

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)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

*from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion*

In the Torah portion of Vayeira we learn of Yitzchak's brit which took place when he was eight days old. The Midrash relates that Yitzchak and Yishmael argued about who was more cherished. Yishmael said he was more cherished as he was circumcised at age 13. Yitzchak said: "I am more cherished for I was circumcised when I was but eight days old."

One can easily understand why Yishmael felt more cherished: at age 13 he was old enough to protest. That he did not do so was surely reason enough for him to feel superior. But why did Yitzchak reason that he was the more cherished of the two?

The overall theme of circumcision is, as the verse says: "This shall be My covenant in your flesh, an eternal covenant." Circumcision effects an eternal bond between the individual and G-d.

Concerning a covenant formed between two dear friends there is no ironclad guarantee that the covenant will truly be everlasting, for mortals are subject to change. When, however, it is G-d who makes the covenant -- in this case, His covenant with the Jewish people through circumcision -- then it is truly eternal.

The reason that circumcision is performed at the tender age of eight days -- at a time when the infant has absolutely no say in the matter -- may be understood accordingly.

Whatever a person does on his own initiative requires preparation; adequate time must therefore be allowed. However, the covenant that is set in motion through circumcision is affected entirely by G-d. In other words, circumcision is not an act through which a person binds himself to G-d. When a Jew is circumcised G-d binds Himself to the person with an "eternal covenant."

Thus, there is no reason to wait until the infant will come of age and consciously affirm and participate in this act, for in any event he does nothing at all -- the entire covenant comes from G-d. He is therefore circumcised at the earliest age possible.

Thus, the merit of Yitzchak's circumcision at eight days surpassed not only that of Yishmael, but also the circumcision of his father Abraham. For Abraham was commanded to circumcise himself after he had attained the highest degree of perfection possible for a created being to achieve on his own. Thus, Abraham's circumcision lacked the indisputable indication that the covenant, which came as a result of the circumcision, came entirely from G-d.

Only with the circumcision of Yitzchak, at the age of eight days, was it clear for all to see that his was a covenant that had nothing whatsoever to do with his created being, but was entirely dependent on G-d.

Adapted from: The Chasidic Dimension

6 or 7

By Rabbi Mendel Rubin

About that 6 or 7 meme. Not sure what it really means, or why it has become so wildly popular, but everyone is referencing it -- and no one can really explain it.

BH we found a mystical meaning to this popular online 6/7 juxtaposition and toss-up.

6 is the six days of the workweek, and 7 represents Shabbos. As the verse says, "Six days you shall work, and rest on the Seventh". Working the six is also part of the observance and service. Six needs the 7th, and the 7th needs the 6th!

Most would think 7 would win that match-up, after all, Shabbos is much holier than the weekday. But Chassidus sees greatness in both! Shabbat and Weekday, the 7 and the 6, both are necessary for a full Jewish life.

In fact, there are many Jewish aspects and Chassidic goals and missions only possible in the workweek! More so than Shabbat!

So 6 and 7 can be seen as a very meaningful toss-up, a constant ongoing balance and synthesis, we need both and there's much spiritual opportunity both ways. Judaism isn't only seeking higher and holier, says Chassidus, it's also seeking how to bring that holiness lower, down into our physical world. And our weekday service can

do more of that.

We're now entering the Torah portion of Noah. At the start of the story G-d tells Noah: "Come into the Ark". As the Baal Shem Tov teaches, "Teiva" (the Hebrew word for Ark) also means Word. G-d tells Noah (and each of us!) to enter within the words of Torah to be protected from the turbulent waters of livelihood and worldliness. The Ark is a retreat from worldliness, it's a spiritual escape. But that's not the end of the story! At the end of the Flood, G-d tells Noah to "Leave the Ark!" That, too, is a spiritual mission! The purpose isn't to stay within the Ark but to exit it, to engage with worldliness, to elevate it, to transform it.

Look, this Chabad House on campus got dubbed "Shabbos House" (there's a history behind that) but we're open all days of the week, too! Our hope is that all of our weekday activities and events are permeated with the spirit and energy of Shabbos. But yes, much of our mission can only get done in the weekdays, the 6's!

This 6/7 meme has come to the fore in Fall of 2025, when we had this series of midweek holidays soon followed by Shabbat weekends. We hardly had a 6 week. Now that we're done with so much holier holiday, it's a good time to emphasize the potential in the weekday 6's.

SLICE OF LIFE

A Father's Final Words

I was born into a Chabad-Lubavitch family in what was then called Leningrad (and now is called St. Petersburg). During my childhood, chasidim suffered greatly in Soviet Russia, as these were the years when the KGB mercilessly persecuted those who were intent on keeping the embers of Judaism burning.



Mr. Bentzion Chen worked in Israel's aerospace industry for thirty-five years

A few months before her wedding, my mother watched her father, Rabbi Yitzchok Raskin, as he was aggressively dragged from his home by KGB agents for the crime of teaching Torah underground. Before he left, he managed to say to his children, "Keep the ways of your forefathers" — which earned him a blow from his captors. Unfortunately, these were the last words they heard from him — they later learned that he was murdered just a few weeks after his arrest. When World War Two ended, a treaty was signed between Poland and the Soviet Union allowing Polish citizens, who fled to Soviet territory during the war, to return to their homeland. Lubavitchers used this opportunity to organize an extensive network of document forging, which enabled many to leave under the assumed identities of Polish citizens.

My parents also wanted to leave and, for that reason, we moved to the border town of Lvov where the network functioned. But before the arrangements could be made, the KGB found out and my parents, among many others, were arrested on the charge of treason. Thus, at the age of eleven, I was left without parents and had to bounce around from one relative's home to another.

After the death of Stalin, many of the prisoners who had been sent to labor camps were released, including my parents, who were freed after six years of imprisonment. A little while later, we moved to Tashkent, where there was a large community of Lubavitchers.

I got married in Tashkent and began working as a technician in the Soviet Union's aerospace industry. The whole time we were hoping to leave. In our farbrengens, the participants would wish one another that they should one day merit to meet the Rebbe in America, and we even had a song that we would sing about this.

Eventually my wife and I and our two daughters were granted an exit permit. We went to Israel, where we settled in Kfar Chabad, and just before Passover of 1973, we traveled to New York to visit the Rebbe for the first time. Our dream of many years was finally fulfilled!

When we arrived, we requested a private audience. We were staying at the home of my wife's cousin, Rabbi Gershon Jacobson, and he helped us get ready for our audience. At his suggestion, we prepared a written list of all the topics we hoped to discuss with the Rebbe, as well as the many requests for blessings that other Jewish refugees from the Soviet Union had asked us to bring before the Rebbe. Rabbi Jacobson said that if we don't write these things down in advance, we might forget them in the Rebbe's presence.

Indeed, when we finally came into his office, I was so moved that I was unable to utter a word. However, when I looked at the Rebbe's warm face and his fatherly smile, I felt a calm come over me and I was able to speak.

The Rebbe asked us many questions. He was very interested in life in the USSR and wanted to know how the chasidim there celebrated the holidays, what their farbrengens were like, and how they were managing to keep the Torah.

After he answered his questions, we asked the Rebbe to bless those who had given us their names. Among them was the name of a student in the school where my wife worked; the boy was very sick and we submitted a letter from his parents to the Rebbe. The Rebbe read the letter but didn't say anything. At that point, my wife spoke up, but the Rebbe only said, "I know; I was already asked."

Unfortunately, after we got back, this child passed away. We understood that the Rebbe must have seen things that others couldn't and that, in this case, he knew there was no possibility of overturning the decree.

Also in this conversation, I asked the Rebbe about the various job opportunities that were suggested to me in Israel — among which was a position in the aerospace industry. I was inclined towards this field since I had experience in it, but there were other promising offers as well. The Rebbe asked me about the kind of people who work in this industry, and upon hearing that these were highly-educated people, he advised me to accept this position.

He spoke about the need to reach out to the many highly-educated but secular immigrants coming to Israel from the USSR, saying that we have to ease their absorption process not only materially but also spiritually. Despite the fact that they were well-educated and had university degrees, most of them were lacking basic knowledge of Judaism. The Rebbe suggested that we open centers where we could teach them Torah and Jewish history in order to bring them closer to Judaism.

The Rebbe also told us, "In recent years, many Jews have arrived in New York from cities in the Soviet Union where Chabad chasidim lived. And through those chasidim, these people were connected to me. But many have never come to see me. I've sent a few of my disciples to ask them why they don't come, but the only answer has been: 'If we come, we won't have a choice but to change, and we're afraid of that...'"

After we left the Rebbe's office, I said to my wife, "This is very interesting information, but why did the Rebbe feel the need to tell us this at four o'clock in the morning? There must be some significance to this."

It took several years, but eventually I found out.

In the beginning of the 1990s, when the big waves of Jewish immigrants were coming from the former Soviet Union, I came to understand that we had to help them not just with their physical needs but with their spiritual needs as well — as the Rebbe had instructed us. We needed to connect these Jews with him, as this would influence their connection to their heritage.

This then became my primary aim, and the impetus behind the books I published in Russian.

Recently, a friend of mine from Moscow contacted me and told me that his daughter visited Israel with the Birthright program. Before departure, he gave her my book, *The Rebbe You Don't Know*, a compilation of inspirational stories about the Rebbe. When she finished reading it, she gave the book to her friend, but the friend returned it, explaining, "I don't want to read this. I am afraid that if I read it, I will have to change my way of life..."

When I heard that, the Rebbe's words echoed in my ear. It reminded me how right the Rebbe was and encouraged me to increase my efforts in continuing to spread his message — because the more people learn about the Rebbe, the more connected they feel to him, the more they want to make positive changes in their lives by keeping Torah and its mitzvot.

Mr. Bentzion Chen worked in Israel's aerospace industry for thirty-five years, during which time he published eight books in Russian on Judaism and Chasidism. Since retiring, he has devoted himself to spreading Torah among immigrants from the former Soviet Union. He was interviewed by JEM in February of 2015.

Hurricane Melissa Devastates Jamaica and Its Chabad Center



Hurricane Melissa made a direct hit to Jamaica on October 28, bringing record-breaking 185 mph and storm surges that caused massive destruction.

It rapidly escalated from a tropical storm into a catastrophic Category 5 before inhabitants and visitors had a chance to flee.

Amongst them were the island's Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries, Rabbi Yaakov and Chaya Raskin and their children, who are based in Montego Bay and weathered the hurricane at the Chabad Center, which was recently renovated in 2023 and is equipped with hurricane-rated doors and windows.

Since the hurricane hit, Rabbi Raskin has been in touch with Jewish tourists stranded in Montego Bay and looking for support.

"We are the Rebbe's emissaries here, we have a responsibility to every Jew and non-Jew on the island.

To support the Raskins and help Chabad of Montego Bay rebuild, visit JewishJamaica.com/Melissa.

A Call To Action

Take a Tip from the Kids when interacting with G-d:

Children have a unique manner of relating to G-d and they understand that the awareness of G-d has to be connected with physical entities. Thus they understand the importance of reciting blessings: thanking G-d for the food that they eat. Similarly, we see that children have a unique attraction to a mezuzah, and kiss it eagerly several times a day. Also, through having a tzedaka pushka and holy Jewish texts in their rooms, they transform their room -- and the entire house -- to a "sanctuary in microcosm."

(The Rebbe, 18 Cheshvan, 5752)



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

THE LAND OF ISRAEL: THE ROYAL PALACE 30 Tishrei, 5720

I received your letter of the 17th of Tishrei in which you write about your background and activities. I was especially gratified to read about your activities to strengthen Yiddishkeit in your environment, in the field of kashrut, etc.

I was especially pleased to read you realize that there is a great deal more to do. For the realization that there is more to be done ought to bring forth additional forces to meet the challenge. All the more so, since every one of us is commanded to go from strength to strength in all matters of holiness, which should be on the ascendancy.

In this connection it is well to remember the saying of my father-in-law, of saintly memory, that at this time every Jew should consider himself in the position of a mountain climber climbing a steep mountain.

In this situation he must continue to climb or slide back, for he cannot remain stationary... It is also a well-known law of physics that the rate of a falling object accelerates. The lesson is obvious.

I read with interest about the books you read and study. I was surprised to note the absence of the Tanya and other works on Chasidut, which you no doubt could study in the original, though part of this literature is available in English.

The study of Chasidut would not only be greatly inspiring to yourself, but would have a great influence on your work and inspiration on behalf of others.

Young people not burdened by family responsibilities, and full of youthful

energy, should make the fullest use of their opportunities.

I trust that you have friends among Anash [members of the Chasidic community] with whom you can discuss a method of learning Chasidut and what sources you should study, though I imagine you should have a fairly good idea. But nevertheless, many heads are better than one.

As for your question with regard to my attitude towards the Holy Land etc., I trust you saw my reply to the question "What is a Jew?" which has been published both here in America and in Eretz Yisrael [the Land of Israel].

Your particular question with regard to immigration and settling in Eretz Yisrael does not indicate whether it refers to yourself or if it is in a general way. But my answer would depend on the circumstances of each individual, for it is not possible to give blanket advice on such an important question.

I should like, however, to emphasize one general point.

No matter how much is expected of a Jew in regard to Torah and mitzvot, wherever he may be, a great deal more is expected of him if he is in Eretz Yisrael, of which the Torah says "It is the land on which the eyes of G-d are upon, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year." So much so that it is regarded as a Holy Land even among non-Jews. Our Sages refer to it as "The Palace of the King."

A person wishing to enter the Royal Palace must be prepared to answer such questions as on what business is he there, and he must be prepared in every way. It is demonstrated by his conduct and actions that he realizes he is in a Royal Palace. It is unnecessary to elaborate.

May G-d grant that you will succeed in what is your true and inner purpose in life, namely to spread Yiddishkeit, and in an ever-growing way, and may you have good news to report always,

from the Torah? -- From the verse in Psalms, 'Happy are those who dwell in Your house; they shall praise You forever.' The verse does not say, 'They praised You,' but 'They shall praise You.' Thus the Resurrection of the Dead is taught in the Torah."

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

The twentieth of the Hebrew month of Cheshvan is the birthday of Rabbi Sholom DovBer of Lubavitch, the fifth Rebbe, known as the "Rebbe RaShaB."

An interesting story is told about the events surrounding the first haircut at the age of three of the Rebbe Rashab.

(It is a Jewish custom to let a boy's hair grow until his third birthday at which time his hair is cut except for his payot -- sidelocks. The first haircut is a powerful introduction to this mitzva. Symbolically, just as a young tree may not have its fruit picked for its first three years, so too do we refrain from cutting a boy's hair for the first three years of his life.)

On the evening before the Rebbe Rashab's birthday, his grandfather, the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, known as the Tzemach Tzedek, asked that he be brought into his bedroom to sleep the night there. In the morning, when the young child awoke, the Tzemach Tzedek himself said the morning blessings with him.

After the morning prayers ended, the Tzemach Tzedek called to his son, Rabbi Shmuel, (who would later succeed his father) and his daughter-in-law the Rebbetzin Rivka, the child's parents, and told them:

"The spiritual cruse of oil that the Baal Shem Tov gave to his primary disciple, the Maggid of Mezritch, to anoint Rabbi Shneur Zalman, to make him a leader of the Jewish people for his generation, with this power my father-in-law, the Mitteler Rebbe anointed me, and with this power I am anointing him."

The Rebbe, a direct descendant of the Tzemach Tzedek and the spiritual heir of the Rebbe Rashab, stated that "The anointing of Moshiach has already taken place, all that is left is for the Jewish people to accept him."

May we merit Moshaich's coming, speedily in our days.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה י מושקה

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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Lubavitch Youth Organization
1408 President St, Brooklyn, NY, 11213
phone 718 778 6000

Chairman
Director
Publishing Director
Program Director
Secretary
Administrator
Layout
Associate Editor
Chairman Editorial Comm.
Rebbe photo

Rabbi David Raskin ז"ל
Rabbi Shmuel Butman ז"ל
Rabbi Yosef Y. Butman
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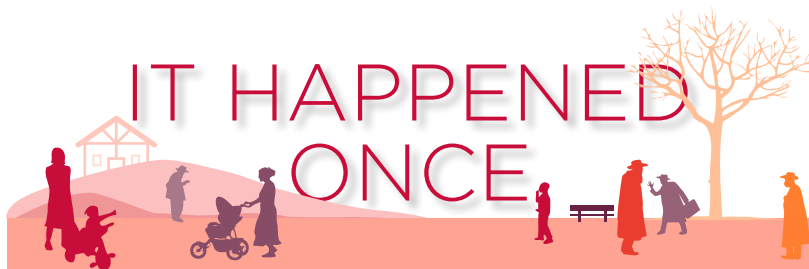
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MOSHIACH MATTERS

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said:
"Where is Resurrection derived



The simple village inn was full of people, but as soon as the well-dressed, distinguished looking man entered the large room, all eyes turned to him. It was not only his unusual appearance which attracted attention, but also the look of apprehension which could be seen in his eyes.

One of the wealthiest men in his city, he had just completed a series of extremely profitable business deals which had taken most of the summer. After a few more stops, he would finally return home, bearing the fruits of all his labor -- a purse containing five hundred gold coins. But the source of his unease was how to complete his successful journey without coming to a bad end at the hand of some sharp-eyed thief.

The hostel guests soon forgot the new arrival; only one person still stealthily eyed him, and that was the innkeeper himself. Suddenly, the merchant rose and with a deliberate step, walked outside. The innkeeper followed a few paces behind, his curiosity egging him on.

After walking several dozen paces, the merchant stopped at the edge of a wood. The innkeeper hid behind a large oak and watched as the merchant dug a small hole, buried his money purse in its depths and smoothed the surface. He seemed satisfied with his work and paused to lean against the tree's rough trunk, his face now in repose as if contemplating a deed well done. Then he calmly returned to the hubbub of the crowded inn.

No sooner had the wealthy gentleman left, than the innkeeper emerged from the shadows and opened the newly dug repository of the money purse. He seized the heavy purse and hid it in his apartment. Meanwhile, the unsuspecting merchant continued his journey, never doubting that his ruse had succeeded and his money was safe.

Two weeks later, having completed his final negotiations, the merchant returned to retrieve his money. He made his way to the back of the inn and counted his paces to the edge of the forest. Recognizing the spot, he began to dig, but was soon overcome with a rising sense of panic. The mound of earth was growing too large, and yet the purse was not there. Many minutes passed in feverish digging, as the merchant's panic turned to a cold realization that his fortune of gold was not going to be found. He had to face the truth -- the money had been stolen. The very shock of it was like a physical pain and his breath came with difficulty.

After a few moments, though, his thoughts began to clear, and he began to recollect the scene in the inn just before he hid the gold. Yes, he dimly recalled the way the innkeeper had surreptitiously surveyed his belongings when registering his room. Yes, it could only have been the innkeeper; no one else had paid that much attention to him. His quick mind devised a plan that would surely snare the thief.

The merchant approached the innkeeper with a smile on his face and said: "My friend, I have been told that you are a very intelligent man, and I wish to benefit from your advice." The innkeeper was put at ease by the merchant's friendliness; he obviously had no suspicions.

"I know I can count on your confidentiality, for the matter which I am about to relate to you must be kept secret. As you know, I am a businessman, and a successful one at that. At times, I am forced to carry on my person a great sum of money, and at present, I have two full purses of gold: one containing eight hundred coins and the other containing five hundred."

The innkeeper listened with rapt interest, as the merchant's voice became all but inaudible: "Two weeks ago, I hid one of them where it will never be found, but I wonder what I should do with the second one which contains even more money than the first."

The innkeeper straightened up his shoulder and replied, "Well, sir, you are a stranger here, with no close friend whom you can trust. If I were you, I would hide this purse in the same place that I hid the first, since it was such a safe place."

After receiving that answer, the merchant had no doubt that he had found the thief. He pretended to think over the suggestion and then left the inn.

The innkeeper hadn't much time, for when the merchant returned to the hiding place, he would see that the purse was missing. He hurried to the woods and reburied the stolen purse. After all, he might be risking five hundred coins, but he would soon be gaining another eight hundred. It seemed quite a good investment.

The merchant waited a safe length of time before starting off for the woods. Uttering a prayer to the One Above, he began digging in the same spot. It didn't take long before he had retrieved the purse full of gold coins. He was overcome with gratitude, and with a full heart, he recited the blessing, "Praised by He who restores lost objects to their rightful owner."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

And Abraham called the name of his son...Isaac (Yitzchak) (Gen. 21:3)

In the Messianic age, it is specifically of Isaac that we will say "for you are our father" (a verse from the book of Isaiah).

According to Chasidut, the name Yitzchak is an expression of laughter and delight; when Moshiach comes, the supernal joy and delight of our present service of G-d will be fully revealed. (*Likutei Sichot*, Vol. I)

He took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed (Gen. 18:8)

How could Abraham have served his guests both dairy and meat at the same time? Rather, Abraham offered his guests both types of food; it was then up to the individual to decide which kind he preferred. Those who chose meat dishes did not partake of the dairy.

Alternatively, they first ate the dairy, and only later did they eat the meat (as in the order it is written in the Torah). (*The Rebbe*)

And Abraham drew near (Gen. 18:3)

Rashi notes that Abraham approached G-d "to speak [with Him] in a harsh manner," to plead that He change His mind and not destroy Sodom.

Abraham, the epitome of loving-kindness, nonetheless saw fit to go against his natural inclination and "speak harshly" with G-d!

We learn from this that when it comes to saving lives, either literally or in the spiritual sense, a Jew must pull out all the stops and do all in his power, even if it goes against his very nature. (*Likrat Shabbat*)

Dedicated in honor of a dear friend of the
Lubavitch Youth Organization
Samuel I. Schwartz



4:27 PM Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
16 Cheshvan / November 7
Torah Portion *Vayeira*
Shabbat ends **5:27 PM**