

LAMPLIGHTER

19 Iyar
Parshas
Emor
1346
4 May
5778/2018

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Emor, contains the verse: "You shall bring the omer of the first of your harvest to the kohen [priest]." This refers to two types of mincha offering that were brought in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem: the omer offering, which was brought on Passover, and the "two breads" of Shavuot.

The omer offering officially allowed the new harvest to be eaten. Before the omer was brought, it was forbidden to eat from the new crop of grain. Even afterwards it was forbidden to bring offerings of new grain until after the "two breads" was offered on Shavuot.

There was, however, a difference between the two prohibitions. If an offering of new grain was brought before the omer, it was invalid. But if it was brought after the omer but before the "two breads," it was considered kosher "after the fact," even though it was originally prohibited.

There are many legal reasons for this distinction, but it can also be explained in terms of the inner spiritual significance of these two offerings:

The omer offering consisted of barley, which the Talmudic Sages deemed "foodstuff for animals." The "two breads" consisted of wheat, "the foodstuff of man."

The various offerings in the Holy Temple are symbolic of our offering up to G-d the different components of our soul. The omer symbolizes the offering of the "animalistic" part of us, the "animal soul." The "two breads" is symbolic of the elevation of the component that makes us "man," the "G-dly soul."

This helps explain why it was forbidden to eat from the new grain before the omer was brought: Before a person has worked on and refined his animal soul, he cannot even think about refining the world around him. Not only will he not have a positive effect, but he is liable to deteriorate even further. The first step is to subjugate oneself to G-d before turning outward.

After the animal soul has been refined a person can then proceed to the second step, i.e., the elevation of his G-dly soul. The offering of new grain was technically prohibited until Shavuot.

This also helps explain why one prohibition was absolute whereas the other was not. Subjugating the animal soul is a basic requirement in the service of G-d. Once a person has refined his lowest inclinations, the attempt to achieve higher spiritual levels only relates to perfecting that service. So even if a person "jumped the gun" and brought an offering of new grain before Shavuot, it was still valid "after the fact," as he already possessed the minimum level of sanctity.

No, I Don't Want to Hear Ahmadinejad's Opinions

By Levi Avtzon

In our "open" society where everything our parents believed in and died for is open for debate; where the "other perspective" is always entertained; where the more immoral, racist, or sadistic the speaker at the podium is, the greater the round of applause he receives from our "educated elite," I fear for the future.

When a Holocaust denier is debated on campus, when Hitler is portrayed as a person with his own "point of view," when Ahmadinejad is invited to share his rants on Ivy League colleges, an alarm must ring.

Sometimes I wonder if the open-minded loyalists aren't in truth closed minded, by the mere fact that they cannot entertain the thought that the "old-schoolers" had anything right, so they must shatter the taboo, must hear the radicals, and must applaud the morally corrupt.

The Torah reading of Emor opens with the following verse (Leviticus 21:1):

"G-d said to Moses: Say to the priests, Aaron's sons, and you shall say to them: 'Let no priest become ritually impure through contact with a dead person...'"

Why does the verse repeat itself—"Say to the priests... and you shall say to them"? Answers the Talmud: "The redundant wording is intended to enjoin the adults with regards to minors." I.e., the adults must ensure that the young priests also retain their ritual purity.

This is the first time in the Torah that G-d commands the Jewish people to educate their children. And about what? Regarding ritual impurity.

What is the logic behind ritual impurity? Why does contact with a corpse (or any other ritual-impurity generating substance) cause spiritual "defilement"? We don't know. G-d has chosen not to share with us the rationale.

Are unexplained commandments the first thing to teach a child? Should we not first present them with the commonsense laws, and only after we have convinced them regarding the beauty and logic of the Torah and its laws, do we, with a red face and an apologetic tone, whisper to the kids about some "yet to be explained commandments" with a quick disclaimer that "these are not the prototype of religion and they must not be taken out of context"?

Absolutely not, says the Torah. A child must first and foremost know that what G-d says we follow, no questions asked. "Na'aseh v'nishma—we will do then we will understand," said the Jews at the giving of the Torah at Sinai. Ever since, these two words have been our modus operandi and our key to survival. Self sacrifice for ideals have been our method of surviving for more than 3,300 years.

Questions are, of course, encouraged for the "people of the book"; but there are guidelines, there are taboos. And no matter where our inquiries may lead us, we know that G-d's word is the first and last in any discussion.

If we would only educate our children with these black and white rules in their younger years, we would not cry bitter tears when Ahmadinejad gets a standing ovation from our future doctors, lawyers and politicians.

Let us reclaim our innocence. Let us hold tight to the enduring stump of our ancient religion and values, and not to the falling leaves of the "isms."

Not everything is up for debate.

Slice of LIFE

Zahavah's Friend

By Tuvia Bolton

One afternoon, about ten years ago, I entered the office of our Yeshiva in Kfar Chabad (the Chabad village in Israel) and checked the voice mail on our telephone. The first message was: "My name is Zahavah and my phone number is 9876544."

She obviously had the wrong number, so I decided I'd do her a favor and call her back. I called the number she left, and when Zahavah answered I tried to explain to her that she had made a mistake. "One minute," she said, "this is Kfar Chabad, right? I want to speak to Kfar Chabad."

When I answered in the affirmative, she continued: "Good! Well, I have a friend called Sarah. She's pregnant and says she can't afford another child, she already has three and her husband doesn't earn much, so she decided to have an abortion. I tried to talk her out of it, even sent rabbis and experts to her, they talked to her for hours but nothing worked. Now she says that the only thing that will change her mind is if the Rebbe of Chabad himself

calls her and personally tells her not to do it. That is why I called you. You're Chabad, right?"

I explained to Zahavah that the Rebbe is very busy, that he prays, studies and teaches Torah twenty hours a day and also answers about one thousand letters and requests each day, so it's unreasonable to expect him to call people back on the phone.

I suggested that I was willing to send a fax to the Rebbe explaining Sarah's situation and ask for a blessing that the next person that speaks with her should succeed in convincing her to have the baby.

Zahavah agreed, I sent the fax, and just one hour later I received a call from the Rebbe's office that the Rebbe had issued an answer!

The Rebbe wrote, "Is it true that people spoke to her seriously and did not succeed? I will pray for her."

I immediately called Zahavah and excitedly read her the Rebbe's answer.

For a moment she was silent and then she slowly said, "Is the Rebbe saying that I'm lying? That no one ever spoke to Sarah?"

I really hadn't thought about it but I realized that she had a point. I tried to think of some other possible

explanation for the Rebbe's words but she cut me off.

"The Rebbe sits over there in New York! How can he know if I'm telling the truth or not?"

There was silence for a minute; I didn't know what to say.

Finally she said, "Well Rabbi, I want you to know that there is no Zahavah... I am Sarah. No one ever spoke to me about not having the abortion. I don't know how the Rebbe knew! But one thing is sure -- I just got the answer, in person, from the Rebbe I was waiting for. Please tell him that I'm not going to do the abortion. Tell him that I decided to have the baby and to trust that G-d will help."

I faxed in what she said to the Rebbe's office and three hours later I received yet another reply:

"Thank you for the good news. It is written in a Mishna of the [Talmudic] Tractate Sanhedrin that anyone who saves one Jewish soul it is as though he saved the entire world. Please tell her that she has just saved the entire world. And with that merit, G-d will send her blessings of success, health and nachas (joy)."

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield
in conjunction with the

Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

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ISSUE 1346

WEEKLY VIDEO



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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Importance of Early Childhood Education

By the Grace of G-d
5730 [1970]
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing!

...The Ten Commandments begin with the fundamental precepts of man's relation to G-d, and conclude with precepts governing man's relation to man. This emphasizes that even the most elementary ethical and moral precepts have a validity and effectiveness only if they derive from the authority of "I am G-d your G-d" and "Thou shalt have no other gods."

The history of mankind has continuously demonstrated that human life can make no real progress where the imperatives of morality and ethics are not based on the authority of the Supreme Being, but are human inventions that can be changed and modified to suit the proclivities of the age. The state of the generation of the present day is the best proof of that.

In Jewish life, in particular, there can be no separation between morality and ethics on the one hand, and our belief in One G-d on the other. Unity is the very core of both our belief and our daily conduct, where the material and spiritual aspects of life must be brought into full harmony, with the spiritual aspect being the predominating and determining factor.

There can be no difference of opinion as to the necessity to bring up a child in the proper relationship towards others, with respect for parents and elders, and so forth, from his earliest age. On the same basis, it is equally imperative to bring up a Jewish child in the spirit of Torah and Mitzvot from his earliest age. Only this kind of upbringing and education can be called a complete and unified Chinuch, a true Torah-Chinuch. This is what the wisest of all men meant when he said, "Train the child in the way he should go, and he will not depart from it when he grows old"

(Prov. 22:6).

(Excerpt from a letter)

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Why is My Family Insulted by My Kosher Diet?

Question: Ever since I started keeping kosher, there has been major tension in the family. My sister is hurt that I won't eat at her house and says that I am being "holier-than-thou," and my parents say that I am tearing the family apart. What can I do?

Answer: There are hundreds of diets out there these days. Whenever a group of friends sit down to eat, someone will say something like, "I can't eat anything here, I'm on the Mutkin's diet," or, "I can't eat carbohydrates after 10:00 a.m.," or, "I can only eat green peas and watermelons until the next full moon." Such announcements are usually met with little more than a shrug - if they choose to starve themselves that's their thing.

But when someone says, "I can't eat anything here, I keep kosher," the reaction is rarely so tame. For some reason, Jews feel challenged by another Jew being more observant than they are, and often take it as a personal attack. To your sister, when you say you can't eat her food it is as if you are saying that she is not good enough for you, that she's not a real Jew like you. You were talking about your own eating habits, but she is hearing a judgment on her Jewish identity.

This is not a rational reaction. Perhaps she hears in your words the subconscious voice of her own Jewish soul, yearning to live a more Jewish life. Whatever it is, your job is to keep the peace. You need to make it clear that by keeping kosher you are in no way judging or condemning anyone else, you have merely made a decision about your own observance. You are not asking anyone to change their ways, but only to respect the change that you have made.

It is your responsibility to maintain good relations with your family, and to achieve this you should be willing to go out of your way. Continue to visit your sister, and organize kosher food for yourself. Be as accommodating and undemanding as you can. If you handle it right, it will bring the family closer, because you will come to respect and understand each other better than before.

The kosher diet is spiritual. It doesn't promise to make you lose weight or feel healthy, but it is supposed to refine the spirit. Be a living example of a refined kosher soul with the way you treat your family.

A WORD

from the Director

We are currently in the Jewish month known as Iyar. In the Torah, Iyar is referred to as the second month, since it is the second month from Nisan. It is also called Ziv - the month of radiance (Kings I) - because the sun's radiance begins to grow. Iyar is also a month of healing, for the generation of Jews who came out of Egypt were healed this month from all their illnesses, as they prepared to receive the Torah. In fact, the word Iyar spelled in Hebrew letters is an acronym for the verse, "I G-d am your Healer."

The month of Iyar for the generation of the desert was, in essence, a foretaste of the Messianic Era when we will witness ultimate physical and spiritual bliss. According to the Midrash (Breishit Rabba) everyone will be healed of all their diseases. At the time of the Redemption, we are told, G-d will take the sun out of the special sheath in which He enclosed it.

These special rays of the sun which had previously been hidden are healing rays and will cure everyone of all their ailments. The blind, the deaf, and the mute, anyone who has any illness or disease, any blemish or disability, will be healed. Death itself will cease, as the Prophet Isaiah said, "Death will be swallowed up forever and G-d will wipe the tears from every face."

When will these miracles occur? There are two stages to the Redemption. The first stage is the one about which Maimonides writes, "The world will follow its normal course." This stage is a precursor for the second, later stage when we will see changes in the conduct of the world. The laws of nature will be changed to what they were originally intended to be, that is, as they functioned while Adam and Eve were still in the Garden of Eden. At this time we will see the actual fulfillment of our Prophets' words such as the wolf at peace with the lamb, etc.

It is in this second stage that we will witness the Resurrection of the Dead - the last of Maimonides' Thirteen Principles of Faith.

May the month of Iyar truly be a month of healing--spiritual, physical and emotional healing for the Jewish people and the entire world.

J. I. Gutterick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Rabbi Meir Makes Peace Between a Husband and Wife

Rebbe Zecharia, the son-in-law of Rabbi Levi, would tell this story:

Rebbe Meir would teach Torah on Friday nights in the synagogue in Chamat, a small town near Tiberius, and there was a woman who used to listen to his lectures. One night, Rebbe Meir spoke for longer than usual, and the woman stayed until he finished. By the time she got home, the candles had already burned down. "Where were you?!" demanded her husband.

"I was listening to a Torah lecture," she answered.

Her husband, a scoffer, said to her, "I swear that you will not enter my house until you go spit in the face of the rabbi who was lecturing."

Not knowing what to do, she stayed outside, until her neighbors said to her, "Come, let's go together to the rabbi."

When Rebbe Meir saw them coming, G-d gave him insight into the problem. He immediately pretended that his eye hurt him.

"I need someone to spit in my eye, to cure it! Can one among you do it?" he asked.

Her friends nudged her forward.

"Spit in my eye seven times and I'll be cured," Rebbe Meir told her.

When she did, he told her, "Go home and tell your husband, 'You said I should spit once, but I spit seven times!'"

His students were appalled, and asked, "Rebbe, how could you let people disgrace you like that? When they disgrace a Torah scholar, they disgrace the Torah! If you'd told us to, we'd have forced her husband to let her come home!"

Rebbe Meir answered, "The honor of Meir is not greater than the honor of G-d! If the Torah tells us to erase the name of G-d for the sake of peace between a husband and wife in the case of a sotah (wayward wife),¹ surely Meir can be dishonored for the same reason!"

The Returnee

The students of Rabbi Dov Ber, the great Maggid of Mezerich, prized the opportunity to serve their master. Thus, they developed a rotation, in which they each took a turn assisting their teacher.

It happened during the turn of Meilech, who would one day gain renown as Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk:

"Meilech," called the Maggid from his room. "Do you hear what they are saying right now in heaven? The mitzvah to love a fellow Jew means that one must love a complete sinner exactly as one would a pristine tzaddik (righteous person).

"A tzaddik is able to arouse latent abilities that are hidden deep in the soul of another, thus enabling even a sinner to return to G-d," continued the Maggid. "The Chevraya Kadisha (Holy Brotherhood, a term used for the elite disciples of the Maggid) has the ability to arouse a complete sinner to return to G-d."

The following morning, Rabbi Elimelech shared this wondrous teaching with his fellows, who understood that they had their work cut out for them. They immediately set out to understand the Maggid's words, each one offering his interpretation. During the course of the conversation, they shared stories and teachings of the sages on the subject of teshuvah (repentance).

Suddenly, the door opened and a stranger walked in. He stood for a few minutes, listening to their conversation, before shouting: "What are you doing, sitting around in a synagogue talking about Torah study and repentance? What is Torah? What is teshuvah?"

He then continued to berate them and laugh at their sincere discussions.

The men rose to pray with great fervor and copious sobs. They then recited Psalms together, allowing the inspired words of King David to express their desire to help others come closer to G-d.

Unmoved, the man continued to scoff, calling them "batlanim" ("loafers"). Undeterred, they continued to display only kindness, telling him how every Jewish soul is infinitely precious in the eyes of G-d.

Slowly but surely, their words had the desired effect, and the man turned his life around, becoming a pious and G-d-fearing Jew.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

The Torah section of Emor ("Speak") begins with the special laws pertaining to the kohanim ("priests"), the kohen gadol ("high priest"), and the Temple service: A kohen may not become ritually impure through contact with a dead body, save on the occasion of the death of a close relative. A kohen may not marry a divorcee, or a woman with a promiscuous past; a kohen gadol can marry only a virgin. A kohen with a physical deformity cannot serve in the Holy Temple, nor can a deformed animal be brought as an offering.

A newborn calf, lamb or kid must be left with its mother for seven days before being eligible for an offering; one may not slaughter an animal and its offspring on the same day.

The second part of Emor lists the annual Callings of Holiness—the festivals of the Jewish calendar: the weekly Shabbat; the bringing of the Passover offering on 14 Nissan; the seven-day Passover festival beginning on 15 Nissan; the bringing of the Omer offering from the first barley harvest on the second day of Passover, and the commencement, on that day, of the 49-day Counting of the Omer, culminating in the festival of Shavuot on the fiftieth day; a "remembrance of shofar blowing" on 1 Tishrei; a solemn fast day on 10 Tishrei; the Sukkot festival—during which we are to dwell in huts for seven days and take the "Four Kinds"—beginning on 15 Tishrei; and the immediately following holiday of the "eighth day" of Sukkot (Shemini Atzeret).

Next the Torah discusses the lighting of the menorah in the Temple, and the showbread (lechem hapanim) placed weekly on the table there.

Emor concludes with the incident of a man executed for blasphemy, and the penalties for murder (death) and for injuring one's fellow or destroying his property (monetary compensation).

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 4 - 5 May	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	5:12	6:10
Adelaide	5:13	6:09
Brisbane	4:56	5:50
Darwin	6:15	7:05
Gold Coast	4:54	5:47
Perth	5:18	6:13
Sydney	4:54	5:49
Canberra	5:00	5:56
Launceston	4:57	5:56
Auckland	5:15	6:12
Wellington	5:06	6:06
Hobart	4:53	5:54
Byron Bay	4:52	5:46

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS EMOR • 19 IYAR • 4 MAY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	5.20 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	5.50 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.38 AM
	SHACHARIS	10.00 AM
	MINCHA	5.05 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	5.15 PM
	MAARIV	6.00 PM