



In the period between the First and Second World Wars there lived a pious Jew named Yehuda Schwartz, in the central Hungarian village of Mezutzat. Reb Yehuda was the proprietor of a small tavern located next to the railroad station.

Most of Reb Yehuda's business was conducted with the local wine growers, from whom he purchased his supplies. Some of the wine was served in his tavern, while the rest was sold to wholesalers in the larger cities.

The business grew until eventually Reb Yehuda brought in a partner, a Jew by the name of Hopstatter. Over the course of time a clear division of labor was established: Schwartz traveled from village to village buying the wine from the vineyards, while Hopstatter dealt with the wholesalers and other merchants. All payments he received were handed over to his partner, who could then pay the wine growers whatever they were owed.

At the end of each season, after the wine had been fully fermented and sold, the two partners would sit down to do their books. Both men were G-d-fearing individuals, and the two partners trusted each other implicitly. Not even once had they argued over figures or the division of profits.

One time, however, it happened that each partner made his calculations separately, with drastically different results. Hopstatter claimed that he had given 10,000 kronen to Schwartz, while Schwartz insisted that he had never received the money. After going over their records a second time with the same results, they decided to go to the Rabbi.

In those years, the legal authority in the village was the famous Rabbi Yehuda Altman, author of the scholarly work, Yam Shel Yehuda. The Rabbi listened carefully as the two sides presented their respective cases.

Standing before him were two good men, ethical and honest. Each was convinced he was speaking the truth. Hopstatter insisted that he remembered putting the bundle of money in his partner's hand. Schwartz was equally adamant that it never happened. Unfortunately, neither partner had any documents to back up his claim.

In such cases, the Rabbi had no choice but to ask the defendant to take an oath. Hopstatter declared that he was willing to swear, but Schwartz was dead set against it. As it was patently obvious that his friend was mistaken, Schwarz argued, he had no desire to cause him to commit the sin of taking a false oath.

"I am against it on principle," he continued. "If the tables were turned and I were asked to swear to the truth, I wouldn't do it even then. How much more so am I opposed to it now, when I see my friend about to stumble." At that point Schwartz announced that he was dropping his claim against Hopstatter. The 10,000 kronen weren't that important...

The two partners looked at the Rabbi expectantly, awaiting his verdict. After a brief moment he pronounced that as there was no longer any case pending, there was no need for an oath, and everyone could go home.

A short time later a vendor who was a casual acquaintance of Reb Yehuda Schwartz visited the tavern. In the course of conversation, Reb Yehuda mentioned the recent misunderstanding he had had with his partner.

"Hey, wait a minute," the vendor said as a thought occurred to him. "I might be able to tell you something that can shed a little light..."

"A few months ago I was making my rounds at a certain inn, and I bumped into your friend Hopstatter. I didn't really talk to him, but I noticed him speaking to the owner. At a certain point a third man, someone I didn't recognize, walked in and went over to Hopstatter. The two men shook hands, whereupon Hopstatter took out his wallet. I saw him remove a bundle of money tied with a string and hand it to the stranger. The stranger then sat down at a side table and counted the bills. When he was satisfied it was the proper amount he left the premises."

Immediately, Schwartz wrote a letter to his partner describing the incident, and asked if it had any significance. After mailing the letter he returned to work.

About a week later a carriage pulled up in front of the tavern, discharging a rather emotional and distraught Hopstatter. Rushing inside he practically fell upon Schwartz, hugging and kissing him. "I can't believe it!" he cried. "You saved me!"

He related that although he clearly remembered preparing the bundle of money for his partner, he had completely forgotten that he had given part of it to the man at the inn.

That evening Hopstatter told everyone in the synagogue the story of what had happened, and invited everyone to a festive meal in honor of his dear friend, who had prevented him from committing a grave sin.

Reb Yehuda Schwartz was murdered by the Nazis (may G-d erase their name) in June of 1944. This story was told by his great-grandson, Avigdor Sharon of Israel.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT
on the weekly Torah portion

If a man makes a vow to the L-rd... (Num. 30:3)

The Torah teaches that vows are praiseworthy, terming them "a fence around abstinence," yet at the same time states that "the [existing] prohibitions of the Torah are sufficient." How do we reconcile these two statements? A person who conducts himself properly is not encouraged to abstain from worldly matters. On the contrary, he is obligated to work "within" the world, in order to elevate and sanctify the physical plane of existence. A person whose conduct is deficient, however, can sometimes prevent further deterioration by means of vows. (*Likutei Sichot*)

...He shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth (Num. 30:3)

The commandment to carry out one's verbal declarations was given primarily to the "heads of the tribes" - to the leaders of the Jewish people. As authority figures, they are responsible for setting the highest standards for the rest of the community. That is why the Talmud states in Berachot: "Concerning one who recites the Shema but [his words] do not reach his own ears, Rabbi Yosai opines that he has not fulfilled his obligation." A person must never chastise or reproach another unless he has first applied the same criticism to himself. (*Mei'otzareinu HaYashan*)

These are the journeys of the people of Israel (Num. 33:1)

There is nothing in macrocosm that does not also exist in microcosm. On the spiritual level, the 42 journeys of the Jewish people are reenacted in the life of every Jew, from the moment he is born till his last day on earth. (*The Baal Shem Tov*)

8:08 Candle Lighting Time
NY Metro Area
25 Tammuz/July 14
Torah Portions Matot-Massei
Ethics Ch 1
Blessing of the new month Av
Shabbat ends **9:14 pm**

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 *Massei*. The portion of *Maasei* ends with the story of the daughters of Tzelaftchad fulfilling G-d's words and marrying men from their father's tribe of Menashe.

We were first introduced to the daughters of Tzelaftchad in last week's Torah portion of *Pinchas* when these five women asked for a portion in the land of Israel on behalf of their dead father.

The Torah here mentions them by name for the third time, an honor which is bestowed on very few. Not only that, G-d chooses to close the book of *Bamidbar*, Numbers, with them. This clearly indicates that there is something about them that is central to the book of *Bamidbar*.

Machla, Tirtza, Chagla, Milka and Noa.

What are we meant to learn from these great women? How does it highlight the central theme of the book of *Bamidbar*?

The first thing to know about the daughter's of Tzelaftchad is that they were selfless. In the case they brought before the Jewish people, they did not ask for any personal gain but rather that the Torah law be fulfilled, that their father have a portion of the holy land named for him.

They were holy, righteous learned and wise, they were patient and waited until the fortieth year in the desert to make their case. They never took their eye off the goal, to get their father, his rightful part in the holy land.

The book of *Bamidbar* is all about making our way to the Holy Land. Which for us means not simply living in Israel but living there under Torah rule, with the coming of Moshiach.

How do we accomplish this? First, by being learned and having the wisdom to understand our purpose. To be patient and do the necessary steps to bring it about. Keeping our focus on our purpose and finally, to stand before G-d, now in the last moments of this exile and demand that justice be served, that He send Moshiach. Not for our personal gain but because it is what G-d wants and what the Jewish people rightfully earned.

G-d, being proud of the daughters of Tzelaftchad, mentions them three times. If we act like them he will surely be proud and send Moshiach. The time has come.

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.

Water, Water Everywhere

In the United States, water has been in the news so much lately. Boil water advisories due to water line breaks, storms or flooding were in effect in New Jersey, Texas, Missouri and Illinois.

"Clean water" projects are underway to protect beaches, wetlands and waterways in Delaware, New York and Florida.

Of course, all of this pales in comparison to the damage caused to the Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine last month that cost human lives, destroyed homes and animals, and could affect the drinking water of up to 700,000 people.

Boiled water, bottled water, filtered water, purified water, tap water. Whichever we use, water is a necessity of life.

Torah is likened to water. It is called "Mayim Chaim" - life-giving waters (*Gen. 26:19*). Torah, like water, more than anything else, keeps the Jewish people alive.

Rabbi Akiva transformed himself from a simple, ignorant shepherd into one of the most outstanding and influential Sages of all time, because of water.

Rachel, the only daughter of Kalba Savua, one of Jerusalem's foremost families, offered to marry the uneducated Akiva if he would devote his life to the study of Torah. At the age of 40, Akiva felt that such an endeavor was hopeless.

One day, though, he observed water dripping onto a stone and noticed that the steady trickling had made an impression in the stone. "If drops of water can make an imprint on a

stone," he reasoned, "then even I can learn Torah."

When the Romans forbade Torah study, Rabbi Akiva continued to study at the risk of his life. When a soldier once asked him why he behaved thus, Rabbi Akiva answered with a parable:

A hungry fox, standing on the river bank, called out to a fish, "Fish, why do you subject yourself to such a dangerous existence? Don't you know that a little further down there are fishermen just waiting to catch you? Join me on the river-bank and you will be safe."

Replied the fish, "What you say about the fisherman might be true. But if I am not immersed in the water, then surely I will die. My only chance to live is if I am in the water despite its peril."

Rabbi Akiva closed his discussion with the Roman soldier by saying, "Just as a fish cannot live without water, a Jew cannot live without Torah."

Getting back to "mayim chaim" - life-giving or "living" waters, this term was coined when our ancestor Isaac was digging wells. Isaac redug the wells his father Abraham had dug. And more specifically, when he dug new wells of his own the words "mayim chaim" were used.

This hints to us that the life-giving waters of Torah are especially plentiful when we dig - digging deeply within ourselves to uncover and cherish the Torah waters of our ancestors and digging just as deeply or even more so to uncover how those teachings personally resonate to each individual in his/her own unique way.

SLICE OF LIFE

No Coincidences by Michael Saffer



Mr. Saffer's speech at the Chabad of Northwest New Jersey 35th Annual Founders Dinner

Nearly 15 years ago, my dear friend Allan Janoff asked me to do him a favor and attend an annual dinner at the Crystal Plaza for an organization I had never heard of – the “Chabad Center of Northwest New Jersey.” I knew something about Chabad as a global organization but nothing about that particular Chabad Center. But, when Allan Janoff asks you for a favor, you do it. That evening, Allan introduced me to Rabbi Asher Herson.

As the evening progressed, the first thing that impressed me about Rabbi Herson was how he could still stand up after the number of drinks he downed, followed by a “L’Chaim”.

From that evening forward, Chabad of NW NJ, with Rabbis Herson and Baumgarten and their wives guiding it, has meant more to me than I can adequately express in words. But I’ll give it a try. I’ll make it personal because that’s what I was asked to do tonight.

I have a long way to go to be a perfect person but Chabad has helped me to strive to reach that goal. Because Chabad is so non-judgmental and tolerant, it has taught me to be

less judgmental and more tolerant.

In one of my weekly study sessions on the Torah portion with Rabbi Herson, I recall him asking me if I get upset when a car cuts me off when I am driving. I shared how livid I get when that happens! Rabbi Herson then asked if I actually knew why the driver cut me off. I answered that of course, I didn’t. He then asked me if I would be less livid if I had considered the possibility that the other driver may have been in a rush, driving a loved one to the Emergency Room at a hospital. It is those kinds of insights that Chabad provides to me on an ongoing basis.

Because Chabad believes that our mission on Earth is to turn this planet into a G-dly place, it has taught me to try and maximize – through good deeds – every opportunity to do good. And to grow spiritually and compassionately – not just when it’s convenient to do so but to strive to do so every minute of every day. Spiritually, Chabad has educated me about the lessons of the Torah and enriched my life that way.

Chabad has also taught me something about poise and trust. There are a lot of charities out there, many of which are looking for honorees. Because of this competition for honorees, most years, like most charities, we struggle to find honorees. Those of us on the Committee tasked with finding honorees are sweating bullets for months except for two people – Rabbi Herson and Rabbi Baumgarten. They remain poised, telling the Committee there’s nothing to worry about – and they’re always right. G-d always delivers and we get honorees. Another life lesson from Chabad.

I also firmly believe that Chabad has had a profound impact on my professional life. After being an honoree in 2009, I committed to Rabbi Herson to put on *tefillin* every day and try and live my life according to Chabad’s principles. Although I was always fortunate enough to have a busy law practice, once I started putting on *tefillin* every day and following Chabad’s principles, the scope of my practice exponentially increased.

I have a client who told me he was seriously in debt until he started putting on *tefillin* every day and started studying with a Chabad

rabbi four years ago. I’m not suggesting that a profit motive should be a reason for more religious and better ethical observance. But is what happened to me and to my client a coincidence? I don’t believe in coincidences.

And, lastly, I think in a roundabout way Chabad assisted in me and my wife Marion becoming grandparents this year. How’s that? Well, in 2018, my wife Marion lamented to Sarah Herson that our eldest son Matthew had dated just about every single Jewish woman in New York City and was frustrated that he had yet to find his wife. Sarah told Marion to go to the *Mikva* and say a special prayer. Marion admitted to Sarah that the last time she went to the *Mikvah* was just before we were married, which then was 37 years ago. But, again, no judgment on Chabad’s part – Sarah Herson was very supportive.

Frankly, Marion wasn’t too interested. But Sarah, very frankly, was very persistent. And Marion went to the *Mikva* and said her prayer. One month after Marion went to the *Mikva* and said that prayer in 2018, Matthew met a woman named Jackie Newman. They were married in September 2021 and she and my son made us grandparents for the first time on March 6, 2023.

So, life is a series of connections and Chabad helps them along. Perhaps if I had never met Rabbi Herson, Marion had never met Sarah Herson, Marion had never gone to the *Mikva*, Marion had never said the prayer, Matthew had never met Jackie.... As I said before, I don’t happen to believe in coincidences.

For those of you here tonight who don’t know much about Chabad of Northwest New Jersey, I urge you to learn more about it. I’ve witnessed it change people’s lives through its non-denominational mission to feed those in need, find employment for the unemployed and support those who are ill. Reach out to and get involved with Chabad. Chabad of NW NJ has enriched my life in so many ways that I want all of you to experience the growth, the joy and the wisdom that Chabad of Northwest New Jersey offers to each and every one of us.

Mr. Saffer is a partner at Mandelbaum Barrett PC. He has been recognized every year since 2006 by “Best Lawyers in America” in commercial litigation as one of the top litigators in America.

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

21st of Menachem Av, 5728 [1968]

I am in receipt of your (undated) letter.

The first observation I must make is that whenever a question is to be discussed, there can be a meaningful discussion only if both sides accept certain premises as a basis for the discussion.

From your letter I see that we both recognize the Written and Oral Torah as undisputable authority.

Now it is clearly explained both in the Written Torah, as well as in the Oral Torah, that insofar as Jews are concerned, Golus [exile] comes not as a result of military circumstances, namely an outnumbered army, nor as a result of economic pressures necessitating submission to a stronger power, etc. Rather it has amply been explained again and again in the *Chumash* [the Five Books of Moses] (including whole Sidras [portions], such as *Bechukosai*, *Ki Sovo*, etc.) and in the books of the Prophets, and even more so in the Talmud and Rabbinic literature, that if Jews had always adhered to the Torah and Mitzvos, they would have never been banished into Exile, regardless of the fact that “You are the smallest among the nations.” For, Jews have always been outnumbered and outweighed in terms of military and physical strength, as King David puts it succinctly in one sentence, “These (come) in chariots, and those on horses, but we call upon the Name of G-d.”

Conversely, when Jews forsake the Torah and Mitzvos [commandments], G-d forbid, no power nor military might, nor political alliances, etc., are of any avail, as the Torah clearly states, “If you will walk contrary unto me, then will I also walk contrary unto you” etc., with the inevitable consequence of *Golus* [exile].

In the light of the above, the true test of events, to see if they herald the *Geulo* [Redemption] or not, is to see whether there has been an essential change in the causes which have brought about the *Golus* in the first place, namely, a new tendency in the

direction of stronger adherence to the Torah and Mitzvos.

A further point is this: After the *Churban* [destruction (of the Holy Temple)], when there could have been no question about the observance of the 17th of Tammuz [when the wall of Jerusalem were breached], Tisha B’Av [the Hebrew date on which the Holy Temple was destroyed], etc., there were still a number of Jews who remained in *Eretz Yisroel* [the Land of Israel], and it was incumbent upon them too to observe all the matters connected with the *Golus*. As a matter of fact, those who remained in *Eretz Yisroel* and saw with their own eyes the destruction, would have felt the *Churban* and *Golus* even more. Let us remember also that the observance of Tisha B’Av, etc., was in effect even during the time of Gedalia ben Achikom, the Jewish Governor of the Jewish community in *Eretz Yisroel*, before he was assassinated by Ishmael (II Kings, 25:25)

As in the case of many other Torah matters, there are sources where they are explained at great length. However, inasmuch as not every person has the ability or patience to study these things at length in their original sources, they come also in a short and concentrated form.

Thus we find also the subject under discussion formulated in succinct terms by the Great Teacher, the Rambam, who was not only the Guide for the Perplexed of his generation, but for the perplexed of all generations. In his Code *Yad Hachazakah*, he describes in brief but highly meaningful terms the state of the last era of the *Golus* as it would be, and how the beginning of the *Geulo* would follow.

I will quote what he states, but in English translation, with interpolations to clarify the text, with some prefatory remarks, namely, that it has been amply explained in the Written and Oral Torah that the *Geulo* will come through the *Melech Hamoshiach* [King Moshiach], and as the Rambam also declares, simply as a matter of course, in the section which is the last of his entire Code, so that it is in a sense the very seal of his Code - the section of *Hilchos Melochim* [the Laws of Kings].

There, at the beginning of chapter 11, he states that the *Melech Hamoshiach* will bring the *Geulo*, and at the end of this chapter he describes carefully the order how this will come about. And since this is not a book on philosophy, but a code of laws, the terms used are carefully chosen and strictly to the point, without polemics or homiletics.

Continued in next issue

MOSHIACH MATTERS

These are their journeys according to their goings forth (Num. 33:2) The *Midrash* relates that when Moshiach comes and ushers in the Fi-

nal Redemption, G-d will cause the Jewish people to retrace the same 42 journeys they made through the desert after leaving Egypt. This is alluded in the above verse: “And these are the journeys” – these very same journeys – will be undertaken and repeated, when the future progeny of the Children of Israel will “go forth” – from their final exile. (Abarbanel)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

This coming Wednesday is *Rosh Chodesh Av* (the first of Av). It is the beginning of the Nine Days when mourning for the Holy Temples intensifies. As well, it is the *yahrzeit* of Moses’ brother, Aaron the Priest.

As the *Alter Rebbe* explains in *Tanya*, on a *yahrzeit*, “all the deeds, Torah, and service for which a person toiled throughout his lifetime...is revealed...and ‘brings about salvation in the depth of the world.’”

What was Aaron’s special service? Aaron was the epitome of *ahavat Yisrael*, love for his fellow Jew. He was characterized by “loving peace and pursuing peace, loving the created beings and bringing them close to the Torah.” Throughout his life Aaron made special efforts to spread love, peace and harmony among all Jews, especially husbands and wives.

For this reason Aaron was especially beloved, and when he passed away he was mourned by “the entire House of Israel” – men and women. This was because the love he showed and encouraged among Jews relates to the essential point of the Jewish soul that transcends all division and differences between individuals.

Lashon HaKodesh - the holy tongue, is unlike other languages in that its letters express the “essence” of what they describe. Accordingly, this concept of all-encompassing love is reflected in Aaron’s (Aharon’s) Hebrew name - *alef-hei-reish-nun*:

The *alef* stands for “ahava,” “love,” the *reish* for “rabba,” “great,” alluding to Aaron’s tremendous *ahavat Yisrael*. The *hei* and the *reish* spell “har,” “mountain,” which is frequently used as a metaphor for love. The letters of the *alef* itself can be rearranged to spell “peleh,” “wonder,” indicating that Aaron’s love was wondrous and unbounded in nature.

Lastly, the final letter of Aaron’s name, the long *nun*, protrudes below the line, expressing how he extended himself to all Jews without distinction, even those whose behavior was not up to par. Because Aaron’s love was unbounded, it had the potential to extend to every single person, regardless of individual nature.

Emulating Aaron’s example, let us all resolve to love our fellow Jews simply because they are Jewish, thereby hastening *Moshiach*’s immediate arrival.

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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New Emissaries

Rabbi Mendel and Sara Piekarski are moving to Beverlywood, California to expand adult education and youth programming. Beverlywood is home to over 5,000 Jews. Since Rabbi Dov and Geula Newman opened Chabad of Beverlywood 22 years ago, the community has grown and so have its spiritual needs.

New Torah at New Center

Chabad of Kirkland, Washington welcomed their first Torah Scroll with joyous dancing and in memory of a late community member. Rabbi Chaim Shaul and Sarale Rivkin established Chabad of Kirkland, on Seattle’s North Eastside in 2017. The Chabad Center, located in the city that is home to Costco’s headquarters, has approximately 1,000 Jews, and many business visitors who travel through the area.



Hakhel – Unite!

Bitachon, belief, unites all Jews. All Jews are “believers the sons of believers,” inheriting this belief from Abraham. This belief is the very same in ALL Jews, though in all other aspects they differ and to the extreme. It is this belief that makes a spiritual *Hakhel* of the people a reality, unifying all Jews into one entity – since their common simple belief also pervades and moves everything in which they differ (as indicated in the verse): listening to, learning, keeping and doing all the words of the Torah. (From a letter of the Rebbe, 1980)