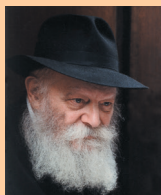


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

*from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion*

The Torah reading Tetzaveh, which we read this week, continues from the previous portion to enumerate the commandments that pertain to the various details of the Sanctuary. These portions contain the "instructions" on how to make the Sanctuary's vessels, as well as the holy garments that were worn by the kohanim (priests).

The very last mitzva we are told of relates to the building of the golden altar and the incense offering that was made upon it. "And you shall make an altar to burn incense upon...every morning when he dresses the lamps...a perpetual incense before the L-rd, throughout your generations." Because the incense offering concludes the list of these mitzvot, we may infer that it was the culmination of all the different services that were performed in the Sanctuary.

Every day the incense offering was made by a different kohen. Only the kohen was allowed to enter; no other person was permitted to be present when the mitzva was performed. The kohen was alone in the Divine Presence of the Holy One.

The same holds true for the G-dly service of every individual Jew. The highest level we strive for is the observance of Torah and mitzvot without fanfare or publicity, in which each of us stands alone in G-d's presence. In a certain sense, every Jew is considered to be a "kohen," as G-d commanded, "You shall be to me a nation of kohanim." Just as the kohanim were chosen to perform the service in the Sanctuary and Holy Temple, so too has every Jew been chosen to serve G-d, not only for his own sake but for his people as a whole.

The best way to perform any mitzva, particularly the mitzva of tzedaka (charity), is not under the glare of spotlights or in front of a camera. A Jew doesn't observe a mitzva in order for his good deed to be written up in the newspapers. The most perfect manner of doing a mitzva is in secret, so that only G-d and the participant are aware of it - just like the incense that was offered by the kohen in the sole presence of G-d.

Furthermore, just like the incense offering in the Sanctuary, when a Jew observes the Torah's commandments in secret, it likewise causes the Divine Presence to dwell in the physical world.

The Hand Behind the Events

There is a longstanding Jewish tradition: when a decree threatens or trouble befalls the community, the first response is introspection — to examine one's ways and set them right, in the spirit of the verse, "Let us search and examine our ways." Jews do not limit themselves to the natural, practical steps needed to avert a crisis. They turn inward, to repentance, prayer, and a return to G-d.

The Purim story is the ultimate model of this approach. When Mordechai learned of Haman's decree of annihilation, his first move was not to the palace corridors or the king's advisors. He went to prayer and repentance, calling the Jewish people to fast and to cry out to the Almighty. Only afterward did he turn to the natural means of addressing the danger, and even then, he reminded Queen Esther that "relief and salvation will come to the Jews from another place" — true salvation comes from Above.

This reflects a fundamental principle in Jewish thought. Many people instinctively separate faith from the rest of life, as though they exist in parallel universes that never touch. In the synagogue, one thinks of G-d; in the marketplace, only pragmatic, rational considerations apply.

Mordechai teaches us otherwise. Spiritual life and material life are deeply interwoven, even when the connection is not visible to the eye. When Haman's decree was proclaimed, Mordechai could have

mapped its natural causes clearly: Haman's hatred of the Jews, his jealousy, his arrogance, and Achashverosh's susceptibility to bribery. One might expect him to focus all his energy on countering exactly these forces. Instead, he directed his primary effort in an entirely different direction.

Mordechai understood that natural causes alone cannot bring such a terrible decree upon the Jewish people. The divine protective shield over Israel had been breached. He recognized the cause — as the Sages teach — in the Jews' mass participation in Achashverosh's feast, which reflected a turning away from G-d and Torah. And so he invested his greatest energy in repairing that spiritual breach: calling for repentance, fasting, and heartfelt prayer. He was certain that once the Jewish people repaired the spiritual root of the decree, the physical dimension would also be resolved — one way or another.

No one should rush to assign blame to others. Every individual must first look inward, and no one can know G-d's precise calculations. Yet the principle must be clear: behind everything that unfolds in our physical world lie causes in deeper, spiritual dimensions.

This is the profound message of Purim. "The heart of kings and ministers is in G-d's hand." When He wills it, the decree is overturned in the most astonishing fashion. May we merit, very soon, the true and complete redemption through Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

SLICE OF LIFE

Miracle on Stage



Musical Director Tomer Hadadi

Composer, pianist, arranger, conductor, and musical director Tomer Hadadi, 42, was born in Ra'anana and now resides in Miami, Florida. He collaborates with international artists and has composed several major Jewish musical hits.

"My love for music began when I was four years old," says Hadadi. "As I grew older, I studied music in Israel and New York and served as an outstanding musician in the IDF. I love the connections music creates between people."

At a relatively young age, Hadadi began working with prominent artists and conducting large orchestras internationally. "I constantly feel the great kindness G-d has shown me, allowing me to do what I love most," he says. "I write songs, compose, perform solo and in duets, and conduct orchestras. Thanks to the gift G-d gave me, my life was literally saved."

The incident occurred two years ago,

shortly before the Purim holiday. Hadadi was scheduled to perform at a synagogue in Florida. "The day before, I had appeared with a large orchestra at a major event and was exhausted. I considered canceling the performance, but ultimately decided to go on. I performed six songs and felt filled with incredible energy."

What happened next is based on eyewitness accounts, recordings, and video footage. "As I began playing 'Adon Olam,' my head suddenly dropped, as if I had fallen asleep on the piano. The audience thought it was part of the act. In truth, I had gone into cardiac arrest. A singer who knows me well immediately understood that this was no joke."

A remarkable chain of events followed. "Earlier, the event organizer had contracted COVID and requested that the program be livestreamed. A production staff member watching the livestream noticed my collapse and immediately called emergency services. At the same time, the singer asked whether there was a doctor in the audience."

An intensive care ambulance rushed Hadadi, sedated and intubated, to the hospital. "The cardiologist told my wife that the cardiac arrest was caused by a rare, genetic condition with no prior warning. Some people experience this in their sleep and never wake up. The doctor told her, 'Your husband experienced an enormous miracle. The cardiac arrest happened during a live performance, surrounded by people.'"

As if that were not enough, while sedated and intubated Hadadi contracted COVID, which developed into severe pneumonia and respiratory complications. "I was in a coma for ten days. My wife played

songs I had written, and the doctors noticed surprising improvements in my vital signs during those moments."

After he regained consciousness, the doctors told his wife, "Your husband was in the most critical condition possible." Some colleagues suggested that he had worked too hard. "I told them that it was precisely because I pushed myself to perform that my life was saved," Hadadi says. "I woke up with an overwhelming sense of gratitude to G-d. Since then, every morning I make sure to say Modeh Ani. I was blessed that G-d returned my soul, my breath, and my music."

Inspired by this experience, Hadadi composed a song centered entirely on gratitude to G-d. He also speaks warmly of the legendary singer Avraham Fried. "I define Avraham Fried as a teacher, a rabbi, and a friend. I wrote the song Yerushalayim Shebalev on the subway while traveling to Crown Heights, where he lives, and later presented it to him. I often speak with him about life."

"Faith is the source of strength," Hadadi reflects. "Without connection to faith, tradition, and the history of our people, we lack the strength to endure. Trends come and go, but faith remains. It accompanies me at every moment. I feel constant gratitude and often reflect on the many angels G-d sent to protect me."

He adds, "I believe I was given a second chance to devote more time to my family and to understand what is truly meaningful in life. Today, I tell anyone seeking strengthening in faith to come speak with me. I will tell them about the angels in our world."

Adapted from Sichat Shavua Magazine

New Chabad Center for "Paris of South America"



Buenos Aires, known as the "Paris of South America," is home to one of the world's largest Jewish communities. With over 180,000 Jews, the community was shaped by waves of immigration as thousands fled pogroms in Eastern Europe and, later, the Holocaust.

For 25 years, Rabbi Hirshel and Suri Hendel have lovingly served the Recoleta neighborhood, an upper-class area of northern Buenos Aires.

Now, their son and daughter-in-law, Rabbi Mendy and Tzvie Hendel, are joining the Chabad House and are expanding programming for youth, teens, students, and community members.

How is Purim celebrated?

There are four mitzvot associated specifically with Purim. They are:

1. Read or hear the Megillah (Scroll of Esther) at night and by day.
2. Give charity to at least two needy people.
3. Send a minimum of two ready-to-eat foods to at least one person.
4. Sit down for a royal feast.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

By the Grace of G-d
7th of Adar, 5713 [1953]
Brooklyn, N.Y.

...The story of Purim, as related in the Book of Esther, gives us a clear analysis of the "Jewish problem."

Being dispersed over 127 provinces and lands, their own still in ruins, the Jews undoubtedly differed from one another in custom, garment and tongue according to the place of their dispersal, very much in the same way as Jews in different lands differ nowadays. Yet, though there were Jews who would conceal their Jewishness, Haman, the enemy of the Jews, recognized the essential qualities and characteristics of the Jews which made all of them, with or without their consent, into "one people," namely, "their laws are different from those of any other people" (Book of Esther 3:8).

Hence, in his wicked desire to annihilate the Jews, Haman seeks to destroy "all the Jews, young and old, children and women." Although there were in those days, too, Jews who strictly adhered to the Torah and Mitzvot, and Jews whose religious ties with their people were weak, or who sought to assimilate themselves, yet none could escape the classification of belonging to that "one people," and every one was included in Haman's cruel decree.

In all ages there were Hamans, yet we have outlived them, thank G-d. Wherein lies the secret of our survival?

The answer will be evident from the following illustration. When a scientist seeks to ascertain the laws governing a certain phenomenon, or to discover the essential properties of a certain element in nature, he must undertake a series of experiments under the most varied conditions in order to discover those properties or laws which pertain under all conditions alike. No true scientific law can be deduced from a minimum number of experiments, or from experiments under similar or only slightly varied conditions, for the results as to what is essential and what is secondary or quite unimportant would then not be conclusive.

The same principle should be applied to our

people. It is one of the oldest in the world, beginning its national history from the Revelation at Mount Sinai, some 3300 years ago. In the course of these long centuries our people has lived under extremely varied conditions, in most different times and different places all over the world. If we wish to discover the essential elements making up the cause and very basis of the existence of our people and its unique strength, we must conclude that it is not its peculiar physical or intrinsic mental characteristics, not its tongue, manners and customs (in a wider sense), nor even its racial purity (for there were times in the early history of our people, as well as during the Middle Ages and even recent times, when whole ethnic groups and tribes have become proselytes and part of our people).

The essential element which unites our "dispersed and scattered people" and makes it "one people" throughout its dispersion and regardless of time, is the Torah and Mitzvot, the Jewish way of life which has remained basically the same throughout the ages and in all places. The conclusion is clear and beyond doubt: It is the Torah and Mitzvot which made our people indestructible on the world scene in the face of massacres and pogroms aiming at our physical destruction, and in the face of ideological onslaughts of foreign cultures aiming at our spiritual destruction.

Purim teaches us the age-old lesson, which has been verified even most recently, to our sorrow, that no manner of assimilationism, not even such which is extended over several generations, provides an escape from the Hamans and Hitlers; nor can any Jew sever his ties with his people by attempting such an escape.

On the contrary: Our salvation and our existence depend precisely upon the fact that "their laws are different from those of any other people."

Purim reminds us that the strength of our people as a whole, and of each individual Jew and Jewess, lies in a closer adherence to our ancient spiritual heritage which contains the secret of harmonious life, hence of a healthy and happy life. All other things in our spiritual and temporal life must be free from any contradiction to the basis and essence of our existence, and must be attuned accordingly in order to make for the utmost harmony, and add to our physical and spiritual strength, both of which go hand in hand in Jewish life.

With best wishes for a joyous Purim, and may we live to see a world free of Hamans and all types of Amalekites, the enemies of the Jews, of their body, soul and faith,
Cordially yours,

midday candle.

Purim, however, will be the exception, because the Purim miracle was called forth by the year-long self-sacrifice of the Jewish people of that time. (They could have averted Haman's decree by apostasy.) Their mesirus nefesh evoked a Divine reaction so sublime that even in the future time it will never be annulled.

(Sefer HaMaamarim 5626, p. 34)

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

The Baal Shem Tov's explanation of the Mishna "He who reads the Megila backwards has not fulfilled his obligation" is well known: If someone reads the Megila thinking that it only relates to an historical event and that the miracle is not happening in our own times, he's missing the point. The purpose of reading the Megila on Purim is to teach us how to conduct ourselves today.

At the time of Haman's decree, the Jewish people enjoyed a relatively high standing in Persian society. Mordechai was a very respected personage in the kingdom, and having once saved the king's life, was accorded certain privileges. Esther, the queen, was the most important woman in the realm. In other words, the Jews were politically "connected." It would have been logical to think that once Haman's evil plan became known, the Jews would have capitalized on their "protektziya" and tried to influence Achashveirosh to nullify the decree.

But as the Megila relates, the first thing Mordechai did was "don sackcloth and ashes and go out into the city." Only afterward did he appeal to Esther to intervene with the king. Likewise, Esther requested that the Jews fast on her behalf. Instead of trying to improve her physical appearance to win the king's favor, she fasted and prayed for three days, something which no doubt did little to enhance her looks. Both Mordechai and Esther realized that Haman's decree would not be nullified through the natural order of things, but only through teshuva, a complete and sincere return to G-d.

How is this relevant to us? Whenever a Jew encounters a difficulty or danger and thinks he can solve the problem by acting "logically," he should remember the lesson of the Megila: Working within the natural order is the second step, not the first. The rules that govern our existence are different from other peoples! The first thing to do is strengthen our connection with G-d, learning His Torah and observing His mitzvot. In that way, salvation and deliverance will surely come.

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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MOSHIACH MATTERS

"All the festivals will be annulled in future time, except for Purim"

The future revelation of Divinity will be so intense that the revelation currently evinced by the festivals will be as insignificant as a



The bitter cold chilled the officer's bones and fear made his heart tremble. Ivan was not a coward, but the rumors of the sadistic Bolsheviks who were nearing the city of Rostov frightened him terribly. He paced the streets, waiting anxiously for the light of day. He was oblivious to the two men following at his heels, not making a sound, the distance between them narrowing...

Suddenly he felt powerful hands grabbing him. He screamed a loud and bitter scream, but the two held him and... In the morning the body of the officer was found with the warning: "Beware! The Bolsheviks are coming!"

The Jews were the most shaken by news of the Bolsheviks' approach, as the study of Torah and observance of mitzvot was a most serious crime to the Bolsheviks. There was only one part of the city where life went on as usual, where fear of the Bolsheviks was not felt: in the Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim.

The yeshiva students continued their studies without disruption. They drew their strength from their Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom Dovber of Lubavitch - the fifth Rebbe of the Chabad dynasty. The Rebbe encouraged them to study and pray as usual, and the yeshiva bustled with life.

It was Zundel the Beggar who brought the news: "The Bolsheviks are on their way into the city!" Soon Rostov became a city of flames and the Bolsheviks beat and killed anyone they chanced upon.

Thus passed several weeks. The holiday of Purim was approaching. The Rebbe isolated himself and didn't speak to anyone. The students could not make peace with the Rebbe's isolation. They remembered the great joy of Purim, when Jews celebrate the victory over Haman who tried to "destroy, kill and annihilate."

And then it was Purim. Not a soul smiled. Finally, two of the yeshiva students who could no longer bear the thought of Purim passing in such a manner, summoned up their nerve and entered the Rebbe's room. After a few silent moments they heard the Rebbe's voice: "The Bolsheviks are in the city. I cannot exist together with them. But for the sake of Purim, we'll forget about the situation. Go buy plenty of vodka and let there be light for the Jews!"

The good news spread through the city and the yeshiva students took their places for the Purim gathering. The Rebbe spoke and all listened. When the Rebbe concluded, an older Chasid began singing a soulful Chasidic niggun (melody). Everyone joined in, singing from the depths of their hearts. Suddenly the door burst open. At the entrance stood a Chasid. "The Bolsheviks are coming," the Chasid cried, wringing his hands in fear.

The singing stopped at once; everyone was gripped with terror. The Rebbe, however, disregarded the news, and began singing a niggun very softly. The melody touched and calmed the frightened crowd. Having concluded the melody, the Rebbe began saying a Chasidic discourse. The room was silent; the only audible sound was the Rebbe's voice.

Suddenly the silence was broken by loud knocking. The Rebbe continued speaking as though nothing was happening. After a few moments one of the members of the Rebbe's family said: "Rebbe, the Bolsheviks are demanding that we let them in. If they see us gathered here it will be our end...G-d forbid." The Rebbe interrupted the discourse and said, "Open the door for them."

In the doorway stood two tall and fearsome looking Bolsheviks, their eyes darting all about, hungry for prey. "What is this gathering? What is going on?"

Trembling, one of the Chasidim called out, "This is the Rebbe Sholom Dovber of Lubavitch. He is teaching Torah to his Chasidim. The Rebbe is busy with his talk and he cannot be bothered." He could hardly believe the words that came from his mouth. The two soldiers were astounded at the Chasid's nerve, and they turned on their heels and departed.

"An open miracle!" the Chasidim exclaimed to one another. They felt protected and sang with greater fervor. Thus passed two hours. So immersed were they in their joy, that they did not hear the Bolsheviks knocking again... "Rebbe, what shall we do?" several frightened Chasidim cried out.

The Rebbe freed himself from his thoughts and said, "Open for them! I don't fear them." The Chasidim understood that another great miracle was about to occur. The Bolsheviks burst through the door, their weapons in hand. The Rebbe ignored their threatening presence and said, "We will begin saying some words of Torah." The Rebbe raised his voice and began, "Amalek is first among the nations but his end will be destruction."

The faces of the Bolsheviks softened. The swords returned to their sheaths, and they watched with growing perplexity as the Chasidim listened to their Rebbe. They looked at one another and then, without a word, turned and left...

The Chasidim thanked G-d for miraculously saving them and for giving them their Rebbe in whose presence evil had no power. Everyone was deeply moved, feeling in their hearts without knowing why that this would be their last gathering with the Rebbe. Painful tears flowed from their eyes, tears of parting. A week after Purim the Rebbe became very weak, and on the second of Nissan his soul departed in holiness and purity.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah portion

And they shall take to you pure olive oil (Ex. 27:20)

The Jewish people has a unique power not possessed by any other nation: the inability to completely assimilate even if desired, just as olive oil is incapable of mixing with other liquids. This is the reason for the Torah's use of the reflexive verb in its prohibition against intermarriage - "you shall not intermarry": Such "marriage" is not considered marriage at all, for it just doesn't "take." (Sefat Emet)

Beaten (katit) for the light, to cause a light to burn continuously (Ex. 27:20)

The numerical equivalent of the word katit is 830 - the exact number of years the two Holy Temples stood in Jerusalem. (The First Temple existed for 410 years; the Second, 420.) The Third Holy Temple, by contrast, will exist "to cause a light to burn continuously" - eternally and forever.

(Toldot Yitzchak)

And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate and an ephod (Ex. 28:4)

It is said that Rashi, the foremost Torah commentator, was once very perturbed when he stepped out of the study hall for a moment and saw a gentile noblewoman on a horse riding towards him. Later, however, when he was trying to find the right words to describe the ephod, he realized that it was exactly "like the kind of apron...with which the noblewomen gird themselves when they ride on horses." This too, had been part of the Divine Plan and had served a positive purpose. (Maayana Shel Torah)



5:27 PM Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
10 Adar / February 27
Torah Portion Tetzaveh
Parshas Zachor
Shabbat ends 6:27 PM

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הו"ח א"ח התמים נז"כ
עוסק בצ"צ רב פעלים וכו'
גבאי בית הכנסת ובית המדרש ליובאוויטש שבלובאוויטש
ר' משה פינחס הכהן ב"ר אברהם מרדכי הכהן ז"ל
כ"ץ
נפטר בד"ח אדרשני, ה'תשמ"ו