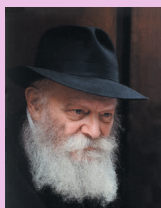


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

This week we read two Torah portions, Matot and Masei. Masei means "journeys." The journeys enumerated in this week's Torah portion from the time of leaving Egypt until reaching the valley of Jericho, signify all the stages that the Israelites must pass through until the coming of Moshiach.

Thus it is said in the works of the Kabbala, and in a teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, that he who understands the meaning of the journeys will know the particular "journey" of his present state as well as all that still lies before him, i.e., how many and which journeys he still needs to travel until the coming of Moshiach.

Generally speaking, all these journeys are in order of ascents. "These are the journeys of the children of Israel leaving the land of Egypt--Mitzrayim" refers to journeys in the plural from, notwithstanding the fact that there was but a single journey that took them out of Egypt; but every journey signifies a going out from the "mitzrayim" (which comes from the same root as restriction and limitation) of that moment and stage to the expanse relative to that moment and stage.

There are numerous levels and stages. Something may be a "good and expansive land" relative to a lower level, but it would still be "mitzrayim" relative to higher levels. The "journeys" thus teach us that one must incessantly move on and progress, regardless of past achievements. There must be a continual movement from Mitzrayim to a "good and expansive land," at the very least in terms of one's current status. This implies a non-gradual progression. With a single journey we can instantaneously leave Mitzrayim--restrictions and limitations--and come into a "good and expansive land."

Even so, one is not to content oneself with that singular departure from Mitzrayim. One must forever progress further in awareness of the fact that whatever stage has been attained remains a form of "mitzrayim," i.e. restrictive limitation, relative to higher levels. Thus, one must continue onward until reaching the "Valley of Jericho," the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our very own days.

From a talk of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, translated by Rabbi J. I. Schochet

Our Inherent Need to Matter

By Rabbi Lazer Gurkow

Would you rather earn a meager salary or be a kept man or woman and live in luxury? Most people like to live in luxury, but not at the price of their self-image and soul.

Reflecting on our early history, G-d lovingly proclaimed to Jeremiah (2:2), "Go and call out in the ears of Jerusalem, saying: So, said G-d, I remember for your sake the loving-kindness of your youth, the love of your nuptials, your following Me in the desert, in a land not sown."

Everyone knows the desert is inhospitable. To willingly leave a metropolis for an arid, dangerous, unlivable place demonstrated great faith in G-d. G-d remembered it lovingly even when our ancestors sinned.

LAP OF LUXURY

Yet, the Torah tells us that our ancestors journeyed through the desert enveloped by miraculous clouds that shielded them from the elements.

Our ancestors did not brave the desert. So why was G-d so enamored with them?

In Jeremiah G-d described the desert as a "land not sown." G-d was referring to the fact that everything was so plentifully available in the desert that one did not even need to sow in order to reap.

When G-d directed them to the desert, they would have known that He would provide for them. And being provided for can be a serious hardship.

BREAD OF SHAME

The Talmud (Baba Metziah 38a) posits that one would rather have

one measure earned than receive nine measures for free. This phenomenon is known as "bread of shame."

There are thousands who grew up in the lap of luxury. They don't need to work a day in their lives, but this is precisely their downfall. They feel useless. They create nothing, they produce nothing.

Yet, our ancestors willingly followed G-d's direction and headed for the desert where they would be a kept people.

G-D RECIPROCATES

This is what G-d appreciated. You embraced something that held no promise to you, it did nothing for you. Because I asked. You made the ultimate sacrifice for love.

When the Jews sinned and were worthy of exile, G-d assured the prophet that He would never allow them to slip into distinction. As they gave G-d what He wanted in their youth, G-d would grant them what they wanted and needed.

G-d kept His promise. Throughout our turbulent history, He always remained at our side. Despite the many upheavals, we survived. And we will survive in the present and future.

With one caveat. We are no longer in the desert. Our Divine blessings don't come for free. Today, we are able and expected to earn our protection and security. We can make ourselves indispensable. Not only to others, but also to G-d.

Then G-d will provide a stream of blessings, prosperity, protection, security, serenity, and happiness. What's more, they will be well earned and well deserved.

SLICE OF LIFE

The Family Who United the Nation With Tzitzit



When war erupted in Israel on October 7, 2023, the Jewish People rallied together in an unprecedented display of unity and support for its defenders. Among the countless acts of solidarity that emerged during this tumultuous time, one family's initiative stood out, capturing the hearts of soldiers and civilians alike. This is the story of the Philip family from Beit Shemesh and their remarkable "Tzitzit Phenomenon."

David Philip, a 60-year-old businessman, never imagined that he would become the driving force behind a nationwide movement. It all began with a simple observation by his wife, who noticed a social media post about soldiers seeking tzitzit - the ritual fringes worn by observant Jewish men.

In the book of Numbers, G-d commands the Jewish people to affix fringes – tzitzit – to the corners of their clothing so that they would constantly remember Him and His commandments. Our sages teach that the tzitzit also offer a physical protection, safeguarding the wearer from harm and damage. The Lubavitcher Rebbe occasionally counseled individuals seeking additional spiritual protection to wear high-quality tzitzit. This advice complemented his emphasis on the daily practice of putting on tefillin - a ritual that not only offers spiritual safeguarding but also

fulfills a fundamental mitzvah.

Realizing the spiritual and emotional significance these items held for many soldiers heading into battle, David sprang into action.

"I went to a Judaica shop to buy tzitzit," David recounts, "but they told me everything was sold out. Even the factories had very few left."

Jewish law necessitates that the tzitzit strings be tied by hand, and as such, they cannot be mass produced by a factory. Additionally, making tzitzit for soldiers, there are specific fabric requirements that must be met to ensure uniformity and the safety of the soldiers. Very quickly, David realized that he needed to start producing tzitzit from scratch.

What started as a modest attempt to meet an immediate need quickly snowballed into a massive operation. On the first night of production, volunteers flocked to help, working tirelessly until 4 AM. "It was incredible," David recalls, his voice filled with emotion. "I felt the sublime experience of the Jewish people coming together for such a noble cause."

As news of the initiative spread, so did the support. Soon, three production centers were established in Beit Shemesh alone, with the Philip family sharing their newfound expertise to enable rapid, mass production.

The demand was staggering, and so was the output. When he approached one factory, David was told that they could produce 200 tzitzit in two weeks. In contrast, the volunteer-driven operation was soon churning out 2,000 in a single night. "We were inundated with requests," David explains. "Volunteers wanted to help, and soldiers had one request: 'Before we enter Gaza, please give us spiritual armor - tzitzit.' Many parents also wanted their children protected before entering battle."

As the conflict dragged on, the project expanded beyond Beit Shemesh. New production hubs sprang up in Bnei Brak, Petah Tikva, Beitar Illit, Shaalvim, Ramat Gan, and other locations across Israel. People from all walks of life devoted countless hours to the cause.

The phenomenon wasn't limited to Israel. Jewish communities worldwide sought to participate, with calls coming in from Australia, the United States, and beyond. These international supporters produced thousands of tzitzit and shipped them to Israel,

demonstrating the global Jewish community's solidarity with the embattled nation.

Rabbi Dovi Philip, David's son and a military rabbi, provides an insider's perspective on the project's impact: "In the first week, our phones rang non-stop. Everyone wanted tzitzit immediately. My father, usually a very busy man, put aside all his affairs and devoted himself to tzitzit production for many months, inspiring all of us to do the same."

Dovi himself opened a branch of the operation in Bnei Brak, where many ultra-Orthodox volunteers eagerly joined the effort. "We essentially set up a textile factory in a synagogue," he explains, "with manual cutting and a lot of dedication and care."

As the operation grew, so did its complexity. The military requested that distribution be organized by battalions, with prioritization based on operational considerations. Military rabbis took charge of distribution, ensuring that tzitzit reached frontline soldiers in Gaza first.

The family estimates that close to 100,000 tzitzit were produced over nine months, a testament to the scale and impact of their initiative. But beyond the numbers, it's the personal stories that truly highlight the project's significance.

One particularly moving account involves Guy Madar, a soldier who was wounded while defending communities near Gaza. In the chaos of the encounter, he was initially mistaken for a terrorist by fellow IDF soldiers. His life was saved when they noticed the tzitzit peeking out from his clothing, instantly identifying him as a fellow Israeli.

The project also brought together diverse segments of Israeli society. David proudly notes, "It was amazing to see Satmar Chassidim and members of Religious Zionist community tying tzitzit together for the soldiers."

The family received countless messages of gratitude from soldiers, along with photos and warm words about the sense of security the tzitzit provided. "We got so many 'regards' from fighters," David says, his voice filled with pride and emotion.

The "Tzitzit Phenomenon" began as one family's response to a pressing need, but it evolved into something much greater - a nationwide movement that embodied the best of the Jewish People.



'Letters for Life': The Rebbe on Emotional Wellbeing

It's hardly a secret that society faces an unprecedented mental health crisis. Recent years have seen an epidemic of loneliness and lack of self-esteem. Already alarmingly high suicide rates keep climbing.

To counter this, conventional wisdom has been to focus on the painful experiences that might have led to an individual's negative state of mind. The struggling senior, adult, teen—or child—is guided to double-down on the distressing thoughts causing them angst or worse, to relive the negative experiences of their past and give them voice. Or some variation thereof.

A new book suggests an alternative path. The culmination of five years of research and writing by Chassidic scholar Levi Shmotkin, *Letters for Life: Guidance for Emotional Wellness from the Lubavitcher Rebbe* draws on the voluminous correspondences of the Rebbe who taught that in G-d's holistic creation, each and every one of us plays a special role. Therefore, inner wellness is not achieved by retreating into our own minds, but by plugging into the larger, healthy whole outside ourselves.

Letters for Life will be released by Chabad.org and Ezra Press, an imprint of Kehot Publication Society in September.

Ethics of the Fathers: Chapter Two

He would also say: Make that His will should be your will, so that He should make your will to be as His will. Nullify your will before His will, so that He should nullify the will of others before your will.

Hillel would say: Do not separate yourself from the community. Do not believe in yourself until the day you die. Do not judge your fellow until you have stood in his place. Do not say something that is not readily understood in the belief that it will ultimately be understood [or: Do not say something that ought not to be heard even in the strictest confidence, for ultimately it will be heard]. And do not say "When I free myself of my concerns, I will study," for perhaps you will never free yourself.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

THE SKYSCRAPER

By the Grace of G-d

Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, 5739
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Blessing and Greeting:

I received your note with several questions about HaShem I will answer you with a simple illustration: If you walk in the street and see a skyscraper, you know that someone made that skyscraper with all its floors, walls, windows, and so on.

In the same, but even more certainly, when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, and when you look around and see trees and flowers and birds and all other wonderful creatures, and people, you know that HaShem created them all.

Now, when a human being wants to make anything, he needs materials and tools, and very often he needs helpers. But HaShem is not like a human being; He created and made everything by simply saying, "Let there be!" And so, by the word of HaShem the the heavens and the earth were made, and all that is in the whole wide world.

Of course, HaShem is only one; He needs no helpers. As for your other question, if it is possible to talk to HaShem, you surely know that we do it every day when we pray to G-d and/or make a blessing, such as the blessing "Shehakol": "Blessed are You, G-d, our G-d, King of the Universe, by whose word everything came to be." And when we say, "Blessed are You," we clearly speak directly to G-d.

I trust you are learning HaShem's Torah and doing His Mitzvos, and generally conducting yourself as HaShem wants every Jewish girl to conduct herself, being a daughter of Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah, the Mothers of our Jewish people. And although this is a must in

any case, it is also the way to receive and enjoy HaShem's blessings for yourself, your dear parents and for all our Jewish people.

With blessing



WILL G-D GIVE ME A TRUMPET?

By the Grace of G-d
Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, 5739
Brooklyn, N.Y.

My Dear Assaf:

I was pleased to receive your letter, but I was very much surprised at the questions you asked.

You wrote: "I want to know if HaShem really exists." I will answer it this way: Suppose you were walking in the streets and saw a skyscraper. Would you ask, "Is there someone who made it?" And if this is so with a building of a number of floors, what will you say about the whole world, with the sun, moon and stars, oceans and mountains and woods, and all the creatures on land and in the seas, and so on?

Your other question was: If you daven the rest of the year, will you get a trumpet?

Since you are a thoughtful boy, I will again answer it with an illustration: Suppose you were invited to the White House and the President of the United States received you with pleasure and asked you what kind of a present would you like? Would you ask him for a candy? Perhaps you know the story of King Solomon, who was only 12 years old when he became king of all the Jewish people, after his father, King David. G-d appeared to him in a dream and asked him, "What shall I give you?" And all he asked for was – a wise and understanding heart! And G-d gave him that, as well as everything any person could wish for.

I trust you are learning HaShem's Torah with devotion and diligence and conduct yourself the way Hashem wants you to, as fitting for a Jewish boy, a son of Abraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, the Fathers of our people.

With blessing,

M. Schneerson

Exodus will not lose its place in our history but it will be secondary in significance to the Final Redemption, due to the profound, overwhelming miracles which will be performed in the Messianic Era.

(Highlights of Moshiach by Rabbi A. Stone)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

From the Archives

This week, on Shabbat afternoon, we study the second chapter of Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers). One of the Mishnas discusses choosing one's path in life, as it states: "Rabbi (Yehuda HaNasi) said: Which is the right path that a man should choose for himself? That which is honorable to himself and brings him honor from man."

The "right path," according to our Sages, is a life in consonance with Torah and mitzvot. In addition, Chasidut explains that each individual has his own particular path, and the path that seems to be correct for one person may not be the ideal path for someone else. G-d has granted each and every one of us our own unique talents that must be utilized to accomplish our goals. Every person must realize his own abilities and use the Torah as a guide to travel down his own "right path."

The verse goes on to speak about receiving honor: How can a person achieve honor once he has recognized his true path in life? Through action. Thought, speech and deed are called the "garments of the soul," giving physical expression to the soul's G-dly connection. It is fitting for a person to ponder his path in life, and to discuss how he will travel that path further solidifies his commitment, but thought and speech are not referred to as "honorable." It is only through deed, through actually doing what he has set out to accomplish, that a person is called honorable.

This Shabbat is the Shabbat before the month of Av, also known as Menachem Av. The word Menachem comes from the word "comfort." For as we mourn the destruction of our Holy Temple on the ninth of Av, we are comforted by the anticipation of the imminent coming of Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Holy Temple.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA

לזכרון חיה 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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MOSHIACH MATTERS

In the future, the miracles of the Exodus will be secondary in comparison to those of Moshiach. Our Sages note that the



IT HAPPENED ONCE

During the time of Rebbe Shmuel of Lubavitch there lived a kind nobleman in the area of Vitebsk who owned the entire village of Chekhov. Many Jews lived on his vast estates and he was so well disposed toward them that he lifted the burden of taxes from those who were poor. In addition he permitted the religious functionaries, the rabbi, the shochet, and the teachers to pasture their livestock free of charge.

This count was not in good health and the older he grew, the weaker and sicker he became, having to visit Doctor Bertenson in Vitebsk more and more frequently. The count's illness forced him to give the administration of his properties over into the hands of his manager who was a violent Jew-hater. This manager together with the local priest conspired to change the count's administrative practices and thus deprive the Jews of the favor they had enjoyed. They even went so far as to deprive many families of their livelihood and to require taxes from even the poorest families. This collusion between the two anti-Semites continued for two years.

During all that time the local Jews, who were mainly chasidim of Rebbe Shmuel of Lubavitch, visited their Rebbe on all the festivals and many Sabbaths. The Chasidic discourses he gave enlivened their existence and they often went to Lubavitch to receive the Rebbe's blessings for their health, their children or their livelihood. Not one of the Jews thought it proper to bring up the topic of the priest and the manager and how they were changing the benevolent policies of the count.

There was one local Jew who did business for many years with the count. He was called Reb Shmuel Isaacs and was respected throughout the region as a reliable, honest merchant. He spent all his free time studying Torah, and was learned in its revealed and mystical aspects. Once he was visiting Lubavitch for the holiday of Shavuot in the year 1880. In the course of their conversation, the Rebbe asked Reb Shmuel about the state of affairs vis-a-vis the livelihoods of the Jews in the town.

Reb Shmuel answered truthfully and in great detail describing the illness of the count and the ensuing problems of his Jewish tenants caused by the troublesome manager and priest. The Rebbe replied that he was aware of the condition of the count, since Dr. Bertenson had described the nobleman's fragile health. "But why," continued the Rebbe, "didn't you tell me about the change in policy towards the Jews on the count's estates?"

The Rebbe sat quietly in meditation for a few minutes and then said: "Return home now, and when you have the opportunity, tell the count in my name, that I know that his condition is dangerous and that his doctors have all but given up. Nevertheless, I promise him that if he helps the Jews of Chekhov and the neighboring villages, the Alm-ghty will grant him one month's health for each family that he aids."

Reb Shmuel returned home at once and began frequenting the environs of the count's home in the hope of meeting him, but the nobleman stayed inside most of the time now, due to his ill health. One lovely day his physicians advised him to ride out into the countryside to get some air, and it was then that Reb Shmuel encountered him, weak and pale, being escorted into his carriage.

The count recognized the merchant and invited him along for the ride. Reb Shmuel related his conversation with the Rebbe, and the count lost no time in commissioning the merchant to assemble extensive and exact lists of all the Jews living on his properties. He was to visit each of them and assess their needs, while not allowing the purpose of his visit to be discovered.

In due time the count received a list of more than one hundred and sixty families from the township and others from the surrounding villages. The Jews were again aided in making a living, and the count was helped by the Alm-ghty to regain his health.

Reb Shmuel enjoyed a close relationship with the count from that time on, and each year the count was sure to send a lulav from his own palm trees and some myrtle sprigs from his gardens as a gift to the Rebbe with which to honor the festival of Sukkot.

The count's good health continued for another fourteen years after which he began to feel very weak. He sent at once for Reb Shmuel and asked him to go to Lubavitch and visit the grave of the Rebbe, who had passed away some years before. He was to tell the Rebbe that the count was feeling weak. According to his calculations he was owed another year and seven months of life, and he requested that the Rebbe fulfill his promise.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion



He shall not profane his words; everything that leaves his mouth he shall do (Num. 30:3)

Whoever is careful never to profane his words, and is particular to fulfill his commitments has applied to him the verse, "Everything which leaves his mouth he shall do," i.e., "He"--G-d will fulfill the person's every blessing and utterance. As it says, "the righteous decree and the Alm-ghty fulfills. (*Avodat Yisrael*)"

Aaron the Priest went up onto Mount Hor at the command of G-d and died there... in the fifth month on the first of the month. (Num. 33:38)

Our Sages said that "the death of the righteous is equal to the burning of G-d's house [the Holy Temple]." The fifth month is the month of Av, the month in which the Holy Temple was burned and destroyed. Another connection between Aaron's death and the burning of the Temple is as follows: The Second Temple, in particular, was destroyed because of causeless hatred. The remedy for causeless hatred is unwarranted love, which was exemplified by Aaron. Aaron "loved peace, pursued peace, loved all creatures and brought them closer to the Torah." (*Likutei Sichot*)

To execute the vengeance of G-d on Midian (Num. 31:3)

The name "Midian" comes from the root "madon," meaning quarrel and strife. Midian symbolizes contention and unwarranted hatred. The war against Midian is truly "the vengeance of G-d." For, there is nothing so opposed to G-d as dissention and needless hatred. (*Sefer HaMaamarim*)

Dedicated in memory of a dear friend of the
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Mr. Jerome Belson OBM



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