

A few days later, Rabbi Shneur Zalman again gave notice that he was leaving, exclaiming again, "You torture the poor." Amazed, the host told his guest of the second meeting and that the poor would not be bothered at all. Rabbi Shneur Zalman told him that he was not aware of the meetings and had been referring to a different matter:

In the human body there are "rich" organs and a "poor" organ. The "rich" organs are the mind and the heart, and the "poor" organ is the stomach. "In this city," he explained, "instead of putting emphasis on the rich organs and engaging them in the study of Torah and concentrating on prayer to G-d, the approach is to constantly fast. Thus, the 'poor' organ, the stomach, is deprived and made to suffer for the person's iniquities. I cannot tolerate this approach!"

This new philosophy was very intriguing to the host, and he asked Rabbi Shneur Zalman its source. He told him of the Baal Shem Tov and his teachings, which accentuate working with the mind and heart and not punishing the body.

"The Baal Shem Tov," he continued, "bases his approach on a verse in the Torah portion of Mishpatim and interprets it as follows: 'If you see' -- when you will come to the realization that -- 'chamor' - the physical matter of the body (related to the word chomer), is 'your enemy' -- because he is engaged in attaining physical pleasures, and thus hates the soul which is striving for G-dliness and a high spiritual level -- and the body is -- 'lying under his burden' not wanting to get up and serve G-d -- 'you might want to refrain from helping him' -- you may think that you will begin to torture him and deny him the food he needs. Be advised that this is a wrong approach. Instead, 'you must surely help with him' -- give him his bodily needs and attune your mind and soul to worship G-d. Eventually, your body will become purified and cooperate in your Divine service."

# Slice of LIFE

## "RABBI BASKETBALL" ISRAEL HABER

At the end of August 1972, we moved to Dallas where I had obtained the position of assistant principal at the "Akiba Academy" Hebrew Day School. I was interested in trying to make Akiba as competitive as possible with other private schools in the area. Not surprisingly, I learned that many Jewish parents in sports-minded Dallas did not have their youngsters attend the Jewish day school solely due to the lack of a sophisticated sports program. Our curriculum already included a fine physical education program along with an eight hour day, and a superior dual curriculum. But we certainly weren't one of those schools that offered a little bit of academics in between sports activities. Nevertheless, if it was sports that would give a Jewish child a chance to learn about his sacred heritage, then sports it would be. I have been an avid sports fan all my life, so it was fine with me.

Having coached junior high school basketball, the first thing I decided to do was to enter our school into a local Dallas junior high school league. The schedule began January 14, 1973. It was no easy task establishing a cohesive unit with young boys who hadn't played basketball as a

team before, or even been part of any organized sports league.

I also made it clear that it was mandatory for our players to wear yarmulkes at all times. One boy said he would feel ashamed to wear his in front of non-Jewish fans and threatened not to remain with the team. I told him how I appreciated that he was a pretty good player and that losing him would adversely affect our chances, but to compromise would lead to even worse consequences and there is no way I would do that. So he quit.

By the second game, he had already re-joined the team with his yarmulke securely in place. Was he influenced by my words of wisdom and principle? Perhaps. It's more likely that a swisher at the buzzer for an exciting one-point victory in the season opener with hundreds of people coming to watch Jewish boys wearing skullcaps while playing ball and then cheering their victory helped change his mind.

With the coaching assistance of another rabbi on the staff, we won seven out of nine games - seven games more than anybody thought we would win. The Texas Jewish Post featured stories and pictures after every game of the Akiba Academy team.

In the program distributed to guests at the league's awards night which featured Roger Staubach of the World Champion Dallas Cowboys as its guest speaker, it noted that

"...always an exciting league, it was doubly so that year with the addition of the Akiba Academy team and their rabid fans. The team was superbly coached by Rabbi Haber and Rabbi Lazarus. Rabbis are not often found near basketball courts and if in attendance they are usually watching, but Rabbis Haber and Lazarus did an outstanding job coaching its team to an outstanding season."

Soon after, I received a congratulatory note from the local athletic director, a former head coach of Rutgers University basketball team. It began with the salutation: To Rabbi Haber - Basketball mentor, Akiba Academy..."

All the favourable publicity accomplished the intended result. Within two weeks, nine Jewish families came to check out Akiba for their children's schooling. During the next few months more people inquired about the academy for the coming year's registration than ever before. The success of the school's sports program led to many Jewish youngsters learning Chumash and Talmud, and about Jewish laws and holidays.

*[Adapted by Yrachmiel Tilles from an early draft of: "A Rabbi's Northern Adventures: from Alaska to the Golan Heights"]*

**Rabbi Yisrael Haber**, once a USA Army chaplain in Alaska, founded and directs the Chabad Center of the Golan Heights in Crispin.

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*The Lamplighter contains words from sacred writings. Please do not deface or discard.*

ISSUE 1123

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

In this week's Parsha it says "When you acquire a Jewish bondsman, for six years he shall work and in the seventh year he shall go free..."

"Six years," an allusion to the 6000 years of the world's normative existence, "he shall work".

That is, during this period, in the present time of this existence, there is the opportunity of serving G-d with Torah and mitzvot. By virtue of this service:

"In the seventh year," i.e., in the seventh millennium, "he shall go free..." - we shall be released and be free of all the obstacles and hindrances that presently are dominant in the world, and we shall merit the sublime manifestations of the Messianic future.



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d  
11th of Kislev, 5735 [November 25, 1975]  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr.----  
Springfield, Mass. 01103  
Greeting and Blessing:

Your letter of the 22nd of Cheshvan reached me with some delay, and this is the first opportunity for me to acknowledge it.

Following the order of your letter, I wish to extend here my prayerful wishes that your wife ---- should have a normal and complete pregnancy, as well as a normal delivery of a healthy offspring in a good and auspicious hour.

With regard to the business venture about which you write, it is clear that the general conditions which affect the problem, as well as those specific ones that you mention in your letter, are of a nature which change from time to time. Indeed, as you write, this is also the reason that caused the problem of financing. At any rate, it seems at this moment that the next step does not depend on you, as you don't seem to have any options to choose from.

The only suggestion I can make to you is one that may appeal mystical, but it has been borne out by experience and proved quite practical. I have in mind the idea that when a Jew strengthens his bond with the Source of wisdom, which is in G-d, he gains wisdom and understanding also in mundane affairs, which helps him to decide what to do and what not to do in matters of business and the like.

Needless to say, by strengthening one's bonds with the Source of true wisdom and understanding, is meant the actual observance of the Mitzvoth which G-d set forth in His Torah, of which it is written, "This is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of all the nations."

As mentioned above, the advice that you should make an effort to strengthen your commitment and actual fulfillment of the Mitzvoth, which will also help you make the proper decisions, is at first glance of a mystical nature. But looking at it from a practical point of view, we know that in everything else the important thing is the actual results which a certain measure brings about. If experience shows that doing such and such a thing brings such and such results in the vast majority of cases, then it is not so important whether one understands how and why those results are caused, for the important thing is the result itself.

The same applies also to Jews and their commitment to the Torah and Mitzvoth throughout the ages. Our long history has borne out the fact that the well-being of the Jewish people, as well as of the Jew as an individual, is intimately connected with his observance of the Torah and Mitzvoth in the daily life and although the Torah and Mitzvoth should be observed for their own sake, as the commands of our Creator, it has been revealed that the Torah and Mitzvoth are also the channels and vessels to receive G-d's blessings for Hatzlocho (success) in the material aspect of life.

May G-d, whose benevolent Providence extends to each and every one individually, grant you the wisdom to make the right decisions, and to have Hatzlocho in all above.

With blessing,

P.S. Noting that you are an attorney at law, I would like to add a point that is no doubt quite familiar to you. This is that in matters of a legal suit, the best and weightiest legal argument is when one can cite precedents of judgment in similar cases, and there is no need to substantiate and explain the reasons for the judgment further since the judgment speaks for itself.

P.P.S. Regarding the project in Nicaragua in general - in light of the world economic and political situation, it does not appear to be a practicable and realistic project in the near future.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*In this week's Parsha the Torah tells us about a unique mitzvah. If a person is unable to pay a debt, he may sell himself as a slave to another Jew for a period of six years. After this period the slave goes free. If the slave says "I love my master, my wife (that my master gave me), and my children - I do not wish to go free", then it is a mitzvah to pierce the right ear of the slave, and he may work for another six years.*

*Rashi explains that the reason for the mitzvah is because, "the ear that heard Hashem say on Mount Sinai, 'for the children of Israel are My slaves' - and went and acquired a master for himself - should be pierced".*

*Although this Mitzvah was practiced long ago, we can still see its practical relevance. At one point or another, we are all aware of the truth about our lives - we are dependent on others - G-d, and even other people. When one realizes this, it calls forth from within one's self a feeling of submission and thanks, appreciation and indebtedness. This attitude creates an environment of goodness and a space within us where Hashem is welcome.*

*However, when one is distracted by his work, or by his own endeavours, without attributing them to their source, he becomes a "slave of a slave" - like the slave in the Parsha who acquired another master for himself. He is a slave to his false impression of independence, unwilling to acknowledge the benevolence of others.*

*We may need to pinch - or sometimes even pierce - ourselves to break out of this concealment and recognize the harmonious relationship between each other and with Hashem. This is what Shabbos is for. Throughout the "six years", or six days of the week, we may get carried away with our work, but on the seventh let us recognize the true Master of the universe.*

*J. I. Guttentag*

### CUSTOMS CORNER

In this week's Parsha we learn about many (53!) Mitzvos - some that are very practical and currently applicable and some that only were in a time gone by. Why is it so important that we learn about mitzvot that have no bearing on our life anymore?

Here are a few thoughts on this topic:

- The Torah in its entirety is G-d's wisdom. By studying any aspect of Torah, practical or not, one gains an insight into G-d's wisdom. This provides messages and guidance for all areas of life.
- According to Chassidic teachings, Torah study's ultimate benefit isn't the practical knowledge gained, but the unity it creates between G-d and the one studying the text.
- By demonstrating to Hashem how precious these laws are to us, we arouse Hashem to return these Mitzvos to us with the return of the Holy Temple in the times of Moshiach.
- Through studying about these mitzvot, it is considered as if we actually have fulfilled them.
- The Torah is multi-layered. While on its simplest level it teaches us practical rules, each mitzvah has profound meaning on a spiritual level, too.

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

## THE COINS THAT CUREDS

There was once a man who had a paralysed daughter. He brought the girl from doctor to doctor for consultations, but they could do nothing, and she remained in the same condition, unable to move any of her limbs. When the Baal Shem Tov began to acquire a name as a healer and a holy man who could do wonders through prayer, the man's friends urged him to seek the Baal Shem Tov's help for his daughter, But the father refused to make the trip, saying that he did not believe that such things happened in his day and age. "Miracles like that happened only long ago," he insisted.

Time passed, and the man saw that there was no hope for his daughter. In the face of his friends' persistent urging he decided he had nothing to lose by traveling to the Baal Shem Tov. Taking with him a small bundle of coins wrapped up in a kerchief, the man carried his helpless daughter to his wagon, set her down inside, and then set off in the direction of the holy Tzadik.

Leaving his daughter in the wagon, the man entered the Baal Shem Tov's chamber and began to speak: "They say that you are able to cure the ill. Here is the bundle of coins that I've brought. Take it -- let's see what you can do for my daughter, who is lying paralysed in the back of my wagon outside."

It was a hot summer day, and the Baal Shem Tov was sitting next to an open window. After hearing the man's request, the Baal Shem Tov took the bundle of coins and tossed it right out the window. "Go in peace!" he said, "I have no need for your money."

The small package landed outside. When it hit the ground it tore open, scattering its contents. When the paralysed girl saw this she got to her feet, climbed out of the wagon and began to collect the coins that were rolling in all directions.

Her father came out and beheld the miraculous sight. "Get back in the wagon right now!" he yelled at his daughter. "Let's get out of here!"

Pointing at the Baal Shem Tov's house, he explained, "He is liable to come out and say that he is the one who cured you!"

[Source: Supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from "Extraordinary Chassidic Tales" Volume 1 by Rabbi Rafael Nachman Kahn, as translated from Hebrew and adapted by Basha Majerczyk.]

## Biographic note:

Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer (18 Elul 1698-6 Sivan 1760), the Baal Shem Tov ["master of the good Name"], a unique and seminal figure in Jewish history, revealed the Chassidic movement and his own identity as an exceptionally holy person, on his 36th birthday, 18 Elul 1734. He wrote no books, although many claim to contain his teachings. One available in English is the excellent annotated translation of *Tzava'at Harivash*, published by Kehot.

# Thoughts THAT COUNT

Neither shall you eat any meat that is torn of beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs (22:30)

This is to teach us that G-d does not deprive any creature of its just reward. Because the dogs did not bark at the Israelites when they came out of Egypt (see Exodus 11:7), G-d said: Give them their reward. (*Mechilta*)

You shall serve the L-rd your G-d, and He will bless your bread and your water (23:25)

In Hebrew, the pronoun "you" has both a singular and a plural form. The above verse, as written in the Torah, is a grammatical abnormality: the words "your bread and your water" (*et lachmecha v'et meimecha*) are in the singular form, while the "you" in "you shall serve" (*va'avadtem*) is plural.

The Rebbe of Kotzk explained: A Jew praying, even a single Jew praying alone, is nevertheless praying for, and together with, the entire community of Israel. On the other hand, a thousand people eating together are each eating for the sake of their own selves.

### CANDLE LIGHTING: 24 JANUARY 2014

BEGINS		ENDS
8:22 .....MELBOURNE .....		9:24
8:11 .....ADELAIDE .....		9:11
6:28 .....BRISBANE .....		7:24
7:02 .....DARWIN .....		7:54
6:28 .....GOLD COAST .....		7:23
7:06 .....PERTH .....		8:03
7:48 .....SYDNEY .....		8:47
8:00 .....CANBERRA .....		9:00
8:23 .....LAUNCESTON .....		9:28
8:21 .....AUCKLAND .....		9:22
8:32 .....WELLINGTON .....		9:37
8:26 .....HOBART .....		9:32
7:28 .....BYRON BAY .....		8:24
7:00 .....SINGAPORE .....		7:51



### CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD  
PARSHAS MISHPATIM  
23 SHEVAT • 24 JANUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:22 PM
	MINCHA:	8:30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9:00 PM
SHABBOS:	TEHILIM:	8:00 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9:59 AM
	The Molad for the month of Adar 1 is Friday	
	January 31 at	2:26 and 7 chalakim AM
	MINCHA:	8:15 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:24 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MON-FRI:	8:00 AM
	MINCHA:	8:25 PM
	MAARIV: SUN-FRI:	9:15 PM