

LAMPLIGHTER

28 Nissan
Parshas Shemini

1187

17 April
5775/2015

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The number seven is a recurring motif in the Torah: Shabbat is the seventh day of the week; Shavuot falls exactly seven weeks after Passover; the Shemittah (Sabbatical) year is the seventh year; and the Jubilee year comes after every seven Shemittah years. We see the significance of this number in many other instances as well.

Seven symbolizes the cyclical nature of the world, which was created in six days; the seventh day completed the creation. The whole cycle of the world revolves around the number seven.

At the end of last week's Torah portion, we find mention of the number seven - the "seven days of consecration" of the Sanctuary.

But at the beginning of this week's portion, Shemini, we come across an entirely new theme, the concept of eight. Shemini - meaning "eighth" begins with the words: "It came to pass on the eighth day."

The seven days of consecration culminated in the dedication of the altar on the seventh day. The next day, referred to as "the eighth day," the dedication of Aaron and his sons took place - something not directly related to the consecration of the Sanctuary itself. Why then is this considered the eighth day, since there seems to be no connection to the previous seven?

The question appears even more valid when we look at what eight symbolizes. While seven stands for wholeness and completion within nature, eight symbolizes that which is on an even higher level than nature - the aspect of G-dliness which is not confined to the laws of creation. We learn that on the eighth day "G-d appeared unto you" - there was an even greater revelation of G-dliness. If this is so, why did the supernatural revelation (the number "8") come as a continuation of what occurred on the first seven days? Why did the supernatural revelation come only after the revelation of G-d in nature?

Furthermore, all of the great revelations of G-dliness that are to take place after Moshiach comes are dependent upon our deeds now. How can it be that our actions, which take place in this limited, finite world, can bring about revelations of holiness that are above the laws of nature?

G-d asks of us only that which we are capable of doing. If we give G-d our whole effort, our complete dedication, then we receive the G-dly revelations as a gift from Above. If we give G-d the whole "seven" of our natural abilities, He will grant us the revelations of holiness indicated by the number eight.

The revelations in the Sanctuary which occurred on the eighth day were only possible after the Jews did all that was required of them during the first seven. Even though G-dliness, as it exists above nature, is infinitely higher than what we can attain through our own deeds alone, G-d supplied the rest after we did our part.

And this power every Jew has - the ability to relate to G-d even as He exists above natural law.

And Aaron Was Silent...

By Tali Loewenthal

In the course of life, sometimes, startling and shocking events take place. Some might be close at hand, affecting people we know. Yet we learn how to respond to such tragedies from our sacred Torah, which tells of events happening thousands of years ago, and of responses which are eternally relevant.

In this week's Torah reading (Leviticus, chapters 9-11) a very unexpected and tragic event is described. At the moment of the final consecration of the Sanctuary, two of Aaron's sons were killed. Without consulting Moses, they let themselves be overcome by their enthusiasm and had come too close to the infinite power of the divine which was revealed in the Holy of Holies. In effect, they died as a result of their own unbridled ecstasy.

The Torah portion describes how Moses comforted Aaron, and that Aaron accepted what had happened: "And Aaron was silent" (Leviticus 10:3).

The power to be silent at certain moments of life and of history is an important strength. It expresses the awareness that G-d is infinite, and cannot be encapsulated in our human conceptions of what should take place.

Language, speech, signifies comprehensibility. Melody is beyond language, expressing moods which words cannot describe; and silence is yet higher.

The Talmud tells of a case when Moses himself was told by G-d to be silent. G-d showed him in a vision all future generations of the Jewish people, and the leaders of each generation. Moses was greatly impressed by the wisdom of Rabbi Akiva. Then he saw the way the Romans tortured him to death. "Is this the reward of his Torah knowledge?" Moses asked. G-d answered: "Be silent; thus it arose in My thought."

Before the event, assuming that there is some warning, one must do everything possible to prevent tragedy. Once it has happened, though, through our spiritual "silence" we reach a special closeness to the divine. Rashi tells us that because Aaron was silent, he was rewarded by G-d speaking directly to him later in the Parshah.

However, this silence is only in terms of our intimate, personal relationship with G-d. In terms of our practical lives, even the worst and most horrific event is a call to action. It may be a call to do all one can to alleviate the suffering which has been caused. It may be a call to rebuild homes which have been lost. Or it may be a call to "rebuild" in a more spiritual way.

The Jewish people have confronted a physical Holocaust, and also various forms of spiritual damage through intermarriage and assimilation. How do we respond to this? Not through passive silence, however mystical that might be; but with supreme effort, action and joy, through which we try to help every Jew turn towards their Jewish heritage and rebuild Jewish family life and Jewish knowledge, around the globe.

Today, as Jews, we also face onslaught in Israel and elsewhere, through political action, media attacks and also sickening violence. Here, not silence, but the right voice defending Israel's right to exist is required: to exist healthily, with secure borders.

So we see that in the case of any kind of tragedy, G-d forbid, there is a time for "silence" like that of Aaron; yet there is also a call to respond, through action, love and determination, and thus to rebuild a shattered world. Through this we too, like Aaron, will merit divine revelation. G-d will bring the Messiah, rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, and bring everlasting peace to the world.

Slice of LIFE

Rabbi Moshe K. was a Chassid who lived in New York but would regularly travel to Brazil to lecture and spread Judaism.

Once, just as he was finishing one of his tours and was about to return home, he was approached by a rich Jew who told him a sad story. His daughter had somehow got involved with a cult in New York and had all but totally cut off contact with home.

At first he didn't realize the implications of all this as he himself was not a 'practicing' Jew, but after research he discovered that this particular cult had a reputation for stealing the minds and hearts of its members with promises of greatness and threats of failure and damnation for the unfaithful. His daughter was in serious trouble.

He admitted that he had made a mistake by becoming so estranged from Judaism but he gave the Rabbi his daughter's telephone number and address and pleaded with him to do what he could to get her out. Rabbi Moshe promised try and flew home.

When he arrived in New York he gave the girl a call and to his surprise she was eager to talk.

It seems he had arrived at exactly the right moment. Something ugly happened at a recent cult meeting that revealed exactly how evil and manipulative they really were. She was ready to listen.

At their first meeting Rabbi Moshe simply told her what Judaism is really about.

He explained things she had never heard; how Judaism is not just a bunch of empty rituals but a living connection to the Living Creator of the Universe. He explained how the Torah is a blueprint of G-d's mind; the commandments are His will and convinced her to begin lighting Shabbat candles. After a week or two the girl was not only happy to leave idolatry but even more happy to start learning Judaism for real.

Of course when her father heard what happened, his gratefulness knew no bounds. But when he asked the Rabbi how he could repay him the reply was, "Well, I'm a Chassid of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. If you want to really thank me, then take your daughter's example and start getting interested in Judaism. That is what the Rebbe would say." And he took the Rabbi's advice.

But there is more to the story.

Almost a year later, Rabbi Moshe got a phone call from that same girl. She told him that she had been learning in a yeshiva for women and now she was calling to announce that she had been seeing a young religious fellow just like herself and they just decided to get married. She wanted him to preside over their marriage ceremony.

Of course he congratulated her but said that before he could accept he wanted to meet the groom-to-be.

Rabbi Moshe's efforts paid off. He discovered the groom to be a fine young man with all of the qualifications; Jewish, single, normal, intelligent, responsible, friendly and even a sense of humour.

He only had one problem; his father.

The groom's father was an avowed, embittered atheist.

He had been brought up in Poland in a Chassidic environment; his father (the groom's grandfather) had been an important Rabbi in Warsaw. But Warsaw was destroyed and the Jews there, including his father, mother and brothers and sisters, were killed. He escaped and finally ended up in America where, after the war, he completely severed all connection to Judaism.

Judaism meant suffering, and he made up his mind to keep as far from it as possible. He happened to marry a Jewish girl but that was it. Not only did he hate the commandments and hadn't been near a synagogue since he was a boy, the very sight of a religious Jew disgusted him.

Now that his son became religious it was bringing out the worst in him. He kept telling himself that America was a free country where everyone did what they wanted and he should just let it be - but now it was all coming to a head.

His son was also in a quandary; on one hand he wanted his father to participate but on the other he knew that it meant trouble.

Sure enough, his father announced that he would attend the wedding, but only on the condition that it was not in a synagogue and he was not asked to take any part whatsoever in any religious ceremony.

Tension was in the air and one wrong move could cause an explosion. He was just on the verge of disowning his son completely.

Finally the day arrived. The wedding was to take place that night. Rabbi Moshe wrote a letter to the Lubavitcher Rebbe explaining the delicate situation and asked for blessing and advice.

Earlier that day the Rebbe went to pray at the grave of his father-in-law the previous Rebbe. The Rebbe received the letter, and

on the way back he told his secretary to use the car phone to and relay his reply.

The Rebbe said that he was happy to hear of the wedding and that in fact he had a book of Torah thoughts that had been given to him at his own wedding years ago that he wanted to give to the newlyweds.

The Rebbe explained the source of the book and concluded that it was only proper that that book should be under the wedding canopy at the time of the ceremony.

The Rebbe gave his secretary exact directions to explain to Rabbi Moshe where the book was to be found in his massive library (remember that he had received the book some fifty years earlier) and in an hour the book was in Rabbi Moshe's possession.

The wedding took place in a plush hotel in Manhattan where there was no sign of anything Jewish. When Rabbi Moshe entered, the groom nervously took him aside and warned him again not to request any participation from his father - he was on the verge of walking out.

The ceremony began, the bride and groom took their places under the canopy when suddenly Rabbi Moshe turned to the crowd and began speaking about the uniqueness of the occasion. The speech was only a few minutes long and it concluded with the words "In fact, I have here a wedding present given to the Lubavitcher Rebbe at his wedding in Warsaw over fifty years ago that the Rebbe wants to pass on to the new couple:

It is a book written and given by none other than the groom's grandfather of blessed memory! Yes, the groom's grandfather had been a great Rabbi in Warsaw before he was killed by the Nazis and had attended the Rebbe's wedding that was held in that city some ten years before the war." And he held the book up for all to see.

The crowd was obviously moved by the speech but the silence was broken by the moving of a chair. The groom's father stood and stormed out of the room!

Rabbi Moshe left the podium and walked out after him. Perhaps he had overstepped his boundaries. Maybe he was insulted and was on his way out of the hotel.

But it wasn't so. He was standing in a corner with his face to the wall weeping like a baby.

After a minute or so he turned to the Rabbi, took the book and kissed it for several minutes, then dried his eyes, smiled and said.

"Nu! From now on I'll be a good Jew. Tell me what to do under the canopy. I want to take part in the wedding."

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

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ISSUE 1187

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In order for there to have been the great revelation of the Torah at Mount Sinai there had to be an exile in Egypt of 210 years. Similarly, in order that there should be the great revelation of the inner teachings of the Torah in the ultimate Redemption, this exile has had to be so long. *(Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch)*



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Freely translated and adapted

13 Nissan, 5712 (1952)

I received your letter in which you notify me about Mr. ... and his wife. [You write to me that] he is suffering from a number of ailments and his wife is also not well. You ask for a blessing on their behalf:

Explain to them that G-d, the King of kings, is the sole Master of the entire universe, and that He is the Essence of goodness, kindness and mercy. We on our part have merely to make the proper vessels in order to draw down and receive His blessings from on High. The appropriate vessels for a Jewish man and woman are matters of Torah and Mitzvos (commandments).

When someone is physically hungry or thirsty, he stills his hunger with bread and quenches his thirst with water; it does not matter whether or not he understands how the bread and water are able to satisfy his hunger and slake his thirst.

The same is true regarding one's spiritual life. When the soul hungers and thirsts for the bread and water of Torah and Mitzvos, the most important thing is the actual deed - that its hunger and thirst be slaked through the practical performance of Torah and Mitzvos.

Once the soul becomes healthier and stronger, it will be much simpler - and a lot less time-consuming as well - for it to understand [the significance of] Torah and Mitzvos. Moreover, this will [not only be apprehended by his soul, but] even by his [inherently] limited physical intellect.

However, one should not change the order and declare that only after he understands the whys and wherefores' [of the necessity of observing Torah and Mitzvos] will he be ready to observe them.

All the above also applies to Mr... G-d will surely return him to good health. But he on his part should not make conditions that first he must get well and only then will he use his free time to understand the necessity of performing Torah and Mitzvos, and only [then] begin increasing his practical performance of Torah and Mitzvos.

To act in the above manner is similar to someone who is unwell and yet insists that he will not take any medication until he concludes studying the science of medicine and understands exactly how the medication promotes his healing.

In point of fact, it is quite the contrary: Taking medicine will strengthen his intellect, making it much easier for him to understand the science of medicine [and how the medication promotes his healing].

Mr. ... should begin performing Mitzvos, particularly wearing Tefillin and observing kashrus (the laws of kosher), and his wife should begin conducting a scrupulously kosher home and lighting candles prior to Shabbos and Festivals, and before lighting them she should give to the charity of R. Meir Baal HaNes.

[When they will begin doing so,] they will merit to be able in a short amount of time to convey glad tidings about an improvement in their health.]

CUSTOMS CORNER

Why is it customary to give charity before praying on weekdays?

To dispel whatever may hamper the acceptability of one's prayers, charity should be given before praying. Thus we find that before praying Rabbi Eliezer would give a pauper a coin, in the spirit of the verse, "With Tzedek - righteousness - (like tzedaka - charity) shall I behold Your countenance." For accusatory voices On High adjudge whether a worshipper is indeed worthy of entering the heavenly palace of the King of Kings in prayer. Yet "charity rescues..." and "charity elevates a nation..." Also, by giving a poor man charity before prayer and thereby giving him life, one's prayers come alive.

A WORD

from the Director

In this week's Torah portion we read of the death of two of Aaron's sons, Nadav and Avihu, after they brought a "strange" fire before G-d.

According to some commentators, the brothers brought an offering in accordance with the sacrificial laws as they had been practiced by our ancestors, before the Torah was given by G-d to Moses. This, then, is what was strange about it.

Chasidic philosophy offers a unique explanation as to what was strange about the fire. A Jew's soul is likened to a flame, or, at times, a candle. Though placed in a body, it strives to reunite with its source, the G-dly flame. Nadav and Avihu's longing to be united with G-d was so great that they allowed their souls to leave their bodies, "consumed" by the G-dly fire.

However, the true purpose of the soul's descent into this world is not to leave the body and be reunited with its source. That union is meant to take place only when the soul has completed its mission. Rather, it descends to this world in order to transform and elevate its surroundings. If the soul leaves the body it cannot accomplish this.

Many stories have been told about great and holy people whose souls transcended this world and traversed other spiritual planes. They revel in the experience of enjoying the spiritual light and revealed G-dliness of these other worlds. But when the time comes for their souls to return to their bodies, they accede, knowing that this was the true purpose of their life to begin with.

Nadav and Avihu allowed their longing for G-d to supersede their mission in life - to bring G-dliness and holiness into this world.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Rabbi Mordechai Dubin was a well-known Chassid of the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe. He was extremely talented man and at one period of his life he held two high positions in the Lithuanian government. In fact he used his influence to help save the Rebbe's life, free him from communist prison and get him out of Russia.

But his talents made him a target of communist suspicion as well and he too had several close encounters with death. Here is one of them.

He had been imprisoned for several months already in one of the several thousand 'correctional' facilities in communist Russia in a dim, cold, concrete cell with eight or nine other 'criminals'

Death waited every second, the air smelled of it, it was a dull curse in everyone's dulled eyes and a

Suddenly the iron door opened, "DUBIN!"

Two guards stood at the open door behind an official who took one step into the room and was reading from a paper. "Mordechai Dubin? On your feet! Come with us!"

Was this the end? Would he never see his family or friends again? He stood upright, walked to the door. It was pointless to argue or to plead. He had nothing to fear - death would be a macabre blessing to end the cold, bitter uncertainty.

Exactly the opposite, his only chance was to show them that he was not afraid. One indication of fear would only draw their contempt.

He said words of Tanya by heart as he walked down the corridor and with every step he became filled with a strange pride. He was far superior to his captors. They were animals, worse than animals, living a lie; they were really dead. But he was attached to life... to infinite, undying truth. He was a follower of a true servant of the Creator; the only man in the Russia to defy Stalin; the Lubavitcher Rebbe!

"DUBIN!" Another voice broke his thoughts. He looked up to see he was standing near the main entrance of the penitentiary. They would probably take him outside and shoot him. Just throw him in the snow somewhere for the wolves and dogs to drag him away.

"YOUR NAME IS MORDECHI DUBIN?"

"Yes" he answered firmly.

A smile came across the face of the officer speaking to him. "Congratulations" He said as he handed him an envelope "Your period of correction is over. Here are your papers of discharge and a few other things."

He nodded to the guards at the door and they began to open the massive iron structure.

"But, my clothes? My clothes? At least a coat?" As the words came out he knew it was a mistake.

"Ahhh! He wants to stay." Smiled the officer. "Close the..."

No, no!" he whispered as he moved toward the door. They opened it a bit more and he slipped out into the bitter cold grabbing the envelope in his fist. It was ten below zero.

The iron door closed behind him muffling the laughter of the guards. It must have been one A.M. In the distance he could vaguely see the outline of a nearby town, lucky the moon was full.

He put the envelope in his shirt and began to run. He had to keep moving, it was his only chance to keep from freezing. The snow wasn't too deep...another stroke of fortune, a blessing! He hugged himself to keep warm and ran.

He wasn't used to running; in Yeshiva there was no running, but he ran. The night was spinning around him, he ran out of breath quickly, he couldn't breathe but he ran. He tripped rolled on the ground, his nose was bleeding, his knee hurt but he stood up and ran again.

Finally he was there. Who knows how many times he had fallen. He knew that his only chance was to find a Jew. No one else would open the door, especially not at two in the morning. He was shivering uncontrollably. A Jew. A Jew would open for a Jew. It was his only hope... Aha! A door with a Mezuzah!!

He began knocking, pounding. His head was spinning. But he mustn't wake the neighbors, they could kill him. "Ratave! Ratave!" (Yiddish for save me). He pressed his mouth to the door and whispered as loud as possible "Ratave!!!"

He was going numb. He didn't feel his feet at all. It must be twenty below zero, up to now he hadn't noticed wind. He gave thanks to G-d for that, no wind up to now. And with his last ounce of strength he knocked for the last time.

A small hole opened at the side of the door and closed. He heard the man say to his wife in Yiddish, "A Drunk meshuga! Prison clothes... no coat... saw our mezuzah... pretends to be a Jew."

Rabbi Dubin slid slowly down, he couldn't stand, face pressed to the door until he was huddled up in a ball on the ground near the door. His strength was gone. He would go to sleep. It wasn't so hard. He stopped shivering, closed his eyes and said his last "Shema Yisroel" thankful to G-d that at least he wouldn't die in jail. Maybe he'd get a Jewish burial. Maybe...

Suddenly he opened his eyes. Wait a minute!!!

A terrible thought occurred to him.

"When this Jew opens his door tomorrow morning and sees me dead at his doorstep and realizes that I'm Jewish... he will never forgive himself! Never!! I know how I would feel!!! I can't let that happen!"

He stood again and began pounding with all his might yelling in Yiddish "It's no trick!! I'm Mordechai Dubin. My mother's name is such and such and my father's is such and such... let me in! Let a Jew in!! Shema Yisroel HaShem Elokeinu..."

The door opened and he fell in the house, almost unconscious but alive and safe.

His love for another Jew actually saved his own life!!!

Thoughts THAT COUNT

And it came to pass on the eighth day (9:1)

The number seven represents the cycle of creation; the number eight represents the "circumference" --that which lies beyond the perimeter of time and space. This is why the Divine Presence came to dwell in the Israelite camp on the eighth day. This is also alluded to in the saying of our sages (Talmud, Erchin 13b) that "The lyre of Moshiach has eight strings." (*Keli Yakar; Shaloh*)

"They came close to G-d and died" (Leviticus 16:1)

They approached the supernal light out of their great love of the Holy, and thereby died. Thus they died by "divine kiss" such as experienced by the perfectly righteous; it is only that the righteous die when the divine kiss approaches them, while they died by their approaching it... Although they sensed their own demise, this did not prevent them from drawing near to G-d in attachment, delight, delectability, fellowship, love, kiss and sweetness, to the point that their souls ceased from them. (*Ohr HaChaim*)

And Aaron was silent (10:3)

In youth, one learns to talk; in maturity, one learns to be silent. This is man's problem: that he learns to talk before he learns to be silent. (*Rabbi Nachman of Breslav*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 17 APRIL 2015

BEGINS		ENDS
5.34	MELBOURNE	6.30
5.33	ADELAIDE	6.27
5.12	BRISBANE	6.04
6.23	DARWIN	7.12
5.10	GOLD COAST	6.02
5.37	PERTH	6.30
5.13	SYDNEY	6.08
5.20	CANBERRA	6.15
5.21	LAUNCESTON	6.19
5.35	AUCKLAND	6.32
5.31	WELLINGTON	6.29
5.19	HOBART	6.18
5.09	BYRON BAY	6.01
6.51	SINGAPORE	7.40



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS SHEMINI • 28 NISSAN • 17 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:34 PM
	MINCHA:	5:40 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:10 PM
SHABBOS:	TEHILLIM:	8:00 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:34 AM
	THE MOLAD FOR THE MONTH OF IYAR	
	WILL BE ON SUNDAY:	1:27AM (4 chalakim)
	MINCHA:	5:30 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:30 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	SUN-FRI: 8:00 AM
	MINCHA:	9:15 am
	MAARIV:	5:30 PM
		6:20 PM
		9:00 PM