

L'Chaim



IT HAPPENED ONCE

Hard times had hit the land of Israel; famine stalked the land and the people looked to the heavens for respite from their troubles. The leaders of the people, the descendants of the house of Judah, lived in Beit Lechem and at their head was Elimelech, a leader of the generation.

As members of the elite of their people, he and his wife and two sons lived in comfort, possessing vast fields, animals and a store of gold and silver. But Elimelech committed a fatal sin. For, just when the eyes of his troubled brethren focused on him for help and guidance, he left and abandoned them to their fate. Taking his wife Naomi and his two sons, he settled in the land of Moab where he was received in a manner fitting a man of his exalted station. And there he lived, a prosperous and respected member of the aristocracy of that alien land, the plight of his suffering people conveniently forgotten.

For ten years life went on until tragedy struck--Elimelech died. His sons--who had married into the royal family of Moab--soon met the same fate, leaving Naomi, a grieving mother, and Ruth and Orpah, childless widows. Naomi was now finally free to act as her heart desired, as it had desired these ten long years in this foreign land. Though alone and broken, she decided to return home, to live out her life among her own people. She gave her loving blessings to her two young daughters-in-law and prepared to set out on her return journey. But their love for her was strong and deep, and they refused to part from her.

Only after many entreaties and tears did Orpah kiss Naomi a final goodbye and return to her family. But Ruth, from whom Moshiach was destined to descend, staunchly refused to budge from her mother-in-law's side: "Don't tell me to leave you," Ruth implored. "Where you go, I will go; where you stay I will stay; your people will be my people; and your G-d will be my G-d. Where you die I will die and there will I be buried; only death will part us." Of all the Moabites, only Ruth had inherited from her forefather, Lot--Abraham's nephew--the trait of loving-kindness. When Naomi realized at last that Ruth wouldn't be dissuaded, she stopped speaking about it, and the two women began their long journey back to Beit Lechem.

"Is this Naomi?" exclaimed the townspeople in their amazement. How should they greet her? Should they disdain the former aristocrat who turned her back on them in their time of trouble, or pity the suffering widow who now stood before them? No one made a move.

Poor and homeless, Ruth went out to gather the fallen sheaves in the field, those designated for the destitute. Unknowingly she went to gather wheat in a field which belonged to Boaz, a wealthy relative of Naomi. While other women who gathered wheat talked and flirted with the workers, Ruth conducted herself modestly, her eyes fixed on her work. As he passed through the fields Boaz noticed her, and discovering that she was the daughter-in-law of his relative, encouraged her to gather the wheat with his own maidservants. Boaz had heard of Ruth's incredible devotion to Naomi, and he resolved to take her under his wing.

When Ruth returned home that night Naomi marvelled at her successful gleanings. "Whose field did you work in?" she asked, excitedly. Ruth told her mother-in-law the whole story, how Boaz showered her with kindness and allowed her to gather as much as she could and even eat together with his workers. "Of course, he is one of our close kinsmen," said Naomi, smiling. Boaz was one of her closest relatives, and he was finally taking notice of their plight. In Naomi's heart was the strong and secret wish that Boaz would take

Ruth for his wife, thereby providing a successor to the family of Elimelech. Could it be that G-d's mercy was beginning to shine on them once again?

Boaz, the closest near relative married Ruth in fulfillment of the mitzva of Levirate marriage, and they were blessed with a son, who was called Oved--"the servant of G-d." Naomi was exalted! Oved was the grandfather of David of whom we say, "David, the King of Israel, who lives forever." He was the forerunner of the Eternal Monarchy of Israel--and Moshiach will be descended from him.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

You shall take a count of the Congregation of Israel (Num. 1:2)

When a count is taken, no distinctions are made between what is being counted. The great and the small are both equal, each having the value of one. The Torah portion of Bamidbar is always read on the Shabbat before Shavuot, the holiday on which the Torah was actually given on Mount Sinai, for all Jews stand equal on that day. Our Sages said that if even one Jew had been missing, the Torah would never have been given! (*The Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

Mount Sinai

Why wasn't the Torah given to the Jewish people in Israel, their final destination after having left the land of Egypt?

If G-d had chosen one location in Israel to give His Torah, it would have caused bad feelings and contention among the twelve tribes, for each would have wanted the Torah to be given in their portion of the land. G-d therefore chose a wilderness, belonging to no one, as the site at which to give His Torah. (*Midrash Lekach Tov*)

And Israel encamped there opposite the mountain (Ex. 19:2)

Why was the Torah given on a mountain? The difference between level ground and a mountain is not qualitative; both are made of dust and earth. A mountain is just more of that earth collected and heaped up into a larger mass.

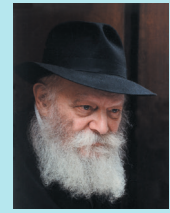
The fact that the Torah was given on a mountain teaches us that a Jew's purpose in life is to take that earth-- physical matter and corporeality-- elevate it, and transform it into holiness. (*Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

The world was still

When G-d gave the Torah on Mount Sinai, no bird chirped, no fowl flew, no ox lowed. The heavenly angels were silent, the sea ceased to roil, and not a creature on earth uttered a sound. The entire world was silent as G-d said, "I am the L-rd your G-d." (*Midrash*)



8:07 Candle Lighting Time
NY Metro Area
1 Sivan / June 7
Torah Portion Bamidbar
Ethics Ch 6
Shabbat ends **9:16 pm**



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

This week's Torah portion of Bamidbar is specifically relevant to the festival of Shavuot. This connection is found in the opening words of the portion, where G-d commands, "Count the number of all the congregation of the Children of Israel." Rashi comments on the command: "Because they [the Children of Israel] are dear to Him, He counts them all the time: when they went forth from Egypt He counted them; when they fell because of [the sin of] the Golden Calf, He counted them; when He was about to make His Presence dwell among them (i.e., in the Tabernacle) He counted them."

When things are counted, they are all equal; the greatest and least great are each counted once. And since the census was a token of G-d's love, it must have been a gesture to the equal part of every Jew: His essence, his Jewish soul. The point was to bring the soul of each Jew into prominence.

Rashi writes that G-d counts His people all the time; and yet, as Rashi himself points out, they were counted only three times in the first year, and very rarely following that. But, if the point of the counting was to reveal the essence of each Jewish soul, then this revelation has a depth which places it beyond the erosion of time--it is operative, literally, all the time.

The differences between the three countings which Rashi mentions were evolutionary stages in a process of revelation. First, the Jewish soul was awakened by the love of G-d; second, it began influencing the external lives of the Israelites; and third, it suffused all their actions.

The first census was on the Israelites' departure from Egypt, and it aroused their spirit of self-sacrifice to the extent that they followed G-d into a barren wilderness. But it left their emotions untouched.

The second was prior to building the Tabernacle. It reached their intellect and emotions, because they were preparing for the work that was to bring G-d's Presence into their midst. But still the impetus came from outside; from G-d rather than inside.

But with the third census came the actual service of the Tabernacle, when the Israelites--by their own actions--brought G-d into their midst. Then all their actions were a testimony to the union of the Jewish soul with G-d.

Now, the connection between Bamidbar and Shavuot becomes clear. When the Torah was given, Israel and G-d were united in such a way that G-d sent down His revelation from above; and the Children of Israel were themselves elevated. And we read, in preparation for our annual re-creation of the event, the portion which tells us of the third census when the two modes of revelation are brought together.

From Torah Studies by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Wisdom From the Wilderness

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

"Numbers" may be the name by which the fourth of the Five Books of Moses is commonly called, but in the Hebrew original it is known as Bamidbar, or "In the Wilderness." It is interesting to note that this Parshah is always read immediately before the festival of Shavuot, "the season of the giving of the Torah." What is the connection?

The Sages teach that it is not enough for G-d to give us the Torah; we have to be ready to receive the Torah. What makes us worthy recipients of this most precious gift from G-d? This is where the "wilderness" idea comes in. A wilderness is ownerless and barren. Just as a desert is empty and desolate, so does a student of Torah need to know that he is but an "empty vessel." Humility is a vital prerequisite if we are to successfully absorb divine wisdom.

As long as we are full of ourselves and our preconceived notions, we will not be able to integrate Torah into our being. Even if we are already somewhat accomplished in our Torah studies, we still need to remember--as the Kotzker Rebbe put it--that "as much as you know, you are still an undeveloped wilderness."

Then there is the idea that an ownerless wilderness is there for anyone to stake his claim. No person or group of people has a monopoly on Torah. It belongs to each and every single Jew, not

just the rabbis or the yeshiva students. "The Torah that Moses commanded us is the heritage of the entire Congregation of Jacob" (Deuteronomy 33:4). While we acknowledge that there is much hard work ahead of us if we are to acquire the Torah and make it ours, we also know that with diligence and effort we can succeed. Indeed, some of our finest Torah scholars throughout the generations have hailed from the simple, ordinary folk.

However, while Torah may be "free for all" as a desert wilderness, we must surrender ourselves to it, emptying ourselves of our ego and our preconceptions, rather than attempting to adjust it to our own circumstances and lifestyles.

And then, like the uninhabited wilderness, the Torah personality may find himself alone and isolated. We might express our strongly held values and beliefs, only to discover that we stand alone. We might display the courage of our convictions and find ourselves, like Abraham, "on the other side" of the whole world. Our principles may well prove unpopular. No matter. Being true to G-d and His Torah means standing by it, under every circumstance.

May the literal title of our Parshah of Bamidbar, and the many lessons it conveys, serve as a fitting prelude for the beautiful festival of Shavuot. May we receive the Torah with joy and earnestness, so that this important festival will be both memorable and meaningful.

Dedicated in honor of a dear friend of the Lubavitch Youth Organization
Mr. Sam Schwartz

SLICE OF LIFE

Deserted on the Parkway

By Dovid Zaklikowski



Mr. Nader Bolour

Nader Bolour, the owner of Doris Leslie Blau, home of vintage rugs and antique carpets in New York City, loves the spotlight. His designs have been featured in dozens of glossy magazines. He shines as he gives tours of his rugs at his showrooms. “Nowhere else in the United States can you get this design,” he says while lovingly caressing the samples.

His success in carpets, funded his second love sports cars, which he owns many of. But, Mr. Nader also loves to give, if it is a kind word, financial assistance or share words of Torah, which he does on a weekly basis at his synagogue.

He takes his studies seriously, and as a Sephardic Jew, has a deep respect for his rabbi. When the rabbi explained that glitz is not everything about life, he changed his sports cars for a humbler, albeit luxurious one. But last year, on May 25th, as he rushed home from his showroom, he had only one thing on his mind: Shavuot was coming.

The holiday of receiving the Torah on Mount

Sinai begins at sundown, and continues for two days. But there was traffic on the FDR Drive parkway, and if there would be much more gridlock, he may have to park his car on the side of the road at sundown and jog home.

But when he arrived at the George Washington Bridge the road was clear. He soon was cruising towards his Englewood, New Jersey home, when he faced a scene “right out of a movie.” There was a Chassidic family with several children, and a police car standing off to the side of the ramp. It was about two hours to the holiday, and here they looked “like homeless people,” with their boxes and suitcases near them.”

When Mr. Bolour arrived on the scene, the Brecher family had been stranded for a while. Due to an address confusion, the car’s registration had lapsed. Chesky Brecher, a Chassidic cantor, was hired to lead the prayer services at the Raleigh Hotel in South Fallsburg, New York. After trying to reason with the officer, and explaining the confusion, he was told that there was no way out and his car had to be impounded. The couple decided to take a car service to the hotel. But every time they scheduled a ride, the Uber or Lyft driver would cancel on them.

“My efforts were not producing results,” Mr. Brecher later recalled thinking, “So I said to G-d, it is all up to you, do whatever you want to do.”

At the very first moments the businessman saw them, he felt inclined to just continue on. “Wherever we are holding as Jews,” he said, “We think that our style is the right style. Naturally if you want to do charity, be kind, you want to do it with your own group rather than go to a group that you are unfamiliar with.”

It would have been easy, he said, for him to walk away when seeing the Chassidic family. “I didn’t identify with them. To go out of my comfort zone to a group of other

Jews that I am not used to, is out of the norm for me.”

But instinctively he decided to pull over, and he asked Mr. Brecher how he could help him. “I told him that there is no way for him to help,” the cantor said, “He was coming from the opposite direction and was not heading Upstate.” After continuing to question their situation, the cantor said he needs to lead the services upstate. Mr. Bolour on the spot told them, “Take my car, and go. Go right now and be on time for the holiday!”

The cantor could not believe his ears. The car was a luxury car, and this man was giving it to a stranger. But Mr. Bolour had no hesitation. He told them that he has no need for his name, or phone number. He gave the cantor his number and told him, “We are all brothers, I trust you. Just call me after the holiday.”

The Brecher couple was bewildered, but they felt that this was their only choice to arrive on time. To the joy of Mr. Bolour, the cantor arrived on time for the holiday, but to him it was all orchestrated from Above: If he would have a sports car, it would not have been large enough for the family. If he would have left for home earlier, if there was no traffic on the parkway that afternoon, he would have not met them. To him, we just need to recognize the moments of divine providence in our life.

He adds that it was a plus to build a relationship with the Brecher’s, which has opened his eyes to see people different than him, as those he can also be there for. “Everything we have we are not deserving of it,” Mr. Bolour said that it is given to us by G-d to do good with it, “I was privileged to be able to be put into that position by G-d.”

Dovid Zaklikowski is a biographer and author of over forty books, his books can be found on HasidicArchives.com or Amazon, and he can be reached at DovidZak@gmail.com

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

FREE RENDITION

By the Grace of G-d

In the Days of Preparation 5720—200th Anniversary of the Histalkus-Hilulo of the Baal Shem Tov, of blessed memory. Brooklyn, N.Y. “To the House of Jacob”—the Women “And to the Children of Israel”—the Men G-d be with you

Greeting and Blessing:

The Days of Preparation for the Receiving of Our Torah call for special, deepfelt reflection on what the Torah is.

The holy Torah is not a collection of laws for special occasions. It embraces the totality of the Jew, from his first moment to his last, and in all the minute aspects of his day-to-day life.

This is the essential meaning of the Torah, Toras Chayyim, the “Law of Life.”

Furthermore. Our Sages of blessed memory explain that the Torah embraces the totality of Creation, citing the example of an architect who, before erecting a building, draws up blueprints and plans, covering every detail of the structure. So the Creator used the Torah as a “blueprint,” as it were, for the Creation, down to the minutest particle in the inanimate material world.

This, indeed, is one of the basic doctrines of General Chassidus as expounded by the Baal Shem Tov, based on his interpretation of Scripture: Forever, O G-d, Thy words standeth firm in the heavens (Psalms 119:89), and explained at length in the teachings of Chassidus Chabad by the Old Rebbe, of blessed memory, author of the Tanya and Shulchan Aruch, especially in his Shaar Ha-Yichud Veha-Emunah—

Everything—in the heavens above and down to the earth below, in all their particulars—exists only by virtue of the “word” of G-d (“Let there be a firmament,” and the other Divine fiats), which created, creates and vitalizes all things continuously, every instant, without

interruption.

From this follows the next basic doctrine—Hashgocho Protis—G-d’s direct knowledge of, and Providence for, all particular things—extends to each and all minute details of the Creation, from individual man, the supreme creature, to the lowest thing in the inanimate world.

From the above there follows yet another corollary, which is likewise basic to the teachings of Chassidus and which was especially emphasized by the Baal Shem Tov, although it is, of course, a law in the Shulchan Aruch, namely, that—

It is incumbent upon the Jew to serve G-d in and with all details and aspects of his life and surroundings, beginning with the study of the Torah and the fulfillment of the 613 Divine precepts, down to the simplest acts and conditions of the daily life, and that

Everything in one’s surroundings is a lesson in love of G-d and fear of G-d, the primary wellsprings from which the Jew draws the proper inspiration to fulfill the Torah and Mitzvoth, the positive commandments (Mitzvoth-Asseh) and prohibitions (Mitzvoth-Lo Taaseh), permeated with true vitality and fulfilled with perfection.

The concentrated reflection on all that has been mentioned above, reflection with intensity, animation and illumination, Especially in these auspicious days, on the eve of Mattan Torah, which is also the anniversary of the Histalkus-Hilulo of the Baal Shem Tov, and

Transforming it into the detailed aspects of the daily life, both in one’s personal life as well as in one’s surroundings, and in all aspects of the world, according to the dictum—

Let thy fountains spread forth outside, whereby the fountains of Chassidus, that is, the Inner Light of the Torah, will overflow and irradiate even the “outside”—the external and most distant details and aspects of the entire Creation—

Will speedily bring the true and complete Geuloh, the Redemption through our righteous Moshiach, when the whole Creation will recognize and experience the meaning of I am the L-d, thy G-d.

With prayerful wishes to receive the Torah with joy and Pnimius (inwardness), and a Happy Yom Tovd and drawn to spirituality and G-dliness.

is known that we must learn from our forefathers and Matriarchs. This story is alluding to the footsteps of Moshiach. Directly before the coming of Moshiach there will be great Sages and Torah giants who will hasten the Jewish nation to prepare themselves for Moshiach. It is for this reason the Torah alluded to us that there will be those who will Not be strong in faith and will laugh at the holy people. It is to them that G-d says “Is there something that I am not capable of doing?”

(Sefer Chafetz Chaim)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

As the Shavuot holiday approaches, we are reminded of the beautiful Midrash which teaches that the Jewish children of every generation are the reason why G-d gave us the gift of the Torah:

When G-d asked what assurance the Jewish people were offering that the Torah would be studied, loved and cherished, the Jewish people offered our Patriarchs as security. But this was not accepted. We then offered the Torah scholars as the guarantors. This, too, was not acceptable. It was only when we offered our children as guarantors that G-d approved our proposal and gave us the Torah.

On the anniversary of an event, the “spiritual energy” that was infused by G-d into that event is at its strongest. This is the reason why, for example, we should do our utmost to celebrate our birthdays properly each year. This is true, too, concerning every Jewish holiday. Which means that on Shavuot—the celebration of the Giving of the Torah—the spiritual energy that was invested into that day over 3,000 years ago is at its strongest.

What is the special spiritual energy of Shavuot and how can we benefit from it? It was on Shavuot that our ancestors proclaimed, “We will do and then we will learn.” So this is the time when we recommit ourselves to the actual performance of mitzvot—even if we haven’t yet learned or don’t yet understand their reasons.

Shavuot is also the time when the spiritual energy of our children, being the guarantors for the Torah, is at its strongest. This is the time when we must renew our commitment to providing our children with a proper Jewish upbringing and education as well as facilitating the proper Jewish education of all Jewish children, wherever they may be.

We can begin doing both of the above by going to the synagogue this Shavuot to hear the reading of the Ten Commandments and by bringing along with us Jewish children of all ages—children in age, children at heart, or children in Jewish knowledge. Be there, and be a part of a 3,000-year-old unbroken chain of Jewish commitment and pride.

Shmuel Beiman

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.



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

Chairman Rabbi Dovid Raskin ז"ל
Director Rabbi Shmuel Butman
Program Director Rabbi Kasriel Kastel
Secretary Rabbi Moshe P. Goldman
Administrator Rabbi Shlomo Friedman
Layout Rivky Lauffer
Associate Editor Dovid Y. B. Kaufmann ז"ל
Chairman Editorial Comm. Rabbi Nissen Mangel
Rebbe photo S. Roumani

L’Chaim contains words from sacred literature. Please do not deface or discard. All contents © 2023 by L.Y.O. ISSN 1050 0480
L’Chaim Subscriptions For a one year subscription send \$55, payable to LYO (560 elsewhere) to: L’Chaim, 1408 President St., Bklyn., NY, 11213
Learn about Moshiah Visit www.moshiah.com or call (718) 953 6100

A New Home for Jewish Students at University of Chicago

Amid a week-long, anti-Israel encampment at the University of Chicago, the Jewish community proudly showed up to the groundbreaking ceremony for a \$3.2-million expansion of the Rohr Chabad Center on campus. The new expansion will include a large multi-purpose room that can comfortably seat 150. There will be dedicated study spaces, a student lounge, extra bathrooms and an enlarged kosher kitchen. In addition, the new basement area will include a mikvah, the first ritual bath in Hyde Park since 1976.

The student lounge will be named for Ilan Naibryf, a rising senior and Chabad student board president who died in 2021 in the tragic collapse of the Champlain Towers South condominium building in Surfside, Fla. He was 21 years old.

“We believe that when Jewish students are in a crisis like this, the best thing to do is to build and to grow,” said Baila Brackman, who has directed Chabad-Lubavitch at the University of Chicago and Hyde Park with her husband, Rabbi Yossi Brackman, for the past 22 years.

What’s In A Name?

RUTH is from the Hebrew meaning “friendship.” Megilat Ruth tells the story of the Moabitess who embraced Judaism and was the great-grandmother of King David, from whom Moshiach will be descended.

REUVEN means “Behold, a son.” He was Jacob’s first-born son by his wife Leah. First mentioned in Genesis 29:32

MOSHIACH MATTERS

It is known that every word of the Torah is extremely important. So how can it be that the Torah elaborates on the fact that the Matriarch Sarah laughed when she found out that G-d promised her a son? How is it the Torah elaborates on the negativity of our Matriarchs? The Chafetz Chaim explained: It