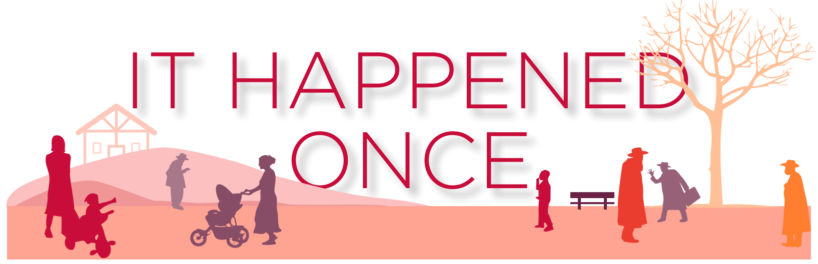

The chasidim regarded Reb Pesach of Malastovker with utmost respect. He was a noted scholar, a devout chasid, a master of nigunim [Chasidic melodies] and physically robust. He merited a long life and had the opportunity to establish a connection with the Alter Rebbe, the Mittler Rebbe, and the Tzemach Tzedek.

Once, he courageously warded off a group of hoodlums who attempted to attack a Jewish girl. The would-be attackers vowed to take revenge and chased Reb Pesach, who took refuge in a yard stocked with large barrels, hiding beneath one of the barrels where they could not spot him. Enraged at the loss of their prey, they slashed the barrels with their swords. Although they did not discover Reb Pesach, their slashes wounded his skull. Some time later, Reb Pesach visited the Alter Rebbe and related the incident, complaining that the wound caused him constant head pain. The Alter Rebbe grasped Reb Pesach's head and the pain ceased.

After the Alter Rebbe passed away, Reb Pesach began to feel acute pain from the old wound. At his next meeting with the Mittler Rebbe, Reb Pesach told him of his agony. The Mittler Rebbe, too, grasped his head and the pain receded.

Upon the passing of the Mittler Rebbe, Reb Pesach again experienced intense pain. He traveled to the Tzemach Tzedek who relieved his agony, as his predecessors had done in the past.

Rabbi Eliyahu Yosef Rivlin was one of the prominent chasidim of the Mittler Rebbe and, afterwards, of the Tzemach Tzedek. He fell ill with tuberculosis and the adhesions from his lungs became attached to his rib cage. The doctors told him that his days were numbered and, with this pessimistic report, he approached the Tzemach Tzedek.

The Tzemach Tzedek replied, "The Ramah, upon whom the Ashkenazic halachic tradition is based, rules that an animal with such a condition is trefe (i.e., that it will die within a year). Rav Yosef Karo, upon whom the Sephardic tradition is based, rules that such as animal is kosher. Travel to Israel where Rav Yosef Karo's rulings are accepted as law."

Rabbi Eliyahu Yosef followed this advice and lived twenty years longer in Israel. Once, however, he journeyed back to Lubavitch to see the Tzemach Tzedek. The Tzemach Tzedek, startled by his appearance, asked him to explain himself. Rabbi Eliyahu Yosef related, "Though fish spend their entire lives in water, when it rains, they rise to the surface. Why? They want to receive water from heaven..."

One Shabbat afternoon, as Dr. Lieberman napped, he dreamt that a distinguished-looking man was standing before him and reciting passages from the Mishna. He listened and recognized the teachings, for they concerned the requirement to treat critically ill women in labor even when the desecration of the Shabbat was involved. When he awoke, he pondered over the strange dream. Though the issue was obviously related to his occupation, he wondered about the identity of the figure in his dream.

His thoughts were interrupted by his attendant. "Doctor, someone is waiting to see you. He says it is an emergency."

A very anxious-looking man entered the study. "I am from Horodok. My wife has been in labor for many hours and is in critical condition. Please come see her; it is a matter of life and death."

"What a strange coincidence," mused the doctor. Still under the impression of the dream, he agreed to accompany the man. Though there were several complications, the doctor's timely arrival and professional experience enabled him to deliver a healthy baby.

Two months later a telegram arrived at Dr. Lieberman's home from the Rebbe Rashab's [the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe] home in Lubavitch, requesting him to come to Lubavitch to make a house call. The doctor came, examined the patient, and discussed his treatment with Rebbetzin Shterna Sorah. While they were speaking, the Rashab entered the room. Seeing the Rebbe for the first time, the doctor recognized him as the person who had appeared to him in his dream.

When he related his dream to the Rashab, the Rebbe shrugged. "I know nothing about your dream. I do recall the man from Horodok describing his wife's complicated pregnancy to me. He asked me whether to hire a doctor or a specialist to deliver the baby. I advised him not to call upon a specialist since labor and delivery is often prolonged and a specialist usually makes brief visits. I suggested that he summon a doctor and recommended you."

Reprinted with permission from "My Father's Shabbos Table" by Rabbi Y. Chitrik

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

And Aaron shall then go into the Tabernacle of Meeting (Lev. 16:23)

"To remove the incense-bowl and the spoon," comments Rashi.

Once, in the Russian town of Lubavitch, a young man noticed the great Rabbi Hillel of Poritch making his way home from the synagogue after the morning prayers. Reb Hillel had sunk up to his ankles in mud, and was holding the bag containing his tallit and tefilin aloft as he slogged through the swampy muck. The young man offered to help him by carrying the precious bag, but Reb Hillel refused. "The High Priest had to immerse himself in a mikva just to enter the Holy of Holies, to retrieve the utensils which had been used for the incense. This in itself was considered part of the Priest's service. From this we learn that carrying the tallit and tefilin home from the synagogue after prayers is also part of the service, and I want to perform this myself!" he explained.

For on that day shall [the High Priest] make an atonement for you (Lev. 16:30)

The Jewish people are likened to a walnut. A walnut is edible even if it falls into dirt and filth. All one must do before eating it is wash it off, for the inside meat remains unsoiled. The same may be said of the Jewish people. No matter how sullied they become by their misdeeds a whole year, Yom Kippur comes and "washes" them off. A sin affects only the external part of the Jewish soul; the inner essence is always untouched and pristine. (Midrash Rabba)

Blood shall it be considered to that man; blood has he shed (Lev. 17:4)]

The purpose of the animal offerings was to accustom the individual to self-sacrifice. However, the Torah tells us, if the sacrifice was offered in the wrong place, "blood shall it be considered to that man." Sacrificing oneself on foreign altars, for the sake of foreign ideologies and ideals, is not only a waste of time, but a grievous sin. (Eglai Tal)

In memory of
the brave soldiers of the IDF
**Cpt. Ido Baruch, Sgt. Amitai Even Shoshan,
Sgt. Ilai Zair and Sgt. Reef Harush, HYD.**

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Blessing of the new month Iyar
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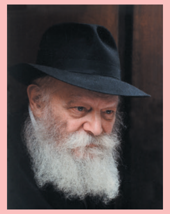
L'Chaim

1821
25 Nissan, 5784
May 3, 2024
The Weekly Publication for Every Jewish Person
נוסד תוך ימי השלושים
Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"May there be peace in your wall, tranquility in your palaces" (Psalm 122:6)

LIVING WITH THE REBBE



from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

This week's Torah portion, Acharei, begins with the words, "And G-d spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron." Nadav and Avihu, both of whom were truly righteous men, were consumed by a great fire. Why did they deserve such a harsh punishment?

The Midrash offers some reasons why Nadav and Avihu died: They entered the Holy of Holies without permission; they performed their service without wearing the required priestly garments; they were not married and thus had no offspring. But what was so terrible about these infractions that it brought about their premature deaths?

Chasidic philosophy explains that Aaron's sons died precisely because of their high spiritual stature. Nadav and Avihu possessed an overwhelming love of G-d, which ultimately blinded them to their true purpose. Their deaths were caused by their good intentions which ran counter to G-d's intent in creating the world. Their souls so longed to be one with G-d that they could no longer remain in their physical bodies, and the two men died.

On the one hand, this attests to Nadav and Avihu's high spiritual accomplishments. But on the other hand, their behavior was considered sinful because man was not created solely to fulfill his spiritual yearnings. G-d gave us the responsibility to refine the world, enabling physical matter to become a receptacle for holiness. Nadav and Avihu's excess in the realm of the spiritual, to the exclusion of the physical, was their downfall.

This is why the verse reads, "...when they had come near before G-d, and they died." Their death was not the result of their actions, but rather, the essence of their sin. Aaron's sons drew so close to G-d that physical existence was impossible.

Entering the Holy of Holies without permission was symbolic of ascending too high; performing the service while being improperly clothed shows an unwillingness to "clothe" oneself in mitzvot, which are called the garments of the soul. Nadav and Avihu wanted to take the "short cut" to G-d, without having to trouble themselves with the obstacles posed by the physical world.

Likewise, the fact that neither Nadav nor Avihu married and had children showed their refusal to lead a natural, physical existence. This is not what G-d wants from us.

We learn a valuable lesson from their death: Although there are certain times when we feel a strong desire for G-dliness and we experience a great spiritual uplift, we must carry those feelings into our daily lives and translate them into tangible actions. This is the purpose for which we have been created--to transform our physical surroundings into a dwelling place for the Divine Presence.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Where Are We Going...

By Rabbi Baruch Epstein

Our family all gathered for a hike. Loaded up with sunscreen and water bottles we headed out on the mountain trail. After 15 minutes of walking my 5-year-old granddaughter posed the ultimate hiking philosophical query: "where are we going?" this prompted her 3 year old sister to inquire: "are there toys there?"

Where are we going? After 210 years of Egyptian slavery, anywhere must be an upgrade over where we are; doesn't it? Moshe did not distribute an itinerary and there was no treasure map to follow, the gates were open and we are on our way, and now seems like the right time to ask "where are we going?"

Where are we going? Up at dawn, hit the gym, go to work, and what is the point of it all; "are there toys there?"

Pesach is more than a reenactment of a story from long ago. More than dressing up in period costumes and eating odd foods while paying homage to an ancient event from some other place. It is a personal journey – an exodus from our own insurmountable straits, the inescapable ruts we feel trapped in. When we have concluded the exodus part it is time to say "ok, now what?"

To move forward let's look back. It all began with the introductory list of 15 tasks. You recognize them, make kiddush, wash your hands, dip the vegetable in salt water, tell the story and eat the matzo. Follow these guidelines and you arrive at the target, graduate from slave to free man. Step #15 is tricky; it's called nirtzah – and it means the seder is accepted by Hashem – but what are we supposed to do? What is the action item?

The task? The final phrase of the hagada is Lishana Habaa biYerushalayim – (by) Next Year in Jerusalem – and there you have it – the answer to where are we going?

It starts off with raw enthusiasm – we are getting out of here – leaving Egypt, like the five-year- old gripping her mother's hand, we have ultimate trust, total acceptance that the adults know what they are doing.

As the reality of this great escape seeps in we stop looking over our shoulder at where we were and start looking ahead as to where we are going. That part is a bit unclear, and so we follow the hagada, we check off the steps and after all of that we are there – we know our destination – Jerusalem, and we are not waiting until next year; we are certain we will be there before next year.

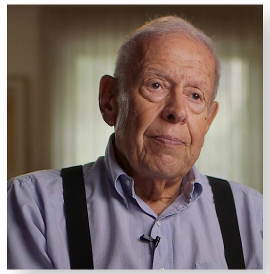
With the celebration of Pesach in the rear-view mirror and our eyes laser locked on the destination we follow the trail, hold steadfast to Moshe Rabeinu and off we go to the Promised Land.

Freedom is much more than the freedom from oppression, the 'don't tell me what do' kind of freedom. Freedom is the opportunity to make life a journey to a destination. Genuine liberty comes through the clarity of knowing Hashem's Guiding Hand is holding ours and taking us to the Promised Land, and yes there are some great toys there. There is a lot of hiking to do, and hey freedom don't come free.

SLICE OF LIFE

Who Is A Chassid?

From an interview with Dr. David W. Weiss, who served as a member of the board of governors of Bar-Ilan University, Jerusalem College of Technology and Ben Gurion University of the Negev



After earning a Ph.D. in biological sciences and studying medicine at Oxford, I was appointed assistant professor in the Department of Immunology and Bacteriology at the University of California in Berkley. When I took up this post in 1957, I moved with my family to the San Francisco area. While there, I befriended Rabbi Shlomo Cunin, who was the Rebbe's emissary to California, and I believe that it was Rabbi Cunin who brought me to the Rebbe's attention.

The first and only time that I met the Rebbe was after a trip that I made to the Soviet Union in 1965, when the Rebbe asked to see me.

That year the Soviets decided to host their first symposium in modern medicine to which they invited twenty-five select scientists from abroad, along with twenty-five of their own scientists.

However, I didn't feel honored. I knew very well about the oppression of the Jews in the Soviet Union, so I refused to attend. But then, Avraham Harman, Israel's ambassador to the United States, appeared on my doorstep and convinced me that I should go. He told me of the dire situation the Jews in the USSR were facing – many had been imprisoned for minor offenses such as hoarding flour, which they were only saving to bake matzot for Passover! He told me that the staff of the Israeli embassy in Moscow was under constant watch and could not reach out to the Jewish community, but that I would have a chance they did not.

I would be going to Russia as a VIP with special privileges; I would have a car and driver at my disposal, and I would have the freedom to move around. Thus convinced, I accepted the invitation and I went.

Once in the USSR, I was told what to do – I should request a visit to Babi Yar; I should go to the cemetery in Moscow and ask why there's no more room given for Jewish burials; I should always appear to be observant and ask for kosher food so that the Jews in the woodwork, so to speak, would trust me and come out. This is the sort of thing they asked me to do, not espionage.

These tactics worked. Suddenly, while I was out of the room, one of the Soviet scientists scribbled in my notebook, "I am a Jew" in small Hebrew letters. We connected, and later I managed to get him out of the Soviet Union.

As well, I found lots of Jews who were practicing Judaism in hiding; there was a desperation about them that broke my heart. I found a minyan of about 25-30 people behind closed doors. I found a community of Georgian Jews who met in an abandoned building; these people came out of hiding to show me that they were still there and living by the Torah, and it was an experience that impacted my entire life.

After I returned from my trip, the Rebbe invited me to come see him. I brought my oldest son, Hillel, who was then seven years old. The audience was late at night, and he was not able to stay awake. I walked into the Rebbe's office and sat down, with my son nodding off on my lap.

When the Rebbe saw this, he came around his desk and picked him up, and the rest of the time, I spoke with the Rebbe with Hillel sleeping on the Rebbe's lap.

The audience was supposed to last twenty minutes. All told, the audience lasted about two-and-a-half hours or maybe three. I do know that I arrived around 10 p.m. and I left after 1 a.m. The Rebbe wanted to know every detail about my trip to Russia.

I told him everything that had happened, and all along the way, the Rebbe asked me many questions.

When we were finished talking about Russia, the Rebbe said, "I'd like to talk to you about what you do in science," and he began asking me about the theory called "trauma immunology," which was very new at the time, and which has since become quite famous. This theory holds that since the body has an immune system to recognize viruses, bacteria and cancer cells as alien and reject them, then maybe the reason people get cancer is that, due to trauma, this system stops functioning or doesn't function well enough. It is a complicated theory, and I found the depth of his understanding and questioning absolutely astounding.

At the end of the audience, I was so profoundly impressed that I was moved to say to the Rebbe, "I am not as exacting in my Torah observance as some others. I do pray three times a day, but not always with a minyan. And I am not always as careful about observing the commandments as the people who are your emissaries. But I would just like to know, "Who can call himself one of your chasidim?"

He responded, "It's very simple … Somebody who can say at the end of the day that he has advanced a small step higher than he was at the beginning of the day, I would be happy to call that person a chasid of mine."

His statement contained a very powerful message. And ever since then, I have tried – though I have not always succeeded – to be the kind of person who is able to look back at the end of the day and say "I've risen today by a small step."

Dr. David W. Weiss of blessed memory, was a renowned scientist who moved to Israel in 1966 / From the JEM's My Encounter with the Rebbe oral history project.

etc.

2,200 Students at Binghamton U. Shatter Record for Largest Campus Shabbat Dinner

A mega Shabbat dinner on Friday night served to unify the Jewish community of Binghamton University in New York with a record 2,200 students participating. The Rohr Chabad Center for Jewish Student Life sponsored the April 5 event, saying that it was the largest gathering of students in one place for a Shabbat dinner. This year marks the 30th anniversary of a community-wide Shabbat meal that began with 1,000 participants in 1994 and was led by Binghamton co-directors Rabbi Aaron and Rivkah Slonim.

Today, there are 4,000 Jewish students at Binghamton; 1,500 of them are active with Chabad during the school year in one capacity or another. The "Shabbat 2400" dinner at Binghamton has spawned similar programs on campuses across the country and around the world.

Before the onset of Shabbat, students were welcomed with video greetings from prominent influencers: Montana Tucker, Inbar Lavi and Mayim Bialik. New York Gov. Kathy Hochul also addressed the crowd. The services then began with Jewish women coming together to welcome Shabbat with candle-lighting before the dinner; highlighted by Shabbat traditions such as kiddush and Shabbat hymns and songs.

Customs

Why are "Ethics of the Fathers" read on each Shabbat from Passover until Shavuot?

We read one chapter of "Ethics of the Fathers" (Pirkei Avot) each Shabbat following the afternoon prayer because these are the days leading up to the Giving of the Torah and Pirkei Avot contain ethics and moral exhortations to help us improve ourselves so that we are worthy of the Torah. Many have the custom to continue reading these chapters throughout the summer months until Rosh Hashana; summer is a time when people are prone to become more lax in their Jewish observance.

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

By the Grace of G-d
The 1st of Adar II 5717
Brooklyn, NY

Dr. William Mendelsohn
442 Temple Street
New Haven, Conn.

Greetings and Blessings:

I was gratified to learn from Rabbi V. Schildkraut that you gave him your special attention and particularly in connection with the surgery which you performed on him.

A physician is, of course, the authorized agent through whom G-d sends a cure to a sick person, and needless to say, it is not only the physician's skill that is important, but also his cordial attitude towards his patients, in conformity with the accepted view that a physician's profession is not just a calling but is a sacred mission of bringing a relief and a cure to the suffering. Hence a personal attitude, and even a personal bond with the patient often goes a long way towards bringing him the necessary relief and cure.

Although in the case of a surgeon a subjective attitude may, in a sense, present a problem, since the surgeon must operate with perfect calmness, without being distracted by personal emotion, yet in practice the surgeon who combines intellect and feeling in perfect harmony enjoys G-d's blessings, so that he is not only not distracted by his feelings, but rather the contrary, is greatly helped thereby.

Parenthetically, one of the significant lessons and influences of Tefillin, which, as you know, is placed both on the arm facing the heart and on the head facing the brain, is to teach us and help us to harmonize the two and to subjugate both to the services of G-d and mankind, making the complete and perfect man.

All this is in keeping with the idea of Monotheism, of which our Jewish people have been privileged to be the bearers throughout the ages. This is the idea that a perfect pervades everything, the macrocosm as well as the microcosm. Accordingly, in human life we do not consider the body and soul as two separate universes, but two aspects of the same microcosm. Even science, in modern times, has become aware of this truth, realizing that the physical and spiritual health are intimately connected.

I trust, therefore, that in treating your patients physically, you also help them spiritually, which in general terms, means to strengthen their bond with the Source of Life, the Creator of the Universe, and the Giver of the Torah, in the way we are taught in our Torah, the Law of Life, how to realize and strengthen the said bonds in the most effective and in the fullest measure.

I do not want to say "Thank you" for your personal attention to Rabbi Schildkraut, but instead I would rather extend to you my prayerful wishes that for many, many years to come the Al-mighty grant you the strength and the skill to help those who turn to you, both physically and spiritually. And as G-d's reward is in kind, but in a very generous measure, may the Al-mighty reward you and all yours with good health, both physically and spiritually.

With blessing,

[signature]

MOSHIACH MATTERS

There are those who argue that our generation--with all its problems, weaknesses, and apathy--is not fit for Moshiach. How is it possible that our generation will be fit to see the revelations of the future redemption, revelations of such magnitude that the glorious and noble generations of the past did not merit to see? Is our generation better than the preceding ones?! Actually this itself is proof that now is the time for the revelation of Moshiach, as our Sages state: "Moshiach will come b'hesech hadaat" (Lit. "in a time of forgetfulness,")-- when we aren't expecting him.

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our Sages speak not only about belief in Moshiach's coming, but also of the importance of anticipating and yearning for his arrival. Maimonides, in his Thirteen Principles of Faith, emphasizes, "If he tarries, wait for him." And, in fact, in the Ani Maamin prayer based on Maimonides' Thirteen Principles it says, "Even though he tarries, I await his coming every day."

At the outset of Maimonides' discussion on Moshiach in his magnumz opus, the Mishne Torah, he states: "Whoever does not believe in him, or does not await his coming, denies not only [the statements of] the other prophets, but also the Torah and of Moshe, our Teacher."

The Talmud even states that one of the questions a person is asked on the Day of Judgement is, "Did you yearn for the Redemption?"

Thus, it is clear, that every Jew is actually required to yearn for the coming of Moshiach in addition to believing in him.

Awaiting the Redemption facilitates the proper belief in Moshiach, as well. For, we are not only enjoined to believe in Moshiach's coming in general, or that Moshiach could come eventually, but to believe that he could come today. Thus, the concept of "to await" is appropriate because it shows that we believe not that he will arrive in some distant future, but here and now. True belief in Moshiach means believing that he can come today, and therefore awaiting his arrival today.

Yearning for the Redemption is also one of the principles that hastens the Redemption. The Midrash states that after the destruction of the Holy Temple, our forefather Isaac approached G-d and asked, "Master of the World! Why have you not returned the children?" G-d answered, "When there is a generation who yearns for My sovereignty, they will be redeemed immediately..."

Another Midrash states, "Even if the Jews have nothing in their hands [i.e. no other merits] but their hope, they can gain the Redemption in the merit of their hope."

As the Chofetz Chaim expressed it so beautifully, "We ask for the Redemption so many times in the course of our daily prayers. But requests alone are not enough. We must demand the Redemption, like a worker demands his salary."

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA
לזכרון חי'ה י מושקא

The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.

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