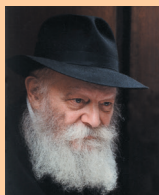


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

The Jewish nation has endured four exiles: The first in Egypt, the second in Babylonia, the third in Assyria. The fourth and final exile is the one we have been in for the last two thousand years, the "exile of Edom." (Edom stands for Rome, and symbolizes the countries of the Western world.)

The Torah portion of Vayigash delineates the beginning of the Jewish people's journey into exile. G-d appeared to Jacob and promised, "I will descend with you into Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again." Bolstered by this promise, Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt and began the Jewish people's 210-year sojourn there.

In many respects the exile in Egypt was the harshest of all the exiles; it occurred before the giving of the Torah, which afforded future generations the strength to withstand the suffering. Also, as with other painful experiences, the first time it occurs the wound is always the deepest and the hardest to overcome.

In addition, the Jews' exile in Egypt differed from future ones in that all Jews were involved. Later exiles found Jews scattered all over the world, assuring that whenever Jews were discriminated against in one country there were other lands in which they enjoyed relative freedom, and could come to the aid of their brethren.

Furthermore, Egypt itself was a land that posed particular difficulties. Not only was it spiritually corrupt, but our Sages describe it as a fortified country from which not even one slave could escape.

This first and most difficult exile served one positive purpose--to act as preparation for the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. Egypt was the crucible in which the Jewish nation was purified and made worthy of the Torah.

We learn this from the Hebrew name for Egypt, "Mitzrayim," which comes from the word meaning "limitation" and "constriction."

When water's flow is artificially blocked by placing an obstruction in its path, the water flows even more forcefully because of the temporary impasse. When one's thumb is held over the tap to partially obstruct the flow, the water shoots out that much more forcefully from the faucet.

Such is the Divine purpose of our exile, to uncover within every Jew the hidden strengths and stores of faith that are in the Jewish soul. The difficulties and pressures of the exile cause these inner qualities and self-sacrifice to be revealed.

The experience of exile can be used for our maximum benefit--to strengthen our commitment to Torah and mitzvot. Just as the Jews eventually left Egypt victorious and with "great wealth," and were worthy of receiving the Torah, may we be worthy to usher in the Messianic era, now.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Winter's Longest Nights

By Rabbi Eli Friedman

This year, we are not letting Chanukah go just like that. It was too good, too necessary and too soothing to have it just last eight days and go. We need the miracle to last a little longer this year.

So, a little bit more about Chanukah.

Chanukah features, of course, the Chanukah Menorah. Others call it a Chanukiah, but whatever you call it, it has eight lights and a ninth one called the Shamash. It is lit to commemorate the famous miracle that took place during the story of Chanukah.

That miracle also took place on a Menorah. Only it was the original Menorah, the grand, golden Menorah which was lit each day in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

Each of the seven branches on the Menorah in the Holy Temple was lit every night of the year, to last all night. Since not every night is the same length, they put in enough oil to last through the month of Tevet - the longest nights of the year. The candles were filled to last through the darkest dead of the winter.

*

An olive alone is just an olive - but when squeezed, it produces a treasure: olive oil. We Jews are the same way. A Jew is a Jew - until the most harrowing

circumstances. When squeezed, the inner treasure of a Jew - his G-dliness, comes out.

Our enemies repeatedly attack us, hoping to crush us. And every time, we come out stronger than ever before. Right now, we are going through a 'dark winter'. The Jewish people are at war. Jews feel lost, as if we are stuck in this long winter.

Along comes the Torah and reminds us gently, "Enough to last through the longest nights of Tevet." You're going to make it. You'll survive this too. Your light will not go out. Until this long night is over, you will keep glowing. You may be shocked at the depth of your own inner strength but there it is. No night is too long for you and no cold is too cold for you.

During the year, we may not recognize the excess oil. But it is there, within each of us, coming out now. Our enemies try to destroy us, but we will prevail. Our light will last through this bitter winter.

Our enemies have set our souls ablaze - and we are burning down their towers, their dreams, their plans for destruction. We will triumph; overcome this difficult winter.

And in the end, we will come out stronger than ever before. Anew, with more strength and pride than ever before. Am Yisrael Chai!

SLICE OF LIFE

Putting "Hospitality" in "Hospital" at Mayo



Rabbi David & Chanie Greene

Rochester, Minnesota, is a small town. The population is just over 120,000 people. But Rochester is a destination for hundreds of thousands of people worldwide, all for one reason: the world-renowned Mayo Clinic. Mayo is a level 1 trauma center, with over 2,000 beds. They treat patients with all sorts of complex illnesses from all over. Their treatment team is top-of-the-line, with the best doctors. In 1988, the clinic had everything in terms of staff and assistance. That is, except for one thing: a Rabbi. Enter the Greenses.

Now, the Greene family did not first come to Minnesota in 1988. It began years before that, with Velvl Greene, a scientist who researched public health, bacteriology, and astrobiology with NASA. His Rabbi, Rabbi Moshe Feller, cultivated a warm relationship between Greene and the Lubavitcher Rebbe. At some point during his career, Velvl Greene transformed his lifestyle to that of a religious Jew, and in 1977, sent his 15-year-old son, Dovid, to learn in yeshiva.

Dovid embraced the religious lifestyle and married his wife, Chani Greene (nee Raskin), a native New Yorker. Chani grew up in the Chabad community in Crown Heights, and the newly married couple settled there.

In the beginning years of their marriage, the couple fielded offers from around the world to move out to various locations to spread Judaism, each of which was politely turned down. That was, until Dovid's childhood Rabbi, Moshe

Feller, reached out, and pitched an offer to them to move back to Rochester, in Dovid's home state of Minnesota. The pull was strong and with the Rebbe's blessing, Rabbi Dovid and Chani Greene moved out to Rochester, Minnesota.

Brimming with confidence and the promise of a new future, the couple purchased a house in Rochester, which quickly morphed into their office and outreach center as well.

The Greenses quickly found out that along with the small community in Rochester was a whole other community: the Mayo Clinic. And so, they got to work.

First, they fastened an extensive sign in the nearby airport, proclaiming in big, bold, letters: 'Baruch Haba!' Hebrew for welcome! Beneath those words was the Chabad House phone number. Sure enough, the sign caught the eyes of the many Jewish patients traveling to Rochester for treatment, and calls began flooding the Greenses.

In the first year, they began serving and packaging meals for patients, Shabbat and holiday services at the hospital, and moral support visits. During one of these visits, it became apparent to the doctors that Rabbi Greene spoke Hebrew. They recruited him to become the translator for their Israeli patients. Chani Greene visited the clinic often as well, helping patients eat despite dietary restrictions. She was also a surrogate mother for the patients.

Sensing the need, the Greenses renovated their home to include a lounge and library for outpatients, while still housing the Greenses and their five children. The space provided a sense of comfort and support for the patients in tumultuous times of their lives. Working at a health clinic is not always an easy job, and the Greenses often face heartbreaking and challenging circumstances. Still, they carried on servicing the Jewish community.

The Greene children were active participants in their parents' outreach work, and they enjoyed it.

Their son Shlomy, however, like his parents, never thought he would do outreach in his own life. Until he met his wife.

Chana Greene, (nee Kornfeld) grew up in Seattle, Washington, and always knew that she wanted to do outreach when she grew up.

Within the first few years of their marriage, they worked in the preschool and ran youth programs in New Jersey. A couple of years in, however, they moved back to Shlomy's hometown of Rochester to open a preschool.

They quickly found out that the visiting and permanent communities were intertwined, and by default, got involved with patient care, often involving the preschool.

Once, an Israeli patient came for open heart surgery with two little children. He was not religious, but needed a school to enroll his children in for their month-long stay in Rochester. The Greenses willingly enrolled the children. The family joined the Chabad Menorah lighting, with over 300 people. Rabbi Greene kept trying to arrange a time for this patient to come put on tefillin. At last, the arrangements were made. It was right after his surgery, and they were doing one more scan to make sure he didn't need another one. Thankfully, the results came back clear, and as Rabbi Greene relates, 'we never heard from them again - in a positive way.'

Another little girl came to their preschool - this time not full days. She was a three-year-old facing an extremely rare disease, and her parents were overwhelmed by her back-to-back appointments. They asked the Greenses if their daughter could come for just an hour a day to play at preschool, so they could have a break. The Greenses, of course, readily agreed, and the parents shared with them that the one hour made all the difference.

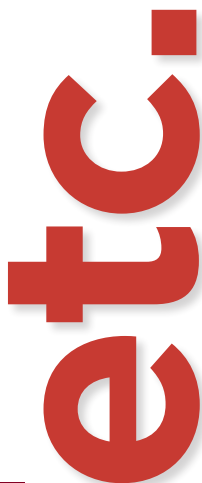
They helped an Israeli patient through his long journey to get a liver transplant long after his family had returned to Israel. Rabbi Greene met him as his interpreter, and they became very close. Oz Eliezer relates that the Rabbi helped him through his dark time tremendously until he got the transplant and returned home healthy.

The Greenses have serviced thousands upon thousands of patients, as well as the Jewish community in Rochester. The Greenses set about providing Kosher lodging for patients at Mayo. They are currently building a ten-million-dollar campus to centralize all of their activities, such as the lounge, housing, and their grab-and-go kosher kitchen, plus house hundreds of patients.

'Everybody is looking for a miracle to take place when they come to Rochester. People come here to experience healing. And I'm going to help those around me heal.' Rabbi Shlomy Greene relates. And they certainly do.

Excerpt from the Machne Israel "Lamplighters" Podcast - for more episodes visit Lubavitch.com/podcast

Edited by Rivkah Dinah Butman



Decades of Car Menorahs Lighting the Way

You know them when you see them, and when you see them, you know it's Chanukah. The car menorah is a uniquely American innovation—a marketing gimmick created by young yeshiva students in the early 1970s.

In 1973 the Lubavitcher Rebbe announced his Chanukah-awareness campaign, encouraging his followers and emissaries to reach out to their fellow Jews and give them the opportunity to kindle the Chanukah lights.

"Those early car menorahs were crude wooden things which were put together by a group of students," remembers Rabbi Mendel Feller, who studied in the Oholei Torah Yeshiva in Crown Heights in the mid-1980s. Together with his friends he put together the first car Menorah parade. Today Rabbi Feller is the Rabbi of Upper Midwest Merkos-Lubavitch House.

"If I had to guess, I'd say our class made about 40 or 50 of them," says Rabbi Sholom Ciment, a classmate of Fellers and a Boston native who now serves as co-director of Chabad Lubavitch of Greater Boynton Beach in South Florida. Ciment says. "That year, we made the very first car-menorah parade, which was an incredible sight."

A CALL TO ACTION

The prayers that we are most familiar with are the ones the congregation sings together in the synagogue or the ones we learned with a melody as children. When you take time out each day to communicate with G-d, accompany your prayers with song, which is certainly in keeping with Jewish tradition.

(The Rebbe, 1992)



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

IN VIEW OF THE SITUATION IN ISRAEL

Translated from a letter of the Rebbe

5 Tevet, 5736 (1976)

In reply to your inquiry and request for instructions in connection with the forthcoming Fast of Asara b'Tevet (10th of Tevet), in view of the situation in and around Israel--- You will surely be instructed by the rabbi of your congregation.

However, since you have also approached me in this matter, I will set forth at least several suggestions -- after the following introductory remarks:

Regrettably, there are people who claim that it is necessary to think and act "big," in terms of global dimensions and stupendous undertakings, etc.

Surely they mean well; and to the extent that such resolutions are practical and are actually carried out -- they are very helpful in improving the situation.

Yet, we must never overlook -- indeed, rather greatly emphasize-- the so-called "small and unsophisticated" things which each modest congregation, moreover each individual, can and must do -- beginning with the old, yet ever-new, Jewish way, collectively as one people and also as individuals.

This is the action of "the voice is the voice of Jacob" -- Torah and prayer -- which G-d Himself has shown us to be the first effective action to nullify the power of "the hands of Esau" -- in whatever shape or form they are raised against us.

Certainly this should find the fullest expression in a day which the Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law) declares to be a day of fasting, one to which the prophet Isaiah refers as a "chosen fast...a fast and time favored by G-d."

Now, in answer to your inquiry, and since the Fast of Asara b'Tevet is specially connected with the Holy Land and the Holy City of Jerusalem (recalling the siege of Jerusalem), my suggestion -- in addition to the regular "observances" on fast days, as set forth at length and in detail in Poskim [halachic adjudicators] and in books of Mussar and Chasidut -- is as follows:

During this day -- expressly for the sake of the security and strengthening of the Holy Land, materially and spiritually, and for the material and spiritual benefit of all Jews wherever they are -- in the Holy Land as well as in the Diaspora -- and particularly for the benefit of our brethren behind the "Iron Curtain" -- a special effort should be made in the areas of Torah, prayer, and tzedaka (charity).

Especially after prayer (both in the morning and at the afternoon service one should learn (and where there already are daily study groups, to add) a subject in Torah, including final ruling of Jewish law. Immediately following the prayers, even before learning, one should say several chapters of Psalms (in addition to the regular portion).

Before and after praying -- one should give tzedaka (in addition to the regular donation), including tzedaka for a sacred cause or institution in the Holy Land, the "Land of Living."

Needless to say, one who repeats the above again and again in the course of the day is to be praised.

And the more one does it (in quantity and quality), the more praiseworthy it is.

And, as in all matters of holiness, it is desirable that all the above be done b'tzibbur (with at least a minyan).

May G-d accept, and He will accept, the prayers and supplications of Jews wherever they are.

And soon, in our very own days, may the Promise be fulfilled that "These days will be transformed into days of rejoicing and gladness," with the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach.

MOSHIACH MATTERS



Why should we, of all generations, merit the revelations of the forthcoming

Messianic Era? Surely our ancestors were more deserving than the present generation! However, it does not depend on personal merit, but rather on the degree of purity and holiness the world has reached.

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 Sunday, the fifth of Tevet, is a day of celebration and rejoicing known as "Didan Natzach" -- "Victory is Ours."

It is the day, in 1987, when Judge Charles Sifton rendered his legal decision on the ownership of the enormous and valuable library of the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson.

For three weeks during the previous winter, the judge had listened to testimony concerning whether the Previous Rebbe's library was a personal possession, subject to the laws of inheritances, or if it was the possession of "Chabad."

Judge Sifton was tremendously influenced by the statement of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, of blessed memory, daughter of the Previous Rebbe and the Rebbe's wife, that "My father belonged to the Chasidim just as the books belong to the Chasidim."

There was great rejoicing on the day of the judgment, lasting for seven days. Each evening the Rebbe spoke publicly and expounded on the spiritual ramifications of the victory.

In one of these talks, the Rebbe said: "At the time of his imprisonment and redemption, the Alter Rebbe (Rabbi Schneur Zalman) found a Divine lesson in everything that had occurred.

One of his conclusions was the need to increase with renewed vigor and strength the dissemination of Chasidic philosophy.

The eternal Divine connection [of the Alter Rebbe's imprisonment and subsequent release] to this event is obvious.

Thus, especially because the charge was brought against Agudas Chasidei Chabad as a living and vital organization, we must strengthen even more the dissemination of the teachings of our Rebbes, learning them privately and in groups amidst great joy and enthusiasm, joy that breaks all boundaries..."

May we witness the ultimate breaching of limitations with the end of the exile and the ultimate joy of being united as one in the true and complete Redemption.

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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IT HAPPENED ONCE

The Rav of Yanov was a great scholar. As a young man he had been the friend of Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg, and their friendship had endured in spite of the young man's terrible obstinacy and inability to concede the correctness of anyone else's viewpoint.

Once, the Rav of Yanov was traveling to his son's wedding together with an impressive party of illustrious well-wishers. The Rav and his party stopped at a lovely site on the outskirts of a forest to say the afternoon prayers. The Rav chose a secluded spot under the trees some distance away from the others, and he lingered over his devotions. The members of his traveling party waited patiently for him in the carriage, but when darkness descended, they began searching for him in the surrounding groves of trees. Their search proved unsuccessful and though they were a bit concerned, they assumed that he had accepted a ride from one of the many other carriages in the wedding party.

Their anxiety was borne out when they arrived at the site of the wedding and the Rav was nowhere to be seen. There were all kinds of speculation, but there was nothing to do other than to proceed with the wedding without him. The sad group returned to Yanov without the Rav and in fact, without a clue of what might have happened to him.

Meanwhile, the Rav was wandering around in the depths of the forest unable to find a way out. He had unwittingly lost his way in the forest. As hours became days the Rav became more despondent and disoriented. He lost track of time and set about preparing for Shabbat a day early.

Finally, with G-d's help, the Rav found his way home and rejoined his jubilant family which had begun to fear the worst. When Thursday arrived the Rav busily set about preparing for Shabbat. When his family explained that it was Thursday and not Friday, he argued hotly that they were all mistaken. They tried patiently to explain that in the course of his wanderings he had somehow lost a day in his reckoning, but he just became more and more infuriated. His family invited many acquaintances to try to convince the Rav, but to no avail. What could they do, other than to allow him to celebrate the holy Shabbat on Friday. He celebrated with all the traditional foods and prayed the Shabbat prayers, and when Shabbat actually arrived he donned weekday garb and set about his usual weekday activities while his horrified family helplessly looked on.

Many weeks passed while he persisted in his mistaken behavior in spite of the steady stream of visitors all endeavoring to convince him otherwise. One day word of his strange fixation reached his childhood friend, Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg. Reb Shmelke set off at once for Yanov, making sure that he would arrive on Thursday. The Rav was thrilled to see him, and hastened to invite him for Shabbat. Reb Shmelke accepted enthusiastically, eager to implement the plan he had devised.

Reb Shmelke quietly gathered the Rav's family and outlined his plan to them. Needless to say they were anxious to do anything to bring the Rav back to reason, and so, in addition to the usual bountiful Shabbat fare, they also prepared some bottles of strong aged wine and set them on the table. The masquerade was carried out as the whole family and their many guests gathered to celebrate a festive Shabbat meal. After each delicious course Reb Shmelke poured a generous cup of old wine into the Rav's cup. Now, this was a heavy, red wine known to induce a deep slumber in the drinker, and Reb Shmelke didn't stint on the "L'chaims." Toward the end of the meal, the Rav fell into a deep sleep. Reb Shmelke sat back and relaxed with his pipe, telling his fellow diners that they could now return to their normal activities without worry, for the situation was under control. He took a soft cushion and placed it under the head of the sleeping man and settled down to guard the Rav throughout the night and into the following day.

On the next night, which was truly the Shabbat, the same guests returned and sat down at the table to enjoy the real Shabbat repast. When it was time to say the Blessings

After the Meal, Reb Shmelke gently roused the Rav, who sat up and remarked, "It seems as if I've been sleeping for a long time." He then joined in saying the prayers and everything continued in the usual manner through to the conclusion of the Shabbat. The family and townspeople were overcome with happiness at the result of Reb Shmelke's visit and thanked him profusely. For his part, Reb Shmelke made them promise that they would never reveal the true happenings of that Shabbat.

The Rav never had an inkling of what had transpired. In fact, he was very proud that everyone else had come to the enlightened conclusion that his calculations had been correct. He was however, careful to credit his old friend Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg for helping lead his mistaken congregants and family to the right conclusion, saying, "Thanks to my friend from Nikolsburg, they were able to comprehend the truth. Isn't it amazing how impossibly stubborn some people can be!"

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT
On the weekly Torah Portion

And you shall tell my father of all my honor in Egypt (Gen. 45:13)

"Tell my father not to worry," Joseph requested of his brothers. "All the honor and respect heaped upon me by the Egyptians has not had a negative effect. It has not made me lose the humility necessary to worship G-d properly." (*Gedolei Hachasidut*)

And he saw all the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him (45:27)

Rashi comments that with these wagons Joseph alluded to the very last subject in Torah he had learned with his father Jacob before being sold into slavery, that of the eglu arufa (beheaded heifer). When Jacob saw the wagons (agalot--the same root word as eglu), he realized that his son was sending the message that he had not forgotten all that he had learned with his father so many years ago. We see from this that seemingly insignificant actions of the righteous are fraught with meaning and serve as lessons and examples for those who take heed. (*Maayana Shel Torah*)

My lord asked his servants, "Do you have a father or a brother?" (44:19)

Judah tried, with this statement, to disprove Joseph's contention that the "stolen" cup magically told him everything. "If your cup is really magic and you already know all about us, why did you ask so many questions about our family?" claimed Judah. (*Sefer Darush*)

Here is seed for you; and you shall sow the land (47:23)

The righteous Joseph, the spiritual leader of every generation, gives each of us the encouragement and strength we need to worship G-d. But we must not rely solely on that which we receive from the tzadik; we must also sow the seeds we are given. (*Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

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