

# L'Chaim



There was a wealthy Jew, whose only daughter was becoming of marriageable age. While there were many promising young Torah scholars in his own town, he desired to have an exceptional Torah scholar as a son-in-law. After much effort, he indeed found one such young man. The couple were married, settled down and were extremely happy. The young man learned in the yeshiva study hall and grew in his learning and Torah knowledge. Everything was going as desired.

Some years passed, and the wealthy father-in-law began noticing small changes in his son-in-laws conduct and observance of mitzvot (commandments). At first, he tried to dismiss them as insignificant changes, and perhaps his learned son-in-law has reasons to conduct himself in this new manner. After all he knows much more than I do, so who am I to question him! But as the weeks and months passed, he began noticing that he was taking off much more time from his learning and was seen in the company of others who were known to be completely non-observant. This was a situation that he was no longer able to ignore and pretend all is well.

So one day, he sat down with his son-in-law and asked him, "What caused this drastic change. Are you perhaps unhappy about something or is something or someone bothering you?" The son-in-law replied, "I am extremely happy and fortunate. Your daughter is an excellent and kind hearted person. She is the perfect wife, and you are very gracious to us. A man couldn't ask for more. "But you want to know if everything is perfect, what caused these changes? I began having some questions about G-d's ability to do certain things that our sages stated had happened. I noticed that some of the great commentators also wrote that these things are exaggerations. So I no longer knew what is real and what is being said as a way of a parable or metaphor. "Whoever I asked either replied that those are dangerous questions, that one is not allowed to ask, or gave me such weak answers and explanations, that they themselves admitted weren't complete answers, they weren't satisfactory. So now I have my doubts about many things, such as does G-d really care about such minute details, for example, when you wash your hands for bread, does it have to go until the wrist and a drop off makes it invalid or it isn't so important. And therefore I decided not to do it all."

The father-in-law was torn with grief. This is the son-in-law that he had hand-picked for his wonderful daughter, who is so proper in her observance of every mitzva (commandment). Is everything lost G-d forbid? "No! It can't be," he told himself. "I must find a way to correct this." Turning to his son-in-law he said, "My dear son-in-law, you are much more learned than I, and if the great Torah scholars of the town couldn't answer your questions satisfactorily, I for sure don't have the ability. However, I am asking you one thing, please come with me to a great sage and allow him to answer and clarify everything."

Wanting to please his father-in-law, especially as he always has the ability to say that the answer this sage gave was not a convincing or even good answer, he agreed. The father-in-law didn't waste any time, but immediately set out with his son-in-law to see the Baal Shem Tov. They arrived in Mezibuzh on a bright sunny day and the father-in-law poured out his troubled heart to the Baal Shem Tov and pleaded with him that he does whatever is in his ability to bring the son-in-law back to the ways of G-d. The Baal Shem Tov asked them to join him on a small journey. With the father-in-law sitting on his right and the son-in-law sitting on his left, they left Mezibuzh.

Once they were out of the city and on the road in the midst of an open field, the Baal Shem Tov turned to the son-in-law and said, "Young man, can it rain now?" Looking at the clear blue sky, the young man replied, "No, there isn't a cloud in sight." The Baal Shem Tov said, "And I say it can rain!" Looking up once again, the young man peered in all directions to make sure that he saw correctly and indeed there wasn't a cloud in sight. So he smugly retorted and said, "It is impossible! No way in the world can it rain here at this very moment." The Baal Shem Tov smiled and said, "And I say it will rain momentarily!" A few seconds later the heavens opened and a deluge of rain came pouring down. The young man was bewildered at this happening.

Not only is it pouring from a cloudless sky, but the Baal Shem Tov's wagon is remaining completely dry. This is truly miraculous and beyond human comprehension. Being an extremely intelligent person, he realized why the Baal Shem Tov showed him this and didn't try to answer his questions verbally. Far be it that the Baal Shem Tov was merely showing off to him his miraculous powers. It was much more than that; he had clearly demonstrated that stories of our sages that are beyond human comprehension, doesn't mean that they never occurred or are not real. There are many happenings that the human intellect says one way, but in actuality they happened the opposite way – the way he thought was impossible. Once this question was answered, he realized that all of his other questions and doubts were based on this premise. And therefore if this was resolved they all have nothing to stand on.

Full of remorse he turned to the Baal Shem Tov and beseeched him, to guide him back to the way of G-d. During the first year after his passing, the students of the Baal Shem Tov gathered and many of them related a miraculous story of the Baal Shem Tov that they personally were privy to. That night the Baal Shem Tov came to one of his students and said, "My greatness is not my ability to do miracles, it is my awe of heaven for even the smallest detail of a mitzva.

As told by Rabbi Shalom Dovber Avtzon.

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah Portion

**And G-d departed as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place (Gen. 18:33)**

Even after Abraham was told that there were not even ten righteous people in Sodom in whose merit the city would be spared, he "returned to his place," and continued to search for people whose deeds might qualify them as such. One must therefore never cease to look for good in one's fellow man. (Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev)

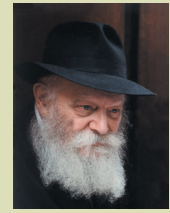
**"G-d, Himself, will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son" (Gen. 22:8)**

Rashi explains that Isaac also knew that he was going to be sacrificed. Nonetheless, "they went both of them together," with equal resolve and with one heart. Isaac's willingness to be sacrificed did not detract from Abraham's trial. On the contrary, it made it that much more difficult for Abraham to consider sacrificing such a righteous son. (Chidushei Harim)

**"Stay the night, and wash your feet" (Gen. 19:2)**

Abraham first instructed his guests to wash their feet before extending his invitation to enter, fearing that perhaps they were among those Arab nomads who worshipped the dust of the earth as a deity. Lot, however, seeing that his guests had come directly from Abraham's house, reasoned that anyone leaving Abraham's presence could not possibly be an idol-worshipper. (Chatham Sofer)

**5:32 Candle Lighting Time**  
NY Metro Area  
**19 Cheshvan / Nov 3**  
Torah Portion Vayeira  
Shabbat ends **6:31 pm**



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

This week we read about the Akeida, the binding of Yitzchak on the altar as a sacrifice.

Yitzchok was 37 years old. Because when Sarah heard that Avraham was sacrificing Yitzchak, it was too much for her to bear, and she passed away. She died at the age of 127, and Yitzchak was born when she was 90. 127 - 90 = 37, he was 37 years old. This means that he was in fact a willing participant.

This was the ultimate test for Avraham. Everything was hanging on this one child, The Jewish people would come to be because of Yitzchak, and now Hashem was asking him to do the unthinkable.

Hashem made it take him three days to get there, which gave him enough time to think about what he was going to do. After three days he saw the location, Mount Moriah, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. At that time, it was called Shalem, named so by Shem, son of Noah, who was Malkitzedek (righteous king) king of Shalem.

After the Akeida when Hashem showed Avraham a ram to offer instead of Yitzchak, Avraham named the place "Hashem Yireh", a prayer meaning, "Hashem should see" to it, that this place will become the place of the Temple. When you put both names together, you get Yerushalem.

The Jewish people are here to continue the work of Avraham and Yitzchak in the world. What is that work? To transform this physical world into a home for Hashem, a place where He will feel at home.

How do we do it? Through the study of Torah we transform the air and atmosphere around us and through the performance of mitzvot which are mostly done with our physical body. When we do so, we transform everything, our bodies, the object that we are doing the mitzvah with and the place where you are doing the mitzvah. The preparation we make for a mitzvah also transforms the world into a home for Hashem. The time, money, work, and effort are all uplifted. In fact, that is the definition of Moshiach, when Hashem will fill the whole world openly. May it happen soon.

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.

## Is Happiness Fitting at a Time of Battle & the Power of the Shabbat Candles

From the teachings of the Rebbe on what we can do for Israel:

On the surface, explanation is called for: What place is there for a farbrengen at a time when Jews are involved in battle? An explanation can be given on the basis of a teaching of the Baal Shem Tov on the verse, "G-d is your shadow, at your right hand": – Just as a shadow follows the movement of a person's limbs, so too, G-d follows the actions of the Jewish people on this material plane.

In this vein, the Zohar teaches:

"The higher realms impart effluence to the lower realms according to their state. If on this earthly plane, {a person's} state is luminous, {Divine light} shines to him from above. If his state is one of sadness, a comparable influence is granted him. {Therefore, we are taught,} "Serve G-d with joy," because a person's joy draws down joy from Above."

Accordingly, the manner in which we can positively influence the situation in these days is through joy, because "Joy breaks through barriers," including the geographic barriers separating us from those in danger. It elicits joyous revelations from above, for "In the light of the King's countenance is life."

When many Jews gather together in one place, they evoke the Divine presence, as our Sages taught, "the Divine presence rests on every congregation of ten Jews."

How much more so is this true

when the gatherings connected with teachings of Torah, an arousal to the fear of Heaven, and gifts for tzedakah in the spirit of the verse, "Zion will be redeemed for judgment and its captives with charity."

On September 11, 1974, the Rebbe introduced a campaign to inspire Jewish women and girls the world over to light candles for Shabbat. This special campaign was another weapon in the "war" the Rebbe was waging to eradicate darkness forever and bring the Redemption.

The Rebbe called this campaign "Neshek" - an acronym for Neivot Shabbat Kodesh - holy Shabbat candles. He explained, "Neshek" is also the Hebrew word for "weapon." "The light of candles lit by Jewish women and girls is our ammunition with which we battle against the dark forces of impurity."

The Rebbe called women 'Ambassadors of Light.' Each person has a unique light that no one else has; we show gratitude to G-d for giving us our unique light by shining that light into our own corner of the world. "Fire is a physical thing that has infinite possibilities - one candle can light hundreds. Our souls are candles. Like candles, we can give to others without being diminished or extinguished. Sharing our light and our love transcends age, location, abilities."

Dedicated in memory of a dear friend of the Lubavitch Youth Organization  
**Mr. Jerome Belson OBM**



# SLICE OF LIFE

*"Out of the terrible pain will come great salvation."*



For almost forty years, Rabbi Moshe-Zav Pizm, has been the director of the Chabad Center in Sderot, located directly on the Gaza border. Over the years he and his family have endured and witnessed many difficulties. Even during the most challenging times he never once thought of leaving the city, and now he says, is no different. He, together with his family are committed to do anything and everything possible, to support, comfort and uplift the spirits of the Sderot residents regardless of the horrific situation they are now faced with.

Rabbi Pizm recalls the various accounts which took place the night of Simchat Torah: With roughly two hundred people in attendance, all participating after services, in the Hakafot dancing which went on until the wee hours of the night, there was tremendous joy in the synagogue. Tired and inspired, we each went home smiling from ear to ear with anticipation for even greater joy the following morning, sadly this joy never came.

Early morning greeted us with deadly sounds of shots being fired, coupled with multiple explosions. We have unfortunately

heard similar sounds in the past but this was different. Suddenly, we heard an announcement over a loudspeaker notifying residents not to leave the houses, because terrorists are loose on the streets. "Could this be?" I asked myself, "am I being delusional?" But then, my family and I saw from the window, terrorists with automatic machine guns shooting anything in sight. My wife and I did what we could to protect the children, and did not stop praying.

Later that Simchat Torah morning I was finally able to return to the synagogue for morning services, accompanied by a number of brave soldiers. When we entered, there were nine Jews waiting for us. Everyone was in a daze, no one really knew what was going on either. Being that I was the tenth for the Minyan we closed the doors and our eyes and prayed to G-d. Meanwhile, all around us there were explosions and proclamations of red alert and war. The prayers and Hakafot dancing were intense, emotional and yes, they were quick.

As it turns out, the city of Sderot was severely attacked. Dozens of residents were killed by the terrorists. Many of our good friends, close residents, police personnel and soldiers, were taken from us in a most horrific and barbaric way. In addition, community members who were an inseparable part of the activities at the Beit Chabad, who were such an integral part of our happy circle of friends, were brutally murdered. The magnificent police station, recently inaugurated, was taken over and subsequently utterly destroyed by the inhumane terrorists.

On Sunday at noon, we began assisting with the efforts of finding and identifying those who were murdered. We were subject to scenes we had never seen before and please G-d will never see again. I reiterate, to think that in the Holy Land, our Land, terrorists would roam the streets freely? This is a chilling thought which demands a real response.

We all have painful questions, but now is



Remaining in the city and supporting its residence.

not the time for questions, now is the time that we must and we are making every effort to strengthen the residents of Sderot. In the past, when Israel went through trying times, the Lubavitcher Rebbe imbued us with the message of hope, faith, confidence, commitment to G-d, our land and our people. He urged Israel to resolutely protect her borders, while at the same time adding to our daily Torah study, prayer, charity and faith in G-d.

There is no doubt in my mind that just as G-d has shown the world over the past 4000 years that the Jewish nation will come out stronger than ever after being confronted by an enemy, that he will do the same this time. The bigger the disaster, the bigger the victory, the greater the calamity, the greater the after blessing! The hope we are all feeling now is the birth of the unprecedented unity that the Jewish people are experiencing now.

My concluding message is: let us come together and help each other whichever way we can, physically, mentally, emotionally, materially or spiritually. Everyone was created by G-d with something that the other person doesn't have, take that "something" and gift it to a person in need. And right now that person is in the Holy Land, whether it's a mother, father, child, soldier, we need you and are asking for your help even if it's just picking up a book of psalms and reciting a chapter for the safety and security of our brothers and sisters in the holy land, the incredible IDF, the safe return of our hostages and peace in our land AMEN!

*Translated from Sichat Hashavua.*

## Teachings...

Rabbi Meir said: Whoever occupies himself with [the study of] Torah for its own sake merits many things (Ethics, 6:1) The Hebrew word for "occupies – osek" relates to the word for "businessman," "baal esek." A person's occupation with the study of Torah must resemble a businessman's preoccupation with his commercial enterprise. Just as his attention is never totally diverted from his business, so too should the Torah always be the focus of our attention. (Likutei Sichot, Vol. XVII)

## The Rebbe Writes

*from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe*

Mezuzah Protection

By the Grace of G-d  
Rosh Chodesh Elul, 5736 [August 27, 1976]  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To The Jewish Mothers and Daughters everywhere,

G-d bless you --

Blessing and Greeting:

In view of the recent events — the hijacking and saving of the hostages held in Uganda; and the subsequent attempt of the terrorists to perpetrate a vicious reprisal, G-d forbid, in Kushta (Istanbul),

It should be understood that these events are an indication that Jews must, at the earliest possible, strengthen all aspects of their security and defenses — first and foremost in their spiritual life, which is the channel to receive G-d's blessings also in the physical aspect, namely, to know the right ways and means that have to be undertaken in the natural order of things, and to fully succeed in these efforts, in accordance with the Divine promise, "G-d, your G-d, will bless you in all that you do" -- to be protected and secured from enemies, and to be spared any undesirable happenings, G-d forbid.

The above events remind each and all of our Jewish brethren in general, and Jewish mothers and daughters in particular — since every married Jewish woman is called Akeres Habayis, "Foundation of the Home," and those not yet married are to be Akeres Habayis, for which they must prepare themselves from tender age — the following:

The present situation calls for the protection of every Jewish home. True protection is that which only G-d provides, as it is written, "G-d guards the city." To ensure this Divine guardianship, the home has to be conducted in all aspects according to G-d's will.

Then the home is also an abode for the Shechinah (G-d's Presence), in accordance

with His promise, "I will dwell among them."

In addition to this, G-d has given our people a special gift wherewith to protect the home, namely, the Mitzvah of Mezuzah. Our Sages declare explicitly that "the home is protected by it (the Mezuzah)."

Moreover, this protection embraces the members of the household also when they go out of the house, as it is written, 'G-d will guard your going and your coming from now and forever.' It is further explained in our holy sources that the Divine Name (Shin-Dalet-Yud) written on the back of the sacred Mezuzah parchment spells out the words, "Shomer Dalsos Yisroel — Guardian of Jewish Doors."

Let it also be remembered that inasmuch as all Jews constitute one body, and are bound up with one another, every Mezuzah is a Divine protection not only for the individual home, with everybody and everything in it, but each additional kosher Mezuzah that is affixed on a doorpost of any Jewish home, anywhere, adds to the protection of all our people everywhere.

And considering — as mentioned above — that every Jewish housewife is an Akeres Habayis, and every Jewish girl a future Akeres Habayis, they have a special Zechus (merit) and responsibility in the matter of Mezuzah, to see to it that not only a kosher Mezuzah be affixed on every doorpost in their home that is required to have a Mezuzah, but that the same be done by their Jewish neighbors and friends, and in all Jewish homes.

I hope and pray that you will do this with inspiration and joy, which, in addition to increasing the Hatzlocho [success] in this effort, will also inspire many others to do likewise, and the Zechus Horabim [the merit you brought to the many] will further stand you in good stead.

The present time is particularly auspicious for this endeavor, as for endeavors in all matters of goodness and holiness, since we are in the beginning of the month of Elul — the month of spiritual stocktaking, to complete the deficiencies of the outgoing year and to prepare for the New Year, that it be a good and blessed year for each and all of us and for our Jewish people as a whole.

With esteem and blessing of Kesivo veChasimo Tovah.

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Even though Moshiach's prayers are always answered immediately, nonetheless when he

suffers the pains of his body, like a sheep before her shearers is silent, so too, does he suffer and opens not his mouth to request that even one of his afflictions be removed from him, or to say to G-d, "I want not the pain nor its reward."

*(Alshich on Isaiah 53:7)*

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

*This Saturday, the 20th of Cheshvan, is the birthday of Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber (1860-1920), the fifth Chabad Lubavitch Rebbe.*

*A beautiful story is told about an important lesson that Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber (known as the "Rebbe Rashab") taught his son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok, who was later to become his successor.*

*Once, when Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok set out on a journey, the Rebbe Rashab asked him to try to do a certain favor for one of the chasidim, a businessman, who was in need of help.*

*When Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok returned he told his father: "I did everything you told me to do, and the favor to that man I did meticulously."*

*"You err," said the Rebbe Rashab. "You did a favor to yourself, not to him. G-d did a favor to him, by arranging for an emissary, such as yourself, through whom the will of Divine Providence could be realized."*

*The Rebbe Rashab was teaching us a lesson that permeates the whole of Judaism. When we do a mitzva, especially one which ostensibly allows us to help another person, we are G-d's emissaries. And, more than helping the other person we are, in essence, helping ourselves.*

*Tzedaka, charity, is a prime example. When we give tzedaka it should be with the knowledge and understanding that G-d has bestowed upon us a privilege—the privilege to administer His money in a righteous manner. Certainly, this is the reason why our Sages teach, "More than charity does for the poor person, it does for the rich person."*

*This attitude can and should permeate all "favors" we do for others. In addition to being the correct attitude, it stops us from feeling self-righteous!*

*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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