

LAMPLIGHTER

26 Adar II
Parshas Tazria
Parshas Hachodesh
1132
28 March
5774/2014

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In the beginning of the Torah portion of Tazria we find the commandment "and on the eighth day shall the flesh of his foreskin be circumcised." Hundreds of years before this commandment was given to the Jewish nation, Abraham was instructed to circumcise himself "and your seed after you, for generations." Yet, Jewish boys are circumcised from the command in this week's Torah portion, and not because of our forefather Abraham.

The command given to Abraham to circumcise himself was a commandment given to an individual and revealed by G-d through prophecy. The mitzva of brit milah in this week's portion is one of the 613 commandments of the Torah which were given to the entire Jewish People at Mount Sinai, to which every single Jew was witness.

Chasidic philosophy explains that a Jew's G-dly soul enters the physical body upon performance of the brit. Before the brit milah, the joining of the spiritual, G-dly soul and the corporeal body was incomplete; brit milah affects a linking and union between the two. This is why, according to many of our Sages, only after brit milah does a Jew have a share in the World to Come.

The word "brit" means "covenant," for indeed it is a sign of the Covenant between G-d and the Jewish People. So great is this bonding that it finds expression in the very physical flesh of a Jew, testimony to the depth of his relationship and commitment.

Brit milah is unique in the sense that it is a perpetual mitzva. The Talmud relates that once while King David was visiting a bathhouse, he suddenly grew despondent, concerned that he was also "unclothed without mitzvot" before his Creator. But after he reminded himself of the sign of brit milah engraved in his flesh he was reassured that he was not without merit for even one moment.

An additional advantage brit milah has over other commandments is the fact that it involves the physical body. Other mitzvot, even if they necessitate the use of various limbs of the body to carry them out, are primarily concerned with matters pertaining to the soul. The mitzva of milah is so great that it effects a change even in the physical realm, which the human eye can witness as testimony to the sacred bond between G-d and the Jewish people.

This explanation also sheds light on why a baby is circumcised before he can even comprehend the significance of the act. Performed on the physical body, the mitzva of milah effects a bond even greater than intellectual comprehension can grasp; in this respect, infant and adult are equal. The circumcision is therefore performed on the earliest possible date, the eighth day of life.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Speak Nicely, But Clearly

By Yossy Goldman

That the Torah speaks in refined language is a principle of Biblical studies. The classic example is back in the Book of Genesis. There, when G-d tells Noah to take all the animals into the Ark, He speaks of the "clean" animals (*hatehorah*) and the "animals which are not clean" (*asher einenah tehorah*). Although the Torah is generally sparing with words--every seemingly superfluous letter is expounded upon and interpreted by the Sages--here it uses an additional eight (Hebrew) letters to avoid using the word *teme'ah* (literally, "defiled" or "impure").

And yet, a cursory look at this week's readings which deal with the laws of the ritual impurity caused by *tzaraat* ("leprosy") reveals the word *tamei* occurring numerous times. Why is it that in the story of Noah the Torah goes out of its way not to use a negative word and here it uses it repeatedly, seemingly at whim?

The answer given by the Sages is that in Genesis the Torah is recounting a historical narrative, and can thus allow itself to be more subtle and not pronounce a negative word. However, when it comes to *halachah*, to determining Jewish law, one cannot afford subtleties or flowery language; one must be crystal clear in laying down the law. The Law is sacrosanct and in matters of Law there may be no ambiguities. Our Parshah deals with dos and don'ts that must be expressed in no uncertain terms. When a rabbi is called upon to answer a halachic question, he should not beat around the bush. His response must be clear and unequivocal. And if it is *treif*, then he must pronounce it *treif*!

Now, generally speaking, rabbis should be gentle, nice and soft-spoken. They should suggest, not demand. The old "fire and brimstone" types don't work that well today. But sometimes rabbis can be too gentle, too subtle and too undemanding. And not only in halachic matters but even in counselling.

Psychologists and social workers will, on principle, never be directive with their clients. It is part of their professional code not to impose their opinions or personal values on those seeking their guidance. They will try to help their clients "see the wood from the trees" so they can make their own informed decisions. Rabbis, on the other hand, should have no qualms about giving direction. After all, it's their job!

A fellow once came to see me about his therapist. "She doesn't tell me what to do," he complained. I explained that therapists don't work that way. "You want someone to tell you what to do? Go to a rabbi."

If a couple goes for marriage counselling, a counsellor is likely to guide them based on their hopes and aspirations. Do they really want to work it out, or are they going through the motions on their way to the divorce lawyer? And if it is the latter, the counsellor may very well help them on their way. A rabbi will not hesitate to explain that marriage is sacred and should be worked on and that divorce is an absolutely last resort when all else has failed. The counsellor might ask, "Would you guys like to stay married?" while the rabbi might say, "You must stay married." Then, he may refer them to a professional counsellor who is committed to saving marriages.

Remember the kleptomaniac who bumped into an old friend? The friend remembered how guilty he had felt because of his compulsive shoplifting and asked him whether he still had the problem. "No," said the fellow. "I went to a psychiatrist and he helped me solve my problem." "That's great, so you don't shoplift anymore?" asked the friend. "Sure I shoplift. I just don't feel guilty anymore."

Please G-d, rabbis will be soft, supportive, friendly, loving and gentle. Please G-d, they will give clear direction when they have to.

Slice of LIFE

A Lost Luria

By Dovid Leib Marasow

In 1943, in the town of Gutschein, Germany, the Luria family welcomed their firstborn son into the world with tremendous joy.

But the joy was short lived. Just a few hours later, the Nazis rounded up the town's Jewish population, the Lurias among them, and herded them into cattle cars bound for the concentration camps in the East.

Miriam Luria held her little bundle tightly in the dank, cramped car, desperate to save him from discovery and certain death. She had a few pills with her, and she placed them in the baby's mouth, hoping that the overdose would cause him to sleep silently.

Days later, the train came to a jarring halt. They had arrived in Auschwitz.

Starved and dazed, the Jews of Gutschein joined the line for *selektzia*, the selection determining who was suitable for slave labour and who was destined for the gas chambers.

Miriam was young and able bodied, and she drew a breath of relief as she passed the selection. On her back, hidden deep inside a sling, her baby boy slept on, blissfully unaware of the cruel world into which he had been born.

Miriam knew that if her baby remained in the camp he would certainly be discovered. Soon she saw her chance. Passing close to the electric fence surrounding the camp, she noticed a kind-looking peasant on the other side. With a prayer on

her lips, she threw him her backpack.

The kind man felt sorry for the child and promised to do what he could. He kept his word, and shortly thereafter brought the tiny Luria to an orphanage for gentiles.

Miraculously, both Miriam and her husband survived and were liberated from the camps at the end of the war. They immediately began to comb Europe, trudging from one orphanage to another in search of their precious son. Each negative reply pushed them deeper into despair.

But they did not give up. After years of false leads, they followed a tip to Paris, where they found their little bundle, now a five-year-old boy.

The family immigrated to Australia soon after being reunited. As Miriam put it, they wanted "to be as far away from Europe as possible." At the same time, they did their best to erase any trace of the Jewish identity that had been the cause of so much suffering. They named their son Alex and never told him that he was a Jew.

Alex was never taken to a synagogue. He only learned that he was Jewish from his classmates, who mocked him.

Once, Miriam brought her son to a rabbi, hoping that he would be able explain the mystery of Judaism. But "he didn't really explain anything," Alex said, "He just gave me all the right reasons why they hate me..."

This summer, a friend and I travelled through central Australia in a motor home loaded with Jewish supplies and enough kosher food to last for several weeks. We were on a

mission for Chabad of Rural and Regional Australia (RARA), searching for Jews who could use some Jewish inspiration.

Thumbing through the white pages in Ballarat, Victoria, we noticed the name "Luria." How did the name of one of the noblest rabbinic families in Jewish history end up in the Ballarat phonebook? We took note of the address and decided to try our luck.

A man who appeared to be about 70 answered our knock, and we explained that we were rabbis travelling through the outback visiting Jewish people.

Alex's face lit up. "The Christians were coming after me for a long time to try to convert me, and I would never listen. But I always wished that the Jewish community, my people, would reach out to me in the same way," he said.

During our visit, Alex put on *tefillin* for the first time in his life and placed a *mezuzah* on his doorpost. As we were about to leave, Alex stopped us: "My father always told me that I was a descendant of a rabbi named Isaac Luria," he said. "Ever heard of him?"

Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534-1572), known as the "Arizal," was one of the greatest Kabbalists of all time. His writings form the basis of almost all later mystical works.

Needless to say, we saved Alex's phone number and promised to keep in touch.

As we drove away, we couldn't help thinking that the Arizal must have had immense satisfaction from seeing his descendant reconnect to his heritage. It had been a very long journey, but Alex Luria was finally on his way home.

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

Editor: Yosef Y. Kasle
P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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

ISSUE 1132

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Why is Moshiach a central Jewish belief?

If one had to make a list of the five most important features of Judaism, it would probably consist of the following: 1) Hashem 2) Torah 3) Mitzvos 4) the Jewish People 5) the Jewish Land - Eretz Yisroel.

All of the five above are being hindered in achieving their full potential during the era of Galus - Exile. A. Hashem - Hashem is in exile with us. B. Torah - The Chazal (Koheles Rabbah 11:8) say that the Torah we learn today is "nonsense" compared to the Torah that Moshiach will teach. C. Mitzvos - Most of those Mitzvos are dependent on the dwelling of all Jews in Eretz Yisrael and an existing Bais Hamikdash. (i.e. sacrifices, Shemitah, Yovel, etc.). D. The Jewish People - Ten of the twelve tribes were exiled during the period of the Bais Hamikdash. They will be returned to us when Moshiach comes (Sanhedrin 110b). E. Eretz Yisroel - We have only conquered 7 of the 10 nations that Hashem Promised Avrohom Avinu.

From the above it is clear that anyone who says that Judaism is dear to them must be anticipating Moshiach. For Moshiach will cause every aspect of Judaism to reach its "full potential."



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

B"H, 10 Mar-Cheshvan, 5716

Peace and blessing!

You asked: What should be your response when told that science allegedly has proof that the world has existed for more than 5715 years? Can this be answered with the famous statement of our Sages that G-d "built worlds and destroyed them?"

The meaning of that statement is not that G-d actually created earlier physical worlds. Rather, the intent there is to spiritual worlds, as recorded by the Alter Rebbe - based on the Arizal's writings - in his Torah Ohr on the portion of Shemot.

Their statement that science has proofs is absolutely false. Science has no proofs at all, only estimations built on flimsy foundations. It is hard to explain all of this in a letter of requisite length. The main point is, however, that the statement in scientific texts with regard to the world's having existed for several billion years, etc., is based on the following theory:

Since a specific number of years are needed (according to today's conditions, such as temperature, atmospheric pressure, wind movements, the proportions of elements in the environment, etc. etc.) for every hundred feet of sand accumulation at the banks of a river, and since there are mountains of this sand which are several miles high, therefore (if one is to assume that these mountains were gathered bit by bit from grains of sand, by the movements of this same river, and that all of the above conditions haven't changed in thousands of years) such and such number of years would be needed. This number is far more than 5715.

When one asks, however, where these grains of sand came from, they have no answer.

When one asks: Just as it is possible for grains of sand to have come to be at a certain point on a flat plain, may it not be possible that mountains too came into being all at once? Again, they have no answer.

When one asks: How do you know that five thousand years ago all of the conditions, of water, wind, river patterns, etc. were exactly the same as they are now? For this, too, they have no response.

When one asks, in addition to all of the above: If you are claiming that your proofs are scientific, how can it be that the results of the research into the age of the world according to astrophysics, according to archaeology, according to geology, and according to radioactivity, all contradict each other, from one extreme to the other? For example, one concludes that the world can be no more than half a billion years old, while the other concludes that it cannot be less than two billion!

These contradictions are clear proof that all of these discussions and research are only theories built on thin air. Here is not the place to delve into this at greater length.

CUSTOMS CORNER

Customs During Pregnancy

- During pregnancy, a woman should be especially scrupulous in following the laws of kosher, as the food she eats also nourishes the developing baby. The same applies to gazing at non-kosher or other impure things.
- A pregnant woman should be particular to give charity every day, as well as on Friday and the afternoons preceding Jewish holidays before lighting the Shabbat or holiday candles. A woman who was already doing this regularly should add to her usual amount, preferably by adding a quantity that is (a multiple of) eighteen.
- During the course of the pregnancy, it is a good idea to check the Mezuzot in the home.
- When a woman is pregnant, she need not fast on any of the yearly fast days other than Tisha B'Av and Yom Kippur (If need be, a doctor & Rabbi should be consulted in regards to these two fasts as well).

On Shabbos:

- A woman may travel to the hospital or birthing centre on Shabbat when she feels that the birth is imminent. If possible, one should arrange for a non-Jewish (taxi) driver.
- In order to put the soon-to-be mother's mind at rest, it is permissible for her husband, other relative, friend, or coach to accompany her in the taxi or ambulance.

A WORD

from the Director

This week's Torah reading focuses on the concept of ritual purity and impurity. Our Rabbis explain the distinction between the Torah's prohibitions and its laws of impurity as follows: Prohibitions guard against evil that our minds and hearts can appreciate. The laws of impurity, by contrast, protect against a dimension of evil which we cannot comprehend.

Although the evil associated with a prohibition can be appreciated more readily, there is a more severe dimension associated with impurity. For since the evil associated with impurity is not easily discerned, it is much more difficult to guard against and to eradicate. To cite an example, when a person eats non-kosher food, he has performed a transgression and must repent. Nevertheless, even before he repents, he may enter the Temple and bring a sacrifice.

Casually coming into contact with an impure substance can change an individual's personal state and isolate him from holiness. For example, were a person to touch a dead lizard, he would be forbidden to enter the Temple or partake of a sacrifice.

Moreover, just as ritual purity is a quality which cannot be grasped by our mortal intellect, it affects the levels of our souls that transcend reason and understanding. It has an effect on the dimensions of our being that are connected to G-d above the level of logical thought.

At present, the entire Jewish community is ritually impure, for throughout the ages, since the destruction of the Temple, it has been impossible to maintain a state of ritual purity. For example, one of the fundamental sources of impurity is contact with a human corpse. To restore a person to a state of purity after such contact, a priest must sprinkle water mixed with the ashes of a red heifer upon an impure person. Since the destruction of the Temple, these ashes have not been available and therefore our entire people are impure.

This will be one of the first achievements of Mashiach after rebuilding the Temple - to restore our people to a state of purity. When that is accomplished, our relationship with G-d will be lifted to an entirely different level. The parallel of the isolation of impurity will be attained in the realm of purity.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED

Once...

PRISONER EXCHANGE

The tavern keeper stood before his *poritz* quaking with terror. His rent was due that day but he did not have a penny to pay. He would have to ask for a postponement. Would the hard-hearted gentile landlord agree? The Jew shivered, waiting for an answer, hoping and fearing.

From the frown on the landlord's beefy face, he already had his answer. The heavy-set gentile growled as he said, "How dare you appear before me without bringing the money, you filthy Jew!"

He shouted for his servants to bring clubs and whips to beat the tavern keeper. They fell upon him with a lust of their own, striking him until he was bruised and bleeding. He suffered in silence, but his ordeal was still not over.

"Now take this Jewish dog, chain him and throw him into the dungeon. And throw his family out into the street."

Mere mention of the dungeon struck terror in all Jewish hearts. It was a damp, dingy underground pit in a cellar on the landlord's estate. It was used to punish all those who dared defy and displease the landlord, owner of the vast estate which employed dozens of Jews in various capacities. Not always did the victim emerge from this horrible pit alive.

The pain-racked Jew lay on the damp floor of the dungeon. He wept and thought, "Will I ever see my wife and children again? Will I ever get out of here alive?"

The news of this tragedy reached Rabbi Moshe-Leib Sassover, the great Rebbe whose heart wept for all of his brothers in sorrow. The plight of the homeless, fatherless family shook him deeply; the tears streamed involuntarily down his cheeks.

He arose and made his way to the landlord's mansion. Rabbi Moshe-Leib knocked boldly on the door. The landlord's gateman opened the huge door and was surprised to see a distinguished looking Jew standing outside.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"Take me to your master," Rabbi Moshe-Leib demanded authoritatively. "I must speak to him."

The gateman was so impressed by the rabbi's bearing and confidence that he led him straight to the *poritz*. The landlord was stunned to see this impressive Jew in his home.

"Sir," said Rabbi Moshe-Leib, "I have heard that there is a wounded Jew imprisoned on your property, in the dungeon of your castle."

"He deserves it!" the landlord replied hotly. "He did not pay his rent. That is the punishment for failing to pay rent."

Rabbi Moshe-Leib did not make any demands. With a suave tone, he said, "I would like to suggest an offer."

"An offer?" he landlord repeated, his voice rising with curiosity. "What could you possibly offer?"

"Look at the matter logically. What possible benefit can you reap from holding this Jew in jail? His suffering will not pay the rent; you surely can understand that. However, if you were to free him and imprison me in his stead, I am certain that my fellow Jews would hasten to redeem me for the amount that he owes and even more. What do you say to that suggestion?"

The landlord's eyes lit up. He would never have conceived such a thought. He would be able to demand any amount of ransom for this distinguished Jew. "I accept your offer," he said. He freed the Jew and imprisoned Rabbi Moshe-Leib instead, chaining him hand and foot.

Rabbi Moshe-Leib lay on the cold, damp stone floor, happy in his suffering, for he had freed a fellow Jew! The chains bit into his hands and feet but he gave them no care. He was so transported with joy that had he been able, he would have broken into a dance.

He lay there all morning, unconscious of any discomfort or pain. But in the afternoon, when the hour to pray *Mincha* drew close, he tried to rise and found that he could not do so. Now his imprisonment disturbed him.

"How will I be able to commune with my Creator?" Rabbi Moshe-Leib wept, sighing from the depths of his heart. "I cannot stand up!" The pain did not disturb him, but he

suffered greatly because he could not pray erect.

Meanwhile, the landlord rubbed his hands in glee as he returned from the dungeon to this comfortable mansion. "It cannot take long for the Jews to find out that their beloved leader is being held prisoner here. Soon, they will send a delegation bearing a huge sum for his ransom. They will come begging on their knees for me to free him."

The landlord sat himself in a comfortable chair to await their arrival. Suddenly, a spasm shot through his head; he could not see straight. His entire body began aching. He groaned in agony and begged his family to fetch a doctor.

The landlord's private physician was summoned, but he could discover no cause for the strange pain. Specialists were called in, but they, too, were baffled. This was a strange disease which they were unable to diagnose or treat.

The landlord writhed in agony. His shouts and screams echoed throughout the castle and brought all the servants to his side. His family tried in vain to alleviate his pain, but they were utterly at a loss. They sought some clue to his illness. Perhaps, it was a result of something he had eaten?... Or done?

"What did our master do this morning?"

"He was fine until he came back from the dungeon. He released the tavern keeper and imprisoned the rabbi."

"Perhaps..." the family hesitated to express their fear. Perhaps the rabbi had put a curse on the master; perhaps this was a punishment.

"Master," said a number of his advisors, "who knows if the Jew is not to blame? Maybe if you released him from the dungeon, you might get relief."

Unable to speak, the landlord merely nodded his head. Servants were quickly dispatched to free the Jew from his bonds and take him out of the dungeon.

When they arrived, Rabbi Moshe-Leib refused to be released, much to their amazement. "I demand that the landlord come here himself," he insisted.

Moaning and groaning, the landlord was carried to the dungeon. Supported on either side, he cried down into the pit, "Please forgive me for having imprisoned you. You are free to leave. I will also forgive my Jewish tenant."

Rabbi Moshe-Leib was still not ready to emerge. He had other demands. "I will not leave here until you allow the tavern keeper and his family to return to their home."

The landlord had not expected such a harsh demand. Despite his excruciation, he thought not to agree. But at that moment he had another severe attack, which served to remind him why he was suffering. "Very well," he said, "they can return to their home in the tavern. And now, you are free to go. Please, leave my property at once."

Rabbi Moshe-Leib had not come to the end of his demands, "I want you to guarantee to let him manage the tavern, as before. I want you to restore his lease."

"Anything! Just go!"

Rabbi Moshe-Leib finally agreed to let the servants unchain him and lift him up out of the pit. And lo! The very minute that the *tzadik* stood on firm ground, the landlord's anguish began to recede. The closer Rabbi Moshe-Leib got to the main gate, the weaker it became. The moment he departed the property, the landlord was completely healed.

And from that day on, the landlord was wary of his Jewish tenants. He treated them with respect and care and never dared harm them again.

Source: Adapted from *Tales of Tzaddikim* (ArtScroll) by G. MaTov.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised (12:3)

Said Rabbi Yitzchak: The law of the man and the law of the beast are equal. The law of man is that "On the eighth day shall be circumcised"; and the law of the beast is, "From the eighth day onward it shall be accepted as a fire offering to G-d" (Leviticus 22:27). (*Midrash Rabbah*)

The number seven represents the natural, and the number eight represents the holy. This is why circumcision on the eighth day takes precedence over Shabbat, the seventh day. (*Keli Yakar*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 28 MARCH 2014

BEGINS	ENDS
7:01MELBOURNE	7:59
7:00ADELAIDE	7:54
5:33BRISBANE	6:25
6:35DARWIN	7:24
5:32GOLD COAST	6:23
6:01PERTH	6:54
6:39SYDNEY	7:33
6:47CANBERRA	7:42
6:54LAUNCESTON	7:51
7:05AUCKLAND	7:59
7:03WELLINGTON	8:01
6:53HOBART	7:51
6:31BYRON BAY	7:23
6:56SINGAPORE	7:44



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS TAZRIA

26 ADAR II • 28 MARCH

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:01 PM
	MINCHA:	7:10 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	7:40 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10:28 AM
	THE MOLAD FOR THE MONTH OF NISSAN	
	IS MONDAY 31 MARCH AT	3:54 & 9 CHALAKIM AM
	MINCHA:	7:05 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	7:59 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	SUN-FRI: 9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	MON-FRI: 8:00 AM
	MAARIV:	MON-THURS: 7:00 PM
		7:50 PM