

LAMPLIGHTER

19 Adar
Parshas Ki Sisa
Parshas Parah
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's portion, Ki Tisa, G-d commands Moses to make a washing basin and place it in front of the Tent of Meeting. This basin was for the priests to wash before they performed their service, as it states, "Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and feet from it when they go into the Tent of Meeting."

The act of washing had two objectives. The first was for cleanliness and purity, as the kohen (priest) was required to maintain a higher standard than others. The second was for the purpose of holiness: by washing himself the priest received an extra measure of sanctity. In fact, the very act of washing is called the "sanctification of the hands and feet."

Although the Holy Temple in Jerusalem is no longer standing, the lessons we derive from the services that were performed there are eternal. Every Jew is considered a "priest" (the entire Jewish people is called "a nation of priests and a holy people"), and the concept of washing before serving the Creator exists on many different levels.

In his Laws of Prayer, Maimonides writes that one must "wash his face, hands and feet before praying the morning service." Nowadays, when we cannot bring actual sacrifices, our prayers are offered in their stead. Washing before we pray follows the example of the priests, who washed before performing their Temple duties. But why does Maimonides stipulate that the face must be washed - something the priests were not obligated to do? The answer is that the concept of "face" has a special significance during the period of exile, after the destruction of the Holy Temple. Hands and feet are symbolic of man's physical ability and prowess; the face is symbolic of his higher powers (intellect, sight, hearing, speech, etc.) The more mundane aspects of life are to be carried out by the hands and feet alone, whereas the higher powers are to be reserved for man's higher calling - the service of G-d.

When the Holy Temple stood, the overall spiritual level of the Jewish people was higher. It would never have occurred to the "face" to involve itself in lower matters; thus, it didn't need an added measure of protection and holiness. During the exile, however, the Jew is sometimes so demoralized that he forgets himself and invests his higher powers in affairs that are truly unworthy of their attention. His "face," as it were, must therefore be safeguarded.

In practice, many authorities rule that the "Modeh Ani" prayer said upon awakening, thanking G-d for restoring the soul, is sufficient preparation for prayer; washing one's face is not strictly necessary. For the Jew's innermost essence is always pure and connected to G-d, and thus always ready to worship the Creator.

Who's a Cheapskate?

By Elisha Greenbaum

Some people are cheap, penny-pinching their way through life. They eat stale, expired food, and on the rare occasion that they eat out, they don't leave tips. They huddle under layers throughout the winter, glaring in defiance at the central heating unit, and perspire their way through the summer, too miserly to install air conditioning. They don't spend on themselves, and they definitely don't give to charity.

Other people give generously when asked and are equally lavish when spending on themselves. They dispense cash with largesse and are always ready to indulge in an extra luxury or two. Money is there for spending, and life is meant to be lived large.

But it's a rare individual who sacrifices his own creature comforts to better provide for the needs of others, who holds back on his own spending so that there will be more left over to give away. Imagine the strength of character needed to put everyone else first and yourself last. That's generosity!

The Torah describes the construction of the Kiyor, the copper laver which was used by the kohanim (priests) to wash their hands and feet when entering the Temple. The raw materials for the Kiyor were donated by the Jewish women, who gave up their own valuable mirrors for the cause.

Almost immediately thereafter, we read about the most shocking sin in history, when, just weeks after receiving the Torah on Sinai, the people constructed and worshiped a golden calf: "And they stripped themselves of the golden earrings that were on their ears and brought them to Aaron. He took [them] from their hand[s], fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made it into a molten calf, upon which they said: 'These are your gods, O Israel.'"

However, it should be noted that the women did not sin. They remained faithful to G-d and Moses. They refused to contribute their jewelry and, even when threatened, remained true to their faith. When Moses finally returned, the sinners were punished, while the women were rewarded for their faithfulness in the face of temptation and violence.

But how can we really be assured that the women's motives were so pure? Maybe they refused to give up their gold because they just wanted to keep it for themselves.

Perhaps that's why the Torah prefaces the story of the golden calf with the description of the Kiyor. The women weren't cheap, they were wise. They were willing to give up their own cherished possessions for a truly G-dly purpose, but unwilling to invest in evil.

And that's why they were rewarded.

This is the attitude we should strive to inculcate in our children. There is nothing wrong with spending money for the useful things in life, and a person should aspire to serve G-d lavishly. Paying for a quality Jewish education, buying kosher food, and supporting synagogues and worthy institutions might be expensive, but they're worth it.

It is only when it comes to the empty-headed frivolities of life that we should hesitate. Are we wasting our money? Do we need it? Would we be any worse off if we waited till we indulged? It's not that we are too cheap to spend; rather, we recognize the true value of money and life, and we're saving towards the investments that last forever.

Slice of LIFE

And When You Walk

by Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

The following story happened to my wife, Rochel. Rochel runs a successful advertising agency near Tel Aviv. One day she was told that a certain business might be interested in her services. She followed the lead, called the owner, introduced herself and asked if he had plans for advertising.

The owner said that he wasn't interested in advertising at this stage as his budget didn't allow for it. However, if she was interested in hearing a personal story connected with the Lubavitcher Rebbe he would be happy to tell her at his office.

As my wife is a successful Chasidic businesswoman, she has been written about in a number of Israeli publications. It seems he had read about her in a business magazine and he knew she would appreciate the story.)

Rochel visited the man's office several days later and was shown in immediately. He began by apologizing profusely that he didn't have an advertising budget, and then he began his story.

"When my daughter was 15 years old she was a very talented and promising dancer. Although she had doubts about going professional, she loved to dance and spent hours each day

practicing.

"Then one morning, unexplainably, she couldn't get out of bed. She screamed and we ran to her room and then frantically called an ambulance; she was paralyzed and had lost all feeling from the waist down! What a tragedy!

"A month and tens of experts later the unanimous decision was that there was no hope. The doctors were supposing that she had contracted a rare nerve disease because all of the tests concluded that her nerves were destroyed and there was no cure.

"With no alternative we brought her home and a pall of sadness and depression replaced the music and joy that had until recently filled out home.

"Then, one day, a Lubavitcher who I know came to my office to ask for a donation. Usually I donated generously but that day I was not in the mood and just told the fellow to leave me alone. " 'Did something happen?' the young man asked. 'Maybe I can help. Forget the donation. You look really sad, what happened?' Try as I could I couldn't get rid of him so finally I told him about what happened to my daughter.

"The fellow heard the story and as soon as I finished he had a 'solution.'

" 'Listen, the Lubavitcher Rebbe often encourages people to check their mezuzas whenever an issue comes up! Did you check your mezuzas? You have mezuzas on the doors of your office and your home, I

bought them for you! You must have them checked. I'll take care of it for you, what do you care?'

"I gave him permission to do whatever he wanted and then I put the whole thing out of my mind.

"Late the next day, the Lubavitcher was back with an excited look on his face.

" 'I went to your house yesterday, took off the mezuzas from the doors and, have a look! The one on your daughter's door had the letter "lamed" of the word "U'v'lecht'cha" (and when you walk) partially worn away. I bought a new one and I'm on my way to your house now to put it up.'

"About a week later my daughter woke up shouting. Her legs were tingling! We rushed her to the hospital. They ordered tests. The results came back that there were definitely some changes evident. The next day she moved her foot and a few weeks later she was already trying to stand up! The doctors all wanted to know which specialist was treating our daughter. They refused to believe the mezuzah story! In fact, as many times as I've told it, no one appreciated it. That is why I wanted to share it with you when you called.

"That was over five years ago. Today she is walking like everyone else. She is still not dancing yet but thank G-d it was a real miracle!"

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Editors: Shlomo Chaim Kesselman and
Mendel Bacher

P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

The Lamplighter contains words from sacred
writings. Please do not deface or discard.

ISSUE 1287

SOUL COFFEE

The child delights in the simple things of life.

Yes, sometimes delight can take you in the wrong direction,

and yes, we have to steer the child from that.

But delight itself is good.

To live is to delight in life, like a child.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Lessons from a Pharmacy - Part 1

Excerpt of a letter written by the Rebbe to a pharmacist.

If a person is to derive a lesson in life from each particular event he witnesses, how much more should he do so from his own vocation, in which he invests the better part of his talents, time and energy.

Regarding the pharmaceutical profession, there are many lessons it may impart to our mission in life. I'll confine myself to two of them:

1) Upon entering a quality pharmacy and seeing the great and varied selection of medicines and drugs which provide relief and cure for all sorts of illness, including the most deadly of them—the informed observer is greatly impressed, and rightly so.

But the pharmacist must explain to him—and, most importantly, must explain to himself—that all this is but a preface and preparation. In order for a sick person to actually be cured, two crucial things must happen: (a) an expert must instruct which specific drug, and in what specific manner of administration, is appropriate for this specific illness; (b) this, too, is not sufficient in itself—the patient must actually take the medicine.

Applied to our everyday lives: Each and every individual is an emissary of the Almighty, who has been given his or her specific "portion in the world" to "cure" and rectify. He has also been given the "drugs" and means with which to achieve this. But all this is but a preamble and preparation, for he still needs an expert to instruct him which "drugs" he is to apply to correct his "portion" and his own self today, which tomorrow, etc. Otherwise, he is apt to jeopardize rather than cure, to destroy rather than build.

(There are those who would argue: "The entire community are holy," myself included. I shall consult the Code of Jewish Law myself and thereby know what must be done, both regarding myself and regarding my mission in life. The result of such an approach can be understood by considering the case of a person who, having learned to read, acquires medical texts and medical instruments and begins practicing medicine...)

Then must come the primary thing—to go out and do the work of "healing" oneself and one's world. One may be an accomplished scholar, and greatly esteem his "expert doctor," and acquire the medicines in the exact manner that the doctor prescribes; but if he doesn't actually take them, he has not yet begun the work of healing.

He might have many good excuses: the time isn't right, it's not the appropriate place, he doesn't have the influence, etc. But all an excuse can do is determine the degree of his culpability—is he guilty, merely negligent or altogether absolved? The most impeccable excuse will not cure the illness he was meant to deal with. And since, undoubtedly, the divine intention is that he achieve a cure, his arguments are obviously flawed and prejudiced by self-interest.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

More Unkosher?

Question: Why do Jews give the poor old pig such a hard time? Is pig more unkosher than other animals?

Answer: The pig has copped it pretty badly in the collective Jewish psyche over the years. It has always been the personification of unkosherness. It is not uncommon to find Jews who say "I may not keep kosher, but at least I don't eat pig!" Although a pig is no more unkosher than a cheeseburger or a lobster, the pig has something to it that is anathema to what Judaism stands for: it is a fraud.

There are two signs that identify a kosher species of animal. 1) It has split hooves, and 2) it chews its cud (i.e. it regurgitates its food and chews it over a second time.) The first sign is easy to spot - just look at the hooves. But the second is not so apparent. You have to study the animal's digestive system to know if it chews its cud. A cow is an example of an animal that fulfils both requirements, and is thus kosher. A horse is not kosher because it fulfils neither. There is only one animal in existence that seems kosher because it has split hooves, but is really not kosher because it doesn't chew its cud -- the pig.

And that's why we denigrate the pig. Every other non-kosher animal is up front about it. The horse says "I don't have split hooves, so I'm just not kosher." But the pig presents a kosher facade. "Look, I have split hooves, just like a kosher animal should!" But what lies hidden behind that kosher veneer is a non-kosher inside: it doesn't chew its cud. For Judaism, nothing could be worse than making a holy facade when your inside is rotten.

A WORD

from the Director

This Shabbat a second Torah scroll is taken out of the ark and Parshat Para, a special chapter enumerating the laws of the red heifer, is read. The ashes of the red heifer (of which only nine have ever existed) have the power to remove the spiritual impurity that is caused by contact with a dead body. The tenth and final red heifer will be prepared by Moshiach, who will purify the Jewish people in the Messianic era.

The mitzva (commandment) of the red heifer is a prime example of a "chok" - an "illogical" commandment that completely transcends human understanding. While the person upon whom the ashes were sprinkled was purified, the one who performed the ritual was rendered unclean. The mitzva of the red heifer has long been derided by the non-Jewish world for its inconsistencies. The Evil Inclination wants Jews, too, to feel uncomfortable about it. But like other commandments in this category, it reminds us that the basis for our observing Torah and mitzvot is not how much of Judaism we can understand and "agree" with. A Jew's faith in G-d is higher than the limitations of the human mind.

Of course, as human beings blessed with intellect we are obligated to study Torah and comprehend it to the best of our ability. Faith and intellect are two sides of the same coin, each one complementing the other and making us complete. But the bottom line is that the Torah is Divine, and we can't expect to understand everything.

The mitzva of the red heifer thus contains an important lesson: G-d promised us Moshiach; it doesn't matter if it makes "sense," or if there are skeptics who ridicule our belief. In the same way our forefathers were redeemed from Egypt in the merit of their faith, so too must we remain strong until the Final Redemption with Moshiach is a reality.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Bruria sat at the table staring at the open scroll of Torah, but she didn't see the words before her. Her anguished past was usually held at bay by her intense study of the Law, but on days like today the painful scenes intruded into her present and irrepressibly dominated her thoughts.

The horrible scene was as fresh in her mind as the day on which it had occurred. "Father, Father," she screamed over and over. She had tried in vain to go to him, whether to help him or to join him in his martyrdom. It seemed like only hours had passed since his pure soul escaped from his tormented body, flying heavenward together with the holy letters of the Torah scroll wrapped around his body which refused to burn. The same day saw the martyrdom of her holy mother and the enslavement of her sister.

Her husband, Rabbi Meir, entered the room, interrupting her thoughts, but she didn't look up. "What are you thinking of, my wife?" he asked softly.

"So much time has passed since that terrible day. I'm thinking about my poor sister. Oh, Meir, we must do something again to try to ransom her. It's been so long since we've tried. Please, I can't bear to think of her a captive of the wicked Romans. I can't live with myself, imagining what she's going through."

"You're right, Bruria. I promise to try. Perhaps G-d will have mercy on her and intercede on her part. Perhaps this time I will succeed." The following day Rabbi Meir prepared for his mission. He changed from the clothing which marked him as a scholar and dressed for the road. He loaded his horse with provisions, and carefully tucked in his belt a bag of gold coins. With this small fortune he hoped to bribe the prison guard and free his sister-in-law.

When he reached the Roman fortress, he dismounted and approached the guard. "Halt! What is your business here?" barked the Roman guard.

"I have come to ransom the Jewish girl who is being held here." "If that's it, you may as well get back on your horse. There's nothing I can do about it. I have superiors to answer to. Do you think I can let prisoners out just like that? What do you think would happen to me?"

"I understand your problem, well," replied Rabbi Meir as he removed the bag of gold from his belt. He made sure that the guard saw the bag and heard the clinking of the coins.

"Maybe the contents of this bag will solve your problem," said Rabbi Meir. "Keep half for your trouble, and use the rest to keep the other guards quiet. I'm sure that now you can free the girl."

The guard stood wide-eyed, looking down at the bag. Only his fear stopped him from grabbing it. "If they find me out, I'll be in the kind of trouble there's no getting out of."

"I will make you a promise: If you need help, just cry out, 'G-d of Meir, answer me!' and you will be saved."

"How can I trust you?" No sooner had the guard uttered his question when Rabbi Meir spotted a pack of wild dogs. He picked up a few stones and threw them at the dogs who leaped at him with bared fangs.

"G-d of Meir, answer me!" cried out Rabbi Meir. Instantly, the dogs ran away. When the guard saw that, he reached for the bag of gold. Obviously, this wasn't your average horseman, but a miracle-worker. In a few moments Bruria's sister was running down the road, free.

When news of the girl's escape reached Rome, a government investigation was quickly begun. It wasn't long before the guard was

implicated, convicted, and condemned to death by hanging. He was led to the gallows and the rope placed on his neck. But he hadn't forgotten what Rabbi Meir had told him, and at the last moment he cried out, "G-d of Meir, answer me!" At once, the rope snapped. The hangmen brought a new rope, but no matter how they tried, something always went wrong. Even the executioners sensed that something out of the ordinary was occurring.

They removed the guard from the scaffolding and asked him, "What's going on here? It seems that some great power is saving you. Nothing like this has ever happened before!" The guard told them about the strange horseman who had come to ransom the girl, and about his promise of help.

The strange story was told and retold until it reached the ears of the highest officials in Rome. Rabbi Meir's reputation as a holy man who could work miracles was well known to them, and they surmised that the daring horseman was none other than Rabbi Meir himself. No effort was spared to apprehend and punish him. Those Jews would be taught an indelible lesson.

One day as Rabbi Meir was walking down the street, he was recognized. He fled down the winding, narrow paths as fast as he could, but soon they would catch up to him. Just then he saw a non-kosher restaurant. This was the perfect place to hide. Why, who would imagine that the great Rabbi Meir would be found inside a treife restaurant? He entered, ordered some food, and sat with the plate in front of him, sticking one finger into the food, while licking another.

Just as he had assumed, his pursuers arrived in no time. They looked into the door and stared hard at Rabbi Meir. No, it couldn't be - they must be mistaken. True, there was a man who looked just like Rabbi Meir, but he was sitting and licking his fingers, enjoying the plateful of non-kosher food. No, it couldn't be Rabbi Meir. They quickly left to continue the search elsewhere.

Rabbi Meir waited another few minutes and then left. He knew that he couldn't stay in the Holy Land any longer. That very day Rabbi Meir would make plans for his escape to Babylonia and safety.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

The people of Israel are told to each contribute exactly half a shekel of silver to the Sanctuary. Instructions are also given regarding the making of the Sanctuary's water basin, anointing oil and incense. "Wise-hearted" artisans Betzalel and Aholiav are placed in charge of the Sanctuary's construction, and the people are once again commanded to keep the Shabbat.

When Moses does not return when expected from Mount Sinai, the people make a golden calf and worship it. G-d proposes to destroy the errant nation, but Moses intercedes on their behalf. Moses descends from the mountain carrying the tablets of the testimony engraved with the Ten Commandments; seeing the people dancing about their idol, he breaks the tablets, destroys the golden calf, and has the primary culprits put to death. He then returns to G-d to say: "If You do not forgive them, blot me out from the book that You have written."

G-d forgives, but says that the effect of their sin will be felt for many generations. At first G-d proposes to send His angel along with them, but Moses insists that G-d Himself accompany His people to the promised land.

Moses prepares a new set of tablets and once more ascends the mountain, where G-d reinscribes the covenant on these second tablets. On the mountain, Moses is also granted a vision of the divine thirteen attributes of mercy. So radiant is Moses' face upon his return, that he must cover it with a veil, which he removes only to speak with G-d and to teach His laws to the people.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 17-18 March	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	7:18	8:14
Adelaide	7:13	8:07
Brisbane	5:44	6:36
Darwin	6:42	7:30
Gold Coast	5:43	6:35
Perth	6:14	7:07
Sydney	6:53	7:46
Canberra	7:01	7:56
Launceston	7:11	8:08
Auckland	7:19	8:14
Wellington	7:20	8:17
Hobart	7:10	8:08
Byron Bay	6:42	7:34

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS KI SISA PARSHAS PARAH • 19 ADAR • 17 MARCH

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7.18 PM
	MINCHA:	7.25 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	7.50 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10.22 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	7.15 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8.14 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	7.15 PM
	MAARIV:	8.05 PM