

# LAMPLIGHTER

24 Shevat  
Parshas  
Mishpatim -  
Shekalim  
**1334**  
9 February  
5778/2018

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Mishpatim, we find the verse: "If you lend money to My people..." The word if usually implies an optional act. However, lending money (without interest) is actually a mitzva, a commandment! According to the Midrash, G-d only tells the Jewish people to do and observe those things which He, Himself does. Thus it follows that G-d also observes the precept of "If you lend money to My people."

A loan is given to someone even if he doesn't deserve it. Nonetheless, it is not a gift; the borrower must ultimately repay the loan.

G-d, too, provides man with various abilities that he does not necessarily deserve. He demands, though, that this "loan" be repaid - that the abilities be utilized for the realization of one's mission in life.

There are two types of loans: loan of an object and loan of money. The difference between them is that in the first case the borrower must return the same object, for it does not become his property. A monetary loan, however, is "given to be spent"; it becomes the property of the debtor and he may use it any way he desires.

When G-d provides man with abilities it is like a monetary loan. Man chooses how he will use these abilities. Will he use them for his own purposes or to realize his mission in life?

A loan, even of abilities, is given to be spent. Every Jew is permitted to take his loan and to utilize it for his personal affairs. However, he must always bear in mind the ultimate purpose for which the loan was intended.

Practically speaking, the Midrash comments that lending money to the poor is tantamount to lending to G-d. And in Proverbs it says, "He that is gracious to the poor, lends to the Eternal and He will repay him..."

When G-d pays back His debt, though, He does so according to His measure. Just as G-d is infinite, He recompenses without limit.

Charity is equivalent to all the mitzvot (commandments). Among the various levels in charity, the highest is gemilut chasadim. Gemilut chasadim literally means performance of kindness. In colloquial usage, though, this term usually refers to granting [interest] free loans.

Our sages say that gemilut chasadim is superior to charity, for charity can be given only to the poor while free loans are given to both the poor and the rich. Charity implies the existence of a rich person and a poor person. But, gemilut chasadim is not limited.

## Intellectuals Enter Here

*By Shimon Posner*

Mitzvot, the commandments which G-d enjoins upon the people, can be classified into three groups:

Mishpatim -- social legislation, rulings similar to those every society espouses: a grid of rational social intervention.

Edut -- the testimonies of our culture and history, commemorations similar to every society's need to remember and keep alive its past.

Chukim -- the supra-rational dictates only the Divine can comprehend, and mortals follow on faith alone.

Our Torah portion's name is Mishpatim; it deals with the first category, the precepts of social legislation that have a basis in logic. "And these are the mishpatim that I place before you," it begins.

It is unusual for a portion to begin with the word "and." The Midrash therefore infers a connection between this Torah portion and the previous one, a connection which is stronger than between other neighboring portions. Yitro, last week's portion, spoke of the Ten Commandments at Sinai. The Ten Commandments juxtapose secular morals and principles of Divine faith. This reminds us that judgments of reason must also be founded upon Divine Will, not upon the dictates of society. "And these are the mishpatim" tells us to expand that idea.

Some sixty years ago the question on the vanguard of social evolution was still: Why do I need G-d to tell me to be good? I know that myself! I can be my own barometer in life. Society is capable of deeming what is acceptable and what is not. (In Jewish circles the question narrowed to: Can't I be a good person without being a good Jew? Can't I be a good Jew without keeping kosher and Shabbat?) The social justice of Biblical tradition retained some status; it concurred with the spirit of the times. Secular movements advancing social causes abounded and they accomplished wonderful things. Humanity was doing well; Divine instruction, or intervention, seemed redundant.

The question changed during the social upheaval of the Sixties/Seventies. The question was now, "Why be good? Who says what you consider good is good? What you call good is good for you; what someone else calls good is good for him." This challenge reduced the word good to an emasculated state, where it became easily manipulated, judged on a sliding scale and worthless. The previous generation did not realize that this was the logical conclusion of a course they had set in action. Nor did they realize how deeply embedded in (and indebted to) the Biblical traditions they were.

Society judges everything relative to itself: subjectively. No subjective judgment can be unmitigated truth. Even if at times our judgment concurs with truth, we must remember that although now they run parallel, they come from different places and are headed to separate destinations.

It is commendable and necessary to involve intellectual pursuit in Yiddishkeit. But it is mandatory to respect the sanctity, the Divinity, Yiddishkeit possesses. "I am the L-rd your G-d.... And these are the mishpatim I place before you... If one man hits another ...If an ox gores a man... If a man opens a pit..." All these are laws governing a society; on their surface, they seem mundane. Trace them to their roots, beneath the surface. They are holy, they are just and they endure.

# Slice of LIFE

## The Wedding Dress That Made History

*A Glimmer of Joy in the Displaced Persons Camp*

by Helen Schwimmer

Lilly Friedman doesn't remember the last name of the woman who designed and sewed the wedding gown she wore when she walked down the aisle over sixty years ago. But the grandmother of seven does recall that when she first told her fiancé Ludwig that she had always dreamed of being married in a white gown, he realized he had his work cut out for him.

For the tall, lanky twenty-one year old who had survived hunger, disease and torture this was a different kind of challenge. How was he ever going to find such a dress in the Bergen Belsen Displaced Person's camp, where they felt grateful for the clothes on their backs?

Fate would intervene in the guise of a former German pilot who walked into the food distribution center where Ludwig worked, eager to make a trade for his worthless parachute. In exchange for two pounds of coffee beans and a couple of packs of cigarettes Lilly would have her wedding gown.

For two weeks Miriam the seamstress worked under the curious eyes of her fellow DPs, carefully fashioning the six parachute panels into a simple, long sleeved gown with a rolled collar and a fitted waist that tied in the back with a bow. When the dress was completed she sewed the leftover material into a matching shirt for the groom.

A white wedding gown may have seemed like a frivolous request in the surreal environment of a Displaced Persons camp, but for Lilly the dress symbolized the innocent, normal life she and her family had once led- before

the world descended into madness.

Lilly and her siblings were raised in a Torah observant home in the small town of Zarica, Czechoslovakia where her father was a teacher, respected and well liked by the young yeshiva students he taught in nearby Irsheva.

He and his two sons were marked for extermination immediately upon arrival at Auschwitz. For Lilly and her sisters it was only the first stop on their long journey of persecution, which included Plashof, Neustadt, Gross Rosen and finally Bergen Belsen.

Four hundred people marched fifteen miles in the snow to the town of Celle on January 27, 1946 to attend Lilly and Ludwig's wedding. The town synagogue, damaged and desecrated, had been lovingly renovated by the DPs with the meager materials available to them. When a Sefer Torah arrived from England they converted an old kitchen cabinet into a makeshift Aron Kodesh.

"My sisters and I lost everything. Our parents. Our two brothers. Our homes. The most important thing was to build a new home." Six months later, Lilly's sister Ilona wore the dress when she married Max Traeger. After that came cousin Rosie. How many brides wore Lilly's dress?

"I stopped counting after seventeen," she recalls. With the camps experiencing the highest marriage rate in the world, Lilly's gown was in great demand.

In 1948, when President Harry Truman finally permitted 100,000 Jews who had been languishing in DP camps since the end of the war to emigrate, the gown accompanied Lilly across the ocean to America. Unable to part with her dress, it lay at the bottom of her bedroom closet for close to 50 years, "not even good enough for a garage sale."

"I was happy when it found such a good home."

Home is at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. When Lily's niece, a volunteer, told museum officials about her aunt's dress, they immediately recognized its historical significance and displayed the gown in a specially designed showcase,

guaranteed to preserve it for 500 years.

But before being placed in its permanent quarters at the American museum, Lilly Friedman's dress had one more journey to make.

Bergen Belsen, the museum, opened its doors on October 28, 2007. The German government invited Lilly and her sisters to be their guests for the grand opening. They initially declined, but finally traveled to Hanover the following year with their children, their grandchildren and extended families to view the extraordinary exhibit created for the wedding dress made from a parachute.

Lilly's family, who were all familiar with the stories about the wedding in Celle, were eager to visit the synagogue. They found the building had been completely renovated and modernized. But when they pulled aside the handsome curtain they were astounded to find that the Aron Kodesh, made from a kitchen cabinet, had remained untouched- a testament to the profound faith of the survivors. As Lilly stood on the bima once again she beckoned to her granddaughter, Jackie, to stand beside her where she was once a kallah. "It was an emotional trip. We cried a lot."

Two weeks later, the woman who had once stood trembling before the selective eyes of the infamous Dr. Josef Mengele returned home and witnessed the marriage of her granddaughter.

The three Lax sisters, Lilly, Ilona and Eva, who together survived Auschwitz, a forced labor camp, a death march and Bergen Belsen, have remained close and today live within walking distance of each other in Brooklyn. As mere teenagers they managed to outwit and outlive a monstrous killing machine, then went on to marry, have children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, and were ultimately honored by the country that had marked them for extinction.

As young brides, they had stood underneath the wedding canopy and recited the blessings that their ancestors had been saying for thousands of years. In doing so, they chose to honor the legacy of those who had perished by choosing life.

Published by **The Chabad House of Caulfield** in conjunction with the

**Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.**

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ISSUE 1334

### WEEKLY VIDEO



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# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

## In Which Body Will a Reincarnated Soul Return?

I received your letter in which you ask the question "if a soul has come back to earth several times to complete its duty here, when Messiah comes in which form will the soul come back?"

I was pleased to note from your letter that you are taking an interest in your studies and follow the instructions of Torah as you are taught in the Yeshivah in New Haven.

As for your question, it was already asked a very long time ago by one of our great teachers of the Talmud, Rabbi Hizkiah, as mentioned in the holy book "Zohar" (Part 1, page 131a). The answer given there by another great teacher of the Mishnah, Rabbi Jose, is that the soul will come back to life in the body in which it has accomplished Torah and Mitzvoth during her lifetime on this earth, and that a body which did not practice Torah and Mitzvoth on earth will not come back to life. This answer must be considered in the light of a further explanation by the great Rabbi Isaac Luria, who lived about 400 years ago, and is known as Ari (the "Lion"). (About his life and work you may have read in the "Talks and Tales.") The saintly Ari explained that it is almost impossible for a Jew not to fulfill at least some Mitzvoth. Therefore, in accordance with the answer in Zohar, almost all bodies will come back to life. The question then is in which body will the soul return if it had been in more than one body. The answer, strange as it may seem at first glance, is that it will return in all bodies it had inhabited. To understand how this is possible, let us remember that the souls of mankind started from two people, Adam and Eve. Their souls included all the souls of the future generations, in a way a single seed includes in it future generations of trees, fruits, and seeds. In the same way the souls of parents are not just two souls, but they can split up into soul sparks, each of which is in turn a complete soul. Therefore, when a Jew performs a Mitzvah, the body takes part in it and it is no longer "dry wood" that rots away, but it will come back to life with a soul which is a Divine spark, and which was included in the original soul. Thus at the Time of Resurrection (after Messiah will come) all "parts" of a "general" soul will each have a separate body, just as parents will come back to life with all their children.

If you find the above a little difficult to understand, you can ask your teacher to explain to you more fully, or leave the question until you grow older. But you may be sure that no good deed, no Mitzvah, not even a single minute spent in the study of the Torah, is ever lost.

With blessing,

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*This Shabbat we bless the new month of Adar. Our Sages have taught that when the month of Adar begins we should increase in happiness.*

*Happiness is related to Moshiach in numerous ways. For starters, we are taught that "Happiness breaks through boundaries." Moshiach, too, is referred to as one who "breaks through boundaries."*

*Additionally, the word Moshiach, is sometimes spelled without the Hebrew letter yud. At these times it is the same letters as the Hebrew word for happiness - samayach. When we are samayach - happy, we bring Moshiach.*

*The story is told about one of the great sages of Poland that when he was a little boy he asked his father for an apple but was refused.*

*The enterprising youngster recited the blessing for fruit. His father could not possibly allow the blessing to be recited in vain and promptly handed his son an apple.*

*The Rebbe used this story to describe the relationship between happiness and the imminent Redemption. The Rebbe explained that, "If the Jewish people begin now to rejoice already in the Redemption, out of absolute trust that G-d will speedily send us Moshiach, this joy in itself will (as it were) compel our Father in heaven to fulfill His children's wish to redeem them from exile."*

*Why is happiness such an effective means of hastening the Redemption and preparing ourselves for Moshiach's imminent arrival? Again, let us look at the Rebbe's words.*

*"The nature of happiness is that it permeates through the entire scope of the person's existence. When a person is happy, he lives joyfully. This happiness affects the way he conducts his life and all the people with whom he comes in contact. The person shares happiness with those around him and his happiness brings him success in all matters."*

*Live Moshiach! Make someone happy today. It doesn't take much - a smile, a kind word, a phone call to say, "I was thinking of you."*

*J. I. Gutterman*

## QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

*With Rabbi Aron Moss*

### Is New-Wave Kabbalah Authentic?

**Question:** *I was watching a news report the other day about Madonna (now known as Esther). She is discussing how Kabbalah has changed her life, the new views she has and the insight she has gained from learning with her Rabbi. She apparently even keeps a kosher home. My question is - what are your thoughts on the masses learning Kabbalah? Is it a good thing? Or is it a fad?*

**Answer:** I'm not sure how authentic the "Kabbalah" being studied by Madonna is, but I would imagine there are much worse things she could be doing with her time. If it has indeed made her a better person - good for her.

The renewed interest in Kabbalah is a good thing. The Kabbalists always said that although in earlier generations Kabbalah was a restricted area of study, a time will come when these teachings will become available to everyone. Its blend of profound thought and down to earth spirituality is much needed today.

The question is not so much who can study Kabbalah, but who can teach it and how it is taught. Some modern exponents of the Kabbalah claim that it is a separate religion, distinct from Judaism. This claim is not only untrue, it is self-destructive, and one should beware of such teachers.

The Kabbalists call Jewish mysticism the Pardes, meaning "The Garden." If you see a beautiful flower in a garden, you may have the urge to pick it and take it home to enjoy its beauty. But a flower won't last long out of its natural habitat. Once it is disconnected from its life-force it will very quickly wither and die.

Taking Kabbalah out of its Jewish context and removing it from Jewish practice, is like picking a flower from a garden. It looks beautiful and smells nice for a while, but soon it starts to wither, rot and stink. Kabbalah is a living, breathing spirituality that is nourished by the rich soil of Jewish wisdom and practice. But those who are calling it a separate religion, for the obvious reason of gaining a wider audience, are turning something deep and holy into just another passing fad. It looks good, creates a stir, but won't last.

While one can taste the teachings of Kabbalah even without being particularly observant of Judaism, you can't detach it from its source. Kabbalah is the heart of Judaism. A body without a heart is lifeless. A heart without its body is useless. Judaism without its mystical side can become dry and unattractive. But Kabbalah without the grounding of practical Judaism is an uprooted flower.

We are a searching generation. We've tried empty materialism and it has failed to sustain us. We have experimented with spiritual escapism and it has left us floating towards nowhere. It is time to taste the fruits of The Garden, the deepest mystical insights grounded in the fertile soil of the Jewish tradition and observance. That's real Kabbalah.

IT HAPPENED



By Yerachmiel Tilles

**The Bloodless Challah**

Rabbi Yitzchak of Kalish, the subsequent Rebbe of Vorki in Poland and the brother of Rabbi Meir of Premishlan, kept an open house. All travelers were welcome. One Friday, a gentile man came in and asked for a piece of bread. The Rebbe's wife had only whole challahs in the house at that moment – challah that she had just baked in honor of the Shabbat. She did not want to cut into one of these challah's, but the Rebbe urged, "Cut the challah, blood won't come from it."

She did as her husband asked, and gave the gentile as much bread as he needed to satisfy his hunger.

Some time later, Rabbi Yitzchak had to travel to Hungary. His route went through the Carpathian Mountains. There, he was seized by a gang of robbers who took away everything he had. Then they marched him to their leader, who would decide whether or not to kill him.

But the leader of that gang turned out to be the very same man to whom the Rebbe's wife had fed her challah! He recognized Rabbi Yitzchak at once, and told his men, "This Jew kept me alive. Do not kill him – and return everything that you have taken from him!"

The robbers did as they were ordered, and Rabbi Yitzchak was allowed to leave in peace.

Upon his return home, he addressed his wife and said, "As I told you: 'Cut the challah, blood won't come from it.'"

**A Tale of Two Cows**

Many of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov's ways might have seemed strange to an outsider. But Reb Zev Wolf Kitzes, the Baal Shem Tov's constant companion, had enough confidence in his Rebbe never to doubt his actions. He knew that in the end -- even if it took years -- all would be understood.

Reb Zev Wolf once accompanied the Baal Shem Tov on a visit to a certain village Jew. The impoverished villager welcomed the Chassidic master into his home.

"I must have a donation of eighteen rubles for a very important cause," the Baal Shem Tov requested. The poor man did not have this large sum. But, considering that it was the Baal Shem Tov making the request, the villager took some of his furniture and his cow, sold them, and gave the Baal Shem Tov the money. Reb Zev Wolf looked on silently while his master took the money and then departed.

Several days later the villager's rent was due on his inn. He could not produce the sum and the landlord evicted him. The villager, seeing no future for himself in this small village, decided to try his luck elsewhere. He finally found himself a tiny hut in a different village with a different landlord. By selling some more of his possessions, the villager managed to buy a cow. The cow provided him with his sole source of income; he sold her milk and eked out a meager living.

Some time later the local landowner's cow became sick and her milk was unusable. One of the squire's servants who knew of the new tenant quickly went to this villager and bought milk for the squire.

When the squire tasted the milk, he commented, "This milk is of a

superior quality. Tell the owner of this cow that I will pay handsomely for the privilege of being his only customer."

This incident turned the tide of fortune for the villager. Each day he delivered milk to the manor and each day the squire commented on the quality of the milk and milk products derived from it. He grew fond of the Jew and began to consult him about his business, slowly turning over to him many responsibilities. The squire trusted him implicitly and appreciated the Jew's honesty, reliability, and faithful service.

The squire's relationship and bond with the villager became so deep that, being childless, he transferred ownership of his entire estate, which included that village and the nearby town and its surrounding lands, to the Jew. Feeling that now everything was in good hands, the squire took leave and went abroad after having given the Jew legal title to that area.

A few years later, Reb Zev Wolf came to the village of the new landowner collecting money on behalf of Jewish prisoners and captives. Reb Zev Wolf had already collected all but 300 rubles of the sum which the Baal Shem Tov had designated.

Upon meeting with the village rabbi, Reb Zev Wolf questioned him as to why he was so festively attired. "I am going, together with a group of the town dignitaries, to greet the landlord of this city who will be paying us a visit today," said the rabbi. "Why don't you come along with us? He is a Jew and will most probably be willing to contribute to your cause."

Reb Zev Wolf accompanied the rabbi and his companions. The landlord greeted the delegation warmly, paying special attention to Reb Zev Wolf. After a little while, the landlord took Reb Zev Wolf aside. "You don't remember me, do you?" he asked. Reb Zev Wolf could not place the wealthy man's face. The landlord took out 300 rubles and gave it to Reb Zev Wolf.

It was only upon returning to the Baal Shem Tov that Reb Zev Wolf understood the entire story. "The last 300 rubles were donated by the village Jew whom we once asked for a donation of 18 rubles. Today he is a wealthy man."

"Let me now tell you why I extracted that large sum from him when his circumstances were so difficult," explained the Baal Shem Tov. "A change of fortune was awaiting him in the future but not in that place. It was necessary to bring him to the end of his rope so that he would be forced to leave and settle elsewhere. That is exactly what happened. The rest you already know."

**PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL**

Following the revelation at Sinai, G-d legislates a series of laws for the people of Israel. These include the laws of the indentured servant; the penalties for murder, kidnapping, assault and theft; civil laws pertaining to redress of damages, the granting of loans and the responsibilities of the "Four Guardians"; and the rules governing the conduct of justice by courts of law.

Also included are laws warning against mistreatment of foreigners; the observance of the seasonal festivals, and the agricultural gifts that are to be brought to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem; the prohibition against cooking meat with milk; and the mitzvah of prayer. Altogether, the Parshah of Mishpatim contains 53 mitzvot—23 imperative commandments and 30 prohibitions.

G-d promises to bring the people of Israel to the Holy Land, and warns them against assuming the pagan ways of its current inhabitants.

The people of Israel proclaim, "We will do and we will hear all that G-d commands us." Leaving Aaron and Hur in charge in the Israelite camp, Moses ascends Mount Sinai and remains there for forty days and forty nights to receive the Torah from G-d.

**CANDLE LIGHTING**



	Shabbos 9 - 10 February	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	8:08	9:06
Adelaide	7:58	8:55
Brisbane	6:19	7:13
Darwin	7:00	7:50
Gold Coast	6:18	7:12
Perth	6:54	7:50
Sydney	7:36	8:33
Canberra	7:47	8:44
Launceston	8:06	9:07
Auckland	8:07	9:05
Wellington	8:15	9:16
Hobart	8:08	9:11
Byron Bay	7:19	8:13

**CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH**

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

**PARSHAS MISHPATIM - SHEKALIM • 24 SHEVAT • 9 FEBRUARY**

<b>FRIDAY NIGHT:</b>	MINCHA	8.15 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	8.45 PM
<b>SHABBOS DAY:</b>	TEHILIM	8.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	10.06 AM
	SHACHARIS	10.00 AM
	MOLAD WILL BE	Thursday 3.09 (3 chalakim) PM
	FARBRENGEN AFTER DAVENING	
	MINCHA	8.10 PM
<b>WEEKDAYS:</b>	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	8.10 PM
	MAARIV	8.55 PM