

Chabad of Northern Beverly Hills, 409 Foothill Road . Beverly Hills, CA 90210  
 Rabbi Yosef Shusterman 310/271-9063

MARCH 3, 2000

VOL 3, ISSUE 22

26 ADAR 1 5760

## ❖ PARSHAT VAYAKHEL

In the beginning of this week's portion, 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. 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." (From: L'Chaim 5757, #459, Adapted for Maayan Chai from Likutei Sichot, vol. 1)

**"For six days, work shall be done..." (35:2)** The Torah expresses itself in the passive - 'work shall be done' - rather than using the active - 'do work'. This is to teach us the proper attitude toward our workday pursuits: the necessary mundane involvements of life should be approached in a matter-of-fact and unenthusiastic manner... -The Rebbe

*Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin was expected at the home of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. But the visit gave rise to a dispute between the Rebbe's wife and her daughter, Freidkeh. For several years now, Freidkeh had taken charge of all the cooking in the house; now, in honor of the distinguished guest, the Rebbetzin wanted to retake the kitchen. The Rebbetzin cited seniority and baalbosteh's rights. Her daughter argued that since she always does all the cooking, it is hardly fair that the task be taken from her just when an honored guest arrives. The case was referred for arbitration to Rabbi Schneur Zalman, who offered the following compromise: The Rebbetzin will prepare the food, but Freidkeh would add the salt. Since the*

*food will be all but tasteless without her contribution, the privilege of feeding Rabbi Shlomo would be equally hers. But when the much-contested dish finally reached the table, Rabbi Shlomo Karliner found himself unable to continue past the first spoonful. The force of decades-long habit had caused the Rebbetzin to salt the food without even realizing it, and Freidkeh, of course, had not failed to perform her duty. The result was simply impossible to swallow. But the sodium story of this hapless dish was far from over: a third dash of salt now joined its predecessors, this time cast by the hand of Rabbi Schneur Zalman himself. Upon noticing the neglected plate in front of his guest, the Rebbe figured that perhaps the food is not sufficiently salted to Rabbi Shlomo's taste. Finally, Rabbi Schneur Zalman asked the Karliner why he wasn't eating; Rabbi Shlomo replied that the food was too salty to eat. Surprized, Rabbi Schneur Zalman took another spoonful from his own plate and swallowed thoughtfully. "You know," he said, "you're right." "From the time that I journeyed to Mezeritch to my Rebbe" the Rebbe explained "I have not sensed the taste of food." (From: Once Upon a Chassid by Yanki Tauber)*

**"He made the Menorah... its cups, its knobs and its flowers..." (37:17)** When describing the menorah's decorations, the Torah never varies from the order "its cups, its knobs and its flowers." It never starts by talking about its flowers first. Why? The human mind has three stages of development. In our youth, we spend most of our mental energy assimilating new information. The mind of a child starts off as an empty page. Until he can fill it with information, he cannot make intelligent assessments. His memory-banks must be full of information like a cup whose whole essence is to contain. The cups of the menorah represent this idea. Then comes the second stage. A stage where we go inside ourselves. We use the power of the mind to detach itself from the outside world in order to process the information that we have gathered. To think. This is represented by the menorah's round knobs, symbolizing the mind separating itself from the outside to process what it has already imbibed. The word concentrate in English has this implication: We con-centrate -- we encircle ourselves in thought, with thought, and detach from the outer world. However, this stage can only take place after we have amassed much information. As King Solomon says in Proverbs: "Go to the ant, lazy one!" Like an ant, first you have to gather information, only then can you extrapolate. This is the explanation of the saying in Ethics of the Fathers, "If there's no flour, there's no Torah." If you don't possess a lot of information, the flour of knowledge, you will have very little to grind. And what you do grind will be of poor quality. The last stage is when the mind "flowers." It produces its own ideas and novellae. Just as the flower is something new and unexpected that emerges from beneath the ground, so too a new idea seems to come from out of the blue. However, in reality, its "newness" can only result from the hidden processes in the "under-ground" of thought. The menorah represents man's obligation to spread the light of superior wisdom, the Torah, beyond himself. This can only be done in the proper order: The cup, the button, and then the flower. (From: Ohr Somayach web site, www.virtual.co.il)

## ❖ LAWS OF SHABBAT - 39 Melachot: Dosh (Threshing)

**Squeezing/Drying wet hair:** One whose hair became wet may not squeeze it to extract the water on Shabbos because this resembles Mefarek. One may likewise not shampoo one's hair on Shabbos because the lathering action is Mefarek. However, there is nothing wrong with wetting one's hair as long as one is careful not to squeeze the hair. One may dry one's hair by tightly wrapping a towel on the hair to absorb the wetness. This method is permitted because the water from the hair is instantly absorbed and rendered useless. (From: The 39 Melochos by Dovid Ribiat)

MY FATHER SAID: TRUTH IS THE MIDDLE PATH. AN INCLINATION TO THE RIGHT, TO BE OVERLY STRINGENT WITH ONESELF AND FIND FAULTS OR SINS NOT IN ACCORD WITH THE TRUTH, OR AN INCLINATION TO THE LEFT, TO BE OVERLY INDULGENT, COVERING ONE'S FAULTS OR BEING LENIENT IN DEMANDS OF AVODA OUT OF SELF-LOVE - BOTH THESE WAYS ARE FALSE. (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM 27 ADAR 1)

***The Baal Shem Tov taught there are two paths: 1. G-dliness is everything. 2. Everything is G-dliness. Where the two paths converge, there is G-d Himself***

- The Rebbe