

LAMPLIGHTER

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Parshas
Kedoshim
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion Kedoshim, contains the commandment: "Sanctify yourselves and be holy." Man is commanded to sanctify himself even within the parameters of Torah law. Not only must he heed both positive and negative mitzvot, but he must also sanctify himself in those areas which the Torah has deemed permissible.

One might think that because these areas are not specifically spelled out in the Torah, this commandment is less important than others which are explained in great detail. But it is precisely this personal sanctification which has the power to bring the Final Redemption closer to reality.

Although learning Torah and performing mitzvot (commandments) requires the individual to subjugate, to a certain extent, his own personal desires to G-d's will, this in no way ensures that his inner nature will be purified and refined. But when a person, of his own accord and of his own volition, consistently behaves in the same dignified and respectful manner, no matter what the endeavour, it demonstrates that the Torah's holiness has penetrated his inner being and that he is totally committed to G-d.

At the same time, this imbues one's entire life with meaning, not only those areas directly involved with religious observance. A person who strives to sanctify himself at all times, however mundane his activity, reveals the G-dliness within all of creation and proves that no aspect of life is too insignificant to be used in the service of G-d.

This commandment has particular meaning for us now, as we stand on the threshold of the Final Redemption, for one of the main changes that will occur when Moshiach comes is the revelation of G-dliness that will suddenly become apparent. When Moshiach comes we will realize that G-d is indeed everywhere and that truly "there is nothing besides Him."

At the present time, holiness is manifested in a limited way. Today, it is the physical objects we use to perform mitzvot that are related to as holy. During the Messianic Era, however, we will easily recognize the G-dliness inherent in every detail of creation.

When Moshiach comes, G-d will be perceived as He exists - without any limitations whatsoever. G-d's desire to establish a dwelling place for Himself "down below" will be totally fulfilled and the purpose of creation realized.

Sanctifying even the most mundane aspects of our lives, therefore, not only prepares us for the imminent Redemption, but serves to bring Moshiach even closer.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

The Central Teaching

By Tali Loewenthal

A famous story in the Talmud concerns a person asking different rabbis to tell him the whole Torah while he stood "on one foot," meaning in a brief summary. Eventually he came to a great sage named Hillel, a descendant of King David and the leading rabbi of his generation. How would Hillel reply to this question? Can the vast Torah really be reduced to a single statement? "What you do not like, do not do to others," came Hillel's answer. "That is the whole Torah. The rest is commentary. Go and study."

The idea that the entire Torah focuses around the theme of one's relationship with other people is quite striking. Very often the laws of the Torah are divided into two groups: those concerning the relationship of the person with G-d, such as Shabbat observance and kosher, and those concerning one's relationship with other people, such as not to steal, or not to be a false witness in a legal case. Here, however, Hillel was saying, in effect, that the whole Torah revolves around the single principle of one's relationship with others.

In the Torah reading of Kedoshim (Leviticus 16-20) we find this principle clearly expressed: "love your neighbour as yourself." It occurs among many commands about one's behaviour towards other people, such as--in the very same verse--the demands not to bear a grudge and not to take revenge. However, it is clear that this is a teaching on a quite different level to the other commands.

We can understand that if a person properly keeps this law, he or she will obviously keep the commands such as not to steal, nor be a false witness, nor bear a grudge. All the laws concerning one's relationship with other people are included in this teaching "love your fellow." Hence Rabbi Akiva said about this command, "this is a great general principle in the Torah." It is a great general principle because it includes more or less half the Torah: all the laws between man and his fellow.

However, what about the laws between the person and G-d? Hillel seems to go further than Rabbi Akiva. For Hillel, this command includes all Torah law. How can we understand that?

An answer given by Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the founder of the Chabad school of Chassidism, is that the intended effect of the entire Torah is to make us more sensitive to the soul, rather than just the body. The mitzvot (laws) between man and G-d have the function of drawing G-dliness into the material aspects of life. They help us break through the barrier of appearances and connect with the G-dliness within.

This has a direct effect on our view of others. For in physical and material terms, people are divided. But as regards the soul, we are united together. The more that a person is sensitive to that unity, feeling a true love for others; the more he or she will be expressing the goal of the entire Torah. And conversely, the more that a person observes the Torah, in all its details, in a truly inward way, the closer they will come to a genuine love for others.

Hillel makes this point in another teaching, found in Ethics of the Fathers. He tells us to be like the disciples of Aaron, loving all those around us and drawing them close to the Torah. We can express our love for another person through caring for them in physical terms. Yet we can also express our love by caring for them spiritually, helping him or her come closer to the Torah. Each of us has this power of love, with the power to give to others, both materially and spiritually. Through this love we will trigger the chain reaction leading to the goal of Creation: peace and love between man and his fellow, between nation and nation, between humanity and G-d.

Slice of LIFE

After an eight hour journey I got off the bus. The boy who handled the bags tried offering what he thought was my US army khaki duffle bag. It almost looked like mine. However, it was missing my name which was written in small letters along the side. Slowly we worked out what had happened.

A woman had gotten on the same bus in Guatemala City with an identical US army bag, and gotten off the bus with my bag at the previous stop. Things like this do not shock me. I tend to be more amused by Hashem's sense of humour. I have been traveling around the world for years and never met anyone with the same bag as me, but now in Guatemala of all places?

The boy and I jumped into a cab and rushed back to the previous bus stop. We checked all over but could not find the woman or my bag.

"Maybe she take van from here and go to another place?" the boy suggested pointing to the vans that serviced various parts of the country

It was Friday afternoon. I was hoping to catch a bus to one of the national parks before Shabbos. By late afternoon there was still no sign of the woman. I resolved to find a guest house. I walked through the local market scanning the area for a sign that offered accommodation. The local indigenous people sold fruit and vegetables. It was a colourful affair but my mind was focused on a backpacker's worst nightmare: 'The disappearance of a backpack.'

My backpack is my home, containing everything I need to survive: clothes, a toothbrush, and juggling balls. It also has things like cables to recharge my camera and my Mp3 player, medication, contact lenses and other small things that are impossible to replace in a third world country village. But the most valuable items in the pack were my Tefillin and siddur! For the first time on my trip I put the Tefillin in my pack. I usually never do this. I know always to carry the Tefillin with me in a small bag along with things like the camera and other valuables. The one day I put my Tefillin in the pack is the one day that a woman in Guatemala gets on the same bus as me, with the same bag, and then gets off with my bag!

I bought some bananas, avocados, and some candles to light for Shabbos. After walking around a bit, I found a guest house.

"You've only got a small bag with you?" The guy running the guest house asked in a heavy American accent. "Is this all you travel with?"

"Today it is, because some women has my stuff. In exchange she has left behind a bag of old clothes."

"By the way my name is Tom,"

"Ben," I said, and we shook hands.

"I've lived in Guatemala for seven years," said Tom. "If you have one electronic item in your bag forget about it. It is not coming back.

The contents of your bag are worth more than the women can make in a few years!"

Tom smiled when I mentioned that I also had \$100 US in cash hidden in the pack. I kept it there for an emergency.

"She's struck gold!" Tom continued, "But I know something that will cheer you up. My dad and I make the best banana pancakes in Guatemala and tomorrow I'll make you one for breakfast. Then we can go out and I'll show you where to find some new clothes and a new backpack. Maybe you'll even find your original pack and clothes for sale!"

I did not bother to explain to Tom that I would not eat a pancake cooked on Shabbos and that I would not do any clothes shopping either.

I lit Shabbos candles and a candle for the first night of Chanukah. I tried to daven what I could from memory. I sang a few Shabbos songs, and had my bananas and avocados.

Having nothing was incredible. I tried to embrace the experience and savour the feeling. It was something I could not put fully into words. It brought me to some sort of place where I could sense my true self and feel some of the divine inside of me.

Tom was curious about the Shabbos and Chanukah candles and we spoke about Jewish stuff. I also told him about the Tefillin that cost \$1200 and that this was the most valuable item in the backpack.

"If you have this special spiritual item in the pack, G-d will get you your bag back."

"From your mouth to G-d's ears," I replied.

I gazed intently at the burning Shabbos and Chanukah candles. The lost Tefillin came to mind. They were a special pair; a gift from Hashem.

At my bar mitzvah I received a very large and heavy pair of Chabad style Tefillin. Since then I became active with outdoor adventure; running trails, climbing mountains, and bicycling long distances. Carrying a large and heavy item like the Tefillin in to the outdoors was annoying especially if I were doing a 24 hour adventure race. One night I made a decision that on the next adventure trip I may not take my Tefillin.

The following morning my mother called.

"Guess what! You won a raffle."

This did not surprise me because I seem blessed at winning raffles. Maybe this time it was dinner for two at a non-kosher restaurant or some other useless thing. I usually forget when I even buy a raffle ticket.

"Remember two months ago you gave me money to put in a Chinese auction? Well I put in for the stuff you wanted but there was some left-over money so I put in for Tefillin. You won the Tefillin of your choice valued at up to \$1,200!"

I emailed the scribe in Israel who was responsible for organizing the prize.

"I want the smallest and most mehudar Tefillin that you can make with every chumra (stringency) possible." He wrote back, "For \$1200 we can make you very good Tefillin!"

"I will miss these Tefillin - the ones I have lost," I said to myself as I gazed at the candles.

"They were special to me, but if Hashem gave them to me in the most unusual way, then he can take them back in the most unusual way." Later after saying Shema I spoke to Hashem. It is one of the few times in my life that I truly felt like I was talking to G-d and that he was listening. It is one of the only times that I really prayed.

"Hashem you can keep the backpack, all the cables and the rechargers, malaria medication and contact lenses. You can keep the \$100, and even my five favourite juggling balls, but since my Bar Mitzvah I have not missed a day of putting Tefillin on. When Sunday morning comes, if you want me to put on Tefillin, you better get me a pair, because it is up to you. Even if I try to get to Guatemala City where I can find Tefillin, the chances of me getting there by sunset on Sunday are not high. It's a long trip away. There needs to be a bus going, I need a seat, and you need to arrange that there will be no landslides that block the roads, bus breakdowns, riots, wars, or rebel activity. So between you and me, it is probably easier for you, Hashem, to organize my Tefillin to come back, than to organize a miracle where a bus will not break down in a third world country!"

It is the only time in my life I felt I davened with complete bitul. There was absolutely nothing I could do about the situation other than ask Hashem for his help.

Shabbos morning after davening what I could by heart, I walked to the bus station. There was still no word or sign of my bag. The man working there tried to comfort me, "This is Guatemala, no bag ever came back. You can have this bag of women's clothing," He said, offering me the duffle bag belonging to the woman.

"No thanks," I said. I had no use for the woman's bag of old clothing.

I found Tom at the guesthouse and asked him if he could help me with a police report. His Spanish was better than mine.

"I don't get it," Tom said, shaking his head. "You've got these Tefillin things, so G-d has to get them back to you"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"I'm not convinced," Tom continued, "We're going back to the bus station."

Twenty minutes later we were standing in the station. The man working there smiled at us and presented my bag fully intact.

"This is first time I see in Guatemala!

Yesterday women travel five hours. Come home late at night and see she have wrong bag. So she travel back five hours and hope she find her bag still here!"

I was happy and about to explain that I could not carry the bag back because it was Shabbos.

"It will be an honour to carry this bag," said Tom. He lifted it over his shoulder and we walked back to the guest house.

"Do you still want that banana pancake?"

Tom asked me when we arrived at the guest house.

"Maybe tomorrow," I smiled.

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ISSUE 1243

MOSHIACH MATTERS

How is it that the Redemption has not yet been attained? That despite all that has transpired and all that has been done, Moshiach has still not come? What more can I do? I have done all I can to bring the world to truly demand and clamour for the Redemption...The only thing that remains for me to do is to give over the matter to you. Do all that is in your power to achieve this thing--a most sublime and transcendent light that needs to be brought down into our world with pragmatic tools... I have done all I can. I give it over to you. Do all that you can to bring the righteous redeemer, immediately! I have done my part. From this point on, all is in your hands... (The Rebbe, Nissan 28, 5751/1991)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

15 Iyar, 5724 [1964]

I was sorry to hear from Rabbi - that you have not been feeling up to par recently. I trust that this letter will find you in improved health, and may G-d grant you a speedy and complete recovery, so that you should be able to continue your good work for a better and happier environment, in good health and with joy and gladness of the heart.

If you suspect that by saying "a better and happier" environment I have in mind something that has to do with the Torah and Mitzvoth [commandments], you are quite right, for the Torah is the true good, and the source of true happiness.

I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge receipt of your letter in which you wrote about your participation in a symposium on the future of the American Jewish community as it will be one hundred and twenty years hence. Generally speaking, I take no pleasure prognosticating, even in regard to a more immediate future than one hundred and twenty years.

For one thing, there is the consideration that it is one of our basic principles of faith to wait and expect Moshiach every day, when the whole world will be established under the reign of the Al-mighty. But apart from this, everyone, even a non-religious person, can see clearly what unforeseen changes have taken place "overnight." Therefore, it serves no useful purpose to forecast what the state of affairs will be a century from now; however, this is a point of which you are not unaware, as is indicated in your letter.

I wholeheartedly agree with you that when a Jewish audience can be gathered together, the opportunity should not be wasted on empty platitudes, but should be made use of to the utmost, to provide them with a lasting inspiration which should be expressed in the daily life.

Of course, I do not know what kind of audience there is going to be in this particular instance. I believe, however, that the following observations are valid for any type of Jewish audience:

It is customary to find fault with the present generation by comparison with the preceding one. Whatever conclusions one may arrive at from this comparison, one thing is unquestionably true, namely that the new generation is not afraid to face the challenge.

I have in mind not only the kind of challenge which would make them at variance with the majority, but even the kind of challenge which calls upon sacrifices and changes in their personal life.

Some of our contemporary young people are quite prepared to accept this challenge with all its consequences, while others who may not as yet be ready to accept it, for one reason or another, at least show respect for those who have accepted it, and also respect for the one who has brought them face to face with this challenge. This is quite different from olden days, when it took a great deal of courage to challenge prevailing popular opinions and ideas, and a person who had the courage to do so was often branded as an impractical individual, a dreamer, etc.

Furthermore, and in my opinion this is also an advantage, many of our young people do not rest content with taking up a challenge which has to do only with a beautiful theory, or even deep thinking, but want to hear also about the practical application of such a theory, not only as an occasional experience, but as a daily experience; and that is the kind of idea which appeals to them most.

A further asset is the changed attitude towards the person who brings the challenge.

Even though it seems logical that the one who brings the challenge to the young people should have a background of many years of identification with and personification of the idea which he promulgates, this is no longer required or expected nowadays, when we are used to seeing quick and radical changes at every step in the physical world.

If this is possible in the physical world, it is certainly possible in the spiritual world, as our Sages of old had declared, "A person may sometimes acquire an eternity in a single instant." Thus, no individual can ignore his duty to share his newly-won truth, even if he has no record of decades of identification with it. As a matter of fact, this may even be an added advantage, in that it can impress on the audience a precedent...

Continued in next issue

A WORD

from the Director

This week we are commanded to "rise before the white-haired, and honour the face of the old man". The Torah considers old age a virtue and a blessing. It instructs to respect all elderly, regardless of their scholarship and piety, because the many trials and experiences that each additional year of life brings yield a wisdom which the most accomplished young prodigy cannot equal.

Modern society on the other hand dictates that one's later years be marked by inactivity and decline. The aged are made to feel that they are useless if not a burden, and had best confine themselves to retirement villages and nursing homes.

On the surface, the modern-day attitude seems at least partly justified. Is it not a fact that a person physically weakens as he advances in years? True, the inactivity of retirement has been shown to be a key factor in the deterioration of the elderly; but is it still not an inescapable fact of nature that the body of a 70-year-old is not the body of a 20-year-old?

Certainly, the physical health of the body affects one's productivity. Life is a marriage of body and soul, and is at its most productive when nurtured by a sound physique as well as a healthy spirit. But the effects of the aging process upon a person's productivity are largely determined by the manner in which he regards this marriage and partnership. Which is the means and which is the end?

If the soul is nothing more than an engine to drive the body's procurement of its needs and aims, then the body's physical weakening with age brings with it a spiritual deterioration as well — a descent into boredom, futility and despair. But when one regards the body as an accessory to the soul, the very opposite is the case: the spiritual growth of old age invigorates the body, enabling one to lead a productive existence for as long as the Almighty grants one the gift of life.

J. I. Gutnick

CUSTOMS CORNER

Charity: Tzedakah

Tzedakah—often translated as charity—is a mainstay of Jewish life. The sages teach that the world was built upon kindness. However, Tzedakah goes one step beyond. Literally translated as "justice" or "righteousness," Tzedakah tells us that sharing what we have with others isn't something special. It's the honest and just thing to do.

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Little Shloimeleh was the youngest of the family's nine children. He had a quick smile and intelligent eyes. Shloimeleh's favorite time was Friday afternoon, when his mother lit the Shabbat candles. He loved to watch them burn in their polished candlesticks.

But one Shabbat eve, when his mother had closed her eyes to recite the blessing, one of the candles fell on Shloimeleh's arm, badly burning him.

Time passed, and the burn eventually healed. But little Shloimeleh was left with an ugly scar on his forearm as a reminder of the incident.

Then WWII broke out, and Poland was invaded by the Germans. As part of the "final solution," all the Jews in Shloimeleh's town were rounded up and sent to concentration camps. Reb Avraham, Shloimeleh's father, was forcibly separated from the rest of his family. It was the last time he would see his wife and children. Reb Avraham was later interred in a labour camp. Miraculously he survived the Holocaust, and eventually found himself in Russia.

Reb Avraham was now alone in the world. Physically exhausted and consumed with grief, he tried to lessen his pain by learning, praying, and teaching Torah and mitzvot (commandments) to Jewish children, many of whom had never been exposed to Judaism. Aside from organizing a secret yeshiva, he also served as a mohel (ritual circumciser). But of all his religious achievements, the tiny synagogue he established was closest to his heart.

Needless to say, Reb Avraham's activities were completely illegal; time and again he was cautioned by the Communist authorities. But Reb Avraham felt he had nothing to lose. After going through everything he had, what else could they do to him? He continued to spread Torah and mitzvot, and spent even more time in his little shul.

The most persistent of Reb Avraham's tormentors was a young Communist named Natishka. Reb Avraham could hardly take a step without being followed by him. Natishka repeatedly warned him that he would end up before a firing squad if he didn't shape up.

Around this time Reb Avraham decided to apply for an exit visa to Israel. He was very surprised when his request was approved. In truth, Reb Avraham had mixed feelings about leaving Russia. On the one hand, he was grateful for the opportunity to spend the rest of his days in the Holy Land. Yet on the other, he worried about the fate of his brethren. Who would keep the embers of Judaism burning after he was gone?

As the date of his departure grew near, Reb Avraham spent most of his time in his beloved synagogue. Emboldened by the prospect of imminent freedom, he abandoned some of his usual precautions.

One evening Reb Avraham entered the shul and lit several memorial candles in remembrance of his family. His eyes filled with tears as he recalled their faces. In a voice choked with emotion he began to recite Psalms, and the sound carried out into the street...

At that moment, Natishka happened to pass by and decided to investigate. When he saw what the Jew was up to he became incensed.

"When will you ever learn?" he screamed at him. "When will you finally give up your obsolete practices?" Once and for all, he would teach the Jew a lesson. He began to roll up his sleeves...

Reb Avraham remained tranquil. Having already been beaten many times, there was nothing new about the prospect of physical violence. "Shema Yisrael!" ("Hear O Israel"), he called out in a clear if somewhat trembling voice. "The L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is One!"

It was then that he looked up and noticed Natishka's bare forearm, poised to strike. A long scar, evidence of an old burn, wound its way down his arm in a very familiar pattern...

"Shloimeleh!" Reb Avraham cried out. "Is that you, my son?"

The young Communist's face drained of colour as his hand froze in mid-air. Inexplicably, his eyes were drawn to the candles' flames, as if they reminded him of something long hidden and repressed... A cry erupted from his throat as his eyes filled with tears. He embraced the elderly Jew and began to weep like a small child.

"Tatteh (father)!" he wailed inconsolably. "Tatteh, forgive me!"

Father and son marvelled at how Divine Providence had brought them together. Not long afterward they both immigrated to Israel. And each week thereafter, as they gazed into the Shabbat candles, they pondered their indebtedness to them for their reunion.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

Every man shall fear his mother and his father, and My Sabbaths you shall keep (Lev. 19:3)

The Talmud teaches that there are three partners in the creation of a human being - the mother, the father, and G-d. It is, therefore, not sufficient for a person to honour only his parents; the third partner, G-d, demands His due as well: "And my Sabbaths you shall keep." (*Shuva Yisrael*)

And you shall love your neighbour as yourself (Lev. 19:18)

The previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, once related: As a four year old, I asked my father (Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber), "Why did G-d create two eyes and not one, as He did with the mouth and nose?" My father began explaining by asking: "In the Hebrew alphabet there are both the letter shin and the letter sin. What is the difference between them?" I answered that one has a dot on the right side, and one has a dot on the left side. My father explained: "There are things in the world at which we must look with the right eye, with love and affection, and things that we must see with the left eye, as if from a distance. For instance, we must look at the letters in a prayer book and at another Jew, with our right eye, and at candies and toys with the left..." This implanted love for a fellow Jew firmly in my heart. One must look favourably upon every single Jew, no matter who he is..." (*Likutei Dibburim*)

You shall not go up and down as a talebearer among your people (Lev. 19:16)

A person's eyes and ears are not under his control, but his mouth is. (*Zohar*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 13 MAY 2016



BEGINS		ENDS
5.03	MELBOURNE	6.01
5.04	ADELAIDE	6.01
4.50	BRISBANE	5.44
6.12	DARWIN	7.03
4.48	GOLD COAST	5.42
5.11	PERTH	6.07
4.46	SYDNEY	5.42
4.51	CANBERRA	5.49
4.46	LAUNCESTON	5.47
5.06	AUCKLAND	6.04
4.56	WELLINGTON	5.57
4.42	HOBART	5.44
4.46	BYRON BAY	5.40

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD
PARSHAS KEDOSHIM • 5 IYAR • 13 MAY

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5.03 PM
	MINCHA:	5.10 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5.35 PM
SHABBOS	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.42 AM
	MINCHA:	5.00 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6.01 PM
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS: SUN-FRI	8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	5.05 PM
	MAARIV:	5.50 PM