

THE CHABAD WEEKLY

Vol 5, # 31

The Jew as a Sefer Torah

"It is true that a Jew is a Sefer Torah, but with a difference."

"There are two ways of making an inscription. One can write with a quill or pen and ink, or one can engrave like the Ten Commandments which were engraved in stone.

"What is the difference between these two methods? Writing with a pen, or quill, means applying ink to paper or parchment.

"The ink and the parchment are separate entities, but they are skillfully joined by the writers. But because they are separate entities, it is possible for the ink to fade, or be erased.

"On the other hand, engraving means forming letters and words within the very stone itself; nothing is superimposed upon the material -- the material and the letter are one. Such letters cannot be erased, nor can they fade.

"So long as the material exists, the letters are there. However, while no actual fading or erasure is possible in this case, there is a possibility of dust and grime gathering and covering up the engraved letters. If this happens, one must only clear away the dust and grime, and the letters will again be revealed in their original freshness."

"A Jew is a Sefer Torah, but not a written one. He is rather like the Ten Commandments -- engraved.

"The Torah and mitzvot are an integral part of the Jewish soul; they are engraved in his mind and heart. You do not have to 'rewrite' a Jew; all you have to do is help him brush away the dust and grime of environmental influences which have temporarily covered up his true self - the 'pintele Yid'. This is why a Jewish heart is always awake and responsive." (The Rebbe, L'Chaim #317)

MOSHE, KING DAVID AND THE BAAL SHEM TOV

The festival of Shavuot is associated with three tzadikim (righteous individuals): Moses, King David, and the Baal Shem Tov.

The connection to Moses is obvious, for it was through him that G-d gave the Torah on Shavuot to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. King David is associated with Shavuot because it is the anniversary of his passing. Similarly, the Baal Shem Tov passed away on the 6th of Sivan, also Shavuot.

In truth, these three tzadikim have much in common, as each one was a "first" in a particular area:

Moses was the first leader of the Jewish people. King David was the first monarch of the House of David. And the Baal Shem Tov was the first leader in the dynasty of Chasidut.

Another common characteristic is that all three tzadikim were shepherds. Moses tended his father-in-law Yitro's flock; David tended his father Jesse's; and the Baal Shem Tov, who used to lead young children to cheder, was a "shepherd" of schoolchildren. A shepherd, by definition, must embody patience, mercy and dedication to his flock. By choosing shepherds to lead the Jewish nation, G-d knew they could be counted on to demonstrate these qualities.

An additional point in common is that all three tzadikim were self-educated: Moses was raised in Pharaoh's household; King David was a shepherd from the earliest age; The Baal Shem Tov was orphaned as a very young child.

Nonetheless, despite these similarities, each of these Jewish leaders was unique in embodying a different "pillar" upon which the entire world rests: Moses was the embodiment of Torah. He received the Torah from G-d and transmitted it to the Jewish people. King David was the embodiment of avoda, the service of prayer. It was he who authored the Book of Psalms. The Baal Shem Tov was the embodiment of gemilut chasadim, the performance of good deeds. This is reflected in his name, which means "Master of the Good Name."

The festival of Shavuot is thus an appropriate time to strengthen our connection to each of these tzadikim, through the daily study of Torah. These studies, which every Jew should resolve to learn each day, are known by their initials, Chitas, and are alluded to in the Biblical verse "And the terror (chitas) of G-d was upon the cities."

To intensify our connection with Moses, we learn the daily portion of the weekly Torah reading, the Chumash. To intensify our connection with King David, we recite the appropriate chapters of the Psalms corresponding to the day of the month. And to strengthen our connection to the Baal Shem Tov, we study the daily portion of the Tanya, which elucidates the Baal Shem Tov's teachings. (Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Vol. 8 and Vol. 18; Hitva'aduyot 5743 and 5744. Lchaim # 569)

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"Israel encamped there opposite the mountain." (Ex. 19:2) Why was the Torah given on a mountain? The difference between level ground and a mountain is not qualitative; both are made of dust and earth. A mountain is just more of that earth collected and heaped up into a larger mass. The fact that the Torah was given on a mountain teaches us that a Jew's purpose in life is to take that earth-- physical matter and corporeality-- elevate it, and transform it into holiness. Lubavitcher Rebbe (from L'Chaim #317)

UNITY AND PEACE

From the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

The preparations for receiving the Torah, and the "receptacle" for it, are peace and unity, as our Sages explain in the Mechilta (quoted in the works of the great commentator, Rashi) in reference to the words "And Israel encamped there facing the mountain" (Ex. 19:2)--in the singular, as one man, i.e., "all Israel, like one man, with one heart." The Yalkut expresses the same thought in this way: "The Holy One, blessed be He, wished to give the Torah to the Jewish people immediately upon leaving Egypt, but they were divided and disunited. When they came to Sinai, they were all united into one unity. Said G-d, 'The Torah is all peace; I shall give it to the peace-loving nation.'"

Such peace and unity must be directed toward the purpose of Torah and mitzvot, as indicated in the words of the Torah quoted above: "And Israel encamped there facing the mountain" (i.e. for the purpose of receiving the Torah and mitzvot, cf. Rashbam).

Unity and peace are powerful enough, even where misused in the quest of unworthy objectives, as was the case with the Tower of Babel episode. However, such unity cannot be long-lived, and this is not the way to bring G-d's blessings. But in the case of the Torah--G-d's Torah, and mitzvot--G-d's mitzvot--peace and unity are the means by which to attain unity with G-d; such unity can be attained only through the Torah and mitzvot. This feeling of unity must express itself in mutual love and in efforts to unite with the rest of our people through the study of our one Torah and the observance of its precepts. (From: L'Chaim 5753, #268) - lchaimweekly.org

THE CHILDREN AS OUR GUARANTORS

A famous Midrash describes how, when G-d was about to bring an unprecedented level of G-dly revelation into the world through the giving of the Torah to the Jewish people, G-d demanded of the fledgling Jewish nation a guarantor for the Torah. The Jewish people offered their ancestors as the guarantors but G-d refused them. He demanded that their children be the guarantors instead.

When the children came before G-d, He asked them, "Do you agree to be the guarantors of the Torah for your parents, and if they do not observe the Torah, you will be responsible for them?"

To this Divine question, the children answered affirmatively, whereupon G-d began reciting the first of the Ten Commandments.

It is perhaps in this vein that the Rebbe has stressed throughout the years that all Jewish children should be present in shul on the holiday of Shavuot to hear the reading of the Ten Commandments and to accept the Torah anew.

We bring the children so they can become familiar with the "terms" of the guarantee. The children's presence in shul actually confirms our guarantee it.

In Hebrew, the word guarantor is "orev." Orev can also mean pleasant or sweet. What sweeter guarantors can we have than our children, whose influence helps our own deeds to be pleasing?

One of the many beautiful concepts in Judaism is that the Jewish soul can comprehend long before the intellect.

With this in mind, we see how imperative it is to bring even infants and young children to shul; though their minds might not yet comprehend where they are and why they are there, their souls certainly do. (From: L'Chaim 5754, # 317) - lchaimweekly.org

The Baal Shem Tov passed away on Wednesday, the first day of Shavuot, 5520 (1760) and is interred in Mezibuz. The Ater Rebbe Commented (on Wednesday, the 20th of Kislev 5559 (1798) in Petersburg): "On the fourth day the luminaries were taken away." 1 (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM, SIVAN 6.)

Procedure for the congregant during the blessing by the kohanim (p. 268): When the kohanim say yevarech'cha, face forward; When kohanim say Hashem, turn head to right (which is the left of the kohein pronouncing the blessing). When the kohanim say v'yishm'recha, face forward. While kohanim say ya'eir, turn head to left (which is to the right of the kohein pronouncing the blessing), etc. At shalom face forward.

Say Ribono shel Olam only while the kohanim sing (the wordless accompanying melody); but when they pronounce the words, one must listen. When the kohanim sing the wordless melody prior to saying v'yaseim, say Ribono until hatzadik. During the similar choral introduction to l'cha, say from v'im until Elisha. Likewise before shalom say from Uch'sheim until l'tova. As the kohanim finish pronouncing the word shalom, say v'tishm'reini u't'chaneini vetirtseini.

Adir bamarom is said after responding amen, while face is still covered by the tallit. (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM, SIVAN 7.)

In practical terms: On Shavuot, a Jew is told that "deed is paramount," and therefore, after the Giving of the Torah, he must endeavor to influence a Jew to put on tefillin, and perform the other mitzvos. If such Jew claims he would rather influence another Jew in Torah study ('the Season of the Giving of our Torah'), but it is unseemly for him to "lower" himself to engage in propagating mitzvos, actual deed - the answer is that the precondition for receiving of the Torah was that deed would precede understanding. -The Rebbe

PARTICIPATE IN WEEKLY CLASSES

<u>Sunday</u>	8:00 AM	Gemara-Tractate Rosh Hashana (men)
<u>Monday</u>	8:00 PM	Chumash (men and women)
<u>Tuesday</u>	8:00 PM	Gemara-Tractate Sukka (men)
<u>Wednesday</u>	8:30 PM	Halacha and Tanya (women)
<u>Thursday</u>	10:00 AM	Chassidus (women)
	8:00 PM	Class for Beverly Hills Highschool Students
<u>Daily</u>	6:45 to 7:15 AM	Chasiddus
	Between Mincha and Maariv	Halacha

SHAVUOT SCHEDULE - 5762

★ **Thursday night - May 16: Candlelighting:: 7:30 PM**
Mincha: 7:45 PM

ALL NIGHT LEARNING: THURSDAY NIGHT starting at 12:00 Midnight.

★ **Friday-May 17: Shacharit:** Early Minyan.....5:15 AM
LATEST SHEMA.....9:20 AM
Regular Minyan.....9:30 AM

followed by cheesecake, Kiddush and ice-cream sponsored by David and Isabelle Suissa in honor of their birthdays

Mincha.....7:30 PM

★ **Friday evening - May 17: Candlelighting is at 7:31 PM from a pre-existing flame.**

★ **Shabbos -May 18: Shacharit.....9:30AM**
Yizkor11:00AM
Learning.....6:35 PM
Mincha.....7:20 PM
(followed by Seuda Shlishit)
Havdala.....8:31PM

Happy Anniversary to David and Isabelle Suissa.

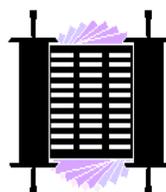
Yartzeits: Charles Cohen - Sivan 8, Naftal Sternlight - Sivan 9.

There will be no classes on Tuesday, May 21 and Wednesday, May 22.

DAILY MINYONIM

Shacharis: Mon -Fri: 6:00 AM & 7:30 AM
Sunday: 9:00 AM

Mincha/Maariv: 7:50 PM



A Sefer Torah is being written in memory of the fathers of Rabbi & Mrs. Shusterman.

Anyone who is interested in participating should contact Mendel Shusterman at (310) 497-2643

**GOOD SHABBOS AND CHAG SAMEACH!
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