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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

There are 39 categories of "work" prohibited on Shabbat, derived from the 39 different types of labor that were required to build the Sanctuary. As every Jew is enjoined to erect a "Sanctuary" to G-d in the spiritual sense, these laws reveal many important lessons for our Divine service.

As we read in the first of this week's two Torah portions, Vayakhel, setting a fire is one of these prohibited labors, as it states, "You shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations on the Sabbath day." The strict definition of "setting a fire" for which a Jew is culpable requires that some sort of benefit be derived from the act: either illumination, heat, or for the purpose of producing ashes. Without the element of benefit, it is not considered "setting a fire." (However, by Rabbinic decree it is forbidden to set any kind of fire or engage in related activities on Shabbat.)

In spiritual terms, this means that "fire," in and of itself, is not considered an actual component of our Divine service unless it produces practical benefit. To explain:

"Fire" refers to the innate flame within the Jewish soul, as it states, "The candle of G-d is the soul of man." A Jew is required to kindle and encourage this inner fire, until his whole being is suffused with longing to reunite with its G-dly Source.

In Judaism, however, spiritual elevation is not an end in itself. The objective is not to feel elevated and close to G-d, to the extent that the physical, mundane world becomes unimportant.

On the contrary, the Torah teaches that this is not a true "fire," for although it is pure it is devoid of purpose. In order to build a genuine "Sanctuary," a Jew's fiery love for G-d must result in actual consequences and actions.

This is reflected in the physical phenomenon of ashes. Ashes are symbolic of the most intense level of corporeality, which is why they remain after other matter is completely burned and consumed. Indeed, the whole purpose of a Jew's "fire," i.e., spiritual arousal, is to produce "ashes" - permeate the very lowest levels of existence with Torah and mitzvot.

The refinement of the physical plane through Torah and mitzvot is the underlying objective of the world's creation. When a Jew utilizes physical objects for the sake of Heaven he attains the most elevated of spiritual heights and fulfills G-d's will, according to the dictum "Action is the main thing."

The service of every individual Jew elevating his own corner of the world will in turn lead to the ultimate elevation of creation: the coming of Moshiach and the Final Redemption.

Emerging from the Torah

By Tali Loewenthal

The most precious possession of the Jewish people is the sacred Torah, expressed as the Torah Scroll in the Synagogue, the essence of the Written Torah, and the many volumes of printed books of the Oral Torah. On a more basic level, the Torah was embodied as the two Tablets of Stone, actually sapphire, which Moses brought down from Mount Sinai and which were kept in a Golden Ark in the Temple.

The drama of the way the first set of these Tablets was smashed by Moses when he saw the orgy around the Golden Calf was described in last week's Torah reading Ki Tisa. It continued with the lengthy process of Moses pleading with G-d on behalf of the Jewish people and, at last, the moment of forgiveness. On that day Moses came down the mountain carrying the second set of Tablets which were to be housed in the Golden Ark.

It must have been an absolutely wonderful moment. The Sages tell us that the date in the Jewish calendar was 10 Tishrei, the date of Yom Kippur, the holiest and most sublime day of the year. One imagines the Jewish people gathered at the foot of Sinai on that very first Yom Kippur as Moses descended bearing the second set of Tablets, the sign of G-d's forgiveness and love. They knew they were at last being given the true essence of the Torah, the Tablets from Mount Sinai.

It must have been an intensely absorbing and awe-inspiring occasion, especially heightened by the fact that the face of Moses shone. At first the people were frightened by this and retreated; but then Moses called them back to him and he spoke to them, telling them Divine teachings of Torah. When he had finished teaching them, he put a veil over his face, to hide the radiance. This gathering was described in the last week's Parshah, and is the absolute paradigm of immersion in the luminous delight of Torah study and closeness to G-d.

Then comes our Torah reading. It begins (Exodus 35:1) with Moses gathering together the Jewish people in order to give them very detailed instructions about building the Sanctuary, including the idea that for six days in each week they should work on building it, but on the Sabbath they should rest. When did this gathering take place? The famed commentator, Rashi tells us it was the day after the first Yom Kippur when Moses had descended from the Mountain.

The Rebbe discusses this point. Why did Moses wait till the next day in order to instruct the people about the Sanctuary? Everyone was together with him on Yom Kippur, as described above. Why not use that occasion to tell them about the Sanctuary? Why should this take place in a separate gathering the next day?

The Rebbe suggests this is because that first Yom Kippur, a day of immersion in the essence of the Torah, was so sublime and so totally absorbing, that it was not the moment for the highly practical instructions concerning the building of the Sanctuary. On that day the focus was the holiness of the Torah itself.

However, the Jewish people could not remain forever immersed in that sublime mood. The next day they had to gather again in a very purposeful way, to learn how to build the Sanctuary, an activity which would take them several months of dedicated work.

Slice of LIFE

And When You Walk

by Baila Olidort

He's the good looking, buoyant 12 year old Nepalese boy who greets visitors to Katmandu's Chabad House with a huge smile: "Hi I'm Bim, the boy from Beit Chabad," he offers. He's also quick to provide unsolicited bits of useful information, like candle-lighting time on Friday, or that Shabbat is not out until three stars are spotted in the sky.

Bim arrived at the Chabad House last year, naked but for a plastic bag that he used for some cover. One of hundreds of children exploited for profit on Kathmandu's dangerous streets, he fixed his eyes on a Chabad rabbinical student, and asked for help. He wouldn't leave go until the student brought him back to the Chabad House.

Chezki and Chani Lifshitz, Chabad representatives here have become beloved figures in Kathmandu, especially to thousands of Israeli backpackers who flock to the Himalayas after completing their service in the IDF. (The Lifshitzs were the inspiration for Kathmandu, a popular Israeli TV series based on their day-to-day lives as Chabad Shluchim (emissaries) in this third-world backwater.)

After 13 years of living here, the Lifshitzs have not become hardened to the poverty and the human suffering that are everywhere in this slum city. "My grandmother is a Holocaust survivor," Chani says. "I learned from her not to ignore the pleading eyes of a child in need. Bim was not going to survive-that much was obvious," she says.

The boy screamed in pain as Chani and Chezki gently washed his lacerated, severely malnourished body. Scars and bruises - from beatings by his traffickers disappointed in his take home after a day on the streets - were raw. They brought a doctor in to administer first aid. They cut his long, matted hair and uncovered a beautiful face. They fed

him, clothed him and made him comfortable.

What made Bim know to ask for the Chabad House?

"He had heard of the Chabad House, the Jewish place where people find help," Chani explained in a phone conversation.

Bim had no normal socialization. "He was not raised as normal children are, and he had to learn basic behaviors." He also needed psychological therapy and professional help to wean him from a substance dependency (inhaling glue) that many of the street children cultivate in Kathmandu. Then his traffickers, unwilling to give Bim up as a source of income, began to harass and intimidate the Lifshitzs.

With five of their own young children, Chani and Chezki's days were already filled anticipating and answering the needs of an endless stream of visitors to their Chabad House. The go-to people for every exigency arising among young and restless Israelis traveling dangerously, and for their families abroad who depend on the Lifshitzs to help in emergencies, were Chezki and Chani getting in deeper than they meant to?

It was a question that surely crossed their minds during those first days with Bim. Adopting a Nepalese child is not exactly what they expected to be doing as Chabad Shluchim. "But we asked ourselves what the Rebbe would advise us to do," Chani says. "There's no question he'd tell us to do whatever we can to save his life."

Chezki and Chani paid Bim's handlers for his release, and gave him a new life in the bosom of their family. The Lifshitz children surrounded him with warmth and acceptance, and he integrated quickly. "My children have been amazing, full of love and appreciation for Bim. They've learned so much from him-gratitude for the things in life they never had to think about before. . . like having parents."

"Ima Chani" and "Abba Chezki" as Bim likes to call his adoptive parents, enrolled Bim in a private school where he is proving to be a fast learner and a

high achiever. "Last year he did not know how to read or write. Now he's reading and writing in three languages. He's skipped two grades since he started formal schooling," says Chani, kvelling like any good Jewish mother. "He's incredibly bright."

Bim is not Jewish, but that's not relevant, Chani says, and converting him is not on the agenda. "We did not adopt him to make him Jewish. We adopted him to save his life, to give him the opportunity to grow intelligently, with happiness and love."

But Bim has something more in mind. Precocious and very proud of his adoptive Jewish family, he tells visitors that he'll be having a bar mitzvah next year just like his "older brother" did. He insists that his Jewish name is Binyamin. And he's learning Hebrew.

The Passover Seder in Kathmandu - with about 2,000 guests - is one of the largest and most popular worldwide. Chezki and Chani invest weeks of preparation. Speaking from Israel where she is adding Passover provisions to a shipping container that will arrive in Kathmandu for Passover, Chani is clearly the skilled multi-tasker. Back home, her husband is taking care of logistics at the Chabad House. Reservations for the legendary Seder are quickly filling up, and Bim and his siblings are pitching in as well.

The Lifshitzs never sought to publicize Bim's story. "Bim's been with us for a year and a half now," says Chani, and we never thought about bringing this to anyone's attention." But with so many visitors making their way to the Chabad House, the story about the Nepalese boy who seems to know more about Judaism than many of the Israeli travelers who come there, finally made Israeli news.

The story then garnered attention in Nepal as well. "We've had representatives of various agencies and organizations, most recently from the UN who come to our Chabad House wanting to learn more."

"I hope this will raise awareness of the plight of Nepal's street children," Chani says. "Imagine if more children like Bim would be saved."

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ISSUE 1288

SOUL COFFEE

A child's enthusiasm comes in a storm, taking over the child's entire world. So that when a child embraces a new, good way of being, it enters forever, and nothing can ever take it away. Whatever you embrace as a child lasts forever. Never stop being a child.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Lessons from a Pharmacy - Part 2

Excerpt of a letter written to a pharmacist. Continues from previous issue

Entering into the interior of the pharmacy, one notices a section marked: Warning! Deadly Poison! One may wonder, what is poison doing in a place designated for cures and balms? But the informed person understands that what in ordinary circumstances and in significant quantities is poison for a healthy person may in special circumstances and in small dosages be the only treatment that may save the life of one who is ill.

Applied to our everyday lives: The Torah is a "benevolent law," and "all its pathways are pleasantness and peace." Nevertheless, it commands: if you are invited to your fellow's home and there is doubt as to the kashrut of what is being served, it is forbidden for you to partake of his meal, even if this causes him grievous insult. If your fellow violates the Shabbat, and there is hope that your protests will prevent this, you are obligated to do so. If a certain institution has gained control of Jewish children and is stripping them of their faith, it is your obligation to object and to announce that although this institution may be saving the temporal lives of these children, they are destroying the eternal life of their souls. It is your obligation to save the lives of these children by all possible means, including covert and illegal means.

The mind will object: I am a civilized person; furthermore, Torah law itself states that "civilized behavior comes before Torah." How can I break the law of the land and go kidnap children? How can I go out into the streets to demonstrate against so-and-so's violation of the Shabbat and insult him in public?

The answer is that, indeed, for healthy people and circumstances all this is deadly poison; but in the case of critical illness it is the only medicine that can save a life.

A far more subtle example, this one regarding man's relationship with G-d: There are those who find fault with chassidim that they study Chassidut and meditate at length before morning prayers and, as a result, pray after the prescribed time. Again, the answer is that for healthy people and circumstances this is indeed most damaging. But for those ill of soul, it is impossible otherwise. For without such preparation they would pray only with their lips and not with their hearts, and their prayers would be invalid (see Mishneh Torah, Laws of Prayer 4:15; Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chaim 98; Tanya, part 5, pp. 307-309).

However, and this is most important: just as in the parable, one must take great care that such "poison" is not taken in too great a dosage, and that all must be in accordance with the instructions of a "qualified doctor."

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

Should I Go?

Question: *I just received an invitation from my friend to her son's Bar Mitzvah. Unfortunately, a few years ago, we had a bad fall out. I was terribly offended and hurt, our relationship was badly damaged and we never really resolved anything.*

We haven't spoken since. I feel strange and even hypocritical to attend the Bar Mitzvah. I am still hurting and can't just pretend that everything is okay. What do you think?

Answer: I am not aware of all the details and certainly don't want to undermine the intensity of your anger and hurt. But let me share with you an old Jewish expression: "Better to have a false peace than a real conflict."

Repairing damaged relationships is difficult and complex. The path to resolving a dispute is challenging. It takes willingness, patience and strength of character on both sides.

But standing on ceremonies and hanging on to conflict guarantees that it will linger on and never come to an end. Insisting on correct protocol and waiting for the right person to apologise first is always ineffective.

The first step towards resolution is to break down boundaries, melt the ice and create an opportunity for communication.

Maybe your friend hasn't done the right thing. But sincerely or not, she has reached out. Now is not the time to analyse her exact motives or to pursue the absolute truth. It is far better to grab the opportunity and hopefully begin a process of repairing the relationship.

By attending the Bar Mitzvah you are not a hypocrite, nor are you making a statement that everything is okay. You are merely saying that while there are still unresolved issues you nevertheless wish her well and are prepared to begin the process of restoring the friendship.

Go to the event, relax and enjoy.

A WORD

from the Director

This Shabbat we read a special Torah portion, Parshat HaChodesh, that speaks about the month of Nisan (which begins on Tuesday).

Our Sages argued over when the Final Redemption with Moshiach will occur. Some held that "In Nisan [our ancestors] were redeemed [from Egypt]; in Nisan [the Jewish people] will be redeemed in the future." Others insisted that the Final Redemption will take place in the month of Tishrei.

There are two reasons why Moshiach has to come. One is by virtue of the Jewish people's cumulative service of G-d over the last few thousand years. The other is simply G-d's promise to bring Moshiach.

According to Chasidic philosophy, the month of Nisan symbolizes the level of G-dliness that transcends our service. G-d took our forefathers out of Egypt on Passover despite the fact that they were spiritually degraded and unworthy. By contrast, Tishrei (Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur), is a time for returning to G-d in repentance and prayer.

The Rabbis' disagreement over the most appropriate month for Redemption was based on whichever factor each considered more decisive. Those who believed that spiritual status is more important held that it will occur in Tishrei, insisting that the Jewish people must be aroused to increased observance of Torah and mitzvot in order for Moshiach to come. Those who believed that G-d's promise is the determining factor held it will occur in Nisan.

So how was it resolved? Actual halacha (Jewish law) rules that "in Nisan they will be redeemed" - that the overriding consideration is simply G-d's promise. But both sides had a valid point, for by the time Moshiach comes, the world will have already been transformed by our service into an appropriate vessel for G-dliness. Yet the revelation of holiness that will occur will far surpass any level man could have attained by his own efforts.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

1918. Civil war raged between the Reds and the Whites in Russia. After a few months of bitter street fighting, the Reds finally took the upper hand. That is when the Communists began forcibly ruling over the millions of Russian citizens.

In order to firmly establish their position, the Communists compiled a long list of rules to regulate the lives of the citizens. They couldn't congregate in the evening, and even during the daytime no more than a few people were allowed to gather, lest they attempt to conspire against the government.

Beginning in 1919, the government cracked down harder and harder. They established laws limiting the activities and authority of religious institutions. They began to dog the footsteps of rabbanim and often conducted searches in their homes for possible proof of rebellion.

One day they came to the home of Rabbi Sholom Dovber of Lubavitch, the Rebbe Rashab, in Rostov. A group of soldiers armed with rifles broke into the Rebbe's home to search for anti-revolutionary material. The members of the household were ordered not to move from their places. The sight of the armed soldiers was terribly frightening, and the Rebbe remarked to those standing around him that it would only be right if the soldiers at least removed the bayonets from their rifles.

Those who had come to the house stood in terror, watching silently as the soldiers turned the house over in their search. None of them dared repeat to the soldiers what the Rebbe said. Another moment went by, and then Rabbi Yaakov Landau, the young rabbi who was a household member in the Rebbe's home, courageously spoke to the commanding officer and asked him to consider the Rebbe's honor and remove the bayonets.

The officer could have easily ordered that the young man be beaten for his nerve, yet amazingly, the officer told his soldiers to respect the Rebbe's wishes.

But the search was not over. The soldiers continued looking, and one of them found a box of tobacco the Rebbe used on Passover. The soldier wanted the box and put it in his pocket. The Rebbe observed the theft and moaned, telling those around him that the box was precious to him, and that he was willing to redeem the Passover snuff box, which was made of tin, for a different one made of silver.

The household members standing around thought it wasn't an auspicious time to get into an argument with soldiers over something so insignificant. Again it was Rabbi Yaakov Landau who put his life on the line, and as a loyal Chasid he acceded to the Rebbe's request. He turned to the officer again and asked him to tell the soldier to return the box.

Again those present were certain that the officer, a wicked man whose hatred for the Jews burned in his eyes, would order Rabbi Landau's arrest, but incredibly, he turned to the soldiers, red-faced with anger, and said that whoever stole the box had to remove it from his pocket at once and put it on the table, otherwise he would

be sorry. Within seconds one of the soldiers grudgingly removed the box from his pocket and placed it on the table.

The Rebbe looked pleased until he noticed that the box cover had been opened. His face was downcast again and he said that since the box had been opened he didn't need it anymore, since the soldier might possibly have had a drop of chametz in his pocket. King David said in Psalms, "You recompense a man according to his deeds." As the soldiers left the house, a bullet from one of the soldier's rifles accidentally shot the soldier who had stolen the box, and killed him on the spot!

This difficult episode left its mark on the Rebbe Rashab, who said that he could not continue to live with the Communists. Shortly thereafter, on the second of Nissan, 1920, the Rebbe Rashab passed away.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Moses assembles the people of Israel and reiterates to them the commandment to observe the Shabbat. He then conveys G-d's instructions regarding the making of the Mishkan (Tabernacle). The people donate the required materials in abundance, bringing gold, silver and copper; blue-, purple- and red-dyed wool; goat hair, spun linen, animal skins, wood, olive oil, herbs and precious stones. Moses has to tell them to stop giving.

A team of wise-hearted artisans make the Mishkan and its furnishings (as detailed in the previous Torah readings of Terumah, Tetzaveh and Ki Tisa): three layers of roof coverings; 48 gold-plated wall panels, and 100 silver foundation sockets; the parochet (veil) that separates between the Sanctuary's two chambers, and the masach (screen) that fronts it; the ark, and its cover with the cherubim; the table and its showbread; the seven-branched menorah with its specially prepared oil; the golden altar and the incense burned on it; the anointing oil; the outdoor altar for burnt offerings and all its implements; the hangings, posts and foundation sockets for the courtyard; and the basin and its pedestal, made out of copper mirrors.

An accounting is made of the gold, silver and copper donated by the people for the making of the Mishkan. Betzalel, Aholiav and their assistants make the eight priestly garments—the apron, breastplate, cloak, crown, hat, tunic, sash and breeches—according to the specifications communicated to Moses in the Parshah of Tetzaveh.

The Mishkan is completed and all its components are brought to Moses, who erects it and anoints it with the holy anointing oil, and initiates Aaron and his four sons into the priesthood. A cloud appears over the Mishkan, signifying the Divine Presence that has come to dwell within it.

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS VAYAKHEL - PEKUDEI PARSHAS HACHODESH • 26 ADAR • 24 MARCH

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7.08 PM
	MINCHA:	7.15 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	7.40 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10.24 AM
	TEHILLIM:	8.00 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	THE MOLAD FOR NISSAN IS ON MONDAY 7.04 (chalakim) PM	
	FARBRENGEN FOLLOWING DAVENING	
	MINCHA:	7.00 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8.03 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	7.05 PM
	MAARIV:	7.55 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 24-25 March	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	7:08	8:03
Adelaide	7:04	7:58
Brisbane	5:37	6:28
Darwin	6:37	7:26
Gold Coast	5:35	6:27
Perth	6:05	6:58
Sydney	6:43	7:37
Canberra	6:51	7:46
Launceston	6:59	7:56
Auckland	7:09	8:04
Wellington	7:08	8:05
Hobart	6:58	7:56
Byron Bay	6:34	7:26