



Rabbi Avraham Benyamin Sofer was the son and successor of the illustrious rabbi known as the Chasam Sofer. Rabbi Avraham Benyamin, who was called the Ksav Sofer, was appointed by the secular government to the head of Austro-Hungarian Jewry. To mark the Ksav Sofer's appointment, a gathering was made with all the heads of the Jewish communities throughout Austro-Hungaria. At the gathering, the Ksav Sofer addressed the crowd: "In honor of my illustrious guests, I would like to make a surprise presentation." All eyes turned to the Ksav Sofer as he removed his wallet and withdrew from it a small silk pouch. He opened it and took out a gold coin. "This coin is a half-shekel, the same coin used in the Tabernacle and the Holy Temple for sacrifices, and other needs."

Everyone in the room craned their necks to get a better look at the coin. Each person wanted to see it and hold it in his own hands, to experience a personal brush with history. The Ksav Sofer continued, "I received this half-shekel from my father, who received it from his father and so on through all the generations of my family from the times of the Holy Temple. This coin is the only one left; it is unique in the entire world."

An excited murmur passed through the crowd as the coin was passed and lovingly examined. While this was occurring on one side of the room, the rabbis across the room sat discussing its weight and shape and exchanging their differing opinions. A short while passed when suddenly one voice rose above the others saying, "Where is the half-shekel now?"

Everyone started searching for it, but it was as if the coin had disappeared into thin air. The Ksav Sofer turned white. He turned to the assembled crowd and said, "I do not, G-d forbid, suspect anyone of taking the coin. It is forbidden to suspect another Jew. But, it is possible that while your thoughts were so absorbed with the coin, one of you might have accidentally laid it down amongst his other possessions. Therefore, I ask you to please look through your things, and perhaps you will find it."

Everyone did as the rabbi requested, but the coin was not found. Then, the Ksav Sofer had another idea. "Since the coin has not been found, please check your neighbor." Everyone agreed, but suddenly one elderly rabbi who was known as a great scholar, opposed this idea. "It would be good to wait for fifteen minutes. Perhaps the coin will be found."

The Ksav Sofer agreed, but after the fifteen-minute wait, the coin failed to turn up. The elderly rabbi requested another fifteen-minute waiting period, but again it wasn't found. When a third time the rabbi asked for another fifteen minute period, everyone was coming to the conclusion that the rabbi had quietly pocketed the coin and was stalling in the hopes of finding a graceful way to extricate himself from the situation. Even the Ksav Sofer said, "Despite the request of the honorable rabbi, I won't extend the time. In the next five minutes please check your neighbor."

The rabbi again rose and with tears in his eyes, pleaded with the Ksav Sofer to wait yet another fifteen minutes. The Ksav Sofer stood in silence for the allotted time while the elderly rabbi stood in a corner and prayed. Many of the assembled notables were confident that the rabbi would soon admit that he had taken the coin, and waited expectantly.

Suddenly the shammas (orderly) rushed forward and exclaimed, "We found it! After the meal we removed the tablecloths and shook out the crumbs. I started thinking maybe we accidentally shook the coin into the garbage. I searched for it and just now I managed to find it in the garbage."

When everyone settled down, the rabbi asked permission to speak. "Gentlemen, I also have in my possession a gold half-shekel which has been passed down in my family as well. When I set out to attend this gathering, I intended to share with you my prized possession, and so I brought it with me.

"But when our host surprised me by bringing his coin, and in addition saying that his was unique, I left it in my pocket. Imagine what would have happened if we had

searched and the coin had been found in my possession! I would have been considered a thief. Each time I requested another fifteen minutes, I prayed that in the merit of the Chasam Sofer I would not be shamed. Thank G-d, my prayers were answered and the coin was found." The rabbi removed the coin from his pocket and solemnly looked at the half-shekel, which was identical to the other.

When the gathering drew to a close the Ksav Sofer again addressed the crowd. "Do you know why we gathered today? It was to explain the words of the Mishna which teach that we should judge every person in a meritorious fashion, rather than assume that he is guilty. The Mishna appears clear and simple. But we can see for ourselves that if we had found the coin in the rabbi's pocket, would anyone have believed that he hadn't stolen it? Especially as I had stressed that it was unique, would anyone have believed that there was another like it in this very room? So we are gathered here to understand that sometimes circumstances point to someone's guilt, but we should still see him as innocent. We see how deep is this Mishna and how far we must extend ourselves to really fulfill this commandment."

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

**You shall be holy (Lev. 19:2)**  
The commandment to be holy includes sanctifying oneself even within the confines of Torah law. (Ramban)

**You shall be holy, for I am holy (Lev. 19:2)**  
"Holy, but not removed from the world," comments the Ktav Sofer. Man is enjoined to imitate G-d, the source of all holiness, who actively involves Himself in all aspects of His creation. G-d wants us to live a holy life within the physical world, not to be ascetic. A saying exists that a wealthy man's son never has to worry about making a living. Likewise, G-d reassures His children, the Jewish people, that holiness and sanctity are well within their grasp. "For I am holy." "I have enough holiness to go around for everyone." (The Rebbe of Alexander)

**And when you come into the land (Lev. 19:23)**  
Certain commandments only pertain to the land of Israel, and are not applicable outside of its borders. Despite the admonition of the Tzemach Tzedek--the third Lubavitcher Rebbe--to "make here the land of Israel," we should not feel that it is acceptable to languish in exile for even one minute more than necessary. Our goal remains the physical land of Israel and the ushering in of the Messianic era through the coming of Moshiach.

**Counting the Omer:**  
Why must we count the Omer, when we know beforehand exactly how many days there are until Shavuot? The number is always 49--no more and no less. What is gained by our counting them?  
We count the Omer to show our love for each and every day that we are allotted. Indeed, every minute and second of a Jewish life is equally as precious, and should be treasured.

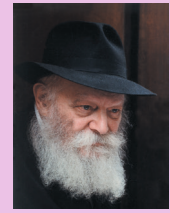
**7:44 Candle Lighting Time**  
NY Metro Area  
2 Iyar / May 10  
Torah Portion Kedoshim  
Ethics Ch 2  
Shabbat ends 8:49 pm

Dedicated in Memory of  
**Judah Leib Lipschitz (Jerry)**  
רפאל יהודה לייב בן הרב מאיר  
By Hedy and Ben Lipschitz

# L'Chaim

The Weekly Publication  
for Every Jewish Person  
נוסד תורתי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson  
"May there be peace in your wall, tranquility in your palaces" (Psalm 122:6)



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

At the very beginning of this week's Torah portion, Kedoshim, there are three commandments: 1) "You shall be holy"; 2) "Every person shall fear his mother and his father"; and 3) "You shall keep My Sabbaths." The fact that these three mitzvot follow one another is significant and indicates that they are interrelated.

The term "holy" in this instance means separation, as it says at the end of our Torah portion, "You shall be holy to Me, for [I, G-d, am holy, and] I have separated you from the nations..." The Jewish people must be separate from the nations of the world. And they must separate specifically in those areas in which we are seemingly similar, such as eating, drinking, conducting business and so forth.

The ultimate purpose of a Jew's holiness and spirituality, though, is not egocentric--to be holy just for himself. Rather, as the Torah says of our ancestor Abraham, "in order that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of G-d..." So, one of the reasons for our remaining separate from the other nations is to be able to guide our children to walk in the ways of our ancestors. And this is why the mitzva to be holy is followed by "every person shall fear his mother and his father"--which alludes to the obligation of Jewish education.

Parents are the first educators. The mother and father must instill in their children the feeling that they are different from the rest of the world, that they are part of a holy nation.

The sequence in that verse is "his mother and his father," mentioning first the mother. For the mother is the foundation of the house, and a major part of the actual education is in her hands.

How does a person imbue his children, and himself, with the consciousness of being a holy nation? This is brought out by the third commandment, "You shall keep My Sabbaths."

The Sabbath is a sign between the Al-mighty and Israel. It signifies the certainty that the Al-mighty is the Creator of the universe and continuously sustains and conducts it.

Shabbat was given only to the Jewish people. Observing Shabbat thus means to keep and guard not the sign and covenant between Israel and G-d. This is done by strengthening our faith in the fact that Jews are under the specific and individual providence of G-d.

This, in turn, will bring us full circle. It will reinforce in ourselves and our children the mitzva of "You shall be holy," to the point where our everyday activities will be infused with holiness.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

## The Great North American Eclipse

By Rabbi Eli Friedman

In the Torah, the Jewish holidays are prescribed to happen on a certain day following the new moon. To celebrate these festivals, we need to keep track of the lunar cycle.

Along the way, we've come to identify with the moon.

The moon's ups and downs are similar to our own history. One moment we're shining bright, the next moment we're so oppressed that casual observers are predicting our extinction, G-d forbid. And the next moment, to their disbelief, we're back and growing stronger every day.

It's notable that G-d told Moshe about Rosh Chodesh, the Mitzvah that we celebrate the birth of the new moon, before the exodus from Egypt. By giving that Mitzvah right then, it meant that it would be given in the darkest spiritual locale in the world. G-d could have waited until we were out and told us about Rosh Chodesh in the desert. Why the rush?

A few weeks back, The Great North American Eclipse was a major event which had millions of people looking up to the Heavens.

Now, solar eclipses only happen around the new moon. In fact, the Monday night of the eclipse, the Jewish people observed "Rosh Chodesh". This means that Monday was the day when the moon was at its very lowest point, the moment

that symbolizes the challenging times of the Jewish People.

Precisely in its smallest, weakest moment, the moon looms largest: it can even eclipse the mighty light of the sun.

Is this not our story? Is this not why G-d told this to Moshe in Egypt, in our place of suffering? In the place of our pain, before the redemption, G-d stops everything and tells us to look at the moon and discover an eternal reminder that no matter what, Am Yisrael Chai forever.

The eclipse shows our darkest moments are when we shine brightest and loom largest, as we begin the great turnaround, the journey from darkness to light.

This year, the Monday of the Eclipse, marked the 3,336th anniversary of the day G-d showed Moshe the moon.

How perfect. During these painful days, days of insult and injury for Jews everywhere, the sun, 400 times bigger than the moon, is eclipsed by it. Far from faltering, the Jewish people are stronger than ever, more secure than ever, more influential than ever.

This week we will celebrate Rosh Chodesh once again, and yes, our best days lay just ahead. So in the words of the Lecha Dodi which we sing every Friday night:

"Wake up! Your light is coming, rise and shine! Say your song, because G-d's glory is revealed upon you."

Happy Rosh Chodesh!



# SLICE OF LIFE

## Guyana Presidents' Son Puts on Tefillin, Receives Matzah for First Time

By Uziel Scheiner



Rabbi Super puts on Tefillin with Dr. Joey Jagan, son of former Guyana presidents Cheddi and Janet Jagan, icons of Guyana

When Rabbi Avromy Super couldn't find a direct flight home to St. Lucia last October, he was disappointed. Usually, the Rabbi didn't have trouble finding direct flights to St. Lucia, his home island where he had established a Chabad. This time, however, the only available flight was through Guyana, 600 miles out of his way.

Since St. Lucia was home to a very small Jewish community, Super was accustomed to keeping an eye out for Jews. So when he landed in Guyana's capital city of Georgetown on his dreaded 24-hour stopover, he brushed off his exhaustion and got to work.

Almost immediately he found two Jews—one named Raphi, owner of a local riverside resort, and Alan, a Jew originally from Antwerp, Belgium, who had been living in Guyana for 13 years. Super met with both, and when it was finally time to catch his connecting flight, they vowed to stay in touch.

Six months later, with Passover fast approaching, Super began going through his list of Jews to send traditional, handmade round Shmurah matzah for the holiday.

Along with the Jews of St. Lucia, Super has a Rolodex of Jews he's met on his travels in the Caribbean with whom he remains in contact, including his new friends in Guyana.

The rabbi made travel plans to deliver the hand-made matzah, along with the joy of the holiday, in person.

At the same time, through his Jewish contacts in Guyana he'd become aware of at least a dozen Jews living there. One of them, however, the Jewish son of two former presidents of Guyana, he knew of on his own. The Jagan family is all but royalty in Guyana. Cheddi Jagan, the patriarch of the family, founded the People's Progressive Party in 1950, together with his wife, Janet (née Rosenberg). He served in the government, and then as president of Guyana, for a number of years. His work there made him an icon in the country, and he is often referred to as 'Father Of The Nation'. The airport in with Super landed was called the Cheddi Jagan International Airport.

Janet was a force in her own right. The daughter of Jewish immigrants from Romania and Hungary, Janet was born and raised in Chicago, moving to Guyana after marrying Cheddi Jagan. In 1973, after years of political activism, Janet was elected to Parliament and went on to become the longest-serving member of Guyana's parliament. After her husband's death in 1997, Janet was elected president of Guyana, becoming the country's first female president and Jewish leader. As one of a handful of Jewish heads of state in the world outside of Israel, Janet was by far the most famous Jew in the Caribbean.

Janet Rosenberg Jagan passed away in 2009, 12 years after her husband, and was survived by their two children, Dr. Cheddi ("Joey") Jagan Jr. and Nadira Jagan-Brancier.

Like most people in the Caribbean, Super had heard of Jagan and his Jewish ancestry, and when he arrived in Guyana before Passover, he resolved to meet Dr. Jagan—a dentist based in Guyana—and give him Shmurah matzah for the Seder.

Guyana's Jewish community does not have much of an infrastructure, and with no

toehold to gain an introduction, Rabbi Super came up with a clever solution: walk up to his office door and knock.

Super is not the first Chabad rabbi to arrive in Guyana on a mission to find Jews. In the 1980s, Rabbi Yitzhak Nemes went to Guyana on a business trip. Prior to his trip, the Lubavitcher Rebbe instructed him to find a Jew there as well. Although he had been told he wouldn't, Rabbi Nemes managed to find a Jew with whom he put on Tefillin, and some years later arranged his burial in a Jewish cemetery.

When Super got to Dr. Jagan's reception area, he introduced himself to the secretary as a visiting rabbi. She disappeared into the back, emerging a few minutes later to usher him into Dr. Jagan's office.

The president's son and the rabbi sat together for an hour. They discussed their family backgrounds, Judaism and Israel. Jagan, who hadn't previously felt much affiliation with his Judaism, described experiencing a shift since Oct. 7. Feelings that he hadn't had before began to perk up, and he was left with a sense of care and responsibility for his people. He was excited to see a rabbi in his office and be able to discuss his heritage.

At the end of their meeting, Super offered Jagan the opportunity to put on tefillin. Jagan had never heard of them, but after a quick introduction happily wrapped them and recited the Shema prayer for the first time in his life.

Before they parted, Super gave Jagan the box of Shmurah matzah for Passover and promised to stay in touch.

Super continued his trip in Guyana, reconnecting with his Jewish friends there, delivering matzah for their Seders, and holding a Torah class for the handful of Jews he had met over his short visits. "Every article on Guyana's Jews says only one or two Jewish people live here. On my short visit here, I know that that's a significant undercount," Super said. "Just like Rabbi Nemes discovered in the 1980s, when we seek out a fellow Jew with an open heart, we find them."

Excerpts from an article on Chabad.org

## The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Freely translated

Erev Shabbos Kodesh  
Rosh Chodesh Iyar, 5735 [1975]  
20th Annual Convention

National Council of Neshei U'Bnos Chabad (Lubavitch Women's Organization)

On the occasion of the forthcoming convention, taking place on the weekend of Pesach Sheni [the "second" Passover], I send greetings and prayerful wishes that the Convention should, with G-d's help, be crowned with hatzlocho [success] in the fullest measure.

One of the teachings of Pesach-Sheni - as my father-in-law of saintly memory pointed out - is that in matters of Yiddishkeit [Judaism] one should never give up, and it is never too late to rectify a past failing.

This principle has also been one of the basic factors in the work of the Rebbe's-Nesiim [leaders] since the beginning of Chabad, who dedicated themselves with utmost mesiras-nefesh [self-sacrifice] to bring Jews closer to Torah and mitzvot [commandments], regardless of their level of Yiddishkeit, and not to give up a single Jew.

The task of bringing Jews closer to Yiddishkeit is especially relevant to women, for it obviously requires a special approach in terms of compassion, loving-kindness, gentleness, and the like - qualities with which women are generally endowed in a larger measure than men, although all Jews without exception are characterized

as rachmonim and gomlei-chasodim, compassionate and practicing loving-kindness.

The theme of the Convention, "Bringing Light Into the World - The Obligation and Privilege of Every Jewish Daughter," is especially fitting in many ways, including this detail in light that it illuminate its environs regardless of the state of things, all of which are equally illuminated, and in a benign and friendly manner. This is the way Torah-Or [Torah-Light] illuminates every Jew in every respect, as it is written, "Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace."

May G-d grant that the convention be carried through with hatzlocho, and should inspire each and all the participants to carry on their vital work in a manner full of light and vitality, and in an ever-growing measure...

16 Iyar 5711 [1951]

Blessing and Greeting:

I was pleased with the opportunity to exchange a few words with you. As you connected your visit with the day of Pesach-sheni which we observed on the day before yesterday, I want to make it the subject of this letter.

One of the significant lessons of Pesach-sheni is never to despair even when one has not attained the spiritual heights of others. Thus, while all the people are celebrating the Passover at its proper time, and one finds himself "far away," or otherwise unfit to enter the Sanctuary, he is told: do not despair; begin your way towards the Sanctuary; come closer and closer; for you have a special chance and opportunity to celebrate the Second Passover, if you try hard enough. Please convey my regards and best wishes to your circle.

Cordially,

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

On the 2nd of Iyar (Friday, May 10) we commemorate the birthday of the fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shmuel, known as the Rebbe Maharash.

One of the most memorable and pithy maxims that we have from the Rebbe Maharash is the saying, "L'Chatchila Aribet"-which means, "In the first place, go over."

The Rebbe Maharash mentioned this concept—which has been the constant battle cry of Lubavitch outreach workers all over the world—in reference to one who finds himself faced with an obstacle. "The whole world says, first try to go under or around an obstacle. If this doesn't work, then go over it," the Rebbe Maharash noted. "But I say, 'In the first place, go over,'" he declared.

What does it mean to go over an obstacle right away rather than trying another method to pass an obstruction? In confronting obstacles to all good endeavors, one should take the most ambitious and aggressive approach. One cannot remain passive, hoping that the situation will change by itself or that the obstruction will magically disappear. It must be approached as a challenge. And, as such, it should be afforded one's utmost attention and energy.

In addition, when working at overcoming obstacles, we have to keep uppermost in our mind only positive thoughts and the image of the endeavor successfully accomplished. For this, too, will aid in our ultimate triumph and success.

Shmuel Beilman

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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## What's In A Name

SHIMON [Simon] means "to hear." Shimon was the second son of Jacob and Leah (Genesis 29:33). Among the many great sages named Shimon, was Shimon "the Righteous" who said, "The world stands on three things: (study of) Torah, service (of G-d) and deeds of kindness." (Chapters of the Fathers 1:2)

SHULAMIT means "peaceful." In Song of Songs (7:1) it was a name alluding to the most beautiful girl in Israel.



## 1,200-Plus From Former Soviet Union Unite for Record-Breaking 15th Annual Shabbaton

Living abroad, in a new country, with a new language, new laws and a massively different culture is a daunting prospect for many people.

For the Jewish community of the Former Soviet Union in the United States—who make up approximately 10 percent of all American Jews—this holds true. Even 30 years after immigrating, these discrepancies can still create many challenges, not least a longing for a piece of home. On the last weekend in March, Lubavitch Youth Organization joined forces with Chamah, an organization set up to serve the Russian-speaking Jewish community, to accommodate such a reality, with the 15th annual Russian-Jewish Shabbaton held in the Hilton Hotel in Parsippany, NJ.

More than 1,200 guests attended from across the United States, Canada and Israel. They participated in a spiritually uplifting weekend that provided individuals with a sense of home, with a series of educational workshops, a variety of Jewish and leisure activities, and, of course, fantastic kosher food.

