

LAMPLIGHTER

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Acharei - Kedoshim
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

As we read in the second of this week's two Torah portions, Kedoshim, the fruit of a tree's first three years is forbidden. These fruits are considered "Arlah", literally uncircumcised, and may not be eaten. During the tree's fourth year its fruit is permissible, but the fruits must be brought to Jerusalem and eaten in a state of ritual purity. Only in the fifth year may anyone partake of the tree's fruits and eat them anywhere he wishes.

As a reward for observing these mitzvot (commandments), G-d promises that the fifth year's yield will be quantitatively greater. A Jew who observes these laws merits to receive G-d's blessing of bounty, as the Torah states: "And in the fifth year shall you eat of its fruit, that it may increase to you its produce."

Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the first Chabad Rebbe, explains that the fifth year's fruits are superior to the first four years', not only quantitatively but qualitatively.

It is significant that even though the fifth year's fruits are the best thus far, it is permissible to eat them anywhere, not only in Jerusalem, and that everyone may eat them, not just those in a state of ritual purity.

To explain:

Why did G-d create the world? For the purpose of transforming it into a suitable dwelling place for Him in the lower realms.

A "dwelling place" is a permanent residence; "the lower realms" refers to the physical world, including its lowest and most mundane elements. G-d wants us to be aware of Him at all times, not just when we pray and study Torah. Even our most seemingly insignificant actions must be permeated with this consciousness. We must remember that everything depends on G-d's beneficence, and we must pray for and express our thanks for every aspect of our physical existence.

For this reason it is precisely the fifth year's fruits, the very finest, that are eaten in any place and in any spiritual condition. For the sanctity of G-d's Torah is meant to be brought to every single person and to every place on earth.

Years ago, whenever the Baal Shem Tov travelled and would meet a Jew, he would ask about his health and livelihood. Inevitably, the Jew would respond: "Thank G-d!" "Everything will be fine with G-d's help." These responses demonstrated that a Jew never forgets about G-d, even when the subject is business or health.

The Baal Shem Tov deliberately asked about worldly concerns rather than spiritual matters to accustom people to the idea that everything depends on G-d's blessing, not just things that are obviously "religious."

When a Jew maintains an awareness of G-d, everywhere and in all circumstances, s/he transforms the world into a suitable "dwelling place" for G-d.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Volume 7

Spiritual vs. Holy

By Yossy Goldman

In a Parshah where we read the golden rule of "*Love Thy Neighbour as Thyself*" and numerous other "social" mitzvot, I find it necessary to focus on another of our Parshah's commandments--one which in our own day seems to have been forgotten, much to our own detriment, I fear.

Under the general command to "Be Holy" (Leviticus 19:1), the Torah instructs us not to engage in sorcery, superstition and other related activities which were practiced by the heathen nations of old. Elsewhere in Deuteronomy the Torah proscribes other practices such as consulting the dead. Jews are told to be "sincere and wholehearted with G-d," to follow the Torah way of life and, when in doubt, to consult the prophet or the recognized spiritual leaders and Torah authorities of the day. Sorcery, dabbling in the occult and "crossing over" are serious infractions to be strenuously avoided.

A Jewish grandmother once took her grandson to a séance. After making her magic, the crystal ball lady claimed she had made contact with the woman's deceased husband, Chaim. Indeed, they heard a male voice saying how everything was well with him on the other side and he answered all their questions. Then, little Harry the grandson piped up and asked, "Zayde, may I ask you one more question please. When did you learn to speak English so well?"

Whether you believe that those who practice spiritualism are indeed making contact or not, makes little difference from the Jewish perspective. Imaginary or real, the Torah forbids it. Even if it is *real* that doesn't mean it is *right*. Not everything that *can* be done *ought* to be done.

Most people seem to be confused by this. They become convinced that if it really is able to happen then this legitimizes it. Often, it is those who have been bereaved, especially under tragic circumstances, who are anxiously seeking answers and grasping for comfort through these unholy sources.

Unholy, you ask? Yes. You see, there is a fundamental difference between *spiritual* and *holy*. Not everything spiritual is necessary holy, and not everything holy need be spiritual.

Balaam was a heathen prophet (Numbers 22-24). He was able to communicate with G-d. But he was very unholy. He tried to put a curse on the Jewish people which would allow their enemies to destroy them completely. They had done him no harm. He was a greedy, lustful anti-Semite--far from a holy man. But he was very, very spiritual. Clearly, not everything spiritual is holy.

Money is very, very physical. But if you use it for holy purposes like charity, it becomes holy. Clearly, not everything holy need be spiritual.

It may be possible to "cross over." But, in the process, we may be getting ourselves involved with unholy forces. There are forces of darkness out there too. And if we are not dealing with Jewish prophets of old or bona fide holy mystics, we may, G-d forbid, get burned. And, who knows if our connections are not seen as interference. We may well be guilty of disturbing the dead, in which case we might actually be doing more harm than good.

My brother-in-law, Rabbi Shabsi Alpern, is the Chabad Shliach [emissary] in Brazil. Many such practices occur in his community. He once asked the Lubavitcher Rebbe what to tell people about this. The Rebbe answered to tell them that every Jew has a direct connection to G-d and we do not require a medium to connect. In fact, why take the circuitous route if you can go direct?

If we want to help the deceased, Judaism has many worthwhile suggestions. Kaddish, tzedaka, and any mitzvah in memory are all good deeds which have positive effects on the soul. Torah study, particularly *Mishnah*, is highly recommended.

By all means should we all deepen our spirituality. Study the esoteric side of Torah with reliable, trustworthy teachers to gain an appreciation into Jewish Mysticism. But be wholesome with G-d. Don't dabble in forbidden fields. Be holy--in the way our holy Torah tells us to be.

Slice of LIFE

In 1968, Rabbi Shmuel Azimov was sent out as the Chabad Shliach to France. Although he did not know a word of French, the Rebbe called him into his office and assigned him and his wife to a certain French city, blessing them and adding several times encouragingly. "It is important that you always be happy (b'Simcha) because the French people hate an angry face."

From the minute they arrived they also met with success, at first slowly and with many difficulties, but after two years there were almost a hundred children, all of them from non-observant backgrounds, learning in the large building Reb Shmuel had rented and converted into a school.

But then "lightning" struck. A government building inspector appeared on the premises and announced that he was checking the place.

For three days he poked around until finally he unceremoniously handed Reb Shmuel a long list of "hazards", and announced that if every fault on the list wasn't fixed, his school would be closed down. He estimated that the repairs would cost over twenty thousand dollars, and he gave him three months to complete the job.

Reb Shmuel saw black! He had trouble even coming up with the monthly rent and teacher's salaries, how could he possibly come up with such a huge sum in such a short time? But he remembered the Rebbe's words about being b'Simcha and hoped for the best.

For the next two months he tried various solutions. He made a dinner, sent out letters of appeal and even asked a few rich people for donations, but nothing worked. In fact every time he thought about it he became depressed. Then suddenly he recalled a chance meeting he had over a month ago.

He had taken the express train to Paris and as fate would have it he accidentally got on the wrong coach. While he was searching for his seat another passenger interrupted and said good-heartedly, "You must have made the same mistake as I did. See your ticket? It says coach 18 and this is 17. No problem! See there are a lot of empty places. You can sit next to me."

The man turned out to be Jewish and a chief assistant for a French Parliament member. They talked for the entire two hours of the trip, and Reb Shmuel

remembered that as they approached Paris the man gave him his calling card and warmly invited him to call him if he ever needed anything.

Funny he had never thought about it before but now he was desperate. He frantically searched his office and finally found the card! He called the number and when there was no answer decided to travel to the office in person.

But when he entered the building the secretary at the entrance had bad news. The man he was looking for was abroad on business and would not return for "quite a while."

Reb Shmuel didn't even have time to become depressed, suddenly behind him he heard people at the door saying, "Oh hello Mr. Blan", "How are you Mr. Blan?" He turned and saw a young well-dressed fellow shaking hands with people and remembered that he had read in a newspaper somewhere that "Blan" was the name of the building commissioner for his city!

He said a prayer of thanks to G-d, excitedly walked over, shook the young man's hand and asked him if he was in fact the commissioner.

"Ahh, no no." He replied cordially. "You must mean my father. If you would like to meet him you can call and make an appointment. Here is his number." He said as he took a card out of his wallet.

Suddenly in a spirit of "chutzpah" he looked the young man in the eyes, smiled slightly and said, "I want YOU to call. It is very important."

Like magic, the young man nodded and went to the phone, returning just moments later announcing that his father would see him at his office in two hours.

Two hours later Reb Shmuel was standing opposite the elderly commissioner explaining his terrible dilemma; in two weeks he was to be evicted, one hundred children would be on the street. He was hoping that the old man would give him a few rooms in some other building until he could arrange something else.

"Sit down please" Said the commissioner "Do you mind if I ask you a question, Rabbi?"

Reb Shmuel was a bit apprehensive but he sat down and said he would be glad to answer to the best of his ability.

"Tell me, Rabbi, what you think about your Israeli Prime Minister Begin giving the Sinai desert back to the Arabs?"

Now Reb Shmuel was really in the "hot seat". The French were at the time notorious leftist, pro-Arab and opposed to anything that reeks of racial oppression; especially if the Jews did it. One wrong word and he

could say good-bye to his school

But on the other hand The Lubavitcher Rebbe was very opposed to returning the Sinai.

It crossed his mind to try to be diplomatic and evade the question, but he shuddered at the thought and just blurted out. "Mr. Blan, I am a Chassid of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and he said that returning of the Sinai is a big mistake and will lead only to tragedy."

The old man looked at him deeply and said. "I just returned from Israel last month, I was there for a week. I'm even a representative here in France for the Weitzman institute. I want to tell you that the returning of the Sinai is the most insane thing in the world.....Completely insane!"

He then took out a Bible from a drawer put it on his desk and continued. "In this book it says that Israel belongs to the Jewish people. If G-d said it, that is good enough for me. No one has the right to give that land back!"

He paused again and said, "Rabbi, I'm going to write a letter about your school to the Building Minister in Paris. He is the one that makes the decisions not me, but I think everything will be all right. Please give me a call in a week."

A week later the Rabbi was again sitting opposite the commissioner waiting to hear the answer. The commissioner just spread a set of blueprints on his desk and said. "Do you understand blueprints? This, Rabbi, is your new building! It's yours. See? It's two stories high, and about three thousand meters square. Here I will call my driver and we will drive down to see it. You can move in whenever you want."

The Rabbi was dumbfounded! A huge building! Completely his! He was expecting only a few rooms! Even more amazing, in France there is a very strict separation of Church and State, this was probably the first building ever given by the French government to a religious institution!

When the Commissioner saw the joy in Reb Shmuel's eyes he said, "Rabbi, I want to tell you something. You know why I am doing this? You told me that you were a Chassid, right? Well, I asked one of my friends what a Chassid is and he told me that Chassidim are Jews that are always happy, that made me feel good. You know, I know several other religious Jews, but they aren't like you, they always have angry faces, and I hate an angry face!"

Reb Shmuel understood what the Rebbe meant with those exact same words over two years ago.

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ISSUE 1189

MOSHIACH MATTERS

We must all clearly know that each and every activity and each and every effort made to spread the wellsprings of Chasidus outward illuminates the darkness of the exile and hastens the coming and revelation of Moshiach. There are no words to describe how difficult it is to remain even one extra moment in exile and how precious one extra moment of the revelation of Moshiach is. (From a letter of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Pesach Sheini 5710 - 1950)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

27th of Iyar, 5720 [1960]

Greeting and Blessing:

Thank you for letter of May 19th.

I trust that Mrs. - will not be discouraged by the "tough fight," as you write in connection with her attempt to influence -. However, I hope that the effort will be continued in a spirit of friendship and pleasantness, and that eventually Mr. - and [his wife] will recognize that you are only trying to help them, and have nothing but their own good in mind. "Words coming from the heart enter the heart," all the more so when the subject matter concerns the vital interests of the parents and children to the end of posterity. Of course, I need not elaborate this to you and Mrs. -, but our Sages say "Encourage the energetic ones." I trust that both you and Mrs. - will, therefore, continue your efforts in this direction.

With regard to the question of your daughter, I am surprised you do not mention anything about her plans for the forthcoming vacation time. I trust that she will make use of it in the best way for her own benefit as well as for the benefit of others.

As for her plans for the new term, and your desire that your son should continue here, which would entail a postponement of your daughter's coming here, I note from your letter that she is only sixteen, and therefore her coming to study here could be postponed for a year or so. I assume, of course that in the interim your daughter will have regular appointed times for the study of Yiddishkeit [Judaism] in the maximum possible way, both in regard to quantity and quality.

I enclose a copy of my message, which I trust your daughter will find useful, and that also you and Mrs. - could make use of on your appropriate level.

Wishing you and your family, in the words of my father-in-law of saintly memory, a happy Shovuo [the festival marking the receiving of the Torah at Mount Sinai], and to receive the Torah with joy and Pnimius [inwardness].

With blessing,
M. Schneerson

Needless to say, I do not agree at all with the spirit of resignation which you express in your letter in regard to Parnosso [livelihood], being prepared to wait for a substantial improvement until winter. For your benefit as well as for the benefit of the Tzedoko [charity] fund, which needs for its steadily growing commitments, a correspondingly growing income, I hope and pray that the improvement will come much sooner, and I trust that you will also be strong in your faith in this since the strength of faith and trust in G-d provides the channel and vessel to receive G-d's blessings.

Rev. M- is due to see me this evening.

Since writing the above, I want to add that Rev. M- visited me together with his brother and sister, and we had a lengthy discussion on the communal affairs of Manchester. No doubt he will communicate to you all that we spoke about. As you know me, you can take it for granted that I spoke to him about the need to expand his work and all other communal activities, for the strengthening of Yiddishkeit in Manchester and environs.

CUSTOMS CORNER

Must one give charity to anyone who asks for it?

We are not obligated to give someone who asks for charity a large contribution, but we are not allowed to send him away empty-handed. Also, it is forbidden to pretend not to notice someone who asks for charity. If someone asks for food we give him food immediately without checking to see if he has any. However, if he is unclad and asks for clothing, we are permitted to check into his situation.

A WORD

from the Director

This Sunday, May 3rd is "Pesach Sheni." Pesach Sheni, the Second Passover, was instituted the year after the Jews left Egypt while they were still in the desert. On Passover of that year, G-d commanded our ancestors to bring the special Passover offering. However, since some of the Jews were ritually impure at that time, they were not permitted to bring the offering. They protested and G-d told Moses that all those who were unable to bring the offering on Passover could bring it one month later. This date became known as the Second Passover.

The Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson wrote: "The theme of Pesach Sheni is that it is never too late. It is always possible to put things right. Even if one was ritually impure, or far away, and even in a case when this impurity or distance was deliberate-nonetheless it can be corrected."

It's never too late. What an inspiring and optimistic thought! There's always a chance to improve, to become better, to learn and do.

This is truly a motto worth memorizing (and hanging on the refrigerator). Rather than muttering about yourself or another person, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks," realize that it's never too late.

You didn't put on Tefillin yesterday? Today's a new day and it's never too late.

You didn't light candles for Shabbat last Friday night? Do it this week, it's never too late.

You never went to Hebrew school, so you can't read Hebrew? Enrol in an adult education course; it's never too late.

You never knew that Judaism had so much to offer? Now that you know, do something about it, because it's never too late.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

The year was 1798. The Russian winter had already set in; the white-covered roofs and roads reflected the glint of occasional sunlight; and the Chabad Chasidim of the village of Starodub in the province of Chernogov were enduring a difficult time. Not that the weather fazed them, but their Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, had been incarcerated since the day after Simchat Torah in the *Tainy* Soviet, a fierce prison in Petersburg. He was undergoing interrogation for a trumped-up charge of treason, and the Chasidim fully shared his pain. The elders of Liadi had decreed a number of austere measures, one of which was fasting - no food, no drink, not even water - every Monday and Thursday from sunrise to sunset. Some of the Chasidim of their own volition even took upon themselves to do so every day of the week except Shabbat.

Another decree was that if, G-d forbid, one of the Chasidic membership should happen to pass away, the other Chasidim in his area would gather at the cemetery and implore the departed soul to intercede as best he could for the release of the Rebbe.

The Chasidim in Starodub, although a great distance from both Liadi and Petersburg, accepted upon themselves every stringency with fervour.

When one of the local Chabad leaders, Reb Yechezkel Liozner, an elderly man, felt himself about to die soon, he summoned his closest friends to his deathbed. He said to them, "I know that after I 'depart,' you will come to my grave to plead with me in great seriousness to intercede for the Rebbe. I want you to promise me that when the Rebbe is finally released - may the Al-mighty allow it to happen soon - you will come again. But this time in joy, to toast 'L'Chayim' and to dance."

"Amen - so be His will," one started and the others immediately chimed in. "But," the first one qualified, "you have to promise us something too. Surely before the release can take place down here, it must be decided first in Heaven. Therefore you will know before we will! So promise us as soon as you find out you will let us know somehow."

After a brief pause for reflection, the dying Chasid agreed. The deal was struck! Later that day he did pass away, and as expected, at the funeral his fellow Chasidim implored him to intercede on behalf of their beloved Rebbe.

On Monday night, the eve of the 19th of the Jewish month of Kislev, one of his friends who had been part of the deathbed pact saw Reb Yechezkel in a dream. "Yechezkel! Where are you?" he stammered, in his dream.

Without bothering to answer, Reb Yechezkel told him the following:

"Tonight, in honour of his *yahrzeit*, the Maggid [Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezritch, successor to the Baal Shem Tov as leader of the fledgling Chasidic movement] was invited to give a lesson in the Heavenly Yeshiva. A large crowd attended, including many of us Chasidim. Seated at the Maggid's right was the great kabbalist Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, the holy *Ari* of Safed. At his left was Rabbi Yisrael, *the Baal Shem Tov*.

"Upon concluding his presentation, the Maggid leaned to his left and said, 'My "Zalmanyu" is in trouble and the teachings of Chasidism are endangered. We must do something to help him.'

The Besht and the Ari nodded sagely.

Almost instantly there was a rustle at the entrance, and in came Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai [leading sage of the Mishna and source of the teachings recorded in the Zohar]! The Ari apprised him of the situation and he agreed to preside over a *Beit Din*, a rabbinical court with a panel of at least three qualified judges.

"The facts were presented. The Rashbi, the Ari, and the Besht deliberated [the Magid was not eligible to be a judge in the case because he was so personally

involved with Rabbi Shneur Zalman - editor]. Then the three judges announced their decision: the Chabad Rebbe must be set free that very day while it was still Tuesday, Yud-Tes Kislev, his Rebbe the Maggid's *yahrzeit*, and he must be allowed to continue on the path of intellectual Chasidus that he had blazed [most noticeably with the publication of *Tanya* two years earlier, exactly, on 19-20 Kislev - editor].

"Now," Reb Yechezkel concluded, "I have fulfilled my half of the bargain. Don't forget yours!"

The dreaming Chasid woke. It was nearly morning - already time to leave for *shul*. He dressed quicker than he ever did, for he couldn't wait to tell his companions in the pact about his dream. He burst into the *shul* and there they all were already, sitting together.

He went over to them and began to speak. "Listen to this!" But then he realized that several of them had also started talking. "Last night I..." "You are not going to believe..." "I had the most amazing..."

It turned out they had all dreamed the same dream! Reb Yechezkel had appeared to each of them during the latter part of the night.

They were so happy and excited. Wide grins lit up their faces. If they all dreamed the same dream, it must be true!

"But hold it a minute," one of them called out. "What about those of us who took on fasting every weekday? We shouldn't have to do it anymore. We all had the same dream. That proves it is true. The Rebbe's liberation had been decreed in Heaven. We have to celebrate, not fast!"

"But we are not permitted to decide such things based on a dream," another one challenged, "even if we know it to be true."

Quickly they were deep in discussion, presenting pros and cons. In the end they agreed it was not their place to decide such a question on their own. They would have to consult the chief rabbi of the community.

They did so. The Rabbi told them they must fast as vowed because no matter how powerful and true the dream, the Rebbe was still in jail.

Indeed, the next day, Tuesday, Kislev 19 in the afternoon, Rabbi Shneur Zalman was released, and Yud-Tes Kislev became forever a festival.

But in those days, before telegraphs, telephones and emailing, it took until the following Tuesday for the news of the Rebbe's release to reach distant Starodub. The Chasidim continued to fast that week, most just on Thursday and Monday and some on all six weekdays. But thanks to their shared dream, the fasts were all conducted in joy instead of pain.

Taken from Yerachmiel Tilles - Stories/ascentofsafed.com

Thoughts THAT COUNT

Akavya ben Mehalel said: "Reflect upon three things and you will not come near sin: Know from where you came, and to where you are going, and before whom you are destined to give an accounting..." (Ethics 3:1)

Reflect upon three things - all three together. If you reflect on only one, or some of them, not only will they be ineffective, but such a meditation could even cause harm. If you reflect only on the first, you will come to the conclusion that you are not to blame for anything. If you reflect only on where you are going you might mistakenly believe that there is no ultimate judgment and accounting. Therefore, we are told to also reflect on "before Whom you are destined to give an accounting." All three aspects of this mediation are dependent upon each other. (*Midrash Shmuel*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 1 MAY 2015

BEGINS	ENDS
5:16MELBOURNE	6:13
5:16ADELAIDE	6:12
4:59BRISBANE	5:52
6:16DARWIN	7:06
4:57GOLD COAST	5:50
5:22PERTH	6:16
4:58SYDNEY	5:53
5:04CANBERRA	6:00
5:01LAUNCESTON	6:01
5:19AUCKLAND	6:15
5:11WELLINGTON	6:10
4:58HOBART	5:58
4:55BYRON BAY	5:49
6:49SINGAPORE	7:38



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAR STREET, CAULFIELD
PARSHAS ACHAREI - KEDOSHIM
12 IYAR • 1 APRIL

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:16 PM
	MINCHA:	5:25 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:55 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:39 AM
	MINCHA:	5:10 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:13 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN-FRI:	8:00 AM
		9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:15 PM
	MAARIV:	6:05 PM
		9:00 PM