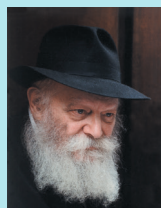


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

In the very beginning of this week's Torah portion, B'Haalotcha, we read the command to Aaron, "When you light the lamps..." This is a clear instruction that a Jew has to "kindle lights" to illuminate the surroundings. In this, too, a Jew has to emulate, so to speak, the Creator, Who, immediately after creating Heaven and earth, gave the order, "Let there be light!"

The essential thing about a candle (in the ordinary sense) is that it should give forth light and illuminate its surroundings. An unlit, or extinguished candle brings no benefit and has no meaning in that state per se. Only when it gives light and shines does it fulfill its purpose, which is to serve man by enabling him to see by its light everything around him. In this way it illuminates his way so that he will not stumble in darkness, and generally helps him to do and accomplish what he must.

The nature of a candle is that when one puts a flame to its wick, even a small flame--so long as he does it effectively--the flame catches on, and then it continues to give off light on its own. This, too, is indicated in the text, as our Sages comment: When you light the lamps [of the menorah]--[light them so] that the flame goes up on its own."

The instruction is thus:

G-d has endowed the human being with a soul, a Divine "lamp," as it is written, "The soul of man is the lamp of G-d"--to illuminate his or her path in life, and to illuminate the world. But this soul-lamp, or candle, has first to be ignited with the flame of Torah in order that it should shine forth with its true light, the light of "a mitzva is a candle and the Torah is light." (Proverbs)

And this is the task and purpose of every Jew: to be a brightly shining lamp and to kindle, or add brightness to every Divine "lamp"--Jewish soul--with which he or she comes in contact. And one must do this to completeness, in a way that the lamps they light likewise continue to shine brightly on their own, and also become "lamp-lighters," kindling other souls, "from candle to candle," in a continuous chain.

Needless to say, though the instruction to light the menorah was given to Aaron the Priest, it includes all Jews, in their spiritual life, since every Jew is a member of the "Kingdom of Priests." Moreover, there is the exhortation: "Be of the disciples of Aaron...loving the creatures and bringing them closer to Torah." To be a disciple of Aaron one must be permeated with love for every Jew and one must be involved in transmitting Judaism.

Ending on a Good Note

By Rabbi Mendel Rubin

It so happens that thanks to calendar scheduling and when Passover fell, our annual Dessert Bake-Off ended up being the last Shabbat of the Spring 2025 semester before Finals Week. I thought about the significance of this, and realized, like dessert does for a meal, it's about ending off (not only meals but also semesters) on a positive, good, sweet note!

There's a Hebrew/rabbinic expression: "Mesaymim B'Tov". End off on a good positive note. You see this (most of the time) with Haftorahs. Sometimes the text itself can be quite harsh or intense, but the closing line is a positive, upbeat one. Yes, there are a few exceptions, but it is still a rule that we end off on a positive line. Don't close the meal with savory, close it with sweet.

Even the Books of the Torah end off with uplifting end-lines. For example, the Rebbe goes through a rich explanation why the first book "Bereishis" ends off with the words that Joseph was placed in a coffin in Egypt -- why would Torah end off the whole book on that note?

The Rebbe goes on to explain how Joseph's (temporary) burial in Egypt, was indeed a symbol of reassurance and connection to the Jewish people remaining in Egypt (for generations -- until the Exodus and redemption). In every situation the rule is that we endeavor to end off on a good note.

You see this a lot in the Rambam (Maimonides)'s great work: The Mishne Torah. Most of the text is informative, dry and technical, it's a legal text so that's the nature of it. But at the end of a large unit, when he closes out a subject, Rambam often waxes poetically, with a meaningful, upbeat, uplifting message at the closing of a unit or one of his 14 books that comprise the Mishne Torah. We once did a class titled "Rambam Ends" which collected these rich passages of spiritual uplift in an otherwise strictly legal text.

This can be a valuable lesson for many areas of life. When you close a chapter of life, be it a semester, a job, a time with friends, a stage in life -- try to find ways to close it out on a positive note. Sometimes we take leave of friends with mixed feelings, it may be that all of them are valid, but perhaps this can remind us to end off on a good note.

Each and every day can be this way. Our days are often filled with ups and downs, accomplishments and frustrations, good news and news that can be better, wasted time and fulfilled time, but there is a healthy emotional value to ending the day on a positive note regardless. Lying in bed, think back to the good aspects, focus on highlights, and perhaps how we can make them even better tomorrow.

Rabbi Mendel and Raizy Rubin are the directors of Shabbos House - Rohr Chabad Jewish Student Center at at University at Albany

SLICE OF LIFE

Rediscovering the Botanical Wisdom of the Holy Land



Rabbi Avraham Dahan

For seventeen years, Rabbi Avraham Dahan has pursued a singular mission—uncovering the ancient plant medicine traditions of the Holy Land. Amid the fragrant herbs and historic fruit trees of his botanical garden at his farm, this 57-year-old Safed resident has compiled a monumental encyclopedia that resurrects a healing tradition nearly lost to time.

“I’m often asked where I obtained this ancient knowledge, when we don’t have books or writings from that time,” Dahan explains. “Well, we collected fragments of information from Jewish literature and ancient medical writings. This is the first research of its kind in the world.”

Dahan’s journey began far from traditional medicine. “I was born in Or Yehuda and followed the typical path of an Israeli child. I studied at the ‘Mikveh Israel’ agricultural school, completed full military service. Afterward, I

became part of the working settlement movement.”

His first encounter with Hasidism came following an invitation from Rabbi Yitzchak Yadgar, the Chabad emissary in the Taanachim region, to attend a Torah class. “I decided to come, out of gratitude to a Jew I had met. The lesson alarmed me and I disappeared. Something there made me run away.”

About six months later, Dahan received a phone call from Rabbi Yadgar, whom he now considers his teacher and mentor. “‘Avraham,’ the rabbi said to me, ‘I’m waiting for you; where are you?’” From there, Dahan and his wife underwent a profound spiritual transformation. “Thank G-d, we have been blessed with six children, two sons and four daughters.”

Over nearly two decades, Dahan has immersed himself in ancient Jewish plant medicine. “I worked hard trying to solve the intriguing puzzle—where did our plant medicine disappear to? Why do Indians, Persians, Greeks, and other nations around the world have plant medicine, while we know almost nothing about ours?” This quest culminated in a massive research project spanning 1,400 pages across five volumes, covering medicinal plants, spices, fruit trees, and incense.

The Land of Israel is rich with unique medicinal plants such as hyssop, thymus, mint, satureja, yarrow, desert hyssop, and ballota. “These are plants with wonderful biochemical substances for treating bacteria and viruses,” Dahan notes. “In our ‘Talmud of Plants’ garden, I grow more than 150 plants, fruit trees, including ancient grape varieties. The leading plants are connected to the soul

sense: roses, geranium, and lavender.”

Venturing into the fields during this season reveals carpets of nettles. “This plant is one of the most powerful for medicine, due to the wealth of minerals and iron it contains. Nettle greatly strengthens the immune system and raises iron levels in the blood.” Another common wild plant is mallow, known in Arabic as “khubeiza.” This plant is rich in minerals and water-soluble dietary fibers that aid digestion and help lower blood cholesterol levels.

The Talmud itself contains medicinal recipes, including “hamlata,” a ginger and honey concoction for strengthening immunity and treating winter illnesses. As a partial example, the recipe calls for 300 grams of fresh, peeled, and grated ginger root; half a cup of water; a heaping teaspoon of cinnamon; and 200 grams of honey. “Cook the ginger and water in a pot, without a lid, for about ten minutes, over low-medium heat. Add the honey, mix well, and cook for another ten minutes. Turn off the heat, add cinnamon, and mix well. Store in a glass jar. One teaspoon a day (no more) works wonders for the flu” (not for those taking blood-thinning medications. In general, for a more full and accurate understanding one must check with a professional.)

Through his meticulous work, Dahan has not only preserved ancient healing wisdom but also created a living connection between contemporary Israelis and their botanical heritage—a heritage as deeply rooted in the soil of the Holy Land as the ancient olive trees that have witnessed generations come and go.

Partial excerpts from Sichat Shavua.

Newest Chabad Couple to Serve the World’s Oldest Synagogue



Mykonos is a beautiful Greek island in the Aegean Sea, renowned for its breathtaking sunsets, and charming whitewashed alleys. It is just one island over from Delos, home to the ruin of what is believed to be the oldest synagogue in the world.

The island welcomes thousands of Jewish tourists—including three daily flights from Israel. The community needed a place to connect—to light Shabbat candles, pray, enjoy kosher meals and feel at home.

To fill that need, Rabbi Uziel Moshe and Shterna Sara Friedland recently founded Chabad of Mykonos. “Even before our arrival, we received requests to host bar and bat mitzvahs, weddings and many inquiries about a mikvah,” reports the rabbi.

Ethics Chapter Two

Hillel would say: Do not separate yourself from the community. Do not believe in yourself until the day you die. Do not judge your fellow until you have stood in his place. Do not say something that ought not to be heard even in the strictest confidence, for ultimately it will be heard.

And do not say “When I free myself of my concerns, I will study,” for perhaps you will never free yourself.

Before dawn comes, the darkness of night thickens, and it is when daybreak is imminent that a heavy slumber descends upon one. It is then that one needs to gather strength, so that



Rabbi Chaim Halberstam of Sanz, known as the Sanzer Rav, was deeply involved in the mitzva of tzedaka (charity), giving with an open hand from his own funds and soliciting from others as well. In keeping with the rabbinical dictum that charity collectors should travel in pairs, he always went on his rounds with a respected member of the community.

One time Rabbi Chaim set about to collect a large amount of tzedaka for a certain wealthy man who had gone bankrupt. He and a trusted companion went about from house to house soliciting funds, when they came to the elegant home of one of the richest men in the city. They entered the beautifully appointed anteroom and were shown to a velvet sofa where they were served tea from a silver tea service while they waited for the master of the house to appear. After a few minutes a well-dressed gentleman entered and greeted the illustrious Rabbi warmly.

The Rabbi and his companion requested that the wealthy man donate the large amount of five hundred rubles for an unspecified "worthy cause."

The rich man considered their request for a few moments and then asked, "Tell me, exactly what is the cause you're collecting for? Is it for some public institution or for a private person?"

Rabbi Chaim replied that he was collecting for a wealthy citizen who had lost all his money and gone into bankruptcy. But this answer wasn't sufficient for the man, and he began to inquire further about the identity of the person.

"I'm sorry," replied Rabbi Chaim, "but I cannot divulge the man's name, since that would cause him terrible embarrassment. You'll just have to trust me when I tell you that he's a very deserving individual."

The rich man refused to be dissuaded from his curious pursuit of the man's identity. "Of course, I trust you implicitly, and I would be only too happy to donate even several thousand rubles to help you, but I would first like to know to whom I'm giving the money."

At this point the man who was accompanying the Rabbi interjected his opinion that perhaps it wouldn't be so bad to divulge the man's identity in this case. Certainly the rich donor wouldn't allow the information to leave the room, and it was a wonderful opportunity to amass the large amount of money to help a fellow Jew rebuild his life.

But Rabbi Chaim would say only that the man had up until recently been one of the pillars of the community and had himself contributed to many worthy causes before his unfortunate business collapse. Again he protested that he couldn't and wouldn't publicize the man's name.

The rich man, far from being silenced, was even more aroused in his curiosity. "If you tell me his name I will give you half of the entire amount you need."

His fellow collector again tried to convince the Rav to tell the man's name, in view of the tremendous sum of money involved, but to no avail.

"You must understand," he replied, "that even though the sum you are offering is more than generous, the honor of this Jew is more important and valuable to me than any amount of money! If you were to give me the total sum that I require, I would still refuse to reveal the identity of the recipient!"

The rich man's countenance changed suddenly and he became very still. He quietly asked Reb Chaim to step into an adjacent room, for he wished to speak with him privately.

Standing alone with the Rabbi, the rich man broke down into bitter sobbing. "Rebbe," he began, "I, too, have lost my entire fortune and am about to enter into bankruptcy. I was too embarrassed to tell this to anyone, but when I saw how scrupulously you guarded the other man's privacy I knew I could trust you. Please forgive me for testing you in such an outrageous manner, but I am a desperate man. I needed to know for sure that under no circumstances would you tell anyone about

my terrible situation. I am in debt for such a huge sum, I have no hope at all of repaying it. I'm afraid that I will have no choice but to leave my family and go begging from door to door!"

The Sanzer Rav left the home of the rich man, and needless to say, not a soul ever heard a word of their conversation. Less than a week later he returned to the same man's house with a large sum of money. He had been able to raise enough money to rescue not only the original intended recipient, but this one as well. They were both able to pay off their debts and resume their businesses successfully.

The role of the saintly Sanzer Rav in this affair became known only many years later after he had gone to his eternal reward.



This is the workmanship of the menora--beaten work of gold (Num. 8:4)

"Beaten work of gold," explains Rashi, means that the menora was to be made of a single piece of gold, beaten or pounded with a hammer and other tools, until it assumed the proper shape. Likewise, a person who desires to transform himself into a "menora," to kindle his G-dly spark and be illuminated with the light of Torah, should also do the same to himself--striking away at his negative qualities and working on his character until he, too, assumes the proper form. (*Likutei Torah*)

From the base, until the flowers, beaten work (Num. 8:4)

The base of the menora symbolizes the lowest level of Jews; the flowers, those on the highest spiritual plane. The Torah demands that the menora be made out of one piece of gold, just as the Jewish people is but one entity. Every Jew is incomplete by himself, without the rest of the Jewish nation, just as in the human body, the foot needs the head to function no less than the head requires the foot for mobility. (*Likutei Torah*)

That there be no plague among the Children of Israel, when the Children of Israel approach the Sanctuary (Num. 8:19)

There are, unfortunately, Jews who only interest themselves in Judaism after a misfortune has befallen them. Our aim should be, however, to approach G-d not only through suffering and sorrow, but with joy and happiness. (*Imrai Noam*)

But the man Moses was very humble, more so than any man upon the face of the earth (Num. 12:3)

The famous Chasidic rabbi, Reb Baruch, once asked his disciple, Rabbi Baruch Stuchiner, if he had as yet succeeded in locating proper accommodations in the town of Pshischa. The chasid replied that he had not yet found a place to stay. Reb Baruch responded: "One who does not 'take up space' will always be able to find a place wherever he goes."



8:10 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
17 Sivan / June 13
Torah Portion Beha'alotecha
Ethics Ch 2
Shabbat ends 9:19 PM

Dedicated in memory of a dear friend of the
Lubavitch Youth Organization
Mr. Martin Zimet OBM