בס״ד

L'Chaim

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The Weekly Publication for Every Jewish Person
נוסד תוך ימי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth" (Psalms 124:8)

IT HAPPENED ONCE

Many years ago in a small village a Jewish boy was orphaned. A fellow villager took pity on him and took him into his own home. The child attended the local yeshiva but try as he might, he just couldn't grasp even the most rudimentary subjects.

Finally, the boy's guardian decided to apprentice him to a tar-maker. No sooner did his master teach him some element of the work than he could perform it faultlessly. After half a year his master said, "You don't need me any longer. You are competent enough to go into business for yourself."

The boy, now a young man, opened his own business in a neighboring village. He quickly established himself amongst the villagers, for both Jews and non-Jews alike were drawn to his cheerful manner and absolute honesty. His business thrived and he married the daughter of a local tradesman. He was soon able to support not only his family, but to give charity generously to the local yeshivas and other needy causes in the town. He even had built a special guest house to feed and maintained travellers at his expense.

His only regret in life was his ignorance of Torah. His father-in-law tried to soothe him, assuring him that the charity he provided to Torah scholars was counted to him as if he himself had studied, but to no avail.

One day in his guest house he noticed a certain visitor who was suffering from sores all over his body. "How did this happened to you?" he inquired.

"I was proficient in learning Torah," the man replied, "but the study of the commentaries was very hard for me. I decided to torment my body in order that G-d would help to open my mind to my learning. With G-d's help, I succeeded and reached my goal. With His help these sores will also heal," he replied.

The young man had never heard of such practices, but he was overjoyed to learn that he still had a chance. And so every day he would go into the woods, sit in a spot where the air was alive with biting gnats and flies, and there he would expose his skin to the creatures until it bled and itched unbearably.

One day, as he sat on a tree stump with flies buzzing all about him, a stranger approached and asked, "Why are you doing this?"

The young man explained his great desire to learn Torah. "It is totally unnecessary for you to do this. I will make a deal with you. If you will give me all of your worldly possessions, I promise you to teach you Torah."

"Of course, I am willing, but I must discuss it with my wife, for it affects her as well. I will meet you tomorrow, and I will tell you our final decision."

The man returned home and related the incident to his wife. "This is what you have always wanted. Of course, you should do it without delay," was her reply. But the man was still wary. After all, he had always been a responsible person. He went to his father-in-law and asked his opinion.

"What! To sign away all your possessions to an utter stranger in return for some foggy promise that you will learn Torah! Your charity is equivalent to the learning of a great scholar!"

The young man left in confusion. But his wife told him: "It seems to me that you aren't sure of what you want. You always professed the strongest desire to learn Torah, but now when you have the chance, you balk!"

The following day the stranger, who was none other than the Baal Shem Tov, came to the same spot in the forest, and the two men proceeded together to the young man's home. When they entered a tantilizing aroma greeted them, and they were astounded to see the table set for a lavish banquet.

"What is this?" asked the Besht.

The wife explained, "This is the last time we will be able to fulfill the holy mitzva of entertaining guests, and I wanted to perform the mitzva as beautifully as possible. In addition, we have reason to celebrate, for now you will be able to achieve your life's ambition. But I had one other consideration: There are many ways in which G-d is able to take away a person's fortune. We have the privilege of giving away all in order to 'buy' Torah learning. This is also a great cause for celebration."

After they had eaten, the Besht asked the young man, "What have you decided?" The young man seemed unsure but a look in the direction of his wife, gave the young man the courage to make the decision. He took a pen and signed all of his worldly goods over to the Besht. In accordance with their agreement, the couple was permitted use of the house and its garden as well as flour to bake bread. And in return, the would-be scholar travelled with the Baal Shem Tov to a place of Torah, where his eyes were illuminated.

True to his promise, the young man eventually became a great scholar and a tzadik. Years later, the Baal Shem Tov was heard to say that which was uttered about Rabbi Akiva's wife, Rachel, "Everything he has achieved belongs to her" -- to his selfless wife who sacrificed everything for Torah.

Dedicated in honor of a dear friend of the Lubavitch Youth Organization
Mr. Eric Miller

to dedicate an issue call (718) 778 6000

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah Portion

There were ten generations from Noah to Abraham to indicate how great is His patience...until Abraham our father came and received the reward of all of them (Ethics, Chapter 5:2)

The generations before Noah had no redeeming virtues whatsoever. They "repeatedly angered G-d" and lived in constant friction, conflict and discord. In contrast, although the generations before Abraham also "repeatedly angered G-d," they at least shared a kindred spirit and treated each other with love.

But although their conduct generated reward, they themselves were unfit to receive it. Because Abraham, unlike Noah, sought to influence the people around him for good, he "received the reward" of all the comradely deeds of the generations that preceded him. *(Likutei Sichot, Vol. III)*

A 20-year-old should pursue a living (Ethics, Chapter 5:22)

The first 20 years of a man's life should be largely devoted to toiling in Torah (beginning at age five): five years dedicated to Scripture, five years entirely Mishna, and five years devoted to Talmud. This method of learning is not designed to have an effect on the world, as such, but rather on the person himself, so that he will develop properly. From the age of 20, a man's duty is to be a "soldier." He must go to war to conquer the world and make it a fitting dwelling place for G-d by fulfilling the mitzvot. *(Biurim L'Pirkei Avot)*

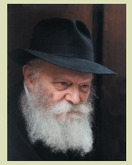
The world was created by means of ten [Divine] utterances (Ethics, Chapter 5:1)

According to the principles of Torah numerology, five represents a level of G-dliness above all limitation, while ten reflects the structure of our finite, material world.

The intent of this chapter of Ethics of the Fathers is to reveal the G-dliness which transcends all limitations within the context of our material existence.

(Sefer HaSichot 5751, Vol. II)

7:56 *Candle Lighting Time*
NY Metro Area
25 Iyar / May 23
Torah Portion *Behar-Bechukosai*
Ethics Ch 5
Shabbat ends **9:03 PM**



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

The first of this week's two Torah portions, Behar, contains the mitzva of Shemita, the commandment to allow the holy land of Israel to lie fallow every seventh year.

"When you come into the land which I give you...six years shall you sow your field...but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of rest for the land, a Sabbath for the L-rd: your field you shall not sow, and your vineyard you shall not prune."

As reward for this mitzvah, G-d promises to provide the Jewish people with sustenance in overwhelming abundance, more than enough to compensate for their cessation of labor for an entire year.

"And if you should say, 'What will we eat in the seventh year? For behold, we are not permitted to sow, and we cannot gather in our harvest,' then will I command My blessing to you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth a harvest for three years."

During the sixth year, sufficient crops will be harvested to last throughout the sixth, seventh, and even eighth year of the cycle.

Symbolically, the sixth year of the Shemita cycle alludes to the six thousand years of the world's existence; the seventh year alludes to the Messianic Era.

The service of the Jewish people throughout the first six thousand years has served to ready the world for the ultimate Sabbath of the seventh millennium, when peace and tranquility will reign triumphant.

We find ourselves now at the end of the six thousand year period. "What will we eat during the seventh year?" we ask.

How can our lowly generation, which is on an infinitely lower spiritual level than that of our forefathers, possibly bring about the Final Redemption?

G-d reassures us that we need not worry: "I will command My blessing to you in the sixth year," we are promised.

G-d has endowed our generation with special strengths and abilities, for despite our spiritual poverty, we have a merit previous generations did not -- that extra measure of self-sacrifice necessary for preserving the spark of Jewishness throughout the darkness of the exile.

This special power has been granted precisely to our generation, the last generation of exile and the first of Redemption, in order to prepare the world and sow the seeds of the great revelation of G-dliness about to begin.

When Moshiach comes, speedily in our day, G-d's promise to "bring forth a harvest for three years" will find ultimate fulfillment in the three distinct phases of the Final Redemption: the Messianic Era, the Resurrection of the Dead, and the seventh millennium itself.

Adapted from Talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Vol 27

Real Security Vs. Fake Security

By Rabbi Yosef Y. Jacobson

THE DNA OF JUDAISM

The human body contains some 75 trillion cells. Within each cell is a nucleus. Within each nucleus is a double copy of the human genome. Each genome contains 3.1 billion letters of genetic code, enough to fill 5000 books.

If I could read the chemical coding in your genome, reading one character every second, night and day, it would take 96 years just to read the description of your organism.

Torah is equally detailed and nuanced; every single letter contains profound truths cosmology, physics, philosophy, psychology, and history. One such example can be found in this week's Torah portion.

THE SALE OF LAND IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

Sometimes, albeit rarely, there is a discrepancy between how a word is written and how a word is pronounced in Torah. Such as in this week's Parsha, Behar, where the laws of buying and selling houses in Israel are detailed. Surface level, the law is simple: homes in cities without walls must be returned during the Yovel year; the fiftieth year of the cycle. Those within a walled city, however, stay in possession of the new owner eternally.

Why then, when referring to the houses within a walled city, which the Torah refers to as 'lo chomah' is there a discrepancy between the written and pronounced version? 'Lo' with an alef means 'doesn't have' while 'lo' with a vov means 'does have.' Although they are not read differently, the Torah specifies 'lo' with an alef as written, and 'lo' with a vov as pronounced. And yet, they contradict!

EXPOSING THE VULNERABILITY

The solution to this perplexity lies in the deeper significance of these laws. Land is returned in the Yovel year as a reminder to the people that nothing physical that we own is eternal; we are merely borrowers from G-d.

This applies too in our days. Businesses, houses, empires, buildings that men built and thought to be indestructible came crumbling in an instant. Egypt, Rome, Greece, Communism, the Third Reich – they all thought they were eternal, that they held the key. And yet, they all came tumbling down.

THE INVISIBLE WALL OF JERUSALEM

Our sages tell us that the walled cities had to have been built by the times of Yehoshua ben Nun, Moses' successor, the man who received the Torah directly from the mouth of Moses, and transmitted it to the rest of the people. He brought the Jewish nation to Israel, and halachically endowed the land with holiness.

His walls are the walls of Moses, the walls of Sinai, the walls of Faith, and the walls of Torah. And they are eternal. They defy the ebb and flow of history; they transcend and are unaffected by crisis and chaos. True, they seem to be at best fragile, at worst non-existent. They appear to be written with an aleph. But search and you will discover that they are engraved in an eternal vav.

When Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai was given an option to preserve one part of Israel from the Romans, he chose not Jerusalem or the Temple: He chose the Yeshivah, Yavneh. For the only indestructible walls are those of spirituality, those of Torah. Security is found not in physicality but in the transcendence of Torah.

SLICE OF LIFE

Torchbearer of Tunisian Torah and Tradition

By Motti Wilhelm

Rabbi Meir Mazuz Z"L

When discussing the exile of the Jewish people from the Holy Land, the Talmud states, "The Holy One, Blessed be He, performed a charitable deed toward Israel in that He scattered them among the nations." Commentaries explore the meaning of this statement and how exile can be seen as an act of kindness. One explanation is that through exile, the Jewish people are able to uncover and elevate the sparks of G-dliness hidden in each location.

Over time, this has created a beautiful tapestry of Jewish communities, each with its own unique practices and character, all contributing to the greater story of the Jewish people.

Rabbi Meir Mazuz, who passed away on April 19, 2025—21 Nissan, the seventh day of Passover—was one such individual. A proud bearer of the Tunisian Jewish tradition, he hailed from a community that had thrived for millennia, and he carried forward its unique customs and distinctive approach to Torah study.

YOUTH IN TUNIS

Meir Nissim Mazuz was born on the 13th of Nissan, 5705 (March 27, 1945) in Tunis, Tunisia, to his parents, Rabbi Matzliach and Kamsana Chana Mazuz. His father served as a rabbinic judge and dean of a yeshivah in Tunis. He later founded his own Yeshivah, and for a time even held a position as a judge on the Supreme Court of Tunisia.

From a young age, Meir's brilliance and dedication to Torah study were evident. Recognizing his potential, his father enrolled him in an advanced yeshivah, where the other students were several years older.

In 1960, Jewish life in Tunisia, which had been steadily declining both materially and spiritually, received a much-needed boost. The Lubavitcher Rebbe dispatched Rabbi Nissan Pinson as his emissary to help revitalize the community.

Shortly after his arrival, Rabbi Pinson met Rabbi Matzliach Mazuz and gifted him a copy of the Tanya, the seminal work of Chabad teachings authored by the first Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. Young Meir Mazuz also studied from the Tanya.

Two years later, in 1962, Rabbi Pinson founded Yeshivas Oholei Yosef Yitzchak in Tunis. Both Rabbi Matzliach Mazuz and his son Meir taught at the yeshivah.

In 1965, ahead of Rabbi Meir Mazuz's marriage to his wife, Esther, his father sent a warm wedding invitation to the Rebbe, who responded with heartfelt blessings for the young couple. Three years passed, and they had not yet been blessed with children. Rabbi Mazuz asked Rabbi Pinson to request from the Rebbe a blessing for children for him and his wife. That very same month, their prayers were answered, and exactly nine months later, on the 26th of Sivan 5728 (1968), a son was born.

A CONTINUATION IN ISRAEL

Terror struck the Mazuz family in 1971. On the morning of Jan. 18, while returning home from morning prayers, still wrapped in his tallis and wearing tefillin, Rabbi Matzliach Mazuz was assassinated by a Muslim terrorist. In the wake of the tragedy, his family emigrated to Israel, where his sons immediately set about reestablishing the yeshivah their father had founded.

The yeshivah would become more than just another center of Torah study in the Holy Land. It would stand as a lighthouse for Tunisian Jewry—illuminating their path in the sacred traditions of their community and ensuring that their rich legacy live on.

What began as a small school in a rented space in Bnei Brak soon grew into a full-fledged institution with its own campus, eventually expanding into a comprehensive network of schools, seminaries and yeshivahs, serving well over one thousand students. He also stood at the helm of a rabbinic court, following in the footsteps of his father. In addition, Rabbi Mazuz founded a publishing company dedicated to printing the works of Sephardic Torah scholars, helping to preserve and promote their rich heritage.

Rabbi Mazuz also authored dozens of his own works, covering a vast range of subjects: He was especially renowned as an expert in piyyut—the art of Jewish liturgical poetry. These intricate poems, composed by Jewish scholars over the centuries, weave together biblical verses, Hebrew and Aramaic poetry, and subtle references to people, ideas, and historical events.

A MIRACLE OF NINE DOLLARS

Throughout his time in Israel, Rabbi Mazuz maintained a warm connection with the Chabad community and Rebbe's emissaries to the Holy Land, encouraging their work of bringing their brethren closer to Jewish observance.

In 1990, Rabbi Mazuz's wife suffered a heart attack and was hospitalized. A yeshivah student close to Rabbi Mazuz approached the Rebbe, who responded with a blessing for a speedy recovery. Indeed, she regained consciousness and was released from the hospital just two weeks later.

A few months later, Rabbi Mazuz traveled to New York, where he met the Rebbe in person for the first time. During his visit, Rabbi Mazuz participated in a "Sunday Dollars" and received the Rebbe's blessings. But instead of a single dollar like most visitors, the Rebbe handed Rabbi Mazuz no fewer than $9. At the time, Rabbi Mazuz did not understand the significance of the number. Nine years later, when his wife passed away, he understood: The Rebbe had blessed her with nine additional years of life.

Rabbi Mazuz was mourned by Israel's current and former chief rabbis, leading halachic authorities, prominent rabbis and members of the Israeli government.

More than 150,000 people attended his funeral, where it was announced that Yeshivat Kisse Rahamim and its network of schools would be led by Rabbi Mazuz's younger brother, Rabbi Tzemach Mazuz. In accordance with his will, no eulogies were delivered. Instead, three piyyutim—the sacred liturgical poems he loved so dearly—were sung by his many students, their voices rising together as a living testament to his legacy.

Excerpts from www.Chabad.org

etc.

Africa, Middle East, and Europe's Shluchim Convene in Montenegro

For two days, the medieval ramparts of Budva, Montenegro, became a nerve center of global Jewish life. One hundred Shluchim—serving as the Jewish infrastructure across 40 countries in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East—gathered to reinforce one another and map the next phase of Jewish life in a post–Oct. 7 world.

Representing over a third of the countries, the Kinus brought together Shluchim from communities large and small to tackle the rising challenges of this new reality.

"The Shluchim are the Jewish people's global support system and first-response network," said Rabbi Mendy Kotlarsky, director of the International Conference of Shluchim and Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch's efforts to drive Chabad's global growth and expansion.

"When Israelis arrive in Accra, Reykjavik or Dubai, the local Shliach is often the only familiar address they know. This Kinus sharpened our strategy to fulfill the Rebbe's vision: that every Jew should have a home wherever they may be."

ETHICS OF THE FATHERS: CHAPTER FIVE

There are seven things that characterize a boor, and seven that characterize a wise man. A wise man does not speak before one who is greater than him in wisdom or age. He does not interrupt his fellow's words. He does not hasten to answer. His questions are on the subject and his answers to the point. He responds to first things first and to latter things later. Concerning what he did not hear, he says "I did not hear." He concedes to the truth. With the boor, the reverse of all these is the case.

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

By the Grace of G-d

Rosh Chodesh Iyar, 5731

Brooklyn, N.Y.

To All Participants in the "Evening with Lubavitch" in Philadelphia, Pa.

G-d bless you -

Greeting and Blessing:

I am please to extend greetings and prayerful wishes to all participants in the Evening with Lubavitch, and particularly to the honored guests.

Inasmuch as the event is taking place in the days of Sefira ("Counting of the Omer"), it is well to reflect on the significance of this Mitzvo.

At first glance, the counting of days seems to be of no consequence, since the flow of time is beyond man's control. Yet, it is obviously very significant in that it lends emphasis to the period connecting the two most important events in Jewish history:

Pesach - the liberation from Egyptian bondage, marking the birth of the Jewish people; and Shevuos - the Receiving of the Torah at Sinai, where the Jewish people became a truly free and mature nation.

Like all things with Torah, the Counting of the Omer has many aspects.

To one them I will address myself here.

Generally, the counting of things by the unit, rather than by approximation of the total, indicates the importance of the thing. The fact that each day, day after day for forty-nine days, a Brocho is said before the counting, further emphasizes the importance of this thing - in this case the value of time. The Brocho we make expresses not only our gratitude to G-d forgiving us the Mitzvo of Sefira, but also our gratitude for each day which He gives us. We must learn to appreciate the precious gift of each day by making the proper use of it. The tasks we have to accomplish today cannot be postponed for tomorrow, since a day gone by is irretrievable.

Secondly, while it is true that the flow of time is beyond our control, since we can neither slow it or quicken it, expand it nor shrink it; yet, in a way we can directly affect time by the content with which we fill each day of our life. When a person makes a far- reaching discovery, or reaches an important resolution, he can in effect put "ages" into minutes. On the other hand, time allowed to go by without proper content, has no reality at all, however long it may last.

Correspondingly, the Torah tells us that man has been given unlimited powers not only in regard to shaping his own destiny, but also the destiny of the world in which he lives. Just as in the case of time, the real length of it is not measured in terms of quantity but in terms of quality, so also in regard to a man's efforts. Every good effort can further be expanded by the vitality and enthusiasm which he puts into it.

Indeed, the period of seven weeks connecting the above mentioned two greatest historic events in Jewish life, illustrates the Torah concept of time and effort as indicated above. In the course of only seven weeks, a people which has been enslaved for 210 years to most depraved taskmasters, were transformed into a "Kingdom of Priests and Holy Nation," who witnessed the Divine Revelation at Sinai and received the Torah and Mitzvoth from G-d Himself.

"Lubavitch" teaches and exemplifies the principle of the predominance of form over matter, of the soul over the body. It is not the quantity - in terms of physical capacity and length of time - that is the essential factor, but it is the quality of the effort and the infinite capacity of the soul that determine the results.

I trust that the spirit of Lubavitch will stimulate each and all of the participants to ever greater accomplishments in all areas of Jewish life, both personal and communal.

With blessing for Hatzlocho,

MOSHIACH MATTERS

An aerial view of a Jewish cemetery (known in Hebrew as "The Home of the Living") often discloses that the plots are arranged in such a way that the foot of each grave is directed towards the Holy Land so that the body of every departed Jew is laid to rest "as if ready to arise and go up to Jerusalem."

(Gesher HaChaim vol. 1, p.138)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

In Memory of Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman, Director of the Lubavitch Youth Organization and Founder of the L'chaim Publication.

From the Archives

This week we read the fifth chapter of Ethics of the Fathers.

The first Mishna in this fifth chapter reads: "The world was created by means of ten [Divine] utterances. What does this come to teach us, for indeed it could have been created by one utterance? [It was done so] in order to bring retribution upon the wicked who destroy the world which was created by ten utterances, and to bestow ample reward upon the righteous who sustain the world which was created by ten utterances."

Our Sages have asked, if the world could have been created with one divine utterance, then why, in fact, was it created with ten?

Had the world been created with just one utterance then the world would have been on such a high spiritual level that everything would have been nullified to G-d. Thus, no entity, including humans, would have felt its own identity and there would have been no free choice in the world. Therefore, G-d created the world with ten utterances so that the world could be diverse and any self-nullification of a creation to G-d would not be an innate natural tendency, but rather a product of its own effort.

However, with the above explanation it seems as if G-d "could not" create the world with one utterance which, if this was the case, why does the Mishna even bother to suggest that He "could have?"

Thought is potent, Chasidic teachings emphasize. That G-d "considered" creating a more highly spiritual world than currently exists before creating this more mundane world actually gives the potential for this mundane world to be elevated to G-d's originally intended level of spirituality. And it gives us the potential to carry through this G-dly ordained mission.

Through using our G-dly gift of our soul powers -- thought, speech and action -- responsibly, we prepare ourselves for the revelation of Moshiach and can bring about the ultimate elevation of the world, which will take place in the imminent Redemption.

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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