

Lamplighter

20 Sivan
Behaalotchah
882
12 June
5769/2009

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Behaalotcha, Moses tells G-d that he cannot bear to take sole responsibility for the Jewish people. G-d responds by saying, "Assemble 70 of Israel's elders... I will cause some of your spirit to emanate, and I will place it upon them. You will then not have to bear the responsibility alone."

The commentator Sifri compares the emanation of Moses' spirit to the elders to a "candle placed on a candelabrum" being used to light many additional candles. In so doing, "the candle did not diminish its own light at all. So too, Moses' wisdom was not diminished at all [by the emanation of his spirit]."

A similar comment is found in the Midrash, "Did this [emanation] possibly affect Moses' degree of prophecy? Not at all! Rather, this was similar to a burning candle from which many other candles were lit, and whose own light was not diminished. Here as well, nothing became lacking in Moses, for the verse attests, 'No prophet like Moses has arisen in Israel.'"

Although these commentaries seem to convey the same thought - that Moses' greatness was not reduced by the emanation - a closer examination reveals differing reasoning for why this was so.

Sifri states that Moses "resembled a candle placed upon a candelabrum." What about this placement is crucial to the Sifri's explanation as to why Moses was not diminished?

The Midrash proves that "nothing became lacking in Moses" by asserting that Moses was the greatest prophet of all. What proof is there from this verse? Couldn't Moses have remained the greatest prophet and still something could have become lacking in him? Clearly, the Midrash sees Moses' greatness as the reason why no change occurred in him.

Both the Midrash and the Sifri address why Moses, who was so much loftier than the elders, did not need to descend from his natural level in order for his spirit to be imparted upon them. Either: a) at that time, Moses was on a lower plane than he normally was - already on a level comparable to that of the elders, or b) Moses was so great that, even though he remained on his rarefied level, he was still able to impart his spirit upon others without causing a change in himself.

The Sifri is a book of Jewish law that views matters from a simple and more practical outlook. The Midrash is a book of Aggadah that views matters from a more spiritual perspective:

Moses' plea to G-d that others share the responsibility came as result of, and immediately after, the sin of the "complainers" - individuals who came forward with perfidious complaints and made spurious demands. Since Moses' greatness was a direct result of his leadership role, it is understandable that the descent of the Jewish people because of the "complainers" caused a corresponding descent in Moses as well.

Thus, according to the Sifri, "At that time Moses resembled a candle placed upon a candelabrum," i.e., readily accessible to all. Moses had undergone a descent, so sharing his spirit would not diminish him further.

According to the Midrash, however, the emanation of Moses' spirit didn't affect him because he was so lofty. He thus was able to remain on his rarefied level even as his spirit spread to others.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Between Jobs

By Yanki Tauber

You stride briskly into the waiting room, fifteen minutes late. This is intentional: you're trying to reduce those wasted waiting-room minutes. But a brief conversation with the receptionist reveals, to your dismay, that you have mistakenly arrived 35 minutes early...

You miss your connection, and the next available flight departs the following morning. As you check into the airport hotel, the thought crosses your mind that you've never been in this city before. What to do now? Do some shopping? Walk around downtown? Spend the evening in your room catching up on work?

You're stuck in a dead-end job. For some time now you've been aware that this is not what you want to do with your life, and it's inevitable that your boss will soon realize this too. You're exploring a number of possibilities, but it will take a while before any of those materialize. So you're looking at a good few months of treading water (and that's the best-case scenario...)

We inhabit two kinds of time: real time and in-between time. In real time we pursue our lives: our careers, our relationships, our family and social interactions. Then there's waiting-room time, airport time, between-jobs time. The trick is to maximize the real time and keep the in-between time to a minimum.

Not so, says the Lubavitcher Rebbe. According to the Rebbe, there's only one kind of time. There are long journeys and short journeys, there are large jobs and small jobs, there are obvious opportunities and situations in which we scratch our heads and wonder, why are we here? But all of time is real; every moment is crucial. Every segment of our lives, no matter how fleeting or temporary, has a center, a purpose, an objective.

In one of his letters, the Rebbe explains his basis for this view: the story of our ancestors' travels through the Sinai Desert.

The book of Numbers describes how the Children of Israel camped and journeyed in the desert. At the very center of the Israelite camp stood the *Mishkan*, the portable sanctuary that housed the Divine presence. Surrounding the *Mishkan* were the tents of the Kohanim and Levites who served in the Sanctuary. And beyond the Levite camp radiated, like the spokes of a wheel, the tent communities of the 12 tribes of Israel — three tribes to the east, three to the south, three to the west and three tribes to the north.

Above the *Mishkan* hovered a cloud signifying the Divine presence which dwelled within it; when the cloud lifted, that was the sign that it was time to move on. There was no pre-set period for each encampment. Sometimes the cloud — and the people — stayed put for a year, sometimes for but a single night. Whenever the cloud lifted, the people journeyed on.

We said that the *Mishkan* was portable. But this was no collapsible puppet. This formidable edifice included forty-eight 17-foot-long wall sections, a hundred 150-pound foundation sockets, more than two dozen huge tapestries, and numerous pillars, fasteners, furnishings and utensils. It required a crew of 8,580 Levites to dismantle, transport and reassemble the *Mishkan* each time the people moved.

And the Torah emphasizes that the entire process was repeated each time the people journeyed. Including those times that they camped for a single night. Each time, the *Mishkan* was erected and 600,000 households pitched their tents in the prescribed formation around it.

Thus the people know that they were never simply "passing through" or "biding time" at a particular juncture in their journey. Their every encampment, no matter how short or temporary, was to have its center, its focus, its objective: its own distinct way of making G-d at home in their lives.



Hamantaschen for Shavuot?

By Yrachmiel Tilles

In 1967, a young Lubavitcher Chassid from Australia travelled to New York to spend Shavuot with the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Brooklyn. He arrived a few days before the festival, just a short time after the outbreak of the Six Day War when the Rebbe had inaugurated the campaign to encourage all Jewish males to wrap tefillin.

Our young Australian decided one day after morning prayers to accompany some of his peers in the new tefillin campaign. At the last moment, before entering the waiting car, he decided to duck into the nearby grocery store to get some food to take along as he hadn't eaten anything yet that day. He grabbed a random selection of baked goods from the first shelf he saw, paid for them, and ran to the waiting car.

As they drove, he pulled out his bag to take something to eat and offered his companions some as well. Suddenly they all burst into laughter. Among the baked good were hamantaschen!
"Hamantaschen now! On the eve of Shavuot?"

The cakes and cookies disappeared quickly. Only the hamantaschen remained. How could they possibly still be edible?

After three quarters of an hour they reached their destination: a large hospital in Manhattan. There, they split into pairs and assigned themselves different wards to visit. In each one there were many Jews. They invited each Jewish man to wrap tefillin, and most of them agreed to do so.

As the end of the time approached, the Australian and his partner went into

one more room, and found that another pair of their friends was already in the room. In the room were two Jewish men. One of them accepted the offer of tefillin right away, but the other firmly refused. He even broke into a rage, exclaiming, "I am as connected to G-d as you are."

The students tried to calm the elderly man with gentle words, but he refused to be pacified. Indeed, their words only seemed to make him angrier. His fierce objection to the idea of performing the mitzvah of tefillin aroused their curiosity. After all, here was a man clearly very advanced in years, sick in bed in a hospital, with the name of G-d coming easily to his lips; it didn't make sense that he should refuse so adamantly to don the tefillin. Even his roommate tried to persuade him to do it, but he wouldn't listen.

After a while they were ready to give up. Anyway, it was time to leave. Then one of them addressed the old man again, this time offering him a piece of fruit. "Here, eat this. At least you will get to recite a blessing."

The man turned his face to the wall, ignoring them. But then he suddenly swivelled in their direction and said sarcastically, "Fruit you present me? Bring me hamantaschen and then I'll put on your precious tefillin."

They couldn't believe their ears. As if at a signal, three pairs of eyes swung towards the visitor from Australia. A broad smile stretched across his face. Gazing fondly at the elderly patient, he replied to him, "If in order to put on tefillin you require hamantaschen, so okay, we'll get you some hamantaschen!"

The old man stared back incredulously. "Hamantaschen now? I don't believe it!"

The other three boys said whatever they could think of to keep the ornery patient occupied. In the meantime, the Australian had already zoomed out of the room and was making his way to the hospital's parking lot.

With a broad smile, the young man took out the little package of

hamantaschen from his bag, the presumably stale Purim pastries that just a short while ago had been scorned by all.

As he made his way back up the steps he wondered to himself how long a time had gone by since this elderly Jew had last wrapped tefillin.

Re-entering the room, he went over to the patient's bed and extended to him the hamantaschen. The old man's eyes filled with tears. "Unbelievable. Simply unbelievable. Hamantaschen after Passover? Right before Shavuot? Who would have thought...?" He stretched out his hand and gingerly lifted one to his mouth. One of the yeshiva boys helped him to say the correct blessing. He closed his eyes and chewed slowly.

After, without a word being said, he rolled up the sleeve of his left arm to fulfil his side of the deal that, strangely, he himself had proposed. When the tefillin were on, he began to cry silently; tears were streaming down his cheeks. Nor was he the only one - there wasn't a dry eye in the room.

The young Chasidim drove back to Lubavitch World Headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn. They were filled with wonder at the extraordinary combination of events that had meshed together. The whole way back in the car they couldn't stop discussing it. Clearly everything had been arranged directly from heaven!

Before returning to Australia, the young man was able to have a private audience with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He told the Rebbe the entire story. (In fact, it is from this Australian Chassid, who wishes to remain anonymous, that we know this story). The Rebbe smiled and replied, "Nu, if that is what it takes, let someone bring him hamantaschen every day."

Translated and adapted from Sichat HaShavua. Yrachmiel Tilles is the co-founder and associate director of Ascent-of-Safed, and editor of Ascent Quarterly and the AscentOfSafed.com and KabbalaOnline.org websites.

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield in conjunction with the Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

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ISSUE 882

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



Difficulties Impossible?

I am in receipt of your letter in which you write about various recent events in your life - which were not in the category of obvious good - and you ask what your reaction should be.

In general, as you surely know, Jews are guided by the Torah, the "Torah of Life," which is to say that Torah is the Jew's true guide in everyday life. The Torah is also called Torah Or, the "Torah of Illumination," since it illuminates a Jew's life and its instructions are as lucid as light itself.

One of the best-known portions of the Torah, which Jews recite daily in both morning and evening, is the portion of the Shema [prayer], in which the Torah tells us to love G-d "with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might".

The Hebrew word m'odecha, generally translated as "your might," also conveys the meaning of middah - "measure" or "dimension," as our Sages explain. This means that a Jew has to love G-d regardless of the kind of "deal" he thinks is meted out to him by Divine providence.

This profound love is to express itself, as the text indicates, in the study of Torah and the observance of its mitzvos (commandments), specifically the mitzvos of tefillin and mezuzah which are mentioned in the Shema; and tefillin because it is symbolic of all the mitzvos.

Moreover, inasmuch as the hand tefillin is placed on the left arm facing the heart, the seat of the emotions, and [the head tefillin] on the head facing the brain, the seat of the intellect, tefillin symbolizes that a Jew is to be totally involved - both emotionally and intellectually - in serving and fulfilling His commandments.

In other words, whatever happens in a Jew's life must not in any way affect his love of and devotion to G-d, nor his everyday life and conduct in accordance with the Torah and mitzvos. (Needless to say, the mitzvah of reciting the Shema daily is not reserved for exceptional Jews, but is for each and every Jew.)

The question now arises: Is the above something that can really be implemented, and if so, how is one to explain how this can actually be implemented?

To be sure, the human intellect is limited and cannot possibly fathom the Divine wisdom that is in the Torah. On the other hand, the Torah itself describes the Jewish people as a "wise and understanding people," and it provides at least some explanation that helps us to understand, in however limited a degree, G-d's ways.

One of the basic teachings of the Torah is that G-d does not expect anything of a human being that is beyond the human capacity to carry out.

This, in fact, is eminently understandable: Even a human being, who is a very long way away from absolute perfection, would not expect a tool that he has fashioned to perform in a capacity greater than its original design. Certainly G-d, the Creator of man, knows man's capacities.

From this it naturally follows that when a Jew faces any kind of a test of faith, it is certain that he has been given the capacity to overcome it; and the more difficult the test, the greater must be the individual's capacities.

The reason that an individual is tested is not that G-d wants to know how well he will conduct himself, but in order that this person be afforded the opportunity to realize his potential, even that which is unknown to him. And when one's potential capacities are released and activated, they become part and parcel of his or her arsenal, to be used for personal as well as communal benefit. ...

A MITZVA A DAY

Positive Commandment 5: Worshipping G-d - "Prayer"

Imagine a magnificent palace with servants always ready to serve the king. Some stand by his throne, others bring him food, and still others tailor his velvet robes. This service is fit for a king. HaShem is the King of all kings! He does not ask us to perform these types of service, but rather instructs us to serve Him through Prayer, Tefillah. As subjects of the King, we express our dedication and loyalty by offering our praise and making our requests through prayer. This is learned out from words (in the Torah) "And you shall serve the L-rd, your G-d" (Exodus 23:25).

A WORD from the Director

This week we continue the study of the Mishna "Pirkei Avot" with Chapter Two. In Chapter two Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, one of the greatest Jewish Sages advises: "Be as careful in [the performance of a seemingly] minor mitzva as of a major one, for you do not know the reward given for the mitzva."

The Rebbe explains that there are two aspects to our Torah observance and two types of reward:

"The commandments were given solely to allow the creations to become refined." Each one of the Torah's 613 mitzvot causes a different aspect of spiritual purification in the person who performs the mitzva, the physical objects he uses to perform it, and in the world at large. In this sense, the reward G-d gives us for keeping His commandments is greater for certain mitzvot and less for others, according to the specific mitzva's characteristics.

At the same time, all mitzvot share something in common in the way we approach them. The Torah's mitzvot are the will of G-d. Whenever we do a mitzva, our motivation is not to bring about its particular spiritual effect but simply to do what G-d wants of us. In that sense, all of the different mitzvot are merely details.

What difference does it make which one we do first? The important thing is to fulfil the will of the Creator. Accordingly, the reward we receive for this aspect of our observance is the same for all the commandments.

Interestingly, the reward we receive for our role in refining the world is limited, just as each mitzva is categorized as "major" or "minor." But, as Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said, the reward for fulfilling G-d's will is beyond limitation - "you do not know" - completely above and beyond our comprehension.

As we say at the conclusion of each chapter, how fortunate we are that G-d "wished to make the people of Israel meritorious. He therefore gave them Torah and mitzvot in abundant measure."

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Now is a time when we must light up the candles of the Jewish people. The cumulative legacy of all the positive activity of the previous generations is granted us and all that is necessary is to kindle the flame, making sure that it "rises up on its own accord." Although our generation is on a lower level than the previous ones, it is our generation that has the potential to elevate the service of all the previous generations. We will be the last generation of exile, and the first generation of the Redemption, and in this way, bring redemption to all Jews of the previous generations.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe, 19 Sivan, 5751-1991)

J.I. Gutnick

It Happened Once...



Rabbi Yosef Ber Soloveichik, the rabbi of the town of Slutsk once happened to meet a young man who had been one of his students at the yeshiva in Volozhin. The meeting was very cordial and the rabbi invited the young man to dine with him at his home.

"What are you doing these days?" the rabbi inquired. "Thank G-d," the former student replied. "I have become a merchant and I'm very successful. In the past few years I have done very well for myself, and I'm making a very comfortable living."

The rabbi looked at his former student, paying close attention to his words and then said, "What are you doing?"

The young man was perplexed. Hadn't the rabbi understood him? He wondered, and he repeated his explanation. But instead of acknowledging his statement, the rabbi only repeated, "What are you doing now?"

"I hope the rabbi will forgive my asking, but three times the rabbi has asked me what I'm doing and I have answered him. I don't understand," asked the young man.

The rabbi replied with a deep sigh: "It is correct that you have answered my question three times over, but your answer is not the one I was hoping to hear. In so far as you have accumulated money, that is nothing to your credit, for it all belongs to G-d, as it says, 'Mine is the silver and Mine is the gold.' It is He who gives you riches, health, and in fact, your very life.

"When I ask you 'what are you doing?' I am referring to your good deeds, which are wholly your own. Do you give tzedaka (charity)? Are you kind to your fellow man? Do you devote a set time every day to the study of Torah? These are the only things in this world which are truly your own possessions which you accomplish through your efforts alone. I am asking you what you are doing, not what G-d is doing for you!"

Reb Moshe Leib Sassover was a great tzadik (righteous person) known for the tremendous love and kindness he constantly expressed for his fellow Jews. There was a constant stream of Jews who came to him to ask for a word of advice or a blessing.

One day a poor woman appeared at his door. As soon as she was admitted to his rooms she began to weep as if her heart was breaking. "I beg you, Rebbe," she pleaded, "give me a blessing for my daughter who is very sick."

Reb Moshe Leib responded with the blessing, "May G-d send her a complete and speedy recovery."

But for the distraught mother this blessing wasn't sufficient. "No, Rebbe, you must promise, you must swear to me that my daughter will recover. You must swear to me on your share in the World to Come that G-d will cure my child."

Without hesitating a moment Reb Moshe Leib replied, "I swear on my portion in the next world that G-d will cure her and she will recover." When she heard these words, the woman thanked the Tzadik effusively and left with a light heart.

Reb Moshe Leib's students who had observed the entire incident were

astounded. They asked him, "Rebbe, how could you have made such a promise? The girl is seriously ill, and it is very possible she may not survive."

"What else could I have done?" Reb Moshe Leib replied. "The tears of a Jewish mother are more precious to me than the entire World to Come. If my swearing on my future reward in the World of Truth was necessary to stop her from crying, then it is more than worth it to me, even if it will cost me my portion in the next world.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

Over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings (Num. 10:10)

The foundation of the Jew's service of G-d must be the absolute nullification of self, much like the burnt offering that was entirely consumed on the altar. Only then can one progress to the next stage of "peace offerings," symbolic of the service of the intellect, like the peace offering that was enjoyed by the person who brought it. (*Likutei Sichot*)

And you shall be to us as eyes (Num. 10:31)

Moses informed Yitro, his father-in-law, that he would be held up as a shining example to the rest of the Jewish people. For if Yitro, a convert to Judaism, could willingly abandon his family, his homeland and his elevated social status to worship the G-d of Israel, how much more so must Jews from birth serve G-d with all their heart! (*Kli Yakar*)

I am in the midst of the people, six hundred thousand men on foot (Num. 11:21)

This verse intimates the mystical principle that there is a spark or part of Moses in every Jew. Because Moses was connected with every Jew, he was therefore able to be the "faithful shepherd" of Israel and redeem them from Egypt. Similarly, the Baal Shem Tov taught that every Jew has a spark of the soul of Moshiach within him - the very core of which he is to unveil and release to govern his life. Each Jew will thus redeem himself, which in turn will bring about the national redemption for all of Israel. Because Moshiach is intimately connected with every Jew, he therefore has the power to be able to redeem the entire Jewish nation. (*Peninei HaGeula*)

And the likeness of G-d does he behold (Num. 12:8)

The "likeness of G-d" - these are the attributes of the Holy One, blessed be He. Our Sages said, "Just as He is merciful, so shall you be merciful; just as He is gracious, so shall you be gracious." These G-dly attributes were brought down by Moses our Teacher and instilled in the heart of every single Jew. (*Rabbi Avraham Mordechai of Gur*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS BEHAALOTCHAH

21 SIVAN • 13 JUNE

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4:49 PM
	MINCHA:	5:00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:30 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	4:45 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	5:50 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN - FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:00 PM
	MAARIV:	5:45 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 12 JUNE 2009



BEGINS	ENDS
4:49 MELBOURNE	5:50
4:52 ADELAIDE	5:52
4:42 BRISBANE	5:38
6:10 DARWIN	7:03
4:39 GOLD COAST	5:39
5:01 PERTH	5:59
4:35 SYDNEY	5:33
4:30 LAUNCESTON	5:35
4:53 AUCKLAND	5:53
4:40 WELLINGTON	5:43

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

יצוקללה"ה נבג"מ ז"ע

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