

L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

The Jewish nation has endured four exiles: The first in Egypt, the second in Babylonia, the third in Assyria. The fourth and final exile is the one we have been in for the last two thousand years, the "exile of Edom." (Edom stands for Rome, and symbolizes the countries of the Western world.)

The Torah portion of Vayigash delineates the beginning of the Jewish people's journey into exile. G-d appeared to Jacob and promised, "I will descend with you into Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again." Bolstered by this promise, Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt and began the Jewish people's 210-year sojourn there.

In many respects the exile in Egypt was the harshest of all the exiles; it occurred before the giving of the Torah, which afforded future generations the strength to withstand the suffering. Also, as with other painful experiences, the first time it occurs the wound is always the deepest and the hardest to overcome.

In addition, the Jews' exile in Egypt differed from future ones in that all Jews were involved. Later exiles found Jews scattered all over the world, assuring that whenever Jews were discriminated against in one country there were other lands in which they enjoyed relative freedom, and could come to the aid of their brethren.

Furthermore, Egypt itself was a land that posed particular difficulties. Not only was it spiritually corrupt, but our Sages describe it as a fortified country from which not even one slave could escape.

This first and most difficult exile served one positive purpose—to act as preparation for the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. Egypt was the crucible in which the Jewish nation was purified and made worthy of the Torah.

We learn this from the Hebrew name for Egypt, "Mitzrayim," which comes from the word meaning "limitation" and "constriction."

When water's flow is artificially blocked by placing an obstruction in its path, the water flows even more forcefully because of the temporary impasse. When one's thumb is held over the tap to partially obstruct the flow, the water shoots out that much more forcefully from the faucet.

Such is the Divine purpose of our exile, to uncover within every Jew the hidden strengths and stores of faith that are in the Jewish soul. The difficulties and pressures of the exile cause these inner qualities and self-sacrifice to be revealed.

The experience of exile can be used for our maximum benefit—to strengthen our commitment to Torah and mitzvot. Just as the Jews eventually left Egypt victorious and with "great wealth," and were worthy of receiving the Torah, may we be worthy to usher in the Messianic era, now.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

The Missing F-35 Fighter Jet

By Rabbi Mendel Rubin

Earlier this year, a US Marine pilot ejected from his F-35 fighter jet while flying over the Carolinas. Yet while the pilot landed safely, the plane flew onwards, leaving the military in a most unusual situation. Unable to locate their wayward plane, they reached out to the citizenry, to the public at large, to see if perhaps someone had spotted it. What a bizarre story and what an even stranger response!

Now this version of the F-35 is one of the most advanced military aircraft, with a whopping price tag of over one hundred million. Despite its extensive suite of cutting-edge computers and sensors, the plane had gone AWOL.

"How can you lose a plane like this?" was the first question on everyone's mind. One would think that the US military, with all its extensive resources and capabilities, would be able to keep track of its hardware and would be able to rapidly recover any lost aircraft without help from random civilians.

While I don't know the answer, in life we can all ask ourselves similar questions.

We are all entrusted with some very treasured things in our lives, including our families and our Jewish heritage. Our Jewish heritage, like our family, is a priceless treasure, but it can be

complex, comprised as it is of various components and moving parts.

Like family, no matter how far we stray or how much we object or disassociate, "the Pintele Yid," our core Jewish identity remains. We can never lose that, thank G-d.

However, when it comes to family cohesion, a happy family dynamic, or in the terms of our Jewish heritage, our involvement, awareness, or observance, there is no such guarantee.

While people care about family, without hands-on active involvement, care and concern alone doesn't have the same effect. The same is true with our Jewish identity. Often you hear Jews say that they are Jews at heart, but such Judaism can quickly run out of fuel and is hard to sustain.

It's important that we remember the Marines' solution to their missing jet dilemma. Sometimes, it's not about sophisticated technology or trained professionals, often the problem calls for simpler everyday solutions. Just as trained soldiers and military experts reached out to ordinary people, we can rediscover and rebuild with the basic things we already have and know, in our own backyard.

With our families, as well as in our Judaism, it's the little everyday things that go a long way and can reclaim and recover what's lost.

SLICE OF LIFE

Let There Be Light! Public Giant Chanukah Menorah Lightings Celebrated Worldwide

While the Jewish people and the world in general are going through a challenging time, this year in particular the Public Chanukah Menorahs, which were organized and lit by Chabad Lubavitch the world over, illuminated that darkness and brought much light and joy to millions of people around the world.

In the early 1970s, the Rebbe introduced a Chanukah awareness campaign, urging increased private observance and public displays of the eight-day holiday. The Rebbe explained that the Menorah stands as a reminder that not only as a reminder that the Jewish people are free of persecution and can enjoy their rights, but as a universal message of freedom and liberty for all.

Aptly, In 1977, the World's Largest Menorah went up on Fifth Avenue, adjacent to Central Park in Manhattan; and has been lit every Chanukah since.

“The Chanukah Menorah, with its universal message, which is especially akin to the spirit of liberty and independence of this nation,” the Rebbe wrote in 1982, “has won a place not only in Jewish life, but also in the life of the American people.”

Like so many positive aspects of American life, the public menorah has since been exported around the world. Today, over 15,000 public menorahs illuminate the darkness from Rome to Beijing, from Malta to Mumbai.

Despite all that is going on, Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries in the United States

and around the world have reported more and more people, Jews and non-Jews, joining in the public kindling of the menorah. The Menorahs have inspired much Jewish pride and sent a resounding message that the light of the Menorah will continue to educate, inspire and shine brightly, making this world a better place for all people.

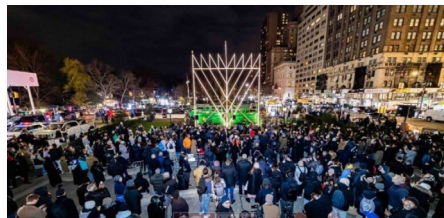
Here are some glimpses of public menorahs illuminating the night from around the world.



Jerusalem, Israel



With IDF Soldiers



World's Largest Menorah, New York City



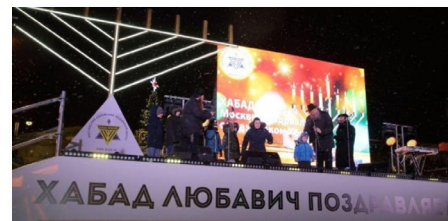
Rome, Italy



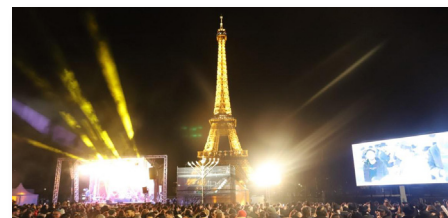
Beijing, China



At the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, With German Chancellor, Olaf Scholz



Moscow, Russia



Paris, France



Kiev, Ukraine

Sydney, Australia



Chabad of Eilat Aids 70,000 Refugees from Gaza Area and Northern Israel

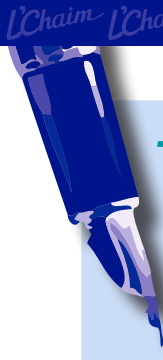
Eilat Israel, the city, which is a symbol of peace and relaxation and usually home to 50,000 residents, has transformed overnight. The city now hosts an influx of over 70,000 refugees. These individuals, hailing from communities around Gaza and the north of Israel, have been deeply affected by the devastating October 7 attacks.

Chabad of Eilat has swiftly responded to this crisis with the theme of -wrapping them with love-. Chabad has initiated various programs including: Children's Programs: Mini camps and daily clubs in 10 hotels. Shabbos Celebrations: Family-oriented Erev Shabbat concerts and challah baking sessions. Women's circles offer a platform for emotional support and community connection. Programs for Teens: Include game rooms and teen lounges in hotels to give a place for teens to break away from the grief and trauma they have experienced. On Chanukah in over 50 hotels Chabad of Eilat provided Menorah lightings and activities and gifts to children giving families respite and joy during Chanukah.

Customs

What is involved in the mitzva of "visiting the sick"?

Visiting the sick, or *Bikur Cholim* in Hebrew, is one of the commandments for which the Talmud has set no limits. The Talmud states that by visiting a sick person one helps him to recover. One should cheer the sick person with pleasant conversation and good advice and help them in any way possible. For the performance of this mitzva a person is rewarded in this world as well as in the World to Come.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Can I learn Tanya if I'm not Religious?

By the Grace of G-d
25 Elul, 5736
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Blessing and Greeting:

I received your letter of 3/9/76, in which you ask if it would be proper for you, not being religious, to read Tanya and similar books. I presume you mean not just reading but studying it in depth.

No doubt you know that one of the basics of Judaism is, as our Sages formulated it: "Every Jew has a share in the World to Come, as it is written: '(being) a branch of My planting, the work of My hands, to be glorified.'" The difference is only in regard to the share, whether it be large or small, and whether one attains it with greater or lesser effort. But our Torah, called *Toras Chayim* (because it is both our guide in this life and the source of everlasting life) makes it clear that every Jew, man or woman, has a share in the World to Come.

The Tanya—as the author states in the title-page—is based on the verse, "The thing is near unto you—in your mouth and in your heart, to do it" (i.e. in speech, thought, and action). But he immediately cautions that "the road is a long and a short one," meaning also that it may be long for some and short for others, but everyone will get there sooner or later.

In light of this preface, needless to say, the Tanya pertains and relates to every Jew, and, moreover, it is "near" (comprehensible), and, indeed, highly conducive to actual implementation in the daily life.

However, G-d has given everyone free choice of action, and it is His desire that the choice be made in the right direction out of one's own free will. Yet, while presenting this freedom of choice, G-d gives the assurance that "it is near unto you," not only in word and thought, but also in actual deed. This is what the author explains in his book, where he also provides guidelines to the desired goal. He also explains why it is certain that every Jew will attain it, sooner or later, except that for one the road may be longer, and for another—shorter.

Inasmuch as you state in your letter that you are a professor of Pedagogic Sciences, it is confidently hoped that you will study the Tanya without prejudice, and then you will see the truth of the author's ideas. Thus, you will find it rewarding and beneficial not only for yourself, but—being a teacher and educator—you will want to share it with others. This is an additional factor that will contribute to the success of your said study, that will help "shorten the road."

I would like to add a further point. Where one has the opportunity and ability to influence others in the right direction, the time element is of the essence. For, with regard to oneself, a person may think that he will make up tomorrow what he misses today; but with regard to another person, one cannot be sure that the other person may be reached tomorrow, or that he will be as receptive tomorrow as today.

With reference to a beracha [blessing], it is customary to remember one in prayer by mentioning the full Hebrew name together with the mother's Hebrew name. If you will let me know these names, I will remember you in prayer for G-d's blessing in all your needs.

At this time before Rosh Hashanah, I extend to you and yours my best wishes for a happy and pleasant year, materially and spiritually.

With blessing,

life, within finite, earthly existence. There, more than any spiritual world, is the place of G-d's delight.

Towards this ultimate union all of history flows, all living things crave, all human activities are subliminally directed. When it will finally occur, it will be the quintessence of every marriage that has ever occurred.

May it be soon in our times, sooner than we can imagine.

Sefer ha-Sichot 5750, vol. 1, pp. 103ff.

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

When was the beginning of the destruction of the first Holy Temple? The destruction began when the Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem on the 10th of Tevet, December 22 this year. This day is traditionally designated as a fast day.

But this year, G-d willing, maybe we'll "break with tradition"; maybe we won't fast! Maybe we won't shed bitter tears and mourn for the Holy Temple's destruction! How could this possibly be?

When Moshiach comes--may he arrive before the 10th of Tevet--we will no longer fast on the three days designated to commemorate the destruction of the Temple. Rather, these days will become days of rejoicing, gladness and festivity.

How can we turn this dream into a reality? The Lubavitcher Rebbe has repeatedly stressed that each and every individual can hasten Moshiach's arrival. How can this be accomplished? By increasing our acts of kindness, goodness and tzedaka; by actively awaiting his arrival at any moment; by preparing ourselves to greet him; by learning more about Moshiach and the Ultimate Redemption.

A viable suggestion toward this end would be that each time we do an additional act of kindness, or goodness, give tzedakah or do mitzvot, we do so with the intent of hastening the Final Redemption. By doing this ourselves and encouraging those around us to do so the same, we will bring Moshiach that much closer.

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
1408 President St, Brooklyn, NY, 11213
phone 718 778 6000

Chairman
Director
Program Director
Secretary
Administrator
Layout
Associate Editor
Chairman Editorial Comm.
Rebbe photo

Rabbi Dovid Raskin ד"ר
Rabbi Shmuel Butman
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S. Roumani

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All contents © 2023 by LYO. ISSN 1050 0480

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MOSHIACH MATTERS

From the moment that they were sundered apart, the earth has craved to reunite with heaven: physical with spiritual, body with soul, the life that breathes within us with the transcendental that lies beyond life, beyond being.

And yet more so does the Infinite Light yearn to find itself within that world, that pulse of



IT HAPPENED ONCE

Once Rabbi Chanoch Henich of Alexander was having a Chasidic gathering with his followers on the topic of humility. "If you want to know what real humility is," he said, "I'll tell you of an incident that happened to the Chief Rabbi of the Rabbinical Court of Frankfurt on Main.

"The man's name was Abraham Abish and aside from the many hours he spent occupied with rabbinical duties and scholarship, he occupied himself greatly with the mitzva (commandment) of helping providing food and clothing to the poor. It was his custom to make the rounds of the wealthy citizens of the city and merchants who came to Frankfurt to conduct business to solicit charity which he later distributed to the poor, to widows and to orphans.

"One day as he made his rounds he stopped in one of the local inns and approached a merchant who was visiting Frankfurt on business. 'Excuse me, my good sir,' began the Rabbi. 'Could you please make a contribution to help the poor with food and clothing?'

"It seemed as if the merchant hadn't heard, for he didn't so much as raise his eyes to gaze at the supplicant standing before him.

"Rabbi Abraham, for his part, was too unassuming to announce his name, and so, he stood before the merchant patiently waiting. He made his request one more time. The merchant wasn't in the mood to be troubled by paupers, who seemed never to leave him in peace. He lifted his gaze and stared at the beggar who had the impunity to interrupt him. 'Go away. Get out of here and stop bothering busy people.' Rabbi Abraham said not one more word. He turned and left the inn, never insisting and never imagining to use his identity to coerce the unwilling donor.

"A few minutes later, when the merchant had finished perusing his accounts, he rose to leave and reached for his cane, but to his surprise it was nowhere to be found. This stick happened to be a prized possession of his and he was very upset to find it missing.

"It didn't take him long to assume that the pauper had stolen it in revenge. The merchant dashed out of the inn in hot pursuit of the thief. A few hundred yards away he ran right into the thieving pauper.

"'Give me my walking stick, you no good thief!' he cried.

"'I'm sorry, but I have not seen your stick, my good man,' Rabbi Abraham replied calmly. 'I would certainly never take anything from you.'

"But the merchant's anger, instead of being assuaged, only grew in ferocity and virulence until he even struck Rabbi Abraham. Still, the Chief Rabbi of Frankfurt didn't respond with anger; he merely picked himself up and continued on his mission.

"As Divine Providence would have it, the merchant was delayed longer in Frankfurt than he had anticipated. When the Shabbat approached he found himself still in the city. On the afternoon of the holy day all the Jews gathered to hear some words of Torah, and he decided to join them, for he had heard that the famous tzadik, Rabbi Abraham Abish would address the crowd and he very much wanted to hear the great man in person.

"The merchant entered the large hall and raised his eyes to the podium to catch a glimpse of the rabbi. To his great shock and dismay, he recognized the man at once, and the terrible, scene of a few days before appeared before him in a horrible new light.

"Unable to bear the shame, he fainted to the floor. When he regained consciousness, he was surrounded by the congregants all trying to bring him to consciousness.

"'What has happened?' they all asked him anxiously. To his great shame, he related to them the entire incident.

"'You must go to the Rabbi and beg his forgiveness,' was the advice offered from all

sides. The merchant realized that he must do as they said.

"When the Rabbi had finished speaking he passed through the crowd, greeting everyone graciously. The quaking merchant stood a little to the side, speechless with embarrassment, as the Rabbi approached. The rabbi caught his glance, but said nothing; only his eyes had a glitter of recognition.

"Before the merchant could stutter an apology, Rabbi Abraham began speaking in a calm, conciliatory voice, wanting only to calm the man.

"Please, believe me, I didn't take your stick. I promise you on my word of honor."

"The Rabbi had no thought that the man might be coming to apologize to him. For he was so humble that he never considered his own honor above that of anyone else. The Chief Rabbi of Frankfurt was not above apologizing yet again to the thoughtless merchant, even before the eyes of his admiring congregants."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah Portion

And you shall tell my father of all my honor in Egypt (Gen. 45:13)
 "Tell my father not to worry," Joseph requested of his brothers. "All the honor and respect heaped upon me by the Egyptians has not had a negative effect. It has not made me lose the humility necessary to worship G-d properly." (*Gedolei Hachasidut*)

And he saw all the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him (45:27)
 Rashi comments that with these wagons Joseph alluded to the very last subject in Torah he had learned with his father Jacob before being sold into slavery, that of the eglu arufa (beheaded heifer). When Jacob saw the wagons (agalot-the same root word as eglu), he realized that his son was sending the message that he had not forgotten all that he had learned with his father so many years ago. We see from this that seemingly insignificant actions of the righteous are fraught with meaning and serve as lessons and examples for those who take heed. (*Maayana Shel Torah*)

My lord asked his servants, "Do you have a father or a brother?" (44:19)
 Judah tried, with this statement, to disprove Joseph's contention that the "stolen" cup magically told him everything. "If your cup is really magic and you already know all about us, why did you ask so many questions about our family?" claimed Judah. (*Sefer Darush*)

Here is seed for you; and you shall sow the land (47:23)
 The righteous Joseph, the spiritual leader of every generation, gives each of us the encouragement and strength we need to worship G-d. But we must not rely solely on that which we receive from the tzadik; we must also sow the seeds we are given. (*Lubavitcher Rebbe*)



4:14 Candle Lighting Time
 NY Metro Area
10 Tevet/ Dec 22
 Torah Portion Vayigash
 Shabbat ends 5:18 PM

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