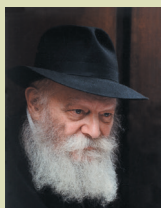


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

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

In this week's Torah portion, Ki Teitzei, we read that "When you build a new house, you must make a guardrail for your roof, in order that you won't cause bloodshed in your house, by he who falls, falling off of it."

The law of making a guardrail applies even when you buy a house that you didn't build, as well as to a house that you have owned all along. So why does the verse say, "When you build a new house?"

The commentator Sifri explains that "new" means from the time it is new to you, and even before you move into the house. The moment you have a roof, whether you built it or bought it, you are obligated to make a guardrail. The commandment of the guardrail is not like the mezuzah, whose obligation doesn't begin until after you move into the house.

This leaves us with a question. From the words in our verse, "When you build a new house," it seems that the obligation is only for a new house. Why doesn't the verse use a term that indicates that every house needs a guardrail on the roof?

The verses in the Torah are meant to be understood on many levels. Looking more deeply into this verse, we can learn lessons that apply to all of us, even to one who doesn't own a house.

On a deeper level, "house" refers to the body, for the body houses the soul when it is in this world. This verse then refers to when the soul comes into the body. It is called a "new house" because, for the G-dly soul, the physical world is all new. The soul is at risk of falling, in fact it is "falling," because for the soul it is a great and constant descent, having to deal with the body's natural yearning for worldly matters, which is not the interest of the soul. At the same time, the soul is happy to be in her new home, because she knows that through the work of the body she is able to make this world into a dwelling place for G-d and draw down levels of G-dliness, beyond anything she experienced before.

How does this work? When we do our part, making this world into a dwelling for G-d, we are creating for Him a "new home." Everything we do down here affects the spiritual realms as well. We so to speak create a new home for G-d above. What is new about it, is that there is an expansion in the spiritual realms allowing for levels of G-dliness that before were beyond the loftiest spiritual realms to enter the spiritual realms. And ultimately, we are able to draw these levels of G-dliness into the physical as well.

To be able to do this work, we have to make a guardrail or safety fence. First, by setting boundaries and protections not to falter, and by creating a degree of separation, so we can be in the world and at the same time separate.

May we be successful in drawing down G-dliness into the physical, making it a home for G-d. His presence will fill the world openly, and Moshiach will be here. May it happen soon.

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.

Sun Farming

As the energy crisis grows greater, discussion has turned again to alternatives to fossil fuels – oil, mainly. Obviously, the most efficient source for energy is the primary source – solar energy.

Solar energy is radiant light and heat from the sun that is harnessed using a range of technologies such as solar power to generate electricity, solar thermal energy (including solar water heating), and solar architecture.

Transforming sunlight into electricity is not only an engineering challenge, and a geo-political necessity, it is also a metaphor, one that Chasidic teachings began using and developing 200 years ago. The transforming-sunlight-to-energy metaphor provides insight into our spiritual nature.

Our purpose, the performance of *mitzvot* (commandments), is to transform the world – to make it a dwelling place for G-dliness. The electricity entering our homes, transmitted through wires, outlets, and then electric cords, powers our dishwashers, air-conditioning, and computers, transforming our houses into places of comfort and production.

Similarly, we should direct our spiritual energy – the electricity of our souls – to transforming the realm of human relationships and awareness of the Divine. As Maimonides writes in his code of Jewish law, regarding the times of Moshiach, that then there will be neither jealousy nor greed, neither war nor famine. In other words, relations between individuals and

between nations will be harmonious, and for each other's mutual benefit.

Also in the times of Moshiach, all humanity will direct its attention to the "knowledge of G-dliness." We will focus not on accumulating things or statistics but on deepening our awareness of and appreciation of G-d's Presence in the physical world.

But how do we achieve this? Whence our spiritual "electricity" which becomes ours – ours to use, and our responsibility to use to transform the world? Following the analogy, from some form of spiritual sunlight.

What is this "sunlight"? Well, what do we mean when we say someone "enlightens" us, or they "light up our life"? We mean they inspire us, reveal to us something about ourselves we weren't aware of, provide direction and guidance in how best to actualize our potential.

Perhaps it is no coincidence, then, that on the 18th of Elul, twelve days before Rosh Hashana, we celebrate the birthday of two luminaries of the Jewish world – the Baal Shem Tov, founder of Chasidism in general, and Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Chabad Chasidism in particular. (Indeed, the Alter Rebbe's first name means "two lights.")

So the sunlight is shining. We have within ourselves the spiritual photovoltaic cells to gather this spiritual sunlight and transform it into spiritual energy with which to transform the physical world into a dwelling place for G-dliness. All we need do is harvest it, to tend the solar farm of our souls.

SLICE OF LIFE

Western Wall Vignettes

by Gutman Locks



Returning a Lost Item

I was walking through the Arab *shuk* (market) early in the morning on my way back from praying at sunrise at the *Kotel* (Western Wall in Jerusalem). It was empty as it usually is at that hour, but as I came to the main side street that leads into the Jewish Quarter there was a very young boy standing there, maybe five or six years old. He was looking right and left, and then back again. He looked concerned. When he saw me, his face relaxed and he came right over.

He looked up, and said something with his very tiny voice. There was no way I could hear what he was saying. I asked him what he was doing there? Where did he want to go? Then I asked, "Are you going to *cheder*" (Torah elementary school).

He said he was, and I asked him where it was. He pointed toward the Jewish quarter.

"Come, I'll walk with you."

He looked relieved, but I wasn't. "Cheder is not open yet." (Not for another 2 hours!) "What are you going to do there?"

He said something tiny, and we walked on.

I didn't know what to do with him. We passed

the Ramban *shul* where there were lots of Jews praying. I asked him if he wanted to wait in the shul until his cheder opened. He said something tiny and kept on walking.

At the next street, a nice woman walked toward us and smiled at him. I asked if she knew him... that I had found him standing alone in the shuk. She said she did, and walked over and started speaking with him. He was comfortable for me to let her take over and that is what she did.

I know why I was in the shuk at that early hour, and I know why G-d sent that nice lady there at that hour, but I have no idea what that little boy was doing there at that hour!

Jews

He is visiting from New York. He works making videos for a former New York City mayor. He was standing across from me watching me putting *tefilin* on visitors. I called out for him to come put them on, too. He thought for a moment, shrugged his shoulders as if saying, "Why not," and walked over.

I asked him if his mother was Jewish. He said she was.

He stuck out his arm for me to put on the strap. He repeated the blessing.

After I put the tefilin on his arm and picked up the head piece, he stuck out his other arm for me to put tefilin on that arm, too.

I said, "Obviously, this is the first time you have ever put on tefilin!"

He said it was.

He is 53 years old...

After he read the *Shema* in English, I told him to bless his 14-year-old son, and I explained how important a day it was for him, being the first time he had ever put on tefilin. I showed them how to stand by the Kotel and pray for their loved ones and for all that they wanted.

They had a good time. I said, "Don't wait another 53 years before you put them on again."

His sticking out his other arm reminded me of 37 years ago when my friend Meir Rhodes was smuggling tefilin into Russia. The Russian government forbade Jews from importing such religious items, and the Rebbe said to be sure

that tefilin were available for the Jews there.

When Meir went through the Russian customs the guard searched his bag and found the tefilin.

He asked Meir, "What are these?"

Meir answered, "They are for me to wrap on my arm."

And then the guard saw a second pair, and harshly asked, "Then, what are these for?"

Right away Meir answered, "They are for my other arm!"

The guard said, "Oh," and let Meir take them in.

G-d, bless the Jewish people wherever we are, that we may fulfill Your holy commandments as You wish. This is what we want.

Bar Mitzva

They are Israelis. The boy's father brought the boy over and asked if he could put on tefilin. It was two weeks before his Bar Mitzva. I put tefilin on the boy. He said the blessing, and read the *Shema*.

The actual time that he is obligated to put on tefilin is from his 13th birthday, but he is allowed to put them on somewhat before this as education.

I explained that it was a very special time in his life, coming to his Bar Mitzva, and that G-d will pay special attention to his prayers, so he should send blessings to all the people he loves.

What is a Bar Mitzva? It does not mean that you put on tefilin or had a celebration. Bar Mitzva means, "Son of the Commandment. It refers to a Jewish boy who has reached the age of 13 so now he is old enough to begin to understand the depth of the commandments, and therefore is obligated and privileged to begin to fulfill them.

What is a commandment? G-d has given us 613 Commandments; each has been created to help elevate the Jew so he or she can become more aware of G-d's Presence. G-d is everywhere at all times, but He hides. He hides and He has given us these spiritual tools to help us to reveal His Presence.

Gutman Locks is well-known at the Western Wall for over two decades. He is the author of several books, musical tapes and many educational videos. See more of his writings at www.thereisone.com



New Emissaries

Rabbi Shmuly and Shevy Gurary are arriving soon in Washington state to establish **Chabad of Maple Valley, Washington**. There is no prior Jewish infrastructure in Maple Valley, a rapidly growing city east of Seattle.

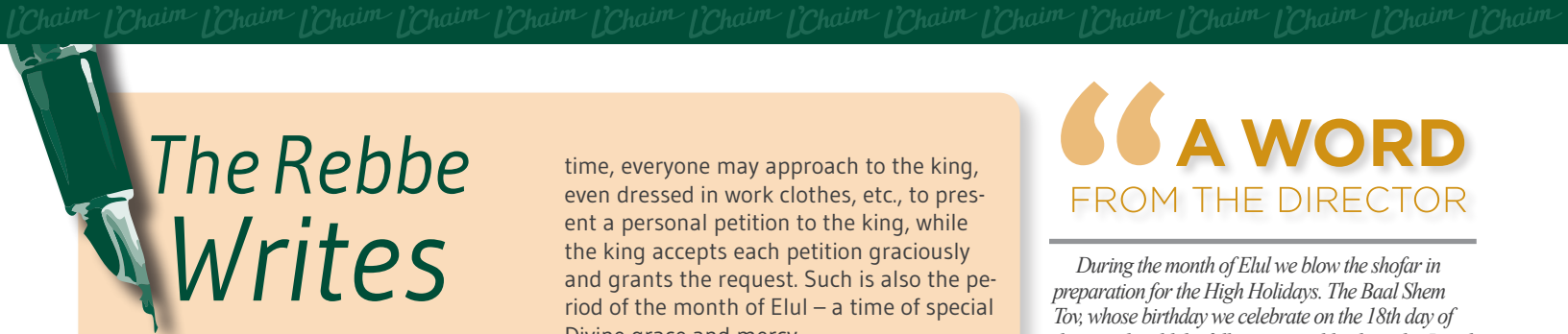
Rabbi Boruch and Mushka Hecht are moving to **Walnut Creek, California** in the East Bay of S. Francisco's Bay Area. They will be joining Rabbi Dovber and Chaya Berkowitz of Chabad of Costa Contra as Youth Directors, directing children's events and programming throughout the year, as well as Costa Contra's local Cteen chapter, day camp, and Hebrew School.

Rabbi Levi and Chana Sputz will be establishing the Chabad Learning Center of Northern Nevada in **Reno, Nevada**. The new Center will bring the world-renowned JLI courses to the entire Northern Nevada region. The Sputs will also offer one-on-one learning opportunities and a full array of classes and Torah study groups.

Today Is...

19 Elul

When Rabbi Shneur Zalman was still in Vitebsk he once expounded on the verse "You stand..." Taking *eitza* (wood) as an idiom of *eitza* (counsel), he interpreted "choppers of wood" to mean that one must chop out "the many thoughts (counsels) in the heart of man." "Those who draw water," he interpreted – one must drain out the water that "makes all enjoyments grow.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

22nd of Elul, 5730 [1970]

I received regards from you through your husband, who also told me of your present frame of mind. And while this is quite understandable, it is necessary to bear in mind that the ways of G-d are inscrutable, but always good, since He is the Essence of Goodness, and it is in the nature of the Good to do good – however difficult it may sometimes seem to comprehend. Yet it is not at all surprising that a human being should not be able to understand the ways of G-d. On the contrary, it is quite easy to see why a human being should not be able to understand the ways of G-d, for how can a created being understand the creator?

We must, therefore, be strong in our trust in G-d and let nothing discourage us or cause any depression, G-d forbid. As a matter of fact, the stronger the *Bitochon* [trust] in G-d and in His benevolence, the sooner comes the time when this becomes plain even to human eyes. You should therefore be confident that G-d will eventually fulfill your heart's desires for good, as well as that of your husband, to be blessed with additional healthy offspring.

Your husband's activities and contribution to the strengthening and spreading *Yiddishkeit* [Judaism], as well as your share in it, will stand you in good stead to hasten that time.

Inasmuch as we are now in the auspicious month of Elul, I trust you surely know the explanation by the *Alter Rebbe* [Rabbi Shneur Zalman], author of the *Tanya* and *Shulchan Aruch*, of the significance of this month. He explains it by means of an illustration of a king returning to his residence, when all the people of the city turn out to welcome the king in the field. At such a

time, everyone may approach to the king, even dressed in work clothes, etc., to present a personal petition to the king, while the king accepts each petition graciously and grants the request. Such is also the period of the month of Elul – a time of special Divine grace and mercy.

May G-d grant that this be so also with you and all yours, in the midst of all our people Israel.

Wishing you and yours a *Kesivo veChasimo Tovo* [to be written and sealed for good],

With blessing,

15 Elul, 5739 [1979]

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to be informed of the forthcoming Concert on the eve of the 18th of Elul.

The date is particularly significant and auspicious for the occasion. For the month of Elul is dedicated to *teshuvah* – return to the roots and sources of Torah and *mitzvot* [commandments] which are bound up with the real essence of every Jew.

The *Alter Rebbe*, founder of Chabad, explains in *Tanya* that the essential aspect of *teshuvah* is in the sincerity of the heart, since it entails profound feelings of regret for past failures and the strongest resolve and commitment for the future. And it is well known that very often the heart strings can be touched more readily and effectively by an inspiring *niggun* [Chasidic melody] than by a word of admonishment.

Moreover, the concert is taking place on *Chai* [the 18th of] Elul ("Chai" for "life") – the birthday of the two great luminaries, the *Baal Shem Tov* and the *Alter Rebbe*, who brought new life and inspiration to our Jewish people.

May the concert event be a great success in every respect, a source of lasting inspiration to all of you, and stimulating the activities of Chabad Lubavitch to strengthen Torah-true *Yiddishkeit* in the community at large.

Wishing you a *kesiva vachasima tova* for a good and sweet New Year.

will be fully restored to the Jewish people. According to Maimonides, one of the first things Moshiach will do is "wage the wars of G-d and prevail." Everything that was wrongfully stolen from the Jews during the exile will be returned to our hands. Most significantly this includes the ultimate target of their hatred, the Holy Temple, which was twice destroyed. When Moshiach comes and rebuilds the Temple, it will finally be redeemed from the captivity of the nations. (The Rebbe, *Parshat Teitzei* 5750-1990)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

During the month of Elul we blow the shofar in preparation for the High Holidays. The Baal Shem Tov, whose birthday we celebrate on the 18th day of this month, told the following parable about the Jewish people and the shofar:

A mighty king had an only child, a beloved son. Though the prince grew to be a well-educated young man, he and the king decided that by traveling to other countries he would further enhance his knowledge.

And so, the prince set out, laden with wealth and accompanied by nobles and servants. The prince traveled for years and years, studying the people and countries he encountered and acquiring a great taste for luxuries. At first slowly, and then more quickly, the prince spent his money until he was finally left penniless, without servants or friends, far from his father's palace and comfortable life.

Slowly, the prince made his way back to his homeland. He arrived at his father's palace, bedraggled and exhausted. He had been away so long, though, that he had even forgotten his mother tongue. Through signs and gestures, he tried to convince the palace guards that he was the prince, but the guards just laughed and beat him.

Finally, the prince cried out in anguish and grief, a wordless cry full of desperation and agony. And his father, the king, heard and recognized the prince's cry and ran out to greet his son.

The king is, of course, G-d, the King of Kings. The Jewish people are the prince.

G-d caused the soul to descend into and wander in the body to perform mitzvot and do good deeds. However, the person often gets distracted and wanders far away. Eventually, however, when he notices the poverty of his life, he returns to his "Father's palace" though he no longer even knows the language or how to communicate with G-d, the King. So, he utters an incoherent cry, but a cry from his very depths – the cry of the shofar. And the cry of the shofar is recognized by the King, who lovingly accepts him and all His returning children.

May we merit, even before Rosh Hashana, to hear the cry of the Great shofar which will be sounded at the commencement of the Messianic Era.

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.



Published by
Lubavitch Youth Organization
1408 President St, Brooklyn, NY, 11213
phone 718 778 6000

Chairman
Director
Program director
Secretary
Administrator
Editor
Associate Editor
Chairman Editorial Comm.
Rebbe photo

Rabbi David Raskin י"ד
Rabbi Shmuel Butman
Rabbi Kasriel Kastel
Rabbi Moshe P. Goldman
Rabbi Shlomo Friedman
Yehudis Cohen
David Y. B. Kaufmann י"ד
Rabbi Nissen Mangel
S. Roumani

L'Chaim contains words from sacred literature. Please do not deface or discard.

All contents © 2022 by L.Y.O. ISSN 1050 0480

L'Chaim Subscriptions

For a one year subscription send \$47, payable to LYO (\$60 outside of USA) to:
L'Chaim, 1408 President St, Bklyn, NY, 11213

L'Chaim on the Internet

Current issues and archives: lchaimweekly.org

Learn about Moshiach

Visit www.moshiach.com or call (718) 953 6100

MOSHIACH MATTERS

When you go forth to war against your enemies, and G-d has delivered them into your hand, and you have taken them captive (*Deut. 21:10*) Not only does G-d assure us victory over our enemies; we are promised that the spoils plundered by the nations



IT HAPPENED ONCE

A woman once came to the Baal Shem Tov and begged him to bless her with a child. The Baal Shem Tov was unwilling at first, but when pressed, he finally assured her that within a year she would bear a son.

A son was born to the woman and her husband that year. The little child was a source of great joy to them. When her son was two years old, the woman brought him back to the Baal Shem Tov to receive a blessing from the tzadik. The Baal Shem Tov held the baby and kissed him before returning him to his mother. As soon as the woman returned home, however, the baby became sick and, within a few days, passed away.

The woman returned to the Baal Shem Tov and asked bitterly, "Why did you bless me with a child who would only live for two years?"

The Baal Shem Tov answered her: "Listen carefully to the story I am about to tell you."

"A childless king once asked his wisest advisor how he could solve the dilemma of not having an heir.

"No one can help you except for the Jews," said the advisor. "You must tell the Jews that if within a year your wife does not give birth to a son, they will be expelled from your kingdom. They will then pray that you beget a son."

"The king issued the advisor's decree. The Jews gathered to pray, recite Psalms and fast. They entreated G-d to save them from this decree and their voices reached the heavens.

"A very lofty soul in heaven heard the outcry and told the Alm-ghty that it would be willing to be sent to the world below and live as the king's son. In this way it would save the Jewish people from being expelled from their homes and their land.

"Within the year, the queen gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. At a young age the prince's genius was evident. Everything that he was taught he grasped immediately.

"One day, the prince told his father, 'I have learned all I can from the teachers in this kingdom. Please find me a new teacher with whom I can study something in which I can delight!'

"A call for a unique tutor went throughout the king's empire and beyond. Soon after, a wise and saintly looking scholar approached the king and offered to teach the prince. 'I have only one condition,' demanded the scholar. 'When I am alone in my study no one, not even the prince, is to enter.' The king readily agreed, caring only to please his beloved son.

"The prince was enchanted with his new teacher. Day and night he studied with the scholar, always thirsting for more. The prince was only separated from his teacher while he slept and at those times that his teacher insisted on being alone in his study.

"One day the prince succumbed to his curiosity and entered his teachers' quarters. He opened the study door and was astounded to see his teacher swaying back and forth, covered with a white and black cloth, and leather straps around arm. He gasped and the teacher turned around to see his shocked disciple.

"You were not to enter," the teacher said firmly. The prince just nodded mutely. "Now that you know my secret, I must leave the kingdom," said the scholar sadly.

"But I know nothing," cried the prince, for he had never seen a Jew in talit and tefilin.

"I am a Jew," explained the scholar.

"Then I too will be a Jew," said the prince.

"Try as he did, to dissuade the prince, the scholar was unsuccessful. Eventually, he agreed to teach the prince Torah. As soon as they began studying, the prince realized that he had found that which had seemed to elude him his entire life. Years flew by, with the prince always at the scholar's side. He drank in the words of Torah, never tiring of it.

"It is time for me to become a Jew," said the prince, now a young man, to his teacher.

"You can not remain prince if you were to become a Jew," warned the scholar. "Is it not better for you to stay here and eventually become a benevolent and just ruler?"

"The prince was adamant. He told the king that he needed to learn first-hand about his father's vast country. With the king's reluctant permission, the prince and scholar traveled away from the palace toward the border of the kingdom. The prince crossed the

border, converted, and settled down to a fully observant Jewish life.

"When the prince died, his soul ascended to the World Above and not a single count could be charged against him. What could be said about a soul that had the self-sacrifice to descend to the world in order to save a Jewish community from a terrible decree, and who had rejected the royal crown to become a Jew?"

"But then, one angel said, 'For his first two years he was nursed by a non-Jew.' It was decreed that this soul, being so lofty, would need to descend into this world once again and be nursed by a Jewess."

The Baal Shem Tov said to the woman compassionately, "You need not be sad that you merited, for two years, to nurture this lofty soul."



THOUGHTS THAT COUNT



on the weekly Torah portion



When you go forth to war against (literally "above") your enemies (Deut. 21:10)

When you go forth into battle with complete trust in the G-d of Israel, secure in the knowledge that G-d stands by your side to assist, you are automatically "above" your enemies as soon as you embark on your mission. (*Likutei Sichot*)

You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep driven away and hide yourself from them; surely you shall bring them back to your brother (Deut. 22:1)

G-d has implanted within us a wonderful character trait: a willingness and urge to be kind to another Jew that is even stronger than the desire to be kind to ourselves. We can always find reasons why we deserve our own suffering, G-d forbid, but when it comes to another's distress, it is absolutely impossible. (*Hayom Yom*)

That which comes out of your lips shall you keep and perform (23:24)

The sentiment of the modeh ani prayer thanking G-d for restoring the soul to the body and recited immediately upon awakening in the morning, should carry through the rest of the day as well. One should always conduct oneself with this fundamental fact in mind. (*Likutei Sichot*)

Remember what Amalek did to you (Deut. 25:17)

Why does the Torah use the singular form of the word "you" instead of the plural? The early chasidim explained: Amalek, or the Evil Inclination, gains a stronghold only in an individual who is stand-offish and reclusive from the rest of the Jewish People. He who considers himself part of the larger whole and stands in unity with his brethren cannot be harmed by Amalek. (*Maayanei Hachasidut*)

Sponsored by the
Greenbaum Family

In Honor Of Hashem's Kindness
Wishing you a K'sivah Vachasimah Tovah
A sweet and good year



6:57 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
13 Elul/Sept 9
Torah Portion Ki Teitzei
Ethics Chs 1 & 2
Shabbat ends 7:54 PM