

LampLighter

14 Adar I
Ki Tisa
Purim Katan
970
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The Torah portion of Ki Tisa contains the mitzva of the half-shekel, symbolic of the mitzva of tzedaka (charity).

There are several ways in which an individual can give tzedaka. The first is when a person is kindly and giving by nature, or when he understands intellectually the need to help his fellow man. This is, however, considered to be the lowest level of giving tzedaka.

A higher level is when a person gives tzedaka because G-d has commanded him to. In this instance the incentive is not personal, but stems from the desire to obey G-d's will. A mitzva is an absolute that is not subject to intellectual or emotional considerations. Thus, when a person gives tzedaka out of a sense of obedience, his action is imbued with greater power. Yet even here there can be personal motivations mixed in, such as the fear of punishment or the desire to receive reward (material or spiritual) in this world or the next.

Above these two levels is the giving of tzedaka "without the intent of receiving a reward." In this instance, the mitzva is fulfilled out of pure and simple obedience to G-d, without any thought of recompense whatsoever. The person wants to fulfil G-d's will and enjoys doing so.

The mitzva of the half-shekel, however, represents the very highest category of giving tzedaka. On the verse in this week's portion, "This shall they give...a half-shekel...an offering to G-d" (the commandment for every Jew to give the half-shekel), the Jerusalem Talmud comments: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, removed a coin of fire from under the Throne of Glory and showed it to Moses, saying, 'This shall they give.' "Indeed, the "secret" of the half-shekel is related to the idea of "a coin of fire."

The nature of fire is to always ascend upward; it has no "weight" or fixed, definable form. Similarly, the optimal way to give tzedaka is with a fiery "flame" and enthusiasm, without any personal considerations or motives. In this scenario, the Jew just naturally desires to fulfil G-d's will, and doesn't even look for other reasons or justifications.

Nonetheless, it is significant that G-d showed Moses a "coin of fire," rather than just a flame. When a person gives tzedaka (or does any other mitzva, for that matter), theoretical abstracts are not enough. The point is to bring down that fiery enthusiasm to where it can actually help someone, and express it in the realm of concrete action.

When the mitzva of tzedaka is done in this manner, a Jew will give unconditionally, without waiting for specific times and without waiting to be asked. His inner "fire" will prompt him to seek out those in need, and he will give repeatedly, over and over again.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

G-d is Somewhere

By Yossy Goldman

So you think you're the first guy out there looking for G-d? People have been searching for spirituality, exploring the metaphysical and generally searching for truth for millennia. Even the greatest prophet of them all, Moses himself, was preoccupied with seeking the Divine. Moses wanted to see G-d in all His glory.

"Please, show me Your glory," Moses appeals in the 33rd chapter of Exodus. The commentators understand this to mean that he wanted it all, the ultimate revelation. Others see it as a quest for understanding the infinite ways of G-d, like why the righteous seem to be perennial sufferers and the wicked seem to be laughing all the way to the bank.

Whatever the meaning, the Almighty places limits on Moses' understanding. "You will see My back," G-d responds, "but My face may not be seen." Finite earthlings - even a Moses - can only perceive so much and no more. The face of G-d, the ultimate full picture, is beyond human comprehension.

A youngster was being given his lesson and he wanted to know, "Where is G-d?" The answer he received was, "G-d is everywhere." "That's the problem," said the child, "I want a G-d who is somewhere!"

"Everywhere" is abstract, theoretical and rather intangible. "Somewhere," on the other hand, is more defined, substantial and real. Yes, Judaism definitely believes that G-d is everywhere. But even more important is the *somewhere* where G-d is to be found.

In Judaism we find a clearly developed infrastructure of life. There is a list of behaviours that are considered G-dly, and another list that may seem a lot more attractive but is deemed to be un G-dly. We know what G-d expects of us - and what He does not. It isn't left to what feels good or bad to us in our highly personal and very subjective mindsets. There are objective rules of right and wrong. Morality and ethics are in the province of G-d and are therefore non-negotiable. Oh, we can talk about it and debate the issues all night long but, ultimately, our moral code is Divine and absolute.

I was once asked regarding a certain person whether he was "a religious person." I remember how that question was a moment of personal insight for me. From the perspective of the questioner, the answer was a definite "yes": the person he was asking about was a believer, came to synagogue faithfully every week, and did charity work - the things that qualify a person to be called "religious" in the commonly accepted sense of the term. But in Judaism, the term "religious" carries different connotations. The most obvious one is Shabbat observance. Adhering to a kosher diet is another. The nitty-gritty do's and don'ts which the Torah instructs the Jew.

Faith in general, attending Shul and helping out are all nice, but still somewhat superficial. They are in the *Everywhere* category. Keeping Shabbat, though, is more in the *Somewhere* department. It is clearly defined and absolute. It goes beyond the surface-level feel good stuff. As Jews, we require a more precise definition of "religious." Practicalities not platitudes, action more than attitudes are the order of the day. G-d must be somewhere, not just everywhere.

In the final analysis, when we connect to G-d by doing His will we experience the greatest revelations.



The Rebbe Knows Tasmania

Raquel E. HaSofer

My story starts many years before my own birth. My father grew up in Alexandria, Egypt, an avowed Communist and atheist.

In 1949, when he was expelled from Egypt for illegal political activities, he moved to Israel, became an officer in the army and met my mother. Together they became members of a non-religious kibbutz.

In 1954 they moved to Tasmania, Australia.

The small Jewish community in Tasmania was totally assimilated. The president of the community approached my father and requested of him that since he was the only Jew in the community who knew Hebrew, would he please lead the services in the synagogue?

Needless to say, my father was taken totally by surprise.

"Are you absolutely crazy?" he asked. "I am an atheist. I know nothing about religion or G-d, nor do I believe in any of it!" Nevertheless, to his own amazement, the community won him over, and my father took on the job of leading the services.

My father's belief in Communism had already been severely shaken years before when it became clear to him that the Communist "show" trials in Czechoslovakia were a sham.

As a result, he and my mother started looking into Judaism and their feelings towards G-dliness gradually grew. They began to be attracted to the Torah and mitzvot and wished to abide by at least some of them.

My mother remembered some of the laws of Shabbat and kosher from her parents' home, so they kept whatever

they could and thirsted for more. Yet this was not enough. Each day they prayed their own private prayers to G-d, that He should somehow send them some kind of information about Judaism.

My mother, in particular, became convinced that since every generation in Jewish history always had a leader, anointed by G-d, to lead the Jewish people, there must be a leader assigned to lead and help the Jews of this generation, too.

At that point she felt an urgency, and from the depth of her being cried out: "G-d! If there is a leader of this generation who has the absolute responsibility to help every Jew, then I demand of him, from this remote corner of the world, to reach out to us and help us, too!"

Soon after this, Rabbi Chaim Gutnick, a Lubavitcher rabbi from Melbourne, Australia, unexpectedly received a letter from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, telling him to go to Tasmania. Although he had no idea why he was going, Rabbi Gutnick organized a visit to Tasmania.

The moment he arrived in Tasmania, he was accosted by my parents who triumphantly announced to him: "Rabbi! You are the answer to our prayers! We have begged G-d to send us some information about how to be Jewish, and finally you are here. You must come to our house immediately and show us the ways of a Jew."

So Rabbi Gutnick helped them and came back the following year as well. The Rebbe had literally stretched out his hand to a small island in distant Australia to answer the call of two lone Jews. This was the beginning of my parents' way up the eternal ladder of Judaism and their eternal attachment to the Rebbe.

Later, it was my parents' turn to be the envoys of the Rebbe to save a Jewish soul.

One day, out of the blue, my father received an invitation to go for nine months to Malaysia, a Muslim country with no Jewish community.

He wrote to the Rebbe, who advised him to accept.

During a private audience with the Rebbe, the Rebbe told my parents that

they were going to Malaysia on a mission to save Jewish souls.

For the entire time that they were in Malaysia, however, they did not meet any Jews! They did befriend a Buddhist monk called Mahinda, to whom my father taught some elements of Chasidut. Mahinda greatly admired these teachings.

One day, after they returned home to Sydney, Australia, they were contacted by a young Jewish woman from England. She told them that she had gone to Malaysia to search for spiritual truth and had wanted to study Buddhism with Mahinda.

Mahinda asked her, "Why are you seeking truth in Buddhism? You can find all the truth you need in your own faith," and he sent her to my parents.

The Rebbe's mission was successful: a Jewish soul was saved through their trip to Malaysia. The young woman is now married, and an active member of the Lubavitch community in Sydney.

Some time later, my mother had a stillborn child. When the doctors told her that she could not have any more children, she became depressed and frustrated.

In a private audience she asked the Rebbe for a blessing for another child. She also explained that she was very upset because she felt an overwhelming connection to the Rebbe and all the preceding Rebbe's, but she did not feel a connection to the Previous Rebbe. For a moment the Rebbe looked very concerned, but then a wide smile swept across his holy face and he said, "You will, you will!"

Soon, contrary to all the doctors' opinions, my mother became pregnant, and I was born from the Rebbe's blessing on the 10th of Shevat, the yahrtzeit (anniversary of the passing) of the Previous Rebbe.

My connection to the Rebbe has deepened greatly through my study of his teachings at Machon Chana Women's Yeshiva in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. The intensity of the atmosphere, the caring, and quality of the teaching has strengthened my eternal bond to the Tzaddik (holy righteous person) of the generation, the Rebbe.

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ISSUE 970

MOSHIACH MATTERS

This week's Haftorah relates the story of Elijah the Prophet on Mount Carmel, where he turns to the Jewish people and exclaims to them "Ad Mosai! Until when will you waver between two opinions?" Elijah's words did not come as a story or a suggestion, but a very forceful demand - "How much longer?" The same definition applies to the "Ad Mosai" of the verses in Tikun Chatzos (prayers said at midnight, mourning the destruction of the Holy Temple). Just as in the Haftorah, it expresses to G-d, as a demand, that the Jewish people cannot tolerate this exile any longer. (*Shabbat Parshat Ki Tisa, Shushan Purim Katan 5744*)

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



Strong and viable Jewish communities

17 Menachem Av, 5737 [1977]

Greeting and Blessing:

Thank you for your letter of July 23. I am pleased to note that you recall our discussion. However, your inference from the recent black-out in support of your thesis is debatable.

At any rate, following the example of your letter, I will also make reference to a recent event in support of my position. I have in mind the visit of Prime Minister Menachem Begin, and no doubt you also had an opportunity of meeting him and have evaluated the results of his visit to the USA.

One of the obvious elements of the Prime Minister's visit is that it has demonstrated once again how vitally important it is for our people in the Holy Land to have strong and viable Jewish communities in the outside world. For, however, important Aliyah [immigration to Israel] is, it would be a mixed blessing if it were to erode the Jewish voice and influence in such strategically important countries as the USA and others.

And speaking of the importance of Jewish communities in the Diaspora, the emphasis is not merely on numbers as they appear in a national census, but also and primarily on the quality of the Jewish population and leadership, namely, the extent to which Jews identify themselves with Jewishness and Jewish causes. Here again, as I pointed out in our discussion, it is not enough just to write a check - however indispensable financial assistance is, but it must be an even more meaningful identification and personal commitment, touching deeply every Jew and reflecting in his daily life as a Jew. Such identification is not limited to the home and synagogue or when one is in the society of fellow Jews, but it must be evident everywhere, even among non-Jews, and even in the White House, with truly Jewish self-respect and avowed trust in G-d, the Guardian of Israel, and with pride in our Jewish heritage and traditions - as was so eminently expressed in word and deed by Prime Minister Begin. It is the general consensus that this worthy deportment of the Jewish representative during his first encounter with the President of the USA had an immensely favorable impact and has established a personal rapport between the two leaders which will hopefully have far-reaching beneficial results also in terms of American support.

I trust you have followed closely the highlights and details of this visit and compared it with those of his predecessors. Here, for the first time, came a Jewish Prime Minister who declared in a loud and clear voice that he comes strengthened by the prayer of his fellow Jews at home and abroad and trusts in G-d and the eternity of his people that his mission will be successful. And, as you surely know, when he sat down to break bread with President Carter, he made sure that it would be a Kosher meal, and he put on a Yarmulka and made a Brocho [blessing] and explained to the President the meaning of it. All of which has earned him the respect and admiration of the President and of all other who came in contact with him. Even from a pragmatic statesmanlike viewpoint this approach is bound to be a sure winner, though, regretfully, it has not been recognized by his predecessors.

To conclude on the concluding note of your letter, may G-d bless you with strength and wisdom to use your good offices and influence in the said direction, especially in view of your prominent position in the Jewish community.

With kind regards and with esteem and blessing.

A WORD from the Director

This week Friday we will be observing a relatively unknown holiday called Purim Katan, or the "Minor Purim" in contrast with the "Major Purim" we will be celebrating next month. This is due to the fact that this year is a Jewish leap year in which an extra month is added to even out the disparity between the longer solar year and the shorter lunar year. And since the month of Adar in which we celebrate the two Purims is designated as a month of joy, we get to rejoice for an extra month this year.

Indeed, the Rebbe revealed to us that the extra month of Adar gives us a total of sixty consecutive days of rejoicing. In Jewish law a non kosher substance can be nullified if mixed into a larger container of kosher food containing sixty times as much as the non-kosher substance. Similarly, when we have sixty consecutive days of rejoicing we can neutralize all of the negativity and sadness in our lives and in the lives of the entire Jewish people.

One of the ways to prepare for the ultimate coming of Moshiach and the Redemption of all Jews from both their internal as well as external exile is through joy. It is joy, our Rebbe's taught us, that can break through all barriers. And it is through the joy of Adar and Purim that we can even transform the negative energy into positive energy just as the tragic events that lead up to Purim were miraculously converted into positive ones.

This too is the theme of the weekly parsha of Ki Tisa, which connotes the uplifting of the Jewish people, despite the fact that the parsha is mostly about their greatest decline and degradation though the worshiping of the golden calf. The name Ki Tisa underscores our ability to not only vanquish evil but to transform our low points into high points.

Let us therefore fully utilize the added opportunity to rejoice during these two transformative months of Adar, particularly during Purim katan. And may we go from the day of Redemption that we will observe on both Purims to the ultimate and permanent Redemption through and with our righteous Moshiach at our head, when all the darkness and misery of the world will be converted into joy, Amen!

J.I. Gutnick

Purim Katan – the minor Purim

The Jewish calendar follows a 19 year cycle, and there are seven leap years in each cycle. The Leap Year contains an extra month: Adar I and Adar II.

Purim is celebrated in the second Adar. However, during the first Adar we celebrate a Purim Katan - semi Purim. On the 14th and 15th of Adar I we don't say the Tachanun prayer, don't institute a fast day, and don't do eulogies. It is also customary to have a special meal and be extra joyous on that day.

It Happened Once...



Once, it so happened that Rabbi Mottel of Chernobyl fell sick. He became so critically ill that he went into a coma for four days and was literally hovering between life and death.

His Chassidim and followers were in distress. They gathered together, prayed and said Tehillim (Psalms) non-stop for the entire time until finally it worked and G-d heard their prayers! Their Rebbe regained consciousness and several weeks later held a great thanksgiving meal for the kindness G-d showed him.

The meal was unusually joyous; replete with song and dance until one of the older Chassidim, who had taken a few L'chiams, mustered up his courage approached the Rebbe and asked him if he would please grace the crowd with a description of what he'd seen in the four days he was "out."

After a few minutes of pregnant silence the Rebbe cleared his throat, closed his eyes and began to speak.

"I left my body and felt my soul rising, rising to heaven. I was sure that my time on earth had terminated. But I resisted. I didn't want to die. I cried and asked for mercy but it didn't help.

"I was brought before the heavenly court and they were about to decide my fate. So in desperation I screamed that I wanted to see my holy, departed father, Rabbi Nochum. I knew that if he could intercede for me I might have a chance.

"My request was granted! My father was lowered from the high level of heaven he was but, when we were finally face to face and I was bursting from joy to see him again after all these years ... he didn't recognize me!

"I pleaded and tried to make him remember... but to no avail. He admitted that he had a son but he didn't believe that I was him! He simply didn't recognize me at all.

"Finally he asked if perhaps I had done some sin after he left this world and that is the reason he didn't know me. And he disappeared.

"So for three days, I tried to remember if possibly I had done something wrong but with no success. I again began weeping and praying and, behold, my father re-appeared. He told me that he also had been searching but he came up with nothing. All he could conclude was perhaps it was something I had done very recently; say in the last day or two before my illness that was inaccessible to him. He asked me if I remembered anything unusual.

"Suddenly something came to my mind, but it certainly wasn't a sin. I told him that I remembered that just before my illness a wealthy Jew who had recently become a pauper, came to ask me for a loan of several hundred roubles to get back on his feet.

"But I had to turn him down because I simply didn't have that type of money. Still, I gave him what I could and tried to comfort him as best as possible.

"'Comfort him?' My father asked, 'What did you say?'

"I said a proverb from the wisest of men... King Solomon. I said, 'Who is beloved, G-d reproves' (Proverbs 3:12).

"And what did you mean by that?' My father asked as though he was on to something.

"What did I mean?" I replied, not really understanding what he was getting at. "Why, I meant the simple meaning. That he shouldn't worry because sometimes G-d makes people suffer because He loves them. For instance sinners; suffering can sometimes clean them of their sins. 'Who is beloved, G-d reproves'"

"Aha! My father replied. 'Now I know why I didn't recognize you! I never would have said such a thing! And, indeed, here in Heaven we learn that sentence completely differently!

"Up here we learn it like this: 'Whoever is beloved' namely if you see someone that you love (and we are supposed to love every creature) who is suffering... then.... 'G-d reprove!'

"Namely you should reprove G-d!! Like Moses did; when he challenged G-d saying 'Why do you make your people suffer?' (Ex. 5:22). And G-d listened!!!

"My son" my father concluded, 'when it comes to the suffering of others we have to protest! We must try to change G-d's mind and not justify Him!'

"And I came back to life."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

Everyone who sought G-d went out to the Tabernacle of Meeting, which was outside the camp. (Exodus 30:7)

In actuality they were looking for Moses, yet the Torah states that they were seeking G-d. We thus learn that receiving the leader of the generation is the same as receiving G-d Himself. (*Jerusalem Talmud, Eruvin*)

Half a shekel, after the shekel of the Sanctuary. (Ex. 30:13)

A Jew is only "half" an entity in two senses, attaining completion and wholeness by uniting with G-d, or alternately, with another Jew. Yet these explanations are interrelated, for when a person helps his fellow Jew and unites with him, he simultaneously merits G-d's blessing and draws closer to Him at the same time. (*Likutei Sichot, Vol. 3*)

And the Tablets were the work of G-d, and the writing was the writing of G-d. (Ex. 32:16)

What was so remarkable about the Tablets, considering that the Jewish people had already heard the Ten Commandments? Rather, when the Ten Commandments were inscribed in stone, they were simultaneously engraved upon the heart of every Jew forever and ever, as it states, "Write them on the tablet of your heart." This, indeed, was truly "a work of G-d." (*Sefat Emet*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS KI TISA • 15 ADAR I • 19 FEBRUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:58 PM
	MINCHA:	8:10 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:40 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10:14 AM
	MINCHA:	7:50 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8:56 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:00 PM
	MAARIV:	8:50 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 18 FEBRUARY 2011

Begins		Ends
7:58	MELBOURNE	8:56
7:50	ADELAIDE	8:46
6:13	BRISBANE	7:06
6:57	DARWIN	7:47
6:12	GOLD COAST	7:05
6:47	PERTH	7:42
7:28	SYDNEY	8:23
7:38	CANBERRA	8:34
7:55	LAUNCESTON	8:55
7:58	AUCKLAND	8:55
8:04	WELLINGTON	9:04



Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.