

# LAMPLIGHTER

9 Iyar  
Parshas Behar  
24th day of the Omer  
**1138**  
9 May  
5774/2014

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's parshah, Behar, contains the commandments of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years: "Count for yourself seven Sabbaths of years, seven years seven times...and you shall sanctify the fiftieth year." Every seventh year is a Sabbatical year; the fiftieth is a Jubilee. Then the cycle begins anew.

Concerning the Jubilee year the Torah states, "Proclaim liberty throughout the land for all its inhabitants." According to the Talmud, this means that there can only be a Jubilee year "when all its inhabitants" are living in the land. Thus, "When the tribes of Reuven and Gad and half of Menashe were exiled, the Jubilee was abolished."

Nonetheless, the Talmud relates that in the times of the Second Holy Temple the fiftieth year was still officially sanctified, even though the mitzvah of the Jubilee was no longer in effect. This was done to maintain the same cycle as before, i.e., with the counting commencing again in the fifty-first year.

After the Second Temple was destroyed (and during the Babylonian exile), the fiftieth year ceased to be sanctified. The cycle of counting Sabbatical years began on the fiftieth year itself.

Thus, there have been three ways of relating to the Jubilee.

Chasidic philosophy explains that the Sabbatical and Jubilee years are symbolic of spiritual levels in a Jew's service of G-d:

The Sabbatical year relates to the negation of the sense of self. The person perceives himself as an individual, yet willingly nullifies himself before G-d.

The Jubilee year relates to a higher level, of freedom from all limitations, a level that will be fully realized in the Messianic era.

This also explains why the Sabbatical year applies today (by Rabbinic decree), whereas the mitzvah of the Jubilee was only fully observed during the First Temple period. The very highest level of spirituality could only be attained at a time when the Divine Presence was manifested in the world so strongly.

The Second Temple period was somewhere in the middle. G-dly revelation illuminated the world, but in a less obvious manner. The Jubilee was therefore counted and sanctified but not observed.

The lowest level occurred after the Destruction, when it was no longer possible to even comprehend the intense spirituality of the Jubilee and it ceased to be counted.

Today, our service consists of "only" accepting the yoke of heaven and nullifying the ego, but in a sense this gives us the greatest advantage, as it enables us to access the soul's essence. It also helps us prepare for the Sabbatical of the Messianic era, may it commence at once.

*Adapted from Volume 7 of Likutei Sichot*

## The Weekly Sabbatical

By Zalman Posner

"G-d spoke to Moses on Mt. Sinai and said ... Six years you may plant your fields... and the seventh year shall be Shabbat, you shall not plant." Why was this Divine commandment of *shmita* (Sabbatical year when fields are left fallow) particularly related to Mt. Sinai? After all, the entire Torah was taught to Moses on Sinai.

*Shmita*, perhaps to a greater degree than other commandments, tests the Jew's faith in G-d, because it explicitly calls upon him to demonstrate his confidence in G-d's bounty, his belief in G-d's power and providence. "And if you ask what will we eat during the seventh year -- we have not sown and harvested? I will give you My blessing". This is a difficult test, undramatic; there is no heroic martyrdom involved. There is no reason for its fulfilment but faith in G-d, and without faith its fulfilment is impossible. As Sinai is symbolic of Judaism, *shmita* is symbolic of devotion to Judaism.

We have our own *shmita* every week -- the Shabbat day that is no less a test of our religious convictions. How many who profess to cherish Judaism and insist that dire necessity forces them into reluctant violation, have actually made an effort to keep just one Shabbat and failed? How many admittedly unconcerned with earning their next meal, thank G-d, and even familiar with luxuries, nonetheless continue to desecrate Shabbat -- with no excuse of hardship?

Few today fail to subscribe to the beauties and rewards of religious faith. Everybody "believes" in G-d, faith is declared to be a "wonderful thing," and it's very important for domestic tranquillity, preventing juvenile delinquency and peace of mind. But what is faith if not the power to act by that faith? And if our faith ends at our pocketbooks, then how valuable is it?

# Slice of LIFE

## Who Am I?

By Moshe

It's a simple enough question, but until recently, I hadn't been able to answer it. "Who are you?" For years I was proud of who I was. I had no worries in the world. I was making great money, living a life of fun, fancy and fast cars, and thought that nothing or no one could touch me. For years I was a professional criminal.

And then my world came crashing down. I was caught. I was found guilty. And I am now in the process of serving a 12-year sentence in the Ramla prison in Israel.

The day I entered the jail, I lost my identity. To the prison system, I was merely a number. I had a name, but no one knew it as I never used it. I only knew how to be a criminal. So behind bars, who was I? What defined me?

I was a prisoner. And when you are a prisoner you have no definition. You have no status in the underworld and no status in the real world. You are nothing.

Then I got a glimpse, for the first time in my life, into my religion. I met the prison rabbi. The inmates simply called him "Jacobs." For the first time in my life, I began to learn the real answer. I am a Jew.

I am a Jew who never really cared that he was a Jew. I am a Jew who was raised, like most Israelis, with the basic traditions, but with little care or understanding as to what any of it meant. My parents were immigrants. What were passed down well were the poverty, the illiteracy, and the hopelessness that many immigrant families have experienced. And, what got passed down was the need to survive and thrive at any cost. And that was exactly what I did.

I was a great criminal. I knew how to lie, cheat, steal, and essentially get whatever I wanted whenever I wanted. I had no qualms about my actions. I felt I was just helping make the world a little more balanced. It wasn't my fault that I was raised with barely enough food to eat. I couldn't change what I was given, but I could change what I would get. And so, from a very young age, I learned what was profitable. Drugs and weapons were profitable. What I didn't realize was that they were also deadly.

Few believe this, but I think I really wanted to get caught. Call it pop-

psychology, but I think my getting caught was my cry for help. I knew something needed to change, but for the first time, I didn't know how to do it. I only knew how to do wrong. Getting caught and thrown in jail was a real blessing - and not even so much one in disguise. I really think it saved my life. But it was the prison chaplain who saved my soul. He introduced me to who I was, to whom I am, and to whom I want to be.

Fishel, aka, "Jacobs," made sure the kitchen was kosher, there were mezuzas on all the doors, and that other rabbis did their jobs in the cell-block yeshivas by giving classes in Torah throughout the week.

At first when I watched Jacobs make his rounds, I thought that if he knew what was good for him he'd better stay away from me. I was in a cell-block with a lot of tough guys, men who would stab you in the blink of an eye if they needed to. Upon mentioning my thoughts to a fellow inmate, I was informed that Jacobs was a black-belt in karate and if I was smart, I may want to stay away from him. I figured I would rely on the age-old idea that if you can't beat them, join them. He couldn't be that bad if the other inmates liked him so much.

The first time he entered my cell, I realized that this meeting was going to be different. Here was someone who didn't care about my criminal past, wasn't impressed with my rap record, and only wanted to focus on what's inside me. No one had ever taken the time to ask or care about what was going on in there. He did. He took one good look at me, and his eyes entered a place so deep within - a place I didn't even know existed.

He explained to me that he is a Chabad-Lubavitch chasid, and his job was to help Jews discover what it means to be Jewish. That was it. Simple as could be. Here was an intelligent man, whose main goal in life was to teach me that I am a Jew.

Here was someone who embodied the exact opposite of everything I knew. I knew people who were nothing, but pretended to be something. "Fake it 'till you make it." Here was an American, who wrote books, and was a success in other ways, yet to him it meant nothing. All that mattered was helping others. And, he told me that all Lubavitchers tried to be exactly like that.

Working with prisoners is no easy task. Let's be honest here. We are the garbage of the world. We are the people you hate, and rightly so. There is a reason we are behind

bars. We did something that landed us here. With few exceptions, we deserve to be where we are.

So what kind of person with other career choices chooses to work with us? This was the first question I asked Jacobs when he entered my cell. His answer blew me away. He told me that the same question was asked to his Rebbe, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, in regards to how he didn't tire standing for hours, handing out dollars to thousands upon thousands of people. The Rebbe answered that when you count diamonds you don't get tired.

Fishel added that even when those diamonds end up in a pile of mud, when you know there are diamonds, you'll stick your hand in and pull them out. The mud may cover the diamond, but it can't penetrate it or diminish its beauty and value. And the mud will wash off. I was a diamond. Most certainly covered in mud, if not worse, but a diamond nonetheless.

Who would have thought that being imprisoned would be the greatest thing that could have happened to me? It wasn't until I came to prison that I learned who I was. Until then I thought I knew, but I had no idea. Now, even though I am physically behind bars, I am finally free within. And though this is not a place where I want to stay, I am using every minute of my time here as an opportunity.

An opportunity for growth, repentance and change. I have begun to view my sentence as yeshiva for ex-criminals. I have a lot of time here to study Torah, and I attend a Tanya class and a class in Jewish law every day. I keep Shabbat, eat kosher food, and do mitzvot whenever I can. Funny enough, because I was so well known on the streets, other inmates are willing to attend the classes and learn because of me. Go figure.

I wait for the day of my release. I await the day when I can give back to society and try and make up for the damage I did. I yearn for the day when I can marry a wonderful woman and bring beautiful children into this world. And when I do leave these prison walls, I will know what to answer when asked who I am. I am Moshe. I am a diamond. I am a Jew.

Rabbi Fishel Jacobs was raised in Vermont. He is an eighth-degree karate master instructor and title-holder. He worked as an officer for Israeli Prison Service. He has published numerous non-fiction books.

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ISSUE 1138

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Redemption is "composed," so to speak, of our service of G-d during the time of galut (exile). Just as the word geula (redemption) is not made from a separate set of letters, but from the very letters of the word galut, so too the Redemption comes through our service in exile itself. Through the service of galut alone will we merit seeing the redemption, may it be speedily in our days. (The Rebbe, 20 Iyar, 5751)



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d  
11th of Kislev, 5735  
[November 25, 1974]  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. --  
Springfield, Mass.  
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 . . .

. . . 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 appear 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 wellbeing 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 in the material aspects 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,  
M. Schneerson

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 reason for the judgment further, since the judgment speaks for itself . . .

## CUSTOMS CORNER

### Hurtful Words

The Torah says, "Do not hurt your fellow, and you shall fear G-d." Our Sages explain that this verse is referring to speaking hurtful words and giving improper (detrimental) counsel. The Torah uses the phrase "you shall fear G-d" in this context because often one who gives bad advice for his own benefit might claim that it was an honest mistake. The verse therefore emphasizes that G-d knows his true intentions.

### Examples:

- One who is asked for advice must counsel the person and direct him in a helpful way. If one intentionally directs someone to do something counterproductive, he transgresses this mitzvah.
- One may not remind a *baal teshuvah* (penitent) of his previous immoral lifestyle.
- One should not remind the child of a convert about the negative activities that his parents may have engaged in.
- If one sees a friend going through difficult times, he may not tell him that he deserves this as atonement for his sins.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*Parshas Behar begins with the mitzvah of shemithah. HaShem commands us not to work in our fields in Eretz Yisrael for the entire seventh year. We let the land rest and devote our time to studying Torah. HaShem assures us that although we do not work the land during the seventh year, we will still have enough to eat: "The land will give forth its produce and you will eat your fill."*

*In the following passuk, the Torah says: "And should you ask: 'What will we eat in the seventh year? We will not plant or harvest.' And I will command My blessing...."*

*It seems a bit surprising that the Torah should tell us that people may ask what they will eat. Hadn't the Torah already told us that "The land will give forth its produce and you will eat your fill"? Why would anyone have a question after being told this? And wouldn't the Torah consider asking such a question to be a lack of emunah?*

*The answer is that a person who is asking this question is not lacking in emunah. He knows that HaShem promised that we will have food to eat and he trusts Him. He is only wondering how HaShem's blessing will come about. After all, according to the laws of nature, the sixth year should not be a very plentiful year as the land was already farmed for five years straight. The person's real question is this: does that mean that HaShem will work miracles for us?*

*The Torah answers: Yes. It promises that if we have emunah and mesirus nefesh and keep the laws of shemithah, ignoring the laws of nature, HaShem, too, will provide for us in a way that is above the laws of nature. The sixth year, when the soil is at its weakest, will be a most plentiful one.*

*Similarly in regard to the redemption: certainly we believe that the geulah will come any moment. But we may wonder: how is it that our generation, which is comparatively weak, will merit the geulah?*

*The answer is the same as in the parshah. When HaShem sees our emunah and mesirus nefesh, our determination and our willingness to do things which by nature people may find hard to do, then He, too, will overlook the natural course of events and bring the geulah immediately.*

*J. I. Gutnick*

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

## IN THE MERIT OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

In the year 1860, a vast army of soldiers camped in and around the city of Horodna, and established a large military camp. Among the soldiers were many Jews who were forced to work on Shabbat and the Jewish holidays.

When the *tzadik* Rabbi Nachum of Horodna heard about the plight of these Jewish soldiers, he was greatly saddened. He decided to ask his friend, Rabbi Alexander Moshe Lapidus, who was then serving as the chief rabbi of a nearby town, to join him in seeking an audience with the company commander. They would request the commander to let the Jewish soldiers desist from all work on Shabbat and the holidays.

Rabbi Alexander Moshe agreed to accompany Rabbi Nachum and together, the two went to see the military leader. He agreed to receive them and Rabbi Lapidus began.

As he spoke, he pointed to Rabbi Nachum. "Sir, you see beside me a holy and righteous man. He has come to ask a favour of you: Allow the Jews among your troops to rest on the Shabbat and our holy days."

Upon hearing Rabbi Alexander Moshe's words, the commander grew visibly excited. "How fortunate you have brought a holy man here! Perhaps he can find a way to cure my only daughter, who has lain sick for many days now. The doctors can not heal her. If you are successful, I will do as you ask. You have my word!"

Rabbi Lapidus reacted instantly. "This we cannot do!" he burst out. "Are we to take G-d's place?" But much to his astonishment, Rabbi Nachum whispered in his ear, "*HaKadosh Baruch Hu* (the Holy One, blessed be He) can do it!" And before the commander could react to Rabbi Lapidus' outburst, Rabbi Nachum asked to see the sick girl.

The commander led them to her room. His daughter lay in bed, very ill indeed. Rabbi Nachum gazed at her for a moment, and then went to stand in a corner of the room. Lifting his eyes heavenward, he prayed, "Master of the Universe! In the merit of Your holy Shabbat and Your holy festivals, heal this girl, so that all the nations may know that You are the L-rd of all the world -- and that life and death are in Your hands!"

The two righteous men then turned to the commander. "We have done what we can. G-d, in His mercy, will send a complete cure to your daughter."

That same day, the girl opened her eyes and asked for something to eat. A few days later, she had recovered completely from her long illness.

A week had passed when an elegant coach pulled up outside Rabbi Alexander Moshe's home. A messenger descended from the coach, entered the house, and asked the Rabbi to return with him to see the company commander. The Rabbi sent for Rabbi Nachum, and they travelled together to the army base.

The commander greeted them with joy and honour. He led them into his daughter's room. The little girl was playing with her toys as though she had never had a day's illness in her life.

"Welcome, Rabbis of Israel!" the commander cried. "As you can see, your prayers have been answered, and my daughter is fully recovered. Every doctor who treated her despaired of finding a cure, yet you did it. You have given life to the person dearest to me in the world!"

"And now," he continued, "I will keep my end of the bargain. I will do as you have asked. From this day on, the Jewish soldiers will be exempt from all duties on the Shabbat and the Jewish holidays!"

# Thoughts THAT COUNT

And G-d spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying... (Leviticus 25:1)

What has the sabbatical year to do with Mount Sinai? Were not all commandments given on Sinai? But the verse wishes to tell us: just as with the sabbatical year both the general principle and its minute details were ordained on Mount Sinai, so, too, was it with all the commandments--their general principles as well as their minute details were ordained on Mount Sinai. (*Torat Kohanim; Rashi*)

You shall not defraud one another (25:14)

Legally, it is only forbidden to defraud one's fellow. But a Chassid must go beyond the letter of the law, and take care not to delude himself, either. (*Rabbi Bunim of Peshischa*)

For they are My servants, whom I took out of the land of Egypt; they cannot be sold into slavery (25:42)

At the time of the Exodus, G-d made freedom the inherent and eternal state of the Jew. From that point on, no power or force on earth can subvert our intrinsic freedom. (*Maharal*)

## CANDLE LIGHTING: 9 MAY 2014

BEGINS		ENDS
5:07	MELBOURNE	6:06
5:09	ADELAIDE	6:05
4:53	BRISBANE	5:47
6:13	DARWIN	7:04
4:51	GOLD COAST	5:45
5:15	PERTH	6:10
4:50	SYDNEY	5:48
4:56	CANBERRA	5:53
4:51	LAUNCESTON	5:52
5:10	AUCKLAND	6:08
5:01	WELLINGTON	6:01
4:48	HOBART	5:49
4:49	BYRON BAY	5:43
6:48	SINGAPORE	7:38



## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS BEHAR

9 IYAR • 9 MAY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:07 PM
	MINCHA:	5:15 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:45 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	9:43 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:40 AM
	MINCHA:	5:05 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:06 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	SUN-FRI: 9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	MON-FRI: 8:00 AM
	MAARIV:	MON-THURS: 5:10 PM
		5:55 PM