



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.

L'Chaim

The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person
ניסד תורה שלוששים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"To You I lifted up my eyes, You Who dwell in heaven" (Psalm 123:1)

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

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

"Beaten work of gold," explains Rashi, means that the menorah 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)

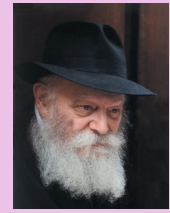
The base of the menorah symbolizes the lowest level of Jews; the flowers, those on the highest spiritual plane. The Torah demands that the menorah be made out of one piece of gold, just as the Jewish people is but one entity. Every Jew is incomplete by himself, without the rest of the Jewish nation, 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."



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 isto 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.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Self Imposed Confinement

By Rabbi Lazer Gurkow

We live in self-imposed confinement.

Such people think everything revolves around them. If two people are chatting, they think it is about them. If they are in a crowded room, they think everyone is looking at them and noting their imperfections. If they broadened their scope and let others in, they would not live inside themselves; they would be free. But they can't. They are confined to themselves.

There are those whose horizons encompass the entire nation. For every question they ask, is it good for the Jews? These people don't live inside themselves. They are concerned for the needs of a nation.

Then you have the Universalists, whose concerns are global. The environment, the economy, the community of nations and its geopolitical balance are constantly on their minds.

After there come physicists whose spheres of interest expand to the entire universe. They study the planets and map the stars, and contemplate the distant galaxies. Their world isn't confined to the here and now; they live in an extraordinary time space continuum.

Yet all these spheres are still limiting. In truth, the vast universe is like naught compared to the infinity of existence. Beyond the aural and visual, the tangible and empirical, lies a world of infinite grace, grandeur, beauty, and

love. Compelling, exquisite, and inconceivable.

This is the realm of angels, souls, and mystical energies. It is not a distant whimsical space, it is right here--a deeper dimension of our reality. Our tools can't measure it and our sensors can't discern it, so we pretend it doesn't exist. But it is very much here.

On this dimension, our world is infinite. It is filled with love and forgiveness, light and inspiration, courage and confidence. It is pristine, beautiful, and peaceful. There are no shortcomings, faults, discord, bickering, separation or separateness. It is the realm of the one. The one and true G-d.

We could deny it like the self-absorbed fellow who foolishly assumes only he exists in a crowd. Such grandiose fantasies don't reward, they destroy. They wear our spirit and leave us bereft.

Accepting that it is real, enables us to tap into it. When we are filled with resentment, we can tap into our endless capacity for forgiveness. When we feel mundane, we can be inspired by its beauty. When we feel confined, we can tap into its uplifting infinity. It is there, it is the deeper dimension of our reality, and we can access it. But first we have to accept it.

Let's not be like the person who is afraid to let others in and lives inside himself. Let's open our minds and hearts to our inner consciousness and tap into the exquisite beauty of the infinite dimension.

Dedicated in honor of dear friends of the Lubavitch Youth Organization
Avremi and Chanie Zuntz



8:12 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
15 Sivan / June 21
Torah Portion Behaalotcha
Ethics Ch 2
Shabbat ends 9:21 pm

