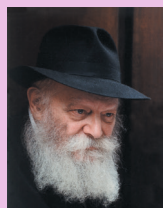


# L'Chaim



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

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

The Torah portion of *Bamidbar* is always read before Shavuot. This year we read it on 5 Sivan – the eve of Shavuot. What is the connection between *Bamidbar*, Shavuot and especially 5 Sivan?

The Talmud tells us, "On 2 Sivan Moses ascended the mountain... On the third he ascended... On the fourth he ascended... On the fifth of Sivan he built an altar and offered a sacrifice."

Why did Moses have to build the altar? Couldn't it have been built by others? Wouldn't his time be better spent reaching new spiritual heights by ascending the mountain?

We must conclude that only Moses could build the altar and in fact doing so was more important than ascending the mountain.

The day before every Shabbat and holiday is called the "eve of" Shabbat or Yom Tov. It is the time we prepare for Shabbat or Yom Tov. But even more than that, it is a time that a ray of holiness of the upcoming holy day is already shining, and is therefore part of the upcoming holy day, which in our case is Shavuot.

The essence of Shavuot is that G-d himself descended into the physical world, onto Mount Sinai. The joining of the G-dly and the physical is what the Torah and our mission as Jews is about. We are to take this physical, mundane world and infuse it with G-dliness, uplifting the everyday to make it holy. We do this through performing commandments with physical objects, and by using our daily activities to aid us in our service of G-d.

This is also the reason why G-d didn't bring us up into the spiritual realms to receive the Torah, rather He chose to do it in the physical world on a mountain. To demonstrate, that it is our interaction with the physical that is most important.

The "eve of" Shavuot (5 Sivan) is already connected with Shavuot. The command to build the altar and bring a sacrifice is thus part of the giving of the Torah. Every step of the giving of the Torah was done with and through Moses. He had the special soul that could actualize the process of receiving and implementing the Torah, G-d's will. Each of us has a part of Moses in our soul that gives us the strength to do our mission, to make the world into a place where G-d's presence can dwell openly.

By Moses taking physical stones and building the holy altar he was clearly demonstrating this principle. Offering a physical sacrifice on the altar, completed the altar, because now it was actually used for its holy purpose.

*Bamidbar* means, "in the desert." The Torah was given to us in a desert, where nothing grows and people don't live. Why? Because it is symbolic of the lowest level of the physical and mundane. To show us, that we can and should infuse even the lowest, and most mundane, with holiness.

Shavuot, the eve of Shavuot, building the altar and *Bamidbar* all convey the same message: We can change the world, and make it a dwelling place for G-d's presence, which we will witness at the conclusion of our mission, with the coming of Moshiach, now!

*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.*

## Jewish Camping

Think back to a recent vacation. Do you remember all of the excitement surrounding the plans for every aspect of the trip? The other people with you (family? friends?) agreed on all of the where's, when's and how's, so making plans was a breeze, right?

Probably not. Often, "dream" vacations turn into nightmares as each participant pushes to have his own expectations, desires, budget and interests met.

When the Jewish people journeyed from Egypt toward Mount Sinai, there were millions of people travelling together. The actual travelling could accurately be described as a dream turned nightmare. But something utterly unique happened once they reached Mount Sinai.

"They had journeyed from Refidim and had come to the desert of Sinai, camping in the desert; and Israel camped there before the mountain," the Torah says (Ex. 19:2).

Our Sages note that the verse uses a plural form for "journeyed...had come... camping..." and a singular form for "Israel camped there" - as one person, with one heart. By virtue of this unity they received the Torah. G-d said: "As they hate dissension and love peace, and they have become a singular encampment, the time has come to give them the Torah!" For "the purpose for which the whole Torah was given is to bring peace upon the world, as it is said, 'Her ways are the ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace'" (Proverbs 3:17).

People differ physically and mentally. Individual distinctions, however, need not separate and divide. They complement and supplement one another. Joining and harmonizing the

differing yet complementing aspects in everyone thus leads to a higher-ultimate-unity and perfection.

The Jewish people at Sinai sensed this ultimate and absolute unity joining them together. In that frame of mind, therefore, "as one person, with one heart," they jointly desired and anticipated receiving the Torah, and that is when G-d gave it to them.

It is likewise with the Redemption. Of the Messianic era it is said that "the preoccupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-d."

All knowledge of G-d derives from the Torah. Moshiach's ultimate function, therefore, will be to "teach the entire people and instruct them in the ways of G-d, and all nations will come to hear him." He will reveal novel understandings of the presently hidden, unknown and esoteric teachings of the infinite Torah, allowing people "to attain knowledge of their Creator to the extent of human capacity." In order to make it possible for the world to partake in these new revelations, the Messianic era will thus be a time of peace and harmony, with "neither famine nor war, neither envy nor strife."

As we look forward to the Redemption, we must prepare for that new revelation even as we had to prepare for the revelation at Sinai. We must overcome all differences that may lead to dissension and divisiveness, to become as "one person, with one heart" by concentrating on that which unites us, on the common denominator we all share. Peace and harmony will surely hasten the universal and everlasting peace of the Messianic era.

*Adapted from Living With Moshiach by Rabbi J. Immanuel Schochet, published by Kehot.*

# SLICE OF LIFE

## The Open Door

by Rabbi Yisroel Freeman



On that winter night in 2006, we pulled up to our new home in Sudbury, Massachusetts. There were no bells and whistles, no welcoming committee, and no friendly neighbors bearing platters of cookies.

It was just dark, cold, and very late. We unpacked a few things, set up the beds, and tried to get some rest.

But how can you sleep if your house is freezing cold? After tossing and turning for a few hours, I went downstairs and sighed. There were piles of boxes everywhere, we didn't know a soul in town, and... hey, what was that? The front door was wide open!

That's why it was so cold! As I closed the door, I realized that G-d was sending us a message: As emissaries of the Rebbe, our job was to open our door wide to make every Jew feel at home.

With that warm message, I knew it was going to be good. But there was one issue: we didn't know a soul in Sudbury! So I did what I had to do. I got a list of phone numbers and started making cold calls.

People were polite enough not to hang up on me, but they gently tried to suggest that we had picked the wrong town. Nicely enough, most of them told us that they weren't interested.

Despite that, we didn't give up. I continued making cold calls and managed to form some good relationships with the few who responded positively. I started learning with some of them, and we invited

them to our grand first event: a Purim party! Four families showed up.

The next event we hosted was a Model Matza Bakery. We made sure to advertise this time and we had a nice crowd. On Shavuot, we had our first minyan.

In the weeks leading up to Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we advertised that we would have services in a nearby hotel. About 100 people showed up! In just a few short months, we went from knowing nobody to having a packed house.

At that point, we were ready to start making more programs. We gave classes, we made some events, and we even opened a Hebrew school. That first year, we had two students. Now, we have 40.

People liked what we were doing and started bringing their friends. The community began to grow. We didn't know them and they didn't know each other, but as time passed, we all became very close.

We have a few nursing homes in our area, and I try to visit the Jewish residents as often as I can. There was one woman, a Holocaust survivor, who I visited regularly. She loved to talk, and I would sing to her.

The day after Yom Kippur one year, she called and asked if we could speak. She asked if our Chabad House owned a Torah and I told her that we did not.

To my shock she said, "I'd like to buy you one."

I tried explaining that it was very expensive, but she insisted that she wanted to do it. I was uncomfortable so I called her daughter to discuss it. Imagine my surprise when her daughter knew all about it! "Don't worry," she reassured me. "I spoke with my mother already. She's going to buy you Torah!"

Apparently, this woman had grown up in an observant home. She remembered how her grandfather had donated a Torah to a *shul* in Hungary which was destroyed in the Holocaust, and she wanted to honor his memory by doing the same.

We made a big celebration when the Torah arrived. Close to 200 people came, and we closed off the streets to dance and lead the Torah to its new home.

We arranged services at the nursing home a few times so this woman would be able to see the Torah she donated. One day, her family called. She was nearing the end of her life.

To make the last hours of her life more meaningful, I brought the Torah which she loved so much, to her

room and then sang the melodies that she loved. She sat up in bed and watched and even hummed along, a peaceful smile on her face. In the last few moments of her life, she was content.

At a certain point, we were bursting out of our rented space and could really use a property of our own for our Chabad House. Even though we didn't have any funds to buy, I began looking at the nearby listings. One day, I heard of a big house that was being sold for \$830,000 to avoid foreclosure.

The house was a nice size, set back from the street and surrounded by acres of fields and forests. The homeowner was a devout Christian. When she heard that a religious rabbi was interested, she told her realtor not to show it to anybody else. "I put so much work into my home because I wanted it to go to my children to serve G-d," she told me, "but if you end up with it, I'll be happy."

I negotiated with the banks and we got the price down to \$650,000. One day, while on the way to our Model Matza Bakery, our attorney called. "We lost the deal," he told me. "The bank is foreclosing tomorrow despite our verbal agreement. Maybe go to the auction."

Our six months of planning and fundraising was about to go down the drain, but 150 people were waiting for us at the pre-Passover program. There was nothing I could do. I just continued driving to our program.

When I came to the auction house the next day, at least ten other experienced buyers and developers were there; I knew that we didn't stand a chance. Within a few minutes, the price jumped to \$900,000 and we lost the property.

I wrote an email to a few of our supporters who had wanted to help with the property, explaining that we firmly believe that everything G-d does is good. I wrote that even though it didn't seem that way, I knew that what happened at the auction was for the best.

Seven months later, the auction house called. "The guy who bid on the property walked away from the deal," they told me. "Will you take it for \$580,000?"

That day, I went back to that old email I had sent and pressed reply all. "Now we can finally understand how it was all for the best!"

We held a grand opening of our newly renovated Chabad Center in 2017, with over 300 people in attendance. Since then, all of our activities have grown tremendously. We finally have enough space!

*An IllumiNations story from dollardaily.org, a platform where people can donate \$1 per day to help Chabad emissaries around the world.*

## New Emissaries

Rabbi Shneur and Simi Itzinger recently arrived in **Chagrin Falls, Ohio**, to open a new Chabad Center. The Village of Chagrin Falls is a suburb of Cleveland. The newly opened Chabad will be offering a wide range of activities for adults, children and the whole family.

## Chabad Nigeria Feeds Locals

Dozens of Jewish volunteers from **Chabad of Nigeria** organized and distributed a quarter of a million meals for the benefit of needy families on the occasion of Muslim holiday of Ramadan. The unique program was organized by the ChabadAid humanitarian organization in collaboration with a group of generous sponsors, as well as the Israeli Embassy in Nigeria.



## Today Is...

### 8 Sivan

The physical universe is a mixture. It is a meeting-place where G-d meets together (as it were) with man, the select of all creatures; yet it is also *ginat egoz*, "a garden of nuts," the word *egoz* having the numerical equivalent of *cheit*, "sin." G-d gives man the capacity to choose freely, that man may choose for himself a path in life.





# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence  
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Adapted from a letter to the Lubavitch Women's Organization convention

Lag B'Omer, 5731 (1971)

Torah from Sinai begins with the Ten Commandments, of which the first two: "I am G-d, your G-d" (the root and foundation of all positive mitzvot - commandments) and "You shall have no other gods" (the root and foundation of all prohibitions) proclaim the Unity of G-d. A precondition to the Giving of the Torah was the unity of the Jewish people (as it is written, "And Israel encamped there facing the Mountain" - in the singular form, indicating, as our Sages explain, "as one person with one heart"). The essence of the Giving of the Torah is to realize in the material world the Unity of G-d, through the "one nation on earth," the Jewish people, fulfilling the 613 mitzvot of the one Torah.

At first glance it is difficult to understand how such unity can be achieved, considering that G-d Himself created mankind as diverse individuals, differing in their opinions ("as they differ in their faces so they differ in their minds"), living in a world which He likewise created variegated as to climate and physical features. How can a whole nation attain true unity within itself and bring unity into such a diversified world?

The explanation is to be found in the verse, "And they stood themselves under the Mountain (Mount Sinai)" - all of the 600,000 adult men, their wives, sons and daughters. This means that, as they were about to receive the Torah, all submitted themselves to it so completely, that mundane matters ceased to exist for them, as it were; their self-effacement (bitul) and joy of receiving the Torah left room for nothing else. And since the "Mountain" was the same for all, and all were permeated with the same feeling of self-effacement and

joy, this brought true unity to all the individual Jews, and also unity into the world, through the one Torah.

The Jewish people began with one family, that of our ancestors Abraham and Sara, and ever since then the Jewish family has been the foundation of our people. In the family, too, each member is a separate individual, with a particular function and purpose in life assigned to him and her by Divine Providence. Unless there is unity in the family, there can be no unity of the Jewish people. How is family unity achieved? In the same way as mentioned above: When all the members of the family accept the One Torah from the One G-d in such a way that the Torah and mitzvot are the only essential thing, and all other things are merely secondary, and have a significance only insofar as they are related to the essence - then there is true unity in the family.

In attaining this family unity - bearing in mind also that Jewish families are the component parts of the Jewish people, hence the basis of the unity of the Jewish people, as mentioned above - the Jewish mother and daughter have a most important part, being the Foundation of the Home, as has been underscored on previous occasions.

Needless to say, the said unity must be a constant one, without interruptions; this is to say, it must be expressed not only on certain days of the year, or certain hours of the day, but in every day of the year and in every hour of the day. This means that a Jewish home must be wholly based on the foundations of the Torah and mitzvot, and so permeated with the spirit of Torah dedication and the joy of mitzvah that this should be reflected also in the conduct outside the home, in the street, and in the entire environment.

Herein lies the essence of the "integrity" and unity of the Jewish family and of Jewish family life - the main theme of this year's Convention.

It is hoped that this point will be brought out at the Convention with the proper clarity and forcefulness, together with its aim and purpose - its realization in daily life, in keeping with the basic principle of our Sages of blessed memory: The essential thing is the deed.

the Torah is also connected with Moses our teacher, for "Moses received the Torah from Sinai." May we proceed immediately to the Holy Land (Significantly, "immediately" in Hebrew is מיד - *miyad*), an acronym for the names of the three Jewish leaders mentioned previously Moses, Yisrael, and David. And may we merit the *kaytz* with the coming of the ultimate Redemption, led by Moshiach. (The Rebbe, second night of Shavuot 5751-1991)

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

*This coming Saturday night through Monday night is the holiday of Shavuot, celebrating when G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai.*

*Three people in Jewish history are particularly associated with Shavuot: Moshe, King David and the Baal Shem Tov. And these three great leaders were also intimately connected with Moshiach and the Redemption.*

*As the one through whom the Torah was given to the Jewish people, Moshe is intimately connected with Shavuot. The Torah, in some places, is even referred to as "The Torah of Moshe" - Torat Moshe. Moshiach will be so like Moshe in his leadership qualities, humility and Torah scholarship that our Sages even stated, "Moshe is the first redeemer and the last redeemer."*

*Shavuot is the birthday and anniversary of the passing of King David. One of the functions of Moshiach is that he will restore the Davidic dynasty, for Moshiach will be a descendant of King David, a human king.*

*Finally, we come to the Baal Shem Tov. The Baal Shem Tov, too, passed away on Shavuot, on the second day of the holiday. In a famous letter to his brother-in-law, the Baal Shem Tov described a spiritual "journey" when he visited the chamber of Moshiach. He asked Moshiach, "Master, when will you come?"*

*Moshiach replied, "When your wellsprings - your teachings - will spread forth to the outside."*

*The Baal Shem Tov's teachings - Chasidut - were recorded and expounded upon by his various disciples. They are a foretaste of the new and deeper revelations of Torah that we are promised will be revealed and taught by Moshiach, himself.*

*This year on Shavuot, when all Jews, young and old, gather in our synagogues to reexperience the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, let us also reconnect with the essence of the holiday and cry out for the ultimate revelation of the Torah and G-d through Moshiach.*

Shmuel Butman

## L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה י מושקה

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

Shavuot marks the *yahrzeit* (anniversary of passing) of King David and Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chasidic movement. The holiday of the Giving of



Before the Giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, G-d brought Moses up to Heaven in order to teach him the entire Torah. Moses, who walked about in Heaven as one walks on earth, was greeted by an angel who asked him, "What are you doing here, son of Amram? What business do you, a mortal who lives in the physical world, have coming to the holy Heavens?"

"I did not come of my own will," replied Moses confidently. "Our Master has ordered me here in order to receive the Torah and bring it back to the Jewish nation."

When the angels realized that Moses had come to take the Torah from the Heavens and bring it to the Jews, they raised a mighty cry. Would they now be parted forever more from their beloved Torah?

G-d therefore told Moses, "Go and speak with the angels. Convince them that they have no need for the Torah and that they have no reason to regret that it is being taken from them."

But Moses was frightened by the fiery angels. "I am surprised at you, Moses," chastised G-d. "When I first appeared to you from the burning bush, you had much to say. You were not afraid to ask and to argue without end. Why are you suddenly frightened by angels who are merely My servants?"

Emboldened by G-d's words, and holding on to the Heavenly throne, Moses gathered his courage and began. "Whatever was written in the Torah was not intended for you," Moses told the angels gathered nearby. "What does the Torah say? 'I am G-d your G-d Who took you out of the land of Egypt.' Were you ever slaves in Egypt? Did G-d rescue you from there?" Moses asked the Heavenly servants.

"The Torah also says, 'You shall have no strange gods before Me.' Do you worship man made idols? Do you have an inclination to steal, to covet what belongs to others? Do you have parents that you must honor them? If not, what use do you have for the Torah? You cannot observe its positive commandments nor its prohibitions."

Hearing these arguments, the angels had to concede that Moses was right.

Moses remained in Heaven for 40 days and 40 nights, learning the entire Written Torah and Oral Tradition. Moses knew when day or night had passed on earth by the activities of the angels. When he saw the angels preparing the manna which the Jews were to eat the following day, he knew that it was day. When the manna fell, he knew it was night time on Earth.

One day, Moses saw G-d sitting on His mighty, exalted throne, adding crowns to the letters of the Torah. He asked G-d to explain the reason for these decorations and was told, "In many years to come there will be born a great tzadik (righteous person) by the name of Akiva the son of Josef, who will reveal many hidden secrets of the Torah. He will know how to derive laws and Torah thoughts from every letterhead and crown which I am now adding to the letters."

Moses begged to be shown this tzadik. G-d showed him a building which housed many disciples sitting in rows upon rows. At their head sat a man who resembled a heavenly angel. Moses approached the men but could not understand what they were saying, and he was very grieved.

Then, suddenly, Moses heard one of the students ask the angelic-looking man how he knew all he had been teaching them. Rabbi Akiva replied, "Everything I am teaching and innovating before you in Torah is a direct transmission of what Moses received upon Mount Sinai." Moses was comforted by these words but asked G-d, "If You intend to create such a great person, why do You not grant him the privilege of bringing the Torah down to the Jews?"

"I have especially chosen you to bring the Torah to My children," G-d told Moses. "But because you were so modest in thinking that Rabbi Akiva is more fitting than you to transmit the Torah to the Jews, I will increase your wisdom and knowledge."

And at that moment, G-d opened the 50 gates of wisdom, allowing Moses to pass through 49 of them. Moses's wisdom was so great that no other person in the world could compare with him. And it is from Moses, of all our other great teachers, that we will learn Torah when Moshiach comes.

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

**Take the sum (literally "lift up the head") of all the congregation of the Children of Israel (Num. 1:2)**

Why is this command to count the Jewish people referred to as "lifting up the head"? Because through this census every Jew became a member of G-d's Army, a Jewish soldier dedicated body and soul to the service of the Creator. And in truth, is there any higher calling? (*The Rebbe*)

Our Sages note that the giving of the Torah at Sinai required the presence of all 600,000 Jews; if just one had been missing, the Torah would not have been given. These verses are always read in the portion of Bamidbar before Shavuot, the day on which the Torah was given, to remind us of this principle. Furthermore, it reminds us that it was not enough for all Jews to be present; it was necessary that the Jewish people be united in love for one another. "Israel camped there [before Mount Sinai] as one man with one mind." This peace and unity is the channel for all Divine blessings, including the greatest of all – the coming of Moshiach. (*Peninei HaGeula*)

**All that were numbered were 603, 550 (Num. 1:46)**

Why is this number so significant? Surely many more Jews have been born over the course of generations. Rather, this number is an eternal constant that is not subject to change. Up Above, in the celestial source of all Jewish souls, there are precisely this number; accordingly, it was reflected in the number of Jews down below. Each "original soul," in turn, is capable of branching off into many more individual souls. (*Sefer HaMaamarim* 5678)

**All that were numbered of the Levites...were 22,000 (Num. 3:39)**

The tribe of Levi was the smallest in population of all the Jewish tribes. Not subject to the Egyptian enslavement with the rest of the Israelites, the Levites increased in a natural manner. The other tribes, by contrast, were blessed with a supernal fertility, and the more Pharaoh tried to annihilate them, the more Jews were born. (*Ramban*)

לעילוי נשמות  
חֶרֶשׁ בֶּן יוֹסֵף ע"ה  
Dedicated in memory of  
Cheresh Ben Yosef obm

**8:04 Candle Lighting Time**  
NY Metro Area  
**4 Sivan/June 3**  
Torah Portion Bamidbar  
Ethics Ch 6  
5 Sivan/June 4/1st night Shavuot  
**light candles after 9:12 pm**  
6 Sivan/June 5/ 2nd night Shavuot  
**light candles after 9:13 pm**  
Shavuot ends Monday night 7 Sivan/June 6 9:14 pm

