

# LampLighter

26 Adar  
Vayak'hel-Pekudei

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

When two Torah portions are combined, such as this week when Vayakhel and Pekuday are read, the result is a single entity with a combined message for us in our daily lives. In fact, this week's Torah reading affords us a fundamental lesson in our service of G-d, for each portion illustrates a different aspect of that service.

"Vayakhel"—"And you shall gather"—points to the unification of all of the different entities in our diverse world, uniting within the domain of holiness. "Pekuday," by contrast, means "counting," and highlights how every entity possesses its own unique importance, for every creation has been given a unique nature with which it can serve G-d.

In particular, the message of Vayakhel applies to the Jewish people, and alludes to their being gathered together to form a single, collective entity. Fulfilling the mitzva of "Love your fellow man as yourself" is possible because all Jews share a single essence, their G-dly soul, which is truly "a part of G-d from above."

This mitzva is so important that even before beginning our daily prayers we make a formal declaration of accepting this commandment as the foundation upon which the day's activities will follow.

In simple terms, when a person sees another Jew, he should try to unite with him, because, in truth, they share a fundamental commonality. This applies not only to Jews in one's immediate community, but to all Jews, even those in the most remote corners of the world.

And when the distance is spiritual in nature, when another Jew doesn't share one's level of Jewish observance, one should make sure to focus on the connection which is shared and not on the differences which superficially divide.

This approach, this thrust to unite with one's fellow Jews, will lead to the ultimate fulfillment of Vayakhel, the ingathering of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel. We need not even wait until Pekuday, when we read about the official census of the Jews that was taken thousands of years ago. On the contrary, after the coming of Moshiach, Jews will gather first in their ancient homeland, and afterwards, when all Jews will have left their present exile, the new census will be taken.

In fact, as we stand on the very threshold of the Messianic era, we have a foretaste of this ingathering, which is being experienced at present with the aliyah of Jews from many countries to Eretz Yisrael.

Although there has always been a Jewish presence in Israel, there are far more Jews gathering there now than ever before, a fact that has attracted the attention of the entire world.

May our deeds hasten that day when the ingathering of all the dispersed Jewish people will be complete, when G-d will "sound the great shofar...and bring us together from the four corners of the earth into our land."

*(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

## Home

By Yanki Tauber

Nations go to war over it; families sign away a sizeable chunk of their income for the next 30 years to acquire one. The sages of the Talmud go so far as to say that "A man without a homestead is not a man."

A home is more than a roof to keep out the rain, walls to keep out unwanted visitors, a kitchen in which to prepare food and a bed in which to sleep. Forts, office buildings, hotels and restaurants can perform those functions as well, or better, than any residence. But only at home is a person at home. Home is where you can make faces at the mirror, wear an old green sweater with a hole under the armpit and eat pickles with peanut butter — because you feel like it.

G-d, too, desires a home — a place where He can be fully and uninhibitedly Himself. The Chassidic masters ask: Why did G-d create the physical world? What can our coarse, finite, strife-ridden existence give Him that the spiritual dimensions of creation cannot? And they answer: G-d created the physical world because He wanted a home — a place where He can do things because He feels like it.

G-d's first home was a two-room, 45 by 15-foot building. According to Exodus 25, it was made of the following materials: gold, silver, copper, blue, purple and red-dyed wool, flax, goat hair, animal hides and wood. It was made to order, from detailed specifications given to Moses at Mount Sinai. It sat in the very centre of the Israelite camp in the desert, and was designed so that it could be dismantled and reassembled as they wandered from place to place for the forty years between their Exodus from Egypt and their entry into the Holy Land. Later, a larger and more permanent version was constructed on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Said G-d to man: I created wisdom, knowledge and understanding, and in these creations My mind dwells. I created love, justice and compassion, and in these my character resides. I created beauty, splendour and majesty, and in these I invest My personality. But none of these are My home, any more than the office at which you work or the theatre at which you are entertained is yours. So I created physical matter — the most undivine thing I could conceive of — so that I should have a place in which there are no roles for Me to play and no characteristics for Me to project; Only My will to fulfil.

When you take your gold (your material excesses), your silver (your stolid middle-class wealth) and your copper (your pauper's subsistence pennies) and use them to fashion a reality that conforms to My will, you have made Me at home in My world.



## The Rebbe Sent Me

Mrs. Raizel Astulin came out of the Rebbe's office with tears of excitement. It was more than a dream come true.

Just a few years ago she was behind the iron curtain with no avenue of escape other than prayer. Russia was closed... forever! Or so it seemed. Every year she applied anew for a visa to move to Israel to her family. But every year she, like millions of others, was rejected.

But what pained her most of all was that she would never see more than just a picture of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

But miraculously it happened! One day she looked in her mailbox to see a letter from the government. It was permission to leave to Israel!

It was truly a miracle! And to make it complete, shortly after she got settled in Israel her family bought her a plane ticket to the Rebbe.

When she entered the Rebbe's office he asked about her family, about her health, about the situation in Russia. He also asked how she was acclimating to Israel, and then told her that when she returns there she should devote time to teaching Jewish women and girls about lighting Shabbat Candles. (For thousands of years Jewish women have been lighting Candles before the commencement of Sabbath night).

But Mrs. Astulin feebly protested that she didn't really even know how to speak Hebrew. The Rebbe answered, "You do what you have to and if any one makes trouble tell them that you are doing it at my request."

Mrs. Astulin, a true Chassid of the Rebbe, wasted no time. The first Friday, after her return to Israel, she took a bus to the nearest hospital. She bravely entered with the plan of going from room to room distributing candles together with a folder explaining why, how and when to light them.

She was full of optimism but there definitely was more than a trace of anxiety. After all, she really couldn't speak the language properly and had never really approached total strangers before to ask them to do commandments.

And sure enough, the first room she entered .... War!

It was a sixty year old woman who, as soon as Mrs. Astulin entered the room with a smile and outreach candles, opened fire: "What are you doing here?! What? Candles for Shabbat? Commandments? GET OUT!! All you religious people are parasites! Do you hear me? Parasites! OUT OF MY ROOM!!"

Mrs. Astulin flinched and wanted to just apologize and leave but suddenly she remembered what the Rebbe said and blurted out.

"Listen, I'm a follower of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and...." "but her limited Hebrew and the shouts of the woman still ringing in her ears tied her tongue.

Then something happened. The woman calmed down! "Ehh? You said the Rebbe of Lubavitch sent you?"

"Yes." Mrs. Astulin answered and asked incredulously, "Do you know the Rebbe?"

The woman's eyes filled with tears and she answered in Russian. First apologizing for yelling and then she explained.

"When I was young my parents passed away leaving me and my brother to fend for ourselves. He went to Medical School and graduated with high honours while I turned to other interests. But we were very close because all we had in the world was each other.

"But things weren't good in Russia and after a while we decided to leave. My brother, although he was head of a department in a large hospital, was making almost no money and for me Russia was only bad memories.

"To our joy we got permission to leave but, for the first time, we parted ways. I moved to Israel to settle down but my brother wanted New York where he could make the money he deserved. But, of course, we agreed to write regularly and eventually rejoin.

"But things didn't work out as we thought. I managed to get a job and a place to live but my brother couldn't get work. It seems that he overestimated the value of his Russian degrees. For months he went from hospital to hospital with the same results; they all told him he needed at least another year of medical school! But he had almost no money; the little he brought went for the first month's rent and now the landlord was hounding him for the two following months that he owed.

"I got one last terrible letter from him and then they stopped coming. He wrote that he was totally depressed and trapped. He had no money, no job, no hope and no energy. He couldn't even return to Russia or come to

Israel... he had nothing and his debts were piling up.

"I was really worried. I had no way of contacting him and so it went for over a month. NOTHING.

But then I got a letter. It was the happiest day in my life! He said he was fine and optimistic. And he told the following story.

"After he wrote the previous letter he decided that he would (G-d forbid) end his own life.

"He stayed up the entire night thinking about it and became more and more depressed until the sun rose. It was a cool Friday morning when he walked out of his apartment onto the sidewalk. He walked in a daze for several hours until he found himself walking to a local bridge. He had nothing to live for anymore. No one cared. He had no future. Everything was black all around him. He decided he would (G-d forbid) jump off into oblivion.

"But then someone called out to him 'Excuse me sir, are you Jewish?' He tried to just ignore it but such a question coming from nowhere almost made him laugh. Jewish? Where did that come from? He stopped for a moment and that was enough. The young man began to hound him saying 'Nu, if you're Jewish come put on Tefillin.'

"My brother had never put on Tefillin in his life. We were atheists from Communist Russia where only freaks put on Tefillin. But the fellow got my brother talking until he convinced him to do it. My brother put on the Tefillin and then told the young man what he had been about to do. The young man almost fainted.

"What?" he said "Why do such a crazy thing? You're a human being! And you're a Jew! It's forbidden to give up."

"Anyway he convinced my brother to put on Tefillin and to come with him for Shabbat in Crown Heights and then somehow arranged for him a meeting with the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

"Well, I don't know what the Rebbe said there to my brother but he came out of the Rebbe's room a different man. Maybe they even gave him some money or found him a job or something but my brother didn't tell me that. He just said that he spoke to the Lubavitcher Rebbe and everything will be all right.

"And he ended the letter saying, 'My dear sister, if you have a living brother today it is only in the merit of the Lubavitcher Rebbe'"

The woman turned to Mrs. Astulin with tears in her eyes and said, "Now please tell me more about these Shabbat Candles."

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ISSUE 921

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

A birthday in general is connected not just with an individual's service, but with the redemption of all Jewry. Our Sages said "The son of David (Moshiach) will not come until all the souls in the 'guf' are ended," which Rashi interprets to mean "all the souls in that treasure store called 'guf.'" In other words, Moshiach will come when all the souls that are destined to be born are born - and therefore the birth of a Jew hastens the coming of Moshiach. The lesson then is the great importance of the birth of another Jewish child. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe, 20 Cheshvan, 5743)

# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



## CHOICE OF ACTION

(11 Tishrei, 5712 (1951))

In reply to your letter and questions contained therein:

Re: the apparent contradiction between the Omniscience of G-d and man's free will (or choice of action), there is a whole body of literature dealing with the subject and it is impossible to give an outline of it in the course of a letter.

I would refer you to at least to the Rambam [Maimonides] (Hilchot Teshuva, ch. 5). However, I cannot leave you without some answer, so I will state briefly: G-d's foreknowledge is no contradiction to man's free choice. What could be a contradiction to free choice is compulsion, not knowledge. Hence a foreknowledge that is not compelling or forcing is in no way limiting to one's free choice of action.

I will cite two illustrations: firstly, assuming that there are people with prophetic knowledge, their forecast concerning certain people does not compel the people to act in a certain way and does not rob them of their free choice of action. Secondly, as you know, G-d is not subject to time, and the past, present, and future are all the same to Him (He was, is and will be, all in one).

It follows that to G-d the future is like the past, and just as knowledge of a past action is no contradiction to free choice, so is His knowledge of a future action. In other words: G-d knows the thoughts of man and his— man's—decisions and such knowledge does not rob man of thinking and deciding how to act.

Re: your question to my opinion of the Theory of Evolution. You do not mention what evolution you are referring to, presuming of animal and vegetable life.

My opinion is, as is stated in the Torah, that during the six days of creation, G-d created the four animal kingdoms (mineral, vegetable, animal and man), independently of each other. Our Sages have enlarged upon this question in detail. However, this creation does not deny the possibility of evolution after that of particular species through various mutations.

With regard to your quotation concerning the role of Agadah in the Talmud, particularly those dealing with medicine, I want to point out that you are touching upon two distinct questions: Agadah in the Talmud, and medicine in the Talmud.

As to Agadah, not all Agadah can be treated equally. In the introduction to various editions of Ein Yaakov you will find out how our Sages class the Agadot of the Talmud. As to the question of medicine in the Talmud, the medical suggestions are not as fantastic as they may appear. As a matter of fact, many medical suggestions in the Talmud have been confirmed in recent years as to their therapeutic value, although medical science has long derided them.

Generally speaking, however, inasmuch as the nature of the human organism has undergone many changes since those days, the medical advice contained in the Talmud cannot be applied nowadays.

But it is quite certain that in their days the remedies were quite effective. For reference consult: Tosafot Moed Koton IIa, Kesef Mishneh, ch. 4 of Hilchot Deot, ch. 18, and sources mentioned in Sdei Chemed, Keleim, where it is mentioned that due to physical and climactic changes, medical treatment and remedies of old no longer hold good generally. In the history of medical science many illustrations are cited as to changes in man's susceptibility to disease and treatment, the development of virus attacks, new diseases, etc. There is quite a lot of literature on the subject, and there is no need for me to enlarge upon it.

# A WORD from the Director

On Thursday this past week was the 25th of Adar, the birthday of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson, and marks the anniversary of the "Jewish Birthday campaign" that the Rebbe established on the Rebbetzin's birthday in 1988.

Because the day of one's birth is the day one's "mazel" shines (according to the Talmud) one should spend part of the day celebrating in an especially Jewish way.

A Jew has the ability to utilize his birthday for a positive end, instead of letting it pass as just another day. He can make it a holiday with emphasis on more Torah and mitzvot.

One's birthday is a time for reflection, when one may "remember and think about those aspects of his life which need improvement and repentance" (HaYom Yom, 11th Nissan).

Here are some suggestions:

On your birthday increase your contribution to charity. When the birthday is on Shabbat or Yom Tov, give the extra charity before Shabbat or the holiday.

Put time and effort (or more time and effort) into prayer.

Study the chapter in King David's Psalms that corresponds to your new age.

Study extra Torah.

Review your conduct for the past year - see what areas need perfecting - and make good resolutions for the future year.

If possible say the blessing of "Shehecheyanu" on a new fruit.

Celebrate with your family and friends in honour of your birthday - give thanks to G-d for enabling you to reach this milestone.

J. I. Gutterik

"Nassi" of the day

Beginning from the first day of Nissan and continuing through the 13<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, we recite the verses (from Numbers ch. 7) describing the offerings made by the "princes" (*nesi'im*) of the 12 tribes of Israel. On the first day we read of the gift bought by Nachshon ben Aminadav, the *nasi* of the tribe of Judah, on this date. The next day we read of the gift from the tribe of Issachar, and so on for all the 12 tribes. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of Nissan we read G-d's instructions to Aaron regarding the kindling of the menorah, which represents the participation of the priestly tribe of Levi.

Following the verses of the day's "Nasi," we recite a short prayer in which we say, "...if I, Your servant, am from the tribe of \_\_\_ whose section of the Nasi I have read today in Your Torah, may all the holy sparks and holy illuminations that are included within the holiness of this tribe shine upon me, to grant me understanding and intelligence in Your Torah and my awe of You, to do Your will all the days of my life...."

Blessing on Blooming Trees

A special mitzvah, which can only be fulfilled once a year, is to recite the *berachah* ("blessing" or prayer) made upon seeing a fruit tree in bloom: *Blessed are you G-d our G-d, king of the universe, who left nothing lacking in His world, and created within it good creatures and good trees with which He gives pleasure to people.* The first day of Nissan is the first opportunity to make this blessing, but it can be done anytime during the month of Nissan (referred to by the Torah as "the month of spring"). Many visit botanical gardens during this time, to avail themselves of an opportunity to observe this beautiful mitzvah.

## CUSTOMS CORNER

# It Happened Once...



King Alfonso X of Castile, a great friend of the Jews, invited them to settle in several cities in Spain, and had many prominent Jewish advisors, including Rabbi Yehuda ben Moshe Hakohen, his personal physician. Because King Alfonso appreciated the services the Jews performed for his kingdom, he protected them and allowed them to worship and live as they pleased. However, like kings of other lands, Alfonso was strongly influenced by the clergy, who were fanatically hostile to the Jews. Rabbi Yehuda was ever on guard lest the king fall under the influence of the clergy.

One day Rabbi Yehuda came to the palace to visit the king, as he often did, only to be informed that the king couldn't see him. The change in the king's attitude towards Rabbi Yehuda was evident, and he was filled with anxiety and foreboding. Heavy-hearted, he left the palace, but instead of returning home, he went to consult with his close friend Don Yitzchak de la Maleha.

Don Yitzchak was not surprised, for he knew that the king had important visitors, two ambassadors of the king of Portugal, Alfonso the Third.

He didn't know what sort of business was being conducted, but he had friends in the Portuguese court from whom he could inquire. The two friends agreed to meet again soon to decide on a course of action.

Yitzchak de la Maleha summoned his friend urgently, "Apparently the Crown Prince of Portugal, Diniz, is suffering from some mysterious illness which the Portuguese doctors were unable to cure. "Our Crown Prince, Sancho, wants to form a political alliance with Portugal by making a match between his sister, Princess Maria, and Diniz."

"What's so bad about that?" asked Yehuda.

"One of the conditions of the alliance is the expulsion of any Jews who will not convert to the Christian faith!"

"The Guardian of Israel save us," Yehuda uttered. The purpose of the visit of the Portuguese ambassadors was clear, as was the cold and unfriendly attitude of the King.

Yehuda said, "Royal matchmaking takes time. Perhaps if the king finds out that Diniz is ill, he will call off the match."

"In matters of political convenience, illness isn't an impediment," replied Don Yitzchak. "But I have a better idea."

"What is it?" asked Rabbi Yehuda.

"You will travel to Lisbon and cure the Crown Prince."

Rabbi Yehuda packed his medical kit and secretly departed for Portugal. Word was spread in the royal court in Lisbon about the arrival of a great physician from Spain.

The king immediately sent for the new doctor to examine his beloved son. He promised any reward, if only this doctor would succeed.

Rabbi Yehuda examined the ill man and informed the king that he had a blood clot on the brain. It would require delicate surgery, but he would undertake it. Until that time, the prince would be under his care. The king agreed. All went as planned, but then, on the scheduled day of the operation, Rabbi Yehuda received orders to leave the country without delay. It was incomprehensible, but Rabbi Yehuda packed and left at once.

He had been on the road only a few hours when a carriage drew up to him and the king, himself alighted, and related what had transpired.

The priest, sure that the new doctor was a Jew, and probably the doctor of the King of Castile, was eager to discredit him. So, he went to the king with the lie that the Jews had decided to kill the Crown Prince with your help, in order to stop the proposed marriage.

"I admit I was swayed by the priest, but when I told my son, he just scoffed at the accusation. He cried that if you were not permitted to treat him, he would commit suicide. You are his last hope, and he has complete confidence in your skill. I have come in person to beg your forgiveness and ask you to treat my son."

Yehuda Hakohen performed the operation, and the Almighty gave him success. The Crown Prince recovered his health, and Rabbi Yehuda was sent home laden with gifts. Of course, his greatest reward was having averted the threatened deportation of the Jews, who continued to live in Spain and Portugal for the next two hundred years in relative peace and prosperity.

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

### You shall not kindle any fire in your dwellings on Shabbat (Ex. 35:3)

Why does the Torah single out this prohibition from amongst the other 39 types of labour which are also forbidden on Shabbat? Heated arguments and disputes are like a fire; unfortunately, controversy has the power to disrupt many a peaceful home. When people are occupied with their daily tasks they do not have time to argue with one another; on Shabbat, however, they are less busy than during the week. The Torah therefore warns us not to kindle the fires of controversy on Shabbat by keeping ourselves busy with Torah study and prayer. Incidentally, rearranging the final letters of the above verse in Hebrew results in the word "shalom" - "peace"! (*Our Sages*)

### And Moses blessed them (Exodus 39:43)

What was Moses' blessing? "May it be G-d's will that the Divine Presence rest on the work of your hands." In other words, holiness and G-dliness must be brought into all aspects of a Jew's life — not just his spiritual relationship with G-d, but even his business dealings with his fellow man. (*Divrei Asher*)

### And on the Menora itself were four cups, shaped like almond blossoms, with its knobs and flowers (Exodus 37:20)

According to Maimonides' detailed drawings, the 22 cups of the Menora were "upside down," that is, the wider, open part of the cup was on the bottom, while the closed, narrower part was at the top. The windows of the Holy Temple were similarly inverted — narrower on the inside and wider on the outside. Why? The function of the Menora was to illuminate — not just its immediate surroundings, but the entire world. Light did not filter in from without; rather, light spread from the Temple outward. A regular cup is a vessel for drinking; an inverted cup pours its contents out for others — hence the symbolism of the Menora's cups. (*Likutei Sichot Vol. 21*)

### And he put in his heart that he may teach (Ex. 35:34)

This expression appears only once more in Scripture, in the verse, "That you be able to teach the Children of Israel all the statutes which the L-rd has spoken through Moses," to teach us that whoever is blessed with wisdom and understanding of Torah is obligated to share it with others and not keep the knowledge to himself. (*Parperaot LaTorah*)

### For the cloud of the L-rd was upon the Sanctuary by day, and the fire that was on it by night... throughout all their journeys (Ex. 40:38)

In this, the last verse in the book of Exodus, day represents the times when the Jewish people flourish; night represents the darkest hours of Jewish history. The Torah assures us that throughout all our travels, regardless of whether or not the sun is shining, G-d's clouds and heavenly fire protect us and assure our safety and survival. (*Our Sages*)

## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

### PARSHAS VAYAK'HEL-PEKUDEI 27 ADAR • 13 MARCH

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:28 PM
	MINCHA:	7:35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS :	8:05 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	TEHILIM:	8:30 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LAST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10:22 AM
	MOLAD OF NISAN: MONDAY 3:11	
	AND 13 CHALOKIM PM	
WEEKDAYS:	MINCHA:	7:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8:23 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN- FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	7:25 PM
	MAARIV:	8:15 PM

### CANDLE LIGHTING: 12 MARCH 2010



Begins	Ends
7:28	8:23
MELBOURNE	8:16
ADELAIDE	6:43
BRISBANE	7:34
DARWIN	6:40
GOLD COAST	7:15
PERTH	7:55
SYDNEY	8:04
CANBERRA	8:18
LAUNCESTON	8:23
AUCKLAND	8:28
WELLINGTON	

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

### The Lubavitcher Rebbe

זצוקללה"ה נב"מ זי"ע

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