

# L'Chaim

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9 Shvat, 5784  
January 19, 2024

The Weekly Publication  
for Every Jewish Person

נוסד תר"י ימי השלושים

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



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe  
on the Torah portion

This week's Torah portion, Bo, speaks of the last three plagues visited on Egypt, and of the Jewish People's long-awaited departure from there. It begins with G-d's command to Moses that he go to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to warn him of the impending plague of locusts. G-d, however, states that Pharaoh will not heed the warning: "For I have hardened his heart...in order that you tell in the ears of your son and your son's son that which I have wrought in Egypt."

We learn from this that the locusts did not come as a punishment for Pharaoh's refusal to heed the warning; G-d had hardened his heart so that he would be unable to agree to free the Jews. But if such is the case, isn't it unjust for G-d to punish Pharaoh?

Our commentators explain that during the first five plagues Pharaoh had free will to decide his actions, and he could have permitted the Jews to leave. It was only after Pharaoh rebelled against G-d—"Who is G-d that I should listen to His voice?"—that his free will was taken away.

This punishment clearly fit the crime: Pharaoh questioned G-d's authority and boasted of his own might, so he was shown that he did not even have the power to make his own decisions. Pharaoh was thus fully subjugated to the will of G-d.

Even with this explanation we are still left with a philosophical problem. Why did Moses and Aaron have to go through the motions of issuing a warning if they knew that there was no chance that Pharaoh would agree?

It is explained in the book of Tanya, the central work of Chasidic philosophy, that even a person who is so sunken into evil ways that "he is not provided with a means to do teshuva (repent)," even he can overcome and find his way back to righteousness. Even the most corrupt and abominable sinner can return to G-d.

If Pharaoh, totally self-centered, and deprived of his free will could have prevented the final plagues by exerting supreme effort to overcome the hardening of his heart, how much more so is it possible for every Jew to overcome his negative character traits and do teshuva.

A Jew's G-dly soul is termed "an actual piece of G-d," and is in his possession always, for the Jewish soul remains faithful to G-d even if the body commits a sin. A Jew always has the power to return to G-d and live in harmony with his true essence. G-d awaits the return of every single Jew, for he can only sin externally, as his internal nature is untouched and holy.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

## "The Sun Rises" Continues Leadership

Yud Shevat (The tenth day of the Hebrew month of Shevat) is the anniversary of the passing of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, sixth Rebbe of Lubavitch, of blessed memory, (5710/1950). On the same day, one year later, his son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, assumed the mantle of leadership of Chabad.

During a farbrengen—a Chasidic gathering that evening, the Rebbe delivered his inaugural discourse titled Basi Legani—"Enter my Garden," marking his official acceptance of the position of Rebbe. He explained that our generation has been entrusted with the task of fulfilling the purpose of creation by creating a dira btachtonim – a dwelling place for the divine, thereby drawing the divine presence back down into this physical world. It is our generation that will bring moshiach.

He also made a statement establishing his "agenda" as Rebbe of Chabad. Freely translated it reads in part, "The three loves—love of G-d, love of Torah and love of one's fellow Jew—are one. One cannot differentiate between them, for they are of a single essence.

If you see a person who has love of G-d but lacks love of Torah and love of his fellow, you must

tell him that his love of G-d is incomplete. And if you see a person who has only love for his fellow, you must strive to bring him to love of Torah and love of G-d—so that his love toward his fellows should not only be expressed in providing bread for the hungry and water for the thirsty, but also to bring them close to Torah and to G-d."

There is a story told about the Rebbe's early life that seems to be almost symbolic of everything that was to follow.

When he was nine years old, the young Menachem Mendel courageously dove into the Black Sea and saved the life of a little boy who had rowed out to sea and lost control of his small craft.

That sense of "other lives in danger" seems to have dominated his consciousness; of Jews drowning in assimilation, ignorance or alienation—and no one hearing their calls for help: Jews on campus, in isolated communities, under repressive regimes.

This year, Yud Shevat begins Friday night (Jan. 19) at sundown and lasts through Saturday night. The day is marked by Torah study, Chasidic gatherings and reaffirmation to the Rebbe's mission as articulated above.



# IT HAPPENED ONCE

Even at a very tender age Yosef Yitzchok had a fixed daily schedule, and he had great satisfaction keeping his affairs in order. At eight o'clock in the morning, Yosef Yitzchok jumped out of bed, and half an hour later he was in the synagogue davening (praying) with the congregation. From 9:30 until 10:00 was breakfast. Then, for four hours Yosef Yitzchok studied in yeshiva. Then came lunch for an hour and another hour devoted to writing. From 4:00 until 8:00 there was yeshiva again, then supper and some free time to spend in his room, before retiring to bed. Quite a schedule for a little boy of five!

Shabbat, of course, was different. Most of the morning was spent in the synagogue in prayer. In addition, he had a special treat, a visit to his grandmother, Rebbetzin Rikva. There he would find the elder members of the Chasidic community, white-bearded chasidim who came to pay their respects to the "Grand Old Rebbetzin." They would stay for a while and relate stories about the lives of older chasidim or even of the Rebbe, Yosef Yitzchok's grandfather, himself.

When everybody went home to eat the Shabbat meal, Yosef Yitzchok went back to the synagogue. There all the worshippers had long since finished their prayers and gone home--all except his father. He sat with his head near the Holy Ark. He was still praying. Yosef Yitzchok approached his father quietly in order to listen to his prayers. His father davened very slowly, as if he were counting the words. Sometimes he paused, and then would slowly continue.

Yosef Yitzchok wondered why it took his father so long to say prayers, which even he, a boy of five, knew so well and could read so fluently. But his heart throbbed as he listened to the soulful melody which his father hummed now and again, and the singsong of the words. Once, Yosef Yitzchok asked his uncle, Rabbi Zalman Aaron, his father's brother. "Why does Father daven so slowly?"

His uncle smiled as he answered with a twinkle in his eyes, "Your father finds it difficult to read the words from the prayer book very quickly. He has to say each word separately, and can't daven very fast. That's why it takes him so long."

Yosef Yitzchok turned away without saying another word. But he felt a deep pain and a burning shame that his father couldn't daven more fluently.

The following Shabbat, Yosef Yitzchok silently approached his father and listened carefully. His father was saying the Shema. "Shema Yisroel..." His father said slowly, then he paused. Yosef Yitzchok was startled to hear his father sobbing. His father said another couple of words, and sobbed again, and when he said "Hashem Echad--G-d is One" the words seemed to burst from his heart, with a flood of tears.

Yosef Yitzchok couldn't listen any more. His heart was bursting with pity for his father. He went home, and with tears in his eyes, appealed to his mother, "Mother, Father is crying in the shul. Why does he daven so slowly, and why is he crying? Come, see for yourself. I can't bear it."

"There is nothing to be worried about," Yosef Yitzchok's mother consoled her little son. "Go to your grandmother and tell her about it. She is a very wise lady, maybe she will be able to explain it to you."

Yosef Yitzchok lost no time and went to his grandmother, certain that the wise, old Rebbetzin would find a remedy to help his father learn to read the prayers more quickly, perhaps even as quickly as all the other Jews in the synagogue.

When he came to his grandmother, Yosef Yitzchok told her about his poor father's difficulty saying the prayers. "Mother said that you could do something about it," he concluded hopefully.

Grandmother looked at him seriously and said, "Your father is a great chasid and a tzadik. Before he reads any word from the prayer book, he thinks about it carefully. What it means and to Whom he is saying it. And when he thinks about the holy words of the prayers, his heart is filled with love for G-d, just as a son loves his dear

father who is near and yet far away. So your father longs to be closer to Him and the tears just come. I cannot tell you more now, but when you grow older you will understand this better, and you will know how it feels."

With his grandmother's explanation, Yosef Yitzchok felt as if a tremendous weight came off his heart. So it wasn't that his father couldn't read the prayers quickly. It was because his father was such a great person that he davened differently. Yes, he realized that his father was different, in the way he spoke, the way he acted, the way he studied, the way he prayed. That very day, Yosef Yitzchok resolved that as the only child of such a great person, he too must act differently, to merit being his child.

Yosef Yitzchok's father, Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber, became the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe. Upon his passing, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok became the sixth and previous Rebbe.

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

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**And in order that you may tell in the ears of your son...and you shall know that I am G-d (Ex. 10:2)**  
 How can a parent imbue his children with a sincere faith in G-d? "You shall know that I am G-d"--you yourselves must believe in G-d first, before you teach your offspring.  
*(Rabbi Yehoshua Rokeach)*

**They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place (10:23)**  
 The worst kind of darkness that can exist is when a person does not see his brother or extend his hand to help the needy. When one ignores his responsibilities and makes believe that the problems of others don't exist, the end result is that he himself will suffer and not be able to rise.  
*(Chidushei HaRim)*

**And you shall eat it in haste (12:11)**  
 Why the big rush when the Children of Israel finally left Egypt? Didn't their extreme haste give the mistaken impression that they had to escape quickly? Pharaoh actually wanted them to leave at that point. They could have taken more time to pack and depart at a more leisurely pace. However, leaving Egypt was not a mere geographical move for the Jews; it was a moral step in the right direction. It was a step away from the world of spiritual degradation they had become accustomed to in Egypt. When a person desires to sever his connection to evil, it must be done all at once and not gradually. A person must grab the first opportunity that presents itself to escape from a negative influence. However, when Moshiach comes and reveals himself we will not be so hard pressed to leave the Exile immediately. G-d has promised to remove all impurity from the world, so there will be no reason to run away from evil.  
*(Tanya)*

**Dedicated to the Rebbe on 74 Years of Leadership**  
 whose teachings and example are a never-ending source of life for all mankind.  
 May we continue in his path and complete the mission with which he has charged us: to make the world conscious of the imminent Redemption and to prepare the environment where this ideal can be realized.



**4:39 Candle Lighting Time**  
 NY Metro Area  
**9 Shvat / Jan 19**  
 Torah Portion Bo  
 Shabbat ends 5:42 pm



# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

By the Grace of G-d  
Rosh Chodesh Shevat, 5711  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the members of our community, the Temimim, and to all who are bound or in any way connected with my revered father-in-law, the saintly Rebbe, of blessed memory,

G-d bless you all.

Greeting and Blessings:

In response to the many requests for a detailed schedule for the upcoming Tenth of Shevat, yahrtzeit of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, hareini kaparat mishkavo, I hereby suggest the following:

On the Shabbat before the yahrtzeit, each should try to be called up to the Torah for an aliyah. If there are not enough aliyot, the Torah should be read a number of times in different rooms. However, no additions should be made to the number of aliyot per reading.

The one who is honored with Maftir should be the most respected congregant, as determined by the majority; alternatively, the choice may be determined by lot.

The congregation should choose someone to lead the prayers on the day of the yahrtzeit. It is proper to divide the honor, choosing one person to lead the evening service (Maariv), a second to lead the morning service (Shacharit), and a third – the afternoon service (Minchah). In this way a greater number of community members will have the privilege.

A yahrtzeit candle should be lit that will burn for the entire twenty-four hours. If possible, the candle should be of beeswax. Five candles should be lit throughout the prayer services.

After each prayer service (in the morning service—following the reading of Psalms), the one leading the prayers should study (or at least conclude the study of) the following selections from the Mishnah: Chapter 24 of Keilim and chapter 7 of Mikvaot.

He should then recite the mishnah “Rabbi Chananyah ben Akashya...,” followed silently by a few lines of Tanya9, and Kadish deRabbanan.

After Maariv, part of the discourse (maamar) entitled Basi LeGani, which the Rebbe released for the day of his passing, should be recited from memory. If there is no one to do this from memory, it should be studied from the text. This should be continued after Shacharit, and the discourse should be concluded after Minchah.

Before Shacharit, a chapter of Tanya should be studied. This should also be done after Minchah. In the morning, before prayer, charity should be given to causes associated with our Nasi, my revered father-in-law, of sainted memory. Donations should be made on behalf of oneself and on behalf of each member of one’s family. The same should be done before Minchah.

After Shacharit and the recitation of the maamar, each individual should read a pidyon nefesh. (It goes without saying that a gartl should be worn during the reading.) Those who have had the privilege of being received by the Rebbe in yechidut, or at least of seeing his face, should—while reading the pidyon nefesh—envision themselves as standing before him. The pidyon nefesh should then be placed between the pages of a discourse maamar or other pamphlet of the Rebbe’s teachings, and sent, if possible on the same day, to be read at his resting place.

In the course of the day one should study chapters of Mishnah that begin with the letters of the Rebbe’s name.

In the course of the day one should participate in a chassidic gathering (farbrenge).

In the course of the day one should set aside a time during which to tell one’s family about the Rebsbe, and about the spiritual tasks at which he toiled throughout his life.

In the course of the day, people (to whom this task is appropriate) should speak at synagogues and houses of study in their cities and cite a saying or an adage from the Rebbe’s teachings. They should explain how he loved every Jew. They should make known and explain the practice that he instituted of reciting Psalms every day, studying the daily portion of Chumash with the commentary of Rashi, and (to appropriate audiences) studying the Tanya as he divided it into daily readings throughout the year. If possible this should all be done in the course of a farbrenge.

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

*“You ask how you can be bound to me when I do not know you personally... the true bond is created by studying Torah. When you study my discourses, read the talks and associate with those dear to me... and you fulfill my request... in this is the bond.”*

*On Shabbat, January 20th, the 10th of Shevat, we commemorate the yahrtzeit of the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn. The above lines were written by the Previous Rebbe in response to the question of how to become bound with him. The tenth of Shevat is also the anniversary of the Rebbe’s acceptance of leadership. How do we maintain and enhance our connection with the leader of our generation? By studying his talks and by following his directives.*

*In a talk in 5746 (1986) the Rebbe said: “Every single Jew must perform his Divine service in a manner similar to and befitting the days of Moshiach and the subsequent era of the Resurrection of the Dead. This is exhibited first and foremost through faith, anticipation and knowledge that supernatural events will occur in the days of Moshiach, namely, the Resurrection of the Dead....*

*“Belief in these concepts must be with certainty, and must be as unshakably firm as the belief in the Ten Commandments. Obviously the belief in the Resurrection of the Dead requires that same degree of certainty and anticipation. This must be emphasized so much more in our present generation, when many Messianic signs are unfolding. These constitute a clear indication that Moshiach is already present in the world. Moreover, he is already a prominent Jewish leader: ‘a king from the House of David, deeply absorbed in the study of Torah,’ etc. Therefore, in our present generation, great emphasis must be placed on belief in the coming of Moshiach and anything which relates to it.”*

*In these last moments before the true and complete Redemption, may we fill our time with only good -- the good of Torah and mitzvot; with study of the Rebbe’s teachings (especially those relating to Moshiach and the Redemption as the Rebbe emphasized numerous times the importance of such study in preparing ourselves for the Messianic Era); and with fulfilling all of the Rebbe’s directives, until the time that we are reunited with the Rebbe once again -- “and he will redeem us.”*

*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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## MOSHIACH MATTERS

The actual date of the Messianic redemption is a guarded mystery unknown to man. It will happen “in its time,” predetermined from the beginning of creation. Every generation has a special “time” of its

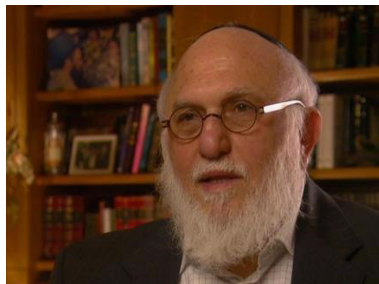
own, for, as stated, Moshiach is alive and present in every generation, albeit concealed. He is ready to be revealed at a moment’s notice. In the course of history prior to “its time” there are especially auspicious times when it is easier to effect his coming. To take advantage of these, to hasten the redemption, that depends completely on us.

*(From Mashiach, by Rabbi J. I. Schochet)*

# SLICE OF LIFE

## Unexpected Success

by Mayer Zeiler



I am a businessman, and an industrialist. The story I have to tell here is how my family invested in a textile business in Israel, thinking it would be a losing proposition. Why did we do it even when we knew we shouldn't?

We did it because the Rebbe said to do it, and we were followers of the Rebbe. Despite all the predictions to the contrary, the business succeeded. Not just modestly, but hugely – not just in Israeli terms, but in American terms, in global terms, thank G-d.

The only explanation why it succeeded, where logically it should have failed, is that the Land of Israel is especially blessed by G-d (something which the Rebbe understood better than any businessman), and that this particular venture was directed and blessed by the Rebbe himself.

The story begins with the passing of my mother in 1951, when I was four years old. My widowed father, a Holocaust survivor, a Bobover chasid – who was then coping with three small children, while living in the Bushwick section of Williamsburg – went to get a blessing from the Lubavitcher Rebbe. That blessing has followed our family to this day.

I married into a Chabad family. My father-in-

law, Reb Dovid Deitsch, was especially close to the Rebbe, and had a plastics business which I joined.

After the devastating Yom Kippur War of 1973, my father-in-law asked the Rebbe what he should do to help Israel. He was sure that the Rebbe would tell him to write a check to an organization doing good works in the Holy Land, but the Rebbe's answer proved starkly different. "Open up a business in Israel," he said. "The new immigrants need jobs. Build a factory there. You will be very successful and it will benefit many families."

My father-in-law didn't think such a venture made business sense, and he didn't do anything about it. But the Rebbe persisted. Each time we went for a blessing, the Rebbe would ask, "Reb Dovid, what's happening with the business in Israel?"

No one in our family was interested in this project. Our advisors told us it would be a total loss. So the explanation that my father-in-law gave the Rebbe was that we were trying but that we were having problems with the Israeli bureaucracy.

To start a business in Israel, we faced one stumbling block after another. It was a very hard project, I had been put in charge of it, and I was weary of it. So, I tried to convince my father-in-law to convince the Rebbe that we should walk away from it.

In fact, I discussed these issues with the Rebbe during an audience in the summer of 1976. But instead of accepting my argument that we should give up, the Rebbe said, "How do you expect to run a business if you're not there?"

That was not the response I was anticipating. But the Rebbe pointed out that this was the ideal time to move to Israel, as the kids could begin school in September.

This was a tough thing for me to accept. But following the Rebbe's recommendation, we made the move into an apartment in Nachlat Har Chabad which was a quarter of the size of our home in Crown Heights.

After a year there, I told the Rebbe that I couldn't take it because of all the frustrations I constantly faced, and I tried to convince him that we should return home. In response, the Rebbe said to me,

"The hard times are behind you; from now on, it will be easier."

And it was.

Suddenly, doors which were shut before started opening up with the ministry officials, customs officials, and the banks. I was making many new friends. At one point, I was introduced to Prime Minister Menachem Begin who amazed me by saying, "When I last visited the Rebbe, he spoke to me about you. I hope you won't have any more problems from now on."

And that's how our factory, Flocktex Industries in Nachlat Har Chabad, started running in the late 1970s.

We were the first manufacturers in the world making a velvet-type fabric for curtains which became very much in demand in England and the world over.

At first, our customers wanted a certificate from an English laboratory, which failed us repeatedly. I asked the Rebbe for his blessing three times before the English laboratory finally approved our product. When I asked him for the third blessing and saw how puzzled he was by the request, I realized that the English test was not being done properly. So I sent our head chemist over there to stand and watch, and then we passed.

As the global demand grew, we built a second and then a third plant. Today, although we are not the largest company in Israel, we are one of the country's most successful textile producers.

Would any of this have happened without the Rebbe's insistence?

For sure not.

Our financial advisors told us this venture would not work. They said, "Go back to your Rebbe and explain to him that he doesn't understand industry and he doesn't understand financing. You can't have a successful industry in Israel."

I thank G-d that despite everything, we followed the Rebbe's advice. We are here today running a business that provides a livelihood for over one-hundred families. And for this the Rebbe gets all the credit.

*Reprinted from the JEM's My Encounter with the Rebbe oral history project*

## Choosing Purpose over Pleasure, Young Jewish Professionals Volunteer in Israel

JERUSALEM—As the sun began to set in Israel, 40 young Jewish professionals from across the United States, who traveled to Israel for their holiday break, somberly walked through what was once the bucolic town of Kfar Aza, one of the devastated communities along Israel's southern border.

The group was part of the Chabad Young Professionals (CYP) Mission to Israel. CYP is the world's largest network of young Jewish communities, with 218 CYP chapters serving like-minded young Jews around the world.

In addition to visiting the destroyed towns of Kfar Aza and Be'eri, their jam-packed itinerary included visits to an army base, where they put together care packages for soldiers, volunteering at a farm that now lacks employees. They also heard from parents who have lost children, met with those injured in hospitals and talked with family members of hostages.



## A Call To Action

**Think about and do something on behalf of Jewish education:**

"It is the absolute duty of every person to spend half an hour every day thinking about the Torah-education of children, and to do everything in his power -- and beyond his power -- to inspire children to follow the path along which they are being guided."

*As quoted by the Rebbe in Hayom Yom*