

L'Chaim

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for Every Jewish Person

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Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson נ"ע
נוסד תוך ימי השלושים



living with the REBBE

This Shabbat is unique as reflected by the fact that three scrolls are taken out for the Torah reading. We read the weekly portion, *Vayikra*, from one scroll, the *Rosh Chodesh* (New Moon) reading from another, and the special *Hachodesh* reading from a third scroll.

This is a very rare phenomenon. There are many occasions when two Torah scrolls are taken out, but taking out three scrolls is extremely uncommon.

Significantly, each of the readings concerns the first of the month of Nisan, the date of this Shabbat. The portion of *Vayikra* was communicated to Moses on Rosh Chodesh Nisan, the day the Sanctuary was erected. The *Hachodesh* reading was also communicated to Moses on Rosh Chodesh Nisan (a year previously). Furthermore, it relates the *mitzva* of sanctifying the months and thus shows a special connection between the ordinary Rosh Chodesh passage and Rosh Chodesh Nisan.

Surely we can derive a lesson in the service of G-d from the above concepts.

The prayer recited when a Torah scroll is removed from the ark begins, "Whenever the ark set out, Moses would say, 'Arise, O L-rd, and Your enemies will be dispersed; Your foes will flee before You.'" This verse is relevant to every Jew, even in the present era, for every Jew possesses a spark of Moses within his soul. This spark brings about "Arise O L-rd," an increase in the service of holiness, and "Your enemies will be dispersed," the nullification of undesirable influences. Thus, taking out the Torah scrolls reflects both services of "turn away from evil" and "do good," the two prongs of our service of G-d, and endows that service with new strength and vigor.

Taking out three Torah scrolls represents a *chazaka*, a strengthening and reinforcement in regard to our service which is above the ordinary, the revelation of a miraculous pattern of conduct. Furthermore, the *chazaka* established by the three Torah scrolls on Rosh Chodesh Nisan does not relate to a miraculous sequence of events as it exists above the worldly plane, but rather to the service of drawing this miraculous source of influence into contact with the natural order, elevating our ordinary conduct.

This week's three readings can thus be seen as a progression. The *Hachodesh* portion introduces the concept of a miraculous order of conduct. The Rosh Chodesh reading describes how this miraculous order of conduct can influence our ordinary lives, and *Vayikra* reveals how this fusion of the supra-natural with the natural can become a permanent and fixed dimension of our existence.

May this *chazaka* lead to our service in the Third Holy Temple, where "we will give thanks to You with a new song for our redemption and for the deliverance of our souls."

The Rebbe, Parshat Vayikra 5751

HIGH-TECH, HIGH-TOUCH

"High-tech" used to be the way one would describe an office where the boss and the bookkeeper both had their own computers. In today's high-tech office, everyone has a computer with a pentium 2 processor and everyone is wired to the internet and world wide web. For some the dazzling explosion of technology is scary; others revel in it.

It seems that technology is here to stay and that most of us don't mind its intrusion into our lives. After all, we aren't discarding technology en masse in favor of going back to nature. Nor, for the most part, are we going in droves to vacation spots where we don't have access to technology's benefits.

Spending hours each day, tens of hours each week, interfacing with technology and not people, can leave us feeling teched out. High-tech creates the need for high-touch, getting back in touch with humanity.

What is touch? Touch is not necessarily becoming physically connected with someone or something, but rather being in contact, encountering, exploring, feeling (as in emotions).

What kind of high-touch pursuits can make a person feel fulfilled, help him "chill out," or become rejuvenated? Judaism has a lot to offer in these areas.

"High-touching" Jewish life means exploring what Judaism has to offer, connecting with one's Jewish roots, feeling the awesomeness and infinity of Jewish knowledge.

Shabbat is a perfect opportunity to chill out from the stresses and technology of the week. You might choose to spend it alone in quiet introspection and solitude. Or celebrate it together with a few good friends, sipping fine wine sanctified by reciting *kiddush*, delighting in

fresh, warm *challas* which you have blessed by saying "hamotzee," and savoring an evening of stimulating table-talk.

Perhaps, for you, Shabbat is best experienced as a time to get back "in touch" with family and friends after a hectic week. Lively discussion, laughter, good food, spirited singing can all be part of a Shabbat dinner. Shabbat is an opportunity not only to really get in touch with people, but to get in touch with yourself.

Prayer is another high-touch Jewish experience. There are various ways to Jewishly experience prayer. Public prayer is a way to get in touch with people in your synagogue or neighborhood, to feel a sense of community and camaraderie, to sense the awesomeness of the Jewish people. Private prayer—the evening "Shema" or morning's "Modeh Ani," the moments when a man is wrapping tefilin or a woman is lighting Shabbat candles, when one is reciting Psalms for a relative or friend who is in a difficult situation, are an opportunity to get in touch with oneself and connect with G-d.

For more sustained moments of connecting to G-d through prayer one can learn Jewish mystical methods of meditation.

Jewish study comes in all shapes, forms and sizes to fit your needs today, next year and always. Formal or informal study sessions, with friends, family, or total strangers, or one-on-one study with a partner, can help your head get in touch with one of Judaism's most essential and unique commodities—the wisdom of the Torah.

Even before you feel the need to break away from high-tech, plan a Jewish high-touch experience. You'll be glad you did. ■