

LAMPLIGHTER

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Eikev, Moses recounts the story of the Golden Calf and the breaking of the first set of Tablets. After breaking the Tablets, Moses prayed for 40 days and nights that G-d would forgive the Jewish people. G-d then commands Moses, "Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first... I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets that you broke."

G-d then commands the Jewish people to build Him a sanctuary, "so the nations will know that the sin of the Calf has been forgiven."

Our Sages teach that one of the factors contributing to the sin of the Golden Calf was the great quantity of gold in the Jews' possession.

Because they were unable to withstand the temptation, one might think that, after their sin, G-d would forbid them the use of gold for all time. Yet we find that the exact opposite occurred: the very first material mentioned in the building of the sanctuary - the purpose of which was to atone for the Golden Calf - is gold!

"The world was not worthy to use of gold..." our Sages explain. "It was created solely for the purpose of the sanctuary and the Holy Temple." After being brought into existence for this reason, permission was then granted for mankind to utilize gold for other purposes as well.

This is but one example of the principle that everything in the world is created to serve a G-dly purpose. "Everything created by G-d in His world is only created for His honor," the Mishna teaches.

G-d grants man the free will to choose how His creations are to be used - to fulfill the purpose for which they were created, or, G-d forbid, to do evil. Gold, created solely for use in the sanctuary and Temple, was utilized by the Children of Israel for their idol-worship. The gross misuse of the gold, however, did not alter its original purpose one iota. G-d has no desire to destroy His world simply because some people are foolish!

Furthermore, the fact that G-d allows man the capacity to utilize His creations for evil adds to His honor. For human nature is such that when a person is confronted by obstacles, inner strengths that would not otherwise have been revealed are brought to the fore, strengthening his resolve in the service of G-d.

This fundamental principle applies not only to things created during the Six Days of Creation, but to modern discoveries and advancements in technology that are constantly being invented. These too, are part of Divine plan, and are also "discovered" solely for a G-dly purpose. The true objective behind all of creation, in reality, is one and the same - to enhance the service of the Creator of all things.

The fact that some people choose to utilize these means for corrupt purposes does not detract from their original intent. On the contrary, when a Jew utilizes technology for the purpose of spreading Torah and its commandments, he elevates them to their true perfection, for which they were discovered initially.

Unsatisfied or Unfulfilled?

By Lazer Gurkow

"And He afflicted you; He made you hunger and He fed you the manna" (Deuteronomy 8:3). To describe the manna experience as one of hunger and affliction seems a bit curious. What does the Torah have in mind?

This question is best addressed by the following parable. A great rabbi delivered a deep lecture and presented an entirely new approach to the study of Talmud. Among the students, there were two groups who walked away unsatisfied.

To the first group, the new insight opened a host of new possibilities, and they were left unsatisfied with their previous understanding. They returned to their books to study again. To the second group, listening to a lecture of such depth felt like a waste of time, for they could barely grasp it.

The manna which our ancestors ate in the desert was a material food of spiritual quality. It was not digested in the conventional manner, nor did it have the aesthetic appearance and appetizing texture that we associate with the experience of food. Eating manna was more nourishment of soul than of body, and many Jews were left unsatisfied.

There were those who could not relate to the spiritual fulfillment and craved the pleasure of material food; they were left physically "afflicted" and "hungry." Others related to the spirituality so well that they found themselves unsatisfied and wanting more. They were left spiritually "afflicted and hungry."

The same concept holds true today with regards to prayer and Torah study. There are those who find prayer monotonous and boring and are completely oblivious to the spirituality inherent in prayer. The prayer experience leaves them feeling deprived and spiritually barren.

Others arrive at services eager to "commune with G-d." However, when their meditations allow them a glimpse of an even greater sphere that is as of yet beyond them, they, too, walk away unsatisfied and yearn for more.

The difference between the two groups is that the first is left demoralized and uninspired. The latter receive an encouraging boost that raises them to the next level.

Fortunate are those who belong to the second group of G-d's "unsatisfied customers."

Slice of LIFE

Baseball Heroes

Excerpt from a speech delivered by Rabbi Paysach Krohn in 1997

In the competitive world of the 1990's, one wonders whether the old adage still holds true: "It's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game." The following true story illustrates the power of human concern - even in the face of intense competition.

In Brooklyn, New York, Chush is a school that caters to learning-disabled children. Some children remain in Chush for their entire school careers, while others can be mainstreamed into conventional Jewish schools. There are a few children who attend Chush for most of the week and attend a regular yeshiva on Sundays.

At a Chush fund-raising dinner, the father of a Chush child delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended.

After extolling the school and its dedicated staff, he cried out, "Where is the perfection in my son Shaya? Everything that G-d does is done with perfection. But my child cannot understand things as other children do. My child cannot remember facts and figures as other children do. Where is G-d's perfection?"

The audience was shocked by the question, pained by the father's anguish, and stilled by his piercing query. "I believe," the father answered, "that when G-d brings a child like this into the world, the perfection that He seeks is in the way people react to this child." He then told the following story about his son Shaya.

Shaya is one of those children

who attends Chush during the week and yeshiva on Sundays.

One Sunday afternoon, Shaya and his father came to the yeshiva as his classmates were playing baseball. The game was in progress and as Shaya and his father made their way towards the ballfield, Shaya said, "Do you think you could get me into the game?" Shaya's father knew his son was not at all athletic, and that most boys would not want him on their team. But Shaya's father understood that if his son was chosen in, it would give him a comfortable sense of belonging.

Shaya's father approached one of the boys in the field and asked, "Do you think my Shaya could get into the game?" The boy looked around for guidance from his teammates. Getting none, he took matters into his own hands and said, "We are losing by six runs and the game is already in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him up to bat in the ninth inning." Shaya's father was ecstatic as Shaya smiled broadly. Shaya was told to put on a glove and go out to play short center field.

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shaya's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shaya's team scored again - and now with two outs and the bases loaded and the potential winning runs on base, Shaya was scheduled to be up. Would the team actually let Shaya bat at this juncture and give away their chance to win the game?

Surprisingly, Shaya was told to take a bat and try to get a hit. Everyone knew that it was all but impossible, for Shaya didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, let alone hit with it. However as Shaya stepped up to the plate, the pitcher moved in a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shaya should at least be able to make contact.

The first pitch came in and Shaya swung clumsily and missed. One of Shaya's teammates came up to Shaya and together they held the bat and faced the pitcher waiting for the next pitch. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly towards Shaya.

As the next pitch came in, Shaya and his teammate swung the bat and together they hit a slow ground ball to the pitcher. The pitcher picked up the

soft grounder and could easily have thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shaya would have been out and that would have ended the game. Instead, the pitcher took the ball and threw it on a high arc to right field, far and wide beyond the first baseman's reach. Everyone started yelling, "Shaya, run to first! Shaya, run to first!" Never in his life had Shaya run to first. He scampered down the baseline wide eyed and startled.

By the time he reached first base, the right fielder had the ball. He could have thrown the ball to the second baseman who would tag out Shaya, who was still running. But the rightfielder understood what the pitcher's intentions were, so he threw the ball high and far over the third baseman's head, as everyone yelled, "Shaya, run to second! Shaya, run to second."

Shaya ran towards second base as the runners ahead of him deliriously circled the bases towards home. As Shaya reached second base, the opposing shortstop ran towards him, turned him towards the direction of third base and shouted, "Shaya, run to third!"

As Shaya rounded third, the boys from both teams ran behind him screaming, "Shaya, run home! Shaya, run home!" Shaya ran home, stepped on home plate and all 18 boys lifted him on their shoulders and made him the hero, as he had just hit the "grand slam" and won the game for his team.

"That day," said the father who now had tears rolling down his face, "those 18 boys reached their level of perfection. They showed that it is not only those who are talented that should be recognized, but also those who have less talent. They too are human beings, they too have feelings and emotions, they too are people, they too want to feel important."

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Greeting and Blessing:

After the very long interval, I received your letter of the 12th of Menachem Av, in addition to the telephone message, to which you received my reply. May G-d grant that you have good news to report about all the things which you mentioned in your letter.

You can well understand my reaction to your writing that you have done "very little" in your secular studies lately. Without entering upon a discussion concerning the matter itself, the fact is that where there is a sincere effort to do a thing efficiently and attain the objective fully, one finds later the opportunity to utilize these efforts in many ways. Above all, time is one of the most precious gifts which G-d has given to the human being, and which should be used to the fullest advantage, inasmuch as the loss of time cannot be retrieved. Although I can well understand the reasons which you mention, which prevented you from making better use of your time, nevertheless knowing you, knowing also the encouragement that your wife surely gives you, you ought to find the ways of overcoming all difficulties. Our Sages said, "One should not bewail the past," for the important thing is to concentrate on the future.

May G-d grant that you will fulfill the precept "Know Him in all your ways," thus putting to good advantage also your secular studies in the service of G-d. I need hardly point out to you the teachings of Chassidus on the subject from the Baal Shem Tov, whose 200th anniversary of the completion of his life's work we are observing this year, of the Old Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism], and of my father-in-law of saintly memory. I refer you, particularly, to the Maamar [Chasidic discourse] b'laylo ha'hu, Purim 5700, end of par. 4.

You do not mention anything about your studies of the Torah, both Nigleh [the revealed parts of Torah] and Chassidus, though I trust that you not only have regular study periods, but that you also make efforts to increase them.

Hoping to hear good news from you in all above, and wishing you especially a successful year in connection with your forthcoming birthday,

With blessing,

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

Do You Really Believe That the Torah Is Historical?

Question: Do you still hold on to the belief that the Torah is Divine? Literary experts and historians have compared the Bible to other writings of 3,000 years ago (when the Torah was supposedly given by G-d) and say that its style doesn't fit into the literature of that time frame, and must have been written much later. How can you ignore a fact that has been scientifically proven?

Answer: Did you hear the joke about the recent study on frogs? Scientists took a sample of over 100 frogs of various species and did the following test:

They placed each frog on a table, crept up behind it and shouted, "Jump!" The frog jumped.

Then they cut off one leg, and again shouted jump. It jumped, although not as far.

They then cut off a second leg and told it to jump, and then a third, each time observing that the frog responded, but jumped smaller distances.

Finally they cut off the fourth leg and again shouted "Jump!" They were amazed to find that in every case the result was the same. The frog did not move at all.

The conclusion: When you cut off a frog's legs, it goes deaf. It is scientifically proven.

We all come to the conclusions that we want to believe. When the experts find that the Torah is too advanced for its time, they conclude it must have been written later than claimed. When I study Torah, I conclude that it is still ahead of its time, because it was written by G-d for all times and all places. Even the parts that seem archaic and outdated, when explained on a deeper level, have powerful messages that I often feel are speaking directly to me. They are relevant and inspiring to me, right here, right now.

Many have tried to either prove or disprove the Torah's divinity. Neither attempt will be successful. G-d wants us to have free choice. If we listen to His word, it is not by force. To maintain balance, there will always be valid arguments to discredit Him and His Torah. We can choose to buy those arguments, or see beyond them. Then, when we open ourselves to the Torah's message, the choice to do so is coming from within.

G-d has given you a mission. How you respond is totally up to you. You can be as deaf as a legless frog, or you can take a leap in response to your higher calling.

A WORD

from the Director

The 20th of Av, is the yahrzeit of the Rebbe's father, Reb Levi Yitzchok. Reb Levi Yitzchok, or "Reb Levik" as he was known, suffered greatly at the hands of the Communist government. But throughout his ordeal, he remained steadfast in his commitment to teach Torah. He encouraged and inspired those around him to observe mitzvot and reconnect to their rich traditions.

In 1939 Reb Levik was arrested for teaching Torah, which the Communists said undermined the authority of the government. Reb Levi Yitzchok was sentenced to five years in exile.

Reb Levi Yitzchok stood as a great inspiration then and in our time as well. His efforts helped many Jews hold onto the teachings of the Torah when those around them wanted to eradicate all traces of religious life. In addition, many of the people Reb Levik taught and inspired went on to be positive influences to their brethren.

In the 5th chapter of Pirkei Avot we learn about people, such as those Reb Levik inspired to teach and influence others.

It states: "Whenever a person causes many to have merit, no sin shall come through him."

This does not mean that if a person has a positive influence on others he will no longer have free will and be prevented from sinning, but that when a person brings so many other people to do the right thing, as did Reb Levi Yitzchok, the positive influence this generates prevents him from becoming involved in situations where he might be led to sin.

We hope and pray that we will soon be led into the era of Moshiach, when every influence will be a positive one, and every situation will be one that leads only to good.

J. I. Gutnick

Here's my Story

Personal Encounters
With The Rebbe. Culled From JEM's
'My Encounter' Project

Fatherly Love

Before the war, my father learned in a yeshiva in Hungary. Although he was not from a chasidic background, he made sure that I got some exposure to chasidism.

When I was a kid he took me to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and also to Satmar and Bobov. He wanted me to experience the whole spectrum of Judaism – the modern side, the chassidic side, the non-chassidic side – to see what it's all about. That way, wherever I found myself, I'd be able to fit in.

In 1973, my Bar Mitzvah year, my parents sent me to a summer camp in Israel. When I came back, I learned that my father was about to undergo surgery. It turned out he had colon cancer, and from that point on his health went downhill.

Two years later, just before Purim, my father's condition took a turn for the worse. We went to the hospital, the doctors examined him, then they called me in and said, "You'd better go home; your father is staying here tonight." That night they opened him up, but they saw that there wasn't much they could do – just to try to make the end as painless as possible.

Of course, we didn't want to give up, so we went to several rabbis for blessings. We even tried the alternative medicines of the time. My father was losing a lot of weight – he was five-foot-six, but pretty soon he weighed barely ninety pounds. Nothing was working.

Then one cousin told us, "You should go to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe." It was winter; the first week of the month of Kislev. Five of us went – my father and mother, my grandmother, my sister and me. My father was so ill... he was haggard; his face had lost its luster.

We entered the Rebbe's office. I stood in the back of the room, and my father spoke quietly with the Rebbe for a few minutes. When the Rebbe finished speaking with my father we began to leave, but suddenly the Rebbe said to me, "You stay."

I was already anxious with everything that was going on; I was only sixteen years old at the time, and I got very, very nervous.

The Rebbe said to me, "Kum ... Come over," gesturing that I should approach. He went over to his shelf and pulled out two Talmuds Tractate Brochos, and he said to me in Yiddish:

"By the laws of medicine, your father is extremely sick now, he's near the end. G-d will help, but your father will be depressed, and you're going to be depressed. You'll need something to give you strength. I want to teach you something which will help keep you going."

He opened up to page 10a and began to teach me the story from Kings II [20:1-6] which the Talmud is discussing. King Hizkiyahu is ill, and the Prophet Isaiah visits him. The prophet tells the king that his days are numbered and he should prepare to die, but Hizkiyahu refuses to accept this, and he says, "No, I have faith in G-d." Although the prophet says it is too late, Hizkiyahu begins to pray because, "even if the tip of the sword is pointed at your throat, you should never give up hope."

I was standing across the desk from the Rebbe, and he was sitting. But in middle of the story, the Rebbe motioned for me to come around the desk, and I looked into the volume together with him. He translated the dialog slowly into Yiddish, word by word, pointing to the place, like a father teaches his son. The point the Talmud is making through this story is that we should not mix into G-d's business. We have to do what we have to do, and G-d does what He does, and that's it.

I remember him pointing to the words with his finger, then looking at me, and pointing again. He had me repeat it until it was clear that I understood. Though my father was quite knowledgeable in Talmud, the Rebbe wanted to make sure that I understood the Talmud's idea well, and that I could explain it to my father, as well – that even at death's door you should never give up hope, you should never become depressed, and you should accept G-d's will. It took quite some time – about twenty-five minutes.

What stands out in my mind more than anything else is the earnest, loving way the Rebbe looked at me. I never saw that type of love. Here I was, a stranger to him, a young boy coming with his father who needed a blessing. He gave his blessing, but then he gave much more. He saw that this boy needed fatherly love, and he gave it.

When I came out of the Rebbe's office, I was sweating. As we drove home, I told my father what had happened, and he broke down and cried. As soon as we got home, we learned the piece at least three or four times.

I remember my father asked me a few times, "Do you understand why the Rebbe told you to learn this with me? Do you understand?"

Two and a half months after our visit with the Rebbe, my father passed away. It was Monday night, the 18th of Shevat, and the last thing he said to me was that I had given him tremendous nachas.

After he passed away, I was on the verge of becoming despondent. I didn't have relatives to look after me – my mother was an only child, and my father's whole family had been wiped out in the war – and I was only sixteen years old.

I don't know how to thank the Rebbe for this fact, but he sat me down and told me the facts of life. Everyone else had been telling me, "No, it'll be good; it'll be good." The Rebbe looked at me and told me how to be prepared for it.

I had times when things got tough. I left yeshiva for a while and wandered away. But then I remembered what the Rebbe taught me. Through those years, I probably learned that piece of Talmud thirty times, and it got me back on track.

The fact that I am a religious Jew and that I raised a beautiful family is because of that day when the Rebbe spent so much time with me and explained to me: When you have a problem and are feeling that you've hit rock bottom, remember never to give up, because G-d is there. Open your heart to Him, and He will help you.

Mr. Yaakov Schiffman lives with his family in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, New York. He was interviewed in the My Encounter studio in March, 2013.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

In the Parshah of Eikev ("Because"), Moses continues his closing address to the children of Israel, promising them that if they will fulfill the commandments (mitzvot) of the Torah, they will prosper in the Land they are about to conquer and settle in keeping with G-d's promise to their forefathers.

Moses also rebukes them for their failings in their first generation as a people, recalling their worship of the Golden Calf, the rebellion of Korach, the sin of the spies, their angering of G-d at Taveirah, Massah and Kivrot Hataavah ("The Graves of Lust"). "You have been rebellious against G-d," he says to them, "since the day I knew you." But he also speaks of G-d's forgiveness of their sins, and the Second Tablets which G-d inscribed and gave to them following their repentance.

Their forty years in the desert, says Moses to the people, during which G-d sustained them with daily manna from heaven, was to teach them "that man does not live on bread alone, but by the utterance of G-d's mouth does man live."

Moses describes the land they are about to enter as "flowing with milk and honey," blessed with the "seven kinds" (wheat, barley, grapevines, figs, pomegranates, olive oil and dates), and as the place that is the focus of G-d's providence of His world. He commands them to destroy the idols of the land's former masters, and to beware lest they become haughty and begin to believe that "my power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth."

A key passage in our Parshah is the second chapter of the Shema, which repeats the fundamental mitzvot enumerated in the Shema's first chapter, and describes the rewards of fulfilling G-d's commandments and the adverse results (famine and exile) of their neglect. It is also the source of the precept of prayer, and includes a reference to the resurrection of the dead in the messianic age.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 11 - 12 August	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	5:23	6:22
Adelaide	5:23	6:21
Brisbane	5:07	6:01
Darwin	6:24	7:14
Gold Coast	5:04	5:59
Perth	5:29	6:25
Sydney	5:05	6:02
Canberra	6:11	6:08
Launceston	5:08	6:10
Auckland	5:26	6:24
Wellington	5:18	6:19
Hobart	5:04	6:07
Byron Bay	5:03	5:57

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS EIKEV SHABBOS CHOF AV • 19 AV • 11 AUGUST

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:23 PM
	MINCHA:	5:30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:00 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:45 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	5:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:22 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8:00/9:15/10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	5:30 PM
	MAARIV:	6:20 PM