

LAMPLIGHTER

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Parshas
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The name of this week's Torah portion is Yitro, despite the fact that only a small part of the reading is actually devoted to Yitro (Jethro), Moses' father-in-law. Most of the portion pertains to the preparation for and giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, which took place seven weeks after the Children of Israel had left Egypt. Certainly the Giving of the Torah is much more significant than the story of Yitro, "the priest of Midian" who "heard all that G-d had done for Moses and for Israel His people" and decided to become Jewish.

In truth, the Giving of the Torah is the central, most definitive historical event in Judaism. This week's portion includes many different narratives, and even contains the Ten Commandments. Nonetheless, the name of the Torah portion is Yitro.

This may be understood in light of the explanation in the Zohar (the mystical text authored by Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai) that Yitro's conversion to Judaism and his statement, "Now I know that the L-rd is greater than all gods," made it possible for the Torah to be given to the Jewish people.

Accordingly, the entire Torah portion (including those chapters which speak of the Giving of the Torah) is named after Yitro because of the central role he played in the giving of the Torah.

From this we learn a wonderful lesson to be applied in our day-to-day service of G-d:

Yitro is symbolic of the body and animal soul, whose only desire is the pursuit of physical pleasure. Every Jew possesses this "Yitro" within him; it strives constantly to arouse his interest in material things.

When a Jew decides to utilize his "Yitro" for holy and spiritual purposes (as did the original Yitro), it is that much easier for him to learn Torah and perform mitzvot, for the animal soul assists him instead of hindering his actions.

This is within the reach of every Jew, as the Torah was given to each and every one without exception. Every Jew can actually induce his animal soul to want the same things his G-dly soul desires: to live a life of Jewish content and meaning, to perform mitzvot and study the Torah.

Furthermore, when a Jew successfully affects his animal soul in this manner, success will be his in all his other endeavours.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Volume 4

The Purpose of the Commandments

By Tali Loewenthal

Meeting Point

The Sages tell us that every Jewish soul ever to be born was present at the giving of the Torah. This includes every single person who would ever become a true proselyte to Judaism. It was a moment of meeting of the entire Jewish people together, and a meeting of the Jewish people with G-d.

The recognition of G-d which was experienced at Sinai remains in the heart of every Jew, and is the spark of his or her Jewish identity.

Further, during his forty days and nights on Mount Sinai the entire Torah was revealed to Moses. The Sages tell us that "Every new idea which would ever be suggested by a scholar in discussion with his teacher - was told to Moses at Sinai".

The Ten Commandments are in many ways the highlight of the entire Torah. But the Midrash makes a surprising statement: it says that the first word of the Ten Commandments is in the Egyptian language. What does this mean?

The Ten Commandments are the summary of the entire Torah. They were heard from G-d by the entire Jewish people. The first Command, "I am G-d, your G-d, who took you out of the Land of Egypt" is the basic statement of our special relationship with the Infinite. The first word, *Anochi*, means, "I am." G-d is speaking of Himself, and communicating with us.

The Midrash is intriguing. It says this first word *Anochi* is Egyptian, because G-d wanted to speak with us in the language we had learnt while we were in Egypt. This tells us something about the nature of Torah and of being a Jew. G-d does not want to relate to us only on the sacred, spiritual level of our lives, represented by Hebrew, the holy language. He wants to reach the earthly "Egyptian" dimension as well.

We should not try to pretend that we do not have this lower aspect. Rather, we should try to control it, then elevate it and ultimately transform it into something holy.

G-d helps us in this task: there are Jewish teachings about every aspect of life, including the most basic. The mitzvot (commandments) connect us to G-d on every level of our being. For this reason *Anochi*, the first word of the Ten Commandments, is in Egyptian: it reaches down to the "Egyptian" person inside us and transforms him or her into a Jew.

Sinai was therefore the ultimate meeting point of G-d, the entire Jewish people and the Torah.

Slice of LIFE

A certain well-known Talmudic scholar in Bnei Brak had a wayward son. At first the boy was an ideal student and apparently a totally devoted religious Jew. But something cooled him off.

At first he came late to classes then he stopped coming altogether. It wasn't long before he dropped all connection to the Torah and its commandments and began wandering the streets. He found himself a bunch of new friends and began life anew, free from all obligations.

Needless to say his father was broken hearted. He tried, in vain, to talk to his son and even sent other boys to talk to him but it failed miserably. The only thing he could do was to pray, say a few Psalms every day and then try to go about his life. But every time he thought about it... it hurt.

So things went on for the next few years until, unbeknownst to him, G-d answered his prayers.

His son had just arrived in the central bus station in Tel Aviv after a weekend in Eilat or some other resort town and as he exited the restroom an elderly Chabad Chassid approached him and asked him if he wanted to put on Tefillin.

Of course he refused and even made a few disparaging remarks, but the old fellow didn't let up. For some reason he decided to put all his efforts into this young fellow and not let him go till he put on Tefillin. He got him into a conversation and then used every trick that he could to try to get him to just put the Tefillin on for **JUST ONE MINUTE.**

Until he hit on the right one: "Please, do it for me."

The young fellow melted like butter. He was opposed to Judaism, to rituals, to religion but, after all he was a Jew. He couldn't turn the old fellow down.

"Nu" he said as he rolled up his sleeve, "to do it for myself ...no way! But to do it for you? Well... I guess so."

But when he took the Tefillin, put them on with ease and expertise and said the appropriate Shma Yisroel prayer by heart the old Chassid was truly amazed.

The young man explained how he had learned in yeshivah, etc. Suddenly an idea popped into the old man's head.

"Listen," He said "I just got an idea. My wife and I live alone. Our children are already married and live far from us. Maybe you can do me a big favour. I'll even pay you for it. All you have to do is come to my house for the evening Shabbat meal and praise my wife's cooking.

"She's already used to my praises. If you, as a stranger, praise the food it will give her a LOT of pleasure and lift her spirits. I'll pay you fifty dollars plus travel expenses. Really she is quite a good cook."

The young fellow took up the offer as an easy way to earn money and faithfully showed up each Shabbat to praise the Chassid's wife and earn the money. In fact the food was indeed good and the old Chassid's words of Torah were interesting.

It wasn't long before he began spending the entire Shabbat with them and the Jewish atmosphere had an effect.

Several months later he decided to return to the religion of the forefathers

and a few months after that returned home a religious young man.

It didn't take long for his father to find out what happened; the Rebbe of Lubavitch had sent an emissary to save his son! The next morning he bought a ticket to New York to give the Rebbe 'thanks'.

He arrived in New York, succeeded in finding the Rebbe's headquarters in Brooklyn, stood in line for 'dollars' (the Rebbe handed out thousands of dollar bills for charity and blessings each Sunday) and when he finally stood face to face with the Rebbe he said a deep and tearful 'thanks'. But he couldn't hold back his natural instincts; he had to ask a question. "Tell me Rebbe, I'm very thankful for what you did, but it's forbidden to put Tefillin on someone who just came from the bathroom - forbidden! How could your old man do such a thing! It's not permissible!"

The Rebbe just looked at him and answered.

"You should know that there is a Jew in Connecticut who wakes up on Yom Kippur morning, takes a shower, shaves, drinks a cup of coffee and eats a meal (all of which are explicitly forbidden) and then drives to the Synagogue to pray. No one can fathom how much pleasure G-d gets from those few minutes that that Jew spends in the Synagogue. You can have NO IDEA how much pleasure G-d gets."

And the Rebbe continued, "You can ask how is it possible to put on Tefillin with a young man that came out of the bathroom? Why you yourself see how this commandment saved your son! And you should know that EVERY Jew is dear to me like your son is to you!"

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ISSUE 1228

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Prophet Isaiah states that in the Messianic Era, "G-d will wipe away tears from every face..." A tear, "dima" in Hebrew, is numerically equivalent to 119. G-d's positive activity of wiping away tears represents an increase causing the sum to reach 120, the years of a complete human life. Thus, when Moses reached 120 years, he said, "Today my days and my years are completed." This relates to every Jew, for every Jew possesses a spark of Moses. It also shares a connection to the portion of Yitro. Our Sages relate that after each of the Ten Commandments, "the souls of the Jews departed," a phenomenon parallel to death, and G-d revived them with the dew which He will use to resurrect the dead in the Era of the Redemption. (*The Rebbe, eve of 22 Shevat, 1992*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

B"H, 7 Nissan, 5709

Greetings and blessings,

I received your letter with the question: In what way can one study *Tanya* to get a taste of it? You do not clarify what you mean by getting a taste. I think you mean simply understanding it. It is only that since obstacles [to understanding] exist, and *Chassidus* in general and *Tanya* in particular are especially difficult [to comprehend] - indeed they are almost beyond understanding - you call understanding merely "tasting."

I must clarify at the outset that *Tanya* and *Chassidus* are - like the other portions of the Torah - accessible to everyone who in truth desires to study and understand. Conversely, however, they possess a depth which even the greatest sage in *Chassidus* cannot say that he can comprehend it in its entirety. In this as well, this is comparable to other aspects of the Torah.

The proof of this is that there are new *maamarim* and texts being produced which - on the basis of [existing] Torah principles - reveal new concepts and show and clarify deeper and broader [concepts than those] communicated previously.

The reason for these two above-mentioned aspects of Torah in general and *Chassidus* in particular - simplicity and unique depth which are seemingly opposite - is that they stem from the wisdom of the Holy One, blessed be He. Just as with regard to G d: a) even simple people know of Him, [and yet.] b) even the greatest sage who is occupied with G dly wisdom cannot grasp Him in His entirety, so, too, [these concepts] apply with regard to the Torah, because "the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one."¹

Regarding a program of study for *Tanya* and *Chabad Chassidus*: You do not say in your letter what you have already studied or whether you are first starting now. If this is a beginning for you, it appears to me - to the extent that it is possible to offer an opinion - that the order of study should be *Shaar HaYichud VehoEmunah, Iggeres HaTeshuvah, Tanya*, Vol. I.

The first time you study [these texts], you should not focus on particular words [or] terms, even if [their meaning] is not entirely clear as long as you understand the general concept [communicated] by the chapter. In order to understand the general concept in the chapters of the first volume of *Tanya*, the text *Kitzur Tanya* by the *Tzemach Tzedek* published by Kehot is very beneficial. After studying it once superficially, if you [then] study the *maamarim* in the *Sefer HaMaamarim* [of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*] from time to time, I think that you will certainly be able to study the *Tanya* in a more fundamental manner and you will be able to focus on the contents of the chapters in a more detailed manner.

It is obvious that if you have questions concerning the above or regarding the study of *Chassidus* in general and you think that I will be able to help you, please write to me in a more detailed manner. [You can write] in whichever language is easiest for you to express yourself and I will answer according to my knowledge of the subject. At the outset, however, I would like to make one stipulation: You should not feel slighted if my answer is delayed because of my work for *Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch* and the like.

I hope to hear good news from you regarding your progress in studying *Tanya* and *Chassidus*. I conclude with blessings for a kosher and happy Pesach holiday,

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson
Chairman of the Executive Committee

CUSTOMS CORNER

Birchat Asher Yatzar

1. Any time one goes to the bathroom (urinating or moving one's bowels) one is obligated to say the bracha of Asher Yatzar. Asher Yatzar is said every time that one releases excrement, even if it was a minute amount. This applies to both solid and liquid waste.
2. One should recite ashers yatzar after using the bathroom, even if he only went to check if he needed to use such as before davening.
3. If no water is available to wash one's hands after relieving oneself, one should wipe one's hands on a piece of cloth or rub them against a hard surface such as a wall, and then recite Asher Yatzar. Later, when water becomes available, one should wash one's hands, but not repeat Asher Yatzar.

A WORD

from the Director

This Shabbos we commemorate the Yahrzeit of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The day of passing of any Tzadik is such that it involves the fusion of two opposite movements. The ascent of the soul to higher levels in the spiritual realms, and secondly influence from the soul descending to the lower planes, "bringing about salvation in the midst of the earth."

In particular, a lesson can be derived from the name, Chaya Mushka. Chaya is related to the word Chaim, "life." The ultimate source of life is G-d's essence which gives influence to the soul, which we draw down through Torah and Mitzvos.

The name Mushka is a Yiddish term. The use of a language other than Hebrew, the holy language, alludes to the elevation of the lowest aspects of our existence. Thus, we see many leaders of Israel had two names, one in Lashon HaKodesh, and one in a secular tongue. The second name alludes to the service of refinement of the lowest aspects of the world which brings about the highest revelations.

In particular, Mushka, is connected with the concept of "perfume." Our Sages explain that smell is a sense which "brings pleasure to the soul," pleasure being the highest of our spiritual potentials. Also, Chaya Mushka is numerically equivalent to 470, which is also the equivalent of the Hebrew word, eit, meaning "time." Koheles mentions 28 different "times" some, whose positive nature is open and revealed, and others, which through our service can be transformed into good. This relates to the name of the Rebbetzin's father, Yosef Yitzchok which alludes to the service of the transformation of the estranged and also to the service of happiness.

The Yahrzeit should, as is Jewish custom, be connected with deeds undertaken in memory of the departed. In this context, it is particularly customary to have women's events organized in connection with the yahrzeit. Such gatherings involve resolutions for increased efforts in spreading Yiddishkeit, in particular, spreading Mitzvos which are associated with Jewish women, such as lighting Shabbos candles etc.

Similarly, many institutions have been established in memory of the Rebbetzin, in particular, institutions for the education of Jewish girls. Until the previous generation, Jewish girls generally received their education from their mothers and grandmothers. In the previous generation, however, Jewish leaders began establishing institutions of formal Jewish education for girls, as did for example the Previous Rebbe, the Rebbetzin's father, who established Bais Rivkah schools in countries throughout the world.

May we continue to be inspired by the life of the Rebbetzin and in her zechus, bring up a generation of sons and daughters dedicated to the Torah ideals that she stood for.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Evening was falling. In another few minutes would be Yom Kippur; the holiest day of the year, and the large room was filled to capacity.

But an unearthly silence filled the Synagogue. No one seemed to move. The congregants either looked down at the floor, or straight ahead, as though they were more dead than alive, like some sort of strange black and grey picture.

The year was 1945 just after the war. The place: a refugee camp somewhere in Germany. Jews just out of concentration camps had gathered in a barracks-turned-Synagogue to pray.

The unanimously chosen "rabbi" of this one-time congregation was none other than the famous Klausenburger Rebbe, Rabbi Yekutiel Yehudah Halberstam. His holiness and erudition were unquestionable, but even more amazing; he had retained his sanity after losing his wife and 11 children to the Nazis.

The "congregation" was composed of all sorts of Jews. From traditionally orthodox, to those that had never been in a Synagogue before. But they all had one thing in common. No one but them could possibly understand what they had been through.

Slowly the cantor began singing, and the congregation followed. There was much genuine weeping that night, until they got to the confession prayer called "Al Chait" where we request forgiveness for the sins we did with our eyes, our hands, through brazenness, through callousness, and so on.

Suddenly one of the congregants stood up and stamped his foot. "No!!" He screamed "No!"

Everyone turned and looked at him. One or two tried to gently calm him down. "No!" he looked at them and yelled.

"What? I should ask forgiveness to G-d for sins I did with my eyes or my hands? These eyes saw my own children killed! These hands had no time to sin, they had to work for those German devils day and night! What? I was brazen?! I didn't dare lift my head for three years! I was callous? I gave my last piece of bread to people I didn't know!"

"No! No! If anyone has to ask for forgiveness, it is G-d. G-d should ask us for forgiveness! He gave the Nazis eyes to see and hands to torture, and brazenness and callousness to ransack and kill. So let Him ask forgiveness from us!"

The room fell silent again, and all eyes filled with tears and turned to the Klosenberger Rebbe. What would he say?

After several seconds of awful silence, the Rebbe cleared his throat and said:

"You... are... right..."

And everyone burst out in uncontrollable weeping. Men fell to their knees, and others just put their faces in their hands and wept and wept and wept. After the crying had subsided and the room fell quiet once again, the Rebbe continued where he had left off.

"But I want to tell you why I did ask G-d for forgiveness today.

"In our camp the guards used to amuse themselves every morning by playing a sadistic game. They would line us up and pick five inmates. These unfortunate souls would be forced to carry a load of bricks up a steep flight of stairs in front of everyone. If one brick would fall, they would add another two in its place, and if the prisoner himself fell, they would slowly torture him to death before our eyes.

"So it was every morning. True, the rest of the day wasn't much better. It was unbearably cold, our clothes were infested with lice, and we were given almost nothing to eat. Everyone was sick, and prisoners were dying like flies. But the worst and most humiliating was that morning ordeal.

"It got to the point that the prayer each of us said before we went to sleep was: 'G-d, merciful G-d, please let me die in my sleep. Please don't let me wake up tomorrow morning.' And I used to say it too.

"That is what I just asked forgiveness for. That is the sin I confessed to this Yom Kippur.

"It never entered my mind that if I am going to pray, if I am going to ask G-d for something, I should ask Him to set me free! I forgot that there could be such a thing as being free...."

After several minutes the prayers resumed.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

And they camped in the desert (19:2)

In the ownerless wilderness was the Torah given to the people of Israel. For if it were given in the Land of Israel, the residents of the Land of Israel would say, "It is ours"; and if it were given in some other place, the residents of that place would say, "It is ours." Therefore it was given in the wilderness, so that anyone who wishes to acquire it may acquire it. (*Mechilta D'Rashbi*)

Why was the Torah given in the desert? To teach us that if a person does not surrender himself to it like the desert, he cannot merit the words of Torah. And to teach us that just as the desert is endless, so is the Torah without end. (*Pesikta D'Rav Kahana*)

And all the people answered together and said, "All that G-d has spoken we will do." (Exod. 19:8)

Instead of each individual answering, "I will do," the Jews all responded together, "We will do." Each individual Jew not only took upon himself to observe the Torah, but to be responsible for other Jews doing so. (*Chidushei HaRim*)

You shall not covet (Ex. 20:17)

How can a person prevent himself from desiring something that is truly desirable? The following analogy is given: The poor peasant doesn't entertain the notion of marrying the king's daughter; not even in his heart of hearts does he dream of being her husband. The very idea is absurd, outside the realm of what is possible. Similarly, when we realize that another person's possessions have nothing to do with us, coveting them becomes impossible. (*Ibn Ezra*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 29 JANUARY 2016



BEGINS		ENDS
8.18	MELBOURNE	9.19
8.08	ADELAIDE	9.06
6.26	BRISBANE	7.21
7.02	DARWIN	7.53
6.25	GOLD COAST	7.21
7.03	PERTH	8.00
7.45	SYDNEY	8.43
7.56	CANBERRA	8.55
8.18	LAUNCESTON	9.22
8.17	AUCKLAND	9.17
8.27	WELLINGTON	9.31
8.21	HOBART	9.26
7.26	BYRON BAY	8.21

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS YISRO • 19 SHEVAT • 29 JANUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8.18 PM	
	MINCHA:	8.25 PM	
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8.55 PM	
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM	
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10.01 AM	
	MINCHA:	8.15 PM	
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9.19 PM	
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS	SUN-FRI:	8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:		7.00 / 8.20 PM
	MAARIV:		9.10 PM