

# LAMPLIGHTER

1 Sivan  
Parshas Naso  
45th day of the Omer

1141

30 May  
5774/2014

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

"And every offering of all the holy things...which they bring to the kohen, shall be his," states the Torah in this week's portion, Naso. The great Torah commentator Rashi explains, "This refers to bikurim (first fruits)."

The very first fruits to ripen are to be brought to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and given to the kohen (priest), as his due.

Agricultural produce does not grow by itself. In order to produce those fruits a Jew must toil countless hours painstakingly ploughing, sowing and tending his fields. Yet instead of enjoying for himself the first tangible results of his labour, the Torah demands that they be brought to Jerusalem and presented to a total stranger!

We learn from this that the very first and best of whatever a person possesses should be used for the purpose of tzedaka (charity).

Many people don't find it too difficult to accept this principle when it comes to supporting religious institutions. They give willingly when asked to contribute to a synagogue or yeshiva.

But a strange thing occurs when it comes to giving tzedaka to a needy individual: "Why should I part with my hard-earned money to support him?" the Evil Inclination prompts us. "Why should his needs come before mine? Why must I part with the very best? Is not second best good enough? Better I should take care of myself first, and only afterward help others with whatever is left over."

We learn, however, from the mitzva of bikurim, that such is not the Jewish way. We are commanded to give the first fruits to the kohen, an individual, for his own personal use. Only after this is done are we permitted to derive benefit from the blessings G-d has given us.

Significantly, the Torah commands us to bring the first fruits to the Holy Temple, "the house of the L-rd your G-d" in Jerusalem before presenting them to the kohen. A Jew must first understand that whatever wealth is granted him from Above is not truly his, despite the labour he may have invested to amass it.

When a Jew realizes that everything, in reality, belongs to G-d, the protests of the Evil Inclination are silenced, and it is far easier to part with the "first fruits" of one's earnings even for another individual.

When a Jew acts in this manner, he can be assured of the blessing that Rashi speaks of in the verse that follows: "He who gives the kohen 'the gifts that are coming to him ... shall be blessed with great wealth.'"

Based on *Likutei Sichot*, Vol. VIII

## Do Jews Believe in Sin?

By Yanki Tauber

Say the word "sin" and you'll evoke different things in the minds of different people.

To the fire-and-brimstone types, the word smells of shame and scorched flesh. To the hedonist it sounds like fun. Some think it's a wholly Christian concept, while others ascribe it to the ancient Hebrews. To the sages of the Talmud, sin is, above all, an act of stupidity.

"A person does not sin," they wrote, "unless a spirit of folly has entered into him."

I used to write manuals for various household items -- those 30-page booklets that come in the box together with electric drills, microwaves, and the like. It was pretty boring work, but it paid well and it was the kind of writing you could do with two kids on your lap. The best part was that you didn't have to put your name on it.

Anyway, one day the consumer department of one of the companies I wrote for forwarded me a letter which, since it was the first response I had ever gotten from a reader of my work, I read with interest. "Sir," the letter began. "I have in hand a booklet you wrote which came in the box with my new video camera. I must say that I am outraged by your presumptuousness and audacity. This is my camera, for which I paid my own hard-earned money. It has lots of buttons, switches and indicator lights -- and these are all my buttons, switches and indicator lights. How dare you instruct me on what to do with them! I shall press each of my buttons and flip each of my switches as I please. As for the indicator lights, I, not you, shall decide for myself what they indicate; indeed, if I so choose, I shall ignore them altogether. Yours truly, a very stupid customer."

He did not, of course, sign off that way, but he might as well have. Needless to say, I didn't bother replying.

The sages of the Talmud didn't see much difference between my stupid customer and your standard sinner. As they saw it, when a person acts contrary to his Creator's instructions on how life is to be lived, he may be doing something bad, evil, selfish, destructive, enjoyable, defiant, cowardly -- as the case may be. But above all, he is doing something profoundly stupid.

# Slice of LIFE

## THE MEZUZA 'CHAPER'

By Anonymous

One day, I arrived back to my dorm room in between classes at UCLA, to find that my *mezuzah* was missing from the doorframe. Though concerned, I had no time to investigate, as I was due at my next class, where we were having a guest speaker from another state, one who often taught classes on various Jewish subjects. After the class I told her my plight, whereupon she told me this story about a student from her hometown.

Recently, this college student had expressed a desire to have *mezuzot* on her doors. The professor kindly arranged to help her. She went to the student's apartment, which was located in a large building where most of the residents were not Jewish. The professor helped the student affix kosher *mezuzot* to each of her doors, including of course, her front door, which faced the common hallway of the building.

Sometime later, the professor again visited the student, for a class gathering. But when she approached the apartment, she did not see the *mezuzot*. Upon entering, she noted that the *mezuzah* was still up, but that the girl had changed its place. Instead of being on the outside of the door, she had reattached the *mezuzah* on the inside, so that it was visible only from inside the apartment itself.

In answer to the professor's private inquiry, the student explained that her Jewish girlfriends had criticized her for putting up the *mezuzah* in such a public place. They told her that it wasn't very p.c. (politically correct) to push a Jewish symbol in the face of everyone who passed by, and that it wasn't necessary. Why must she attract attention like this, and irritate her non-Jewish neighbours?

At this point I began to sputter, thinking that perhaps the professor was trying to

justify my *mezuzah* being gone, but she merely smiled at me and continued her tale.

The student was all in a tizzy. She had learned that one must put *mezuzot* on the doors, but did it matter on which side they hung? She thought it must be okay to just change the position a few inches.

Although it bothered her that, in this day and age, a Jew could be intimidated into not showing her Jewishness publicly, the professor didn't answer her directly at the time. Because she didn't want to appear harsh or judgmental, she decided to wait for an appropriate time to discuss the issue further with the student.

It turned out to be Divine Providence which decided the matter.

A short time later, the student excitedly told the professor that she had returned the *mezuzah* to its former place on the outside of the door. She also announced that she no longer felt that she had to hide her Jewishness. She now understood what a *mezuzah* meant to a Jew.

It seems that a package had come for her in the mail but she wasn't home at the time it was delivered. The mailman left her a note, explaining that he had left the delivery in an upstairs apartment, since he knew the occupant was a trustworthy person.

Going up the stairs to retrieve her package, she realized that this was the apartment of an elderly man whom she occasionally passed in the hallway. The old man opened the door, and recognizing her, asked her to come in so he could give her the package. After she took it, thanked him for his trouble and was about to leave, the man said to her, "Shalom."

"Oh, you're also Jewish," she said, for she had always thought that he wasn't. Immediately the old man's demeanour changed. His eyes clouded over with bitterness and anger. He started mumbling to himself, "Yes a Jew... a curse... a plague on my life... I am a Jew, an unfortunate Jew..." Slowly he became more coherent and told the girl the story of his life.

Like so many others, he had lost his entire family during the Holocaust. His wife and children had lost their lives in the Nazi gas chambers. He was the only one to survive. Since then, his life had been bleak, a numbing succession of days and years of loneliness and pain. Ever since the war he had tried to avoid anything Jewish, even to the point of not revealing his true identity to others.

The girl stood in the doorway wondering what to say. Nothing seemed appropriate. Suddenly, in a gentler voice, the old man asked, "Why, dear girl, did you remove the *mezuzah* from your door?"

As if he were talking only to himself, the old man said that when the *mezuzah* was still hanging on her door he used to sneak downstairs when the corridor was empty. He would stand in the corner near her door and kiss the *mezuzah* and weep. He said that his heart would find solace and some of his pain would be lifted away.

And that, explained the student to the professor, was why she returned the *mezuzah* to its rightful place.

As I had listened to this drama of the *mezuzot* of another girl from another place unfold, the day had passed into twilight. The professor fell silent, as she waited for me to contemplate what she had revealed to me. The night wind began to stir, but I was reluctant to leave her to return to my forlorn room. I couldn't help but exclaim, "That's beautiful, no, beyond beautiful; but what about me?"

As she waved and turned to walk away, she laughed. "You must trust in Divine Providence too."

I pondered that for a moment, and after checking my wallet for my credit card, I decided to take matters into my own hands and go buy a new *mezuzah*. As I was about to drive off, a student who lives in my dorm approached me. I hardly knew her.

"Did you get my note?" She asked, "I passed by your room this morning and noticed your *mezuzah* hanging loose, so I decided to keep it safe for you."

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ISSUE 1141

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

What is Moshiach?

Think Judaism is about tradition? It's not. Because the tradition itself is about something much bigger. About Abraham smashing the idols in his father's house. Moses liberating a people from slavery. Isaiah lecturing a war-hungry civilization on world peace. It's about changing the world and making it the way it's supposed to be. Every book of Torah is filled with that idea. Every mitzvah we do is part of creating that world. Every moment of our history, that hope beats in our hearts. Today we discover that humanity has bought into our dream. That the pieces are neatly falling in place. That rays of a new dawn have already begun to shine.



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d  
10th of Iyar 5725 [May 12, 1965]  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

## Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to receive your respective letters written towards the end of the month of Nissan.

Needless to say, every additional effort in matters of Torah and Mitzvos and in the dissemination of Yiddishkeit in general, will bring additional Divine blessings.

With regard to the question of Davenning, you surely know that there are various customs insofar as women are concerned. However, this is only as far as the women themselves are concerned. But if, as you write, this also has a bearing on the Chinuch of the children, this gives added reason to adopt the custom which would be most valuable for the children, even though the religious community where you lived previously did not demand it.

Besides, there is nothing more conducive to attune the mind and heart towards the consciousness of G-d's Presence than regular prayer, where the first condition is, "Know before Whom thou are standing." Fostering this consciousness is very helpful for the attainment of peace of mind and general contentment. For through prayer and direct personal contact with the Al-mighty, one is reminded every day that G-d is not far away, in the Seventh Heaven, but is present and here, and His benevolent Providence extends to each and every one individually. This point has also been greatly emphasized by the Alter Rebbe in his book of Tanya, where he urges everyone to remember that, "Behold, G-d is standing near him." With this in mind, there is no room left for any anxiety or worry, and King David, the Sweet Singer of Israel, said, "G-d is my shepherd, I shall not want", "G-d is with me, I shall not fear," etc. Thus, this is no longer a theoretical idea, but becomes a personal experience in the everyday life.

As requested, I will remember in prayer those mentioned in your letter.

## CUSTOMS CORNER

### The Torah Perspective on Alcohol Consumption

In some circumstances, the drinking of wine is considered praiseworthy, or even mandatory. This is true for *kiddush*, *havdalah*, the four cups of the Passover seder and many other "cups of blessing," such as the cup of wine over which the *sheva berachot* for a bride and groom are recited, and the wine of the *Brit Milah*.

Despite this, or perhaps because of this, our sages warned us many times of the dangers of excessive alcohol consumption. King Solomon writes in the book of Proverbs: "Who has wounds without cause? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who sit late over wine, those who come to search for mixed wine..."

Here are some negative events that are attributed to the drinking of wine:

- Our sages say that the original sin of Adam and Eve involved wine, as the Tree of Knowledge was actually (according to one opinion) a grape vine.
- After Noah successfully survived the flood, he made grapes his first crop and is faulted for doing so.
- v The excessive drinking of Lot led him to commit incest.

The following rules apply to a person who has drunk a *revi'it* (approximately 3 oz.) or more of wine - or other alcoholic beverages that have a similar effect - and is still feeling the effect:

- 1) He may not pray.
- 2) He may not render a halachic ruling.
- 3) If he is a *kohen*, he may not administer the priestly blessing.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*There are two steps in preparing a palace for an esteemed guest. First, the rooms are scrubbed clean, and then they are decorated with beautiful furniture and objets d'art. The first step logically precedes the second.*

*The same two steps apply when we make our lives and ourselves into a home or sanctuary for G-d. We refrain from what is wrong and actively do good. The names and respective missions of the families of Gershon and Kehat reflect these two steps.*

*The name Gershon is derived from the verb "to banish" (*le-garesh*), signifying the necessity to banish evil. The main load that this family carried was the outer coverings of the Tabernacle, which protected it from undesirable elements. This corresponds to our job of avoiding harmful activities and influences.*

*The name Kehat, on the other hand, signifies "gathering" or "collection" (*yikah*). Their mission was carrying the furnishings of the Tabernacle, each of which corresponds to a particular positive endeavour. This family thus embodied the task of actively pursuing positive energy.*

*Just as Gershon was born before Kehat, it is necessary to first remove oneself from evil in order to be able to properly pursue good. Nonetheless, Kehat was counted before Gershon, for removing oneself from evil is only a preparation for the true work, that of pursuing good.*

*J. I. Gutnick*

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

## SAVED BY A MATCH

Towards the end of the 1930s, Poland was under the rule of a semi-fascist clique called the "Government of Colonels." During this period the Jewish community, which constituted approximately ten percent of Poland's total population, was in an extremely precarious position. New edicts were being issued daily, edicts which were strangling the economic and cultural life of the Jewish minority.

After Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933, the Poles were only too happy to step up their acts of anti-Semitism. One very popular ploy was to accuse a Jew of insulting the Polish people or the Polish government. The accused would be brought before a judge, usually an anti-Semite himself, who would almost always sentence the Jew to a lengthy prison term.

The Polish Treasury Department also had a hand in reducing the Jews to financial ruin. Its officers routinely interpreted the laws in a manner which served to economically break Jewish merchants and artisans. When, as often happened, a Jew was unable to meet the excessive taxes, a tax collector would come to his home or place of business and confiscate his merchandise and household furnishings.

In 1935, in the tiny village of Kreszowice, near Cracow, there lived a Jew by the name of Israel Weiner. It happened that he fell behind with his tax payments, and his home was visited by the tax collector, accompanied by a policeman. They had come to requisition his belongings in lieu of the unpaid taxes.

Among Israel Weiner's possessions was his greatly valued sewing machine. When not in use, it was draped with a linen cover adorned with an embroidered white eagle, the Polish national emblem. The tax collector ordered Weiner to lift this cover so that he and his companion could inspect what was beneath it. When they were through, Weiner lowered the cover back onto the smooth surface but, in his nervousness, did not take care to centre it properly and one side hung down lower than the other. Within a few moments the cover began to slip and soon, unnoticed by Weiner, it was on the floor.

The tax collector ordered Weiner to show him another piece of furniture. As Weiner began to cross the room, followed by the two men, his foot caught hold of the crumpled cover on the floor, and he stepped on the cloth. "Aha!" cried the policeman gleefully. "See how this Jew treats the symbol of his country!"

Despite Israel Weiner's pleas and explanations, despite his pointing out that he used the cloth decorated with the Polish national symbol to cover his most prized possession, charges were drawn up and he was summoned to court. A day was set for the trial, and a magistrate appointed. To Weiner's dismay, the judge was a notorious anti-Semite, and he knew that the probability of a severe sentence was high.

On the eve of the trial, the nervous and depressed defendant went to *the Bobover Rebbe*, Rabbi Bentzion Halberstam, for a blessing. Weeping profusely, he told the Rebbe his woeful story. The Rebbe gave his blessing, expressing his hope and belief that G-d would help the desperate man, and then added some very strange instructions.

"Tomorrow, when you go to court," the Rebbe said, "take with you a matchbox containing only one match. Then, when you notice a member of the

court taking out a cigar or a cigarette during the proceedings - as someone inevitably will - you, Israel, will step forward and offer him your matchbox."

Weiner was puzzled until the Rebbe explained the rest of the plan, and advised him to inform his lawyer about it. "You have nothing to lose, and much to gain," said the Rebbe.

The next day at court, as expected, the public prosecutor released his venom on the trembling Jew.

"Would you dare tread upon your Holy Scroll?" he challenged, his voice full of thunder. "For such a disrespectful act against his country, this man deserves the maximum sentence under the law!"

As the prosecutor continue to rant, the judge, becoming excited at the prospect of meting out a harsh punishment to this helpless Jew, began to fumble in his pocket for a cigarette. Israel, alert to such a move as he had been instructed, quickly stepped forward and offered his matchbox - containing only one match - to the judge. Absent-mindedly, the judge accepted the matchbox, lit his cigarette and tossed the empty matchbox into the waste basket.

However, in those days all matches were distributed solely by the Polish government, so every matchbox bore the emblem of the Polish national eagle. The defence lawyer, who had been waiting for this moment, jumped out of his seat. "Your honour," he cried, "I must bring a very urgent matter to your attention!"

All eyes were on him. How dare he interrupt the proceeding with such an outburst? In a ringing voice, the lawyer for the defence continued his bid for attention. "The honour of our national symbol, the Polish white eagle, has been insulted in this very room, only a moment ago!" he boomed.

As everyone stared at him in astonishment, he continued. "Look into the waste basket! You will see the image of the Polish white eagle imprinted on a matchbox, amidst the refuse. The honour of our beloved country is at stake! And it is His Honour, the magistrate himself, who is guilty of this violation!"

Stifled laughter was heard from the back of the courtroom, and then the laughter became louder and the audience began to applaud.

The defendant then sprang up, wringing his hands, and cried out, "Your Honour, I am the father of small children! Please have mercy on me! I am a devout patriot; I cover my most cherished possession with our beloved national symbol. My stepping on the white eagle emblem that was on my sewing machine cover was no more an act of disrespect than was your casting an empty matchbox into the garbage!"

The room was silent for a moment, the judge shifted in his seat.

"Case dismissed!" he said.

Source: Adapted from the rendition in "Glimpses of Greatness" by Rabbi David Koppelman [Moznaim].

## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS NASO

1 SIVAN • 30 MAY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4:52 PM
	MINCHA:	5:00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:30 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:52 AM
	MINCHA:	4:50 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	5:53 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN-TUE:	9:15 AM
	MON-TUE:	8:00 AM
	MINCHA: SUN-MON:	4:55 PM
	MAARIV:	5:45 PM
TUESDAY:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4:50 PM
	MINCHA:	5:00 PM
	MAARIV:	5:45 PM
	TIKUN LEIL SHAVUOS LECTURES	Throughout the night
WEDNESDAY:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	SECOND KRIAS HATORAH:	1:00 PM
	MINCHA:	4:55 PM
	MAARIV:	5:45 PM
	LIGHT CANDLES AFTER:	5:51 PM
THURSDAY:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	4:55 PM
	HOLIDAY ENDS:	5:51 PM
FRIDAY:	SHACHARIS:	8:00 AM, 9:15 AM

## CANDLE LIGHTING: 30 MAY - JUNE 3, 4 2014

BEGINS		ENDS	
30th	3rd	4th	31st
4:52	4:50	5:51	MELBOURNE 5:53
4:55	4:54	5:53	ADELAIDE 5:54
4:44	4:43	5:38	BRISBANE 5:39
6:10	6:10	7:02	DARWIN 7:01
4:41	4:40	5:36	GOLD COAST 5:36
5:03	5:02	5:59	PERTH 6:00
4:37	4:36	5:34	SYDNEY 5:35
4:42	4:41	5:40	CANBERRA 5:41
4:34	4:32	5:35	LAUNCESTON 5:37
4:56	4:54	5:54	AUCKLAND 5:55
4:44	4:42	5:45	WELLINGTON 5:46
4:29	4:27	5:31	HOBART 5:33
4:39	4:38	5:34	BYRON BAY 5:35
6:50	6:50	7:42	SINGAPORE 7:41

Light candles on June 4th after the time given, and only from a pre-existing flame

