

LAMPLIGHTER

2 Iyar
Parshas Emor
17th day of the Omer
1137
2 May
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Emor, begins with a fundamental teaching about the education of children: "Speak to the priests...and say to them." Our Sages explain that this repetition alludes to the mitzva (commandment) and obligation placed on adults to instruct their children in the proper path. Parents, the Torah insists, must provide the next generation with the proper Jewish education.

But why is such a fundamental concept not mentioned until now, halfway through the Torah? Would it not have been more appropriate for this mitzva to be given immediately after the revelation at Mt. Sinai? Furthermore, why is this mitzva mentioned in connection with the priests?

In explanation, bear in mind that the Torah portion studied during any given week has particular significance for that time of year. Its selection is not arbitrary; its teachings are especially applicable at that particular time. The commandment to educate the young must therefore apply most specifically now, during the month of Iyar, a month primarily characterized by counting the Omer.

The essential concept of Sefirat HaOmer, counting the Omer, is education. The Jews were educated and refined as they counted the days before the Torah was given on Mt. Sinai, seven weeks after their exodus from Egypt. The release from bondage was, so to speak, the "birth" of the Jewish nation, which was then followed by a period in which they were educated for the great event to come.

This learning experience was not, however, in the fundamentals of Judaism; G-d had already said of Abraham, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they will keep the way of G-d." This process of refinement, achieved through counting the Omer, refers to an even higher degree of perfection.

Furthermore, this type of education has a special connection to the service of the priests, for their job was to bring the Jews closer to G-d through the sacrifices brought in the Holy Temple. Because the priests raised the sanctity of the entire Jewish nation, it is to them that the commandment to instruct the young was addressed.

We learn from this that the duty to provide our children - and every Jewish child - with a proper Jewish education involves more than teaching them just the basics of Judaism. We must also endeavour to instil in them the desire for perfection in the service of G-d.

Today, as we stand on the threshold of Moshiach's imminent arrival, this lesson is particularly apt, for it prepares us for that time when "the entire world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d, like the waters of the sea cover the earth."

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

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? The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory, investigates this question by examining comments by various sages on the topic of speech.

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, termed 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, says the Rebbe, 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

THE CHIEF RABBI OF ISRAEL AND NAPOLEON'S THRONE

In the early 2000's, **Rabbi Mordechi Eliahu**, the *Rishon L'Tzion* (Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel), received an official invitation from the President of France, Jacques Chirac, to visit his country.

Mr. Chirac, before ascending to the office of President in 1995, had previously served two terms as Prime Minister and nearly 20 years as the Mayor of Paris. Throughout his career he was known as a hard line, pro-Arab leader who constantly pushed Israel to cede territories to the Palestinians, thus bringing French-Israeli relations to an all-time low.

Rabbi Eliahu, on the other hand, was a very outspoken individual with little patience for the formalities that are the essence of French culture. So the members of the Israeli embassy there were understandably very tense and apprehensive that the Rabbi might say or do something that would make things even worse than they were.

However, when the Rabbi arrived they soon calmed down. His outgoing and friendly demeanour put everyone at ease, and it seemed obvious to the embassy staff that the meeting would be nothing other than formalities and smiles.

But they were wrong. For instance, at the first leg of the official tour when they visited the French National Museum, the Rabbi demonstrated what seemed to be a shameful ignorance and insensitivity to French heritage.

When he was shown the throne of Napoleon he asked if it was for sale; and if so, for how much; and how long ago did Napoleon live! Then when shown one of the rooms of King Louis the Fourteenth he asked if this King was a moral person, which caused everyone to blush and even laugh behind the Rabbi's back.

The tour guide explained that the chair of Napoleon was of great historical and national importance and was certainly not for sale and regarding King Louis; although he was not known to be a particularly moral person, nevertheless France is proud of him as part of their heritage.

Afterwards they returned to the office of the president for an official ceremony where, after many introductions and formalities, Rabbi Eliahu was invited to say a few words that would be simultaneously translated into French.

Rabbi Eliahu began by describing in detail his tour of the museum and his questions that caused everyone to laugh.

At this point Rabbinit Tzivia realized that the translator was not paying attention to every word her husband was saying and, realizing that her husband was making some sort of point, requested that the chief Rabbi of France, who was also present, should take over the task.

Rabbi Eliahu continued, "In my visit to the Museum I learned that the chair of Napoleon was not for sale because of its historical importance and that King Louis, although not a man of pure character is nevertheless revered and honoured as a French hero.

"I noticed that you expected me to honour these men also and were surprised when I did not do so, even though I am not French and do not even live in France.

"If so, my dear friends, I ask the same thing from you: We Jews also have our founders: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob but not of two or three hundred years ago and of questionable character like yours but of three and four thousand years ago and of impeccable integrity and selflessness.

"Is it too much to ask that just as you expect us to respect your founders and kings, so you should in turn respect ours?"

"For instance, over three thousand years ago Moses brought us to the Promised Land and some four hundred years afterwards our King David and King Solomon secured the city of Jerusalem.

"That is our history.

"Does it not make simple sense that just as you expect us to honour your heritage so you should honour ours? If the chair of Napoleon is not for sale then how can you expect us to sell parts of Israel and Jerusalem?"

The members of the Israeli embassy were in panic: this was exactly what they were afraid of! In the moment of silence that followed they were certain that Chirac would simply storm out of the room in a fury.

But they were in for a big surprise. All of the French officials present, including the President himself, stood and applauded!

Then Chirac warmly shook the Rabbi's hand, and immediately called one of his assistants and whispered something in his ear. The man left the room hurriedly and returned in just seconds with a small, velvet box.

Chirac asked for silence and then announced, "This medallion is usually reserved for visiting heads of state, but I have never heard anyone speak such clever words like these. They so impressed me that I am presenting this to you." And when he finished speaking the crowd gave the rabbi another standing ovation.

Source: Adapted and supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from the rendition of Rabbi Tuvia Bolton on [//ohrtmimim.org/torah](http://ohrtmimim.org/torah) (based on *Sichat HaShavua* #1331).

Biographical note:

Rabbi Mordechai-Tzemach (ben Suliman & Mazal) Eliyahu (1929-25 Sivan 2010), the former Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Israel, was born in Iraq. A noted sage in all areas of Torah study, as well as a significant kabbalist, he was considered to be one of the leading authorities on Jewish law in Israel. His son, Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, is currently the Chief Rabbi of Tsfat.

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ISSUE 1137

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In the famous "Letter to Yemen" by Rabbi Moses Maimonides (the "Rambam") he writes: "It is true beyond doubt that the restoration of prophecy is the first phase of the coming of Moshiach. As it is stated, 'After that I will pour out My spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesize' (Joel 3:1)."



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d
28th of Elul, 5734 [September 15, 1974]
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Mr. & Mrs. Mordechai Shoyel Landow

Greeting and Blessing:

After the long interval, though I have of course inquired about you in the interim, I just received your letter and enclosure relating to the Dedication celebration. Since all good things contain the seeds of continuity, like a chain reaction, may G-d grant that this be so also in this case. It is indeed a great Zechus for both of you - I was pleased to hear that Mrs. Landow, too, actively participated and was honoured - and may it be G-d's will that just as you have seen His blessings in the past, in the rapid growth of the students in quantity and quality, and the general blossoming of the program, etc., you should see even greater progress in the future.

All the more so that your letter arrived in the auspicious days before Rosh Hashono.

At this time, I extend to you and all yours my prayerful wishes for a good and happy year, materially and spiritually.

With the traditional blessing of

Cordially,

M. Schneerson

P.S. Regarding the matter with your son, about which you write, it is surely unnecessary to emphasize at length the need to enlist the cooperation of good friends that they should do all they can to influence your son in the right direction. It is to be expected that he may feel freer to discuss the matter with friends than with parents or close relatives. In that case the friends could promptly refute whatever reasons he may have. Of course, this does not preclude your using your persuasion and influence.

I would like to add - and this is also very pertinent in the present case - that all the members of a Jewish family are like one body. When a particular organ of the body needs strengthening, it is given direct treatment as well as indirect, by strengthening the other organs in an extra measure, to benefit also the affected organ. Certainly, when parents strengthen their personal life in accordance with the teachings of G-d, it is bound to have a benefit upon the children, directly and subconsciously. And, needless to say, there is always room for improvement in matters of goodness and holiness, Torah and Mitzvos, which are infinite, being derived from the Infinite. And, as above, every improvement is a benefit, direct and indirect, also for the children.

It is certainly an encouraging sign that the son did not want his father to know about the problem, and may G-d grant that it should be resolved satisfactorily and sooner than expected.

The Zechus of your dedicated work in the cause of Chinuch of Jewish children, of whom the Torah says, "You are children of G-d your G-d," that they should be brought up in the right way, the way of the Torah, will surely stand you in good stead to have true Nachas from your son and all your offspring.

CUSTOMS CORNER

Rejoicing on the Holidays

- It is obligatory to drink 86 ml of wine on each day of a holiday. Since the main purpose of drinking wine is in the joy that it brings, drinking grape juice is not enough for the obligation.
- One who does not like meat or wine should enjoy the holidays with other foods and drinks that he finds to be tasty.
- In order to fulfil the mitzvah of rejoicing with one's family, one should not leave his family for the holiday.
- Although it is not obligatory today, it is nevertheless praiseworthy to visit one's rav (primary Torah teacher) on every holiday. The mitzvot of honouring and having pleasure on the holiday include:
 - Cutting one's hair and nails before the holiday.
 - Bathing in hot water and washing one's hair before the holiday.
 - Baking fresh bread in honour of the holiday.

A WORD

from the Director

Among the many mitzvos in Parshas Emor are the mitzvos of giving tzedakah from the produce in the field. The Torah teaches us that when a Jew reaps the harvest of his field, he should leave a corner untouched. When he ties the sheaves of grain into bundles, he should leave the few that fall. And when he collects the bundles, if a bundle is forgotten, he should leave that, too. This is all left for poor people to come and gather.

These are the mitzvos of peah, leket and shichichah.

But actually, the Torah has already told us about these mitzvos in last week's parshah - Kedoshim. Why are these mitzvos repeated here?

Rashi teaches us that mentioning these mitzvos here helps us learn more about how to fulfil them. In Parshas Kedoshim, we learned that we must leave part of the harvest in the field for poor people. In Parshas Emor, Rashi says, we learn something new. From the words "You shall leave them for the poor person and the stranger." we learn that a person should not go out and give the forgotten bundle or fallen sheaves to the poor person. He should allow the poor person to enter his field and collect it by himself.

Why? Wouldn't it be nice to go out there and help the poor people by handing them the produce?

Sure it's nice, but for whom? The Torah is teaching us that the proper way to fulfil the mitzvos of peah, leket and shichichah is to share with others wholeheartedly, thinking about the poor person's feelings and not about our own desire to feel good.

Rashi teaches us that fulfilling the mitzvah of tzedakah with care can train a person to work on his middos and change his habits. Our sages say that fulfilling the mitzvos in this way is so praiseworthy that it is considered as if we have built the Beis HaMikdash and offered all the sacrifices.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED

Once...

THE BEARD TO HEAVEN

The Rebbe Maharash once described his visit to Prague, and the shul he saw that Jewish immigrants from Spain had built. There was a table there, and on the table was an ancient book of records of wondrous events. This is one of them:

Long ago in Prague there were twelve "parnassei ha-chodesh," philanthropists who each took responsibility to look after one month's worth of communal needs. Appointed over them was a fabulously wealthy and honoured leader in the community. He was a physician by profession, who had reached old age but never had children.

The physician became grievously ill and, feeling his end approaching, sent his coach and driver to the chief rabbi of Prague with a request to come and say the vidui-confession with him in his final moments. To his astonishment the coach returned empty.

The coachman quickly explained. He reported that the rabbi had told him to deliver the following message: "Your days are not yet over, and you will very soon recover from your illness."

In a short time the physician completely recuperated, and the first thing he did, understandably, was travel to the rabbi.

"The truth of the matter is," he told the rabbi, "I at first felt slighted when you overlooked my suffering. But now that your words have been fulfilled, I no longer bear any bad feelings. One thing, though, you must tell me: How did you know that I would rise from my sickbed, rather than go the way of all flesh?"

Replied the rabbi: "I had a dream. I was sitting at a table in Heaven along with many others with long beards. But you were unable to gain admittance there since you have no beard (according to the leniency of removing it with chemicals). Yet, since without doubt your place is in a high place in Heaven, it was obvious to me that pending your beard's growth, no action could be taken."

And so it was. Not long afterwards the physician let his beard grow, and soon left the world for his eternal rest.

Source: Adapted from the translation by Tuvia Natkin for Kfar Chabad Magazine-English (based on Migdal Oz).

Connection: Seasonal-131st anniversary of birthday of the Rebbe Maharash.

Biographical note:

Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn (2 Iyar 1834-13 Tishrei 1882), the fourth Lubavitch Rebbe, known as "the Rebbe Maharash," was the seventh and youngest son of his predecessor, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, "the Tsemach Tsedek".

"REAL REBBE" CRITERION

One day in 1866, when the Rebbe Rashab - an acronym for Rabbi Sholom [Dov-]Ber, the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe-to-be--was five years old, he and his brother [Shneur-] Zalman Aharon decided to play "chasid and Rebbe." The Raza [an acronym for Rabbi Zalman Aharon], who was about a year and a half older, would act as Rebbe and the Rashab would be the chasid entering the Rebbe's room for private audience. The Raza sat on a chair and straightened his hat, and the Rashab belted his waist as preparation for coming to ask him for a tikkun-a [soul] rectification.

"For what are you asking a tikkun?" the Raza asked.

The Rashab replied, "This past Shabbos I ate some nuts, and later found out that the Alter Rebbe [their great-great-grandfather, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the first Chabad Rebbe] writes that it is preferable to refrain from eating nuts on Shabbos." **

The Raza counselled him to make sure henceforth to pray looking at the words in the Siddur prayer-book and not by heart.

"Your advice won't help, and you're not a Rebbe!" exclaimed the Rashab.

"Why not?" asked his puzzled brother.

"When a Rebbe answers, he is supposed to sigh. You didn't sigh, so your advice is no good!"

Retelling this incident, the Lubavitcher Rebbe of our generation (1902-1994) commented that when one Jew helps another, the assistance itself is not enough; what is vital is his sigh, empathizing with the other's pain. Doing a favour for another for the sake of merit and improving oneself, for the sake of one's own self-perfection, without feeling the other's heartache, is not kindness, but the opposite.

Editor's note: ** Due to technical problems involved in the disposal of the shells - see Shulchan Aruch HaRav 319:9.

Source: Adapted primarily from Lma'an Yishme'u #122, and from other Chabad sources.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

Neither shall he contaminate himself [even] for his father or for his mother (21:11)

But he does contaminate himself for the sake of a met mitzvah (a dead person who has no one to attend to him). (Talmud; Rashi)

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)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 2 MAY 2014

BEGINS		ENDS
5:14	MELBOURNE	6:12
5:15	ADELAIDE	6:11
4:59	BRISBANE	5:52
6:16	DARWIN	7:06
4:56	GOLD COAST	5:49
5:21	PERTH	6:15
4:57	SYDNEY	5:52
5:03	CANBERRA	5:59
5:00	LAUNCESTON	6:14
5:18	AUCKLAND	6:14
5:10	WELLINGTON	6:09
4:56	HOBART	5:57
4:55	BYRON BAY	5:48
6:49	SINGAPORE	7:38



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS EMOR
2 IYAR • 2 MAY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:14 PM
	MINCHA:	5:20 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:50 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:40 AM
	MINCHA:	5:10 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:12 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	SUN-FRI: 9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	MON-FRI: 8:00 AM
	MAARIV:	MON-THURS: 5:15 PM
		6:05 PM