

# L'Chaim

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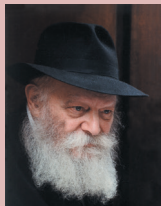
April 19, 2024

The Weekly Publication  
for Every Jewish Person

נוסד תור 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

This week's Torah portion, Metzora, details the special laws governing the plague of leprosy, an affliction whose root cause was spiritual and bears no resemblance to the modern disease of the same name. This leprosy altered the skin of the suffering individual, causing a radical change in the appearance of the affected area.

It is therefore surprising that the Talmud refers to Moshiach as suffering from this affliction. "What is Moshiach's name?" the Talmud asks. "Chivra (Aramaic for 'Leper') is his name," the Talmud concludes.

How can Moshiach, a person of flesh and blood, who stands head and shoulders above all other Jews by virtue of his spiritual perfection, be referred to as a leper?

Moshiach will be distinguished not only by his vast wisdom, but also by his prophetic powers. We must therefore conclude that the term "leper" contains a deeper significance, one which will shed light on its inner meaning.

Leprosy is an external disease, one which affects only the outer skin of the sufferer. The internal organs of the leper remain healthy and unaffected, as does the flesh itself. Only the outermost part of the individual is afflicted, causing the color of the skin to undergo transformation.

Throughout the thousands of years of exile, the Jewish people have been involved in learning Torah and performing mitzvot, in an effort to illuminate the darkness of the exile by strengthening the forces of good over evil.

Exile is characterized by G-d's seeming withdrawal from the affairs of man; the coming of Moshiach and the Final Redemption will usher in an era in which G-dliness is open and apparent.

By their consistent and ongoing service of G-d throughout the centuries, imbuing the four corners of the earth with G-dliness and holiness, the Jewish people has succeeded in healing the world of its internal sickness, the seeming absence of G-d from the physical world.

We stand now at the very end of the exile, on the threshold of the Messianic Era. All that prevents Moshiach's imminent arrival is a tiny and external blemish, an affliction of "leprosy on the skin of the flesh."

The final touches on the world's preparation for Moshiach have been entrusted to our generation, the generation which will be worthy of witnessing Moshiach's revelation.

Up until that time, however, Moshiach is said to be "leprous." For Moshiach himself suffers the pain of the end of exile - "the affliction of leprosy" - as he waits with longing and impatience for the moment the world will be fully prepared for his coming, at which time he will reveal himself and redeem the Jewish people and the entire world.

From a talk of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Parshat Tazria-5751

## The Rebbe's Birthday

On Friday, April 19, the 11th day of the Hebrew month of Nissan - 'Yud Alef Nissan', we will celebrate 122 years since the birth of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

The Rebbe's teachings fill over 250 books, illuminating every area of the Torah - Talmud, Jewish law, Chassidus, kabbala, philosophy, history and more.

Among these books are the 33 volumes of Igros Kodesh, a treasury of more than 9,000 letters where the Rebbe's scholarship, wisdom, and understanding is found within his responses to people from all walks of life.

While the letters were often sent to individuals, the profound advice contained within serves as a unique guide and source of inspiration for everyone, in all areas of life. While the wealth of the teachings and writings contained within these volumes is unprecedented, this doesn't constitute the full greatness of the Rebbe's leadership.

One of the powerful hallmarks of The Rebbe's leadership is his care for everybody, regardless of upbringing or affiliation. There simply are no labels; to the Rebbe, a Jew is a Jew.

When Rebbe's leadership started out in 1951, only six years after the Holocaust, the Jewish world was focused on survival. While most looked inward to see how they could strengthen their own communities, the Rebbe, however, looked beyond his own community and sought to change the world.

The Rebbe began with sending

out representatives or "Shluchim," starting with the places where they were needed most, including Morocco and far-off Australia.

Today, Chabad is all over the world, and there's hardly a city that doesn't have a shliach serving in some capacity, united in their selfless dedication to reach every Jew.

While his reach can be felt globally, he encouraged us to care about the individual. Ask your friend if he put on tefillin! Offer your neighbor Shabbos candles to light! Build bridges, one person at a time, each at their own level.

When in 1991, a correspondent asked the Rebbe what message he had for the world, the Rebbe responded that Moshiach is on his way, and we could hasten his arrival by adding in acts "of goodness and kindness." The Rebbe's universal message transcends race or religion and is something everyone can do.

Maimonides writes that a Jew's obligation is to "I'chol bo'ei olam," to all of humanity. The Rebbe, in celebrating our freedom, which was unfortunately denied to earlier generations, campaigned to spread awareness of Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach - the Seven Noahide Laws - and to institute a moment of silence in public schools, among similar initiatives.

Let's celebrate the Rebbe's birthday with growth in Torah and Mitzvot, and by increasing acts of goodness and kindness to all, so that we may accelerate the coming of Moshiach, may he come speedily in our days.

# SLICE OF LIFE

## 18-Year-Old Matzah

By Shimon Posner



*Rabbi Berel Junik receiving a Matzah from the Rebbe before Pesach 1991*

The Communists rose to power when Naphtali was young. His father didn't like the smell of it all, and told Naphtali to become a shochet – to master the intricate, exacting practice of kosher ritual slaughter. The training takes time and the pay is lousy. “Become a shochet,” said Naphtali's father. “If you'll be a shochet, you'll stay a Jew.”

Naphtali the Shochet and his wife raised their children under the Soviets. By the early 1950s, though, the entire family had managed to escape, most of them with false passports. Except for their grown son, Meir, and his growing family.

Their other son, Berel, had escaped together with Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe's mother, posing as her son. Upon arrival in New York, Berel became a diamond cutter, and (the gray Soviets' silver-lining) maintained his “filial” status with Rebbetzin Chana and developed a warm relationship with her son, the Rebbe of Lubavitch. Naphtali and his wife, together with their daughter, settled in Montreal. Their son Dovid was in Antwerp. Naphtali

was happy, but for Meir's being held by the Soviets.

There is a custom to receive matzah from one's Rebbe before Passover. Naturally, Berel would be doing so.

“When you receive matzah from the Rebbe,” Naphtali told his son Berel, “mention to him your brother Meir.”

“But do not ask for just a brachah, a blessing,” continued Naphtali. “Ask for a havtachah – an assurance – that my Meir will make it out alive.”

Berel never pushed anyone into doing something they did not want to do. And a chassid does not demand of his Rebbe. But Berel never refused his father.

The Rebbe handed matzah to Berel. Berel mentioned his brother Meir and the Rebbe gave his brachah. “My father requests your assurance that Meir will come out,” Berel responded.

The Rebbe's face grew dark and his hand shook. “Shlep mir nisht beim tzung (Don't wrench words out of me that I cannot say!)” the Rebbe answered with rare sting, and added, “My father-in-law [the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe] accomplished greater things than this.”

Berel saw tears begin to fall from the Rebbe's eyes. The Rebbe gave Berel another piece of matzah. “You will give this to your brother.”

“My brother Dovid in Belgium?” Berel asked.

“No. Meir. Not necessarily in America, but somewhere close by.”

A few years later, the family got word that Meir had plans to spirit his family across the border with forged passports. He failed. More years passed. Berel held the matzah for his brother. Eighteen years he held onto that matzah. Matzah, which the Kabbalah calls the “Bread of Faith.”

Then they heard the news. Meir is free! With his wife! With his sons! With his daughter! They received visas to Canada (“not necessarily America, but close by...”) and Berel got himself to Montreal just as fast as he could. Berel hadn't seen his brother in over twenty years. He ran towards his brother. His brother ran towards him. He gave his brother the piece of matzah. And then they fell into each other's arms.

Berel's story explains Jacob. Jacob mourned his lost son Joseph as dead for over twenty-two years. He finally saw him – a miracle! – but Jacob did not kiss him; he was saying the Shema... a jaw-dropping breach of human emotion. Berel showed me, on the night I heard the story as told by his son, that a moment of faith does not separate between long-lost loves. It holds them together.



In 1954, the Lubavitcher Rebbe began talking about the blessings and importance of eating authentic handmade shmurah matzah at the Seder. The Rebbe encouraged us to make sure that every Jew has Shmurah Matzah for the seder night and further explained that The Zohar teaches us that matzah is the food of healing and the bread of faith.

Faith is the foundation of all the mitzvot and of Jewish life in general. Ensuring that all will infuse more life into their Torah study and mitzvah observance throughout the year. Health is what we all pray for. This will ensure that it will be a healthy year in spiritual matters, which will automatically cause it to be a healthy year in all physical matters as well.

Throughout the years, before Passover, the Rebbe would publicly distribute Shmurah Matzah. Many wondrous stories occurred through the special blessing of the Shmurah Matzah received from the Rebbe. The above is one such story.

*To Sell Your Chametz, Purchase Shmurah Matzah and To Find a Passover Seder Near You, Visit: [www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org)*

### SELL YOUR CHAMETZ ONLINE

Since it is prohibited to possess chametz on Passover, any chametz left undisposed, as well as all chametz utensils that were not thoroughly cleaned, must be sold to a non-Jew. A rabbi acts as our agent both to sell the chametz on the morning before Passover, and to buy it back the evening after Passover ends. The chametz should be stored away for the duration of the holiday.

### THE PASSOVER SEDER

The Seder is a feast that includes reading the “Haggadah,” drinking four cups of wine, telling stories, eating matzah and special foods, and other Passover traditions. This year the Passover seders will be held after nightfall on Monday and Tuesday, April 22 and 23. Search the online Chabad directory to find a Seder near you.

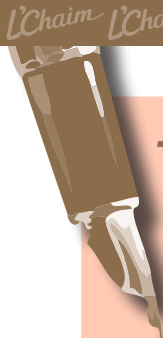
### ORDER SHMURAH MATZAH

Traditional handmade shmurah matzah is recommended for seder use and is available in many Jewish supermarkets, and at synagogues and Chabad centers around the world. You can order Shmurah Matzah online. Be sure to order with enough time to allow for delivery before Passover.

## A Call To Action

From thirty days before a holiday we are enjoined to begin preparing for it by studying its laws. In addition, the Rebbe has always reminded us, beginning at least thirty days before the holiday of Passover, to make generous donations to Maot Chitim -- money for people toward their Passover holiday needs.





# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

11th of Nissan, 5720 [1960]

I received your letter of the 29th of Adar, and may G-d grant that you have good news to report on the matters about which you write in your letter.

As we are approaching the Season of Our Freedom, I trust that you will take time out to reflect on the significance of this great festival, recalling the enslavement in Egypt, which was not only a physical enslavement but also a spiritual one. Yet, because of the great faith of the children of Israel in G-d, they were liberated from bondage, and received the Torah, thus giving them true and complete freedom. The simple message of it is that no Jew should ever give up hope, and should always strive to free himself from the influences and limitations of the environment, as well as from internal temptations, and make steady strides along the path of Torah and mitzvot.

As for your personal problems, the best advice is that you should try to think as little as possible of your inner problems, until you completely dismiss them from your mind. This means not even thinking about their harmful aspects or how to overcome them, but completely disengaging your thoughts from those problems and engaging them in matters of Torah and mitzvot [commandments]. Another good method is to try to be among people as much as possible.

... May the forthcoming Season of Our Freedom bring you true freedom from all the distracting thoughts and from all temptations and diversions, both external and internal, so that you can serve G-d with the fullness and gladness of your heart.

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Wherever the Chofetz Chaim (R. Yisroel Meir HaKohen) traveled he brought a new, long black coat, packed in a suitcase. Once, one of his close acquaintances

Wishing you a kosher, happy and inspiring Pesach [Passover],



Via telegram 6th of Nissan, 5734 [1974]

I am delighted to associate myself with the Pre-Dedication Celebration for the new Landow Yeshiva Center - Oholei Torah School.

The timeliness of the event is underscored by the fact that it is taking place in the auspicious days when the Nesi'im (Princes of the Twelve Tribes) brought their individual contributions to the dedication of the altar of the newly erected Mishkan (Sanctuary) in the desert on the way to the promised Holy Land. The connection is obvious, since every sacred House of Prayer and House of Study is termed Mishkan Me'at, a Sanctuary in Miniature.

Moreover, it is written in our sacred sources that the Mishkan is essentially indestructible, which, by extension, applies also to the sacred Houses of Study and Prayer. Indeed, our Sages declare that in the future (in the time of Moshiach) all Houses of Prayer and Study in the Diaspora will be transplanted into the Holy Land.

Reflecting on the eternal nature of the project that you, and we, are celebrating, it should even further "encourage the energetic" to make the utmost effort with the utmost joy and inspiration, for it is truly an everlasting investment bearing everlasting dividends.

Inasmuch as we are soon to celebrate the Season of Our Liberation, Pesach, may G-d grant that the new Center, which is designed to bring true liberation to Jewish children through Torah-true education, will bring true liberation from all negative aspects to each and all of the friends and supporters who are privileged to participate in the project, and the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Sages quoted above.

With esteem and blessing for a kosher and inspiring Pesach,

asked: "Why don't you ever wear your new coat?" The Chofetz Chaim replied: "I truly believe that Moshiach will come any day now, and I want to be sure that as soon as he comes I will be able to greet him with this new garment."

(From Highlights of Moshiach by Rabbi Abraham Stone)

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

The founder of the Chassidic movement, Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov said that it is a good omen for a person to say daily, the chapter of Psalms corresponding to their age i.e., someone who turns 30 years to say Psalm chapter 31 and so forth. Many likewise have the custom to recite daily the Rebbe's chapter.

The 11th of Nissan (Friday, April 19th, this year) marks the Rebbe's 122nd birthday, and so, we begin reciting chapter 123.

The aforementioned custom includes the study of a few verses of the chapter on the birthday and beginning of each month completing its in depth meaning throughout the year.

This chapter speaks of the Jewish people's attempt to return to Israel from the Babylonian exile, after suffering inconceivable humiliation.

It opens with the words: "A song of ascent. To You I lifted up my eyes, You Who dwell in heaven".

The Meiri [Rabbi Menachem Ben Solomon - Talmudist - France 1249-1315] explains that it is written in the singular [I lifted MY eyes] to stress the fact that all the people were speaking in one voice. In addition, it expresses the greatness and clarity of faith the people had in their commitment to the Al-Mighty being the only avenue to turn to for assistance and salvation.

The Psalm continues: "Behold, as the eyes of slaves to the hand of their masters, as the eyes of a handmaid to the hand of her mistress, so are our eyes to the L-rd our G-d, until He favors us".

The Radak [Rabbi David Kimhi - Bible commentator, France 1160-1235] explains: In this verse King David expresses the people's understanding of the true source of all their tribulations, as well as the acknowledgement that whatever transpired ultimately came from G-d and G-d alone, banishing the idea of a foreign deity.

The Psalm continues: "Favor us, O L-rd, favor us, for we are fully sated with contempt".

Rabbi Ovadiah Seforno [Italian biblical commentator 1470-1550] explains: "In the event we let wealth i.e., materialism of exile cause us to become arrogant, know that it was only the enticing nature of exile that made us this way but not who we truly are, therefore please allow us once again to find favor in Your eyes.

In the final verse King David says: "Our soul is fully sated with the ridicule, the complacent, the contempt [shown] to the valley of doves".

Rashi explains that this verse explains the depth of the ridicule they suffered, and that the valley of doves, is referring to Jerusalem itself.

In summation: This chapter of Psalms talks of the people's request to the Almighty asking for permission to return to Israel after all their past suffering. As we read this chapter, we pray that the Almighty redeem us and the world at large from a far too long exile, having already experienced unimaginable ridicule. May it be speedily in our days.

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 customs of the seder night are ancient and profound. For example, there is a mnemonic device which has been taught for a thousand years to help remember the fifteen parts of the seder. It begins: “Kadesh, urchatz...etc.,” and means “Recite the kiddush, wash the hands...,” etc. It has been the custom over the many generations for teachers to instill these words in the minds of their tiniest students, who then recite them on the seder night, explaining each of them in the Yiddish vernacular.

The first word, “kaddesh” is explained, “When Father comes home from shul on the evening of Pesach he must say the kiddush right away so that the little children don’t fall asleep without saying the Four Questions, beginning ‘Mah Nishtana.’”

It so happened one year in the home of the Shpoler Zeide that his small son began the recitation with the word “kaddesh” and proceeded with the Yiddish explanation, saying, “When Tatty comes home from shul on Pesach night, he must recite the kiddush immediately.” His explanation, however, went no further, and his father asked, “Why don’t you continue?”

“My teacher didn’t tell me anything else to say,” replied the child.

The Shpoler Zeide then proceeded to tell his son the rest of the explanation, which continued: “...so that the little children won’t fall asleep and will ask the Four Questions beginning with ‘Why is this night different from all other nights?’”

On the second night of Pesach the boy’s teacher was among the guests at the Shpoler Zeide’s table, and the tzadik asked him, “Why didn’t you teach the children the rest of the explanation of the word ‘kaddesh?’”

“Oh,” he replied, “I didn’t think it was so important for a little child to know. Anyway, that’s not the most important part of the explanation.”

The Shpoler Zeide was upset by this reply, and said, “How do you dare to take it upon yourself to alter the venerable customs of our illustrious ancestors? You simply don’t understand the depth and profundity of this teaching. Listen, and I will explain the inner meaning of those words:

“The words ‘recite kiddush and wash the hands,’ these are the introduction to the whole seder. In the Zohar it is written that Rabbi Chiya opened up his discourse with the words from the Song of Songs ‘I am asleep but my heart is awake,’ meaning ‘I am asleep during the Exile.’ During the long Exile the Jews are as if asleep, lacking the heights of spiritual sensitivity.

“The true meaning of the children’s words, then, ‘When Father comes home from shul on Pesach night’, is ‘When our Father in Heaven returns to His Abode on High and He sees that all the Jews--no matter how exhausted from their preparations for the holiday--all go to pray and give thanks to Him,’ then: ‘He must recite kiddush right away,’ which is to say, G-d must renew His vows of betrothal to His deserted bride, the Jewish People, as it says in the prophet Hosea: ‘And I will betroth you to me forever.’

“And what is the reason He must do this with haste? That is explained, ‘So that the little children won’t fall asleep.’ The prophets often refer to the Jewish people as the small, precious children of G-d. The Alm-ghty must act immediately to redeem His people, lest the deep sleep of the Exile totally overwhelm them (G-d forbid), and they cannot be awakened, so that the Redemption would be impossible.

“The end of the phrase, ‘So that they will ask the question ‘Mah nishtana...’ Why is this night different from all other nights?’ is explained as follows: We ask ‘Why is this terrible, dark Exile longer than all the other exiles we have previously endured?’”

As he uttered these words the Shpoler Zeide couldn’t contain his emotions and he burst into bitter tears. “Our Father in Heaven, redeem us quickly from the exile while we’re only in a kind of half sleep and our hearts still remain awake! Don’t wait until we fall into a sleep so deep that we cannot be awakened!”

Everyone who witnessed this scene was shaken to his core with the desire for repentance, many weeping from the depths of their souls.

The Rebbe then abruptly interrupted this sad mood saying, “Kinderlach, children, let’s have some liveliness and give our Father a little “nachas.” Let’s show Him that His little children can dance and be joyful even in this deep darkness!” And with that, the tzadik began to whirl and turn in a dance of spiritual rapture.

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

*on the weekly Torah portion*

**If a woman has conceived and born (Lev. 12:2)**  
 This section of the Torah, which deals with the laws of childbirth, comes directly after that portion which spoke of unclean animals--those which died of themselves, creeping things and insects. We learn from this that in the same way that eating non-kosher food makes a Jew dulled and insensitive to holiness, the opposite is true. Keeping the laws of kashrut ensures that one’s children will be spiritually healthy and sound. (Ramban)

**If a man shall have on the skin of his flesh (Lev. 13:2)**  
 When discussing the phenomenon of leprosy and the various appearances such a plague could assume, the Torah uses the word adam--man--a term reserved for expressing man’s finest attributes and characteristics. Why doesn’t the Torah use any of the three other Hebrew words for man--ish, gever, or enosh?  
 The plague of leprosy appeared only “on the skin of his flesh”--on the most external part of a person. Years ago, when G-d afflicted someone with leprosy as a punishment for his deeds, it affected only his most external self, for the inner person was spiritually healthy and not deserving of punishment. Nowadays we have no such phenomenon, as the Biblical leprosy differed from the modern-day disease bearing the same name. In our time, it’s not just the external part of ourselves we must work on and purify. (Sefer Maamarim)

**And the priest shall see the plague (Lev. 13:3)**  
 The Talmud cautions that a priest who is blind in one eye is excluded from examining and pronouncing judgment on plagues. Every plague deserves to be studied with two eyes. One eye sees the leprosy itself, and the other eye sees the extenuating circumstances and reason which led to the sin. A priest who is blind in one eye will see only that which is negative, the plague itself, and will not try to find a merit in that person’s favor. Such a priest is unfit to pass judgment. (Rabbi Yosef Klein)

**Dedicated to the Rebbe**  
*on the occasion of his 122nd birthday*  
 whose teachings and example are a never-ending source of life for all mankind. May we continue in his path and complete the mission with which he has charged us: to make the world conscious of the imminent Redemption and to prepare the environment where this ideal can be realized.



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