

Lamplighter

2 Iyar
Emor
981
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5771/2011

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Emor, begins with a fundamental teaching about the education of children: "Speak to the priests...and say to them." Our Sages explain that this repetition alludes to the mitzva (commandment) and obligation placed on adults to instruct their children in the proper path. Parents, the Torah insists, must provide the next generation with the proper Jewish education.

But why is such a fundamental concept not mentioned until now, halfway through the Torah? Would it not have been more appropriate for this mitzva to be given immediately after the revelation at Mt. Sinai? Furthermore, why is this mitzva mentioned in connection with the priests?

In explanation, bear in mind that the Torah portion studied during any given week has particular significance for that time of year. Its selection is not arbitrary; its teachings are especially applicable at that particular time. The commandment to educate the young must therefore apply most specifically now, during the month of Iyar, a month primarily characterized by counting the omer.

The essential concept of Sefirat HaOmer, counting the omer, is education. The Jews were educated and refined as they counted the days before the Torah was given on Mt. Sinai, seven weeks after their exodus from Egypt. The release from bondage was, so to speak, the "birth" of the Jewish nation, which was then followed by a period in which they were educated for the great event to come.

This learning experience was not, however, in the fundamentals of Judaism; G-d had already said of Abraham, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they will keep the way of G-d." This process of refinement, achieved through counting the omer, refers to a higher degree of perfection.

Furthermore, this type of education has a special connection to the service of the priests, for their job was to bring the Jews closer to G-d through the sacrifices brought in the Holy Temple. Because the priests raised the sanctity of the entire Jewish nation, it is to them that the commandment to instruct the young was addressed.

We learn from this that the duty to provide our children - and every Jewish child - with a proper Jewish education involves more than teaching them just the basics of Judaism. We must also endeavour to instill in them the desire for perfection in the service of G-d.

Today, as we stand on the threshold of Moshiach's imminent arrival, this lesson is particularly apt, for it prepares us for that time when "the entire world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d, like the waters of the sea cover the earth."

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Updates

If you have a computer, you're familiar with the term. Updates come in all sizes and shapes, for all programs and operating systems. Some updates are enhancements (whatever they mean by that), some add new features, some fix bugs, some make the program compatible with an update someplace else - an update to the operating system or another program.

Some updates stop viruses. Some are so radical it's like getting a whole new program.

Some updates you don't have much choice about. Some you really need to download and install. Some are a matter of preference. But they're always there. Isn't it nice to know that the friendly programmers are always trying to make their programs better, more efficient, more productive, more user-friendly?

Just as our software needs an occasional update, so do our souls. Sometimes we only need a minor upgrade. Sometimes our spiritual "operating system" has gotten too complicated, runs too slow, or has too many bugs in it. When that is the case, we need a major update. Sometimes we're ready to enhance our spiritual performance, add new features, new mitzvot - commandments.

There are times and seasons and events that signal an update is needed: Big ones are life-changing events, of course, like a Bar or Bat Mitzvah or a wedding. At these times the spiritual operating system gets an update - our Jewish involvement and observance increases in quality as well as quantity.

Other update times are also pre-set. Each Jewish holiday bring with it a modification in our understanding, in the efficiency of how we operate spiritually. On Chanuka a "bug" is fixed, on Passover we add a "new feature." Each holiday focuses on a particular aspect or function of the program; the next year, when that holiday arrives, there's an enhancement to that function, a new feature to Shavuot - an insight we've gained, some enhanced appreciation, some deeper involvement.

And of course, there's the regularly scheduled weekly maintenance update - Shabbat.

Other times, we update ourselves by increasing our Jewish knowledge: attending a Torah class, studying on-line (Chabad.org), on the phone (jnet.org), from a book or by reading the Lamplighter! Or we start giving tzedaka (charity) regularly by putting a few coins in the tzedaka box daily or making sure to support Jewish causes. When asked why, we often don't know where the impetus came from. But of course it's really our internal, spiritual operating system connecting to the "main server" and automatically downloading updates.

Whatever the reason for the spiritual update - fixing a bug, making our "software" more efficient (doing a mitzva with more care, more attention to detail), adding a feature (taking on an extra mitzva), or enhancing functions (increasing our Torah learning, in a class or online), etc. - it's important to regularly update our spiritual software.



The Dollar Finds Its Home

In 1989, shortly before the fall of the Soviet Union, a Jewish revolution was already underway in the Communist-ruled countries. After decades of underground work to keep the embers of Judaism alive, the Lubavitcher Rebbe's emissaries experienced a lightening of the Russian attitude. For the first time that year, the Russian-Jewish aid organization Ezras Achim of New York sent rabbinical students to large cities in Russia and Ukraine, where they carried out their activities publicly among the Jews of the city.

One of those students was Rabbi Velvel Butman, who today serves as the Rebbe's emissary in Westchester County, New York. Velvel is a descendant of the founder of Chabad Chassidism, Rabbi Schneur Zalmen of Liadi, known as the Alter Rebbe. His father, Rabbi Shmuel, is the head of the Lubavitch Youth Organization of New York and also directs an organization for descendants of the Alter Rebbe. During a phone call, Rabbi Butman mentioned to Velvel that in just a few days would be the 24th of Tevet, the day of the passing of the Alter Rebbe. "It would be appropriate to find a way to travel to the gravesite of your ancestor in Haditch and pray there."

Velvel, naturally, was happy to carry out his father's suggestion. He explained that the best day for him would be the upcoming Thursday, the 21st of Tevet, three days before the yahrtzeit. "On Saturday night, the eve of the 24th of Tevet, I will call you to let you know how it went."

That Saturday night, Rabbi Butman was planning his annual gathering for descendants of the Alter Rebbe. Rabbi Butman thought that the next day, the 24th of Tevet, he would pass the Rebbe, who used to distribute dollars for charity and blessings every Sunday morning. He would report to the Rebbe about the annual gathering and also about his son's trip to the Alter Rebbe's resting place.

When Rabbi Butman returned home after the annual gathering, it was already very late. He waited by the phone for a little while, but his son did not call, and finally he fell into a deep sleep. The next morning, Rabbi Butman heard from his family members that Velvel had indeed called and told them that he had been to the Alter Rebbe's gravesite, had prayed there and also made a siyum, completion, of the book of Tanya, authored by the Alter Rebbe.

As planned, the next morning Rabbi Butman stood before the Rebbe to receive a dollar. When his turn came, he told the Rebbe about the gathering, as well as his son's visit to Haditch and the siyum he had arranged there.

As if he didn't hear the last remark, the Rebbe replied, "It's a shame. He could have made a siyum there!" The Rebbe then added, "Nu, surely he will do it another time."

That evening, the Rebbe's cryptic words became clear. Velvel called his parents again, and Rabbi Butman asked him to relate again what happened when he visited Haditch. Velvel said that he had learned the first few lines of Tanya, not the last ones also, as his family had mistakenly assumed.

Since the Rebbe had said that Velvel would certainly arrange a siyum some other time, Rabbi Butman told his son to go back to Haditch on the upcoming Thursday, and to learn the first and last chapter of Tanya.

That Sunday, Rabbi Butman went before the Rebbe again and told him that the siyum had been arranged as the Rebbe instructed. The Rebbe said, "Thank you," and gave Rabbi Butman an extra dollar for his son. As Rabbi Butman was leaving, the Rebbe called him back. "Surely your son traveled with someone else," he said, and gave an extra dollar for him, too.

As it turned out, Velvel had traveled to Haditch with a friend, Ruvy New, who today serves as an emissary of the Rebbe in Florida.

Rabbi Butman took the two dollars and put them into a drawer in his office, intending to give them to Velvel and his friend as soon as they got back from Russia. For some reason, however, the transfer never took place. The dollars remained in the drawer for 11 years.

In June of 2000, Rabbi Butman was looking for something in his office and opened that drawer. Suddenly, he found the two dollars from the Rebbe, which had lain there for so long. He decided that it was time to give the dollars to their intended recipients. He called his son Velvel, who was in the next room, and gave him the two dollars. "One of these is for Ruvy," he reminded his son.

Two days later, on the 3rd of Tamuz, Ruvy New arrived from Florida to New York. Velvel met him and reminded him of their trip to Russia 11 years earlier. "Do you remember that the Rebbe gave my father two dollars for us? Well, the time has come for you to receive yours," he said with a smile, handing Ruvy the dollar.

Rabbi New's face paled. "I can't believe it," he whispered. "I just prayed that the Rebbe should give me a sign that he is with me in Florida, in my mission to disseminate Judaism. Suddenly, you 'land' in front of me to hand me this dollar..."

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ISSUE 981

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Redemption will involve freeing all the elements of existence that have been subjugated in the exile. Nothing will be lost. On the contrary, everything will be redeemed. Every single Jew will be redeemed. All the positive activities and achievements of the Jews (and also the non-Jews) in the exile will not be nullified. What will be nullified is the concealment of the world's true inner being which is brought on by the material substance of the world and the subjugation to the rules of nature that exist at present. But all the positive aspects of the exile will remain, and indeed will be elevated. (*The Rebbe, 13 Iyar, 5751*)

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



Sholom uBrocho [Peace and Blessing]:

I received your invitation to the Bar Mitzvah of your elder son -, which will take place on Shabbos, [Torah portion] Emor, 5th of Iyar, and I wish you Mazal-Tov [congratulations] on this occasion.

It would be superfluous to speak of the importance of Bar Mitzvah to you, to whom Jewish traditions and customs are personal experiences. However, I would like to emphasize that there is a significance and a message in the fact that the Bar Mitzvah is taking place at this time between Pesach [Passover] and Shavuot.

The days of Sefirah ["counting" the omer] connecting the Festival of Our Freedom [Passover] with the Festival of Our Receiving the Torah [Shavuot] are a period of transition and preparation, from freedom to FREEDOM. True freedom, to the Jew, cannot mean only freedom from external forces of evil, but also, and especially, inner freedom and harmony which only the Torah can give us and help to attain.

I trust that— will realize that his Bar Mitzvah marks a transition from "slavery," in a sense, to full freedom, for many childish inclinations and habits to a life in full accord with the Torah and Mitzvoth [commandments] incumbent upon every fully grown Jew - I send him my prayerful wishes to walk along this happy path with determination and joy, inspired by the Chassidic way of life of his ancestral home. And may you have much Yiddish Nachas [Jewish pleasure] from him and your other children, bless them.

With blessing.

18 Shvat, 5716 (1856)

... My father-in-law, the Rebbe, of blessed memory, related the statement of his father, the Rebbe Rashab, of blessed memory: "See how precious is the body of a Jew - for its sake has G-d poured forth so much Torah and mitzvos (commandments)."

When G-d gives each and every one of us something as precious as the body, we are to make every effort and truly exert ourselves to insure that the body be healthy. In so doing, we make it possible to fulfil G-d's will of performing Torah and mitzvos, which is specifically performed with the body.

This is as Maimonides states (*in Hilchos Deos, beginning of ch. 4*), that "maintaining a healthy and whole body is an integral part of one's Divine service." And then there is the letter of the Maggid of Mezritch (printed in HaTamim) to his son, the holy "Malach," (angel) in which he states: "A small hole in the body causes a large hole in the soul."

My intent is not to lecture - rather, it is my hope that the above will hopefully have a positive effect on you, and through you it will also have an effect upon your husband.

Although the Zohar does state that the "strength of the soul leads to the weakening of the body," this is to be understood in the context of the spiritual power and potency of the holy soul weakening the corporeal demands of the body - not, Heaven forbid, weakening the health of the body.

Indeed, we readily observe that when a person is healthy he can accomplish so much more in all areas [than when he is unhealthy,] particularly with regard to matters relating to love of G-d, love of Torah and love of a fellow Jew. ...

A WORD from the Director

This Friday (May 6th), we celebrate the birthday of Rabbi Shmuel, the fourth Rebbe of Lubavitch, known as the Rebbe Maharash.

In one of his many writings, the Rebbe Maharash quotes a Midrash on the sentiment of the Jewish people when G-d will send Moshiach:

"The Midrash on the Song of Songs states that when Moshiach comes, he will say to the Jewish people, 'In this month you will be redeemed.' But the Jews will protest that G-d told us we would be enslaved to the 70 nations [and we were not yet enslaved by all 70 nations].

"G-d will reply to them, 'One of you was exiled to the Barbary Coast, and one of you was exiled to Samatry, etc. So it is as if you were all enslaved to the 70 nations of the world. Therefore, in this month, you will be redeemed.'"

This Midrash touches a very tender spot. There will come a time when G-d is ready to send Moshiach and some Jews will protest that it's not the right time!

This will not be the first time that such an occurrence has taken place in Jewish history. For, commentators state that at the Exodus from Egypt, some of our brethren protested to G-d, "But You said we would be enslaved for 400 years, and we have only been here for 210 years!" G-d explained to them that because the servitude had been so difficult, the 210 years counted as 400.

Can you imagine? They were being worked to the bone by the Egyptians, and yet, there were some who preferred staying in Egypt!

Whether it was because we prefer the known, even if it is horrible, to the unknown, or simply because they had become complacent, they preferred Egypt to the Redemption.

It is time we stop making excuses for G-d and finding reasons for this exile. As the Rebbe said so many times, everything has already been done. Let us not place the blame for the long exile on a lack of unity, or mitzvos, or faith. Let us judge each other and the entire Jewish people meritoriously.

And let us cry out to G-d, "Ad Mosai - how long?"

J.I. Gutnick

Why do we count the Omer?

By Naftali Silberberg

Counting the 49 days between Passover and Shavuot (starting with the second day of Passover) is essentially a Biblical command: "You shall count for yourselves, from the morrow of the rest day [of Passover], from the day you bring the Omer as a wave offering seven weeks; they shall be complete. You shall count until the day after the seventh week, [namely,] the fiftieth day".

The Midrash tells us that after leaving Egypt, Moses informed the Israelites that they would be receiving the Torah from G-d. In response to the Jews' inquiries, Moses notified them that this event would happen on the fiftieth day after leaving Egypt. Upon hearing the good news, the Jews excitedly started counting down the days until Shavuot.

According to most Halachic authorities, the counting of the Omer was a Biblical obligation only when the Omer sacrifice was actually offered in the Holy Temple. Today the Sages instituted that we continue this practice in memory of the Biblical command — and in anticipation of the rebuilding of the Holy Temple, when once again we will be observing the Biblical command of counting the Omer.

Additionally, the spiritual aspect of counting the Omer is certainly relevant today.

It Happened Once...



In Vitebsk, in White Russia, there lived a goodhearted nobleman from whose estates many Jews made their livelihood. The entire town of Chekhov belonged to him, and not only did he forgo the taxes of the poor Jews who lived there, but in addition he allowed the religious functionaries of the community — the rabbi, the *shochet*, the prayer leaders and the Torah teachers — to pasture their cows and goats without payment.

This *graf*, however, was an ailing man, and as he grew older and weaker he had to visit Dr. Bertenson in Vitebsk more frequently, leaving the administration of his estates, his castle and all of his business interests in the hands of his manager, who was a sworn anti-Semite.

The Catholic parish church stood on the squire's estates, and on the instigation of its zealous new priest the manager began to deprive the local Jews of their livelihoods, and to exact taxes from even the poorest of them. This went on for some two years.

Most of the Jews of the town were chasidim of Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch (whose birthday is celebrated this Friday). When they visited him for a festival or a Shabbat they would listen to a chasidic discourse from his mouth, and when speaking to him privately they would ask for his blessings for their children, for health and for their livelihood — and then they would travel home, certain that the Al-mighty would have pity on them. Not one of them thought it would be proper to trouble the *rebbe* with an account of what was happening to their sources of income, or with stories of some anti-Semite parish priest.

One of the Jews whose business affairs had been connected for generations with the estates of this *graf* was called Reb Shmuel Isaacs — an honest, respectable and well-to-do merchant, who was moderately leaned in both the revealed and the mystical aspects of the Torah. When he visited Lubavitch for the festival of Shavuot in the year 1880 the *rebbe* asked him detailed questions about the state of the livelihoods earned by the Jews of the town, and the merchant told him the whole truth.

"I know of the condition of the *graf*," said the *rebbe*, "for Professor Bertenson has told me that it is precarious. But why did you not tell me all this time about the change in the policy of the administration towards the Jews on his estates?"

The *rebbe* spent some moments sunk in thought, and then said: "Travel home now, and at the first opportunity at which you see the *graf* tell him in my name that I know that his condition is dangerous, and that his physicians have despaired of saving his life. I promise him never theless that if he helps the Jews of Chekhov and the neighbouring villages, the Al-mighty will give him one month's health for each family."

As soon as Reb Shmuel the merchant returned home he began to frequent the squire's courtyard in the hope of meeting him, but for days on end he was not to be seen outside because of his delicate health. One sunny day, though, his doctor advised him to prepare his carriage so that they could take a ride in the fresh air in a nearby forest. Reb Shmuel saw him being led out to his waiting carriage, frail and listless.

The *graf* saw him too, and invited him to join him in his carriage. No sooner did he hear what the *rebbe* had said, he asked Reb Shmuel to draw up a list of all the Jewish families in the region who could earn their living from

his properties, after visiting them all either personally or by proxy — but no one was to know of his mission.

Reb Shmuel duly provided him with a list of more than one hundred and sixty families from the township, with an additional couple of dozen families from the surrounding villages. The Jews were once again able to earn a living — and the *graf* was restored to health. Reb Shmuel became highly regarded around the castle, and every year the *graf* would send with him a *lulav* from his palm trees, together with sprigs of myrtle, as a gift to the *rebbe* in honour of the festival of Sukkot.

In this way he enjoyed fourteen years of uninterrupted good health — but then suddenly he felt very weak. He sent for Reb Shmuel and asked him to set out at once for Lubavitch, where he was to visit the resting place of the *rebbe* — for the *tzadik* had passed away in 1882 — and to notify him that the *graf* felt weak, though according to his reckoning he was owed another year and seven months of life. Would the *rebbe* therefore honour his promise? ...

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

He will not go out from the sanctuary. (Lev. 21:12)

A person's thoughts must always be connected with the "sanctuary" - that which is holy. He mustn't "go out" from holiness even for a moment. Even when busy with worldly matters, it should be similar to one who goes out of his house temporarily, knowing that he will soon return home. (The Baal Shem Tov)

But the seventh day is a Sabbath of Sabbaths, a sacred holiday... (Lev. 23:3)

The Midrash relates: The Torah said to G-d, "Master of the Universe, when the Children of Israel enter the land, what will happen to me? They will be busy sowing and ploughing. What will become of me?" Said G-d to the Torah, "I have a partner that I will give you, and it is Shabbat. On this day, the Children of Israel will not work. They will come to the synagogues and study halls and occupy themselves with Torah."

In the manner that he has caused a defect in someone, so shall it be done to him. (Lev. 24:20)

If one finds a defect or something lacking in his fellow man, this is a sign that "so shall it be done to him" - that he himself has the defect. "He who charges others, charges them with his own faults." (Kometz HaMincha)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS EMOR • 3 IYAR • 7 MAY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:11 PM
	MINCHA:	5:20 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:50 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:41 AM
	MINCHA:	5:10 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:08 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:15 PM
	MAARIV:	6:00 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 6 MAY 2011

Begins	Ends
5:11 MELBOURNE	6:08
5:11 ADELAIDE	6:08
4:55 BRISBANE	5:49
6:14 DARWIN	7:04
4:53 GOLD COAST	5:47
5:17 PERTH	6:12
4:53 SYDNEY	5:48
4:59 CANBERRA	5:55
4:55 LAUNCESTON	5:55
5:13 AUCKLAND	6:11
5:05 WELLINGTON	6:05



Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נב"מ זי"ע

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