



L'Chaim

The Yeshiva Centre - Chabad NSW Headquarters

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Living with the Rebbe



This week we read two Torah portions, Vayakhel and Pekudei. In the beginning Vayakhel, Moshe relates G-d's command to the Jewish people: "Six days shall work be done, and the seventh day shall be holy, a Sabbath of rest to G-d."

In order to observe Shabbat properly, in accordance with G-d's command, the groundwork must first be laid by the six days of the work week: "Six days shall work be done."

Significantly, the commandment is not "Six days shall you do work." The verse does not instruct us to toil laboriously. "Six days shall work be done" - as if the work is being done by itself. You needn't exert undue effort or invest too much of your energy, the Torah tells us. Rather, your work will be accomplished with a minimal amount of exertion.

This is a special blessing which G-d has bestowed on the Jewish people. Our Sages state, "When Israel does the work of G-d [when they serve Him properly], their work will be done by others." Not "Six days shall you do work," but "Six days shall work be done." Their work will already be completed.

This contains a lesson for every Jew to apply in their daily life. Yes, a Jew is obligated to work for a living, to provide for the members of his family, but only his most external powers and abilities should be invested toward this end.

It states in Psalms (128:2): "You shall eat the labor of your hands; happy shall you be, and it shall be good for you." When is it good for man? When only his "hands" are involved in his work; when his head and his heart, his thoughts and emotions, are reserved for higher matters: the study of Torah and the performance of mitzvot (commandments).

A Jew must never invest himself totally in his business affairs. For it is "the blessing of G-d that makes a man rich." A person's success is not determined by the amount of effort he puts into it. His efforts only create the vessel through which G-d bestows blessings. Thus a Jew must reserve his intellect and energy for spiritual matters, while his business must be viewed as if it is taking care of itself.

Approaching work in such a manner ensures that the Shabbat will be observed properly, that the Jew will be able to put aside his material concerns on the day of rest. If a Jew is overly preoccupied with his livelihood during the work week, his Shabbat will be disturbed by worry and anxiety: How can he earn more money? What should he buy and sell? On Shabbat he will find it difficult to disconnect from worldly matters. Thus "Six days shall work be done" is the most appropriate preparation for "the seventh day shall be holy."

In this manner all the days of the week will acquire a Shabbat-like quality, and the Shabbat itself will have an increased measure of holiness, as implied by the Torah's repetition: "Shabbat shabbaton - a Shabbat of rest."

DIRTY DISHES

Perhaps you fit into the category of people who let the dishes pile up. Or maybe you live with someone who never seems to get around to doing the dishes. So they pile up. Sometimes they aren't washed until every knife, fork and spoon is used.

There are specialists in dirty dishes. You know, the pot-soaker - whenever he uses a pot, he has to let it soak, to make it easier to wash, of course. So it sits in once soapy water - for a week.

Now you may be saying, well, we don't have that problem anymore because we have dishwashers. Ah, but do you rinse the dishes before putting them in the dishwasher? And if you're just using a spoon to stir your coffee, do you just drop it in the dishwasher's silverware tray, even when it's empty, knowing full well it'll be three days before you've used enough dishes to get the thing half-full and make it worthwhile to run without thinking about a waste of electricity and water?

So even with a dishwasher a dirty dish or utensil can sit unwashed, with not too many companions, for days.

And then at some point, you've had enough. You just can't stand the mess. In a fury or a whirlwind you scrub every pot, scour every piece of silverware, rub every plate, rinse, and rinse again - by hand - every glass.

There, you sigh, satisfied, but promising yourself you'll never again let the dirty dishes accumulate.

Sometimes we treat ourselves like we're a sink full of dirty dishes.

Instead of cleaning our "dishes" when they get dirty, we let them pile up until the work seems overwhelming. And when we finally do get around to washing them, we're a bit annoyed at ourselves. We use dishes to prepare our #food, and to hold our food, and to help us eat our food. By analogy, since Torah is the food for the soul, our "dishes" are those things we use and do that help us prepare to and also nourish us spiritually.

All the little things that take us through the day - the chat with the bus driver, wiping up the coffee spilled in the office kitchenette, paying the phone bill, arguing with the cashier over the price of that sweater, answering the phone when it's a survey, not saying anything to the person who almost knocked us over in the mall - etc. Every act can, and ought to, have a spiritual purpose, if not directly, then indirectly as part of the process that gives us time, leisure, the peace of mind to feed ourselves spiritually - to learn Torah.

But let's face it, we get dirty in the process. We gossip a little too much with the bus driver, we recalculate the phone bill three or four times, we pushed the cashier a little too hard, we got really annoyed at surveyor.

We can let these accumulate, and then "clean all the dishes" in a frenzy on Yom Kippur. Or we may get ambitious, partially (like doing all the dishes but not the pots), i.e., "get into" a major holiday (Passover's coming up!) or become Jewishly involved or aware for a little while.

Or, we can "clean our dishes" on a daily, or weekly, basis, doing a self-inventory, using the tools the Sages handed down. For you see, in the daily prayers, there are special opportunities to examine our deeds, acknowledge our errors, pray for forgiveness, and forgive others - a time, and place in the service, to daily wash our dirty dishes.

Aliyot Summery

General Overview: In this week's portion, *Vayakhel-Pekudei*, Moses gathers the Jews and relays to them all the details regarding the construction of the Tabernacle, its vessels, and the priestly garments. The actual construction and assembly is also described. This portion repeats many of the details described in the portions of *Terumah* and *Tetzaveh*, wherein G-d instructed Moses regarding the assembly of all these objects. The Tabernacle is erected, and G-d's presence dwells therein.

First Aliyah: On the day after Moses descended from Mount Sinai with the Second Tablets, after successfully securing atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf, he gathered all the Jewish people. The primary purpose of this assembly was to inform the Jews of G-d's desire for a Sanctuary to be constructed. He began, however, with a brief reminder regarding the observance of the Shabbat. This was followed by a description of the materials needed to construct the Tabernacle, and a list of the vessels, Tabernacle parts, and priestly garments which were to be produced. The men and women came forward and generously donated all the materials which Moses enumerated.

Second Aliyah: Moses announces G-d's choice of Bezalel and Oholiab to serve as foremen of the Tabernacle construction project, and he transfers to them all the donated materials. The people, however, continued donating generously, until the craftspeople report to Moses that they have more than enough materials to complete their task, causing Moses to issue a proclamation requesting everyone to cease donating materials. The craftspeople began their work. The tapestries which covered the Tabernacle were assembled, and the craftspeople construct the Tabernacle wall panels, their sockets, the curtains which covered the entrance to the sanctuary and which separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the sanctuary, the Ark, and the Showbread Table.

Third Aliyah: This aliyah describes the construction of the menorah (candelabra) and the Incense Altar. The anointing oil and the incense are also prepared.

Fourth Aliyah: The Tabernacle's construction is capped off with the

construction of the Outer Altar, the copper wash basin, the mesh curtains which surrounded the Tabernacle courtyard, and the beams and hooks which anchored them. The Torah then gives an exact accounting of the amounts of gold, silver and copper donated for the construction of the Tabernacle, as well as the vessels and building materials constructed with these supplies.

Fifth Aliyah: The High Priest's *ephod* -- a reversed apron which covered the back -- and its precious-stone-studded shoulder straps were made. The High Priest's *Choshen Mishpat* ("Breastplate of Judgment") was assembled. It contained four rows of precious stones, each row containing three stones. Artisans engraved the names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel upon these twelve stones. The *Choshen Misphat* was then secured by straps which connected it to the *ephod*.

Sixth Aliyah: The rest of the priestly garments were completed: The High Priest's *me'il* (blue robe adorned with golden bells and cloth "pomegranates") and *tzitz* (a golden band worn on the forehead, which was engraved with the words "Holy to G-d"); and the four garments worn by both the High Priest and the regular priests: tunics, turbans, sashes and pants. With this, the construction of the Tabernacle and all its vessels and accoutrement were finished. The craftspeople brought their finished products to Moses. Moses saw that all the work had been done exactly to G-d's specifications, and he blessed the workers.

Seventh Aliyah: G-d instructed Moses to erect the Tabernacle on the first of Nissan. G-d also instructed Moses to place all the Tabernacle's vessels in their proper places, and to anoint all of the items with the anointing oil, thus sanctifying them. Moses is also directed to dress Aaron and his sons in the priestly garments, and to anoint them, too. When Moses finished this task a Cloud of Glory and the Divine Presence filled the Tabernacle. This cloud also served as the Jews' guide throughout their desert sojourn: when the cloud lifted, the people would travel, following the cloud until it rested, where they would set up camp until the cloud would lift again.

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 labor 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 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*)

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN AND SPIRITUAL LEADER



This Shabbat is 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 needs repentance and improvement - and make good resolutions for the future years.

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

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

Pinchus Feldman

Rabbi Pinchus Feldman OAM

Smile it's Friday! An expectant father rang the hospital to see how his wife was getting on. By mistake he dials the number for Animal Control. "How's it going?" he asked. "Fine," came the answer, "We've got two out already and hope to have the rest out before lunch. The last one was a duck. :)

Moments to Live

by Nechamie Margolis

"I think...you'd better visit soon, Nechamie." There is a small tremor in my grandfather's voice that had never been there before.

"If you wait much longer, I don't think Grandma will recognize you anymore."

I had known this was coming, but the words swirl around me like a dark cloud.

"I'm coming." I manage. "I'll book the tickets today."

One week later, I arrive in New Orleans with my two year old son Menachem. I'm desperately afraid that I'm too late. Afraid that the grandmother, who loves me and takes so much pride in my accomplishments, will stare at me in non-recognition and ask, "Who are you? What is your name?"

I hold my breath as I greet my grandmother with a crushing hug, my heart beating a little slower as she excitedly greets me and calls me by name. She hasn't forgotten me. Yet.

How is she doing?" I ask my aunt in an undertone several minutes later. My aunt purses her lips. "Not good."

I glance over to my grandmother, absorbed in the antics of little Menachem.

"What is the name of your charming baby again? She asks in a stage whisper. "You'll have to excuse me. My mind doesn't seem to work so well in the morning." Her voice trails off. "...or in the evening either."

I almost burst into tears and fling my arms around her, as she opens the door to what's most on my mind. Instead I hastily change the subject and ask my grandmother if she would like to go for coffee at the local Starbucks.

Once there, Grandma looks

around the tastefully decorated coffee shop she has visited countless times in the past.

"How lovely!" she exclaims. "Couches in a coffee shop!" I can't believe I've lived here all these years, and I've ever been here before."

"But Grandma, didn't we come here the last time I visited?"

I immediately regret my words as she looks at me, confusion clouding her smoky blue eyes.

"Of course I've never been here," she says defensively. "I would certainly have remembered it, if I came here before."

It is several minutes later when she repeats that she's never seen Starbucks before. The words form in my mind, "of course you have," but by sheer force I manage not to say it aloud. I smile instead.

Back home, I leave my grandmother to her rest and walk with Menachem in the verdant park bordering my grandparents building.

I try to imagine life without memories. I can almost see myself many years in the future. Would I want to be corrected if I was losing my memory, or would I want to be humored? I hold tight to the thought that while the body might deteriorate, the soul is eternal, with love and positive experiences imprinted in the ageless terrain of the soul forever.

Menachem's urgent pointing as he strains against his stroller harness drags me from my thoughts. "Look, doggie," he points, face alight with excitement. "Yes, doggie" I repeat mechanically, my mind

miles away. His repeated exclamations draw my mind back into the park, from the out reaches of thoughts. I don't remember what I was thinking about- something about memory, identity, about life's meaning and the soul, but I lost it.

"Mommy, doggie," he repeats. I look to where his finger is pointing. It's the same dog.

For a brief moment I try to see the world through his eyes. I try to deliberately forget that I just saw the same dog two minutes ago and attempt to see it as my son did ; an adorable ball of fur, endlessly playing fetch with his owner, but I don't succeed in shutting off my memory. I see the ducks eagerly scrambling after the small crumbs of bread being thrown by an elderly gentleman, but somehow can't separate it from the ducks I used to feed with my mother in Prospect Park.

I find myself wondering if there's really a way to be present in life and in the moment without relinquishing my hold on my past and future.

My grandfather calls me on my way to the airport.

"Thank you for coming," he says simply. There is a pause as though he is considering whether to say the next words. They come out in a jumbled rush.

"Grandma asked me when you were coming to visit. She said that I promised her that you were going to come and you didn't show up."

His voice broke slightly. "She's already forgotten the visit."

"I'll remember, Grandpa," I whisper through my tear choked voice. "I'll remember."

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Moshiach

The Talmud teaches, "Three things come unawares: Moshiach, a found object, and a scorpion." This doesn't mean that a person shouldn't think about the Redemption and anticipate its coming. It means that though logically he sees no possibility for Redemption, a Jew persists with an intense belief that transcends his reason. This meaning springs from the Hebrew idiom b'hesech hada'at (here translated "unawares"), literally "with one's reason set aside." There are those who argue that this generation is unworthy of Moshiach. In light of the above, this very argument is a clear indication of an imminent Redemption.

It Happened Once

Rabbi Yehuda ben Moshe Hakohen was the personal physician of King Alfonso X of Castile, one of the first provinces which the Spaniards had recaptured from the North African Arabs in the 13th century.

A great friend of the Jews, the king invited them to settle in Toledo, Cordova, Seville and other cities in Spain, and had many prominent Jewish advisors. 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 in three days' time, to exchange information and decide on a course of action.

But before the three days passed, Yitzchak de la Maleha sent urgent word to his friend: "I have learned that the Crown Prince of Portugal, Diniz, is suffering from some mysterious illness which the Portuguese doctors were unable to cure.

In the meantime, the king's priest used the opportunity to turn the king against his loyal Jewish officials. "As you know, our Crown Prince, Sancho, is always scheming and lusting for more power. He 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.

"What are you saying? One of the conditions of the alliance is that the two Christian kingdoms join in expelling the Jews who will not convert to the Christian faith!"

Yehuda paled and tears appeared in his eyes. "The Guardian of Israel save us," he uttered in a heartfelt prayer. The purpose of the Portuguese ambassadors was clear, as was the cold and unfriendly attitude of the King.

Yehuda thought for a minute. "Royal matchmaking takes

time. In the meantime we may be able to avert the danger. 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, if G-d only grants us success, and you will be the one to intercede."

"I will do whatever I can. But what is it?" asked Rabbi Yehuda.

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

The two friends discussed the plan at great length. Rabbi Yehuda packed his medical kit and secretly departed for Portugal. Word was to be spread in the royal court in Lisbon about the arrival of a great physician from Spain.

As soon as the king heard the news he sent for the new doctor to examine his beloved son. He promised any reward, if only this doctor would succeed where all the royal physicians of Portugal had failed.

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 the unexpected order 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, he alighted. "The priest has cooked up a nasty dish this time, but he will pay for it! What do I care if you are a Jew, if you can cure my son!" He then related what had transpired.

The priest, being sure that this 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 the help of this Jewish doctor, 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.

Adapted from Talks and Tales



Candle Lighting Times
Friday 20th March 2009

City	In	Out
Sydney	6:50pm	7:44pm
Brisbane	5:42pm	6:34pm
Surfers Par	5:41pm	6:33pm
Melbourne	7:16pm	8:11pm

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