

LAMPLIGHTER

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Beha'aloscha
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Behaalot'cha, opens with the command to Aaron to kindle the lamps of the menorah, the seven-branched candelabra that stood in the Sanctuary.

Aaron, whose duties as the High Priest are also described in Behaalot'cha, was known for his love of every creature. Hillel said of him, "Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving your fellow creatures and drawing them near to the Torah."

What was so special about Aaron's way of life that we are enjoined to emulate it? Aaron did not wait for those who stood in darkness to come within the circle of light, but went out to them. He went, in Hillel's words, to his "fellow creatures," a word including those who had no other merit than that they, too, were G-d's creations. Nonetheless, he "drew them near to the Torah," rather than drawing the Torah near to them. He did not simplify or compromise its commandments in order to bring it down to their level. Rather than lower the Torah, he raised people.

This facet of Aaron's life is suggested in this week's portion which opens with the command, "When you light (literally, 'raise up') the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the menorah" (Numbers 8:2).

The lamps of the menorah of the Sanctuary are a symbol of the Jewish soul - "The lamp of the L-rd is the soul of man." Aaron's task was to raise up every soul, to bring out the Divine within the Jew from its concealment in the subconscious.

The Sages sought an explanation for the fact that the word "raise up" (behaalot'cha) is used, instead of the more obvious "light" or "kindle." And they concluded that the verse meant that Aaron was to kindle them "until the flame rises up by itself."

Aaron's spiritual achievement was therefore not only to light the flame in the souls of the Jewish people, but to take them to the stage where they would give light of their own accord. He did not simply create disciples, people who were dependent on his inspiration. He engendered in them a love of G-d that they could sustain without his help.

This was Aaron's path, "loving peace and pursuing peace, loving his fellow creatures and drawing them near to Torah." And this must be the path of every Jew, lighting the dormant flame in the souls of Jews wherever they are to be found, preferring to be close than to be aloof, to be kind rather than severe, in bringing all our people nearer to Judaism.

Humble in the Face of What?

By Shmuel Kesselman

"Moses was exceedingly humble, more so than any other person on earth". (Numbers 12:3)

What is humility? Humility: "a modest or low view of one's own importance" according to the Modern American Oxford Dictionary.

How was Moses so humble? Wasn't he cognizant of his incredible status relative to the Jewish people and G-d? How could an individual as powerful and influential as he, feel himself to be of lesser value than anyone else around? Being a leader of the entire Jewish nation required forcefulness and a commanding nature - qualities seemingly incompatible with humility.

Furthermore, it is recorded that towards the end of Moses' life, G-d passed before him all the generations of Jews of all time, until the arrival of Moshiach. Then, when the display reached its completion, Moses beheld the individual souls that make up the final generation of exile. It says, Moses was particularly humbled in face of their success at overcoming tremendous hardship and challenges, and remaining true to Torah.

According to many of the signs and hints written in the prophets, the generation we live in today, is the generation that preludes the redemption. In simple words, Moses gazed at you and me, and was humbled by our excellence. Now, I don't know about you, but I have a hint of suspicion that Moses was infinitely holier than me. He did speak to G-d face to face, lead 600 000 Jews through a desert, spend 40 days on a mountain studying with G-d and then bring us the whole Torah. How are we to understand this notion, that Moses felt a low view of his own importance, in light of people like you and me?

The answer is: Every Jew, no matter how low they may have fallen, contains in himself a "part" of G-d himself. When Moses beheld a Jew, he didn't see the external and unimportant baggage of sins, rather he saw the spark of G-d. This spark of G-d is undefined and unlimited, and it is simply an extension of G-d's essence. This spark of G-d remains untainted, unblemished and unaffected by the actions of the individual. The essence of the existence of any Jew is the spark. Therefore, the essence of a Jew cannot be described, in a good way or the opposite. Rather the essence of the Jew is the Spark itself.

Specifically in our times, when the darkness of the exile is at its peak, the spark of G-d within us is revealed in its purest form. When we fulfil G-d's desire, by keeping Torah and Mitzvos, notwithstanding the incredible darkness of the exile being at its worst ever, we are tapping into that spark.

Moses was humbled in the face of this Spark. This undefined and indescribable extension of G-d outweighs by far any single advantage that Moses, the greatest prophet and holiest of all Jews could attain. Any speciality that Moses could reach, even within the realm of spirituality, is specified and defined. Therefore, in the face of true undefined essence, Moses was humbled.

Slice of LIFE

Shalom Aleichem

Before I relate the story of my meeting with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, I would like to express my gratitude for this opportunity to share it. I've been waiting over 50 years to relate this story, so this goes to show that people should never give up hope, whatever they might be waiting for.

My name is Yonasan Wiener. I was born and bred in Melbourne, Australia, lived for a time in New York, and now I'm living and teaching in Jerusalem.

My family originally came from Poland, a place called Chrzanow, but they bounced around all of Eastern Europe – Krakow, Bremen, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt. In Frankfurt my father attended the yeshiva of Rabbi Yosef Breuer, Yeshivat Torah Lehranstalt, and he was there in November 1938 on Kristallnacht, when the Nazis began burning synagogues and Jewish places of business.

After Kristallnacht, my grandfather took his family and fled Germany. They first migrated to Holland and from there to France and then to Australia. My father attended Melbourne High School and Melbourne University, where he excelled because he had a brilliant mind. He got his Ph.D. there and he also studied medicine. In his spare time, my father researched poisons and their antidotes. He studied the red-back spider, a deadly spider in Australia, and he discovered the anti-venom. He also studied the stonefish, a toxic fish which buries itself in beach sand, and when people accidentally step on it, they die. He discovered the anti-venom for stonefish as well. He did this in his spare time, and he didn't want any money for his discoveries.

When he was asked, at the end of his life, what motivated his altruistic research, he said, "Thanks to the Australian government I was saved with my entire family from the Nazis. If I had

stayed in Europe I would have perished with my six million brothers and sisters." In the 1960s, my father won a Fullbright Scholarship to do cancer research at Columbia University in New York. So we packed up and temporarily moved to Flushing, New York, where my father's sister lived. While we were in New York, my father decided to visit the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and he took me and my mother along.

This is where my story begins:

Our appointment was for the 24th of July, 1962, for 10 p.m. My father, being extremely punctual, had us arrive 45 minutes early. We had a long wait because the Mayor of Jerusalem, Mordechai Ish-Shalom, pre-empted us and, after him, came the Israeli Minister of Religion, Rabbi Borg.

We finally went in at 1 a.m.

I remember the Rebbe's office like it was yesterday. The walls were wood-paneled, and on the Rebbe's table – about the level of my nose – there was a big clock. It was late, and I was watching that clock.

The Rebbe spoke to my father about his cancer research at Columbia. He took a big interest in what my father was doing and, not only that, he knew exactly what my father was talking about. It was like a conversation between two scientists.

The Rebbe also took a keen interest in my mother's activities – she was the president of the Women's Auxiliary in Melbourne and, while in New York, she attended the conference of the Chabad organization for women and girls. The Rebbe wanted to hear firsthand from my mother about what exactly went on at that conference.

After he finished speaking with both my parents, the Rebbe turned to me. And my father nudged me, "Nu, maybe you have something that you would like to ask the Rebbe..."

I was nine years old, but I was not shy. I said, "Yeah, I have a question for the Rebbe."

The question I asked had to do with the song we sing at the start of the Shabbat evening meal, Shalom Aleichem. This song has four stanzas

and in each stanza we refer to malachei shalom, "angels of peace," except for the first stanza, in which we refer to malachei hashareis, "ministering angels."

So I asked the Rebbe, "How come? Why are we not consistent and call them 'angels of peace' each time?"

The Rebbe looked at me intently. And I must say that by this time the Rebbe had been up the whole night seeing many people – some of them very important people – but when he spoke to me, I felt like I was the only person who existed in the world. And that he had all the time in the world for me, as if nothing and nobody else mattered.

The Rebbe said, "If you notice, the first two stanzas seem to be redundant. The first one says, 'Peace unto you, ministering angels,' and the second one says, 'May your coming be in peace, angels of peace.' It seems that both are greetings of welcome, so why do we need to welcome them twice?"

He went on, "I'll tell you the reason. There are two types of angels – weekday angels and Shabbos angels. The 'ministering angels' are the weekday angels of servitude, and we are not welcoming them, but saying good-bye to them. In Hebrew, hello and good-bye are the same word, Shalom, so in the first stanza we are really sending off these weekday angels because Shabbos has begun. After that, we are greeting the Shabbos angels, the 'angels of peace.' So none of this is redundant or superfluous."

With that, the Rebbe smiled at me and asked, "Do you understand?" And I nodded.

That happened in 1962 when I was nine years old – so this is going back 52 years. But I feel as if it was yesterday. I feel that the Rebbe is standing in front of my eyes now and speaking to me. That's the kind of strong impression he left on my mind.

Rabbi Yonasan Wiener teaches at Yeshiva Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, where he is in charge of the rabbinic ordination program. He was interviewed for JEM's My Encounter with the Rebbe project in his home in August of 2014.

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

“One should not be too dejected or doubtful, for this, too, is exploited by the [Evil] Inclination.”

By the Grace of G-d
3 Menachem Av, 5710 [1950]
Brooklyn

Greetings and Blessings!

As to your prayerful wish that you [and your colleagues] should be vessels appropriate for the fulfillment of what is desired [of you by the Rebbe]: One should not be too dejected or doubtful, for this, too, is exploited by the [Evil] Inclination.

As was recently discussed here at a farbrengen. It should not be forgotten that the entire subject of creation springs from the fact that “it is in the nature of One Who is benevolent to act benevolently”. In the original, teva hatov leheitiv (Emek HaMelech, beginning of Shaar Alef). And it goes without saying that [this] reason influences the created universe and is discernible in it.

After all the above, one should approach his tasks with joy and with complete trust that G-d will show compassion and will offer help, and we [will be] greatly sanctified from Above — provided only that we keep a firm grasp of the bond of hiskashrus with the tzaddik who is now more accessible in this World of Action, too.

With blessings to all the members of the brotherhood,
Signed,

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

Would You Eat Bacon for \$10 million?

By Aron Moss

Question: I was watching a debate between the famous atheist Richard Dawkins and some rabbi about religion and G-d. Dawkins said that religions are just money machines, and its leaders fleece their gullible followers of their cash and come out rich. What do you have to say about that?

Answer: So Dawkins is saying that for believers, money trumps morality. I assume he holds that atheists are different. Let's test that hypothesis. What happens when people need to choose between money and principles? Let's try the following theoretical experiment.

Imagine you put Richard Dawkins in a sealed room all alone, with no one watching, no recording devices or CCTV's, and you offer him a deal: "I will give you ten million dollars if you will make the following statement right here and now: G-d most certainly does exist, He created the universe, and atheism is a delusion. I will never tell anyone that you said it. There will be no record of this one off event. Just make the statement, get the cash, and it will all be forgotten."

Does anyone have any doubt that Richard Dawkins would go for it and take the money? Can you think of any reason in the world for him to refuse that offer? Would he even hesitate to accept it? I think clearly not.

Now imagine you put the rabbi he debated in that same sealed room, all alone, and made this offer: "Rabbi, you will receive ten million dollars cash, tax free, no strings attached, but on one condition - you eat this piece of bacon. No one will ever find out, it will not go beyond this room, it will be forgotten forever. Just eat and take the prize."

What would the rabbi do? Would he, too, sell his principles for ten million dollars? After all, it's just a one-off, and no one will ever know.

Let's be honest. Rabbis are humans too, and some rabbis may find the temptation too hard to resist. But I would say that the overwhelming majority of rabbis would refuse this offer and walk away. And not just rabbis, but many observant Jews, including those who could desperately use the money, would be able to withstand the test and not eat the bacon.

I am not suggesting that religious people do no wrong. I am saying that a religious person has reason to stand for their principles even when they can get away with it, and reason to regret it when they fail. It makes no difference that no one will find out or no one is looking. G-d is always looking. An atheist doesn't have that restriction. I don't believe that even one single atheist in their right mind would refuse to abrogate their atheism when there is something to gain and no one will find out.

Money is indeed a powerful corrupter. But in a choice between money and G-d, at least G-d has a chance. Between money and atheism, there is no contest.

A WORD

from the Director

This week, on Shabbat afternoon, we study the second chapter of the Mishna known as "Pirkei Avot-Ethics of the Fathers."

One of the first teachings that we read is from Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, who said, "Reflect upon three things and you will not come to sin: Know what is above you, an Eye that sees, an Ear that hears, and all your deeds are recorded in a Book."

A deeper explanation of the above is that to keep oneself from transgressing, one must reflect on three things: the existence of G-d, who is Above; the all-seeing Eye and all-hearing Ear which makes us aware of Divine Providence—that G-d oversees everything; that everything is "written in the Book" which informs us that it is impossible that we will not be punished for any transgressions.

The Maggid of Mezritch rephrases just a few of Rabbi Yehuda's words and gives us the following inspiring comment: "Know that everything which is Above, is from you."

Everything in this world is dependent on G-d Above. But in addition, teaches the Maggid, all the blessings that rain from Above are dependent on each individual's personal actions.

How can this be so? According to Maimonides, every person must consider the world as being totally balanced between good deeds and those that are not good. Through one deed, a person can tip the scale to the side of good.

And if this equation is true for any deed, it is certainly even more so when it comes to deeds which foster love of our fellow-Jews and peace in the world at large. For, as our Sages have taught, the Torah was given to bring peace to the world—peace between one person and another and between the Creator and His creations.

Just as in general the world can be tipped to the side of good through one deed, so, too, can the arrival of Moshiach be hastened and in fact actualized through one good deed.

Do a good deed today. It might just be the one that brings Moshiach!

J. I. Gutterman

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Elijah the Prophet Herds the Cows

By Yerachmiel Tilles

It is known among Jews, from time immemorial, that in times of personal or national crisis, Elijah the Prophet is given permission from Above to appear in the form of a human being and to bring salvation to the Jews in need.

Once, in a tiny village near the town of Moglinza, there was a certain Jew named Joseph who made a living by leasing the milk cows of a local squire. This particular year Joseph had settled on the sum of eight kopeks per liter of milk produced, a price that was neither too high, nor too low.

It so happened, though, that this year, the cows produced milk in unusual abundance. When Joseph took the milk to market, he was unable to sell it at his price, and in fact, milk could be bought for almost nothing due to great supply.

Joseph went home and thought about his situation. He had made an agreement with the squire to pay him eight kopeks a liter, but if he did, he would most certainly lose every kopek he had. On the other hand, if he reneged on his deal, the squire could imprison him, or even kill him. What could he do? Perhaps, the tzadik, Rabbi Chaim Meir, could give him a blessing.

That very day, Joseph went to the tzadik and related the whole story to him, explaining that he couldn't possibly pay the squire the amount they had agreed on. Rabbi Chaim's calm words soothed the distraught man. "Stay until after the Shabbat," the tzadik said, "and then we will see."

The prospect of being near the holy tzadik over the Shabbat was like balm to Joseph's troubled spirit and he readily agreed. The festive Shabbat table laden with delicacies, the soul stirring melodies and the holy words of Torah which the tzadik spoke over the Sabbath lifted Joseph's spirits, so that he hardly remembered why he had come. But then, the Shabbat ended and Joseph's soul again filled with dread.

Soon after the holy day passed, the attendant of the tzadik came to Joseph, "My master, Rabbi Chaim, has summoned you to him." Joseph hurried expectantly. What advice would the sage have to help him out of his dilemma?

When Joseph stood before Rabbi Chaim, the tzadik addressed him saying, "I would like a smoke. Would you be so kind as to fetch a piece of paper from the stove to light my pipe."

Joseph was quick to oblige, but by the time he brought the paper to Rabbi Chaim, the fire went out. He tried a second

time, but the same thing happened, and the paper burned up without his having lit the pipe. This time Rabbi Chaim raised his voice and shouted, "This time, bring me a proper piece of paper that will light my pipe!" Joseph kindled a large piece, and with it, he finally succeeded in lighting the tzadik's pipe.

"Ah, that is good," said Rabbi Chaim. "Now, everything is alright, and you may return to your home in peace."

Joseph, who had great faith in the words of the tzadik, made his way home in a happy frame of mind, sure that somehow, the tzadik's words would be fulfilled for the good, and that his troubles would be over. His faith was soon borne out when, as he approached his village, he was met by one of the local peasants who gave him the news that all the squire's cows had been lost in a fire which suddenly broke out in the barn.

Joseph was startled by this shocking news, and he thought to himself, "True, the squire's cows have all perished, but my own small herd of ten cows was also in the barn. Have I lost them as well?!"

He rushed to his house, where his wife met him at the door.

"Husband, there was a terrible fire in the squire's barn. All his cows perished! But as the flames were just being seen, a gentile peasant came to our door leading our ten cows behind him, and so, our cows were saved. I looked for him, for I wanted to give him some reward for his trouble, but he was nowhere to be found. Finally I gave up searching for him."

When Joseph heard his wife's account of the fire and how their ten cows had been saved by a mysterious peasant, he turned on his heels and went back to the tzadik, Rabbi Chaim, to tell him of the miracle they had merited. Rabbi Chaim, however, was not surprised. "Your cows were saved by the Prophet Elijah, who was sent by Heaven to rescue you from your troubles," he said.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Aaron is commanded to raise light in the lamps of the menorah, and the tribe of Levi is initiated into the service in the Sanctuary.

A "Second Passover" is instituted in response to the petition "Why should we be deprived?" by a group of Jews who were unable to bring the Passover offering in its appointed time because they were ritually impure. G-d instructs Moses on the procedures for Israel's journeys and encampments in the desert, and the people journey in formation from Mount Sinai, where they had been camped for nearly a year.

The people are dissatisfied with their "bread from heaven" (the manna), and demand that Moses supply them with meat. Moses appoints 70 elders, to whom he imparts of his spirit, to assist him in the burden of governing the people. Miriam speaks negatively of Moses, and is punished with leprosy; Moses prays for her healing, and the entire community waits seven days for her recovery.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 21 - 22 June	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	4:50	5:52
Adelaide	4:53	5:53
Brisbane	4:44	5:40
Darwin	6:12	7:05
Gold Coast	4:41	5:37
Perth	5:02	6:00
Sydney	4:36	5:35
Canberra	4:40	5:40
Launceston	4:30	5:35
Auckland	4:54	5:54
Wellington	4:40	5:44
Hobart	4:25	5:31
Byron Bay	4:39	5:35

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PARSHAS BEHA'ALOSCHA • 18 SIVAN • 21 JUNE

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	4.55 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	5.20 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	SHIUR CHASSIDUS	9.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.56 AM
	SHACHARIS	10.00 AM
	MINCHA	4.40 PM
	MAARIV	5.52 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	4.55 PM
	MAARIV	5.40 PM