

L'Chaim

FREE
Take One!

Weekly Publication
for every Jewish Person

April 1, 2011 – 26 Adar II, 5771

1165: SAZRIA

This month's L'CHAIM has been generously sponsored by:

**ARIZONA
E N T**
EAR • NOSE • THROAT

Ralph E. Bassett, MD FRCS(C)
Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery

13949 West Meeker Blvd., Suite C
Sun City West, Arizona 85375

(623) 975-1660
(623) 975-1654 Fax

Email: azent-doctor@qwestoffice.net

Living with the REBBE



This week's Torah portion, Tazria, deals with the laws of ritual impurity and how to purify oneself after becoming impure. A discussion of these laws follows the discussion in previous chapters pertaining to animals - which are pure and which are impure, and animal sacrifices.

"The same way that man's creation took place after all the other animals and birds, so are the laws pertaining to man to be found in the Torah after the laws dealing with animals," our Sages teach.

The Talmud and Midrash offer several explanations as to why man was created only after very other creation was complete. One of them is so that man would arrive in a world ready and completed and be immediately able to perform mitzvot (commandments). A second reason given is that if man's behavior is not worthy and proper, one can say to him, "Even a mosquito was created before you, even an earthworm preceded you."

These two explanations express the dual nature of the essence of man. The first presents man in the role of the crown of Creation, for whom G-d prepared everything in advance. The second explanation stresses the relative unimportance of man as compared to all the other animals, to the point that even the mosquito came first.

The first reason stresses man's merit and is related to the soul every Jew. The second explanation, stressing the unimportance of man, relates to the physical body.

By virtue of the G-dly soul, which is literally a part of G-d, man stands on a level higher than all other creations. This aspect of man cannot be changed even if, G-d forbid, he sins. However, because of his physical body, man is concurrently lower than even a mosquito; an animal does not have free choice and can only carry out the function for which it was created. Man is the only creature that can chose not to carry out G-d's will.

Because man has the ability to lower himself below all other animals, the laws pertaining to him are written in the Torah only after the laws pertaining to the animals.

This contradiction in man's nature raises the question, "How is it possible to be, at the same time, on both a lofty exalted level and yet lower than all other creature?"

Man's subordinance is hidden within a great virtue. Precisely because of man's corporeal nature, he is able to fulfill the purpose of Creation. G-d's will is that the lofty soul should come down and "clothe itself" in a physical body, to elevate and purify the body. The purpose of creation is that man ("adam" in Hebrew), created from earth ("adama") should uncover and fulfill the potential of his soul and elevate his corporeal nature. ■

RFP

RFP is a term that is used throughout the business world. It stands for Request For Proposal. When a company (or government agency) wants to purchase a product or service, it must send out a notice to potential suppliers.

A Request For Proposal is usually a bit more complicated than its cousin, the RFQ (Request for Quotation). The RFQ also invites bidding and competition. But an RFP wants to know, besides what you're the selling the widget for, what kind of sales force and support staff you have, what's your corporate history and finances, etc.

In other words, with an RFP, the buyer wants to know not only if you sell the product needed, but who are you, are you reliable, and can you support what you make?

What's the value of an RFP? Well, it helps a business gather correct information, decide on a strategy, obtain the best deal and consider alternatives. It also encourages suppliers to make their best effort and to analyze just what they can supply. It insures competition, specifies the product or service - reducing or eliminating misunderstanding, and allows for a wide response. It also lays out the criteria for evaluation.

Obviously, it takes skill to craft a good RFP. But the result is a good working relationship between business and vendor, and a prosperous partnership.

We can see a parallel to the RFP in the way G-d interacts with the world in which we live. G-d wants to make, manufacture, create a world in which His Presence dwells - a

world of holiness and goodness.

But in order to make such a world, G-d needs suppliers - and products. The suppliers are the Jewish people, and the products are the 613 mitzvot (commandments), which, when performed, create elements or "bricks" of holiness.

When we're commanded to do a mitzva, it's as if G-d is issuing an RFP: He doesn't just want to know if we can fulfill his command in the practical sense. He wants to know how much attention we are paying to the mitzva we're doing, how much of our selves we are investing in it. What are you willing to give up to perform the mitzva, how important is it to you? Are you doing it according to detailed rules of Jewish law?

Which mitzva is most dear to you? The Sages of the Talmud used to ask each other that. We can become "specialists" in certain mitzvot, a chief "supplier" of the spiritual elements associated with tefilin, for instance.

How do you compare to the competition? Are the mitzvot you "produce" or can "supply" of the same quality as your competitor? A "competitor" in this sense is someone at the same stage or level of observance and learning. Are you producing the same quantity - doing as much as you can, which is measured in part by what others are doing. And here, competition is good, because mitzvot are not a "zero-sum game." G-d's need for mitzvot is infinite. He will "buy" mitzvot from every supplier.

Finally, where do you, as a supplier, get your supplies from? What are you doing to help another Jew, another human being, do a mitzva and help build a world that is indeed a dwelling place for G-dliness. ■

MEZUZAH DID YOU KNOW???



The Art of Mezuzah – The Script

In Exodus 6:4 the Torah instructs, "U'ktavtam..." The literal translation is, "And you shall write them [on the doorposts of your house]." The Sages explain that this word can be read as two words: ktav tam -- a perfect script. The special script, in which the mezuzah, like the tefillin and Torah scroll, is written, has been very precisely defined by the Sages.

In the Code of Jewish Law, the exact form of each letter, from alef to taf, is clearly described. Each letter must be written perfectly in accordance with these laws, for the slightest flaw can render the whole mezuzah or tefillin not-kosher.

The letters may not touch each other, but should be separated by at least a hairsbreadth of space. The space between two words should be the size of a letter yud. If two words are written so closely together that a child learning to read thinks they are one word, the mezuzah or tefillin is not-kosher. This is also the case if a large space in the middle of a word makes it seem like two words. ■

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

On the second of Nissan (this year corresponding to April 6), Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber, the fifth Chabad Rebbe, known as the Rebbe Rashab, passed away.

Today, the second of Nisan, is the anniversary of the passing in 1920 of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom Dovber. Only hours before his passing, the Rebbe Rashab told his Chasidim, "I am going to heaven, but my writings I am leaving with you." Although the Rebbe wouldn't be physically present, the Chasidim could still connect to him through his holy writings and teachings.

In 1914, after World War I broke out, the Rebbe Rashab sent a minyan of yeshiva students to the gravesites of his father and grandfather to recite a special prayer every day. As the words of a tzadik are eternal, there is no doubt that the Rebbe's prayer still reverberates in the celestial spheres, and is especially relevant in light of the world situation today.

In free translation:

"May Your mercies be aroused, O Source of all mercy, for the sake of our brothers, the Children of Israel, who are in grave danger. It is already several months since a war has broken out...with the kingdom of Ishmael. Many Jews have been killed in the terrible warfare...among them are married men, the fathers of children. May Jacob be redeemed from this current horror!

"May the light of Israel succeed in imploring G-d's mercy for the Congregation of Israel who live in lands affected by the strife. May G-d protect them and save them from the sword and from all enemies who lie in wait. May they succeed in all their endeavors and return in full health to their homes. May G-d implant the desire for peace in the hearts of the kings responsible for this bloodshed, so that the world will be spared this great and terrible destruction. ...And may we be worthy of greeting the Final Redeemer, speedily in our days, Amen." ■

The Rebbe Writes

11 Tishrei, 5712 [1951]

In reply to your letter and questions contained therein:

Re: the apparent contradiction between the Omniscience of G-d and man's free will (or choice of action), there is a whole literature dealing with the subject and it is impossible to give an outline of it in the course of a letter.

I would refer you to at least to the Rambam [Maimonides] (Hilchos Teshuvah, ch. 5). However, I cannot leave you without some answer, so I will state briefly: G-d's foreknowledge is no contradiction to man's free choice. What could be a contradiction to free choice is compulsion, not knowledge. Hence a foreknowledge that is not compelling or forcing is in no way limiting to one's free choice of action.

I will cite two illustrations: first, assuming that there are people with prophetic knowledge, their forecast concerning certain people does not compel the people to act in a certain way and does not rob them of their free choice of action. Secondly, as you know, G-d is not subject to time, and the past, present, future are all the same to Him (He was, is and will be, all in one).

It follows that to G-d the future is like the past, and just as knowledge of a past action is no contradiction to free choice, so is His knowledge of a future action. In other words: G-d knows the thoughts of man and his - man's - decisions and such knowledge does not rob man of thinking and deciding how to act.

Re: your question to my opinion of the Theory of Evolution. You do not mention what evolution you are referring to, presuming of animal and vegetable life.

My opinion is, as is stated in the Torah, that during the six days of creation, G-d created the four animal kingdoms (mineral, vegetable, animal and man), independently of each other. Our Sages have enlarged upon this question in detail. However, this creation does not deny the possibility of evolution after that of particular species through various mutations.

With regard to your question concerning the role of Aggadah in the the Talmud, particularly those dealing with medicine, I want to point out that you are touching upon two distinct questions: Aggadah in the Talmud, and medicine in the Talmud.

As to Aggadah not all Aggadah can be treated equally. In the introduction to various editions of Ein Yaakov you will find out how our Sages class the Aggados of the Talmud.

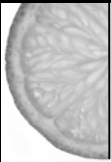
As to the question of Medicine in the Talmud, they are not at all as fantastic as they may appear. As a matter of fact, many medical suggestions in the Talmud have been confirmed in recent years as to their therapeutic value, although medical science had long derided them.

Generally speaking, however, inasmuch as the nature of the human organism has undergone many changes since those days, the medical advice contained in the Talmud cannot be applied nowadays. But it is quite certain that in their days the remedies were quite effective.

But it is quite certain that in their days the remedies were quite effective. For references consult: Tosafoth Moed-Koton 11a; Kesef Mishneh, Ch. 4 of Hilechoth Deoth, Ch. 18, and sources mentioned in Sdei-Chemed, vol. of Kelolim, under the Klal 54, where it is mentioned that due to physical and climatic changes, medical treatment and remedies of old no longer good generally.

In the history of Medical Science many illustrations are cited as to changes in both in man's susceptibility to disease and treatment, the development of virus attack, new diseases, etc. There is quite alot of literature on the subject, and there is no need for me to enlarge upon this subject. I am surprised that you do not mention in your letter anything about your activities in influencing others to bring them nearer to Torah and Yiddishkeit [Judaism], which serves also to strengthen one's own convictions.

With Blessings, ■



SLICE OF LIFE

Who Will be the Zaidys?

by Yosef Shandling

In the spring of 1968 I completed my commitment as an officer in the United States Public Health Service, having been stationed the last six months in Cincinnati, Ohio. A friend invited me to a Passover seder in Cincinnati, but I decided to return to my home in Brooklyn and attend the seders with my family, largely because of the warm feeling I associated with the family seder and all its rituals led by my grandfather.

But my grandfather had passed away the previous August, and I knew that without him, the seder would be lacking. Grandpa Milkman was a traditional, Yiddish speaking Jew from Russia, and he certainly conducted a traditional seder. Each year my immediate family would attend, along with all my cousins, uncles, and aunts. It was by far the richest Jewish experience of the year.

That first year after my grandfather's passing, at my aunt's home in Long Island, we celebrated Passover with a festive meal, much more "modern" than Grandpa's seder. Our meal included matzas and rye bread, and not too much singing or reading from the Hagada. It was more than lacking, it was a disappointment. I knew then and there that if there were to be any more seders in my family, I was going to have to be the one to make them.

In the summer of 1968, I went to Israel and learned in an ulpan (intensive Hebrew language course) for six months in Kibbutz Maayan Tsvi. I then worked as a volunteer for a year at Kibbutz Yotvatah in the southern part of Israel.

At the end of the year, I toured Israel, and arranged the paperwork and other details in anticipation returning home to the U.S.A.,

and touring Europe on the way. Yaakov Klausner, my ulpan teacher and mentor at Maayan Tsvi, where I had returned for a visit, suggested that I see a village called Kfar Chabad.

I traveled to Kfar Chabad and stayed there for a couple of days. Meir Bastomski, a young Israeli Chasid who could speak some English, encountered me early in my visit. He befriended me and shared his genuine warmth and love for Jews and his enthusiasm for learning Torah. I was impressed by the village's warmth, spirituality, and authentic old-world Jewish character. I was touched by the camaraderie of the guys, much like me, who were studying there in the yeshiva's special program for young men from non-observant backgrounds. This program was later to become Yeshivat Ohr Temmim presently led by Rabbi Schneur Zalman Gafne and Rabbi Tuvia Bolton.

As attractive and alluring as I found the people and the environment, I was presented with a challenge. I saw myself getting caught up, perhaps indefinitely, with the Chasidic village, and ruining my plans for Europe in particular and my very exciting, free ranging future in general. I decided I needed to leave before I got stuck.

I boarded the bus for Tel Aviv, where I would continue preparations for my return home. As the bus left Kfar Chabad, I took off the yarmulke from my head that I had been given and placed it in my pocket.

Once in Tel Aviv, I walked on Allenby Street, the busy "Forty-Second Street" of Tel Aviv. I needed to sort out where I wanted to be for the upcoming Passover seders. I had a number of invitations. "Kfar Chabad, that's where they will really make a seder like Grandpa Milkman, the way its supposed to be," I thought to myself. "No," I said, quashing the idea, "If you go back there, you're going to get stuck there."

I decided to go back to Kibbutz Yotvatah for the seders. Having settled that matter in my mind, I continued walking on Allenby Street. As I walked, I realized that I was in the thick of the urban "garbage" that I had talked about the other day with one of the American yeshiva students that I had met in Kfar Chabad.

During the year and a half that I had been on the two kibbutzim, I would from time to time travel from the kibbutz and visit other places in Israel including various cities. I would typically look forward to these trips with some excitement. But inevitably, I would find the city environment, in contrast to the rural kibbutz, to be very disorienting. When I became aware of this, I tended to be somewhat wary of making the trips. The cities were full of distractions, many of them not necessarily very wholesome.

As I passed the shops, signs and the masses of strangers, I felt strongly the disorientation I had experienced over the last 18 months whenever I visited a city while living in the rural kibbutz. I thought to myself: "Here I am in the middle of the city, Allenby Street in Tel Aviv, and all the garbage. I don't know anybody and nobody knows me. I want to meet someone, right now, who I know."

After the briefest of pauses on my part to see what response any "Higher Power" might offer, Meir Bastomski popped out of the crowd, gave me a warm "Shalom" and asked me "Where are you going to be for the seders?" You can just imagine where I spent Passover and the seders that year. ■

Yosef Shandling is a member of the Chabad Community in Monsey, New York. He leads his family

Moshiach Matters The Prophet Isaiah (66:8) compares giving birth to the Redemption. Just as birth takes place in a day, the Redemption can come and the Jewish nation be "reborn" in a moment. ■

What's in a Name?

LIBA is from the Yiddish, meaning "loved one." It is also from the Hebrew "lev" which means heart.

LIPPE is a shortened form of Lipman, Yiddish for "lover of man(kind)."


News

Kosher in Russia

A new kosher restaurant opened recently in Kazan, Russia. The Jerusalem Restaurant is under the supervision of the Kashrut Department of the Chief Rabbi of Russia, The Slavprom Winery (Slavyansk-on-Kuban) in the Krasnodar region has produced its first batch of three kosher wines, also under the Chief Rabbi of Russia, Cabernet dry red, Cabernet semi-sweet red and Isabella semi-sweet red wine.

Kosher in Sydney

Thanks to the efforts of Rabbi Mendel Kastel of the Jewish House, in Sydney, Australia, Sydney Kings Basketball fans can now have kosher food at games. "The Yankees do it in New York. So why not the Sydney Kings?" says Rabbi Kastel. ■

Important Times – Scottsdale, AZ April 1 – April 8 <i>Shacharis</i> 7:00am Sunday 8:00am Monday/Tuesday/Thursday 6:45am <i>Minchah/Maariv</i> 6:30pm Shabbos 6:15pm <i>Shabbat</i> Shabbos Mevorchim Tehillim Minyan 8:00am <i>Shacharis</i> 9:30am Light Candles 6:30pm Shabbat Ends 7:26pm	Brought to you by: Chabad-Lubavitch in Cyberspace www.chabad.org Copyright © 2010 Lubavitch Youth Organization www.lchaimweekly.org	Re-printed by: Chabad of Scottsdale (480) 998-1410 chabadofscottsdale.org  The Jewish Learning Center of Scottsdale 480.443.5362
--	---	--

It Once Happened The young, newly married couple were happy in every respect. But when the young man lost his job, their joy was clouded over. An expert mechanic, he just couldn't find another job, and their panic increased from one day to the next as they grappled with their financial difficulties.

One day, the young man was speaking to some of his acquaintances, who happened to be Chasidim of Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber (the fifth Chabad Rebbe, known as the Rebbe Rashab, whose anniversary of passing is this coming Wednesday). "Why don't you go to see our Rebbe. He is very wise, and he will help you."

The young man, who was not a Chasid, responded, "What does the Rebbe know about being a mechanic? How can he possibly help me?" But, as time passed and no job appeared, the proposition gained credibility in his mind. After all, the young man reasoned, what could I lose? He went to the Chasidim and told them that he was now ready to see their Rebbe. Everyone contributed a little and soon they had enough money to send the young mechanic to Lubavitch.

Eventually, the mechanic had his chance to speak privately with the Rebbe. He described his terrible plight while the Rebbe listened attentively. Then the Rebbe said, "You and your wife should go to [a certain city]. There you should open a hat store." The Rebbe blessed them with much success, and the confused young man departed for home.

When he returned, he confronted the Chasidim: "Your Rebbe gave me the strangest advice! He told me to go to a city I never heard of and sell hats - something I know nothing about!" The Chasidim were not in the least put off by the seemingly irrelevant advice. "A Rebbe is not like other people," they told him. "If he gives you advice, listen to him, even if it makes no sense to you. The Rebbe sees further than we do," they concluded.

The young man left, and after discussing it with his wife, they decided that maybe they should try the Rebbe's advice. Another collection was taken up, and soon the young people were on their way to what they hoped would be a new beginning.

When they arrived in the town they looked for a suitable property, but all they could afford was a very small place on the outskirts of town. How would anyone ever find out about their shop? Would anyone come to buy hats from them? Their doubts were confirmed as days and weeks went by. They sat in their tiny shop and looked at their beautiful hats, but no one came. They began to wonder if they had made a mistake by listening to the Chasidim and the Rebbe.

Then one day, a luxurious coach pulled up in front of their shop. A well-dressed man entered their modest shop and said, "I am returning home from a business trip, and I'm looking for a gift for my wife." He began selecting hats and placing them on the counter. Within a few minutes the man had amassed a great selection of hats. In fact, almost every hat in the little store was sitting on the counter.

"How much do I owe you?" he asked.

The young proprietors stood tongued-tied. If they charged him the actual price, he would surely change his mind about his extravagant purchase, so they mentioned a very low price. "What!" the wealthy man exclaimed. "That can't be the correct price!"

"Actually, sir," replied the man, "We are giving you the wholesale price."

"No, I insist on paying a fair price for your merchandise," said the buyer, taking in the apparent lack of activity in the tiny shop and the nervous look on the proprietors' faces. He counted out a generous sum to cover the many hats he had chosen, and was about to leave, when he stopped.

The young man looked so sad. "What," he asked solicitously, "is the reason for your downcast appearance?"

The wealthy man's inquiry elicited a detailed explanation. "I'm a mechanic," the young man said, "and a very good one, too. But a few months ago I lost my job and couldn't find another one. The Chasidim in my town convinced me to go to their Rebbe, and the Rebbe told me to move to this town and set up a hat business. Your purchase has set us on our feet. But really, sir, I am a mechanic, not a shopkeeper."

"I may have the perfect solution!" cried the wealthy man. "My brother owns a factory and two of his most valuable machines stopped working almost six months ago. He's at his wits' end since no one seems to be able to fix them. Maybe you'll be successful." The wealthy man then gave him a letter of introduction and lent him the money for traveling expenses.

A week later the young man reported to the factory, and two days later, to the great relief of the factory owner, both machines were up and working. "You're the only one who was able to repair the machinery, and I'd like to offer you a position. How would you like to be the manager of my factory?" The young man was overcome with happiness at his change of fortune. Some months later, the young couple returned to their hometown and the Chasidim anxiously gathered around them wanting to be filled in on their progress. The happy couple recounted the whole story and they drew the obvious conclusion: the Rebbe was right, and so were his loyal followers. ■

It might become in the skin of his flesh the plague of leprosy (Lev. 13:2) The Biblical **Thoughts that Count**
 plague of leprosy was a physical manifestation of a spiritual illness. Said R. Shmuel bar Nachmani, in the name of R. Yochanan: There were 7 reasons a plague might occur: gossip, bloodshed, taking a false oath, forbidden relations, arrogance, robbery, and envy. (The Talmud, Arachin 15a)

And if the appearance of the plague is deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a plague of leprosy (Lev. 13:3)

If the outbreak of the disease is limited to the "flesh," to a person's corporeal nature and the desire to fulfill his physical cravings, the damage is superficial, and there is still hope that he will recover. By contrast, once the illness has penetrated deeper and has already infected a person's thought processes and outlook on the world, it is much more difficult for him to be healed. (Tiferet Yehonatan)

The flesh also, in which an inflammation was in the skin, and is healed (Lev. 13:18) The Torah uses words "and is healed" only in reference to a plague that occurs specifically in the "flesh." From this we learn that a person who is as humble and yielding as "flesh" will more readily recover from the trials and tribulations of life than one who is hard and inflexible. (The Talmud and Rashi on Sota 5a)