



The prayers had been said and the festive meal celebrating the auspicious day of Rosh Hashana had been eaten in great happiness and anticipation of the blessings of a good new year.

The evening after Rosh Hashana, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai had retired for the night, but his sleep was disturbed by a frightening dream concerning his two nephews. In the dream his nephews stood, pale and frightened, faced with a deputation of Roman officials. The Romans demanded from them the enormous sum of six hundred dinarim.

Bright and early the next day Rabbi Shimon headed for the home of his nephews. When he arrived they were busily involved in their business affairs. They were surprised by the arrival of their uncle; as a leader of his people he had little time for social calls. Rising from their seats they were anxious to make Rabbi Shimon comfortable, but their uncle had come with a purpose. Looking at his two nephews Rabbi Shimon said: "I think it is strongly advisable that the two of you become involved with the needs of the community. For example, you could perhaps undertake supporting the needy and the infirm. The two young men asked no questions. After all, their uncle was a great tzadik, recognized among all the Jewish people for his wisdom. They were happy to implement his idea, but they asked their uncle: "Where will we get the money to distribute? Our business is not earning much of a surplus yet."

His replied, "Take the money from your earnings and keep a strict record of all your disbursements. At the end of the year I will reimburse you for your expenditures."

They readily agreed, and Rabbi Shimon left feeling relieved that the arrangements had been settled.

Several months later, enemies of the young men informed upon them to the Roman government, reporting that they were operating a silk business without having first obtained a state permit. A group of armed Roman soldiers entered their home and announced to the shocked young men that they were under arrest. As they were being led away to prison in chains, they were given a choice. Either they could make a costly silk garment for the emperor, or pay a fine of six hundred dinarim.

When Rabbi Shimon heard the terrible news he rushed to the prison and managed to speak to his nephews. He urgently inquired of them: "How much money did you distribute to tzedaka this year?"

They replied that they were not certain of the exact amount, but they had kept a careful record of every disbursement, just as he had instructed them. They told him where to find their notebook, and he located it easily. When he returned to them he said: "Give me six dinarim at once!" The Rabbi offered no further explanation, and the nephews immediately gave him the money without question. Rabbi Shimon took the money and approached the guard with it, offering the six dinarim as a bribe. The guard accepted it happily and to their surprise, the young men were immediately released and allowed to return home.

One of his nephews turned to Rabbi Shimon and questioned him, "If the fine was six hundred dinarim, how were you able to bribe them with only six? There must be more to this than you have revealed to us."

Only then did Rabbi Shimon tell them his dream and the explanation for his request that they give charity. "On the evening after Rosh Hashana I dreamed that you would be required to pay the Romans six hundred dinarim. I asked you to give the same sum to tzedaka, a far preferable way to spend money than giving it to the evil Roman government."

The nephews were astounded by their uncle's story. "However, when I checked your

accounts I saw that you were short six dinarim; therefore I asked you for the remaining sum. After you had completed payment you had the merit to be freed."

"But Uncle," they protested, "if you had only told us about the dream, we would have gladly given the entire sum to tzedaka at once, and been spared from suffering the entire incident!"

"That is so," replied Rabbi Shimon, "but had I told you in advance, you would not have given the money from a pure heart only for the mitzvah, but only to spare yourselves from pain. It is only because you gave the money with pure intentions and without any thought of yourselves that you were worthy to be saved from punishment."

### THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah Portion

**These are the feasts of G-d, the holy convocations, which you shall proclaim in their seasons (Lev. 23:2)**

In the days of the Holy Temple, the calendar was fixed and the determination of when the festivals would fall was done by the Sanhedrin, according to the testimony of witnesses who said they had seen the new moon. Even if after the fact, it was discovered that a mistake had been made, the court's decision was final and the holiday celebrated according to their calculations. G-d gave man the absolute power to determine when a festival fell and to imbue the day with holiness.

**And you shall take...willows of the brook (Lev. 23:40)**

The willow, one of the four kinds we take on the holiday of Sukkot, has neither fragrance nor taste. It symbolizes those Jews who have in their possession neither Torah learning nor good deeds. Their only merit is the fact that they are descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Maimonides teaches that even a willow that did not grow on the banks of a brook, say, one that was found growing in a desert or on a mountain-top, is kosher and may be used to perform the mitzva. Likewise, a Jew who did not grow up close to his roots in Judaism and was raised in a foreign culture, through no fault of his own, is also kosher, just by virtue of his being a Jew. (Lubavitcher Rebbe, *shlita*)

**Seven complete weeks shall there be (Lev. 23:15)**

The Jewish People is likened to a seven-branched menorah, each branch of which symbolizes a different approach to the worship of G-d. There are Jews whose main emphasis in worship is fear of G-d, and others whose love of G-d is the main driving force behind their relationship with the Creator. In all, there are seven different paths to G-dliness. On each day of the omer, a different attribute is stressed and a different path to G-d is purified. These seven attributes can be combined with each other for a total of 49 possible combinations. Just as each day is necessary for the completion of the omer, so too is every individual Jew an integral component of the Jewish People.

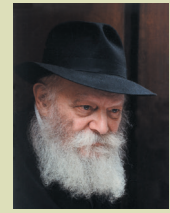
**7:50 Candle Lighting Time**  
NY Metro Area  
**9 Iyar / May 17**  
Torah Portion Emor  
Ethics Ch 3  
Shabbat ends **8:57 PM**

Dedicated in honor of a dear friend of the  
Lubavitch Youth Organization  
Mt. William Shulman Esq.

# L'Chaim

The Weekly Publication  
for Every Jewish Person  
ניסד תוך 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)



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

## Hey, it's Sefira but who is counting

By Rabbi Baruch Epstein

A friend of mine likes to ask new acquaintances; "what do you?" when the man typically responds with his line of work, my friend challenges him: "that's what G-d does for you, He gave you talents for your livelihood. I am asking 'what do you do' with those gifts."

G-d took us out of Egypt, that's what G-d did for us, the question is what we do with that gift.

Beginning with the second day of Passover G-d commands us to count the days and weeks as we detox from Egyptian slavery and progress to Mt. Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments. This mitzvah is called sefiras HaOmer.

Immediately after leaving Egypt we are placed on a 49-day plan – given 7 weeks to extract the Egyptian experience and be ready for Sinai; GO! Get there, geographically and spiritually and G-d will reveal Himself to you; fail and its "thank you for playing, sorry but the world is over".

How can inflexible digits chart a personal journey? How can a uniform method be useful for every individual What if I need more time, I am barely ready for step #9 while everyone else is already at #11?

Life is about merging opposites, illustrating the singularity of Hashem in the apparent diversity of all the stuff He made. G-d is infinite we are finite and yet we are One. When we achieve the spiritual – personal growth – via rigid numbers, we demonstrate true infinity. G-d is not only in the heavens nor bogged down by Earth, so neither are we.

Having experienced Passover, the skipping out of Egypt, ready or not – deserving or not, we are transformed from stiff slaves of routine into graceful spiritual long jumpers. The next step is to channel that boundless energy into the ordinary – and we all can do it – we all must do it – and as Torah tells us, despite some bumps and bruises – we all did it; we got to Sinai, witnessed Hashem, and accepted the Torah.

We don't have to compromise – forego quality for quantity – the counting of Sefira compels us from the perch of spiritual indulgence into the grind of the measurable, while uplifting the despair of "the same old same old" into inspiring sanctity – all at G-d's pace.

Like the child on a swing set we need a push (Passover) to get started and then it's up to us to keep pumping to lift us to the sky.

This week's Torah portion, Emor, contains the command pertaining to the Sabbath: "Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest... you shall do no manner of work."

Take a look at your average calendar and you'll notice that the first day is Sunday, a day of rest in many countries. The week, therefore, begins with a day of rest.

Sunday, in the Jewish calendar, is a work-day; Saturday, Shabbat, was appointed the day of rest. The week actually begins with work. Only after six days of work will the seventh day be the Sabbath. The precedence of labor before rest indicates that our purpose is not to while away time idly, but rather to work for the betterment of ourselves and our community, in both material and spiritual matters.

It might seem strange that the phrase "shall work be done" is in a passive form. But, actually, it indicates that Judaism advocates a "passive" or slightly aloof attitude toward work. A person's entire interest and enthusiasm shouldn't only be centered around business activities.

Today, many of us have become so totally submerged in our business lives that we have no time for anything or anyone, least of all ourselves. We're "on the job" not only at work but also at home, at leisure. We think, sleep, even pray business.

To caution against this complete preoccupation we have the Divine order, "Six days shall work be done." It is a positive commandment, stating the essential nature of labor, yet transmitting an important clause: Don't become totally preoccupied with work. Keep slightly detached so that during leisure hours one will be able to give attention to personal and family needs, both material and spiritual.

From Thought for the Week--Detroit. Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

# SLICE OF LIFE

## Bereaved Father Honors His Son by Spreading Joy



Amichai Ressler and his son Dvir-Chaim OBM

When hearing Amichai Ressler, it's hard to believe the person speaking is a grieving father who lost his son during the horrific events of October 7th. His infectious cheer and constant efforts to spread joy would have one believe that he never experienced heartache in his life. But the truth is that it was exactly that tragedy that propelled him to his new calling.

Amichai Ressler, 45, lives in Kdumim in the historical Samaria region of the Holy Land. For decades, he worked as a tractor driver. On October 7th this past year, the holiday of Simchas Torah, his son, Dvir-Chaim, was murdered by the accursed monsters during the terror attack that took over 1,000 lives. Since the loss of his son, Amichai's life changed. He began to focus on one thing - bringing joy to other Jews.

When remembering his son, Amichai sometimes sums his memories in one word: Simcha - joy. "The joy of life was evident on Dvir-Chaim's face from birth. He was always happy, radiating a special light that also shone on those around him. Growing

up, as a student in yeshiva and in general, he was very sociable, and connected to each student in his class, each soldier in his platoon, and each individual in his social circles. He had a unique way of fulfilling the mitzvah of honoring his parents, avoiding anything that could cause us any distress," Amichai recalls.

At six-thirty in the morning on Simchas Torah this past year, Dvir-Chaim was with his platoon mates at an IDF R&D base in the South of Israel when they heard sirens warning of missile fire towards the base. All the soldiers rushed quickly to the shelters and protected areas, besides Dvir. He went through all the rooms to make sure everyone on the base had woken up and entered the shelter. His friends begged him to protect himself, but he was not deterred from his mission: Ahavat Yisroel - love of a fellow Jew. Only after ensuring everyone was safe, did he join two friends in the shelter.

Moments after he entered the shelter, terrorists breached the base. Dvir had to hold the door of the shelter for many long minutes to prevent the attackers from entering. When the terrorists realized they wouldn't succeed in opening the door, they placed an explosive charge to blast the door open. The explosion killed Dvir-Chaim, who sacrificed his own life to save his two friends.

Shortly afterwards, the news of the attack reached his father, Amichai, but he did not know what the fate of his son was. "When I realized my son was hurt, I tried to find him everywhere. I did everything in my power, but we just weren't able to find any information. I even went by myself to the outposts near the border of the Gaza Strip to try to find him," Amichai recalls.

On Tuesday, four days after the massacre, Amichai headed south again. It was on that trip that a close friend of his son told him, "I promise you that I won't rest until I find Dvir-Chaim."

"At that moment, I let go. I said to the Creator of the World, 'That's it, Father, I

stopped looking. It's in your hands now, and you will find him for me.' The next morning, on Wednesday, I was informed that his body was at the Shura Army base, which was the base where victims of the attacks had been brought to be identified," Amichai said. In those dark days, it seemed like the sea of grief was never-ending.

But almost immediately after the funeral, Amichai set out on a new mission: To gladden the hearts of fellow Jews. It might seem counter-intuitive for a father who just lost his son, but Amichai said that it was his son's memory that prompted him to begin his new "career."

"Until Dvir-Chaim ascended to the heavens, I never even thought of doing anything of the sort. Everyone who knows me knows I'm not the type to stand in front of a crowd and to lecture. But now, thanks to the powers I draw from Dvir-Chaim, I continue his legacy, fulfill his wish, by bringing joy to people's lives. It fulfills me. At my son's funeral, I told him 'I will reach every person who is down and ensure that they will become joyful.' That's my way of honoring my son," the heroic father says.

Amichai explains that his joy is more than just laughter, it is a deep joy, one that comes from belief in G-d. "Joy is a way of life. The way to achieve true joy is by instilling in one's consciousness an absolute trust in the Creator of the world. That which we can change, is up to us, but that which we have no control over, is in the hands of the Almighty, and we must learn to lean on Him."

"I don't wish anyone to go through what I went through. But it is precisely from the place that I stand that I ask everyone to be joyful. Dear Jews, I ask of you, I beg of you, rejoice! This is a time when, more than ever, we need positive energy. We need to strengthen our spiritual and emotional fortitude, and above all, we need to simply be happy. I am sure that this is what G-d wants from us now."

Translated from *Sichat Hashavua*



## The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

By the Grace of G-d  
9 Adar 5739  
Brooklyn, NY

Greeting and Blessing:

This is the acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 7th of Adar, in which you write about the proposed treatment, surgery, for ----. I will remember her in prayer that whatever the decision, it should be with hatzlacha [success].

Inasmuch as you also ask my "advice" in this matter, I can only say in a general way that I am not in favor of radical treatment if there is any possibility of treating a patient in some other way.

I must also add that it is customary among Jews that when there is a difference of opinion among doctors as to the urgency of an operation, or whether to operate or not, it should be treated as any other shaa'lah [question], to consult with a competent practicing Rov, with whom the various aspects and details of the case could be personally discussed, and he can then state his opinion in accordance with the Shulchan Aruch.

I trust there is no need to emphasize at length that one always needs the blessing of "The Healer of all flesh Who works wondrously," and the channel to receive it is through the everyday life and conduct in accordance with His

Will, namely, in accordance with the Torah and mitzvot. When a special Divine blessing is needed, an additional effort in this direction is indicated.

While on the subject of the Torah and mitzvot, as well as medical science, it is fitting to mention here the analogy between the two. As you know, medical science and the effectiveness of drugs which has been proven by application and use. The understanding of how drugs actually do their work is not of primary importance, and can be studied later.

The same is true of the Torah and mitzvot insofar as the Jewish people are concerned. For our long history has proven beyond a doubt that the existence of the Jewish people is intimately bound up with Torah and mitzvot as a way of life, and this has been the only constant factor that has preserved our people at all times and in all places under all kinds of circumstances, whereas other factors that are important for other peoples, such as language, territory, etc. have been changing from time to time and from place to place, so that these cannot be considered determining factors in Jewish life.

I trust that you are using your privileged position of bringing cure and healing to your patients to encourage them to live up more fully to the Will of G-d in the everyday life, since there is always room for improvement in all matters of goodness and holiness, Torah and mitzvot.

At this time before Purim, I extend to you and yours prayer wishes for a joyous and inspiring Purim.

With esteem and blessing,

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Next Wednesday is "Pesach Sheni." Pesach Sheni, the Second Passover, was instituted the year after the Jews left Egypt while they were still in the desert. On Passover of that year, G-d commanded our ancestors to bring the special Passover offering. However, since some of the Jews were ritually impure at that time, they were not permitted to bring the offering. They protested and G-d told Moses that all those who were unable to bring the offering on Passover could bring it one month later. This date became known as the Second Passover.

The Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn wrote: "The theme of Pesach Sheni is that it is never too late. It is always possible to put things right. Even if one was ritually impure, or far away, and even in a case when this impurity or distance was deliberate--nonetheless it can be corrected."

It's never too late. What an inspiring and optimistic thought! There's always a chance to improve, to become better, to learn and do.

This is truly a motto worth memorizing (and hanging on the refrigerator). Rather than muttering about yourself or another person, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks," realize that it's never too late.

You didn't put on tefilin yesterday? Today's a new day and it's never too late.

You didn't light candles for Shabbat last Friday night? Do it this week, it's never too late.

You never went to Hebrew school, so you can't read Hebrew? Enroll in an adult education course; it's never too late.

You never knew that Judaism had so much to offer? Now that you know, do something about it, because it's never too late.

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.

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## Who's Who?

Rachel, the wife of Rabbi Akiva, was the daughter of the wealthy Kalba ben Savua. Her father disowned her when she married Akiva, then an unlearned shepherd. Rachel saw potential greatness in Akiva and encouraged him to leave home and devote himself to Torah. Her self-sacrifice for her husband's Torah learning is legendary. When Akiva returned home after 24 years he attributed his achievements as well as those of his 24,000 students to Rachel, as recorded in the Talmud.



## Colel Chabad Shakes Up Israel's Supermarket Industry with New Store in Beersheva

Nestled in the desert city of Beersheva's "Bet" neighborhood is an unassuming piece of real estate that hopes to make waves in Israel's supermarket industry.

Super HaTzinzor is a full-fledged supermarket that is the result of an ongoing partnership between Colel Chabad, Israel's largest food-security NGO, and the acclaimed investigative television program HaTzinzor. While it may not yet look like the kind of place that could intimidate major players in Israel's food supply market, the two very different organizations believe that the store's affordable prices will not only serve as a powerful cost-saving resource for Israelis, but will compel major competitors to take a closer look at their prices.

The idea was to introduce the general population to shopping the Haredi way. Meaning, less focus on name brands and more of an emphasis on buying exactly what one needs. By stocking up on primarily generic brands and eschewing fancy name brands at inflated prices, Colel Store, and now Super HaTzinzor, have been able to deliver high-quality goods at much lower prices.

