

# LAMPLIGHTER

19 Iyar  
Parshas  
Emor  
**1190**  
8 May  
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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The name of this week's Torah reading, Emor, contains a lesson for every Jew. "Emor - Say" the Torah commands every Jew. The power of speech entails a certain responsibility we must always be aware of every time we open our mouths.

The Midrash explains that all of G-d's utterances are "pure statements." Whatever G-d says comes into being, unlike the statements of a fleshly king, who may promise the world but not necessarily fulfil his pledge. G-d is the essence of truth, and His utterances endure forever.

As every Jew is intimately connected to G-d, his statements share this same quality of endurance. Every Jew must therefore be extremely careful when he speaks, and refrain from saying anything negative about his fellow Jew.

The Torah portion of Emor teaches us to speak only positively about other Jews. As Maimonides puts it, "It is a mitzva [commandment] to love each and every Jew...therefore, one must speak [only] of his praise."

Maimonides writes that a Torah scholar "extols the virtue of his fellow and does not denigrate him." Every Jew is similarly obligated to say only kind things about others, and not, G-d forbid, speak evil of his fellow man.

Even if we see a Jew doing something wrong we must always judge him favourably and try to understand what caused him to sin. We must never defame his character or mention his transgression.

Just as G-d's utterances are "pure," abiding forever, so too do our positive statements about other Jews exert a lasting and powerful influence. The very act of praising another Jew serves to reveal the innate good that is hidden inside him, and causes him to want to live up to the words of praise.

Emor is read during sefirat ha'omer, the counting of the omer. These days are a period of mourning for the 24,000 disciples of Rabbi Akiva who passed away because they did not treat each other with the proper respect.

Counting the omer reminds us to stop speaking about other Jews in an unfavourable light. Similarly, Emor reminds us to speak favorably about our fellow Jews.

"Emor!" the Torah enjoins us. Say only good about another person!

*Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Volume 27*

## Of Sevens and Eights

*By Lazer Gurkow*

"A bull, sheep or goat that is born to you shall remain under its mother for seven days. From the eighth day onward it is acceptable as an offering to G-d" (Leviticus 22:27). Why does the Torah refer to the newborn animals by their mature names instead of the usual calf, lamb and kid? This teaches us that an animal is born with its entire potential already actualized. It cannot develop into something greater than it already is.

Its qualities will never erode, but its inherent faults will always remain.

### Young At Heart

Not so for human beings. Man is always capable of more. Rabbi Akiva, for example, was forty years old before he learned to read Hebrew, yet he became the greatest Torah scholar in history. Every human being, background and affiliation notwithstanding, can transform him or herself and thus make great strides forward.

### The Circumcision Milestone

A calf is born and lives for one week. Having completed one full cycle of life, it reaches its greatest milestone: it is ready to be brought as an offering before G-d. There is no sense in waiting any longer for it won't develop into more than it already is. Mankind, on the other hand, lives for one week and only then begins the journey. Circumcision, performed on the eighth day, enables us to begin a process that only intensifies as we grow and mature.

(Though girls are not circumcised they don't miss out on this process. Jewish thought views women as endowed at birth with the inherent quality that men receive only at circumcision. In this sense women begin their process of spiritual growth one week earlier, from the time of birth.)

### Forward March

It is never too late to turn over a new leaf. Life is filled with milestones. Birth, circumcision, bar/bat mitzvah, graduation, marriage, parenting, grand-parenting and so on. If physical maturity marches inexorably forward it follows that spiritual maturity can, at the very least, keep pace.

# Slice of LIFE

## Lag B'Omer in Ramat Gan

By Rabbi Meir Kaplan

When I was in Israel two years ago to be with my mother and siblings for the Yartzheit (anniversary of the passing) of my father (R' Leibel Kaplan A"H), there was a promise I gave to a community member which became the highlight of my visit.

It started just over two months earlier, on Purim, when a young woman walked into our community Purim party with her sweet children. It was well into the celebration. When I mentioned that I would be visiting Israel in a short while, she asked for a favour. "I have a great aunt who lives there. Would you visit her on my behalf? I'm sure she'd be very happy to see you." I agreed.

To be quite honest, my agreement didn't make sense, in fact I have no doubt that on any other day I would have never accepted to do that...I was going to be in Israel for less than three days. I would not even be visiting my own grandmother or many of my aunts and uncles who live there because of the short time. Why then would I visit the great aunt of a woman whom I had met just a couple of times in my life?...

But after giving her my word, I had no choice. So before leaving for Israel I got the contact information of Esther S. in Ramat-Gan.

On my second day in Israel, on Wednesday night, the eve of Lag B'omer, I went with my mother to celebrate the holiday with hundreds of thousands of Jews at the resting place of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai in Meron. My flight back to Canada was on Thursday at 1:10 p.m. I decided to leave early in the morning; hoping that I'd have time to stop by, at least for a short while, at Mrs. S's home to give her regards from her niece and family.

As I drove toward the centre of Israel, closer to Ramat Gan and the airport, traffic became heavier. It quickly became clear that if I would get off the highway to go to Ramat Gan I might miss my flight. While standing in a traffic jam I dialled Esther's number. "It's Rabbi Meir Kaplan from Victoria, BC. I want to give you warm regards from your family in Victoria and tell you that they are doing great. I was planning on visiting today, but due to the slow traffic, I won't be able to make it this time."

"I'm expecting you and I'm looking forward to seeing you. Where are you now?" I heard the kind but firm voice on the phone ask. I soon realized that I wasn't being given a choice...

"I'll try my best" I said. "I have your address, but I really don't know how to get to you," I added. "Don't worry, when you get to Ramat Gan just park your car and take a taxi. I'll pay for it when you get here." I looked at the clock; it was 10:10 a.m. My flight was three hours away and I was headed in the opposite direction of Ben-Gurion airport, sure to get lost in the big city of Ramat Gan.

I took the exit to Ramat Gan and started looking for an available taxi. "My friend," I called through the window, "can you show me the way to Tirtza Street? I'll pay you when we get there."

"Follow me" the driver said.

As we approached a traffic light, a driver making an illegal U-turn hit my car. "Don't you see I'm making a U-turn?!" he shouted. After he cooled down, we quickly took pictures and exchanged information. Now, on top of everything else, I had an accident to deal with. But more importantly I lost 15 precious minutes. After a quick debate with myself I decided that if I had made it this far, I couldn't quit now.

At 10:45 a.m. I was knocking at Mrs. S's door. After a few minutes of silence an elderly woman walked out of the elevator, looking concerned. "I've been waiting for you outside, what happened?"

"I'm sorry for the delay" I said, "I'm so happy to be here now, Esther. I feel

bad, but I have only 10 minutes as I have a flight in just over two hours from Ben-Gurion"...

Esther took me into her kitchen "I'm extremely excited and I don't know where to begin... Let me start by telling you that while today I'm not a religious woman - it's not who I really am. I suffered a lot, like the Jews of my generation; in addition I had my personal 'tzoros' (troubles), so I've walked away somewhat from my roots... Let me show you who I really am", she said while picking out an old paper from a big pile of pictures and documents that she had prepared for our meeting.

"You see, here in the front row, this is me soon after the liberation of Bergen-Belsen. I grew up in a Chassidic family. I was educated in a Beit Yaakov school", she said in a shaky voice, while moving the paper closer to me. I looked at the pamphlet. In the picture there were Jewish girls walking in a parade holding a sign stating in Hebrew "Tziyon b'Mishpat Tipade v'Shaveha b'tzedaka - Zion will be redeemed with Justice and its captives with righteousness." Then I read the Yiddish headline: "Big Celebration of Lag B'omer in Bergen-Belsen Camp"...

"Do you know what date is today?" I asked her excitedly. "Today is Lag B'omer, and this is your picture celebrating today's holiday exactly 66 years ago!..."

Esther's face turned white and tears began streaming down her face. She hadn't realized the significance of this picture today. I took a deep breath and thought of the Divine providence that brought me to meet her that morning. I was overcome with emotion.

Fifteen minutes later I was on my way, but the image of young girls, who lost their families to the Nazis, walking with Jewish pride on Lag B'omer on the soil of a death camp, accompanied me my entire trip back to Canada. I have a story to tell her family when I get back home; I have a Lag B'omer lesson for all of us.

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ISSUE 1190

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

If we would truly want it we could affect the coming of Moshiach now. Then we could celebrate the holiday of Lag B'Omer with the Rashbi himself. As it says in the Zohar that the righteous will be the first to rise, which will occur immediately after the coming of Moshiach. In addition, the Holy Temple also will have to be built immediately. In order for this to occur we will have to personally ask Moses and Aron, who already had the Holy Temple in their days, how to build it. (*The Lubavitcher Rebbe, 17th Day of Iyar, 5747-1987*)



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Rosh Chodesh Iyar, 5741 [1981]

To All Participants In the  
Annual Dinner of Oholei Torah  
G-d bless you all!

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to be informed about the forthcoming Annual Dinner on the 13th of Iyar, on the eve of Pesach Sheni. May G-d grant that it should be with much Hatzlocho [success].

Pesach Sheni came about, as the Torah tells us, when (on the first anniversary of the Exodus from Egypt) there were several Jews who were unable to offer the Korban Pesach [Passover offering] and celebrate Pesach with all the Jewish people, and they voiced their unhappiness with a heartfelt appeal: "Why should we be deprived of this Mitzvah [commandment]?" And for the sake of these several Jews, indeed for the sake of each one of them, an entirely new chapter was incorporated in the Torah, and a special day was designated in our calendar Pesach Sheni, with its particular Mitzvos and all this "unto your generations" - for all posterity.

Thus the Torah, Toras Chaim ("instruction in living"), emphatically reminds us how precious each and every Jew is, and that no Jew should ever be deprived of his natural right to fulfill all the Mitzvos, by reason of circumstances, such as being on a "faraway journey," and the like.

It has often been emphasized that the best way of coping with spiritually "deprived" Jews, as in the case of any problem, is - prevention: to see to it that no Jew should ever find himself in a state of being on a "faraway journey" from Yiddishkeit [Judaism]. This can be achieved only through a Torah-true education, permeated with the spirit of dedication, that is implanted in Jewish children from their earliest childhood, in keeping with the principle, "Educate the youngster in the proper path; even when growing old he will not depart from it."

Such is the kind of education that is implanted in the students of Oholei Torah, with much Hatzlocho [success], as is well known to those who are familiar with this educational institution.

However, it is up to all of us to see to it that this Torah institution should not find itself in a position where it must come with a heartfelt appeal: "Why should we be deprived?" Surely, it must not be kept back by the lack of financial means, from carrying on its vital educational work, and, moreover, from expanding its facilities for a growing number of students. This is the obligation and privilege of the loyal friends and supporters of Oholei Torah.

With prayerful wishes to the Honored Guests and all who are active participants in this great endeavor, and with esteem and blessing for Hatzlocho..

## CUSTOMS CORNER

What is Lag B'Omer?

Lag B'Omer is the 33rd day of the Omer period between Passover and Shavuot. According to tradition, it is the day on which a terrible plague killing 20,000 of Rabbi Akiva's students stopped. It is also the anniversary of the passing - Yartzheit - of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, author of the Zohar. Before his death he instructed his students to rejoice on the day of his Yartzheit. The Holy Ari - Rabbi Yitzchak Luria - one of the greatest scholars in the mystical aspects of the Torah - taught the great virtue of rejoicing on that day, and later the Baal Shem Tov and his followers strengthened the custom of rejoicing on the Yartzheit.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*It says of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, whose anniversary of passing we celebrated yesterday on Lag B'Omer, that in times of distress, we can depend on him. Times of distress can refer to our present age, when we are all in "galut"-exile.*

*Why, specifically is it Rabbi Shimon upon whom we can depend? What of the other great rabbis, leaders, and righteous people who lived in the past?*

*Rabbi Shimon lived much of his life under the tyrannical rule of the Roman Empire. He was surrounded by the Hellenized world and the desire for "beauty" which Rome hoped all its citizens would embrace.*

*Yet, because of Rabbi Shimon's advanced spiritual state, he was not at all affected by his surroundings. He lived in a different, albeit spiritual, world altogether.*

*Perhaps, from Rabbi Shimon's example, we can learn that a Jew does not have to be affected by his surrounding. He has the power to be above, yet not oblivious to, the "Hellenization" around him.*

*The above is especially significant because many of the difficulties and obstacles that we encounter are often nothing more than a "smoke screen." As soon as one shows bitachon (faith in G-d), determination and perseverance, they disappear into thin air.*

*Let us depend on Reb Shimon in these stressful times of galut and let us emulate, even if only in our own small measure, some of the ways of this giant whose Yom Tov we celebrate on Lag B'Omer.*

*J. I. Gutnick*

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Once, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai was engaged in a discussion with his colleagues, Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Yossi. They were discussing the Roman oppressors.

Rabbi Yehudah tried to find something meritorious about them and mentioned how they had brought new commerce to the land of Israel, built cities, bridges and beautiful baths.

Rabbi Yossi heard his words and remained silent. He didn't want to praise the Romans, yet he also didn't want to malign them.

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai remembered all the evil and destruction the Romans had done - they burned the Holy Temple, killed many people, and especially delighted in torturing the sages. Fearlessly, he criticized, "Everything that they improved or restored was only for their own pleasure and benefit. All of their actions boded evil for us."

A man who had been sitting nearby heard the words of the sages and repeated them to his friends, who repeated them to their friends, until, eventually, they were heard by Roman officers, and finally, the Caesar himself, who decreed: "Yehuda, who praised us, will be greatly rewarded. He will be elevated to head of the Jews. Yossi, who stayed quiet, will be punished lightly. He will be exiled from his city. But Shimon, is condemned to death."

When Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai heard what the Romans had planned for him, he took his son Elazar, and hid in the study hall. They did not leave their hiding place, and Rabbi Shimon's wife brought them food every day.

But soon, the Romans stepped up their search and warned that anyone who helped them flee or hide would be punished. Out of concern for his wife's life, Rabbi Shimon fled with his son to a far-off cave in a desolate area. Here, Rabbi Shimon and his son were safe from their pursuers.

But, there was no one to bring them food and they were afraid to go out to find any. However, there was a carob tree next to the cave and a spring right inside. They wore their clothing only during prayers in order to preserve them and at times of Torah study they covered their bodies with sand. For twelve years, they remained in the cave, never seeing another human being, speaking only to each other, and learning Torah constantly.

After twelve years, Elijah the prophet came to the entrance of the cave and called out, "Who will tell Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai that the Roman Caesar who pursued him has died and the decree is annulled?"

Immediately, Rabbi Shimon and his son left the cave. But after twelve years they were not able to acclimate themselves to everyday life. They saw a farmer tending his field. "Why is he wasting his precious time preparing for his needs for this world when he ought to spend his valuable time making preparations for the world to come," Rabbi Shimon wondered. He looked at the man with a penetrating stare and before their very eyes the farmer turned into a heap of bones. Immediately a heavenly voice called out, "Do you want to destroy My world? Go back to the cave. The world is unable to exist with your great holiness."

Another year passed, and it was revealed to them that they must re-enter the "mundane" world. Upon leaving the cave they saw an old man running quickly to his home with two bundles of myrtle branches. They asked him, "Why do you have these myrtle branches?"

To which the old man replied, "They are in honour of the Sabbath, for they have a beautiful scent."

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai said to his son, "Do you see how beloved and cherished mitzvot (commandments) are to the Jews." They were filled with a new understanding of the purpose of man and were able to rejoin the world.

When people saw Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai return there was great rejoicing. Rabbi Pinchas Ben Yair saw that Rabbi Shimon's body was badly scarred from his many years of immersion in the sand. Rabbi Pinchas took Rabbi Shimon to the bath house and began to wash him with the soothing waters. Rabbi Pinchas tears fell upon Rabbi Shimon's body, adding to his pain. Rabbi Pinchas exclaimed, "Woe to me that I see you in such a terrible state." Rabbi Shimon consoled him: "If I had not been in this state, then I certainly would not have been able to achieve the high level of learning that I was able to reach."

Rabbi Shimon wanted to do a good deed in order to celebrate the great miracle of his deliverance and of his elevated level of Torah knowledge. The townspeople told him about a road under which there had been a lost grave. As Kohanim (priests) are not permitted to come in contact with dead bodies, they had to take a long detour when traveling that route. The holy Rabbi Shimon was immediately able to discern the location of the grave and the problem was corrected.

Once, one of Rabbi Shimon's students left the Holy Land in order to engage in commerce. When he returned to Israel, he brought with him great wealth. The other students saw and become envious. When this became known to Rabbi Shimon, he took them out to a valley facing Mount Meron and prayed, "Valley, valley, fill yourself with gold dinars!" The entire valley filled with gold coins. Rabbi Shimon then said to his students, "Here is gold, go and take it. But you should know that whoever takes now is taking from his portion in the World to Come."

The anniversary of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai's passing on Lag B'Omer is, as per Rabbi Shimon's request, a day of rejoicing.

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

Ben Zoma said: "Who is wise? He who learns from every person, as it is stated: 'From all those who have taught me I have gained wisdom...'" (Ethics 4:1)

In order to learn, a person does not have to be a sage - every person should learn. A wise person is not merely one who learns, but rather one who sees something positive in every person, and from him, he learns that positive quality. (*Likutei Diburim*)

He [Ben Azzai] used to say: "Do not regard anyone with contempt, and do not reject anything, for there is no man who does not have his hour and no thing which does not have its place." (4:3)

There is no man who does not have his hour when circumstances favour him. Similarly, there is nothing which does not have its place which the Holy One has designated as its proper place. All creatures and every single detail of creation form the totality and completeness of the world. Accordingly, one may not despise any person or anything in the world. (*Maharal of Prague*)

### CANDLE LIGHTING: 8 MAY 2015

BEGINS		ENDS
5.08	MELBOURNE	6.06
5.09	ADELAIDE	6.06
4.54	BRISBANE	5.48
6.13	DARWIN	7.04
4:52	GOLD COAST	5.46
5.16	PERTH	6.11
4.51	SYDNEY	5.47
4.57	CANBERRA	5.53
4.53	LAUNCESTON	5.53
5.11	AUCKLAND	6.09
5.02	WELLINGTON	6.02
4.49	HOBART	5.50
4:50	BYRON BAY	5.44
6.48	SINGAPORE	7.38



### CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS EMOR  
19 IYAR • 8 MAY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:08 PM
	MINCHA:	5:15 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:45 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:42 AM
	MINCHA:	5:15 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:06 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN-FRI:	8:00 AM
		9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:05 PM
	MAARIV:	6:00 PM
		9:00 PM