



# L'Chaim

The Yeshiva Centre - Chabad NSW Headquarters

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## Living with the Rebbe



This week we read two Torah portions, Acharei and Kedoshim. In most years, the Torah portions of Acharei and Kedoshim are read together. In fact, they share the common theme of holiness.

The portion of Acharei opens with G-d's command to Aaron, warning him that he may not "come at all times into the Sanctuary." (The High Priest was only allowed to enter the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur.) Acharei thus deals with the highest level of sanctity (the service in the Holy of Holies), on the holiest day of the year (Yom Kippur), performed by the Jew on the highest level of holiness, the High Priest.

The portion of Kedoshim also begins with a command concerning holiness: "You shall be holy, for I am holy." Every Jew is obligated to emulate G-d and strive for the highest degree of holiness. But, practically speaking, how is this possible?

The answer lies in the Torah's directive "You shall be holy," the wording of which also implies a promise: "You will be holy!" G-d assures every Jew, "for I am holy" - for the simple reason that your holiness is derived from Mine. Every Jew possesses a "veritable portion of G-d Above," a Jewish soul that is a part of the Infinite. Every Jew is thus capable of rising to even the highest levels of holiness.

As the Torah teaches, the ultimate objective is not what happened to Aaron's two sons, Nadav and Avihu, who achieved such a state of spiritual arousal that their souls could no longer tolerate the confinement of their physical bodies. The highest level of Divine service transcends even this.

In the Midrash, our Sages interpreted the verse "You shall be holy" as meaning "My holiness is superior to yours." In other words, no matter how high a spiritual level a Jew may attain, he should always remember that G-d is Infinite and thus higher.

This contains a practical lesson for every Jew to apply in his Divine service, regardless of his present spiritual standing: The greatest tzadik (righteous person) can always rise higher, while those on the lower rungs of spiritual achievement must never despair of improvement. The directive of "You shall be holy" applies to everyone. G-d gives every Jew the strengths and abilities he needs to ascend. And when a Jew takes the first step and makes the effort to sanctify himself, G-d takes him by the hand and helps him achieve his goal.

*dapted from Likutei Sichot of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Vol. 12*

## TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

Honking horns, the Gulfstream jet, paying bills on-line, fancy watches in every shape, size and colour. These are just a few examples that illustrate just how important and precious time is to most of us. Convenience stores and neighbourhood groceries abound because we'd rather waste a little money than a lot of time.

For forty-nine days, seven weeks between the holiday of Passover and Shavuot, we are reminded just how valuable time is. Starting on the second night of Passover and continuing through the day preceding Shavuot, we "count the omer[1]." Each evening, we state that it is a certain number of days since the bringing of the omer. In addition, we preface the count by saying a blessing for this mitzva (commandment).

If by chance, one forgot to "count the omer" for an entire day, he may continue counting once he remembers, but without the blessing.

"What's the big deal?" one might ask, "by forgetting to count one day out of forty-nine, a person forfeits the opportunity to say the blessing for all the remaining days!" True, it might seem a bit harsh, but it teaches a powerful lesson: time is priceless and irreplaceable.

Counting the Omer instills within us the understanding that time should not and must not be wasted. The story is told of a famous rabbi who could literally account for every minute of his day. He knew exactly what he did when. He never "lost" time. He, like many others, viewed his every hour, every minute, as a precious gift from G-d. Just as one wouldn't use an expensive bottle of wine for cooking, or give fine imported chocolates to a three-year-old, so, too, time should be used to its fullest and spent on the more important aspects of life.

There's another "timely" idea that we can learn from counting the Omer. Each day influences the next day. If, unfortunately, we forget to count one day, all of the rest of the days are effected by our forgetfulness. If, however, we remember to count every day, we are able to bless each subsequent day, and that blessing impacts future days positively.

Chasidic philosophy explains an added dimension of the seven-week countdown. These seven weeks correspond to the seven character aspects (or emotions) of G-d and of man (because man is made in G-d's image) and through this commandment we can link our personalities to that of the Creator.

As the Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 28:3) puts it: Said Rabbi Chiah: "When are these 'seven complete weeks' really complete? When the Jews do the will of G-d."

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains: Rabbi Chiah is implying that Jewish service of G-d can and should be with total emotional and intellectual involvement. But this is not yet complete. The goal of counting the Omer is to rise to even more complete and meaningful involvement.

So, whether you wear a Rolex or a Timex, try to keep in mind just how precious time is, how it can be used to connect with Infinite timelessness, and make a point of scheduling in time for really important things, like learning more about your 4,000 year old heritage.

## Aliyot Summery

**General Overview:** This week's reading, *Acharei-Kedoshim*, begins with a detailed description of the service of the High Priest on Yom Kippur. Dozens of commandments are then discussed in this week's reading. Among them: the prohibitions against offering sacrifices outside the Temple; consuming blood; incestuous, adulterous, or other forbidden relationships; various mandatory gifts for the poor; love for every Jew, prohibition against sorcery; honesty in business dealings; and sexual morality.

**First Aliyah:** The High Priest is instructed to only enter the Holy of Holies chamber of the sanctuary once a year, on Yom Kippur; and even on this holiest day of the year, the entry into the Temple's inner sanctum must be accompanied by a special service and specific offerings which are detailed in this reading. The High Priest was only permitted to enter amidst a cloud of burning incense. Also, special white garments were worn by the High Priest on this day. While offering the day's sacrifices, the High Priest would "confess" on behalf of the entire nation, attaining atonement for the past year's sins. This section continues with a description of the "scapegoat" ceremony procedure.

**Second Aliyah:** After concluding the order of the Yom Kippur service in the Temple, the Torah instructs us to observe Yom Kippur as a Day of Atonement when we must abstain from work and "afflict" ourselves. The Jews are then forbidden to offer sacrifices anywhere other than the Tabernacle or Temple.

**Third Aliyah:** We are enjoined not to consume blood. When slaughtering fowl or undomesticated animals, we are commanded to cover their blood with earth. The Jews are admonished not to follow the depraved ways of the Egyptians and Canaanites. On this note, the Torah provides a list of prohibited sexual relationships. The list includes adultery, cohabiting with a menstruating woman, and forbidden close relatives.

**Fourth Aliyah:** The prohibitions against homosexuality and bestiality are mentioned. The Jews are then warned that engaging in these forbidden relationships will result in their expulsion from the Land of

Israel -- a holy land which cannot tolerate immoral behavior. G-d commands the Jewish people to be holy. This section then briefly discusses several laws: revering parents; observing the Shabbat; prohibitions against idolatry; the obligation to burn "leftover" sacrificial flesh; the obligation to leave certain parts of one's harvest for the poor; not to lie, cheat, withhold wages, swear falsely, curse or mislead another.

**Fifth Aliyah:** More mitzvot: Not to pervert justice, gossip, be indifferent to a fellow's predicament, hate a fellow Jew, bear grudges, or take revenge. To reprimand a sinner, and to love every Jew. The following statutes are also given here: not to sow a field with two kinds of seed, wear a garment made of a mixture of wool and linen (*shatnez*), or crossbreed animals. The section also includes with the laws of one who commits adultery with a half-free maidservant. We are introduced to the laws of "*orlah*," the prohibition against eating the fruit of a new sapling for the first three years, and the obligation to sanctify the fruit of the fourth year. We are enjoined not to engage in witchcraft or prostitution, or tattoo our bodies. Men are instructed not to destroy the hair at the edges of their scalp or the corners of their beards. We are commanded to observe the Shabbat; respect G-d's sanctuary, Torah scholars and the elderly.

**Sixth Aliyah:** We are commanded to love converts. We are also enjoined to be truthful in business dealing by maintaining honest weights and measures. The Torah prescribes capital punishment for one who worships *Molech*; a form of idolatry which required human sacrifices. The Torah also describes the punishment which will befall the nation if they neglect to punish *Molech* worshippers.

**Seventh Aliyah:** The Torah sets the punishments for individuals who curse their parents and those who engage in prohibited sexual relations. We are instructed not to follow the customs and traditions of the heathens, and to be meticulous about eating only kosher foods. The Torah portion ends with an enjoiner that we be holy.

## Thoughts that Count

With this - bezot - Aaron shall come into the holy place (Lev. 16:3)

The Hebrew word "bezot" has the numerical equivalent of 410, alluding to the 410 years of the First Holy Temple's existence. But why would Moses tell the Jewish people that the Temple would exist for only a specific time? What is to be gained by predicting this tragedy? Rather, Moses' intent was not to dishearten. On the contrary, he informed the Jewish people that it was in their power to prevent the sad event. Proper behavior would confer eternity to the first Holy Temple and preclude any exile. Now, too, it is up to us. Our present conduct can rid us of the exile. Our actions can hasten the coming of Moshiach and the establishment of the Third Holy Temple, which will stand forever.

(*Peninei HaGeula*)

For on that day [the high priest] shall make an atonement for you to cleanse you from all your sins; before G-d you shall be clean (Lev. 16: 30)

Why is it necessary to explicitly add the words "from all your sins"? Is this not already implied? "An atonement to cleanse you" refers to sins that are committed against G-d; "All your sins...you shall be clean" refers to sins that are committed against one's fellow man. For these transgressions, Yom Kippur does not offer atonement until the wronged party has been properly conciliated.

(*Likrat Shabbat*)

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN AND SPIRITUAL LEADER



We are currently in the month of Iyar. In the Torah, Iyar is referred to as the second month, since it is the second month from Nissan. It is also called Ziv - the month of radiance (Kings I) - because the sun's radiance begins to grow. Iyar is also a month of healing, for the generation of Jews who came out of Egypt were healed this month from all their illnesses, as they prepared to receive the Torah. In fact, the word Iyar spelled in Hebrew letters is an acronym for the verse, "I G-d am your Healer."

The month of Iyar for the generation of the desert was, in essence, a foretaste of the Messianic Era when we will witness ultimate physical and spiritual bliss. According to the Midrash (Breishit Rabba) everyone will be healed of all their diseases. At the time of the Redemption, we are told, G-d will take the sun out of the special sheath in which He enclosed it. These special rays of the sun which had previously been hidden are healing rays and will cure everyone of all their ailments. Anyone who has any illness or disease, any blemish or disability, will be healed.

Death itself will cease, as the Prophet Isaiah said, "Death will be swallowed up forever and G-d will wipe the tears from every face."

When will these miracles occur? There are two stages to the Redemption. The first stage is the one about which Maimonides writes, "The world will follow its normal course." This stage is a precursor for the second, later stage when we will see changes in the conduct of the world. The laws of nature will be changed to what they were originally intended to be, that is, as they functioned while Adam and Eve were still in the Garden of Eden. At this time we will see the actual fulfillment of our Prophets' words such as the wolf at peace with the lamb, etc.

It is in this second stage that we will witness the Resurrection of the Dead. In this second stage, G-d will be revealed in all of His Glory.

May the month of Iyar truly be a month of healing - spiritual, physical and emotional healing for the Jewish people and the entire world.

*Pinchus Feldman*

Rabbi Pinchus Feldman OAM

## Smile it's Friday!

Bernie was unfortunate enough to be hit by a truck and ended up in the hospital. His best friend Morris came to visit him. Bernie struggles to tell Morris, "My wife Sadie visits me three times a day. She's so good to me. Every day, she reads to me at the bedside." "What does she read?" asks Morris. "My life insurance policy."

## The Rectification of Anusim

By Ayala Markoff

I was born in Brazil to a Catholic family, and did not have the opportunity to meet Jews until much later in life. My grandparents and parents were born and raised on a farm in the rural area of Sao Paulo, Brazil. They lived a simple and honest life. Hospitality was a trademark in our family, and still is to this day. Farming the land in Brazil in the 1900s was no easy job, so Grandma insisted that her children go to school to have a better chance in life. Having had some schooling, my parents' generation left the rural area to try life in the city. They focused on education and sent all their children to college. For many years I lived a calm, happy and uneventful life. By the time I reached my early thirties, I was a successful scientist working for an international corporation. I knew very little about Jews and Judaism. Business led me to the United States, where I met Jews for the first time in my life. Or so I thought.

I remember the first time I heard about Yom Kippur. For no logical reason, I felt I had to observe this holiday. I embarked on a day of fasting and prayer that I will never forget. The Kol Nidrei services were particularly moving to me. Later I learned that many anusim would gather in secret locations on Yom Kippur eve. Before starting the Yom Kippur services they would pour their hearts out to G-d, begging for forgiveness for the public statements they had made against Judaism during the year. Anusim comes from the Hebrew word "onus," meaning "forced ones." They were Jews who went through forced conversion to Christianity during the Spanish Inquisition under the threat of expulsion or death. They are sometimes called Marranos, a term avoided by many because of its derogatory nature; Marrano means pig.

My interest in Judaism grew quickly. I attended all classes available to me. As destiny would have it, I learned to read Hebrew in Sephardic style and would walk around with a Jewish star around my neck. Whatever mitzva (commandment) I heard about I observed, as soon as possible and in the best way I could.

One day, I was talking with someone who said to me casually, "You are not

Jewish." Hearing these words caused me great pain and anguish. I felt indignant and even insulted! Pondering my intense emotional response, I could not understand why a non-Jew would feel offended at someone stating the truth in a factual manner.

In one of the many Torah classes I attended I had a spiritual meltdown. Chabad Rebbetzin Chaya Epstein, of Beis Menachem in Chicago, Illinois, was teaching a class on the life of the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe o.b.m., Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson. Tears rolled down my face. My soul was deeply moved by his life. In that moment, his suffering for keeping Judaism alive in communist Russia became my suffering. After class, Mrs. Epstein approached me privately and asked me if everything was alright. Still sobbing. I told her that I had no idea what was affecting me so much. After all, I was not even Jewish.

To my surprise, she asked me how I could be so sure that I was not Jewish. Shocked by her response, I could not understand how I could possibly be Jewish given my birth to a Catholic family and my Christian upbringing. Mrs. Epstein suggested that I research my ancestral lineage, focusing on my mother's side.

I continued attending her classes and learning from her. I also followed her advice and went on a journey of self-discovery, reaching deep into my family's history, roots, and customs. After a number of years, countless hours on the computer, and digging through the past by means of family interviews and reunions, trips to cemeteries, and visits to city halls in Brazil, I found out much of my family's history. My research revealed that my maternal great-great-grandmother's last name, Gomes, is Jewish, coming from the Hebrew word "gomel." Gomes is also my father's last name. The most amazing discovery, however, was that my maternal great-Grandmother, Josefa Martin, kept a number of rituals which were reminiscent of mitzvot, as did many

anusim from the post-Inquisition era in Malaga, Spain, where she came from. One of these mitzvot was to separate challa (to remove a small portion of dough reminiscent of the Holy Temple offering) every time she made bread, a mitzva that she could observe in the privacy of her home and which she passed down to all her daughters. Taking challa was one of the first mitzvot I was attracted to. I now enjoy sharing this special and significant mitzva with other women of my generation.

With the help of Chabad rabbis and rebbetzins, I have gone through a process of returning to the Jewish roots of my ancestors, according to Jewish law, as established by the Rabbinical Court of the Chicago Rabbinical Council of Illinois. My case was the first ever of this nature at this court. I was certified as a Returnee to the ways of my ancestors. I feel so privileged to be living in a country and in a generation where, unlike my great-grandmother, I have no need to hide my true Jewish identity. I can openly observe Torah and mitzvot. I pray to G-d that other Jewish souls who are yearning to return to Judaism, both consciously and unconsciously, find the proper guidance and support that will lead them back to Judaism.

Finally, I deeply thank the many people who were very helpful and supportive to me in this beautiful process, far too many to mention. In particular, I would like to thank my caring and supportive husband, Bruce Markoff; Rebbetzin Chaya Epstein of Beis Menachem; Rabbi Dovid Flinkenstein of Chabad of Wilmette; Rabbis Meir Moscowitz and Doniel Moscowitz of Chabad of Northbrook; and Rav Gedalia Schwartz of the Chicago Rabbinical Council.

May we all celebrate with much joy the return of any and all Jewish souls to the Jewish nation. And may we all experience the ultimate celebration with the coming of Moshiaich today.

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# Moshiach

## matteers

Rebbe Yisroel of Ruzhin taught, "We don't need trains for the ingathering of the exiles, because gathering the exiles will take place in a manner resembling how I move the cup from one side of the table to the other."

(Ner Yisroel vol. 2, p. 188)

# It Happened Once

The famous Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak of Lublin, Poland, was known as the Chozeh of Lublin. One of his Chasidim, Avraham Mordechai of Pintshov, was a pauper with no means to marry off his three daughters. Avraham Mordechai had no recourse than to go to the Chozeh and pour out his heart.

The Chozeh gave him a few coins and said "Go to the town of Kreshnik and there you will be saved." Avraham Mordechai hurried home, told his wife what the Chozeh had said, and set off to Kreshnik with no idea what to do there.

Three days later he arrived, checked into the only Jewish hotel. Each day after reciting the morning prayers, Avraham Mordechai would wander around Kreshnik for an hour or two. He would then return to the hotel to eat, study Torah for a few hours, and then wander around the town some more.

Late one evening, about ten days into his stay, there was a knock at his hotel room door. "Who is it?" Avraham Mordechai asked.

"Can I talk to you," was the answer. Avraham Mordechai opened the door and a religious Jew about 40-years-old entered, sat down, and spoke quietly as his eyes filled with tears. "I won't tell you my name and please don't ask. I have something I want you to give to the owner of this hotel."

The man produced an envelope from his coat, opened it and took out a stack of large denomination bills. "It's ten thousand rubles," he said. "It belongs to the hotel owner and I want you give it to him. Will you do this?"

The man saw that Avraham Mordechai was confused and he began to explain. "Ten years ago I worked here for the innkeeper. I was a private Torah teacher for his five wonderful children. We were like family, he trusted me implicitly. One day, I was teaching his youngest son and I noticed that the innkeeper entered his office in the room adjoining. I saw him take a large stack of money and put it in a desk drawer, lock it and put the key behind a picture on the wall.

"Seeing this planted an evil seed in my heart. At first I pushed it off as foolishness, but it didn't go away. I became overpowered by the thought that I needed the money!

"Finally, one night when everyone was out of the house I went to the office and found it unlocked. I entered, found the key, opened the drawer, took the money and a minute later I was in the back yard burying it in the hole I had prepared there. The robbery was not discovered until a few weeks later.

"Of course, no one suspected me. I was the epitome of faith and honesty, the last one in the world that would steal. After a month everything calmed down and life returned to normal. I worked for another year or so, told them I had work elsewhere and we parted the best of friends.

"But my conscience bothered me. A hundred times, a thousand times I thought of returning the money but I didn't. I was afraid maybe someone would catch me digging it up. Or maybe the

innkeeper would get mad when I confessed and have me put in jail.

"For ten years I have been going insane from regret but with no solution in sight. Until a week ago something told me the time had come. I came back here in the middle of the night, dug up the money and waited till the morning in front of the hotel wondering what to do next. When I saw you come out I knew that you are the one. Help me erase my sin and clear my conscience. Please, ask the innkeeper not to ask any questions and give him the money back for me."

Avraham Mordechai stared in wide-eyed disbelief. Should he do it? Maybe he would get into trouble himself! But something inside told him this man was genuinely repenting, and so he agreed. The next morning Avraham Mordechai asked the innkeeper if they could speak privately.

Avraham Mordechai pulled the envelope from his pocket and put it on the table. "Here is the ten thousand roubles that were stolen from you ten years ago," he said. "Someone gave it to me to give to you and requested that you ask no questions."

The innkeeper picked up the money, began to count it and when he was finished looked up and, still under the impression of this dreamlike experience, wiped his brow and said, "But can I ask who are you? What are you doing here? I've seen you leave and enter and have heard that you just wander the streets. Why are you here?"

Suddenly Avraham Mordechai snapped back into his own reality and told the innkeeper who he was and how the Chozeh of Lublin had sent him for a solution to marry off his three daughters.

The innkeeper understood the Chozeh's intent. He immediately counted out one thousand roubles and handed it to him. "Here is enough money to marry off your daughters and buy them houses as well. And I would like to see your Rebbe and thank him personally for the miracle and for the chance to give this charity."

When Avraham Mordechai returned to the Chozeh and told him what happened the Chozeh just replied. "I had to do it this way...the power of the repentance of that teacher didn't allow me to sleep at night!"

By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton from [www.OhrTmimim.org](http://www.OhrTmimim.org)

Help with Shul Security is needed  
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Candle Lighting Times  
Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009

City	In	Out
Sydney	4:58pm	5:53pm
Brisbane	4:59pm	5:52pm
Surfers Par	4:57pm	5:50pm
Melbourne	5:16pm	6:13pm

Dedicated in honour of the Bar Mitzvah of  
**Osher HaCohen Feldman**

May grow to be a Chasid, Yiras Shamayim V' Lamdon and a true source of Nachas to his family and Klall Yisrael

By his family

"Dear Katriel

This letter is in recognition of the great work you did with my financial planning. A big thank you to you for the excellent work you did in consolidating my super funds into one that was suited to my needs and budget, and also ensuring I have the appropriate insurance coverage that is right for me and my family. You have saved me hundreds of dollars per year. I am looking forward to continuously working closely with you.

Yours faithfully, (name withheld)"

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