

LAMPLIGHTER

4 Sivan
Parshas
Bamidbar
1403
7 June
5779/2019

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

Shavuot is the holiday on which we celebrate the giving of the Torah, when G-d Himself descended on Mount Sinai before the entire Jewish people. The world stood still as G-d's voice thundered the first of the Ten Commandments: "I am the L-rd your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Egypt."

Our Sages ask a pointed question: What was so special about the exodus from Egypt that G-d chose to mention it in the very first Commandment? Why not "I am the L-rd your G-d, Who created heaven and earth"? Is not the creation of the world more fundamental than an isolated historical incident involving only a few million people?

In addition, the exodus from Egypt - although a great miracle - involved only that generation. The existence of the physical world, however, is a phenomenon which each generation can point to as evidence of G-d's greatness. Why then did G-d give the exodus such prominence at the moment of His revelation to mankind?

Chasidic philosophy explains that in certain respects, the Jewish people's liberation from bondage in Egypt was an even greater event than the creation of the world. G-d created the world *ex nihilo* - substance out of nothingness - something which we, as created beings, cannot comprehend. Although the creation of the world was a wondrous event, for an all-powerful, eternal and infinite G-d, it was no particular feat.

Furthermore, the Torah states that the world was created by G-d's speech. "By the word of G-d the heavens were created, and by His breath all of their hosts." Speech is an external power, produced without exertion. The world was created in such a way as to express only the outermost fraction of G-d's true might.

The exodus from Egypt, however, was a miracle of a totally different order. In order for the Jews to leave Egypt, G-d had to supersede the laws of nature He had already created to run the world. G-d Himself, not an angel, led the Jews as they departed. Abrogating natural law to free the Children of Israel involved an even higher level of Divine intervention than creating the world in the first place! The exodus from Egypt was therefore given the top billing it deserved in the Ten Commandments.

Likewise, in our own lives, we sometimes find that it is harder to change ingrained and established habits than it is to begin a completely new undertaking. When G-d took our ancestors out of Egypt (Mitzrayim), He gave each and every Jew the strength to break through the boundaries and limitations (metzarim) which stand in their way. This innate power, bestowed upon the Jewish people when the Torah was revealed, gives us the ability to overcome any negative habits or character traits which prevent us from serving G-d with a full heart.

Why an Eighty-Year-Old Played Charades with an Eleven-Year-Old

By Chana Weisberg

Several months ago my husband and I, along with our youngest daughter, visited Toronto to spend a beautiful Shabbat with my parents.

At the end of the Friday night meal, my father turned his attention to my daughter. My father is an incredibly knowledgeable rabbi and mentor who devotes his life to studying and teaching the wisdom of Torah. He engages in the most intricate, hairsplitting Talmudic discussions just as ably as he counsels people on knotty, complex life issues. Now, he was attempting to really bond with his granddaughter. My daughter, though an exceptionally mature and intelligent eleven-year-old, is more than seven decades younger than my father. I wondered how my father could succeed to forge a connection that would break through these barriers.

My father's warm gray eyes twinkled, and a smile appeared around his snow-white beard as he said to my daughter, "Let's play charades. We'll take turns," he suggested to her eagerly. "You start. Think of a mitzvah, but don't tell me. Act it out, without speaking. And let's see if we can guess each other's mitzvah."

For the next several minutes, grandfather and granddaughter were busily engaged in their activity. My father energetically stood up to dramatically act out his mitzvah. My daughter flailed her arms and legs to act out hers. Through these performances, they mimed a wide range of mitzvot. There was lots of laughter in that room, and I'm not sure who enjoyed the activity most: my father, my daughter, or the rest of us watching.

My father had succeeded in bridging the gap. But more so, he succeeded to enter my daughter's world and relate to her through something that they both cherished.

We are now days away from the holiday of Shavuot, when the Jewish people stood at the foot of Mt. Sinai, where G-d asked us a favor: "Perform My mitzvot (commandments)."

At that moment, G-d "entered" our world.

The very word 'mitzvah' hints to the beauty of our relationship. Mitzvah shares a root with the word *tzavta*, which means "bond" or "attachment." When we do a mitzvah, we become joined to the essence of G-d, who has issued that command. G-d allows His infinite wisdom to be distilled into a form accessible by finite creatures, breaking barriers and melding the two into a G-dly and meaningful existence.

The gap between Creator and created is greater than anything we can fathom—ininitely greater than the disparity between a grandfather and his young granddaughter. Through mitzvot, though, we become expressions of G-d's will, just as our own hand which writes, stirs a ladle or plays notes of music expresses our will.

And watching my wise, elderly father playing charades with my eleven-year-old daughter, I think I got a tiny taste of what that looks like.

Slice of LIFE

The string and the flame

By Yehuda Avner

Before his historic first meeting with newly-elected U.S. President Jimmy Carter in Washington, Begin asked me to arrange a meeting with the Lubavitcher Rebbe in New York.

I myself had visited the Rebbe previously on behalf of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, and later as an advisor to Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's then-ambassador to the UN.

When we arrived, the Rebbe came out and escorted Prime Minister Begin to the entrance. Reporters were throwing out questions at the both of them, and I recall one question from a reporter for the Village Voice. He asked Begin, "Why do you seek out the Rebbe prior to your meeting with President Carter?" And Begin said, "It's my first meeting with the new US President and it's very important for me to get the blessings of the Rebbe for its success."

He went on to say that the Rebbe had many insights, and that he was a man of awesome knowledge. "I can learn many things from him." He said. He also described the Rebbe as an old friend.

Then he was asked, "Why doesn't the Rebbe come to you – as you are Prime Minister – why do you go to the Rebbe?" And he said, "He is a great sage of Israel ... he is a great leader himself."

Actually, Begin thought that the Lubavitcher Rebbe was the greatest Jewish leader of the 20th century. I had heard him say that.

And I recall the Rebbe saying with enormous modesty, in

response to a question by the press: "I greet Prime Minister Begin as a friend, but I am receiving his visit on behalf of the Lubavitch Movement."

After Begin's meeting with Carter at the White House, I returned to see the Rebbe in order to give him a report. My appointment was set for 10 p.m. – and I must tell you that the Rebbe always gave me an appointment at a "civilized" hour, not in the middle of the night.

I was ushered straight in, and I gave the Rebbe a report of the meeting. I'm not permitted to go into details, because there are still segments of that meeting that are classified. I must have spoken for half an hour, and then the Rebbe began to comment – and again, I don't think I can reveal those comments.

This exchange went on until after midnight. I was very tired, yet the Rebbe was as sprightly and as fresh as ever. But he saw that I was tired. He leaned over to me – I was sitting at the side of his desk – and he put his hand on mine. I will always remember these words. He said, "Reb Yehuda, you know us so well, why don't you identify more with us?"

Now, I shall never know whether it was only because I was tired that I had the temerity to say what I really felt or whether I would have said it anyway, but I heard myself saying to the Rebbe, "Because I have within my own family those who see in the Rebbe powers which the Rebbe does not recognize in himself."

And he got a very serious look in his eyes, and he said to me these words: "There are evidently people who need crutches." And then he

went on:

"I will tell you what I'm trying to do ... Reb Yehuda, imagine you are looking at a cupboard, and I tell you to open that cupboard. You open the cupboard, and you see there a candle but I tell you that is not a candle – it is a lump of wax with a piece of string inside. When does the wax and the wick become a candle? When one brings a flame to the wick. That is when the wax and the wick fulfill the purpose for which they were created.

"And that is what I try to do – to help every man and woman fulfill the purpose for which they were created."

I was sitting there listening to him, impressed by the authority in his voice. And then he said these words:

"Ha'esh, zeh esh haTorah ... The fire is the fire of the Torah. When one brings the flame to the wick, one ignites the soul – for the wick is the soul – and it gives life to the body, which is the wax. And then the body and the soul fulfill the purpose for which they were created. And that happens through the fire of Torah."

By the time my meeting with the Rebbe was over, it was past two in the morning. For the last hour, a buzzer had been buzzing intermittently, and only later did I realize that the door couldn't be opened unless the Rebbe released the latch from the inside. But he didn't. He merely said, "Don't pay attention."

Finally, I rose and he escorted me to the door. He took hold of both my hands to say goodbye, and I said, "Has the Rebbe lit my candle?"

He answered, "No. I have given you the match. Only you can light your own candle." (Taken from JEM, Here's my Story)

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield
in conjunction with the

Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

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ISSUE 1403

B"H

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

“If this blessing is sometimes delayed...”

By the Grace of G-d
21 Menachem Av, 5710 [1950]
Brooklyn
Greetings and Blessings!

In reply to your letter of 16 Menachem Av concerning your wife's health: You write of reasons for which she cannot conceive. However, this appears to be incomprehensible, because the beginning of your letter mentions that in the month of Elul 5709 she was pregnant. If so, this can certainly be the case now, too.

It therefore seems to me that your wife should not undertake anything that would — according to what you write — be risky. Let her once again consult a medical specialist as to what she should do and he will no doubt find a moderate course of action. Through the agency of a particular doctor and a particular medication everything will pass, and the blessing of my revered father-in-law [the Rebbe Rayatz] will be fulfilled — that G-d will gladden your hearts with healthy and viable offspring.

You write further that from this whole situation your wife has become nervous, and so on. It should be explained to her that the Almighty directs the world in the manner that is best. He knows what is best, and He wrote in the Torah that children are a blessing. Jews are therefore deserving of it. And if this blessing is sometimes delayed, it should be known that we all have a great Rebbe, my revered father-in-law, and in due course he will make all his blessings materialize for all those who are bound to him.

However, one must hold tightly onto the bonds of *hiskashrus* with him. If, instead, one begins to be apprehensive about the fulfillment of his blessings, and this makes one become nervous, this is an indication of weakness, G-d forbid, in one's trust and in one's *hiskashrus*. In particular, if it also affects one's health, it is certainly nothing more than the counsel of the [Evil] Inclination.

She and you yourself must be strong in your trust “in G-d and in Moshe, His servant,” of our generation — that is, my revered father-in-law — and this in itself will help expedite and actualize his holy blessing for healthy and viable offspring and for all good things.

Before candle-lighting, your wife no doubt makes a donation *bli neder* to the charity that carries the name of Rabbeinu Meir Baal HaNess, and every day you no doubt recite *bli neder* the Rebbe's chapter of Tehillim, which is currently chapter 71.

When your wife becomes pregnant, in a good and auspicious hour, you will presumably not publicize the fact at the early stages, but you will immediately notify the Rebbe [Rayatz] at the holy resting-place.

With blessings,

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

Are You Dancing with the Devil?

By Aron Moss

Question: What is the difference between healthy self-analysis and unhealthy self-criticism? I am quite harsh on myself but I think that's a good thing, but then I think it's a bad thing. Then I'm not sure. (sorry I'm not making any sense am I?) (See?)

Answer: It is good to criticize yourself. It is not good to beat up on yourself. The former is necessary for your moral growth, and comes from your soul's desire to reach higher. The latter is no more than a tactic of the devil inside you, trying to sabotage your life by bringing you down.

The two may seem similar, but in fact they are worlds apart. There are a few tell-tale signs to identify the true source of your thoughts:

Healthy introspection is a deliberate exercise that takes place at a scheduled time of your choosing. You control it, it doesn't control you. If thoughts of self-criticism come to you spontaneously, unplanned, in the middle of doing something else, then they are just an unwanted interruption to the flow of life, and should be cut off immediately.

Furthermore, healthy self-analysis has a time limit. You can spend ten minutes on it, maybe fifteen. No more. If it goes on forever then it is coming from a place of self-absorption. Wallowing in self-improvement doesn't improve anyone. If it is endless, it is not coming from a good place. Your inner devil crashes the party and doesn't know when to leave. Your soul comes with an appointment.

Then, at the end of a good session of introspection, you feel upbeat and positive. You have identified what needs to be fixed and believe in your power to fix it. That is a sign of a healthy self-analysis. But unhealthy self-wallowing leaves you feeling flat and hopeless. There is a twisted pleasure in putting yourself down and making yourself out to be the worst human specimen in the world. After all, that's quite an achievement. But it's just not true. You're not so bad and shouldn't enjoy thinking you are. It's just negative indulgence.

Finally, the surest sign of healthy self-analysis is what you do next. If you are spurred on to take action, if you are moved to improve, if you have the momentum to get up and do better, then your introspection came from the right place. But if it makes you feel useless and depressed, inert and lethargic, if you feel what's the point of it all and why should I bother trying, then you know that's your devil talking.

So to test the true source of your self-analysis, just ask: When does it happen? For how long? How does it make me feel? And what do I do next? The answers to those questions will tell you whether you are soaring with your soul, or dancing with your devil.

A WORD

from the Director

Many are familiar with the Midrash describing how the Jewish people designated their children as the guarantors of the Torah.

It is perhaps in this vein that the Rebbe stresses each year that all Jewish children must be present in the synagogue on Shavuot to hear the reading of the Ten Commandments.

We bring the children so that they can become familiar with the "terms" of the guarantee. The children's presence in shul actually confirms our guarantee.

In Hebrew, the word guarantor is "Orev." Orev can also mean pleasant or sweet. What sweeter guarantors can we have than our children, who can help influence our own deeds to be pleasing.

One of many beautiful concepts in Judaism is that the Jewish soul can comprehend long before the mind does. With this in mind, we see how imperative it is to bring even babies to shul; though their minds might not yet comprehend where they are, their souls certainly do.

Shavuot is next week, beginning Saturday evening June 8 and ending Monday night, June 10. Let us all bring our guarantors to hear the Ten Commandments during the reading of the Torah on Sunday, June 9.

To the guarantees and guarantors,

A very happy Shavuot

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

The Miser's Just Repentance

By Yerachmiel Tilles

There was once a wealthy Jew who lived on the outskirts of town, having intentionally built his mansion there so the poorer villagers would not disturb him. His attitude was instilled in his family, and they too shunned their less fortunate brethren.

At the same time, the wealthy miser had a great love for Torah study. To indulge his love of learning, he built a beautiful study hall on his property, and every day would mingle with the Torah scholars who came to study there.

One day a scraggly-looking stranger appeared in the study hall. It was obvious that he was learned, but what no one knew was that he had once been rich himself. After losing his fortune he had begun wandering from town to town, with one cardinal rule: he would never ask for food. If someone offered him a meal he would accept it, but he would never be the one to initiate the request.

The wanderer was very weak when he entered the study hall. Three days and nights had already elapsed without food passing his lips. Surely someone would invite him home and feed him...

The stranger joined a group in the midst of a lively Talmudic discussion. Everyone was astounded by his erudition, especially the miser, who enjoyed conversing with intelligent people. The hours passed, and soon it was time for lunch. By the time the poor man was invited to the home of the miser to continue their discussion, he was almost delirious from the prospect of eating.

The miser went to wash his hands but did not ask the poor man to join him. A sumptuous meal was served, but only a single portion. The stranger was shocked. After taking a bite of bread and eating a slice of succulent roast, the miser returned to their previous conversation. "Now, what were we discussing?" he asked, oblivious to his guest's discomfort.

By that time the stranger was having difficulty not fainting. He was about to break his pledge and ask for food when with his last ounce of strength he stood up, apologized, and stumbled outside.

When a few minutes passed and he did not return the miser went to the window, and was surprised to see a large crowd gathered in front of his house. "What happened?" he asked. "What's going on?"

"A pauper just died in the street," he was told. "From the looks of it, he seems to have starved to death."

The miser was stricken to the core. Only now did he realize how base and cruel he had been. Overcome with remorse, he closed himself in his room and wept till he fell asleep from sheer exhaustion.

In a dream, the pauper appeared to him and said, "Know that because you caused my death, it was decreed that you should pass away immediately. But because I pleaded for mercy on your behalf, I have been permitted to reveal to you how you can make amends." The miser agreed to do whatever he was told.

"Tomorrow you must tell your family that you are leaving on a business trip for one year. After you have left town you must change your appearance, dress in rags, and return to your own study hall. There you must stay for an entire year, learning Torah, praying and doing teshuva, repenting, for your misdeeds. When you need to eat, you may only appeal to your own household. But you must never reveal to them your true identity."

The miser was thankful for the reprieve and did exactly as he was told. Funny how one's perspective was different on the other side of the fence... When the miser knocked on the door of the mansion and asked for a crust of bread he was sent away. He knocked again, only to be beaten and cursed. It wasn't until he announced that he would not leave the premises that they relented, and handed him some crumbs of bread.

The miser rejoiced over this meager offering as if he found a great treasure, and two days later returned for more. As time passed the family came to regard him as a harmless lunatic. The children looked forward to his visits so they could pull his beard and pour water over his head. The miser suffered these indignities in silence, aware that he alone was to blame for his children's mischief.

At the end of the year, the former miser put on the same clothes he had been wearing when he left and returned home. The first thing he did was to arrange a feast for all the important personages in town, and he expressly invited all the poor people to participate. In front of everyone, he related the story of what had happened to him, and with tears in his eyes announced that henceforth his home would be open to all. Every day, he would feed as many poor people showed up on his doorstep.

That night he had another dream in which the dead pauper appeared to him, but this time he was smiling. "Happy is your lot for having achieved a complete repentance," he informed him. "And you should know that you have also brought rest and repose to my soul."

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

In the Sinai Desert, G-d says to conduct a census of the twelve tribes of Israel. Moses counts 603,550 men of draftable age (20 to 60 years); the tribe of Levi, numbering 22,300 males age one month and older, is counted separately. The Levites are to serve in the Sanctuary, replacing the firstborn, whose number they approximated, who were disqualified when they participated in the worshipping of the Golden Calf. The 273 firstborn who lacked a Levite to replace them had to pay a five-shekel "ransom" to redeem themselves.

When the people broke camp, the three Levite clans dismantled and transported the Sanctuary, and reassembled it at the center of the next encampment. They then erected their own tents around it: the Kohathites, who carried the Sanctuary's vessels (the Ark, menorah, etc.) in their specially designed coverings on their shoulders, camped to its south; the Gershonites, in charge of its tapestries and roof coverings, to its west; and the families of Merari, who transported its wall panels and pillars, to its north. Before the Sanctuary's entranceway, to its east, were the tents of Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's sons.

Beyond the Levite circle, the twelve tribes camped in four groups of three tribes each. To the east were Judah (pop. 74,600), Issachar (54,400) and Zebulun (57,400); to the south, Reuben (46,500), Simeon (59,300) and Gad (45,650); to the west, Ephraim (40,500), Manasseh (32,200) and Benjamin (35,400); and to the north, Dan (62,700), Asher (41,500) and Naphtali (53,400). This formation was kept also while traveling. Each tribe had its own nassi (prince or leader), and its own flag with its tribal color and emblem.

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

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PARSHAS BAMIDBAR • 4 SIVAN • 7 JUNE

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA KABBOLAS SHABBOS	4:55 PM 5:25 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA SHACHARIS MINCHA MAARIV	9:52 AM 10:00 AM 4:45 PM 5:51 PM
SUNDAY:	SHACHARIS ASERES HADIBROS	10:00 AM 11:30 AM
WEEKDAYS:	MINCHA MAARIV	4:55 PM 5:51 PM
MONDAY:	SHACHARIS YIZKOR MINCHA followed by Farbrengen MAARIV / YOM TOV ENDS	10:00 AM 11:30 PM 4:20 PM 5:51 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS MINCHA MAARIV	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM 4:55 PM 5:40 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING

	Shabbos Shavuos			
	Begins	1st Night*	2nd Night	Ends
Melbourne	4:50 PM	5:51 PM	5:51 PM	5:51 PM
Adelaide	4:53 PM	5:52 PM	5:52 PM	5:52 PM
Brisbane	4:43 PM	5:38 PM	5:38 PM	5:38 PM
Darwin	6:10 PM	7:02 PM	7:02 PM	7:02 PM
Gold Coast	4:40 PM	5:36 PM	5:36 PM	5:36 PM
Perth	5:01 PM	5:59 PM	5:59 PM	5:59 PM
Sydney	5:35 PM	5:34 PM	5:34 PM	5:34 PM
Canberra	4:40 PM	5:39 PM	5:39 PM	5:39 PM
Launceston	4:31 PM	5:34 PM	5:34 PM	5:34 PM
Auckland	4:53 PM	5:54 PM	5:53 PM	5:53 PM
Wellington	4:40 PM	5:44 PM	5:44 PM	5:44 PM
Hobart	4:25 PM	5:30 PM	5:30 PM	5:30 PM
Byron Bay	4:38 PM	5:34 PM	5:34 PM	5:34 PM

*Light candles from a pre-existing flame not before

