

# L'Chaim

The Weekly Publication  
for Every Jewish Person

נוסד תר"ץ ימי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson  
"To You I lifted up my eyes, You Who dwell in heaven" (Psalm 123:1)



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe  
on the Torah portion

In this week's Torah portion, Beshalach, we read about that pivotal moment in Jewish history which followed the exodus from Egypt - the miraculous splitting and crossing of the Sea of Reeds. Even though the Exodus had happened seven days earlier, the Jewish people were not completely free until the splitting of the sea, as they were still being pursued by the Egyptians.

It was only after they crossed the sea and the Egyptians drowned, that the Exodus was complete. Because the crossing of the sea marked the culmination of our liberation, we mention the splitting of the sea in our prayers. Because we have an obligation to mention the Exodus every day, and according to some, one must also mention the splitting of the sea, the end of the Exodus, otherwise it isn't considered as if he mentioned the Exodus at all. Because until the splitting of the sea, we weren't completely free.

From this is understood, that in order to free ourselves from our personal Egypt, as we say in the Haggadah, "In every generation, a person is obligated to see himself, as if he came out of Egypt." And as it is explained to mean, "In every generation, and every day," we have to act in the way of "journeying forth."

In other words, there are two stages in the Exodus, first leaving Egypt, and second, the splitting of the sea. Leaving Egypt is the first stage, in it we negate the confines and the servitude to the evil inclination and the animal soul, and we serve G-d through accepting His yoke. Without which there is no freedom, because if he is not able to keep even one mitzva (commandment), because of the hold the evil inclination and animal soul have on him, he is not truly free.

The problem he faces after entering this stage, is that since he is only serving G-d through accepting His yoke, Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the evil inclination and the animal soul, continue to chase after him and cover up the light of the G-dly soul that is in him.

However, when he enters the second stage, he starts to serve G-d in a way that "turns the sea into dry land," he uncovers and reveals the G-dliness that is hidden in the world, he sees G-d in everything, then he is truly free, the evil inclination and the animal soul can't bother him anymore.

When he works on himself and reveals his true purpose, and follows the path that G-d wants him to take, in other words, the path that allows him to "journey forth," then he is truly free.

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com. Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

## The Meaning of Self Sacrifice

*On Shevat 10 on the Jewish calendar, upon the passing of the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson in 1950, leadership of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement passed on to his illustrious son-in-law, our Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the seventh Rebbe of Chabad. The following is based on one of Rebbe's talks concerning the life and self sacrifice of his saintly father-in-law.*

On the day of a person's yahrzeit, we think about that person. But we are not just remembering—we are learning from his good deeds. This is especially true on a day like Yud Shevat, when we celebrate the yahrzeit of the Previous Rebbe.

The Previous Rebbe led a life of mesirus nefesh. Mesirus nefesh means "giving up one's life." Throughout our history, many people gave up their lives because of their Jewishness. But mesirus nefesh isn't only actually giving up one's life.

Mesirus nefesh - self sacrifice, is also living our lives without thinking of ourselves, concentrating instead only on doing what HaShem wants.

Mesirus nefesh - self sacrifice was the Previous Rebbe's way of doing things wherever he was. First in Russia with tremendous mesirus nefesh, he spread Torah despite terrible hardships. He was arrested, imprisoned and beaten. And still he persisted. What's more, he took upon himself the responsibility of sending others to spread Torah with mesirus nefesh.

After he was forced to leave Russia, he arrived in Poland.

There, though the government did not interfere with the study of Torah, the Previous Rebbe also showed a great amount of self sacrifice in his work. He had to confront other Jewish leaders in Poland who did not agree with what he was doing.

"Why are you putting so much effort into setting up yeshivos in small towns scattered throughout Poland?" they argued. "It's hard enough to establish the big yeshivos that exist in the main cities." But the Previous Rebbe just continued his difficult work, making sure that Jews in the distant small towns would also have a Jewish education.

When he came to America because of World War II, the Previous Rebbe continued spreading Torah with mesirus nefesh.

But why did he need self sacrifice in America? America is a free country. Everyone can do as they please.

That's true. But many Jews who came to America from Europe thought it would be a better idea not to show their Torah lifestyle too much. "America," they said, "is different. Here we should look like everyone else."

The first thing the Previous Rebbe said when he arrived was: "America is not different!" With enormous mesirus nefesh, he persuaded Jews to keep the Torah and its mitzvos openly and proudly. That paved the way for America to become a land where Jews keep the Torah and its mitzvos with joy and pride.

(Adapted from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XVIII, Parshas Chukas-Balak)

# SLICE OF LIFE

## The Night Jewish History And The World Changed Forever

By Rabbi Eli Friedman



The Rebbe during the early years

One cold winter night in January, 1951, an overflowing crowd squeezed into a stately brick building on Eastern Parkway in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and in not so many words, declared an end to the Shiva for the Holocaust.

The Nazis had surrendered only six years prior. Many of the hundreds gathered there were survivors of the camps themselves. All had lived through the Holocaust and were traumatized and devastated by it.

For many Jews at that time - old as well as young - the feeling was that the Holocaust had snuffed out Jewish pride and vibrancy forever, even for those who hadn't been there. The impossibility of what had happened seemed to threaten the possibility that it would ever be okay to smile again.

Individuals here and there had patched together one semblance of a life or another, but as a people, as a nation, and especially as a community based on faith in G-d - it felt like the best times were behind them.

The shadow of the Holocaust loomed so large and imposing that it felt inescapable. Stories of tragedy and loss were commonplace. Every other face you passed on the street was a reminder. Every Yartzeit, every Kaddish, every memorial,

every Yizkor - it was all about the war and the destruction and the millions. Even the happy days were sad days. Every birth, Bar Mitzvah, and Chupa was called a triumph, an answer, a act of revenge and defiance, an attempt to replace what had been lost and rebuild what had been ruined. Every "Mazal Tov!" was expressed with a smile and sob.

It just felt like the Shiva for the Holocaust would never end. How could it? Who would end it? Finally, that night, at that gathering, it ended.

It didn't end because someone declared it over. It didn't end because an anniversary had been reached. It didn't end because the memory ran out. No.

It ended because a new Lubavitcher Rebbe was appointed that night, and he laid out a vision that was so joyous and so optimistic and so magnificently grand, that for many of the men and women there, it felt like finally, finally, for the first time since the good life before the war, life was giving death a run for its money.

That night, the Rebbe issued a statement all about love. Not compassion, not pity, not remembrance or tribute, but love. Love for Judaism and - gasp! - for G-d, and most importantly, for one another.

That night, the Rebbe spoke about taking responsibility. He declared that as heirs to the heritage of Abraham, who'd taken responsibility for teaching the world about G-d, we must shoulder the same burden and once again teach the world about G-d, how all of creation is in the image of its Creator, is at one with its Creator.

That night, the Rebbe spoke about beauty. He declared that the world is G-d's garden, a lovely realm of charm and delight, simply divine and more precious than Heaven, and he spoke about how we can make it look the part.

That night, the Rebbe spoke about living with urgency, energetically, like people on a mission, willing to toil for its completion. He called for a groundswell of good deeds, Mitzvot performed with passion and exuberance, and over and over again he pushed for the people to care deeply for each other, take care of each other, uplift and inspire each other, and help each other do Mitzvot.

The call for living with urgency and energetically was in itself an audacious sign of life for a nation ravaged by mourning and grieving and despair.

But the Rebbe wasn't done.

That night, to the utter astonishment - there is no other way to put it - of those gathered there, the Rebbe announced that the call of the hour was (not to rebuild, revive, rebound or replace, but) nothing less than to bring Moshiach. Actually.

The crowd stood there listening in amazement as the Rebbe spoke to them, a roomful of people still trying to figure out how to believe again in the coming of Moshiach, and invited them to bring him.

That night, the Rebbe unveiled a plan to reveal the Divine Garden which is the world. Without a grim introduction and without a sad tribute, without looking back, the Rebbe declared the launch of the greatest, grandest project the world had ever seen.

And that night, by doing all that, the Rebbe ended the Shiva. It was time to get up, change, wash up and go to work. We could and would never forget, but the Shiva was over. Life was asking to be lived.

Just before Rosh Hashanah in the fall of 1939, the sun had set on the Jewish People. And in the middle of that winter night in 1951, a few minutes before midnight, the sun rose for them again.

Overnight, the warm rays of the Rebbe dream elevated a generation. The radiance illuminated hearts and minds across the world as word of the Rebbe's talks from that night spread.

Moshiach did not arrive that night, but he took root in the souls of real people with real lives, who set about working with Moshiach as the goal. And just like that, they weren't trying to survive; they weren't trying to make it. They were on a mission to bring Moshiach!

The question was no longer whether Judaism could survive all the evil; now it was a very serious question whether all the evil could survive Judaism.

These people who had just escaped with their lives were on a monumental mission to help others with their lives. These people who had seen a heartless, ugly world were assured that they could reveal a lovely, beautiful world.

These people who had lived through hell on earth had been empowered to create Heaven on earth.

It was the Tenth of Shvat. The Shiva for the Holocaust was over, and that cold winter night turned out to be one of the warmest nights in history.

### Shluchim to Infuse Jewish Life on Amelia Island



Rabbi Levi and Mindy Katz have recently moved to the tranquil Amelia Island, nestled at the northeastern tip of Florida, to bring warmth and vitality to Jewish life in the area.

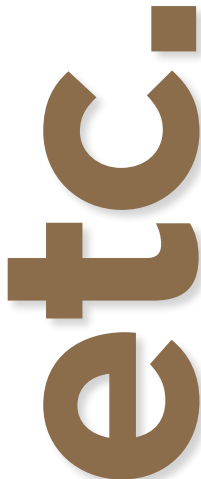
Rabbi Katz grew up in Surfside, Florida, where his parents, Rabbi Menachem and Rochel Katz, work with the Aleph Institute. Mindy grew up in Key West, Florida with her parents, Rabbi Yaakov and Chanie Zucker, of the Chabad Jewish Center of the Florida Keys.

With a vision to serve the island's estimated 1,000 Jewish residents, they aim to create a vibrant Jewish center. This Chanukah more than 200 people joined Chabad's public Menorah lighting at Pocket Park in downtown Fernandina Beach.

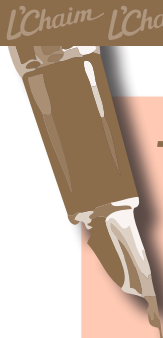
### ALL TOGETHER

What are some customs of Tu B'Shevat?

It is customary on Tu B'Shevat to eat fruits that grow in Israel, particularly the ones for which Israel has been praised: grapes, pomegranates, olives, dates, and figs. Some also have the custom to stay awake throughout the night and study all the Biblical, Talmudic and Kabbalistic sources related to the fruits of the Land.







# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Just as his seed is alive, so too is he alive...  
16 Shevat, 5723 (1963)

I trust that all of you, delegates and members of the various branches convening today, come imbued with a goodly measure of inspiration drawn from the two very recent auspicious days of this month, the yahrtzeit of my father-in-law, the Rebbe, of saintly memory, on the 10th of the month, and of the New Year for trees, which was yesterday.

Among the topics discussed at the farbrengens on both these occasions occurring within one week was the affinity between these two notable days, and how their instructive messages are related.

The Torah likens a human being to a tree, and the tzadik to a flourishing date palm.

Moreover, in a remarkable statement in the Talmud our Sages declare that a tzadik lives on forever, "for just as his seed is alive, so too is he alive."

It is noteworthy that the word "seed" is used here rather than "descendants," "children," or "disciples," though all these are included in the word "seed."

In choosing the word "seed" in this connection, our Sages conveyed to us the specific image and ideas which this word brings to mind:

The wonderful process of growth, which transforms a tiny seed into a multiple reproduction of the same, be it an earful of grain, or in the case of a fruit-seed, a fruit-bearing tree; the care which the growth process requires, and how a little extra care at an early stage is multiplied in the final product; the fact that the more advanced and more highly developed the fruit, the longer it takes to grow and ripen, so that grain, for example, takes but a few months to reproduce itself, while it takes fruit-bearing trees many years to mature, etc.

All these principles apply in a very practical way in the performance of our daily service of G-d, which, of course, embraces our entire daily life, since it is our duty to serve G-d in all our ways...



## MOSHIACH MATTERS

The actual date of the Messianic redemption is a guarded mystery unknown to man. It will happen "in its time," predetermined from the beginning of creation. Every generation has a special "time" of its own,

**YOUNG SEEDLINGS**  
15 Shevat, 5736 (1976)  
I was pleased to be informed of the arrangements for the forthcoming Convention, and send you prayerful wishes for success in every respect.

...The analogy between the cultivation of trees and the raising of children is well known from our sacred books of Mussar and Chasidut, based on the verse, "Man is like a tree."

As even a little extra care given to a young seedling is greatly amplified and richly rewarded when the tree matures, and can make all the difference, so too is extra care in the chinuch of a young child. This, after all, is the crucial period in a child's formative years, when the mother at home shares in the responsibility with the teacher at school.

To carry the analogy further, a tree attains fulfillment when it produces good fruit. Furthermore, good fruit...is not merely good in itself (as a food, or as an object of a mitzva such as an etrog, for example) -- but also contains the seeds to produce new trees and fruits after its kind, to the end of time.

Moreover, the new trees and fruits are of no direct benefit to the original tree, and may be far removed from it in time and place. Nevertheless, because they are the result of the original tree which behaved as it should, they are all credited to the original tree.

This is how every Jewish boy and girl should be raised and educated: Certainly to bring forth fruit, at the very least, but this is not enough, for their fruits -- their good influence -- must be ultimately felt to the end of the world and to the end of time.

Such an achievement seems rather a lot to expect of a limited human being. But actually it is well within reach, since a Jew operates with a Divine soul, a part of G-dliness Above, and operates with Torah and mitzvot given by G-d.

Furthermore, he does this in a world which, though grossly material, is precisely the place where G-d desires to have His abode. With such a combination of favorable factors, the results can and should be without limit.

It is hoped that the Convention will make use of the above points as guidelines for intensified activity in all its programs and objectives, always bearing in mind that the "essential thing is the deed."

Again, wishing you success to carry out the above with Chasidic vitality and joy, and in happy personal circumstances, both materially and spiritually.

for, as stated, Moshiach is alive and present in every generation, albeit concealed. He is ready to be revealed at a moment's notice. In the course of history prior to "its time" there are especially auspicious times when it is easier to effect his coming. To take advantage of these, to hasten the redemption, that depends completely on us.

(From Mashiach, by Rabbi J. I. Schochet)

## 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 coming Shabbat is the 10th of Shevat, the anniversary of the passing, in 1950, of the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, and the beginning of the leadership of the Rebbe.

Our Sages teach that the Sabbath blesses the entire week. On Thursday of the upcoming week we celebrate the festival of Tu B'Shevat, the New Year of the Trees. It is certainly not coincidental that the Tenth of Shevat, the anniversary of the passing of the leader of the previous generation, and the ascension to leadership of the Rebbe, blesses the week in which Tu B'Shevat occurs.

What is the connection? The Torah teaches us that "man is like a tree in the field." This refers to trees in general, which allows one to compare a person to a fruit-bearing tree, a tree that offers shade, etc. A tzadik, however, is likened to specific trees, most notably a date-palm and a "cedar of Lebanon," as described in King David's Psalms.

The date-palm is one of the seven species of the Land of Israel (whose fruit is traditionally eaten on Tu B'Shevat). The Midrash teaches that the date-palm grows straight just as the tzadik remains upright and honest. The wood of the palm tree is free of knots just as the tzadik is free of flaws. Every part of the palm tree is useful: its fruits, its leaves and fronds, and its wood. Similarly, each tzadik fulfills his unique purpose and mission completely.

Like a cedar tree, whose wood is specially suitable to make furnishings, the tzadik makes of himself a "vessel" for G-dliness. Also, if a cedar is felled, its roots and stump remain alive and a new cedar sprouts in its place. Similarly, a tzadik's righteousness is indestructible; if a tzadik is harmed, he will only grow stronger.

May we soon merit the fulfillment of the Rebbe's special purpose and mission - which continues even today because of the Rebbe's everlasting righteousness - the revelation of G-dliness throughout the world which will commence with the complete revelation of Moshiach, may it take place NOW!

Shmuel Butman

## L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA

לְזִכְרוֹן חַי'ה י מוֹשְׁקָא

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

Many years ago, when the Jews of Spain were suffering from the Inquisition, a famous doctor by the name of Avitar Ibn Karashkash lived in Madrid. To escape the wrath of the Inquisition, he left his beautiful and his prestigious job as a skilled surgeon, and exiled himself to a small town. There, he hoped he would be left to live out his life in peace.

Avitar had a young son, Avraham. Avraham was delighted with his new life in the small town where Avitar was able to devote many hours of attention to Avraham and personally supervise his Torah studies. In addition, Avitar carefully instructed Avraham about the special garden he had planted, discussing with Avraham each plant growing there.

One day Avitar called his son into the garden and said, "Today is Tu B'Shevat, the New Year for Trees. On this day it is decided in the Heavenly Courts which trees will bear fruit and which trees will dry up. What is within our power is to plant trees, to care for them and to hope that they will grow and bear fruit. However, this is not dependent on us."

Avraham would never forget that special Tu B'Shevat when his father permitted him, for the first time, to plant saplings. And he would never forget his father's serious words. "Avraham, promise me that you will always try to be a good Jew, to grow upright and faithful to our people."

Twelve saplings Avraham planted that day, according to the years of his life. Then, Avitar took Avraham to a part of the garden where no one else was permitted; Avitar was experimenting with certain plants there. "Avraham," Avitar said quietly to his son, "Remember what I am telling you. If ever you need to leave here and I am not with you, come here first. Take out this sapling and you will find something underneath that will have a tremendous influence on you in the future."

A few months later, in the middle of the night, the hoof-beats of a horse were heard near the Karashkash house. There was a sharp knock on the door. "What do you want?" asked Avitar.

"Are you Avitar Ibn Karashkash, the man to whom G-d has given the strength to heal the sick?" asked the stranger. "That is my name," answered Avitar. "But I am no longer permitted to work in my profession."

"I am Duke Francisco Alba. My dear wife, the Duchess, is very sick and needs an operation urgently. You must come and operate on her or else she'll die. You cannot let her die," begged the Duke in a plaintive voice.

"Certainly you have access to great doctors in Madrid, Toledo, Barcelona," said Avitar. "Why me? You surely know that I am forbidden to practice my profession. Doing so could only endanger my life."

"I have been everywhere and have approached everyone. No one will perform the dangerous operation. I beg of you, help me," the Duke cried. "I will make sure no one harms you. I will bring a ship to take you and your family to safety if necessary. My wife is suffering. Please, help."

The Duke broke out in uncontrollable tears. "I will do what you ask of me," said Avitar. "But one thing you must promise. If anything happens to me, you must take my son to safety." The Duke agreed readily.

Avitar hadn't lost his skill as an expert surgeon. The operation went well and the Duchess's life was saved. But when he returned home, he found the officers of the Inquisition awaiting him.

Avraham broke out in a bitter cry as his father was taken away. Soon, though, the Duke's men arrived; they had heard what happened to the faithful doctor and would take Avraham to a safe haven. They promised him that the Duke would do everything in his power to save Avitar.

Avraham didn't want to go with the Duke's men, but he had no choice. He asked them to wait a moment until he got his things together. Avraham quickly made his way to the special part of the garden. He carefully dug up the sapling and uncovered a box. Opening the waterproof box he found a pair of tefillin and a note. "These tefillin will give you

strength and encourage you in Judaism so that you not, G-d forbid, fall into despair and dejection. In addition, carefully take the sapling you have uprooted, and plant it in new earth. Guard it and care for it painstakingly, and it will be the source of great livelihood for you. For this sapling is from a far-off land. It provides food for the special silkworms that produce the valuable silk material purchased from abroad. Remain a good Jew, my dear son, and the good L-rd will bless you and help you like the blessing of your father who loves you -Avitar Ibn Karashkash."

Avraham wiped away his tears and went to join the Duke's men. He wondered if he would ever see his father alive again.

Months later, while Avraham was living on the island of Majorca, he turned thirteen. Precisely at the moment when he first put on his tefillin he saw a small boat coming closer to the port. As it got closer he couldn't believe what he saw. His father was getting out of the boat!

After an emotional meeting, Avraham found out that the Duke had finally been able to save Avitar from the Inquisition. Avitar explained that he had not come earlier because he had been sick. He did not, however, explain that his "sickness" was due to the terrible torture he had suffered at the hands of the inquisitors.

In due time, Avitar and Avraham gathered around themselves a group of Jews and set up a Jewish settlement on the island. And each year, on Tu B'Shevat, they planted saplings according to Avraham's years.

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah Portion

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**G-d will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace (Ex. 14:14)**  
 G-d will only fight your battle on the condition that you "hold your peace" - remain quiet and avoid controversy and disagreement amongst yourselves. (*Shaar Bat-Rabim*)

**The one came not near the other all the night (Ex. 14:20)**  
 As the Talmud relates, the ministering angels wanted to sing songs of praise as the Egyptians were drowning in the Red Sea. However, G-d stopped them by pointing out the inappropriateness of rejoicing at a time when "the work of My hands is drowning." An analogy is given of a serious yet necessary operation to save a patient's life. During the painful surgery, there is no room for rejoicing. Only after its successful completion can one begin to offer praise and speak of its benefits. (*Yeshuot Malko*)

**And they believed in G-d and in Moses His servant...Then Moses sang... (Ex. 14:31, 15:1)**  
 It was precisely because the Jews believed in G-d and that Moses was His servant, that Moses was able to sing the "Song on Crossing the Red Sea." For having faith in the tzadik (righteous person) actually empowers the tzadik. (*Degel Machane Efraim*)

**And the waters were a wall unto them (Ex. 14:22)**  
 When a Jew observes Torah and mitzvot faithfully to the extent that he is willing to jump into the sea, not only does the "sea" disperse, but it is transformed into a protective wall that safeguards him.

**Dedicated to the Rebbe on 75 Years of Leadership**  
 whose teachings and example are a never-ending source of life for all mankind.  
 May we continue in his path and complete the mission with which he has charged us: to make the world conscious of the imminent Redemption and to prepare the environment where this ideal can be realized.



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