

# L'Chaim



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe  
on the Torah portion

The opening verses of Nitzavim, the first of this week's two Torah portions, begin: "You are standing this day, all of you, before the L-rd your G-d, your heads, your tribes, your elders...all the men of Israel...from the hewer of your wood to the drawer of your water."

Concerning these verses, the Midrash states that the Jewish people are likened to a bundle of straw. Each one individually is weak and can be easily broken, but once the straw is gathered into a bundle it is impossible to make it bend. So too is it with the Jewish people. When we are bound together and stand united we are powerful in the face of our enemies. Indeed, Jewish unity is the vessel for containing G-d's blessing, as we say in our prayers, "Bless us, our Father, together as one."

In truth, there is no power in the world that can dominate the Jewish people. But if such is the case, how is it possible for any bad to befall them? This only occurs if the individual Jew causes a tiny rift in his bond with G-d that allows external factors to enter. It is this self-induced damage in the relationship between G-d and His people which brings about a lack of unity and makes the Jews vulnerable to harm. When peace and unity reign, the Jews are impervious to attack.

How does the tiny breach first emerge? When a Jew's attention to mitzvos are gradually left by the wayside.

Thus the first step in fortifying our spiritual defenses is to make sure that this initial fissure is never allowed to form. How? Through Jewish unity.

Human nature is such that a person is often unaware of his own shortcomings. "All sins are concealed by love." Indeed, our self-love prevents us from being objective. We cannot perceive even great flaws, how much more so the smaller ones. However, when Jews come together, each one can see the shortcomings of his neighbor. A good friend's gentle admonition can cause us to correct our ways, thereby strengthening our fortifications against the Evil Inclination.

This is one of the reasons the Mittlerer Rebbe (Rabbi Dov Ber, the second Chabad Rebbe) encouraged his followers to acquire a friend for this specific purpose: to encourage and inspire each other along the path of Torah and mitzvot. He explained that when two Jews unite to improve themselves and their relationship with G-d, their two G-dly souls are fighting only one Evil Inclination, and it is far easier to emerge victorious.

If this was true generations ago, how much more so is it applicable in our own times, when the darkness of exile has intensified.

By maintaining our Jewish unity we will remain invincible, as it states, "You are standing this day, all of you."

Adapted for Maayan Chai from Likutei Sichot, Volume 2

## Coronation Night

By Rabbi Yosef Y. Jacobson

In a 1974 sermon, Rabbi Yosef Dov Soleveitchik (1903-1993), related about when he was a young child learning in cheder (Jewish school), in the Russian village of Chaslavitch.

"Our teacher, who was a Chabad Chassid (disciple), said to us: 'Do you know what Rosh Hashanah is? The Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek would call the night of Rosh Hashanah – 'Coronation Night'.

"Do you know whom we will be coronating?" the teacher asked.

The young Soleveitchik responded in jest: "Nicholas". (This was when Nicholas still served as the Russian czar).

And the teacher responded: "Nicholas? He was coronated years ago, why do we need to coronate him again? Besides, he is not a real king..."

"Tonight, my dear children, we coronate G-d; we place a crown on G-d..."

"And do you know who places the crown?" The teacher continued. "Yankel the Tailor, Berel the Shoemaker, Zalman the water-carrier..."

Rabbi Soloveitchik concluded: Over the years I have written many discourses on the concept of Rosh Hashanah, but nothing ever made me feel the true depth and power of the day as the words of my childhood teacher.

### WHY BOTHER?

But why does G-d need us to coronate Him? If G-d created us,

does He really need us to declare Him king?

Imagine you assemble 1,000,000 ants and declare yourself king over them. When 50,000 of them then turn left instead of right, you kill them in a single instance. Does that make you king over them? G-d gave us our entire existence; relative to Him we are far smaller and far less significant than an ant in the presence of a human. Can He then said to be our king? Is that not an insult for Him?

Yet here lay one of the great and daring ideas of Judaism. G-d, the perfect endless One, desired to be king not through power. He wanted a relationship with someone distinct of Him who would freely choose to construct a bond with G-d.

So an infinite, omnipotent G-d suspends His infinity, in order to allow space for an intelligent, independent and self-oriented human being who is then capable of choosing G-d as his or her king.

### THE NIGHT

This, the spiritual masters explained, is the meaning of Rosh Hashanah, the day when the first human was created. It is the day when small, vulnerable and lowly human beings invite G-d to serve as their King.

Rosh Hashanah is the most moving day in the Jewish calendar. More than any other day, it embodies the meaning of human existence and the vulnerability of a G-d who linked His fate to man's.

Happy Coronation Night.

# SLICE OF LIFE

## The Meeting that Lasted 45 Years



Mr. Avraham Infeld

I grew up in South Africa in a family that was focused on Jewish education. In fact, although they were not religious, my parents were influential in establishing the first Jewish day school in South Africa where I was educated.

In 1959, shortly after graduating high school, I made aliyah to Israel. There I studied law and also started keeping Shabbat and observing Torah. Eventually, I went to work for the Jewish Agency and was sent as its emissary to the United States.

While in the United States – I was posted to the Baltimore office – I was asked one day in 1969 to accompany a person of great distinction who was visiting from Israel to his meeting with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. I myself had never met the Rebbe although, of course, I knew about him – one can't grow up Jewish without having heard of Chabad or the Rebbe.

The very important visitor from Israel – whom I am not at liberty to name – was not Torah-observant, but he wanted to behave in a correct manner when meeting the Rebbe, and this was the reason my assistance was requested.

We arrived at Chabad Headquarters in Crown Heights, where the gentleman from Israel was welcomed with great respect and taken to see the Rebbe while I waited outside. After about a half-hour, he came out and said that the Rebbe wanted to speak with me. I said, "You must be

mistaken. There is no reason why the Rebbe would want to speak with me." But he insisted that I go in.

Before I tell of what took place when I went into the Rebbe's office, I have to mention that shortly before these events, I had decided to leave the field of Jewish education and had accepted a position to run a new start-up business in Israel.

This is why I was so astonished by what happened next.

I walked into the room, and the Rebbe was standing there. I knew I was standing in the presence of greatness. It is hard for me to describe the emotional feeling of coming face-to-face with the Rebbe – I can only say that it was a rare moment in my life. I felt the Rebbe's presence fill the entire room, and I felt the love in his eyes. He took my hand, held it in both of his hands and said to me in Yiddish, "Avraham, bleibst in chinuch – Avraham, stay in education."

How he could have known that earlier that week I had signed a contract to leave education, I have absolutely no idea. But the way he urged me to stay, with such warmth, touched me deeply and affected me profoundly.

The distinguished visitor was also affected. Afterwards he said to me several times, "Yesh poh mashehu meyuchad – There is something special here." I have to say that, knowing this individual, it was unusual for him to make a statement like this.

When I went home, I cancelled that contract. My wife will testify that for the next two or three months I walked around as if on a cloud. The meeting with the Rebbe had such an incredible impact upon me, even though it lasted only a few minutes.

Of course, I sent the Rebbe a note of thanks, telling him that I decided to follow his advice, and I received a reply from his secretary that the Rebbe sends me his blessing.

The end result was that I dedicated myself to Jewish education for the next forty-five years. I returned to Israel, where I built an institution called the Melitz Center for Jewish Zionist Education, working with tens of thousands of young Israelis and doing educational work with the Israeli Army. And eventually, in May of 2003, I became the international head of Hillel, the world's largest Jewish college

campus organization.

When I returned to the United States to work with Hillel, I had some Hillel leaders come to me and complain that Chabad is competing with us on campus. But I could not understand how anybody could possibly relate to Chabad as competition. After all, were it not for the Rebbe of Chabad, I wouldn't be in education, and I wouldn't be the president of Hillel.

But much more than that, I felt strongly that anybody who is in Jewish education has to see Chabad as a partner. Even when people disagree with some of Chabad's underlying principles, they can't possibly disagree with that very sincere love for every Jew that is an inherent part of Chabad. So, I think that, perhaps, my task at Hillel was to try to change the relationship between Hillel and Chabad, and I think I succeeded. I demonstrated that if any problem arises it can be solved because when there is a desire to work together, we can work together.

This was the result of the few minutes that I spent with the Rebbe – the few minutes in which I confronted greatness, was met with love and warmth, and in which the course of my life was completely changed. For this I will be forever grateful.

I would just like to add that, in my view, the Rebbe was unique among Jewish leaders. He built a movement based on chessed, on loving kindness – a movement that is slowly but surely changing the Jewish world. The Jews are a people who have a covenant with God, and the Rebbe conveyed to his followers that their love for this people must be unlimited.

At Hillel, we would spend hours upon hours training people how to work with students on campus, but nothing can compare with the effect of a Chabad rabbi and his wife opening up their home to students and welcoming them with genuine love and warmth. That doesn't come from training. That doesn't come from being taught how to do it. It has to be implanted in the heart and soul. And this is what the Rebbe did.

*Mr. Avraham Infeld is the founder of Melitz, one of the early architects of Birthright Israel, and past chairman of Israel Forum and Areivim. From 2003 to 2005, he served as the president of Hillel International. He was interviewed in September of 2014.*

## Northernmost Emissaries 'Warm Up' Jewish Life on Alaskan Frontier



Rabbi Heshy and Chani Wolf and their 1-year-old daughter, Mushka.

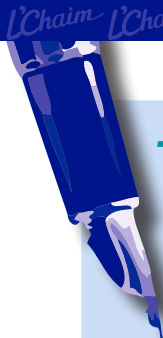
Out of the 5,000 Chabad-Lubavitch emissary couples already serving throughout the world, Rabbi Heshy and Chani Wolf have assumed the title of the northernmost emissaries: Last month they officially established the new Chabad center in Fairbanks, Alaska. The new Chabad center in Fairbanks follows in the wake of the state's long-standing, successful Chabad centers in Anchorage and the Mat-Su valley, under the leadership of the regional directors, Rabbi Yosef and Esty Greenberg.

Since the Wolfs have begun scouting Fairbanks in preparation of their move, they have already seen a shift in Fairbanks Jewish structure and have uncovered that there are like 1,500 Jews in the area.

"Alaska was a place that the Rebbe put a specific emphasis on," said Rabbi Greenberg. "The new Chabad of Fairbanks is a testimony that the Rebbe's vision is going strong and continues to shape Jewish life around the world, and the persistent need for the expansion of Chabad centers to assist in the needs of Jewish community, whether in Alaska or anywhere else."

## Listen to the sounds of the Shofar

The "mitzva of the day" on Rosh Hashana is to hear the sounding of the shofar. If you are house-bound or hospitalized and will not be able to attend Rosh Hashana services where the shofar will be sounded, call your local Chabad Lubavitch Center to find out if one of their volunteers can visit you and help you fulfill this important mitzva.



# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

By the Grace of G-d  
In the Days of Selichos 5715. Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Sons and Daughters of  
Our People Israel, Everywhere,  
G-d bless you

Greetings and Blessing:  
On the eve of Rosh Hashanah I extend my prayerful wishes to my brethren, every Jew and Jewess in the midst of our people Israel, the time hallowed traditional blessing of "Shono toivo umesuko"—a good and sweet year.

The celebration of Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the year, has been ordained by our Torah to take place on the anniversary of the Creation, but not on the first day of Creation. It has been made to coincide with the sixth day of Creation, the day when Man was created.

The significance of this day, and of this event, is not in the fact that a new creature was added to Creation, a creature one plane higher than the rest of the animal kingdom, as the animal is superior to plant, and plant to mineral.

The significance lies in the fact that the new creature—Man—was essentially different from the others. For it was man who recognized the Creator in and through Creation, and, what is more, brought about the elevation of the entire Creation to that recognition and thus to the fulfillment of its Divine design and purpose. Since such recognition and appreciation of the Creator is the ultimate purpose of the Creation.

One of the main distinguishing features which set Man apart from all other creatures, is the free choice of action which the Creator bestowed upon him.

Man can use this special Divine gift in two opposing directions he may, G-d forbid, choose the way leading to self-destruction and the destruction of everything around him; or, he can choose the right way of life, which would elevate him and the Creation with him to the highest possible perfection.

And to help us recognize and choose the right path, we were given the Torah, which is Divine and eternal, hence its teachings are valid for all times and in all places.

It is not possible for man to make his choice unaided, merely by virtue of his intellect, for the human intellect is limited. The intellect can only serve to discover and bring forth that inner absolute intuition and faith in things which lie beyond and above the realm of the intellect; the faith and intuition which are the heritage of every Jew, therewith to illuminate his entire being and to guide him in his daily living to a life inspired by Torah and Mitzvoth.

On Rosh Hashanah man stands not only before the Divine Judgment, but also before his own.

The verdict of his own judgment, with regard to the future, must be: that he takes upon himself to fulfill his duty, that is, to work for the fulfillment—in himself and in his surroundings—of the call:

"Come, let us worship, bow down and kneel before G-d our Maker," a call for absolute submission to G-d first sounded by the first man, Adam, on the day of his creation, on the first Rosh Hashanah.

This can be attained only through a life inspired and guided by the Torah. And that he must once and for all abandon the opposite road, which can only lead to destruction and doom.

Let no one think: who am I and what am I to have such tremendous powers of building or destruction.

For we have seen—to our sorrow—what even a small quantity of matter can do in the way of destruction through the release of atomic energy. If such power is concealed in a small quantity of matter—for destructiveness, in denial of the design and purpose of Creation, how much greater, is the creative power entrusted to every individual to work in harmony with the Divine purpose, for in this case one is also given special abilities and opportunities by Divine Providence to attain the goal for which we have been created: the realization of a world in which "Each creature shall recognize that Thou didst create him, and every breathing soul shall declare: 'G-d, the G-d of Israel, is King, and His reign is supreme over all.'"

With the blessing of  
Kesivo vachasimo toivo,

Moshiach, 'Master, when are you coming?' And he replied: 'When your wellsprings [teachings] will be disseminated outward.'

From this reply it is apparent that the Baal Shem Tov's teachings--Chasidut--are closely connected with the coming of Moshiach. Chasidut is the vessel for the great light of Moshiach.

(Likutei Dibburim)

## 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

With Rosh Hashana upon us we are preparing to enter a new year. May this year be a year of revealed blessing and

שנת אתה תקום תרחם ציון, שנת "אפגלייטיקייט" בעניני גאולה ומשיח, שנת אמונה בה' ובמשה עבדו, שנת ארו עם ענני שמיא, שנת אראנו ונפלאות, שנת נפלאות בכל, שנת בנין בית המקדש, שנת בטחון, שנת נפלאות גדולות, שנת גאולה האמתית והשלימה, שנת נפלאות דגולות, שנת דירן צנח, שנת דור השביעי דור הגאולה, שנת דוד מלך ישראל חי וקים, שנת הקיצו ורננו עפר ורננו שוכני עפר והוא בתוכם, שנת הגה הירא משיח בא וכבר בא, שנת התגלות מלך המשיח, שנת והוא יגאלנו, שנת ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו, שנת זה יתחננו, שנת נפלאות חרותנו, שנת שיר חדש, שנת טובה מושפעת הרבה (מלשון הרמבם), שנת יחי המלך, שנת כתיבה וחתומה טובה, שנת כינור של משיח, שנת לימוד תורתו של משיח, שנת מלך המשיח, שנת יבוא מנחם לחטנו, שנת נפלאות, שנת ניסים גלויים, שנת נחמה בכפלים, שנת סגולה, שנת סיום וסוף הגלות, שנת גילוי אור אין סוף, שנת ענינים הנגיע זמן גאולתכם, שנת פירות תשב ירושלים, שנת צמח דוד עבדך, שנת קיבוץ גלויות, שנת קבלת מלכותו על ידי העם, שנת ראש בני ישראל, שנת שלום, שנת שיר חדש, שנת שופרו של משיח, שנת שלימות התורה, שנת שלימות העם, שנת שלימות הארץ, שנת תחיית המתים, שנת תורה חדשה מאתי הוצא

A year of "Arise and have mercy on Zion,"... uplifted in matters of Moshiach and the Redemption... faith in G-d and Moses His servant... traveling with the Heavenly clouds... Revealed Wonders; Wonders in Everything... the building of the Holy Temple... trust; Great wonders... the true and complete Redemption; Dignified Wonders... victory... the seventh generation is the generation of Redemption... King David lives and is eternal; "Those who rest in the dust will arise and sing and he will lead them"... Moshiach is coming and he has already come... the revelation of Moshiach; "He will redeem us"... "And they believed in G-d and in Moses His servant"; "This one will comfort us"; the wonders of true freedom... a new song; an abundance of good (Rambam); the king shall live; inscribed and sealed for a good year... the harp of Moshiach; learning Moshiach's teachings; the coming of Menachem who will comfort us... the King Moshiach; wonders... revealed miracles... a double portion; treasures... the completion and end of exile... the revelation of the Infinite Divine Light; "Humble ones, the time of your Redemption has arrived"; "Jerusalem will dwell in open space"; Your servant David will go forth; the ingathering of the exiles... acceptance of his sovereignty by the people; Rebbe - Rosh B'nei Yisrael; peace... a new song... Moshiach's shofar... unity of the Torah, unity of the Jewish people, unity of the land of Israel; Resurrection of the Dead... "A new Torah will come from Me"

Shmuel Butman

## 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  
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phone 718 778 6000

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## MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Baal Shem Tov wrote in a letter that on Rosh Hashana of the year 5507 (1746), his soul ascended to the heavenly realms, where he was granted the privilege of entering the palace of Moshiach. "I asked the King



# IT HAPPENED ONCE

It happened in 1648. The infamous Hetman Bogdan Chmielnicki led his wild hordes of Cossacks against the Jews and Poles of the Ukraine, and he almost succeeded in exterminating all Jewish communities along the Dnieper River. Barbaric cruelties, surpassing even the Crusaders', were the daily bread of these devils. In Kiev, scores of Jewish men, women and children barely escaped with their lives. They hid in forests and swamps, constantly in fear of sudden death from the long sabres of Chmielnicki's Cossacks. Only at night, under cover of darkness, did these unfortunate fugitives dare to creep out in search of food for their families.

Rabbi Meyer of Shivotov, which was once one of the largest communities near Kiev, was the spiritual leader of this group of refugees. He had lost his wife at the hands of the Cossacks, and his thirteen-year-old son Hershel was his only consolation. Gifted with a beautiful voice, which made its listeners laugh or cry at the will of its master, Hershel assisted his father greatly in keeping up the low spirits of his companions. More than once, his magical songs held them back from surrendering to the merciless hands of the Cossacks or from committing suicide.

Such a large group of people cannot hide for long without rumors of their whereabouts spreading. They were forced to withdraw deeper and deeper into forests and swamps to escape the oncoming hordes of Chmielnicki's Cossacks. Unwittingly, however, they entered the hunting grounds of Chmielnicki's rival, a man of no less cruelty: Booyar, the leader of the Tartars. But there was one story told about this abnormal maniac that threw a somewhat human light upon him. He was the obedient son of an old nomad woman who controlled him with a wink of her eye.

Finding themselves suddenly trapped from the rear, Rabbi Meyer's group of refugees began to say Viduy, the confession of sins and last prayer, in anticipation of death. Coming from the midst of their suppressed cries and prayers, Hershel's voice was suddenly heard saying Kaddish, praising G-d at this last moment while they were facing the naked swords of the Tartars. As if by magic, the tumult died down. The faces of the Jews lit up, and the cruel savagery, the murderous gleam disappeared from the eyes of the Tartars who crowded around their helpless victims. Their raised hands dropped; spellbound, they listened to the boy who, fully aware of the seriousness of the situation, had put all his powerful emotion into his voice.

Booyar looked out of his tent and witnessed this strange scene. Foaming wildly, brandishing his sword, he stormed forward. He was ready to kill his own men for being fooled by the wretched Jews. Coming closer, he saw that Hershel was the cause of his men's unusual conduct. Booyar grasped the boy's hair with his hand and lifted his sword to chop his head off. In midair his arm was caught by the thin but powerful hand of an old woman. Turning around wildly, Booyar was confronted by his mother. "Do not kill these people, son," she said. "They are under my protection. This boy will sing for me until we reach Constantinople. There you can sell him and his people at a high price." After some hesitation, Booyar gave in.

Thus Rabbi Meyer and his people were saved from certain death. They were dragged along for many months, until the Tartars reached Turkey. Many thousands of refugees from Spain and Portugal had come to this country during the reign of Suleiman II and his Jewish adviser, Don Joseph of Naxos. They had built a beautiful synagogue in Constantinople and had organized one of the most powerful congregations of that time.

It was Rosh Hashana when Booyar brought his victims to the market. All the Jews had gathered in the synagogue, which was right near the marketplace. Many non-Jews in the market looked curiously at the wretched figures of these slaves-to-be. But they had little faith in the Jews' ability to do hard work; they preferred the

strong and healthy-looking natives brought by ship from afar. Under the stress of traveling in captivity, Rabbi Meyer and his men had lost track of time. They did not even know that this day was Rosh Hashana. While they were standing in the marketplace, stared at and ridiculed by the idle onlookers, they suddenly heard the sound of the shofar coming from the nearby synagogue. Rabbi Meyer and his people began to cry as Hershel started the "Unesane tokef" prayer. His voice rose above the noise of the market and soared to the Gates of Mercy.

The crowd of Jews gathered in the big synagogue heard Hershel's prayers. They rushed out into the marketplace, and saw the boy and the poor Jews held for sale by the Tartars. At the command of their rabbi, they hurried home to gather all their valuables and funds. They succeeded in redeeming their brethren. Saved from a terrible fate, Rabbi Meyer and his group joined their liberators in the synagogue. Together they followed Hershel's jubilant voice, thanking G-d for His help at the height of their misery.

*From The Reunion, a collection of short stories, by Gershon Kranzler.*

**THOUGHTS THAT COUNT**  
On the weekly Torah Portion

**And the L-rd your G-d will restore your captivity and have mercy upon you (Deut. 30:3)**

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai said: How beloved is the nation of Israel unto G-d, for the Divine Presence accompanies the Jewish people no matter where their exile leads them. G-d Himself will return together with His people when He leads them out of the exile with the coming of Moshiach. (Zohar)

**To love the L-rd your G-d...and to cleave unto Him (Deut. 30:20)**

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, author of the Tanya, used to say in the midst of his devotion: "Master of the Universe! I do not want your Garden of Eden, nor am I interested in the World to Come. I desire only You alone!"

**If any of you are dispersed at the outermost parts of heaven, from there will the L-rd your G-d gather you (Deut. 30:4)**

No matter how far a Jew may be from Torah and Judaism, G-d promises to gather him back into the fold of the Jewish people when Moshiach comes. When a Jew is spiritually brought back from "the outermost parts of heaven," it hastens Moshiach's coming and brings the Redemption closer. (Lubavitcher Rebbe, shlita)

**See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil (Deut. 30:15)**

One should not perform good deeds in order to live; one should live in order to perform good deeds. (Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk)

Dedicated in Honor of dear friends of the Lubavitch Youth Organization  
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A good and sweet year

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