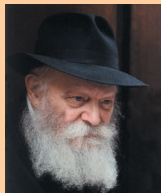


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

About the mitzva of mezuzah, which is found in this week's Torah portion, Eikev, the Talmud relates that Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi once sent a mezuzah as a gift to Artaban, king of Persia, explaining that the small scroll would protect him from harm. At first glance, Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi's gesture seems odd. The commandment to affix a mezuzah upon one's door posts was given only to the Jewish nation. A non-Jewish king, therefore, would not be fulfilling a religious precept by possessing a mezuzah. As such, why then did Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi promise the gentile king that the mezuzah would guard and protect him?

A similar question may also be asked about the common practice, dating back to the time of the Mishna, of inserting a mezuzah scroll into one's walking stick. A walking stick is certainly not included in the commandment of mezuzah. If there is no commandment, there is certainly no reward. How then, did the mezuzah afford protection?

A distinction must be made between the reward a person receives for performing a mitzva and the intrinsic attribute of the mitzva itself. When a person obeys G-d's command by fulfilling a mitzva, the reward he earns is a separate and distinct entity, additional to the essential nature of the mitzva. For example, the Torah states that the reward for the mitzva of mezuzah is long life: "That your days be increased and the days of your children."

Yet besides the reward promised by the Torah, each mitzva has its own special attributes and characteristics that have nothing to do with reward but are integral parts of the mitzva itself. The mezuzah's attribute is protection. Our sages explained that when a kosher mezuzah is affixed to the door post, G-d Himself watches over the occupants of the house, even when they are not at home.

With this in mind, it becomes clear that even when no fulfillment of a religious precept is involved, a mezuzah still possesses this attribute of protection, at least to some degree. It was for this reason that Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi sent the mezuzah as a gift to the Persian king and that Jews took mezuzot with them wherever they went inside their walking sticks.

In a similar vein, speaking about and studying the laws of mezuzah afford similar protection. The Talmud relates that in the house of one Jewish king a special sign was made on those door posts which were exempt from having a mezuzah. From this we learn the crucial importance of having kosher mezuzot. The Jewish people, likened to "one sheep among seventy wolves," is always in need of special defense. Every additional mezuzah affixed to a Jewish home extends G-d's Divine protection to the entire Jewish nation, for all Jews are ultimately responsible for one another.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Do Not Stay At Home Order!

By Rabbi Eli Friedman

A man once came by to chat, complaining about his depression and unhappiness. He said his work is fine but he finds no happiness in his life.

After some conversation, it turned out that more than unhappiness, his problem really was loneliness. He had very few friends, and almost no social life. We agreed that he should begin visiting his local Chabad for Shabbat services and join the community.

The meeting, combined with so many others like it, made me think.

At some point during the 20th century, people purporting to be championing the righteous causes of scientific thought dismissed religion as backward and useless. They walked away from it, proud of themselves for removing dogma and superstition from their lives.

But they made a terrible mistake. Because along with the "dogma and superstition" they also discarded the community. This misguided movement deprived themselves of a community and brought upon themselves loneliness and proud, secular misery.

What a joy, what a blessing, what a gift - a community. When someone has a celebration, the community celebrates with them. When someone is unwell, the community is there for them. When someone grieves, the community shows up for them.

The bottom line: nothing replaces a community. Not office life, not commuter friends, and not co-workers.

Sure, you have the lucky ones

who've been blessed with good, solid friends. But there are far too many doing without. The twists and turns of life have left them without this gift of good, local friends, and they suffer silently, alone.

Folks, go to Shul, and go often, more often than not. Even if you don't sing along or read along, just come sit alongside friends.

When people congregate in honor of G-d, something so much greater than themselves, it stirs the most beautiful elements within every person there. A community of good people assembled for a good purpose causes a magnetism storm, where every individual's Neshama is tugged to the surface by the presence and vibrancy of the others.

We are grateful to Moses for many things; the Torah, freedom, miracles, and much more. But maybe his biggest gift to us was when he turned us from ex-slaves into a strong, cohesive community - united by our bond with G-d. Our first "Shul" experience was when Moshe shlepped us to Mount Sinai and we stood in G-d's presence fiercely united.

Remember the "Stay at Home Orders" from COVID? Well, this is an equally urgent, "DO NOT STAY AT HOME ORDER". Come out, wherever you are. Come to Shul. The community awaits you.

Nobody cares if you know exactly when to stand and sit during the prayers. Just know when it's time to stand with your brothers and sisters, when to proclaim yourself a proud member of the Jewish community.

That time is now. Come to Shul.

SLICE OF LIFE

A Tenth Man for the Minyan



Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson זצ"ל

The twentieth of the Hebrew month of Av, is the yahrzeit of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson of blessed memory, father of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. An erudite chassid, he was considered one of the greatest Talmudic and Kabbalistic scholars of his generation. He served as the chief rabbi of the city of Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine, during the bloody Bolshevik revolution and the subsequent Communist oppression. Despite terrible persecution directed at religious leaders in those days, he remained fearlessly defiant in strengthening Jewish learning and practice in his city and throughout the Soviet Union. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was eventually arrested, tortured, and subsequently banished to exile in a remote village in Kazakhstan. His spirit, however, was not extinguished, even while his body was broken and eventually gave way to his early passing.

Rebbetzin Chana, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's wife, relates in her memoirs:

The following story happened in the USSR in 1935, a time when Soviet oppression was at its peak, and the KGB was tracking all Jewish activity as "counterrevolutionary" and "anti-government."

One night, at 11 PM, a knock was heard on the door of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, the chief rabbi of the city of Dnepropetrovsk. An older woman entered the apartment. She looked

around nervously to make sure that there was no one there besides the rabbi and his family.

"Rabbi," she whispered. "I have come from a distant city that I cannot identify by name. In another hour, at midnight, my daughter and son-in-law will be here too. They are both serving in high-level government positions; coming here is fraught with danger for them. I pleaded with them to go to a rabbi who would arrange a proper Jewish wedding for them. They set the condition that the chupah (wedding ceremony) would take place at your home, honored rabbi, and nowhere else. I came in advance to give you time to prepare for their arrival."

At exactly midnight, the couple arrived. They were immediately brought into a side room so that no one would see them. The rabbi began to prepare for the marriage ceremony. First, he needed to get a minyan (quorum of ten adult male Jews). By now it was after midnight. The streets were deserted. Where would it be possible to get another eight—aside from the rabbi and groom—to complete a minyan at this hour?

The marriage needed to take place that night at any cost. It was necessary to get eight "kosher" Jews—people who could be relied upon to keep a secret and not tell anyone what they had seen. Otherwise, the lives of the rabbi, the young couple, and everyone present would be in danger.

Within half an hour, the room held nine men. Only one was missing, a tenth man for the minyan. What did the rabbi do?

In Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's apartment building, a young Jew had been assigned by the government with the responsibility to keep careful tabs on any irregular movements in the home of the rabbi, and verify that no religious ceremonies were taking place. It was to him that the rabbi sent a messenger, asking him to come.

When he arrived, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak told him that he wanted him to serve as the tenth man of a minyan, so that he could conduct a Jewish wedding for the young couple that was getting married that night.

"Me!?" he jumped back as if bitten by a snake. "Yes, you!" The young man rushed to the windows and closed all the shutters. Then he sat down quietly, and alertly watched the unfolding events.

The rebbetzin brought a big tablecloth to serve as the chupah canopy, and four of those present, like living posts, held up its four corners.

When the ketubah (marriage contract) was drawn up, the bride and groom were summoned from their hiding place in the other room. The bride's face was veiled, and the groom tried to cover his face, too, so he wouldn't be recognized.

The ceremony began. No candles were lit due to the bride and groom's fear of discovery. Seven circles were conducted around the groom as is customary, and the rabbi arranged the marriage and recited the blessing over the wine. The groom put the ring on the bride's finger and said, "Behold you are betrothed to me . . ." The ceremony was complete.

It was now 1:30 AM. The bride and groom hurried to vacate the premises, as did all the other participants—except for two.

These were people who held Communist Party cards. They took their cards out of their pockets, approached Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, and said emotionally:

"As of now, Rabbi, we are with you and we do not want to part from you. All of this"—pointing to their cards—"is worth nothing to us when we are with you, honored rabbi . . ."

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's selfless efforts for Jews and Judaism even in the face of a sadistic superpower regime determined to leave no trace of them were later tenderly nurtured by his son and disciple, the Rebbe. The Rebbe conducted Soviet Jewry's affairs clandestinely from afar, and eventually saw the decades of his father's effort blossom into full bloom upon the fall of the Iron Curtain and the public resurgence of Jewish life there.

His personal example, demonstrating how Judaism will survive against all odds and how we must adhere steadfastly and proudly to its ideals, serves as a shining beacon of inspiration for all of us today, and for all generations to come.

We are likewise collectively indebted to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and his life's partner, Rebbetzin Chana, of righteous memory, for giving us the Rebbe, whose application of their teachings and way of life to all the rest of us changed the very course of world Jewry.

New Roving Chabad Brings Jewish Tradition to Rural Arizona



Eastern Arizona is home to cool mountain lakes, lofty buttes, towering cliffs and turquoise skies. And there are some Jews there, as well—although not nearly as numerous as the ponderosa pine trees that the region is famous for.

That doesn't deter Rabbi Yaakov and Tiferes Cahnman. As a roving Chabad emissary couple, they are being charged with reaching out to Jewish residents and tourists living and visiting anywhere in the state's vast Rim Country and White Mountains region. Rabbi Zalman Levertov, who directs Chabad-Lubavitch of Arizona with his wife, Tziporah, was instrumental in paving the way for the young couple to establish Chabad of NE Rural Arizona.

"Traveling long distances just to help a fellow Jew has been the hallmark of the Chabad movement for decades," said Levertov, who has directed Chabad activities in the state for 47 years. "No Jew should be left behind. That's our philosophy. We should reach out to every Jew everywhere."

"We feel we have a unique responsibility," said Tiferes. "We want to show every Jew that they're loved, and no matter what they've gone through, or how far they might be, they have a beautiful soul. Neither physical nor spiritual distance can diminish the essence and the holiness of every single soul."

Ethics of the Fathers: Chapter Five

There are four types of temperaments. One who is easily angered and easily appeased—his virtue cancels his flaw. One whom it is difficult to anger and difficult to appease—his flaw cancels his virtue. One whom it is difficult to anger and is easily appeased, is a chassid. One who is easily angered and is difficult to appease, is wicked.





The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

This letter was addressed to the directorate of Collel Chabad and in particular, to R. Shlomo Yehudah Leib Aliazarof, the head of the Collel concerning the passing of the Rebbe's father, the sage and kabbalist, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson.

B"H, 21 Menachem Av, 5705

Greetings and blessings,

I received your letter of 27 Tammuz.

Thank you for organizing all the matters concerning the year [of mourning] and the day of the yahrzeit as befitting.¹

You should receive \$100 from R. Chanoch Hendel Havlin for the Collel as [a donation] from me in connection with the expenses associated with the above, together with thanks from the depths of my heart.

Attention can be drawn to our Sages' statement (Shabbos 152b; Zohar, Vol. I, p. 226b) that after twelve months, i.e., on the day of the yahrzeit and from that day onward, the soul ascends and does not descend.

An additional rationale can be mentioned with regard to the righteous. For on the day of their death, the righteous are on a very high level — see the sources cited in Maavar Yabok, maamar 1, ch. 17; see also the gloss of Metzudos David to Il Melachim 2:10.2

And in Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh, Epistle 28, the Alter Rebbe writes that on the day of his passing: "All the work for which a person's soul labored during his lifetime [is lodged] in the spiritual realms in a concealed and hidden manner, [but] is revealed and shines in manifest revelation from above at the time of his passing."

It is possible to say that this is the intent of our Sages' statement (Avos 6:9) that at the time of a person's passing, he is accompanied only by "Torah and good deeds." The intent is at that actual time, [his study and good deeds are revealed].

Therefore with the passing of a year — i.e., on the day of the yahrzeit — [this revelation is repeated]. As is well known, all the spiritual influences associated with the special days of a year become manifest again at the appointed time every year.

Moreover, as a result of the concept that:

"The righteous do not have any rest... not [even] in the World to Come"³ and "proceed from strength to strength,"⁴ [in the subsequent years,] they achieve a much greater ascent than on the actual day of their passing (see Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh, Epistle 14).⁵

In connection with the rationale mentioned above — that [on the yahrzeit] the soul ascends and never descends — Shaar HaMitzvos, the conclusion of Parshas Vayechi, states that this ascent begins from the Shabbos preceding the yahrzeit and is not necessarily [associated] with the yahrzeit itself. This would not apply with regard to the rationale explained above. Further analysis of the matter is required.

With requests to pray for the health and welfare of my mother; may she enjoy long and good years; with the blessing "Immediately to teshuvah; immediately to Redemption,"



This letter was addressed to R. Yaakov Yosef Raskin, one of the members of the chassidic brotherhood in Eretz Yisrael. translated by Rabbi Eli Touger.

From the Sichos in English Collection

B"H

21 Menachem Av, 5710

Greetings and blessings,

I asked your son, R. David, to write down his memories of my revered father, o.b.m. In the course of his conversation, he told me that, in his estimation, you know much more. Therefore I am now asking you, in your free time, to write about the above in the greatest detail possible — for elaboration on these matters is praiseworthy — and then send it to me. I extend my thanks in advance.

Similarly, it has become known to me that you have been able to bring from your previous country the shofar of my revered father and that R. Dovber Chaskind will, with good fortune, be traveling here at the beginning of Elul. I would be very thankful if you would give him that shofar. It is understood that it is my responsibility to cover any expenses involved in the above according to your instructions, in addition to my great thanks for all the above.

On this occasion, I would like to express my feelings of satisfaction and pleasure from the conduct of your son, R. David. May it be G-d's will that the blessings which my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, " , conveyed and conveys even now be fulfilled in their fullness regarding him and your other children.

With blessing and thanks in advance for all of the above,

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn, the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, said: "If

all Jews would join together, great and small alike, and say, 'Father, enough already. Have mercy on us and send us our Redeemer, then certainly Moshiach would come!'"

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

In Memory of Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman, Director of the Lubavitch Youth Organization and Founder of the L'Chaim Publication.

From the Archives

Many people, upon hearing that the Redemption is imminent, ask, "What will happen in the Messianic Era?" Because we are talking about an essential change in every aspect of the world's functioning, it is only human nature to wonder about, and even be a little frightened by, the unknown.

Since the Redemption is a totally new reality, it is understandable that people are anxious and apprehensive. First and foremost, it is important to emphasize that Moshiach's coming will bring only good, happiness and abundance to everyone of us. The changes that will take place will only be for the good, for the good of every person.

The simplest and most basic explanation of the Messianic Era is that it will bring the world to its ideal state, a righteous and perfected world in which good, truth and justice rule. It is easy to see that today's world is not normal! But our mind-set is so established that "this is the way it has always been so this is the way it will always be," and we cannot imagine another way.

The world in which we find ourselves today can be likened to a culture in which the people live in total darkness. They create many rules, inventions and customs in order to cope with the darkness and find their way. They have been living this way for so long that they cannot even imagine a world where light exists, the benefits of light, and how much more pleasant their lives would be if they only had light. They also cannot conceive of being able to get around without all of their special inventions. But the instant they would have light, in the blink of an eye they would get rid of all of their encumbrances, realizing that there is no longer a need for them. They would be totally amazed at how they could possibly have existed until now in the utter darkness.

The same is with us. When the Redemption comes, and G-d's goodness and essence is revealed in the world for all to perceive, all problems will disappear. We will see G-dliness and truth with our own eyes. Just as today we hunger for food and thirst for water; in the Messianic Era we will hunger and thirst to learn Torah and fulfill mitzvot. We will not have to fight against evil, for in the post-redemption world there will be no room for evil.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חי'ה 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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IT HAPPENED ONCE

When word spread throughout the region around Rimanov that the famous Count Dravski would be arriving, all the local gentry assembled to pay homage to the renowned poet and freedom fighter. Although he was now, in 1883, an old man of eighty, his fame had not diminished and he was held in the highest esteem.

The Count was feted extravagantly and in the course of the reception he explained the reason for his visit. "When I was just a small child I fell ill. My mother called for the best physicians available, but none of them could cure me, and they soon despaired of my life. My poor mother was frantic. I was her only and beloved son. One afternoon a friend of hers came to visit and advised her to seek the help of a wonder-working rabbi who lived in a nearby town. This holy man was well known in the surrounding villages, and Jew and gentile alike came to request his blessings.

"My mother lost no time. She called to her coachman and with the fastest horses she flew to the house of the rebbe accompanied by her two closest friends. They arrived at the crack of dawn, but despite the early hour, the household bustled with activity, as that was the time reserved for caring for the needs of the indigent. They sent their servant to request an audience, and the rebbe agreed to see them after he completed his prayers.

"When the time finally came, my mother's friend approached the rebbe and explained the terrible situation. The rebbe listened and then replied in perfect Polish: 'Have you come to me because you think I am a sorcerer and I have some magic with which I can help you?'

"'No,' replied my mother's friend, 'but I see that you live a holy life and so, you are closer to G-d than other people. For this reason G-d listens to your prayers more closely.'" "Since that is your thought I agree to pray for the boy."

"The women left his room leaving the door ajar, and seated themselves outside his door. They were able to glimpse the figure of the rebbe. He was engaged in fervent prayer, beads of perspiration glimmering on his face. After three hours of this intense devotion he called them into his room and said: 'At this exact moment your child's illness has been relieved. When he has recovered completely bring him to me so that I may bless him.'

"My mother returned home and rushed into my room, asking the maids, 'How is the child?' They told her that there was no great change, except that at exactly 12 noon, I had awakened and asked for a glass of water.

"After a few weeks of recuperation I was well enough to travel to the rebbe. I received his blessing and he admonished me to always treat the Jews with kindness. Know that I have kept my word. Now that I am an old man I wished to make a pilgrimage to the grave of the rebbe in order to pray at that holy spot."

Count Dravski began to weep uncontrollably, and in keeping with Jewish custom he wrote a note to place at the grave. The note read: "Ye sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob--pray for the soul of the late Menachem Mendel! And you, Mendel, since you stand already in the presence of the Heavenly Throne, pray for the oppressed nations--the Jewish People and Poland--and pray too for me, for my children, and for my grandchildren!

Signed: Miechislaw Dravski, son of Victoria



The second Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Dov Ber, had a group of chasidim who were musicians and who would perform together on festive occasions. There were also a number of chasidim who were horsemen, and they entertained onlookers by performing on their steeds to the rhythm of the music. The Rebbe would stand by the window listening to the music and observing the performance. His son, Reb Nachum, was one of the riders.

Once, the Rebbe unexpectedly called for a performance and stood by the window to watch. Suddenly, Reb Nachum was flung from his horse and badly hurt. Rushing to notify the Rebbe, the chasidim were surprised when he motioned to carry on with the performance.

Only a while later did the Rebbe signal for them to stop and went back to his room. In the interim, a doctor checked Reb Nachum. "It is not as bad as it looks," the doctor said calmly. "He has only broken his leg." After treating the leg, the doctor left, assuring them that it would heal properly.

Later, some of the chasidim asked the Rebbe why he had ordered the performance to continue despite the accident. "Why don't you ask why the performance was called for an ordinary weekday?" responded the Rebbe.

He explained, "I became aware of harsh judgements regarding my son in the spiritual realms. Since 'happiness mitigates judgement,' I called for the musicians and the horsemen. The festivities did help, for his injury was far less serious than predestined. To assure complete recovery, I ordered the festivities to carry on, despite the fall. Indeed, with G-d's help, he will recover and no lasting impression of the original judgement will remain."

Reprinted with permission from My Father's Shabbos Table by Rabbi Y. Chitrick

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah Portion

And you shall eat and be sated. (Deut. 8:10)

The Maggid of Mezritch once asked a wealthy man what he eats every day. "Bread and salt, Rebbe, like a poor man," was his reply.

The Maggid rebuked him and told him to eat meat and drink wine every day as wealthy men were accustomed to do. Later, when the Maggid's disciples asked for an explanation, he said: "If a rich man eats meat and drinks wine every day, then he will realize that a poor person needs at least bread and salt. If, however, he eats bread and salt, he will think that his poor neighbor can make do with stones!"

And to serve Him with all your heart (Deut. 11:13)

Rashi explains that this verse refers to the service of the heart, namely prayer. Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin used to take a long time over his prayers; Reb Shalom of Belz would recite his prayers hastily. On this, one of their contemporaries commented that both of them cherished every word of the prayers: the former loved them so much that he could not bring himself to part with them, while the latter--for the same reason--could not restrain his eagerness to make them his. (*A Treasury of Chasidic Tales*)

And now Israel, what does G-d ask from you but to fear G-d and to follow in all His ways, to love Him and serve Him with all your heart and all your soul. (Deut. 10:12)

The Talmud asks, "Is then reverence such a small matter?" and answers, "For Moses it is a small matter."

Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the first Chabad Rebbe, commented, "The Torah speaks here to every Jew. How is this an answer for everyone? Every Jew, whoever he may be, contains a spark of Moses. This gives every Jew the strength to attain awe of G-d."



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Yisrael Chaim Aziz ben Reuben
On the occasion of his Yahrzeit
נפטר כ' אב, תשס"ד
Dedicated by Rivka and Raphael Mahpour