

LAMPLIGHTER

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Parshas Naso
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

"And every offering of all the holy things...which they bring to the kohen, shall be his," states the Torah in this week's portion, Naso. The great Torah commentator Rashi explains, "This refers to bikurim (first fruits)."

The very first fruits to ripen are to be brought to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and given to the kohen (priest), as his due.

Agricultural produce does not grow by itself. In order to produce those fruits a Jew must toil countless hours painstakingly plowing, sowing and tending his fields. Yet instead of enjoying for himself the first tangible results of his labor, the Torah demands that they be brought to Jerusalem and presented to a total stranger!

We learn from this that the very first and best of whatever a person possesses should be used for the purpose of tzedaka (charity).

Many people don't find it too difficult to accept this principle when it comes to supporting religious institutions. They give willingly when asked to contribute to a synagogue or yeshiva.

But a strange thing occurs when it comes to giving tzedaka to a needy individual: "Why should I part with my hard-earned money to support him?" the Evil Inclination prompts us. "Why should his needs come before mine? Why must I part with the very best? Is not second best good enough? Better I should take care of myself first, and only afterward help others with whatever is left over."

We learn, however, from the mitzva of bikurim, that such is not the Jewish way. We are commanded to give the first fruits to the kohen, an individual, for his own personal use. Only after this is done are we permitted to derive benefit from the blessings G-d has given us.

Significantly, the Torah commands us to bring the first fruits to the Holy Temple, "the house of the L-rd your G-d" in Jerusalem before presenting them to the kohen. A Jew must first understand that whatever wealth is granted him from Above is not truly his, despite the labor he may have invested to amass it.

When a Jew realizes that everything, in reality, belongs to G-d, the protests of the Evil Inclination are silenced, and it is far easier to part with the "first fruits" of one's earnings even for another individual.

When a Jew acts in this manner, he can be assured of the blessing that Rashi speaks of in the verse that follows: "He who gives the kohen 'the gifts that are coming to him ... shall be blessed with great wealth.'"

Infinity in Disguise

By Tzvi Freeman

Ten, ten the spoons weighed" (Numbers 7:86)—the Ten Sayings by which the world was made correspond to the Ten Commandments by which the Torah was given.

Zohar

Infinite Light is masquerading as a finite world.

There are two pieces of evidence. First of all, there's a world appearing out of nothing. Something out of nothing is entirely beyond our conception, but we can know one thing: something finite can't generate a world out of the absolute void. Creativity has its limit—there's got to be something there to start with. Unless you're infinite. Then creativity is unlimited as well.

It turns out that the light that projects the cosmos into existence at each moment is infinite. If the cosmos it projects appears finite, it must be a disguise.

There's more evidence, something nobody seems willing to take into account. Perhaps it's one of those forbidden questions. Perhaps it just breaks too many assumptions. But we'll ask it anyway: Have the properties of light changed over the centuries? Has the power of gravity weakened with time? Has matter become less material? Everything else decays and passes over time, but the basic forces of nature stand constant and unchanging. If their source was finite, shouldn't they slowly wear down?

Evidence that they are no more than finite iterations of an infinite force. The force of the One Creator who is beyond time and change. So far beyond, that He can do that as well—He can dwell within time and change, and remain immutable.

Every piece of His world contains another form of infinitude.

The very design of the world incorporates infinity. In each and every thing you can examine in this world, you will find infinite wisdom. You will never exhaust the depth, the beauty, the intricacy, the mystery of any aspect of it—whether a blade of grass or a molecular structure or an atom.

From every event, there is no end to possible outcomes. The complexity of the microcosmos and the macrocosmos is such that infinite possibilities extend from every point in time. There is infinity in every step, in every second, as there is in every inch. The appearance of simplicity, of neatness that we can measure and record confidently in a book, is a facade. It is Infinity in disguise.

He could have made a world neat and tidy and immaculately measurable. Yes, He is infinite—but that also makes Him omnipotent. If He wanted, He could have made a finite world that had nothing to do with Him—no trace of the infinite anywhere.

Apparently, that is not His scheme. As the Zohar comments on the words of the verse, "Ten, ten the spoons weighed"—"the Ten Sayings by which the world was made correspond to the Ten Commandments by which the Torah was given."

Meaning that everything was made, the design of the cosmos was determined, with an ultimate goal in mind: That the divine should be able to make itself at home in our world.

That is why each article of our world, when you turn it over a few times and rub it between your fingers, turns out to be no more than a front for the infinite. Neat and measurable on the outside, unlimited capacity on the inside. In fact, you could call it "functional design": finitude, designed to be a home for the Infinite.

Slice of LIFE

Tuning In To Teens

by Arlene Hisiger

It is no secret that the teenage years can be quite challenging. Today, this is truer than ever. The typical high school student faces added responsibilities and pressures. Whether it is striving for excellence in grades, sports, extracurricular activities or just good old peer pressure, the life of a teen is packed. Against this backdrop, Jewish growth is not always high on the teen to-do list.

Eight years ago, Rabbi Yitzi and Rishi Hein settled in Pittsford, a Rochester, New York suburb, to open a new community Chabad center with a special emphasis on programming for Rochester area Jewish youth.

Armed with many years of youth-related service the exuberantly energetic 20-something Hein couple possess just the right mix of earnestness, knowledge, and approachability guaranteed to appeal to even the most challenging of youthful audiences.

The couple's foray into the field of teen programs began with social programs such as Bat Mitzvah Club, sushi-making and The Friendship Circle, a mentoring program that matches teenagers with special needs children. All the teen programs acquaint teens with Jewish values in a fun and meaningful way.

A couple of years ago, Rabbi Hein looked into a custom-crafted teen educational series designed by the Jewish Learning Institute (JLI),

the educational arm of Chabad Lubavitch. "I saw what the JLI for Teens series was accomplishing in other Jewish communities around the world," he said, "so I thought, 'why not try it here in Rochester?'"

Yet the rabbi still had a nagging worry. "Initially, I was a little skeptical that teens would want to study more," he admitted. "I mean, as noble as the idea might sound, maybe this type of program would not be a priority for them given their overcommitted schedules."

In the end, Rabbi Hein realized his fears were unfounded. Alex Hollenberg, a senior at Pittsford Sutherland High School, described the impetus for his attendance at the teen JLI study program, "This class is important to me," he said, "because I get to learn about Jewish values and how they relate to real-world situations. I learn about things I wouldn't have otherwise learned had I not attended the class. For instance, the Ten Commandments teach us both not to steal and not to kill; so are you allowed to steal to save a life?"

"It amazes me how legitimately busy these kids are," said Rabbi Hein, "they're striving for academic excellence and involved in sports. Yet their level of interest in participating in a forum to discuss these issues in a deep way blew my mind." Over the course of eight weeks, during the recent bleak winter months of October through December, some fifteen boys and girls spanning the gamut of Jewish affiliation, ranging in age from 14-18 years old and from all corners of the metropolitan area, gathered on Sunday evenings in the new Chabad Center of Pittsford to wrestle with Jewish law as it pertains to modern life.

The aim of the series titled Life on the Line: You Make the Call is, according to the informational flyer, to "discover a different way of navigating through life's tough decisions." With the help of textbooks, videos and interactive Power Point presentations, participants were encouraged to voice their opinions regarding the case studies examined during each

of the course modules. With intriguing module titles such as Heroes and Hoodlums, Your Money or My Life, and Last Man Standing, the students grappled with moral choices such as: Whose life is more valuable - yours or your friend's? Is it morally acceptable to save one's own life by killing another person? Is it permissible to steal or damage someone else's private property to save oneself from danger? To place these conflicts within a Jewish framework, the students delved into a wealth of Jewish sources, from the Talmud to the present day, to learn the Jewish approach to these modern-day dilemmas.

Helen Kaufman, a Pittsford Sutherland High School junior, stressed the importance of discussing modern issues within a Jewish context. "I think it's really important," she said, "to learn about what your religion believes regarding these issues." Sixteen year old Michael Seluanov, a junior at Honeoye Falls High School, underscored a greater appreciation for the worth of life as the most important take away message from the JLI teen sessions. "It really helped me understand the worth of life, within a Jewish context and Jewish values. You don't often find classes like these," he said. His parents, Vera and Andrei, were greatly impressed with the program as well and were pleased to see how motivated Michael was to attend.

"For us, this course was exactly right," Vera said. "We missed the window of opportunity for Jewish education for him when he was younger." Andrei shared that the family had been looking for a good Jewish studies program, expressly for teenagers, for quite some time. "Michael was very motivated to attend the classes because the discussions were relevant - real-life situations. He will definitely go to the next level."

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Waste of Time

...As to what you write regarding [your] depression – the Holy Tanya has already explained that all depression stems from an unholy source.

In any case, how is it that such a matter concerns yourself?

I wonder: How does a chassid have time to be depressed? Does one not realize that time is now the most precious of resources, its every moment an asset that must be utilized to the utmost?

How much time is being wasted on matters for which "petty" is too generous an adjective!

How to Feel Secure

With regard to your writing about your feeling of depression, etc., I trust it is surely unnecessary to explain to you at length that one of the basics of our Torah, Toras Chaim [the Torah of Life] (so called because it is the Jew's true guide in life, given by G-d, the Creator and Master of the world), is that G-d's benevolent Providence extends to each and everyone individually, as is frequently emphasized in Tehillim [Psalms] that G-d is your "Guardian" and your "Keeper" and is always "at your right hand," etc., so that every Jew can feel quite secure in the constant presence and watchfulness of G-d. It is only necessary to keep the channels open to receive G-d's blessings, and these channels are the everyday life and conduct in accordance with the Torah and Mitzvot to the best of one's ability. And every Jew has the ability to carry it out fully, since G-d provides this ability. It is largely, thereafter, up to one's own will and determination.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

Replicating Temple Vessels

Question: Rabbi Tzvi Freeman, I have read many of your articles about soul matters. You often explain that G-d is somehow "divided" into "sparks," and those "sparks" are present in everything, including non-animated objects such as sand. How can this idea be reconciled with G-d's absolute unity? And what then is the difference between this way of thought and pantheism?

Answer: To answer this, it's first very important that we distinguish between "G-d" and "that which is G-dly" (G-dliness). Everything that exists is sustained by G-d and has no true reality without Him—as we say, "there is nothing else but Him"—yet not all that exists is G-dly.

Let me explain G-dliness: All of the creation is sustained by G-d's will and wisdom. However, in our world, 99.99% of the time, it is in a very disguised and hidden fashion. Often it comes to the point that one of those beings continually sustained by G-dly light will deny the very G-d who sustains it! How this is possible is beyond the scope of what I am writing here. The Kabbalah describes a process of tzimtzum, contraction of light, in addition to concealment and encoding of the information that light carries—comparable, perhaps, to the way an e-mail or an image might be encrypted and encoded when sent over the Internet.

What is relevant to our issue is that in some instances, that concealment does not occur. The signal may be weak, but the source of light shines through nonetheless. These are the instances within creation we call kedushah ("holiness")—or "G-dly"; instances that point to their Creator and communicate to us His will and wisdom: Torah, mitzvahs, the tzaddikim (enlightened individuals), and any person who is carrying out G-d's will on earth.

The doctrine of hidden sparks simply states that, in fact, every creation must contain some glimmer of holiness—or else it could simply not exist. Our mission on earth is to reveal that spark within each thing. In many cases, we do that by using it for a mitzvah. In other cases that is not possible, and the only way to reveal that spark is by withstanding the challenges this article of creation may pose. Each spark has its particular path to be revealed, which corresponds to the path of the soul that comes to earth to live in a human body and to find that spark and reveal it.

Rabbi Freeman

A WORD

from the Director

This week we return to Chapter 1 of *Ethics of the Fathers*: "Antigonus of Socho...used to say: Do not be like servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward, but rather be like servants who serve their master without the intent of receiving a reward; and let the fear of Heaven be upon you."

Loving G-d and fearing G-d are "only" two of the 613 mitzvot. But fulfilling them properly affects the quality and even the practical observance of all of the Torah's commandments.

As explained in the Tanya, "Love [of G-d] is the root of all the 248 positive commands, all originating in it" and "fear is the root of the 365 prohibitive commands, fearing to rebel against the Supreme King of kings."

What prompts a person to act: cold, rational intelligence, or emotion? The Torah teaches that intellect, no matter how high the level of understanding one has attained, may not necessarily be reflected in behavior. By contrast, love and awe of G-d are the only true motivations that can compel a Jew to Torah observance.

"A mitzva performed without the proper intent is like a body without a soul," wrote the Arizal. Love and awe of G-d give our performance of mitzvot their vitality and "staying power." Yes, a Jew can do a mitzva by rote, simply to fulfill his obligation, but the mitzva won't be "alive."

There are many different levels of love and fear. A person may refrain from sin because he's afraid of being punished, or afraid of the damage it would do to his soul. Then there's a higher level of awe that is closer to embarrassment, shame at the thought of going against G-d's will.

As for love, a Jew may be prompted to do a mitzva because of its spiritual or physical benefits. A higher level is when one realizes that even the greatest reward is only a token, and that "one cannot truly cleave to Him except through the fulfillment" of His mitzvot.

May we all attain "a love that is completely independent" of all self-interest, and serve G-d with the best and purest of our emotions.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Rabbi Leib Sarah's was a man who never rested. How could he when there were always so many mitzvot which demanded his attention? Neither the sweltering heat nor the frozen winds prevented him from trudging along the paths of towns and villages. His mission was to collect funds to sustain hidden tzadikim and ransom Jews held captive by rapacious landlords.

Reb Leib Sarah's was well acquainted with the whereabouts of the many beneficent Jews who never refused to contribute for these holy causes. On one of his many trips through the countryside near Berdichev, Reb Leib Sarah's happened to meet a young man who made his living buying and selling spices.

"Young man, I have a very urgent need for 500 rubles," Reb Leib Sarah's said. The tzadik was well known, and although the young merchant had earmarked the money for purchasing merchandise, he didn't hesitate for a moment. He handed over the entire sum (which also happened to be all the money he had) and accepted in exchange a promissory note stating the date on which the loan would come due.

Reb Leib Sarah's instructed the young man to sell whatever merchandise remained in his possession and he went on his way to accomplish the holy mission which awaited him. As for the young merchant, since he had no more money, he had nothing to do in Berdichev. The only problem was what to tell his wife who was patiently waiting for the new merchandise for their shop.

The young man had no choice but to return, but he hesitated telling her the truth. So he decided on a likely story; he told her that he had failed to find the proper merchandise, and that he would make the trip again a few weeks hence. That seemed to satisfy her, but the young man looked forward anxiously to the date when the loan would be repaid and he could resume his business.

Finally the due date arrived and the young man stood in his shop waiting on customers. A man he had never seen before walked in and bought a large quantity of spices. He paid the entire bill and departed, but as soon as he was out of sight, the young man noticed that the customer had left a wallet on the counter. He dashed outside, but the man was nowhere to be seen.

"Oh well," he thought, "I will probably meet him at the afternoon prayers." So, he took the wallet with him - certain that he would encounter the owner - but the stranger was not in the synagogue.

The young man had just finished his prayers when he heard a familiar voice behind him ask, "Have you received your payment yet?" He looked and there was Reb Leib Sarah's.

"No, I haven't received it yet," the young man replied. Reb Leib Sarah's seemed surprised, but he said nothing and they parted.

When the young man went home he decided to open the wallet and count the money. To his surprise, it contained exactly the sum he was owed, and since this was the day on which the money was due, he began to think that this was indeed his payment.

He ran back to the shul to find Reb Leib Sarah's and tell him

about the payment. The tzadik was waiting for him, and was very pleased with the character of the young man. He had not even mentioned the tardiness of the payment when they had first spoken in the shul, and then the merchant had so swiftly come to tell him of the payment. He decided to reward the generous and good-hearted young man.

"Young man," the tzadik said, "you may make a request of me, and if I am able, I will fulfill it."

The young man didn't have to think for a moment. He instantly blurted out his desire: "I would love to see one of the 36 hidden tzadikim who sustain the world."

"That is not easy, but I shall fulfill my promise," answered Reb Leib Sarah's. The young man was brimming with happiness at the prospect of actually seeing one of these holy men with his own eyes. The long and arduous journey was nothing to him, and when he entered the remote little town, his joy could not be contained.

"Go to that street and enter the third house. There, sitting on the floor, you will see a man holding a needle and thread. Ask him to patch up your coat. As he works, you will be able to gaze into his face."

The merchant found the house, knocked and was ushered in. There, on the floor, sat an old man holding a needle and thread as if sewing something. "Could you please mend my coat?" the merchant asked the old man.

The tzadik took the garment into hands unaccustomed to sewing and laboriously began to stitch the garment. Meanwhile the young merchant thirstily drank in the shining features of the holy man.

When the repair was finished, the merchant paid with a whole ruble and took his leave. Returning to Reb Leib Sarah's, the young man was still under the spell of what he had witnessed.

The experience of having seen the holy face of the tzadik illuminated the life of the young merchant. And because he merited to see such holiness, he was given the strength to continue his selfless love of his fellow Jews all the rest of his life.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Completing the headcount of the Children of Israel taken in the Sinai Desert, a total of 8,580 Levite men between the ages of 30 and 50 are counted in a tally of those who will be doing the actual work of transporting the Tabernacle.

G-d communicates to Moses the law of the sotah, the wayward wife suspected of unfaithfulness to her husband. Also given is the law of the nazir, who forswears wine, lets his or her hair grow long, and is forbidden to become contaminated through contact with a dead body. Aaron and his descendants, the kohanim, are instructed on how to bless the people of Israel.

The leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel each bring their offerings for the inauguration of the altar. Although their gifts are identical, each is brought on a different day and is individually described by the Torah.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 2 - 3 June	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	4:51	5:51
Adelaide	4:54	5:53
Brisbane	4:43	5:38
Darwin	6:10	7:02
Gold Coast	4:40	5:36
Perth	5:02	5:59
Sydney	4:36	5:34
Canberra	4:41	5:40
Launceston	4:32	5:35
Auckland	4:54	5:54
Wellington	4:42	5:45
Hobart	4:27	5:31
Byron Bay	4:38	5:34

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS NASO • 8 SIVAN • 2 JUNE

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4.51 PM
	MINCHA:	5.00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5.30 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.50 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	4.45 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	5.51 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	4.55 PM
	MAARIV:	5.40 PM