

L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

This week's Torah portion, *Re'eh*, opens with the word "See." Moses says to the Jewish people, "see, I place before you today a blessing and a curse." The blessing will come when the Jewish people fulfill G-d's commandments, and the curse if they abandon them.

Our portion also contains the verses, "You are children to G-d" and "... G-d has chosen you to be for Him a treasured people."

These verses beg a few questions. Which one is it, are we G-d's children or has He chosen us? What can we learn from this for our personal relationships? Does one choose their relatives?

G-d is telling us that there are two ways he relates to us.

First – as His children. Just as a parent is one with his child and nothing can change that, so too G-d's bond with us can never be severed, we are His children.

Second – He chooses us. He wants us and chooses us every day to be His Treasure.

Not only are we intrinsically one because of our essential bond, but G-d continues to treasure each and every one of us because He chooses to.

It is possible to be in a relationship and take for granted the fact that you are essentially one, thinking that this is enough.

Your children and your spouse ache for you to choose them every day. When you don't, they feel hurt, taken for granted and used. It is because of the intrinsic bond that they yearn for your love.

Don't just be your child's parent, be a parent to your child. The same holds true for spouses, and for children toward their parents. Show them that you choose them, that you treasure them.

Don't be difficult, don't be stubborn, don't make requirements for your love. Choose to give them your love because they are your treasures.

Diagnosed with ALS, unable to move, I have plenty of time to think. When considering what is most important to me, the conclusion is always the same. The most important thing is that my wife and children feel loved and cherished by me, and I try my best to show them that I do. Life is so short, make sure your family knows how much you cherish them and that you choose them over and over again.

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com. Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

The Laws of Conservation

by Dr. David YB Kaufmann *obm*

The Laws of Conservation form the foundation of modern physics and cosmology; without knowing them, much of our current technology and engineering wouldn't exist. Research, both theoretical and practical, starts from applying, analyzing and understanding these basic laws. From them flow the theories that shape science's insights into the universe.

One of the most basic is the conservation of energy: It states that the total amount of energy in an isolated system remains constant. Or, energy cannot be created or destroyed. (Einstein showed the relationship between mass and energy, in the famous formula from his special theory of relativity $E=MC^2$. This law also became known as the conservation of mass and energy.

There are other laws of conservation in physics. Some of the conservation laws seem esoteric, and apply to sub-atomic particles: the conservation of color charge, for instance.

There aren't very many of these laws of conservation. There don't need to be. Physicists use what they have. But they all share a central, critical characteristic: what exists, once it exists within a closed system, cannot be destroyed. Energy/mass can be converted, changed; so too with angular momentum or electric charge. But they continue to be, to impact the physical world.

In the same way, Chasidic philosophy teaches us, there's a Conservation of Spirituality. Every holy act – and everything a human being does

generates holiness – continues to exist, even after the physical cause ceases.

Yes, the physical object disintegrates – the lulav branch, for instance, the ram's horn, etc. – all "return to dust."

But the spiritual force invested in a physical object – the spiritual force resulting from the performance of a mitzva (commandment), from study of Torah, from thoughts about the nature of G-dliness, that lead to love of G-d and awe of G-d – these are everlasting and endure.

But what of a negative act - a thought, word, or deed that is prohibited by Jewish law? Well, the "Law of Conservation of Spirituality" applies to the negative as well. Our every misdeed remains existent in the spiritual realm.

However, when it comes to rectifying the negative, the law of conservation applies as well. The act and its ramifications can never cease to exist, but they can be transformed into positive energy.

The process of transformation, reformation, reshaping, is called teshuva. Teshuva is typically translated as "repentance." But more accurately, it means "return," a return to the source or essence of what something truly is. In this case, it refers to a person returning to his/her true spiritual and holy essence, to his/her G-dly soul.

This time of year, the 30 days before the High Holidays, are specially set aside as days of teshuva, of returning to our true selves. Tapping into the energy of these days can give us insight into our own personal worlds and into the universe.

SLICE OF LIFE

In Attendance

by Rabbi Levi Welton



Sidney Goldman obm and Rabbi Levi Welton

If you don't believe this story, ask Brent H. Delman or Jack Schweizer. They were there. They saw it happen with their own eyes.

It was this past Shabbat. I looked over at the empty blue-cushioned seat which Sidney Goldman used to always sit on during synagogue services. Actually, it was two seats stacked one on top of the other and I called it his "double decker throne." Since he was in his 90's, the doctors refused to do the surgery to fix his back. They couldn't offer him pain meds because they interacted with his other medications. So, instead, they offered him massages and sympathetic words of triteness. They did their best. But Sidney had to live with debilitating back pain day in and day out. As Judy Kaufthal's father once told me, "Getting old is not for the weak."

Nevertheless, this World War II veteran showed up for Shabbat services week in and week out. Rain, snow, boiling heat. It didn't matter to Mr. Goldman. He'd be there, sitting in his double-decker throne, often wearing a bedazzled Bucharian Kippah, his Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.'s cap, or some other cool hat (like

the blue beret in the photo!) Sometimes, I'd catch him grimacing as he shifted in his seat. But, most of the time, I'd catch him praying as he said the words aloud and followed along expertly. He had been coming to Lincoln Park Jewish Center for longer than most of my friends had been alive.

Everyone who met him was impressed by how "sharp" his mind was. He had trained as an engineer, after the war, and built a successful entrepreneurial business. He had also built a beautiful Jewish family with his wife, Fey. She had passed right before I met him and then his middle son Roy passed last year. Yet, he still showed up to Shul. Dedicated. Reliable. Perhaps to pray for their memory and soul.

And, now, he had gone to join them. I looked back into my Siddur and then back at the spot bereft of his presence. I would never see him again. Hear him laugh at the "Rabbi Yehuda Ferris jokes" I'd sprinkle throughout the service. Be reminded by him to say the "Barchu" prayer when I forgot (he never did!). Or watch him talk to my four year old son as if it was normal for a man in his nineties and a boy in his single digits to share a bond of friendship and play.

"Jonathan," I said to his grandson - Roy's son - who now sat in the seat between where his grandfather and father used to sit. "Last Shabbat, your grandfather was in this world but not with us in Shul. But, this Shabbat, he is in the World of Truth and with us."

The congregation patiently waited, allowing me to interrupt the service to publicly speak to a descendent of the Goldman patriarch.

"My FBI friends tell me that it's common to find DNA of someone in the places they frequent most. And your grandfather sat right there so many times. So it's possible his physical DNA - literally a part of him - is right there with you. How much more so, his spiritual DNA is with us here today."

Jonathan nodded, strong and silent just like his father and grandfather. I knew the community ached for Mr. Goldman. He was a distinguished board member, a trusted friend and a giant of a man in more ways than one. Literally, he had been a few inches over 6 feet tall - with military trained broad shoulders to boot - before

the many years of gravity took their toll on his physical frame. But never on his spirit.

I'd always turn to him for permission when doing something atypical or unorthodox in shul. "What do you think, Mr. Goldman?" I'd say. I knew if he approved, the rest would follow. "Why not?" he'd often respond, his eyes crinkling up as if he found it humorous that a young rabbi was seeking his approval.

Jonathan opened the ark, where a Torah scroll had once sat emblazoned with the words "In honor of Sidney Goldman's 90th birthday." But someone had stolen that Torah scroll from us during the past year and we had failed to return it home before Sidney was gone. "May the gates of Heaven be open to all your prayers," I intoned as Sidney's grandson stood in the same spot by the ark which his grandfather had stood countless of times. I knew many in the chapel were praying for Sidney.

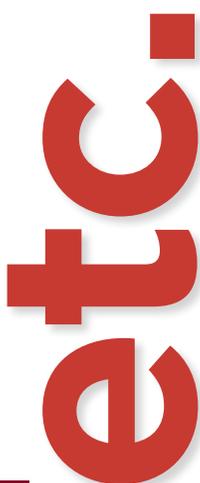
And then it happened. A small moment. Yet, powered with profundity. Alan - you might remember him from the story I once shared about the Jew who turned down a lucrative job to honor the Shabbat - was called up for an Aliyah (being honored to say a blessing by the Torah reading). "Rabbi," he whispered to me. "I pulled out a Siddur when I sat down in my seat today. And look what fell out of it. This must be from the Covid-19 services."

I looked. And looked once more. Then I interrupted the Torah reading to announce what was written therein to the entire congregation. Yet - again - Hashem had blessed us to witness a miracle. For miracles do happen. Every day. Some are of Biblical proportions. And some are small enough to be discounted as mere coincidence. But, as my father taught me, coincidence is G-d's way of remaining anonymous.

I waved the small slip of paper like the American flag at Normandy. And, aloud, I read the words humbly scribbled upon it.

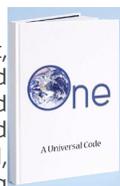
"In Attendance, Sidney Goldman."

Rabbi Levi Welton was raised in the BayArea. He holds degrees in science, film and education and is an ordained rabbi. He is a member of the Rabbinical Council of America and on the board of "Elijah's Journey," an organization that raises suicide awareness and understanding in the Jewish community. Rabbi Welton is the rabbi of the Lincoln Park Jewish Center. www.RabbiWelton.com



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New Mikva

In the city of Meaux, France, approximately 50 kilometers from Paris, a new Mikva was dedicated. Guests, including the mayor, came from throughout the region to attend this historic event and tour the beautiful state-of-the-art Mikva.

Today Is...

28 Av

There are two general approaches in healing a bodily illness: a) To heal the particular organ or faculty that is defective, sick or weak; b) to strengthen the healthy organs and faculties so that they may overcome and heal the sick organ or faculty. The parallel in illnesses of the soul are the two approaches in service of G-d - *teshuva* (return) and good deeds.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Translated from letters of the Rebbe

28 Menachem Av, 5711 (1951)

In answer to the message about your birthday, I bless you that your good fortune should increase and that you may earn a livelihood with ease and support your family with peace of mind and heart; and G-d should strengthen your G-dly soul which finds itself in confinement, so that you should be able to achieve, in practical terms, peace in your home.

I am puzzled as to why you fail to have a concrete understanding of the fact that this situation is coming about through the suggestion and active intervention of the Evil Inclination which is intensifying its action in this matter.

As I have told you several times, and I repeat again, you must put the greatest possible efforts into the matter of achieving peace in your home, between you and your wife.

The saying of our Sages that "A woman's tears are readily found" is well-known. Therefore, it is incumbent upon you to show forbearance, particularly in worldly matters.

If our Sages have expounded on the great virtue of peace in the home at all times, how much more vital is it on the eve of Shabbat, and we, including all of Israel, are now past mid-day on Shabbat eve. The end of exile is close at hand as is the coming of our righteous Moshiach.

It is understood that the greatest concealment of G-dliness prevails in relation to lack of peace in the home.

It is known how great peace is; the ways of the entire Torah are ways and pathways of tranquility and peace, particularly during this last exile, which came about as a result of the lack of peace.

With the approach of the end of the Exile, the resistance of the forces opposed to holiness increase so as to prevent peace in the world at large and specifically between man and wife here below, who reflect their spiritual counterpart above.

However, "the load is according to the camel," and certainly, the ability to withstand the challenge is given to you.

With blessing that you may have awe of G-d

and achieve peace in your home,

17 Sivan, 5714 (1954)

I have been wondering why I have not heard from you all this time, and I hope it is a sign that all is going well.

Still in all, I would be happy to read so explicitly in your letter. May G-d help that this indeed be the case in the best way.

It goes without saying that the running of the home in general, and in particular, the relationship between husband and wife, depend, to a much greater extent, on the woman rather than the man.

As is the expression in the Bible: "The wisdom of the woman builds her home." This is especially true in the case of the "American lifestyle," in which the husband's work involves much anxiety and pressure.

Here, the woman's role is ever more crucial.

It is for her to see to it that the utmost peace and tranquility should prevail between them, through a maximum of understanding on her part.

Even when it seems - and perhaps, in part, rightly so - that the husband could have better qualities, one's attitude should be that, taking in to account that marriage has long been ordained by G-d, it is as when one sees a failing in oneself.

One does not wish to continue to suffer, but to seek a painless way to correct the failing.

This is even more the case as regards marriage.

Ultimately, it is difficult to truly know what the other is going through, or to gauge the effects of the difficulties he may have experienced in the past.

When the husband finds tenderness in his wife, and a strong faith in the Alm-ghty, they both see the entire world in a different light.

It becomes clear that G-d is the authority over the entire world, and, especially, in one's own home and environment; thus positive feelings and joy in the home is increased. She will then see how this was ultimately worthwhile for her own self, for it has brought warmth and tranquility, far in excess of the "cost" in effort to forgo and forgive.

Hopefully, in regard to yourself and your husband, all these considerations are unnecessary, and your home is as a home ought to be - permeated with Ahavat Yisrael (love of a fellow Jew).

It is only because there is no limit to "good" that I assume that these lines will only bring you to improve on this peaceful state and understanding attitude. Your example of harmony and light will also extend to your surroundings.

May G-d bless you,

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Three times a year shall all your males appear before the L-rd your G-d (Deut. 16:16) In the times of the First and Second Holy Temples,

these pilgrimages to Jerusalem were made on the holidays of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. However, after Moshiach comes, they will be made every Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh. Furthermore, when Rosh Chodesh falls on Shabbat, two pilgrimages will be made on the same day - one in the morning and one in the afternoon. (Peninei HaGeula)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

This Shabbat we bless the new month of Elul. Sunday and Monday are Rosh Chodesh Elul.

Elul is a time of introspection and soul-searching. As the old year draws to a close, we take stock of our behavior and make amends for any wrongs we may have committed. In preparation for the New Year, we conduct an honest assessment of our conduct, that we may be aroused to repentance and improvement of our Divine service.

During Elul, a Jew can almost sense the difference in the air. Everyone feels an inexplicable urge to draw closer to G-d, to increase in Torah and mitzvot.

The G-dly soul that every Jew possesses automatically pulls him in the direction of holiness. However, there are two basic ways to motivate a person: the "carrot" and the "stick." Fear of punishment may causes more damage than benefit.

Historically, it was against this backdrop that the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples first arose. In those days, itinerant preachers would "put the fear of G-d" into simple Jews by vividly describing the punishments that would befall them if they did not walk the straight and narrow.

The Chasidic approach, however, is the exact opposite. The Baal Shem Tov emphasized the innate worth of every Jew, the value of serving G-d with purity of heart, the immense power of prayer and the beauty of the Jewish soul.

In Elul, G-d's Thirteen Attributes of Mercy are manifested with particular intensity. It should thus be a time of only emphasizing the positive and increasing our love for our fellow Jew. In the merit of our good deeds (especially the mitzva of charity), each and every one of us will be found deserving, and G-d will inscribe us together with all the righteous.

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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IT HAPPENED ONCE

The Chasid Reb Yehuda Leib was on his way home to Vitebsk after having visited the Rebbe Maharash (the fourth Chabad-Lubavitch Rebbe, Rabbi Shmuel). Sitting in the train station, he noticed a bearded Jew pacing back and forth. Every few minutes he would look toward him as if he wanted to communicate something to him.

Suddenly, the Jew stopped pacing and approached him. "Are you a Chasid of the Lubavitcher Rebbe?" the Jew asked.

When Reb Yehuda Leib answered in the affirmative, he continued, "Then you should know that your Rebbe is a holy man, who possesses Divine knowledge. Please allow me to tell you my story. It relates very closely to the Rebbe, and I'm sure you will find it very interesting. And the man continued:

"I was born into an observant family and lived in one of the small towns which dot this region. I learned in yeshiva like all of my friends, and I was an excellent student. My memory and facility in Torah learning marked me as one of the best students of our group. However, at that time, when I was young, many of my fellows were attracted to the glamour and excitement of the big cities. They wanted to acquire secular knowledge, and many left their small towns and traveled to the big cities.

"I was no exception and I, too, wanted to expand my knowledge: I, too, wanted to see the world and not be 'trapped' in our little town. So, I left home and went to Petersburg, where I was accepted as a medical student in the university there.

"I was very successful. I completed my studies easily. Then, I married a non-Jewish woman and within little time, I assimilated completely into the society of the Russian intelligentsia, who were my new friends and companions. They accepted me fully and it wasn't long before I completely forgot about being Jewish altogether.

"Everything was going along quite well, and I was enjoying my life until one night. On that night my whole life changed. That night I dreamt that my father came and begged me to repent of my ways.

"I ignored that dream, for after all, it is a known thing that dreams are mere fantasies. But the dream repeated itself night after night until I was consumed by it and could think of nothing else.

"One evening my wife and I were invited by some friends to attend a soiree. The party was in full swing, the orchestra was playing and elegant couples circled the dance floor. Suddenly, the old Jew from my dream appeared accusingly in front of me. I always carried a pistol with me, and, in a burst of anger, I drew it and fired at the phantom.

"At once the music stopped and everyone looked at me in horror. For myself, I returned home, mortified at my own senseless behavior. After a sleepless night of reflection, I decided to change my life.

"The following day I headed for Lubavitch where I intended to beg the Rebbe to guide me and prescribe a path of repentance for me. But when I entered his room, he abruptly stood up and turned away from me. Without a glance in my direction, he said, 'What is a man who murdered his father doing in my home?'

"I nearly fainted. Before me stood a holy man who saw with Divine insight, who knew everything that was in my heart. I burst out in bitter tears which sprung from the depths of my broken heart, and I begged the tzadik to tell me how I could repent.

"He commanded me to sell all my possessions quietly and move to a location where no one knew me. He also gave me very specific directions for the atonement of my soul.

"Before I departed from the Rebbe, I asked him how I would know that Heaven has forgiven my sins. He gave me a specific sign. Since that time many years have passed, during which I have fulfilled his instructions to the letter, all the while waiting and hoping to see that sign. A short time ago the sign which the Rebbe gave me was fulfilled. Now I am on my way to inform the Rebbe of the good news. Since you are the first Chasid I met on my way, I felt I had to share this story with you. I hope you found it interesting."

Adapted from Journey with the Rebbes

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the L-rd your G-d (Deut. 8:10)

A Jew doesn't pray to G-d only in difficult circumstances, when he is poor and hungry. Even in the best of times, when he has "eaten and is full," he should remember that it is G-d Who has given him all these blessings and that he should thank Him accordingly. (*Lev Simcha*)

A blessing for obeying the commandments of the L-rd your G-d and a curse, if you will not obey the commandments (Deut. 11:27-28)

The Torah's language is significant and precise: G-d promises to bless the Jews for obeying His commandments, yet threatens to curse them "if" they will not obey. The blessing is assured; the curse is only conditional. In fact, all Jews will return to G-d in the End of Days and receive His blessing. (*Panim Yafot*)

And you shall bind up the money in your hand (Deut. 14:25)

The Torah commands the Jew to "bind up" his money and rule over it, and not the other way around. In other words, his monetary affairs must never exert such an influence over him that he becomes subservient. (*Rabbi Meir of Premishlan*)

It states in Psalms (51:16): "Save me from bloodshed ('damim'), O G-d, G-d of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness." In Hebrew, the word "damim" also means money; King David was thus praying that he never make the mistake of considering money to be G-d. (*Rabbi Moshe of Kovrin*)

Dedicated in honor of
Rabbi Yakov D. Kirschenbaum

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