



## Living with the Rebbe



This week's Torah portion, Emor, contains the mitzva (commandment) of kiddush Hash-m - the sanctification of G-d's name: "You shall not profane My holy name, so that I may be sanctified among the children of Israel."

A Jew must give up his life rather than deny G-d.

Sacrificing one's life for the sake of G-d causes His name to be sanctified throughout the world.

There are actually two types of kiddush Hash-m.

The first is when a Jew is willing to give up his life but a miracle occurs and he does not die, and the second is when he is actually put to death.

Our Sages disagree as to which level constitutes a greater sanctification of G-d's name.

The great scholar and codifier, Moses Maimonides maintains that the main part of the mitzva is actually giving up one's life, thereby publicly demonstrating the extent of the Jew's unshakable faith in G-d.

However, the Midrash (Torat Kohanim) maintains that when a Jew is willing to sacrifice his life and he is saved by a Divine miracle, G-d's name is sanctified even more. In such a case, not only does everyone recognize the Jew's absolute devotion, but G-d's Hand is openly revealed.

Moreover, according to the Midrash, the person whose life has been saved has an additional merit.

To illustrate, the Midrash cites two examples of kiddush Hash-m, that of Chanania, Mishael and Azaria, who agreed to be thrown into the fiery furnace but were saved by a miracle, and that of two Jews by the names of Papus and Lulyanus.

"You are from the same nation as Chanania, Mishael and Azaria!" Maryanus told Papus and Lulyanus. "Let your G-d come and save you just as He did them!"

Papus and Lulyanus replied, "But they were righteous Jews and Nebuchadnezzar was worthy of witnessing a miracle. You, however, are an evil man, and we ourselves are worthy of death in any event because of our sins."

From this it seems that when G-d performs a miracle and a Jew's life is saved, that person possesses a great merit. The sanctification of G-d's name is therefore also commensurately greater.

However, both Maimonides and the Midrash agree that a Jew must never seek to sacrifice his life thinking that he will be miraculously rescued.

For Maimonides, this is because being saved at the last second detracts from the sanctification of G-d's name; for the Midrash, this is because "He who gives up his life with the intent of being saved by a miracle does not merit one." Relying on a miracle to occur actually prevents it from happening.

In the merit of learning these laws may we see the fulfillment of the verse, "My Great Name will be sanctified...and all nations will know that I am G-d" with the final Redemption.

*Adapted from Likutei Sichot of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Vol. 27*

## NO SECOND CHANCE? NEVER!

A little known Jewish festival is this Friday, Iyar 14 (corresponding this year to May 8). It is called Pesach Sheini and is famous for bringing the idea of second chances to the forefront of our consciousness. The Torah teaches (Num. 9:10-11) that if someone was unable to offer the Passover sacrifice on its appointed day then he had a "second chance" to bring his Passover offering, eat matza and maror (bitter herbs) thirty days later - on 14 Iyar.

What might prevent someone from going to the Temple (in the days that it stood, and speedily may it be rebuilt in our days), offering his Passover sacrifice and observing the holiday there? He might be ritually impure because he came into contact with a dead body, or he might be too far away to make it in time. In such a case, the person had a second chance.

From this law of Pesach Sheini - the second Passover - our Sages derived the principle that every Jew always has a second chance - and a third chance - and a fourth chance - etc.

Of course, that "second chance" doesn't come by itself. We have to do something for it - namely, teshuva.

Teshuva - returning, is not only a major theme of the High Holidays, but is a key concept in Jewish philosophy. We might even say that teshuva is "second chance Judaism." We are told that indeed nothing stands in the way of teshuva.

That said, then, there's a curious story in the Talmud about a great sage, a colleague of Rabbi Akiva, named Elisha ben Avuya. So great a scholar was he that he was one of the four who entered the Garden of Mystical Knowledge. Unfortunately, the experience shattered his faith, and he became so immersed in heretical thoughts and activities that he became known as Acher - the other - because the Sages viewed him as having so disgraced himself.

And yet, his student Rabbi Meir (who was also a student of Rabbi Akiva) would not abandon him. One Shabbat they were traveling - Rabbi Meir walking and Elisha ben Avuyah riding on a horse, in clear violation of Shabbat. Yet at one point Elisha told Rabbi Meir to stop, because they had reached the limit one was allowed to walk on Shabbat. Rabbi Meir replied, if so (if you still have such a connection), why not do teshuva, why not return? Elisha ben Avuyah said he had heard a heavenly voice declare, "Let every Jew do teshuva - except Acher." From which he concluded his teshuva would not have been accepted.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe offers two, complementary explanations to the apparent contradiction of this story to the principle of teshuva: One, although Heaven did not desire the teshuva of Elisha ben Avuya, had he pushed himself and done teshuva, he could have stormed the heavenly gates, so to speak, and forced its acceptance. The other explanation is that the heavenly voice said that Acher's - the other's teshuva would not be accepted. But if Acher again became the sage Elisha ben Avuya - which could only be done through teshuva - then the teshuva of Elisha ben Avuya would have been accepted.

The Talmudic story concludes with an interesting account. After Acher's passing the Heavenly Court was at an impasse. He could not enter the World to Come because of his sins, and he could not be judged (i.e., punished for his transgressions, and thus his soul would be purified and he could then enter the World to Come) because of his Torah learning. But because of the prayers of Rabbi Meir before the Heavenly Court, and then the prayers of Rabbi Yochanan, Acher went through the purification process and the soul of Elisha ben Avuya did enter the World-to-Come.

In other words, while one person obviously cannot do teshuva for another, our prayers for, our interest in, our actions on behalf of "another" can be a powerful force to help "another" reach the level where he, too, can have a second chance, since every Jew will always have a second chance.

## The Parsha in a Nutshell

The Torah section of Emor ("Speak") begins with the special laws pertaining to the Kohanim ("priests"), the Kohen Gadol ("High Priest"), and the Temple service: A Kohen may not become ritually impure through contact with a dead body, save on the occasion of the death of a close relative. A Kohen may not marry a divorcee or a woman with a promiscuous past; a Kohen Gadol can marry only a virgin. A Kohen with a physical deformity cannot serve in the Holy Temple, nor can a deformed animal be brought as an offering.

A newborn calf, lamb, or kid must be left with its mother for seven days before being eligible for an offering; one may not slaughter an animal and its offspring on the same day.

The second part of Emor lists the annual Callings of Holiness - the festivals of the Jewish calendar: the weekly Shabbat; the bringing of the Passover offering on 14 Nissan; the seven-day Passover festival beginning on 15 Nissan; the bringing of the Omer offering from the first barley harvest on the 2nd day of Passover, and the commencement, on that day, of the 49-day Counting of the Omer, culminating in the festival of Shavuot on the 50th day; a "remembrance of shofar blowing" on 1 Tishrei; a solemn fast day on 10 Tishrei; the Sukkot festival -- during which we are to dwell in huts for seven days and take the "Four Kinds" -- beginning on 15 Tishrei; and the immediately following holiday of the "8th day" of Sukkot (Shemini Atzeret).

Next the Torah discusses the lighting of the Menorah in the Temple, and the showbread (Lechem Hapanim) placed weekly on the table there.

Emor concludes with the incident of a man executed for blasphemy, and the penalties for murder (death) and for injuring one's fellow or destroying his property (monetary compensation).

## Thoughts that Count

Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is Shabbat Shabbaton (a Sabbath of strict rest) (Lev. 23:3)

The six working days are a preparation for the seventh. Our Sages compare the first six millennia of the world's existence to the six working days of every week, for they serve as preparation, through Torah and mitzvot, for the seventh millennium -- the ultimate stage of the Messianic era referred to as "the day that is entirely Shabbat and repose for life everlasting." On Shabbat there are two levels of holiness: the cessation of work, and an additional, more sublime level of inner peace that transcends mere cessation from labor.

This level, too, is derived from the six days of work, for it is a direct result of the good deeds one has performed throughout the week. Similarly, the six millennia of service prepare the world not only for the first stage of the Messianic era when evil will be subdued, but also its final stage, when the "spirit of impurity will be forever removed from the earth."

(Maamar "Vayakhel Moshe" 5714)

And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Shabbat, from the day that you brought the Omer of the waving; seven complete weeks shall they be. (Lev 23:15)

Why must we count the Omer, when we know beforehand exactly how many days there are until Shavuot? The number is always 49--no more and no less. What is gained by our counting them? We count the Omer to show our love for each and every day that we are allotted. Indeed, every minute and second of a Jewish life is equally as precious, and should be treasured.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

# Lag Baomer

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN AND SPIRITUAL LEADER



Lag B'Omer, the 33rd day of the Omer (coinciding with Tuesday, May 12 this year), is a festive holiday marking the passing of the famed Sage Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, known as the Rashbi.

During the time of Roman persecution, the Rashbi and his son Rabbi Elaza, were forced to spend 13 years in hiding. During that time, he and his son lived in a cave under extremely dire conditions. When it was finally safe for the Rashbi to emerge from the cave, one of the first things he discussed with the local people he encountered was whether or not there was something he could do to help them.

This provides a very valuable lesson for us in our daily lives. The Rashbi suffered physically during his 13 years in hiding. But, rather than concern him with his own needs or at least take some time to rest and recuperate after his ordeal, he immediately set about helping his fellow Jew.

This that Rashbi had reached a certain level of self-perfection during his years of solitude was not enough for him, For the ultimate goal had not been reached--the coming of Moshiach and the revelation of G-dliness throughout the world. And because this had not been accomplished, there was still more to do and to achieve. Thus, Rashbi was determined to continue with selfless dedication to helping the entire Jewish people.

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai authored the Zohar, the basic book of mystical Jewish teachings.(kabbalah) It states in the Zohar that with the revelation of its teachings "the Jewish people will go out of exile with mercy." May we all learn well and live by Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai's example, thereby hastening the coming of Moshiach, now.

*Pinchus Feldman*

Rabbi Pinchus Feldman OAM

**Smile its Friday!** Three rabbis are standing around schmoosing when one of them says, "We've got a terrible problem with mice in the basement of the shul. Traps, cheese. Nothing works." The second rabbi says, "Same thing with us. We tried it all. Still we have mice." The third rabbi says, "We had the very same problem---but not anymore!" Now the other two rabbis are interested. "How did you do it?" "It was easy. I went down in the basement, gathered all the mice together and performed a mass bar mitzvah. And we haven't seen any of them since!"

## It's Never Too Late

A family that just last year thought they were Arabs, celebrated the Bar Mitzva of their oldest son at the Western Wall in Jerusalem last week.

The incredible story began when Yad L'Achim\* received a call from the head of a Torah educational network in the south of Israel whose son was being treated at the Schneider Children's Hospital in Petach Tikva.

"A young boy in the next bed, who appeared to be Arab, engaged us in conversation and then said, 'ana yehud,' ['I am a Jew' in Arabic]," the head of the network reported, "We were stunned. He went on to explain that his grandmother, a Holocaust survivor, had come to Israel all alone and settled in a mixed Jewish-Arab city.

"She had six children and many grandchildren who were all raised as Arabs. But recently, just before her death, she summoned her children and asked to be buried as a Jew."

On hearing the story, Yad L'Achim founding Chairman Rabbi Shalom Dov Lifshitz instructed his staff to meet with the family in an attempt to help them return to their roots.

Two months later, the circle began to close when five of this Holocaust survivor's grandsons had brisim. At a very moving ceremony in Upper Nazareth, attended by the local chief rabbi and Yad L'Achim's top officials, Tmam, Khalil, Yusuf, Mishil and Daoud took their rightful place among the Jewish people as Moshe, Daniel, Yosef, Ma'or and David.

Last week, the family took another important step in their return to Judaism, when their oldest son became a Bar Mitzva. The high point for family and friends came when he was called to the Torah at the Western Wall and recited the blessing, "Who chose us from among all the nations."

A festive Bar Mitzva meal was arranged that afternoon in Bnei Brak by Yad L'Achim, which has been attending to the family's needs,

including helping the children get a Jewish education. It was particularly gratifying to see at the joyous event brothers and sisters of the Bar Mitzvah boy who are enrolled in Jewish schools in Upper Nazareth.

In a moving speech, Rabbi Lipschitz told the story of the Talmudic sage Rami bar Rachel. "Imagine that this sage was none other than the grandson of Shmuel [one of the most prominent Talmudic sages], but his father was a non-Jew and his mother a Jew who fell into captivity and was forced to marry him. It is known that our sages chose to call him this name, 'son of Rachel,' in order that all of us will know that he is only the son of a Jewish mother, and yet he could turn into a Talmudic sage, a Torah great in Israel."

Turning to the Bar Mitzva boy, Rabbi Lipschitz said: "It is clear that your ancestors in the Garden of Eden, the ancestors of a family that perished in the Holocaust, pleaded before the Heavenly Throne and asked for mercy for their descendants that they grow up as Jews and return to their roots. Indeed, their prayers broke through the Heavenly gates and from Above the people of Yad L'Achim were sent to bring you home.

"Your future is ahead of you and you can be a Torah sage in Israel. Today is eternal proof that no one is excluded from the Jewish People."

\*Yad L'Achim was established in 1950 to help new immigrants adjust to the newly born country and to help them find a suitable religious framework.

Over the years, its attention has turned to more complex problems, including how to counter the missionary threat. Israel has

attracted some 100 missionary congregations and cults because it offers a large concentration of Jews, many of whom are prime targets due to their economic distress and unawareness about Judaism. Fighting the missionaries, who have millions of dollars a year at their disposal, has long been one of Yad L'Achim's top priorities.

Another focus of attention is assimilation. Though it was once thought that this could not be a problem in a Jewish country, not even for the secular, the tragic facts show an increasing number of Jewish girls getting involved with foreign workers. Even more tragic and dangerous, is when Jewish girls get involved with Arab men. Indeed, Yad L'Achim gets some 1,000 calls a year reporting such cases.

Our Anti-Assimilation department responds to all such calls. In some cases, this means launching military-like rescues from hostile Arab villages where the Jewish women and children are treated as the "property" of their Arab husbands. The women are set up in "safe" houses around the country, where they can build new lives for themselves, no longer being prisoners in their own homes or living in fear of their next beating.

What motivates the staff of Yad L'Achim are their genuine, deeply felt concern for their fellow Jews. The Jewish soul is a precious, all-too-rare resource, and not even a single one should be give up on. Yad L'Achim continues its rescue activities, together with its efforts at Jewish outreach, as long as the problem of missionaries and Jewish-Arab marriage persists.

*To read more about this organization's important work visit [www.yadlachimusa.org.il](http://www.yadlachimusa.org.il)*

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# Moshiach

## matteers

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said...when it will be close to the days of Moshiach (Messiah) even children who will be in the world at that time will find secrets of wisdom, and will know from them ends [of exile] and calculations [of redemption], and at that time [G-d] will reveal [them] to everyone.

(Zohar Vayeira 118a)

# It Happened Once

The following story happened about four hundred years ago in the town of Cracow, which, at that time, had one of the most important Jewish communities. The Jews were mourning the loss of their spiritual leader, and decided that for a community like theirs no ordinary Rabbi would suffice. Two delegates were chosen to tour the country and find a suitable replacement to serve as their rabbi.

After visiting many big towns and large Jewish communities, they at last heard of a young man who was said to be the "star of the age," a veritable genius. They lost no time in contacting this exceptional young man and found him to be an 18-year-old rabbi by the name of Rabbi Moshe.

Despite his tender years, they were immediately impressed with his brilliant scholarship, his gentle bearing and his humility. They were convinced that he was the man they were looking for and they finally got him to agree to become the spiritual guide and leader of their Jewish community to make the necessary arrangement for his reception.

At that time in Cracow it was the custom, a sort of courtesy gesture, for the Jews to call on the bishop of the town and tell him of the Rabbi they had chosen for their community.

Thus it was that a suitable delegation called upon the Bishop of Cracow and, in the most glowing terms, described the Rabbi they had been fortunate enough to find to become the spiritual leader of the Jews of Cracow. The bishop was visibly impressed with their description of Rabbi Moshe.

The delegates lost no time in making all the necessary arrangements for Rabbi Moshe's coming. And when the date was set, they notified the bishop as they had promised him. Being rather fond of pomp and ceremony, the bishop had commanded that a band go on foot in front of the carriages, so that the entry of Rabbi Moshe should be announced by the beating of drums and the blowing of trumpets.

At long last, the carriage of Rabbi Moshe appeared. The bishop already had a picture in his mind of a sage and a patriarch. He was shocked when out stepped a lad, with hardly a suggestion of a beard, thin, small, and not particularly impressive. Nevertheless, the bishop made his speech of welcome with as good a grace as he could muster, but inwardly he was seething! He would show the Jews that they could not lightly play jokes on him, the Bishop of Cracow!

As soon as the bishop returned to his castle, he immediately sent a letter to the heads of the Jewish community saying he must see them at once. When they reached his home he told them that he was angry with them for having put him in so humiliating a position.

"Now I shall put a proposition before you which will decide the issue. If your rabbi is the great and wise person you would have me believe, he will have to prove it conclusively. I am going to invite all the sages and philosophers in the country

to meet your rabbi. They shall ask him any question on any subject they please, and it will be up to him to give satisfactory answers. If, however, he fails in this public forum, not only will your rabbi suffer the consequences, but the whole Jewish community of Cracow will be driven out!

The Jewish leaders were miserable. Of course Rabbi Moshe was a great genius, but who could foresee what trouble lay ahead? They hurriedly told Rabbi Moshe, who said, "Do not worry, this is not the first time nor will it be the last that such situations have arisen for us Jews. The Almighty will surely grant me the necessary wisdom to answer all questions put to me, so that our Jewish name not be put to shame."

The momentous day came. The hall was packed. Jew and non-Jew alike had the same interest. The greatest thinkers and scholars had come at the bishop's invitation: bishops, priests, scientists, all were there that day!


Rabbi Moshe looked pale but calm. His gentle eyes glowed with a light of determination. With G-d's help, all would be well.

Rabbi Moshe faced his examiners and the questions began to pour forth. But he was not flustered. His answers came unhesitatingly, clearly and concisely. There was not a sound among the vast audience. As the hours passed and Rabbi Moshe emerged the victor, the bishop announced that the forum would be adjourned. The bishop apparently concluded that his own honor had been upheld, and that they had indeed a remarkable genius before them in the person of the youthful Moshe.

The bishop again made a public speech, this time with obvious pleasure. He said that Cracow, indeed the whole country, could regard it as an honor to have so distinguished a scholar among them. He would consider it a privilege to call upon Rabbi Moshe from time to time. The bishop concluded with the hope that Cracow would always be blessed with such great spiritual leaders and that the citizens of Cracow would live together in peace.

Rabbi Moshe was none other than the great Rabbi Moshe Isserles, known as the Ramo, who passed away on Lag B'Omer.

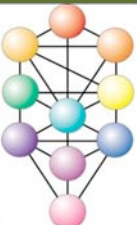
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<b>Surfers Par</b>	4:52pm	5:45pm
<b>Melbourne</b>	5:09pm	6:07pm

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