



In the year 361 of the Common Era, 293 years after the destruction of the Second Holy Temple, a new leader of the Roman Empire ascended the throne. Julian would be Caesar for only two years, but his short reign would be distinguished by an unusually friendly relationship with the Jewish people. In fact, Julian was responsible for initiating an abortive attempt to rebuild the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. We are aware of these events thanks to a Greek historian who recorded them for posterity some 80 years after they occurred.

Julian was a nephew of Constantine the Great, who established Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire. He also moved its capital from Rome to Byzantium (Turkey), and changed its name to Constantinople.

When Constantine died, his three sons fought over who would take his place. Almost all the members of the royal family were murdered, with the exception of Julian. After traveling to Athens and studying philosophy, he became disaffected with Christianity and reverted to the ancient idolatry of the Romans.

Julian went on to become a celebrated military leader, enjoying many victories over the warring Germanic tribes. When the then-reigning Emperor decided to exile him to the Far East, his troops rebelled and established him as the new Caesar. One year later, he declared full religious freedom for all citizens of the Empire. In truth, he was far more benevolent toward his Jewish subjects than to his Christian ones. In an official letter addressed to the "Jewish communities" of the realm, he wrote that he was henceforth exempting the Jews from the special tax that had been levied against them, and declared himself a long-time defender of the Jewish people.

In the same letter he blamed his uncle, the late Emperor Constantine, and his uncle's cohorts, whom he termed "barbarians," for the state-sponsored and institutionalized discrimination against the Jews. At the end of the letter he reassured everyone that he had personally had them killed, and advised the Jews to forget about them and relegate their nefarious deeds to history. Julian also promised that after the war with the Persians ended he would rebuild the holy city of Jerusalem, "which for so many years you have longed to see inhabited; indeed, I will help you inhabit it."

In general, however, the Jews were unimpressed by Julian's professions of fellowship. They knew that they were not sincere, and were actually motivated by selfish political ambitions. Nor did they consider him a new "Cyrus," who had been sent by Divine Providence to bring their exile to an end and rebuild the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

In fact, the Greek historian who chronicled this episode wrote that Julian's "friendship" with the Jews was largely the result of his hatred for the Christians. Moreover, he hoped that they would ultimately follow his example and assimilate into the dominant Roman culture.

At one point, Julian summoned the Jewish elders and asked them why they were not keeping the Torah's laws with regard to the sacrifices. The elders explained that after the Holy Temple was destroyed bringing sacrifices was forbidden, as doing so depends on having a standing Temple with priests to serve in it.

To demonstrate his serious intentions, Julian then ordered that the Jews be given a considerable stipend from the royal treasury, so they could begin to take the first steps toward reconstruction. According to the historian, the Jews actually started recruiting artisans and laborers. Their first task, however, was to clear the Temple area from the filth and debris that had accumulated over the centuries. Women, too, joined in the work, while others contributed their jewelry. After the ground was cleared they were ready to lay the foundation stone, but an extremely powerful earthquake intervened. Huge boulders flew in all directions, and the earth split in many places. A number of Jewish workers were injured, houses came tumbling down, and many residents of the city lost their lives in the disaster.

When the dust settled, the laborers returned to their tasks. Some assumed they were still obligated to carry out the Emperor's orders, while others truly wished to continue. In any event, they refused to recognize the Divine Providence that was obviously against rebuilding the Temple at that time.

And then, as if to further indicate G-d's displeasure, a huge fire broke out at the construction site and many more workers were killed. At that point everyone agreed that the time had not yet arrived to build the Temple, and the project was halted.

Although there is no way to verify all the details in the Greek historian's account, it is undisputed that the Emperor Julian fell in battle against the Persians in 363, effectively putting an end to his plans.

The Rebbe has prophesized that the time for the Final Redemption has arrived. May we merit to see the Temple rebuilt immediately and at once.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT
on the weekly Torah portion

These are the words which Moses spoke to all of Israel (Deut. 1:1)

The Book of Deuteronomy begins with Moses chastising the Children of Israel for their transgressions in the wilderness. When harsh words were necessary, Moses didn't refrain from using them. However, this was only when addressing "all of Israel"; when speaking with G-d, Moses consistently defended the Jewish people and acted as their advocate. This contains a lesson for all Jews, and in particular, Jewish leaders. (Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev)

Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses began to expound this law (Deut. 1:5)

According to our Sages, Moses explained the Torah in all 70 languages spoken by mankind. Why was this necessary? Every gentile nation has its own particular power that opposes the Torah. By translating the Torah into every language, Moses enabled the Jews to preserve the Torah regardless of where they would go in their future exile. (Chidushei HaRim)

You have tarried long enough on this mountain (Deut. 1:6)

The fact that the Jews were not allowed to "tarry" at Mount Sinai - the place where the Torah was given - teaches us that a Jew must never be concerned only with himself. Rather, he must try to extend his positive influence to others, even those who might be far from "Sinai." (Likutei Sichot)

Hear the causes between your brothers and judge righteously (Deut. 1:16)

From this we derive two important principles: A judge must always listen attentively to both sides of a dispute, no matter how long and rambling the arguments. Secondly, he must always make sure that both sides are treated equally when hearing their cases. (Ohr HaChaim)



8:04 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
3 Av/July 21
Torah Portion Devarim
Shabbat Chazon
Ethics Ch 2
Shabbat ends 9:08 pm

L'Chaim
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Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"May there be peace in your wall, tranquility in your palaces" (Psalm 122:6) Year of Unity - Hakhel

LIVING WITH THE REBBE
from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

Our Torah portion, *Devarim*, begins with a rebuke of the Jewish people. Moses lectures them on many of their failings. It ends, however, on a positive note: Moses tells the Jewish people that when they enter the Land and go out to battle against Canaan, they should not fear, because G-d will fight for them.

So too in the Haftora, Isaiah starts his vision with a rebuke of the Jewish people. "Woe to a sinful nation, a people heavy with iniquity, evildoing seed, corrupt children. They forsook the Lord; they provoked the Holy One of Israel; they drew backwards." But the Haftora ends on a positive note: "Zion will be redeemed through justice..." (This Shabbat is called Shabbat Chazon, the Sabbath of Vision. It is named for the first words of the Haftora, "The vision of Isaiah.")

These readings are always read on the Shabbat before Tisha B'Av (the fast of Ninth of Av), the saddest day on the Jewish calendar. Tisha B'Av commemorates the destruction of both of our Temples in Jerusalem and much more.

The rebukes found in our Torah portion and Haftora seem to fit the general theme of Tisha B'Av. But how do the encouraging endings fit such a sad and calamitous day?

For one thing, the optimism at the end enables us to realize that though Tisha B'Av is a sad day, the sadness connected with it has a positive purpose. None of the suffering was in vain.

Even more, with the coming of Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Third Holy Temple, we will see with clarity how our efforts and suffering were that which brought about the ultimate redemption.

When Moshiach comes, Tisha B'Av will be celebrated as a happy day. But a question begs to be asked. Will the calamitous events of the day be erased from Jewish history? Can facts cease to exist? Tisha B'Av will be a holiday because with the revelation of Moshiach there will also be revealed to us that all of the Tisha B'Av events were in truth positive.

Each of us finds ourselves in difficult situations from time to time. It's hard to see the positive in them. But if a person takes the time to recognize that G-d placed him or her in that specific situation, he will realize that there must be a positive purpose. Though he might not be aware of what the purpose is, he will be able to keep upbeat and positive.

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.

Coming Home

The business trip is over – finally. Successful? Oh, yes. In fact, the most successful business trip you've ever taken. But grueling. It was cross-country and even took you overseas. There were delays, lousy accommodations, scheduling conflicts, missed appointments, and a few good deals gone sour at the last moment.

It was all worth it, though. You made invaluable contacts – lifetime commitments. Some excellent sales. Even on the rare occasion when you didn't close the deal, you succeeded in changing the other guy's mind a little. The most hostile contact had in the end to acknowledge the truth of your presentation, whether or not he accepted your offer. And changing that mind set from negative to positive, might bring more in the future. So really, every minute of the trip paid off somehow.

But you've been gone from home a long time. Way too long. It seems you've lost track of time. Sometimes it's hard to remember what the house looks like. And the family – oh, sure, you talk to them on the phone, keep in touch by long distance, but of course it's not the same. You want to be with them. Only now do you realize how much you miss them.

And then, it happens. Your flight is delayed. Bad weather. An engine malfunction. You're stuck, so close, so very close, but with no way to get out of the airport, no way to get home. You're tired, frustrated, angry and not a little worried. Will they cancel your flight? Will you ever get home?

When at last the announcement comes to board the plane, your relief and joy

know no bounds. We the Jewish people have been on a "business trip" for over two thousand years. It's taken us across countries and over all the seas. We've been "selling" G-dliness, changing how the world views itself and how it acts, even though sometimes that change seems imperceptible. But the goodness in the world, a goodness that stems from the holiness in the Torah, has been growing. And it's grown because wherever we've gone we've established holiness, revealing the truth of Torah and inculcating the value of mitzvot.

Of course there have been obstacles, delays, hostilities, hardships, etc. But when we look back on our accomplishments, on the sparks of holiness we've gathered, on the transformation of the world into a dwelling place for G-d, we must feel that ultimately, it was all worth it.

Yet now, when it's time to go home there are delays, disappointments and diversions. It's been so long since we've been home, home living in peace and security. It's been so long since we've been home in Israel, an Israel unthreatened, whole, without internal strife. It's been so long since we've been home in a Jerusalem, united, with the Holy Temple standing, and all the people visibly experiencing the Divine Presence. We're so close to Moshiach, to the final Redemption, that any postponement, hindrance or impediment makes us tired, frustrated, angry and not a little worried.

We don't want to wait any more. We want to go home.

לעילוי נשמת
ה"חזר"
הרה"ג הרה"ח בעל כשרון בעל מדות ויר"ש
התמים הרב ר' יואל ז"ל
בן הרה"ח התמים ר' רפואל נחמן הכהן ז"ל כהן
נפטר וא' מנחם-אב ה'תשפ"א
ת"צ"ב"ה

SLICE OF LIFE

Moshe Our Comfort



Rabbi Yoav-Zeev Robinson at the brit

Abdul was born and raised in the Bedouin diaspora, to a Jewish mother by the name of Rina and an Arab father. His young mother was subjected to serious, ongoing violence, to the point that she decided to escape, leaving behind Abdul, 11, and his 10-year-old brother, Mussa.

The Arab wasn't willing to let his wife go. After a few months, he had a young woman in his *chamula* (clan) contact Rina, and use some pretext to lure her to nearby Rahat. The woman said she needed to pay Rina back several hundred shekels she'd borrowed from her years earlier.

In desperate need of money, Rina jumped at the opportunity, and traveled to Rahat, the Bedouin capital of the Negev. However, on her way from the bus station to the designated meeting place she was run over by a car being driven at breakneck speed. The driver, not content with striking her once, made a u-turn and ran her over again, before disappearing into the darkness.

As the incident occurred 15 years ago, when security cameras in that part of the country were rare, the police were helpless in solving the crime and the murderer was never caught.

Abdul and Mussa, who had been named David

and Moshe by their Jewish mother, were suffering from serious violence at the hands of their father and members of his *chamula*. The fact that the father belonged to a well-known crime family meant that he didn't value the lives of others. And the fact that the boys were referred to as "the sons of the Jewess" only made things worse.

After three years of beatings, David-Abdul and Moshe-Mussa decided that they'd had enough, and ran away. They moved to Tel Aviv and lived on the streets; every so often, when it was cold or rainy, they were given a few nights in a youth shelter run by the city's welfare services.

And then tragedy struck: One night, Moshe-Mussa was stabbed to death by another street person in the height of an argument. If that wasn't bad enough, David-Abdul was forced to see his brother buried as a Muslim at the insistence of their father.

David continued living on the streets until a "chance" meeting with a Chabad chassid that changed his life. The young chassid was manning a tefillin booth and asked David if he would like to put on tefilin and make a blessing. David had no idea what tefillin were, but took the chassid up on his offer.

The two began talking, and David shared the story of his life.

The young chassid, moved by the tragic tale, told David, "If your mother is Jewish, then you are Jewish." He contacted Yad L'Achim and set up a meeting with them.

That meeting was a turning point in his life. After confirming his identity, the Yad L'Achim staffers put him up in a clean, furnished apartment. It also assigned him a mentor, who met with him twice a week to teach him basic concepts in Judaism, and found him a job. Later, when he had turned his life around and was settled, they helped him find a suitable young Jewish woman to marry.

Having no family to help with the wedding arrangements, Yad L'Achim stepped in to provide assistance.

This past month, there was an especially moving closing of the circle. David became a father, and at the *brit* (circumcision) of his

won, organized with Yad L'Achim's help by a mohel from "Brit Yosef Yitzchak," he named his first-born Moshe, after his brother.

Yad L'Achim's Rabbi Yoav-Zeev Robinson, who has served for years as a father figure for David, was honored at the brit.

Recalls Rav Robinson: "David and I burst out in tears when he named his first-born son after his brother. After regaining his composure, he told me quietly, 'I will raise little Moshe like a true Jew, not like my brother who was raised and buried as a Muslim. This Moshe will be our comfort and a source of honor for our mother. Through this child will restore our heritage for future generations.'"

Eight boys who were rescued with their mothers from Arab villages by Yad L'Achim celebrated their bar mitzvahs together in a moving ceremony at the Western Wall.

The youths were called to the Torah as their mothers looked on tearfully. "All the years in the village, I worried about my son's future," said one. "Now I know that I won, and my son will grow up as a Jew."

After the ceremony, the families headed to the Western Wall Tunnels where they were given a "tour" of the Second Holy Temple using advanced virtual-reality technology, as part of a program called "A Look into the Past." The program gave mothers and sons a sense of what the Holy Temple was like in all its glory.

Yad L'Achim's Suri Kostlitz was approached by two of the mothers, immigrants from the Former Soviet Union, who told her that they had never before been given an explanation of the significance of the Holy Temple and its central role in the lives of Jews throughout the generations.

"After years of disconnect, they felt a sense of belonging, which brought them to tears," she recounted.

The Bar Mitzva ceremony was held in conjunction with the Chabad House in Netanya, which celebrated the bar mitzvahs of 30 youngsters in the city, as it does every year at this time.

For more information visit yadlachim.org

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Continued from the previous issue

This is what he [Rambam] states (Par. 4):

And when a king of the House of David will arise, dedicated to the study of the Torah and observance of the *Mitzvos* [commandments] like his father David, according to the *Torah Shebiksav* [Written Torah] and *Shebeal-Peh* [Oral Torah], and he will compel all the Jewish people to walk in it and strengthen its fences, and he will fight the wars of G-d, he is assumed to be the Moshiach. (Note that this is not yet a certain sign of the *Geulo* [Redemption], for all this can still take place in a state of *Golus* [exile]. However) If he did so and has succeeded (in the above matters, namely having won all battles and impelled all the Jewish people to study the Torah and to mend its fences, we are still not sure and require a further sign, namely), and built the *Beis Hamikdosh* [Holy Temple] in its place (clearly in the holy city of Jerusalem, indicating that there would be a large Jewish population in that city, yet we are still not certain of the end of the *Golus*, so a further factor must be fulfilled, namely), and he gathers in the dispersed ones of Israel – then he is certainly the Moshiach.

Surely no further commentaries are necessary.

I will only add a further significant point, namely that this ruling and *Din* [legislation] of the Rambam is not contested by any *Posek* [Rabbinic authority]. Even the author of the *Shulchan Aruch* [Code of Jewish Law], who has written a commentary on the Rambam, including this very chapter, the well known *Kesef Mishneh* has nothing to question here, accepting it fully, nor are there any other *Poskim* to differ.

To be sure there are various homilies and references and allusions to the period of the *Geulo* in the *Aggadah* and *Midrash*, etc., but these are homilies, and do not affect the practical *Halachah* [Jewish law]. Even in the *Halachah* we find at first certain differences of opinion on different matters, in the *Mishna* and *Gemorah*, but once the final decision and *Psak Din* [legal ruling] is arrived at, it is valid for all without question.

It is clear from the above *Psak Din* of the Ram-

bam that before there can be a *Kibbutz Golyos* [ingathering of exiles] and the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdosh* in its place, there has to be a full and complete return to the Torah and *Mitzvos* while Jews are still in the *Golus*, and it is this that is the prelude and preparation for the *Geulo*.

I am aware of the fact that there are many individuals who wish to rely on this or that saying of our Sages, in the Tractate *Sanhedrin* or in the *Yerushalmi* and the like, in order to base upon it their view, but I have always marveled at the inconsistency of these individuals in regard to their entire approach. For surely the Rambam knew just as well those sayings of the Sages in the *Sanhedrin* or *Yerushalmi*, etc., and understood them at least as well as the individuals quoting them. The inconsistency is in the fact that these very individuals consider every word and expression of the Rambam's elsewhere as most meticulous, and study it with awesome reverence. Yet when it comes to this simple and straightforward *Psak Din* of the Rambam, they simply ignored it altogether.

The reason I have written at some length in reply to your letter (though this length is overly brief in comparison with the subject matter), is that it is simply painful to contemplate how misplaced the concern is of some well-meaning individuals.

Instead of each and every Jew, young and old, man and woman, dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to reduce and eventually do away with the causes which brought about the *Golus*, namely "*Mipnei chatoenu* – because of our sins we have been exiled from our land," and what these "sins" are is clearly spelled out in the *Shulchan Aruch* – there are many Jews, undoubtedly with good intentions, who use all their energy and influence to find all sorts of means and ways of human invention to bring about the end of the *Golus*.

This is doubly painful for, firstly, it is simply a deception of Jews to believe that there can be any other way of *Geulo* than that which G-d had specified, and secondly, while engaged in other ways and means in futile effort to end the *Golus*, they cannot engage fully in the true battle against the *Golus* in terms of the *Psak Din* [legal ruling] of the Rambam.

May G-d grant that each and all of us in the midst of all Israel, should be inspired with true Heavenly inspiration to walk in the way of the Torah and to mend its fences, for it is this that will prepare the way for Moshiach to implement all the conditions necessary to bring about the truly full and complete *Geulo*.

MOSHIACH MATTERS

May He make you so many more than you are, a thousand times (*Deut. 1:11*) The ultimate

fulfillment of this blessing will take place in the Messianic era, as prophesized by Isaiah: "The smallest one shall become a thousand, and the youngest one a strong nation." At that time, the Jewish people, now numerically insignificant, will multiply and become a thousand times as great. (*Binyan Ariel*)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

On Thursday (July 27) will be the fast of the Ninth of Av, known as *Tisha B'Av*. While this sad day is most noted for being the day of the destruction of both of our Holy Temples, we see that throughout our history, both before the era of the Holy Temples and after, the ninth day of Av has been a day of sadness and loss.

During the time that the Jews traveled in the desert from Egypt to Israel, they sent spies to survey the land of Israel before entering. When the spies brought back an untrue, negative report, the Jews complained to Moses about being brought to Israel. For this, the Jews were punished by having to remain in the desert for 40 years. This punishment was meted out on the Ninth of Av.

In 1492, during the Spanish Inquisition, the Ninth of Av was the deadline by which all Jews who had refused to be baptized had to leave Spain. Those Jews who did leave often suffered great difficulties until finding a new home, and many didn't survive the journey. Of those who did remain, many continued to retain their Jewish identity, and became known as *Marranos*. Many of them were discovered and burnt at the stake in mass *Autos-de-Fe*.

And even in this century, World War I broke out on the ninth of Av, causing a great upheaval among the European Jewish communities. It brought about the Communist Revolution, which systematically set out to destroy Judaism in Russia. The economic conditions in Germany following their defeat in World War I led to the rise of Nazism and the Holocaust.

Our Sages teach us that in the future, when Moshiach comes, *Tisha B'Av* will be transformed from a day of fasting and mourning to a day of great joy. In this darkest time, the spark of redemption is born. May this happen NOW!

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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Largest Jewish Complex

Germany's largest Jewish complex since the Holocaust, Pears Jewish Campus in Berlin was recently dedicated amidst much joy and fanfare. Located in the Wilmerdsorf neighborhood of Berlin, the, 86,000 square feet campus boasts schools, a library, a kosher deli, a movie theater, a music studio, an indoor basketball court that can be transformed into a lecture hall or a reception venue. The Jewish educational, recreational and religious center is the new home of Chabad-Lubavitch of Berlin under the directorship of Rabbi Yehudah and Leah Teichtal, the Rebbe's emissaries in Berlin since 1996.



Celebration in Ukraine

Jewish Bar and Bat Mitzva age youth participated in an exciting seminar in the Carpathian Mountains. Organized by EnerJew, FSU's Jewish Youth Movement, the seminar included interactive workshops, classes, and unique experiences.

Hakhel – Unite!

At the time when the Holy Temple was in existence the Jewish people were actually able to fulfill the commandment of Hakhel. It is possible that it would be enough for them to just be involved in the mitzva (commandment) of Hakhel and not be concerned with the spiritual aspects that also are involved. This is not true now when the Holy Temple is no longer in existence. The only thing left now is a remembrance of its existence. In our times the spiritual aspects of Hakhel are much more evident. This being the transcendence of one's being through the awe and reverence of G-d. (*The Rebbe, 25 Elul, 1987*)

