

# LAMPLIGHTER

9 Iyar  
Parshas  
Acharei - Kedoshim  
**1294**  
5 May  
5777/2017

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week we read two Torah portions, Acharei and Kedoshim. Acharei, begins with the words, "And G-d spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron." Nadav and Avihu, both of whom were truly righteous men, were consumed by a great fire. Why did they deserve such a harsh punishment?

The Midrash offers some reasons why Nadav and Avihu died: They entered the Holy of Holies without permission; they performed their service without wearing the required priestly garments; they were not married and thus had no children. But what was so terrible about these infractions that it brought about their premature deaths?

Chasidic philosophy explains that Aaron's sons died precisely because of their high spiritual stature. Nadav and Avihu possessed an overwhelming love of G-d, which ultimately blinded them to their true purpose. Their deaths were caused by their good intentions which ran counter to G-d's intent in creating the world. Aaron's sons' desire to merge with G-dliness was incompatible with human existence. Their souls so longed to be one with G-d that they could no longer remain in their physical bodies, and the two men died.

On the one hand, this attests to Nadav and Avihu's high spiritual accomplishments. But on the other hand, their behavior was considered sinful because man was not created solely to fulfil his spiritual yearnings. G-d created man for the purpose of making the world holy through the performance of the Torah's commandments.

G-d gave us the responsibility to refine the world, purifying it and enabling physical matter to become a receptacle for holiness. G-d desires a "dwelling place below," not for us to follow only spiritual pursuits and disdain this world. Nadav and Avihu's excess in the realm of the spiritual, to the exclusion of the physical, was their downfall.

This is why the verse reads, "...when they had come near before G-d, and they died." Their death was not the result of their actions, but rather, the essence of their sin. Aaron's sons drew so close to G-d that physical existence was impossible.

Entering the Holy of Holies without permission was therefore symbolic of ascending too high; performing the service while being improperly clothed shows an unwillingness to "clothe" oneself in mitzvot, which are called the garments of the soul. Nadav and Avihu wanted to take the "short cut" to G-d, without having to trouble themselves with the obstacles posed by the physical world.

Likewise, the fact that neither Nadav nor Avihu married and had children showed their refusal to lead a natural, physical existence. Such a path to G-dliness was too cumbersome for them. However, this is not what G-d wants from us.

We learn a valuable lesson from their death: Although there are certain times when we feel a strong desire and longing for G-dliness and we experience a great spiritual uplift, we must carry those feelings into our daily lives and translate them into tangible actions. This is the purpose for which we have been created - to transform our physical surroundings into a dwelling place for the Divine Presence.

## Towards a Successful Revolution

By Tali Loewenthal

How will we celebrate Pesach in the time of the Messiah?

Hopefully we will all manage to squeeze into the old city of Jerusalem for the Seder Night. The fact that large numbers of people managed to do so two millennia ago was considered miraculous. Now we are rather more numerous and an even more obvious miracle will be required. The Seder will be conducted much as described in the Haggadah, with the key addition of the Paschal Lamb instead of the shank bone on the Seder Plate, and a Festive Offering instead of the Egg.

The advent of the Messiah will mean real freedom, for us and for every human being. Yet the memory and celebration of the Exodus from Egypt will still be significant. Our liberation from Egypt more than 3,300 years ago, celebrated at our Seder nights and the Pesach festival, set the pattern for the future: the ability to break free from a state of limitation and exile, to reach for and to achieve freedom.

In historical terms we can see a number of later instances when the Jewish people were in exile, suffering subjugation in some form, and then we broke free. Yet there is also a constantly repeated personal and psychological process. The Hebrew word for Egypt, Mitzrayim, has the same letters as the word metzarim meaning "limitations." Each day is potentially an "Egypt" from which we might go free in a fulfilled and joyful Exodus; then that new freedom is again seen to be limited compared with the possibility of greater and deeper freedom.

Might this not sound rather dangerous and chaotic? Perhaps here we can take a message from the parshah read this Shabbat, which mentions the tragic death of the two sons of Aaron, described earlier in Leviticus 10:1-7. They too were seeking "freedom" from the limitations of worldliness and materiality. They were seeking closeness with the Infinite, trying to enter the Holy of Holies, but in a dangerous and uncontrolled way.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe comments that indeed there is a paradoxical demand for each individual. Each one of us has to seek the highest level of freedom, including the ultimate of spiritual freedom and closeness to the Divine. At the same time, we have to be able to keep our feet on the ground and remain part of this physical and normal world!

It may seem that this paradox is not sustainable. The revolutionary attempt to break out of limitations without self-destructing is doomed to failure. Consequently, one might feel, do not try, it is too risky. Just keep your head down and go on making bricks for Pharaoh, meaning one's personal Pharaoh in one's personal Egypt.

However, the Rebbe comments, the teaching of our parshah is that it is possible. There is a way for Aaron to accomplish what his sons failed to achieve, as described in the parshah: on Yom Kippur he leaves worldly limitations, enters the Holy of Holies, and safely returns.

# Slice of LIFE

## Lag B'Omer Beginning

by Rabbi Uriel Vigler

Each year our community gives so much to ten of Israel's wounded soldiers. But as much as we give them, they give us so much more in return. They inspire us, they give us hope, they show us the strength of the individual and the strength of the Jewish nation. They teach us passion and dedication, commitment and Jewish pride.

One of the events we organized for the Israeli veterans in June 2010 was a cruise. We invited young professionals in our community to join the severely wounded soldiers for a Lag B'Omer bash. I sent out multiple texts and emails inviting people to attend. I made phone calls and mentioned it to everyone I bumped into.

I worked particularly hard to convince my friend (we'll call him Sam to protect his privacy), to come to the party. I texted him. No response. I emailed him. No response. I facebooked him. Still no response.

By Divine Providence I met Sam on the morning of the event. Excited, I asked him, "Nu, Sam, will we see you tonight?" He hemmed and hawed and tried to get out of it, but I cajoled him into making a commitment. I knew Sam takes his commitments seriously, so once he said he was coming, I knew he was coming.

When he came home from work that night he was exhausted and ready to hit the sack. But a commitment is a commitment. So Sam jumped into a taxi and headed to the water. Crosstown traffic was at its peak, and the taxi wasn't going anywhere. Intent on honoring his commitment, Sam jumped right out of

that cab and ran across Central Park, where he flagged down yet another taxi which brought him to the cruise terminal right in the nick of time. As Sam boarded, the boat left the harbor...

Now, at that same Lag B'Omer party was Sarah (also not her real name), a young woman who I knew only peripherally. Sarah was not a regular at our events, but when she heard about the cruise and the wounded IDF soldiers, she knew she wanted to participate.

Sam noticed Sarah, and something about her manner caught his eye. He wanted to approach her, but she was busy talking to the soldiers for much of the evening. Much as he wished to talk with her, the opportunity did not present itself that night.

Sometime later, Sam's friend asked him to go to another event. He was about to say "No, I'm too tired," when he decided to go along. Unbeknownst to Sam, Sarah was at that event too. When a friend invited Sam to join him - along with some other friends - for dinner, he realized that Sarah was among the group. He approached her and they hit it off immediately. They began dating and have been together since then.

Finally, this week Sam called me to share the happy news of their engagement. Sarah and Sam will be married in a few months' time.

Two happy individuals, a Divinely determined match, and the beginning of a new family. There is no doubt in my mind that our community received more than we gave that group of veterans who were the start of this blossoming relationship.

The morning after our event, I received an email from one of the attendees which really made me stop and think:

Dear Rabbi,  
What a great party last night!

I found myself chatting with your brother-in-law Avi Shlomo, and we began to share more meaningfully. As we discussed some of the stresses we were both facing, we concluded that it's important not to worry too much about those day-to-day issues, because something much bigger

might be right around the corner.

Later, as I walked home with my wife and young son, I had one of those "bigger experiences". Not 20 feet before the intersection my son stopped and asked me to carry him. He said he was tired. We stopped for a minute, I picked him up, adjusted him so he was comfortable and I could walk properly, and continued on our way.

The light was green and we began to cross the street. The first two lanes had cars which were stopped. The third lane seemed empty. But as we stepped onto the street, a car sped right through that third lane at 50mph, followed by numerous police cars! Had we been five feet ahead, that car could have killed all three of us.

My wife and I did not sleep well after that. We were both shaken, and grateful to be safe and healthy. And I can't stop thinking that Someone was watching over us. Someone "made" my son ask us to pick him up. Someone "made" us stop and fall a few feet behind where we should have been. And that Someone saved our lives.

Best Regards,

I re-read the email at least three times. It got me thinking: What was the miracle here? The most apparent miracle, was that G-d saved three lives. But the other miracle, the one we have to dig a bit deeper to find, is that Simon realized G-d saved his life.

It's all too easy to go through the day-to-day of life without noticing G-d directing, protecting and nurturing us. We're all guilty of it. But Simon's email served as a wake up call to me; a reminder to open my eyes and look for G-d. And once I remembered to look, I found Him everywhere. He is there with us every moment of every day.

*Rabbi Uriel Vigler and his wife Shevy co-direct Chabad Israel Center on the upper east side of New York City. Read more of Rabbi Vigler's posts at [chabadic.com](http://chabadic.com)*

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# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

## “G-d is All” vs. “All is G-d”

The difference between “G-d is All” and “All is G-d” is in the approach and deduction. In the first instance, our starting point is G-d, and through study and research we can deduce that G-d's Being is revealed even in material and “natural” things. Our study of the Unity of G-d and His other attributes will lead us to recognizing the same attributes in nature and the world around us, the practical results of which find expression in unity among mankind and the practice of G-d's precepts as the proper application of G-d's attributes in our own life, etc. One who sets out on this path dedicates himself wholly to communion with G-d. He is averse to all material aspects of life, including even the bare necessities connected with his physical well being, and tries to avoid them as much as possible. Being engaged in spiritual communion with G-d, he considers all material and physical necessities, even those permitted by the Torah, as a hindrance in his consecrated life. However, his intelligence convinces him that the material and physical world is but an expression of the Divine Being, and that in them, too, G-d is to be found.

In the second part of the statement, “All is G-d,” the starting point is the outer shell of the universe and all material things in it, a study of which will lead to the conclusion that there is cosmic unity in the whole world and that there is a Divine “spark” vitalizing everything, and, consequently—One Creator. Hence he serves G-d even while engaged in the material aspects of life, and does so with joy, inasmuch as it is in them and through them that he recognizes the greatness of the Creator and they help strengthen his unity with G-d.

Thus we have two ways in the service of G-d, of which the first is the easier one, while the second leads to a better fulfillment of the objective—to make this lowest physical world an abode for G-d.

## QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

### What does “Mazel Tov” mean?

**Question:** I always thought Mazel Tov meant “congratulations.” I recently heard that it actually means “good luck.” But I thought Jews don't believe in luck...?

**Answer:** Your confusion is understandable. The Talmud—the ancient encyclopedia of Jewish wisdom—seems to contradict itself on the issue. In one place it states, “On your birthday, your mazel is strong.” Elsewhere the Talmud reports, “The Jewish people are not subject to mazel!”

The word mazel literally means “a drip from above.” Mazel can have different connotations depending on its context, but they are all connected to this basic definition—something trickling down from above.

The signs of the zodiac are called mazalot. Jewish tradition sees the constellations on high as directing the destiny of individuals and nations down below. Thus mazel is the influence dripping down from the stars. (Over the years, bad or good mazel came to mean “luck” more than “destiny.”) When the Talmud says that we are not subject to mazel, it means that we are not limited to our destiny; rather, our own actions determine our fate.

There is another meaning of the word mazel that is more relevant to the phrase Mazel Tov. Mazel is the term used in Jewish mysticism to describe the root of the soul. The mystics say that only a ray of our soul actually inhabits our body. The main part of the soul, our mazel, remains above, shining down on us from a distance.

Have you ever experienced a sense of spontaneous intuition, where out of the blue you suddenly feel at peace with yourself and the universe? Or a sudden flash of inspiration that makes you see life in a new light? Occasionally we may receive an extra flux of energy from our soul above. It can happen at any time, but is most common at a time of celebration—a birth, birthday, brit, bar/bat mitzvah or wedding. It is especially at these times of joy that we are able to see beyond the mundane and the petty, and to sense the deeper truths of life.

When we tell someone Mazel Tov, we are giving them a blessing: May this drip of inspiration from your soul above not dissipate, but rather have a positive and lasting effect, that from this event onwards you should live your life with higher consciousness. You should be aware of the blessings in your life, and be ready to receive more and more. In other words: Good Mazel!

## A WORD

from the Director

*This coming Wednesday is Pesach Sheni, the "Second Passover." It is customary on Pesach Sheni to eat matza, together with bread, in commemoration of the day.*

*In the times of the Holy Temple, all those who were unable to offer the Passover sacrifice at the proper time, on the 14th of Nissan, were permitted to bring it in the second month, on the 14th of Iyar.*

*This special sacrifice was initiated during the second year of the Jewish people's wandering in the Sinai desert, a year after the first Passover had been celebrated in the wilderness.*

*Some Jews due to ritual impurity, had not been permitted to offer the Passover sacrifice.*

*They approached Moses and Aaron and protested, "Why are we kept back, that we may not offer the offering of G-d in the appointed season among the children of Israel?"*

*They complained that unavoidable circumstances had prevented them from offering the sacrifice. They did not want to be denied the great reward of performing the mitzva.*

*Our ancestors' request was sincere and valid, and so, permission to bring the Passover sacrifice one month later was granted to anyone, throughout the generations, who was ritually impure, in a distant place, was prevented by some unavoidable circumstance, failed unintentionally or even intentionally.*

*Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn, the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, points out that there are many essential lessons we can learn from Pesach Sheni, including that it is never too late to correct a past failing.*

*For us today, as we stand literally on the threshold of the Redemption, the most appropriate lesson is that what the Jews sincerely requested, they received!*

*In the spirit of Pesach Sheni, each of us today, must request, demand, ask and beg for the revelation of Moshiach and the commencement of the glorious Redemption. Then, certainly, G-d will hear our plea and answer them as in the days of old.*

J. I. Gutnick

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

There was once a pious and scholarly Chasid whom the Baal Shem Tov sent to serve as rabbi in a certain city. The young man took his responsibilities seriously and worked hard to improve the physical and spiritual condition of his flock. For a long time everyone was pleased by the new rabbi. Then two incidents occurred that aroused a decree against him up in Heaven:

One day the rabbi was studying in his house when he suddenly became very thirsty. There was no water in the house and he was so thirsty that he couldn't concentrate. Looking out the window, he saw the water-carrier walking rapidly in the opposite direction. The rabbi called out the window for him to stop.

Surprisingly, the water-carrier continued walking. The rabbi called loudly out the window again, but this also had no effect. The rabbi became angry, interpreting this as an affront to his rabbinical authority. He ran after the water-carrier, and when he finally caught up with him, slapped him. "When a rabbi calls to you, you must obey," he reprimanded him. The water-carrier said nothing in his defense. The rabbi's anger was unjustified, and precisely because of his greatness, a powerful decree was aroused against him.

The second incident occurred a short time later. In the town lived a Torah scholar who had become impoverished, whereupon the community had taken it upon itself to support him and his family. Every week the scholar received an anonymous stipend that allowed him to live in dignity.

Occasionally there were other poor people in need, and the donors to the scholar's fund refused to contribute, claiming that they had already given enough charity. When the rabbi heard what was happening, he declared that the needs of the many must take precedence. At that point several of the regular donors stopped contributing to the scholar's fund entirely, and others cut down on their contributions. From week to week the amount that was collected shrank, until eventually the person in charge decided that it wasn't worthwhile to expend all that effort for a few pennies, and the venture was abandoned. The next Shabbat eve the scholar received nothing. He burst into tears, which created another decree against the rabbi.

A trial was held in the Celestial court, and it was decided to deliver the rabbi into the hands of the Satan. The Satan was very pleased with his new mission. After much consideration he decided that he would punish the rabbi with a fate worse than death: he would cause him to renounce his faith!

The following Shabbat, immediately after the morning services, the rabbi was seized with an inexplicable urge to convert. Rushing home from synagogue, he threw off his tallit and started running through the streets in the direction of the priest's house, as if in the throes of a delirium.

When the priest opened his door and saw the rabbi standing on his threshold he was very surprised. He knew the rabbi very well, and even secretly respected him. He asked him the reason for his visit.

"I wish to renounce my faith," the rabbi replied. "And the sooner the better!"

The priest was shocked yet overjoyed. However, he invited him inside. After plying the rabbi with food and drink, the priest left him alone while he hurried off to prepare for the conversion ceremony. The rabbi, who had drunk a glass of whiskey, climbed into the nearest bed and immediately fell asleep.

One of the Baal Shem Tov's customs was to bring to mind all his Chasidim during the third Shabbat meal. The Baal Shem Tov would check on what each was doing to determine if help was needed. That Shabbat, however, when the Baal Shem tried to think about the rabbi he couldn't find him anywhere, neither in the higher realms nor in the lower. The Baal Shem Tov utilized all kinds of spiritual means until he finally located him in the priest's house, about to renounce his faith.

The Baal Shem Tov immediately protested to the Heavenly court, but the court insisted that the rabbi's punishment was just. The Baal Shem Tov disagreed and began to enumerate all of his merits, but to no avail. As a last

resort, the Baal Shem Tov mentioned that the rabbi was very careful to wash his hands for bread at the Melave Malka meal after Shabbat. The Baal Shem Tov was told that this particular merit had the power to save the rabbi but on condition that he wash for Melave Malka this Saturday night, as well.

Immediately after Shabbat, the Baal Shem Tov handed a challa to one of his Chasidim and instructed him, "Take this and go. And may G-d help you."

The Chasid did not ask questions but set out at once. He had no idea where he was going, but surely G-d would help. A few steps later and he found himself standing outside an unfamiliar house. It was the home of the priest, many hundreds of miles away...

For the second time that day the priest was surprised to find a Jew on his doorstep. Ushering him inside, he led him into the room where the rabbi was babbling in a drunken stupor about renouncing his faith. The Chasid then understood why the Baal Shem Tov had sent him.

The Chasid offered the rabbi the Baal Shem Tov's challa. The rabbi grabbed it and was about to eat when the Chasid stopped him. "You are still obligated to wash your hands and make a blessing before eating." The rabbi agreed, washed his hands, made the appropriate blessings and took a bite.

The holiness of the Baal Shem Tov's challa had an immediate effect. The rabbi awakened as if from a dream. "What have I done?" he began to wail. "Will I ever be able to find a tikun (rectification) for such a terrible sin?"

The Chasid calmed him and offered him encouragement. "In the same way the Baal Shem Tov has always taken care of you, so will he continue to lead you along the right path and show you a tikun."

"But how can I even go to the Baal Shem Tov?" the rabbi wept. "He is many thousands of parsangs from here..."

"Do not be afraid," the disciple reassured him. "I arrived here in a miraculous manner. Hold my belt. We will start walking..."

No sooner had they taken a couple of steps than the two men were miraculously transported to Mezhibozh and were standing outside the Baal Shem Tov's house. In fact, the Baal Shem Tov was still sitting at the table with his Chasidim, engrossed in thought. The rabbi resolved that he would not leave until the Baal Shem Tov gave him a tikun, and indeed, he eventually returned to G-d in complete repentance.

## PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

*Following the deaths of Nadav and Avihu, G-d warns against unauthorized entry "into the holy." Only one person, the kohen gadol ("high priest"), may, but once a year, on Yom Kippur, enter the innermost chamber in the Sanctuary to offer the sacred ketoret to G-d.*

*Another feature of the Day of Atonement service is the casting of lots over two goats, to determine which should be offered to G-d and which should be dispatched to carry off the sins of Israel to the wilderness.*

*The Parshah of Acharei also warns against bringing korbanot (animal or meal offerings) anywhere but in the Holy Temple, forbids the consumption of blood, and details the laws prohibiting incest and other deviant sexual relations. The Parshah of Kedoshim begins with the statement: "You shall be holy, for I, the L-rd your G-d, am holy." This is followed by dozens of mitzvot (divine commandments) through which the Jew sanctifies him- or herself and relates to the holiness of G-d.*

*These include: the prohibition against idolatry, the mitzvah of charity, the principle of equality before the law, Shabbat, sexual morality, honesty in business, honor and awe of one's parents, and the sacredness of life.*

*Also in Kedoshim is the dictum which the great sage Rabbi Akiva called a cardinal principle of Torah, and of which Hillel said, "This is the entire Torah, the rest is commentary"—"Love your fellow as yourself."*

## CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 5 - 6 May	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	5:11	6:08
Adelaide	5:11	6:08
Brisbane	4:55	5:49
Darwin	6:14	7:04
Gold Coast	4:53	5:47
Perth	5:17	6:12
Sydney	4:53	5:48
Canberra	4:59	5:55
Launceston	4:55	5:55
Auckland	5:13	6:11
Wellington	5:05	6:05
Hobart	4:51	5:52
Byron Bay	4:51	5:45

## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

### PARSHAS ACHAREI - KEDOSHIM • 9 IYAR • 5 MAY

<b>FRIDAY NIGHT:</b>	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5.11 PM
	MINCHA:	5.15 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5.45 PM
<b>SHABBOS DAY:</b>	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.38 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	5.05 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6.08 PM
<b>WEEKDAYS:</b>	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	5.10 PM
	MAARIV:	6.00 PM