

LAMPLIGHTER

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Parshas Vayahel
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Vayakhel, describes the construction of the Tabernacle in the desert and its furnishings. Among the detailed instructions of how to make the Tabernacle is the following verse (Ex. 25:18):

"They shall make the stakes of the Tabernacle and the pins of the courtyards and their tying ropes."

Rashi explains that the stakes were inserted into the ground to fasten the edges of the curtains, so that they would not flap because of the wind, and the ropes were used for binding them.

There is a moral to be derived from this:

The generations that preceded us can be compared to the builders of the Tabernacle itself. Our own generation, the last one before the coming of Moshiach, can be compared to those who tie the edges of the curtains to the stakes in the ground so they will not flap loosely in the wind.

In the overall stature of Israel's history, our generation is the very "heel" - the lowest part of the body - while our predecessors are like the brains, heart and other "higher" parts of the body. Our task and mission is likewise the "last" or "heel"-labour to complete and finish all that is still required to bring about the Messianic redemption. Ours may be the "lowest" task, merely tying down the very edges of the curtains, some rather incidental and external details. Nonetheless, it is just this work that completes the whole job, and it is specifically what we do that will fasten the Tabernacle so that it may stand firm.

We are indeed the "heel"-generation, time-wise and quality-wise, compared to all those before us. This may raise the question: Is the generation worthy? Why should we merit the coming of Moshiach when our ancestors, who were greater saints and scholars than we are, did not? Nonetheless, the fact is that we are the ones who complete the work. The credit and merit, therefore, is attributed to our generation. Our sages thus said that a meritorious deed is attributed to him who does the last part of it and completes it (Sotah 13b).

Moreover, the edges of the curtains were to be tied to the pegs that were fixed in the ground, the earth. This alludes to the very purpose of the Sanctuary, namely, to bring about an indwelling of the Divine Presence in the Tabernacle which was to be a physical abode established specifically here on earth. This, indeed, is the very task and purpose of our generation. We are to draw the Divine Presence all the way down to the very earthiness of this material world, and this will happen with the coming of Moshiach and the ultimate Redemption.

From "Living with Moshiach" adapted by Rabbi J. Immanuel Schochet from the work of the Rebbe, published by Kehot Publication Society

The Week-Long Shabbat

By Levi Avtzon

And Moses gathers the Jewish people," so begins this week's Torah reading. This was one of the most important meetings ever that Moses held with his nation. It was the morrow of Yom Kippur; the day after G-d said "I forgive!" in response to Moses' forty-day-long entreaty atop Mount Sinai on the Jews' behalf, following the sin of the Golden Calf.

And now Moses was having a "huddle" with his flock.

Here is what Moses had to say:

"These are the words which G-d has commanded, that you should do them: Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day shall be to you a holy day, a Sabbath of Sabbaths to G-d..."

Many questions arise when analysing the text, let's discuss four of them:

1. Is the Shabbat the first thing that Moses needed to share with the Jewish people after coming down from the mountain? How about a talk on repentance, or perhaps a serious admonishment regarding the gravity of their sin!
2. Observance of the Shabbat is one of the Ten Commandments, which the Jews heard 120 days earlier on Mount Sinai. Why the repetition?
3. "Sabbath of Sabbaths"?
4. And finally, why the intro - "Six days work shall be done" - isn't that quite obvious?

A fool answers the last question first, but in this case, we must discuss our last question first, for in it lies the answer to the preceding ones.

Let's take a look at those six words a third time: "Six days work shall be done." Does anything strike you as anomalous in the choice of words?

Why does the Torah use the passive voice, "work shall be done," which connotes that the work gets done by itself, and not the straightforward active voice: "you shall do work"?

The answer is that Moses was not (only) telling the Jewish nation how to observe the Sabbath, rather he was teaching them how observe Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Moses was saying the following:

My fellow Jews, I just came down from the mountain. The reason I went up there was because of the grave sin of idolatry you committed. Now I want to tell you that idolatry does not only refer to one who serves a calf of gold, there are many other forms of the sin.

In fact, every time a person believes that there is someone or something else in control of his destiny other than G-d, he is, in a sense, serving idols. Let's use money as an example. So many believe that the more you work, the smarter you are, and the more connections you have, the greater the resulting surplus in your bank account.

My fellow Jews, believing that there are factors other than G-d that influence your livelihood is a form of idolatry! And I don't want anyone to ever fall into that trap. I wish to teach you how to not to serve the golden calf ever again:

Remember these words: "Six days work shall be done." The work is really getting done "by itself," because G-d runs the world and He, and only He, runs the market. The work you do is merely a conduit through which you receive the beneficence that G-d had allocated for you.

The extra hour of work at the expense of Torah study, prayer, family, health, etc., will not make a difference to G-d's master plan. If anything, they can only ruin!

If you have this attitude, than the whole week will be a holy Sabbath-like existence, where your worries are gone and you have faith that G-d will supply you with all your needs. When Shabbat then comes, you will have a "Sabbath of Sabbaths"-a double Sabbath, a day even holier than the Shabbat-like week!

This was not a huddle about the Shabbat; it was a lesson about the Dow Jones.

Slice of LIFE

Rabbi Greenberg knew the young man by the name of John and his mother. John had begun living a Torah life some ten years earlier through Rabbi Greenberg's direction and inspiration and often brought his mother along for Shabbat meals and other functions in the Chabad House. She also began to warm up to Judaism. But in one area she was stubborn; education.

Despite Rabbi Greenberg's efforts, she refused to allow her son to leave the public school where he was learning and enrol in a Jewish Torah school.

And at first it seemed she was right. There was nothing to worry about. John actually got stronger and stronger in his Jewish observance and seemed to be totally unaffected by his gentile surrounding. Or so it seemed.

But today's disappointing revealed the opposite. It seems that the entire time he was in the public school he was tightening his connection to a gentile girl classmate of his and yesterday he announced that They were serious and wanted to get married.

The boy's parents never dreamed it would come to this. They admitted that they erred about his education but what could be done now? Was it too late?

Rabbi Greenberg wracked his brains and tried talking to him from every angle but it didn't work. In fact every Shabbat John and his parents ate in the Chabad House with all the other guests but nothing the Rabbi said or did had any effect.

Then, a few hours before one particular Shabbat he read a story in a Chabad publication, rather a story within a story, that he hoped might convince John to abandon his plans.

That Shabbat evening Rabbi Greenberg opened the magazine and read:

"One Rosh Hashana Rabbi Yitzchak Gershovitz, the Rabbi in Prague, Czechoslovakia, had over one hundred guests in his Chabad House and at the Rosh Hashana meal he told them a story about a man who he convinced to leave his gentile girlfriend by telling him a story. Rabbi Gershovitz relates the story as follows:

"A few years ago a man entered the Chabad House in Prague and asked me to tell him a story. It sounds strange but when

you run a Chabad House for a while you'll see that nothing is strange. Anyway, all of a sudden this story popped into my mind about Rabbi Slavtitzki in Belgium: And this is the story I told him.

"A middle-aged Jewish woman entered Rabbi Slavtitzki's Chabad house in Antwerp Belgium together with her twenty year old son and begged him to help. The boy wanted to marry a gentile girl and she was at her wit's end.

"She had already taken him to two top rabbis but their words didn't help.

"The first one explained how marrying 'out' breaks the glorious chain of Jewish self-sacrifice that has been holding the Jews together since the Patriarch Abraham. And the second Rabbi explained eloquently with charts and cold statistics that only ten percent of intermarriages succeed and the resultant families are usually disasters.

"But after a bit of thought her son decided that the Rabbis could preserve the chain without him and about the success rate, well, if ten percent succeeded Then he would be in that ten percent.

"So Rabbi Slavtitzki boldly suggested that they fly to Brooklyn to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe and amazingly the young man agreed.

"The next day they flew from Antwerp to New York, spent the Shabbat in Crown Heights and early Sunday morning they stood in line for 'dollars' (the Rebbe gave out dollar bills, advice and blessings every Sunday to thousands of people each Sunday for several years)."

[The reader is asked to remember that this story about Rabbi Slavtitzki is being told by Rabbi Gershovitz at his Rosh Hashana meal as the story he told to a visitor. And it is all part of Rabbi Greenberg's story to John]

"After a few hours of slowly progressing, finally the big moment came and they were standing face to face with the Rebbe.

"Rabbi Slavtitzki told the Rebbe why they had come upon which the Rebbe looked at the young man with him, smiled and said, 'I envy you!'

"The young man was, understandably, confused. He wrinkled his brow, shrugged his shoulders and asked 'why'. The Rebbe continued:

"If G-d has given you such a special challenge He must have given you special powers to overcome it as well. And if you overcome this challenge you will be given

even more special powers. I personally have never had such a challenge. I can only envy you and give you my blessing that you reveal and use all your special powers for good."

"The Rebbe's words struck home; the young man decided to live a Jewish life and cancelled the engagement. When Rabbi Slavtitzki asked him what exactly convinced him, he replied: 'The first Rabbi my mother took me to spoke of the past. And the second Rabbi spoke of the future. But the Lubavitcher Rebbe spoke of who I am NOW!'

"Well," Rabbi Gershovitz concluded, "When the visitor heard the story he was very impressed and a few weeks later he sent me a letter saying that it inspired him to leave the gentile girl he was dating and a year later he married a Jewish girl and has established a Jewish home"

Rabbi Greenberg continued:

"When Rabbi Gershovitz finished the story to his Rosh Hashana crowd it was obvious that one man there was especially moved, as though the story had begun a storm in his soul.

"And sure enough the next day in the daytime Rosh Hashana meal after the Morning Prayer that man stood up and announced.

"Last night we heard a story about the Rabbi in Belgium and Today we read in the Torah about how Abraham took his beloved son Isaac to sacrifice him (that is the Torah reading for the second day of Rosh Hashana). Well, like the story about the fellow in Belgium.. I too have a gentile girlfriend. Her name is Cristina.

"And like Abraham I too have decided to make a sacrifice for Judaism! I have decided to sacrifice Cristina! We will not get married."

Rabbi Greenberg finished his story and saw that it had a deep effect on John. He was locked in deep thought as though he had heard a voice from the beyond.

"My girlfriend's name is also Cristina" he said almost in a whisper.

It wasn't long before John also decided to follow the examples of the three men in the stories he heard and raise a Jewish family.

And that isn't the end. Several years later Rabbi Greenberg told these stories to a group of visitors from Brazil and later got a letter from one of them, a Jewish girl, that because of the four stories she left her gentile boyfriend.

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ISSUE 1233

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The inner challenge of the exile is not only to generate love for no reason (which annuls the cause of the exile - baseless hatred), but rather to reveal the great love and unity there is amongst the Jewish people even when they are in a state of being scattered among the nations. (*Sefer HaSichot 5749, Vol. 1, p. 138*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

From a letter of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to Chasidic artist Henoah Hendel Lieberman (1900-1976).
Freely translated

I was very pleased to read that you are utilizing your artistic talent, that you are preparing an exhibition and that the art critics wrote favorably of you in the newspapers. I am sure you will continue to progress in these endeavors and that you will fully utilize your G-d-given talents to strengthen Judaism and religious feeling. The most important part of the letter is your complaint about your situation. You feel very broken; from time to time you fall into a mood of despair; you find no place for yourself.

You do not write what has caused your current mood and I therefore cannot go into detail to show you how these causes are really the product of your imagination and arise from your yetzer hara (a person's inner inclination to evil); not that the cause does not exist - it may indeed have some foundation. But as a reason for depression and despair - it is false. It is a trick of the yetzer, that evil inclination whom my father-in-law, the Rebbe, used to call "the Cunning One" because he approaches each person with words designed to appeal to that particular individual. Again however, since you do not write the particular causes which seem to justify your dejection, I will limit myself to a general discussion of the whole matter, taking support from the well-known teaching of the Baal Shem Tov (which my father-in-law, the Rebbe, often repeated), namely, that everyone can learn a lesson in G-d's service from everything he sees and hears. I will apply this lesson to shed some light on your particular case:

You know, I am sure, that the genius of the artist in sketching, drawing and painting is his ability to detach himself from the externality of the object he is portraying. The artist must be able to look deeply into the inner content of the object, beyond its external form, and to see the inner aspect and essence of the object. He must then be able to express that "inner essence" in his portrayal, so that whoever views the painting sees revealed for him the inner aspect of the object, an "essence" which he, the viewer, had never noticed in the object itself, for it had been obscured by non-essential, external aspects. An artist reveals in his art the essence and being of his subject; the viewer examining the result can now see the object in a completely different light and realizes that his previous impressions of the object were erroneous.

The above is an exact analogy to describe one of the cardinal principles in a person's service of his Creator. All creation is derived from "the word of G-d" which brings matter into being and sustains it every instant continuously. However, the parallel G-dly force of contraction and concealment obscures the Divine creative force; as a result, all one can see is the external form of the physical. Service of G-d, aided by the simple belief that "there is nothing aside from Him," mandates an honest effort by each of us to "bring to the surface" the G-dliness inherent in everything in our lives, and to remove as much as possible the mask of physical externality obscuring the inner G-dliness.

The same applies to each individual; his inner "essence" is G-dliness. "You are the children of G-d your G-d." It is explained in the Tanya that just as the child is drawn from the mind of his father, so is the soul of every Jew drawn from the Alm-ghty's wisdom and thought (which is synonymous with His Essence, for He and His Wisdom are one). The essential being of each and every Jew - including you - is G-dliness.

The Alm-ghty did not want the soul to eat "bread of shame," (i.e., sustenance given gratuitously, without having been earned by the recipient); He therefore made it possible for man to serve Him in a meaningful way with toil of body and soul. Through our endeavors in avoda (G-dly service) we are Divinely enabled to earn all manner of goodness up to and including the highest levels of spiritual achievement. And do not think that some individuals will not accomplish the ultimate goal of avoda; that is not the case. Even if one initially serves the Alm-ghty for ulterior motives, his involvement in G-d's service will eventually lead to performance for the proper motivation and "...no one will ultimately be rejected by Him."

Such is the pattern and the purpose of Man's creation. Obviously, one must take great care to see that the secondary "external" matters of his life should not obscure the essence of a person and the ultimate goal and purpose of his creation.

Continued in the next issue of Lamplighter

A WORD

from the Director

In describing the people qualified to construct the Sanctuary and its instruments, the Torah repeatedly calls them "wise-in-heart" in referring to their skill. The craftsmanship these artisans possessed was more than technical, their wisdom was a special sort -- that of the heart.

Some people are brilliant intellectually, their gifted minds master sciences, and their logic and reasoning are unimpeachable. Despite these mind-gifts they may be cold, unsympathetic, unmoved by suffering. Others are kinder, charitable, and more emotional by nature, not particularly given to analysis and profound understanding. They may also be overindulgent, gullible, suspicious of or impatient with reasoning. While each sort has qualities, in extremes, or rather without tempering the initial and dominant characteristic, their deficiencies are grave.

The ideal is the wise-in-heart, proper balance between emotion and thought, feeling and reason. The qualities of learning and study, intellectual vigour, the scholar ideal, have always been glorified by our people. No matter how sincere the heart's emotions, they must be channelled, harnessed, and used. Torah inspires the heart in its search. Without Torah the most sublime emotion may degenerate into bathos or sentimental banality.

Similarly, exalted as the intellect may be, it cannot exclusively express the fullness of man. Emotional balance gives warmth and human substance to the mind's achievements. In Jewish terms it means that the true scholar, the disciple of Torah, is endowed with the emotions of love and awe of the Creator, sympathy for the lowly, affection for mankind. Such a person, the wise-in-heart, is qualified to create a Sanctuary for G-dliness wherever he goes.

J. I. Gutnick

CUSTOMS CORNER

AMEN

1. Chazal viewed the recitation of Amen very highly. In fact, Chazal tell us that responding Amen is of greater significance than reciting the bracha. The failure to recite Amen is considered a gross transgression, while responding Amen with great concentration opens the gates of Gan Eden.
2. The letters of Amen are the root letters of the word Emunah, belief or trust. By responding Amen one declares: "I believe in the bracha that I have just heard and I affirm its truth." Additionally, when responding Amen one should have in mind the beginning of the bracha, "Baruch Atta Hashem", that Hashem's name is Blessed.

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

During the earnest days preceding *Rosh HaShana* - when Jews make their annual stocktaking while saying the penitential prayers of *Selichot*, and when the Heavenly Court weighs an entire year's evidence in preparation for the trial of all mankind - Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev saw that the Accusing Angel was preparing to press ominous charges against the whole House of Israel. Moreover, Reb Baruch of Mezhibuzh wrote him a brief letter, telling him that this year in particular he would have to stand on guard and invoke the mercy of heaven for his brethren.

Reb Levi Yitzchak began at once to seek out some special merit, an outstanding *mitzvah* accomplishment that would tip the scales and silence the arguments of the prosecuting angels. One morning, therefore, as soon as he had completed the *Selichot* prayers, he slipped out of his synagogue and made his unobtrusive way to one of the twisted alleys in the quarter where the poor folk lived. He sought, and lost his way, and searched again - until he saw a radiance that illuminated the thatched roof of a dilapidated cottage. This, then, must be the place he was seeking.

Entering through the low doorway he saw a young woman sitting alone, her hair modestly covered by a kerchief. She was reading *Techinot*, the Yiddish supplications that pious women would offer up to heaven when their hearts were heavy. She was alarmed at the sight of the *tzaddik*, for she knew it was his custom to visit the houses of sinners and to arouse in them a desire to repent. If he had now called on her, she must clearly be a sinner.

"It is true that I have sinned, my holy Rebbe," she sobbed, "but I have already repented; I have already done whatever I could to cleanse myself of my sin."

"Be not sad, my daughter," said the *tzaddik*. "You are no sinner. Quite the contrary, in heaven they have recorded an outstanding deed, a great merit to your credit. Tell me please what has befallen you."

"My father and mother," began the young woman, "used to live in a village not far from here. They supported themselves through the dairy which they held on lease from the *paritz* who owned the village. When they passed away - I was then seventeen years old - I called on this squire to ask him not to cancel the lease which my parents had held for so long. But as soon as he laid eyes on me the fire of desire burned within him. He said something vulgar and even tried to touch me.

"I pushed him away and turned to flee, but he immediately changed his tone and spoke to me gently. 'Far be it for me to harm you,' he said. 'Look, I'll give you a three-year lease on the dairy at half price. Just let me kiss the braids of your beautiful hair.' And with that he seized my long braids with both his hands, and kissed them.

"When I came home I could find no peace, and all that night I did not sleep a wink. In the morning I picked up my scissors and cut off my locks. The next day I left the village and the dairy and all, and went off to settle here in Berditchev. For a few years I found work as a maid in a few wealthy households, until I married. A year has now passed since my husband died, and my heart tells me that he died because of my sinfulness."

"And where are the locks you cut off?" asked the *tzaddik*.
 "Just one curl is all I kept as memento of my long braids," said the young woman. "And whenever my heart is sore because of my ill luck, and my poverty, and my toil, I take out that curl. As I look at it I recall the sin of my youth, and quietly accept the just retribution of heaven."

A tear fell from the eyes of the *tzaddik*. He gave the young woman his blessing, encouraged her, and left the cottage.

When the Day of Judgment came every worshiper is *shul* could sense that Reb Levi Yitzchak was toiling with all his selfless might to help the prayers of the House of Israel to ascend to the Throne of Glory, and to silence the strident voices of the prosecuting angels created by Israel's sins.

The time came to blow the *shofar*, and though he had already immersed himself in the morning, the *tzaddik* left to immerse himself once more in the purifying waters of the *mikveh*. He was away for longer than ever before, for while there he was concentrating with devout intensity, creating such harmonies in the spiritual worlds that only *tzaddikim* can effect through their holy thoughts.

He re-joined the hushed congregation, and ascended the steps of the dais in readiness for the blowing of the *shofar*. He stood there without uttering a word - but his Chassidim could hear the stifled sound of his groans and sighs.

Reb Levi Yitzchak suddenly raised his head, gazed aloft, and said: "Master of the Universe! If our sins are weighting Your scales towards a verdict of Guilty, please pick up the little curl of that unfortunate young woman. Put it on the other side of the balance, and I am sure that it will tip the scales in our favour!"

The hosts of heaven were thrown in turmoil; Satan's tongue was paralysed; the gates of heaven were flung wide open to admit the prayers of Israel. The *tzaddik*'s face shone with exultation, and that year was filled to overflowing with G-d-given blessings.

ב"ה

“ Why doesn't G-d respond to my requests?
 Why is slavery sanctioned in the Torah?
 Why are there no more miracles of Biblical proportion? ”

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CANDLE LIGHTING: 4 MARCH 2016

BEGINS	ENDS
7.37MELBOURNE	8.33
7.31ADELAIDE	8.25
5.58BRISBANE	6.50
6.53DARWIN	7.42
5.57GOLD COAST	6.49
6.30PERTH	7.23
7.10SYDNEY	8.04
7.19CANBERRA	8.14
7.32LAUNCESTON	8.30
7.38AUCKLAND	8.33
7.41WELLINGTON	8.39
7.32HOBART	8.31
6.57BYRON BAY	7.49



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD
 PARSHAS VAYAKHEL • PARSHAS SHEKALIM • 24 ADAR 1 • 4 MARCH

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING: MINCHA: KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	7.37 PM 7.45 PM 8.15 PM
SHABBOS:	TEHILLIM: SHACHARIS: LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: THE MOLAD FOR THE MONTH OF ADAR 2 WILL BE ON TUESDAY FARBRENGEN FOLLOWING DAVENING MINCHA: SHABBOS ENDS:	8.00 AM 10.00 AM 10.20 AM 9.31 (15 chalakim) PM 7.30 PM 8.33 PM
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI: MINCHA: MAARIV:	8.00 AM / 9.15 AM 7.00 / 7.45 PM 8.15 PM