

# L'Chaim



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

Moses, Aaron and the Elders stood weeping with despair, not knowing what to do. Zimri, a prince of the tribe of Shimon, had openly brought Kozbi, a Midianite woman, into his tent. Since the Giving of the Torah, the Jewish people had been forbidden to marry or have relations with Midianites. Witnessing this scene, together with the Jewish leaders stood Pinchas, one of Aaron's grandsons.

Pinchas saw that the leaders were silent, yet he did not hesitate. Courageously he reminded Moses of the law which the latter seemed to have forgotten--that under these circumstances, one who is "jealous" of G-d's honor may execute the offender. Moses replied, "You are the one who has remembered and reminded us of the law. You be the one to carry out the verdict." Pinchas entered Zimri's tent and slew him together with Kozbi. Pinchas had stemmed the tide of immorality and idol-worship, which had become rampant in the Jewish camp. As a result, Pinchas earned a great spiritual reward for averting G-d's anger against His people.

Pinchas was not only junior to the leaders in age but also in Torah learning. Yet, when Torah-law demanded action, Pinchas did not indulge in rationalization; he did not say "there must be a good reason why Moses, Aaron and the Elders--who surely know Torah better than I--are silent." No! Respectfully, yet boldly, Pinchas spoke up. Then, he took decisive action with great self-sacrifice--and saved Israel. G-d had caused Moses to forget the law, providing Pinchas with the opportunity to act, and earn G-d's reward of the priesthood.

To know is to do: If one becomes aware of a teaching that he can implement, of a mitzva he can do, let him do so. If one witnesses an action that needs to be corrected, let him speak up, let him act. If he sees that the accepted leaders are silent and inactive, let him realize that this may have happened in order that he should earn a special Divine reward. For in the Almighty's plan for the universe, each individual has certain mitzvot and opportunities for Jewish action that are destined to be presented to him--and to no one else--for fulfillment. If, therefore, one notices that no one is taking action in a situation that he has come across, this may be because it is his mitzva, for him alone to fulfill.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

## You Got Me Something??

By Rabbi Eli Friedman

Say you get a child a gift. You say, "I got you something!" The kid lights up and exclaims, "Awesome, what is it?!" In a flash, the wrapping paper is in shreds and the kid is gone with the gift, immersed in the joy of it all. The kid's mother calls after him, "Hey, come back here and say thank you!" The kid speeds back to you, says, "Thank you!" and is gone once more, back to the gift.

Now, say you get an adult a gift. You say, "I got you something." The guy's face lights up and he says, "You got me something?!" Wow, I'm so touched, that is so nice of you!" And for a few minutes, all he can say is various versions of the same sentiment; he's deeply, sincerely touched that you thought of him.

Eventually, you have to remind him, "Open it, open it!" So slowly, he starts tearing open the wrapping paper, and then carefully opens the gift, saying all the time, "So nice of you to think of me!" And even after opening the gift, his attention is still focused on the fact that you thought of him.

Eventually, a kid is expected to grow up and react not so much to the gift as much as the giver. Show appreciation for the generosity, for the love and care. Of course, enjoy the gift because that's what the giver wants to see, but he thought of you, so you think of him.

G-d gave us the Torah and this question of how we respond to unexpected gifts comes to mind.

In the days leading up to the revelation, G-d informed us that He "got something for us!" We were floored. The aroma of

Egyptian idolatry still lingered on us and we were shocked by G-d's announcement, in the spirit of "You got us something? You thought of us?"

Far from asking, "What is it?!" we reacted with a resounding, "Wow, that's amazing! Whatever it is - thank you!!"

The Giver overwhelmed us and eventually He needed to prod us, "Open it, open it!" The simple fact that He thought of us and wanted to give us something - that was more than enough for us. The actual gift was a bonus.



To this day, every time we read the Torah in Shul, we perform a reenactment of that marvelous moment at Sinai.

First, we remove the Torah from its wrapping the way an adult unwraps a gift. We open the doors of the Aron Kodesh; we open the curtains; we remove the Torah. Then we kiss it, sing with it and dramatically declare our love for G-d with the still-wrapped Torah in our arms.

Eventually, we get around to unwrapping the Torah and actually reading what it says.

And yet, even then, if you watch the person getting the Aliyah, he says the blessing over the Torah while the Torah is closed.

After all that pomp and ceremony, G-d says, "Open it! Open it!" And so we open it. We read it, we see what He got us. And after a few minutes, we're back at it: we close the Torah and declare, "Thank you our dear G-d, King of the whole world, for giving us the Torah of truth, the gift of life!"

# SLICE OF LIFE

## Jewish Life in Lagos, Nigeria

By: Chaya Chazan



Rabbi Mendy and Mazal Sternbach, direct the Chabad Center in Africa's most populous city of Lagos, Nigeria

I grew up in Crown Heights and of course, I constantly heard about being a Shliach - an emissary to bring and share the light of Torah with others, but it felt too monumental for someone like me, who didn't grow up with it.

My teacher in yeshiva showed me a talk of the Rebbe where he explains that every Jew can – and should – be a shliach. If you know Alef, teach Alef. It opened my mind to a world of possibilities, and I began to view shlichus as a personal life goal.

As a student, I assisted Rabbi Uzan, the shliach in Abuja, Nigeria, for the month of Tishrei which include the High holidays and the Sukkot and Simchat Torah holidays. He served the Jewish needs of the entire country, so he sent me to Lagos for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

My wife worked for Rabbi Uzan, helping him run programs. A couple years later, he thought it would be a good idea if we met. So while most couples would be taken aback at the mere suggestion of going on shlichus to Africa, for us, it was familiar.

Lagos is the largest city in Africa and is home to hundreds of Jews. Most of these are Israeli Jews, who moved here for business purposes in the early 80's.

Unfortunately, only those who were familiar

with traditions kept them. There was no rabbi or community leader reaching out to teach about Judaism and our rich heritage.

Baruch Hashem, that ended a few years ago, when we opened the Chabad House in Lagos, the second Chabad House in Nigeria. Today, the Chabad House offers a wide range of programs and services continuing to assure the necessities for Jewish life for the whole community.



Whenever there are school holidays, even if it's just for a couple of days, we organize a camp, so we can give the children a thrilling taste of Yiddishkeit tailored just for them.

During one of these camps, we took the children on a boating trip. Knowing how the speeding winds would make short work of the Kippahs perched unfamiliarly on the boys' heads, my wife advised they all wear a snug baseball cap to keep their yarmulkes secure. Amir\* didn't have a baseball cap.

"Put your kippah in your pocket while we're on the boat," my wife recommended.

Amir looked hesitant. "Does Rabbi Mendy do that when he's on a boat?" he asked.

My wife chuckled and admitted that I didn't.

"Well, then I won't either!" Amir declared, marching proudly onto the boat, his hand holding his Kippah securely in place.

One mitzvah always leads to another, and Amir's dedication to Yiddishkeit was mirrored by his family. They asked us to help them keep a kosher Pesach - a request which completely blew us away! While groceries here carry some kosher products, keeping kosher is a challenge on the best of days - let alone for the week of Pesach!

They were all in and were determined to kosher their kitchen. To make it easier on them, we ordered a variety of kosher for Passover products from Israel. The entire story underlined the importance of every positive Mitzvah and Jewish encounter.



During the year of Hakhel, The Shluchim to Abuja, Nigeria, Rabbi Israel and Haya Uzan, flew to Lagos with their family, and we prepared a full Shabbaton for the Shluchim and the entire Lagos community.

At the Shabbos kiddush, an American Jew

named Michael, who was visiting Lagos as the representative of the Academy Awards of Hollywood ("Oscars"), heard about the gathering and joined.

He told the story of how his parents were saved from the concentration camps by a Christian who made them promise that if they make it safely to the United States, they must convert to Lutheranism.

As I began making kiddush, Michael emotionally asked that I have his father in mind for kiddush. After some L'chaim, Rabbi Uzan arranged for Michael to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah the following Shabbos.



Sukkos is a week-long opportunity for continual mitzvos. We decided to build ten sukkahs, and place them in strategic spots around the city. We got to work early, knowing it would take time to prepare such complicated arrangements. We found 10 hosts who each agreed to keep a sukkah in their backyard, and began negotiations for the materials we'd need. Communication was very slow. Between the language barrier, unreliable power and phone lines, and the strangeness of our request, the summer passed quickly without any progress being made.

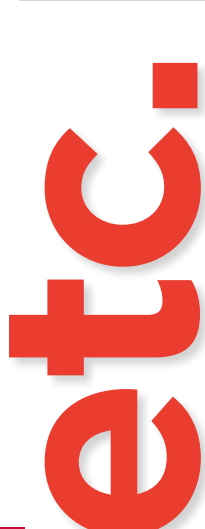
It was just days before Sukkos, and I had no materials on hand to build any of the ten sukkahs. I decided it was time for a heart-to-heart talk with the Boss.

"Hashem," I said, "I'm doing this for You and for Your children. I've done everything in my power to make this happen. If You want it to happen, I leave it in Your hands."

Sukkos was Sunday night. On Friday morning, a dedicated community member managed to get bamboo mats from another supplier in another country. In a miraculous turn of events, all our materials were ready for assembly just before Sukkos.

I spent the entire erev Yom Tov running from one location to another, setting up each of the ten sukkahs. I was exhausted, but it was all worth it when I received the reports. Each of the ten sukkahs helped dozens more Jews gain the inspiration of Sukkos to carry through the rest of the year.

*\*Names changed to protect privacy / Reprinted from www.dollardaily.org*



Little did the thousands attending the event know that Argentinian President Javier Milei was seated inconspicuously in one of the balconies.

### President Javier Milei of Argentina Joins Event Commemorating Rebbe Incognito

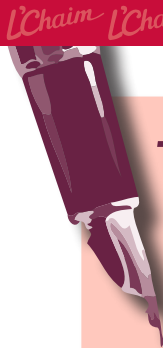
Thousands gathered Monday evening at the Kirchner Cultural Center in Buenos Aires to pay tribute to the enduring legacy of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The event, saw a cross-section of Argentina's burgeoning Jewish community gather to honor the Rebbe, and note especially the tremendous impact he continues to have on Argentinian Jewry.

At one point of the night, giant screens across the room displayed images of President Javier Milei's visit to the Rebbe's Ohel, in Queens, N.Y.— his first trip overseas as president-elect. Little did those in the hall know that Milei himself was seated inconspicuously on one of the balconies.

According to Rabbi Tzvi Grunblatt, director of Chabad-Lubavitch of Argentina, President Milei sat in attendance for the entire two hour event, and requested that the organizers not announce his presence so he could honor the Rebbe, not in the persona of President but rather as the man Javier Milei: an admirer and student of the Rebbe.

## Ethics of the Fathers: Chapter 1

Moses received the Torah from Sinai and gave it over to Joshua. Joshua gave it over to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets gave it over to the Men of the Great Assembly. They [the Men of the Great Assembly] would always say these three things: Be cautious in judgement. Establish many pupils. And make a safety fence around the Torah.



# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

By the Grace of G-d  
3rd of Menachem Av, 5720  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. Aron Dov Sufrin  
26 Linthorpe Road  
London, N.16

Greeting and Blessing:

After a very long interval, I received your letter of the 27th of Tammuz. Needless to say, you need not apologize for writing in English, for the important thing is not the language but the contents of the letter.

I was especially gratified to read about the progress of the Lubavitcher House, and especially about the increase in the number of students and campers in Camp Gan Israel. I have often emphasized that the summer in general, and camp activities in particular, offer extraordinary opportunities to benefit the children, whose attention is not distracted by secular studies during the summer.

I hope you will make efforts in this direction, and thus also create and widen the channels to receive G-d's blessing for Parnosso. I further hope that you will carry on your activities in a spirit of complete faith in the Almighty, and with confidence and joy, as taught by the saintly Baal Shem Tov, whose 200th anniversary of the completion of his life's work coincides with the current year.

Hoping to hear good news from you,

With blessing,



4th of Tammuz, 5728 [1968]

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter of the 5th of July, which reached me with some delay.

You are quite right that I was surprised at the tenor of your letter. For although such a mood would be quite understandable

in regard to another person, it does not harmonize with a believing Jew. As we have talked about it many times, there is every reason to hope with certainty that all the difficulties and setbacks in the Parnossoh [livelihood] situation will be overcome.

You should be quite strong in your Bitachon [faith] in G-d that the time will come - and may G-d grant that it should be very soon - when both of you will realize that the difficulties and trials of the past were Divine blessings in disguise and will be able to say, "I thank Thee O G-d for having been "angry" with me" (Isa. 12:1), for you will see how much G-d's kindnesses have recompensed you for the past, in regard to Parnosso, good name, etc., and above all, in the area of true Yiddish Nachas [Jewish pleasure] from your children.

With blessings,



26 of Tammuz, 5743 [1983]

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your correspondence.

In general, I have already expressed my opinion on the matters about which you wrote, and will again remember you in prayer for the fulfillment of your heart's desires for good.

Now that we are in the period of the Three Weeks, commemorating the sad events which led to the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh [Holy Temple] and the dispersement of our people, we are reminded that every one of us has to do all in one's power to minimize and eventually eliminate the cause that brought about the Destruction and Exile. The only cause of it is clearly spelled out in our Mussaf [additional prayer said on Sabbath and holidays] Prayer: "Be cause of our sins we have been exiled from our land." If alienation from the Jewish way of life, the way of the Torah and Mitzvos has been the cause of the Golus [exile], every one of us must work all the harder to bring Jews closer to the Torah and Mitzvos. Thus, every effort in this direction brings all the nearer the appearance of Moshiach Tzidkeinu [Our Righteous Moshiach], who will usher in the true and complete Geulah [Redemption]. May it come speedily in our days.

With blessing,

Moshiach--why hasn't he arrived yet?"

The Rebbe looked up from his holy books and shook his head. "Perhaps the Moshiach which you are waiting for is not the one which G-d wants to bring."  
*(From Let's Get Ready)*

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

In chapter one of Pirkey Avot we read, "Hillel would say: Be of the disciples of Aaron—a lover of peace, a pursuer of peace, one who loves the creatures and draws them close to Torah".

Our Sages were very careful about each word they wrote. Would it not have been sufficient for Rabbi Hillel to have said, "Love peace and pursue peace" and leave mention of Aaron out? There must be something that we can learn from the fact that Aaron was mentioned as the one who loved and pursued peace.

Who was Aaron? He was the High Priest, the one who served in the Holy of Holies. Because of his exalted position he could have totally separated himself from the rest of the people. Yet, he purposely involved himself in the day-to-day activities of the Jewish nation. So much so that even when two Jews, or even a husband and wife, were fighting he spoke to them and encouraged them to make peace. Thus, we are enjoined to be students of Aaron and learn this wonderful characteristic from him.

In addition, to love and pursue peace is a positive commandment, as the Talmud teaches, "Anyone who strengthens an argument or dispute commits a transgression." Thus, we are to behave like Aaron, who would say, "sholom"--hello--peace--even to an evil person. Through this he was able to bring the person closer to the Torah

May we all take to heart this lesson of Rabbi Hillel as exemplified by Aaron.

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.



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## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Once the students of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi asked him, "Rebbe, we pray, we ask, we beg G-d to bring the



