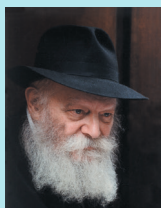


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

The prophecy of the gentile, Bilaam, which appears in this week's Torah portion, Balak, is one of the rare instances where the Torah alludes to the Final Redemption that will take place with the coming of Moshiach. The prophecy begins with Bilaam's words: "Come-I will advise you against what this people will do to your people in the end of days," and describes what will take place then.

About Moshiach, Rabbi Moses Maimonides wrote: "The chapter on Bilaam prophesied about the two Moshiachs, or anointed ones. The first was King David, who saved the Jews from the hands of their enemies. The second is Moshiach who will usher in the Messianic Age by rescuing the Jewish people from the hands of Esau."

Why does Maimonides compare these two, aside from the obvious reason that Moshiach will be a direct descendant of his great-great-grandfather, King David? The Torah tells us that Moses "was the first and will be the last redeemer." Would it not, then, have been more logical to liken Moses to Moshiach when speaking of the great deliverers of Israel? There must, therefore, be another underlying, fundamental connection between King David and Moshiach which must be explored.

Maimonides emphasizes in his writings that Moshiach does not have to perform miracles in order for us to recognize who he is. He will, however, restore the sovereignty of the House of David, rebuild the Holy Temple and gather in all the Jewish exiles. The significance of the rule of the House of David is that it symbolizes a perfection in Torah and mitzvot which is impossible today. Moshiach, through his actions, will enable the Jewish people to return to the full Jewish existence they enjoyed in former years, during the reign of King David.

The role of Moshiach, then, is the restoration of Jewish integrity, and this is reflected in the laws which govern how we will recognize him. Maimonides wrote: "If a king shall arise from the House of David, speak words of Torah, both Oral and Written, be occupied in mitzvot like his forefather David, bring Israel to the ways of the Torah and adherence to its laws, fight G-d's battles, etc." Such a person, we are told, is to be considered Moshiach. Once he has succeeded in vanquishing all the enemies of the Jews, has rebuilt the Temple and gathered in all the exiles--then we shall know that he is indeed Moshiach.

This, then, is the essential link between King David and Moshiach--the restoration of a completeness which we cannot experience while in exile. The coming of Moshiach, like King David's rule before him, will remove our spiritual limitations and enable us to live a fully Jewish life.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Alone, but Not Lonely

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

Isn't it incredible how King Solomon's ancient words "There is nothing new under the sun" still hold true over 3,000 years later.

It's the story of Balaam, the powerful heathen prophet who attempts to curse our ancestors at the behest of King Balak of Moab. But, try as he might, Balaam's attempts fail dismally.

You may not be aware that it was Balaam who coined the phrase *ma tovu ohalecha Yaakov, mishkenotecha Yisrael* - "How good are your tents, Jacob; your dwellings, Israel, a line that is one of our most well-known synagogue prayers.

Let's focus here on another of Balaam's memorable words. He describes Israel as *am levadad yishkon*, "a nation that dwells alone." The commentaries offer a variety of interpretations. Some say it refers to this world, while others suggest it means the World to Come. Regardless, they seem to agree that it is intended as a blessing, rather than a curse.

So, it appears that alone does not necessarily mean lonely. Thus, alone may be understood as distinctive, exceptional, and unique.

In March 1972, when former Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin was Israel's Ambassador to Washington, he received a request from then President of Israel Zalman Shazar to convey the blessings of the President and Israeli government to the Rebbe on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

The Rebbe asked Rabin if he did not feel alone as the Ambassador of Israel among the 120 countries represented in Washington. Rabin said it was an honor for him, even if he did feel lonely at times.

"We have to realize the uniqueness of the Jewish nation," said the Rebbe, and quoted the above Torah verse

describing Israel as "a people that dwells alone."

He asked Rabin whether it is by our own choice or by outside forces that Israel dwells alone among the other nations of the world. Is it a blessing or a curse? In short, is being alone a positive or a negative?

As their conversation continued, the Rebbe answered his own question.

"Being alone is both our own choice and forced on us by the nations of the world. On the one hand, we choose to hold fast to the Torah, our faith and traditions. This has preserved our uniqueness through millennia of persecution and wandering.

"On the other hand, external pressures have strengthened the core of Jewish belief and our loyalty to our traditions. In instances where a Jew may have been embarrassed by his Judaism and tried to hide it, there were external elements that forced his Judaism upon him, and this, too, prevented assimilation. So, it is a combination of both - choice and force - which has kept us alone among the nations - a combination of positive and negative."

Rabin shared with the Rebbe that even the Russians had a begrudging respect for Israel. "The Russian ambassador once told me, 'You are a small country, but you are a proud country.'"

Yes, we may be alone. But we are distinctive in our Jewish pride, and even in our defiance when necessary.

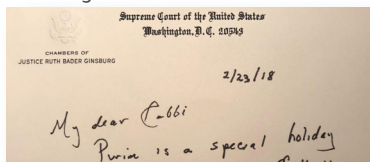
We have nothing to be ashamed of. We have nothing to be prouder of than our distinctive Jewish values and way of life. We may be alone among the nations, but we are not at all alone, for G-d is with us, protecting us and guiding our destiny.

May we all realize that "a people that dwells alone" is not a curse, but a most beautiful blessing.

SLICE OF LIFE

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a Chabad rabbi, and the mysterious nature of Jewish identity

By Sarah Ogince



One of the many handwritten notes Justice Ginsberg penned to Rabbi Gurary

My mother would smile to think of me lighting candles, and saying the brucha, something she made very special in our home...

Writing by hand, on stationery bearing the seal of the Supreme Court of the United States, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg recalled her childhood as a young Jewish girl in Flatbush, Brooklyn.

Chanuka was a happy holiday for us, not the least because of the gelt my grandfather gave to the grandchildren, for which we lined up from eldest to youngest.

A THOUSAND THANKS!

The thanks were for a silver menorah and candles, delivered to the justice's chambers by the note's recipient, Rabbi Nosson Gurary, the Chabad representative to Buffalo, and regional director of Chabad Houses in Upstate New York.

Ginsburg, who passed away at the age of 87, was memorialized as a brilliant jurist, a tireless advocate for women's rights, and a liberal icon with rock-star status—the Notorious RBG.

After the Guardian's obituary stated that she had "abandoned her religion" at the age of seventeen, there was an immediate backlash from American Jews.

They pointed to the obvious manifestations of the justice's Jewish pride: there was a mezuzah on the door of her Supreme Court chambers; she

had personally lobbied for the court to close on the High Holidays; and there was the poster on her wall with the verse from Deuteronomy, "Tzedek, tzedek, tirdof." Justice, justice, shall you pursue.

The Guardian subsequently issued a correction: Though the justice had moved away from observance, "she nevertheless remained deeply committed to her Jewish identity."

UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIPS

Rabbi Gurary became a witness to Ginsburg's Jewish life in 2003, when they were introduced by Justice Antonin Scalia.

As an adjunct professor since 1971, Rabbi Gurary taught classes that were part of the SUNY Buffalo catalogue: Jewish mysticism and ethics, Chasidic philosophy, and Jewish law.

In 2001, through a contact at the law school, he met Scalia ("He was very fond of Jewish law"), and in 2005, Rabbi Gurary created the National Institute for Judaic Law, an academic organization that would consider current cases before the high court in the light of Jewish law (halachah).

The project was launched with a dinner at the Supreme Court attended by Scalia, Stephen Breyer, and Ginsburg. Rabbi Gurary remained in contact with the justices afterwards—they learned to expect a package from him before the Jewish holidays.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

In 1930s Flatbush, the Bader family's primary focus was integration into American society. Ruth's mother, Celia Bader, had grown up speaking Yiddish in her home on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Intelligent and strong-willed, Celia steered Ruth toward a life of academic achievement.

But Judaism was important to Celia, too. The family belonged to a Conservative synagogue in Flatbush, and Ruth attended Hebrew school and Jewish summer camp for her entire childhood. According to Ginsburg biographer Jane Sherron De Hart, Celia lit candles for Shabbat every Friday and brought up a separate set of dishes from the basement for Passover.

As a child and young adult, Ruth fulfilled her mother's demands in both spheres, excelling in public school and at summer camp, where she delivered sermons and led Shabbat prayers. But that would change after her mother's death in 1950, when seventeen-year-old Ruth drifted away from Jewish ritual observance.

Yet, in her own way, Ginsburg sought to synthesize the values her mother had instilled. She championed the rights of women and minorities, a course that she acknowledged was inspired by her experience with antisemitism during the Second World War, and by the idea of tikkun olam that she had absorbed in her youth. In 1993, when she was nominated to the Supreme Court, Ginsburg paid tribute to her mother, whom she described as "the bravest and strongest person I have ever known."

DEEPENING ENGAGEMENT

On the Supreme Court, Ginsburg took pains to define herself as a Jew in a way that she had never done before. "I am a judge born, raised, and proud of being a Jew," she wrote in an essay for the American Jewish Committee in 1996. "The demand for justice runs through the entirety of Jewish tradition. I hope . . . I will have the courage to remain constant in the service of that demand."

Rabbi Gurary recalls his first meeting with the justice in her chambers, when, he says, she proudly pointed out that she had a mezuzah on her door. "It was a prominent, silver mezuzah."

After her husband's death in 2010, Ginsburg began speaking to Jewish audiences more frequently. In 2015, she co-authored an essay about the role of women in the Passover story, intended to be used as an insert in the Haggadah.

And then there were her notes to Rabbi Gurary, which reveal a more intimate side of the justice's Jewish self. "My dear Rabbi," she wrote on March 31, 2014:

World's best matzahs arrived in good time for Passover. I will bring one box to the family seder. . . It is a time that revives memories of seders at my grandparents' home and of the dishes my mother brought up every year.

"She wrote to me openly, personally, in her own handwriting," Rabbi Gurary says. "She wanted me to know how she identifies with the Jewish tradition, that she feels fond of it. The gifts brought back memories of home."

Certainly the rabbi's gifts provided an opportunity for Ginsburg to practice a core tenet of Jewish tradition—one that her mother had pursued with passion. On receiving a Purim gift in 2004, she wrote, it was "the ideal way to make the holiday understood and appreciated." She was, she told the rabbi, passing it on to her grandchildren.

Excerpts from an article which appeared in the Lubavitch International Magazine

Trudeau and Poilievre Sign Joint Resolution Honoring the Rebbe



Canadian Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition sign unprecedented 'Scroll of Honour'

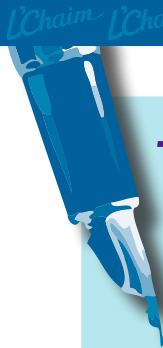
Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Leader of the Opposition Pierre Poilievre met with a delegation of Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries last month to honor the life and work of the Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson.

Meeting at Parliament Hill in Ottawa, the dignitaries affixed their signatures to a joint Parliamentary Proclamation or "Scroll of Honour" that was "in tribute to the vision and leadership of the Lubavitcher Rebbe," and called for July 9—to be "a day of good deeds."

Organized in collaboration with Rabbi Chaim and Bassy Mendelsohn, who co-direct Chabad of Centrepoinette in Ottawa, Rabbi Menachem Mendel and Dina Blum, directors of the Ottawa Torah Centre and Rabbi Chaim and Yocheved Boyarsky, directors of the Rohr Chabad Student Network of Ottawa, the signing event was an opportunity for the politicians to honor the Rebbe's impactful legacy on both Jewish and broader communities in Canada.

Ethics of the Fathers: Chapter Six

Everything that G-d created in His world, He did not create but for His glory. As is stated (Isaiah 43:7): "All that is called by My name and for My glory, I created it, formed it, also I made it." And it says (Exodus 15:1): "G-d shall reign forever and ever."



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

By the Grace of G-d
9th of Tammuz, 5724
[June 19, 1964]
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letters in which you write about things that happened after your return home. May G-d grant that you should always have good news to report.

As we are only a few days away from the auspicious 12th–13th of Tammuz, the liberation of my father-in-law of saintly memory, no doubt you have made arrangements to observe these days and also organize a gathering. May G-d grant that it should be successful, and that you and every one of us should derive lasting inspiration and blessings from these auspicious days.

With blessing,



EMPHASIS ON JEWISH WOMEN

Mrs. Esther Leah Klyne
124 Leicester Road
Salford 7, Lancs.
England

Blessing and Greeting:

I was pleased to receive your letter of June 24th, in which you report on the recent activities of the Neshei Chabad

in Manchester. I was very gratified to receive the good news, and may G-d grant that the meeting will bring good results in many practical ways, in the spirit of the Neshei Chabad, and in an ever growing measure.

I trust you all know of the significance of the forthcoming 12- 13th of Tammuz, the Days of Geulo of my father-in-law of saintly memory. As you know, my saintly father-in-law put particular emphasis on Jewish women in general, and Chabad women in particular insofar as their responsibilities are concerned, as well as their opportunities to strengthen and spread Yiddishkeit, not only in their own family and immediate environment, but also in more extensive way.

I trust that you and all the members of the Neshei will be inspired by the auspicious day of the 12-13th of Tammuz, which demonstrated how much even a single individual can accomplish, even in the face of the greatest obstacles, provided there is a will and determination.

And while none of us can compare to my father-in-law of saintly memory, we must also remember that the obstacles and difficulties we may be facing are almost quite insignificant by comparison with those which he faced. Furthermore, he has already trodden out the path of Mesiras Nefesh for us, which makes it easier for all who wish to follow in his footsteps, all the more so since his Zechus stands everyone in good stead.

Hoping to hear good news from you always

With blessing

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Hebrew word "Moshiach" can also be read as two distinct

words -- Mei siach -- meaning, "from talking." By increased talking about Moshiach one hastens his arrival.

(Sifrei Kabala)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

This Shabbos we learn the sixth chapter of Pirkei Avot. In it we find the words, "Whoever repeats a thought in the name of the one who said it brings redemption to the world--as it says in the Megillah (Esther 2:22) 'And Esther told it to the king in Mordechai's name' and because of that the Jews were saved."

The Rebbe explains this Mishna most beautifully. "The one who said it" refers to G-d. This means that when we are involved in studying the Torah, from learning the Hebrew alphabet to the most esoteric, mystical concepts, we need to keep in mind that all of this is part of G-d's Torah.

What comes out of educating oneself in this manner? "He brings redemption to the world." The Hebrew word for "world" is from the same root as concealed and hidden. When we learn Torah in this manner, we take the cover off the G-dliness that is in this world, thus bringing a level of redemption into the world.

Another way of looking at the Mishna is that "whoever repeats a thought in the name of the one who said it" means that a Jew should train himself to see in everything in the world "The One who says it"--G-dliness. When he goes beyond his natural tendencies and sees that which exists above nature he reveals that everything was created by G-d. Through this behavior, a Jew brings redemption to the world, for he redeems the world from the concealment and hiddenness in which it is masked.

The last part of the Mishna, "And Esther said to the king in the name of Marchecha" is also quite significant. For it teaches us that this type of behavior applies even when we find ourselves in a setting like that of the times of King Ahasuerus, an era when the world was entirely hidden by nature.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה'ה 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

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IT HAPPENED ONCE



Our Sages said that whoever has not seen the Second Holy Temple has never seen a beautiful building. The fabulous restoration and enlargement of the Holy Temple was undertaken by King Herod as an act of atonement for his murderous savagery. Herod was an Edomite slave owned by the Hasmonian royal family. With the complicity of the Roman rulers he seized the throne and proceeded to completely wipe out all the remaining descendants of the Hasmonian dynasty, eventually even his own queen, Mariamne. He ruled, unchallenged for thirty-three years, from 3723 to 3756, and was a cruel and savage despot who bitterly oppressed his Jewish subjects.

The Torah Sages were the particular victims of his hatred, and he had most of the Sages murdered. Only Bava ben Buta was allowed to live, albeit blinded, in order that the king might avail himself of the rabbi's wisdom. How then can we understand why this cruel butcher took it upon himself to engage in the holy work of beautifying the Holy Temple?

According to the Sages, Bava ben Buta was responsible for giving the king this advice. One day Herod went to visit Bava ben Buta. The king disguised his voice and his identity went undetected by the rabbi, who took him to be an ordinary visitor. The king initiated the conversation with Ben Buta saying, "It seems to me that Herod is nothing more than a wicked slave! Just look at all the evil he has done!"

Ben Buta replied only, "What can I do about it?" The king answered, "Why don't you curse him, then?"

"Does it not say in the Torah, 'Thou shalt not curse a king?'" Ben Buta replied. He then continued explaining, "Even if he were not the king, but merely a prince, it would be forbidden to curse him, for it also says, 'A prince in your nation, you must not curse.' And even if he were merely a wealthy man, it would not be permissible, since it is written, 'Do not curse the rich man, even in the privacy of your bedroom.'"

But Herod replied, "This refers to a prince who acts like one of you, like a Jew. But Herod does not even stem from the Jewish nation and certainly does not act like a Jew!"

To this Ben Buta replied, "But I am very much afraid of him."

Herod answered, "There are only the two of us here. There is no one to report to him what we are saying." But Ben Buta replied by quoting a verse from Koheleth, "Even the birds of the sky will carry the voice."

When he heard this reply, the king became angry, and blurted out "I am Herod! Had I known how careful the Torah Sages were in their speech and actions, as I have now seen, I would not have had them killed. But now that the deed has been done, what can I do to atone for it?"

Bava ben Buta answered him, "When you killed the Torah Sages, you extinguished the light of the world, as it says, 'For a mitzva is like a candle and the Torah is light.' Go now, and occupy yourself with the light of the world. Go, rebuild the Holy Temple anew in greater majesty and splendor, for it, too, illuminates the world, as it says, 'And all the gentiles shall stream to it.'"

In return for this act of piety, Herod would be able to attain some degree of atonement for his sins. When Herod heard this advice, he wanted to follow it, but was afraid of the reaction of the Roman Empire.

To this, Ben Buta answered, "Send a special messenger to Rome asking for permission. This messenger will travel for a year's time, will stay in Rome for another year, and will return only after a third year. In this time you can demolish the old building and rebuild it."

Herod accepted this suggestion, and proceeded with the project. Addressing his subjects, Herod promised to rebuild the Temple according to its original splendor which had been prevented before because of the domination of foreign kings. The people, however, were not happy with Herod's proposal. On the contrary,

they were frightened, fearing that Herod would demolish the existing structure and then never rebuild. Herod reassured them, promising that he would gather all the necessary building supplies before pulling down the existing Temple. True to his words, he collected a thousand wagons for transporting materials and recruited ten thousand skilled carpenters and craftsmen. Ninety thousand woodcutters and 30,000 stonecutters were employed. Fifteen hundred priests and Levites took part in the construction. In all, 181,500 men were employed in the rebuilding of the Holy Temple. [Josephus] All expenses were covered from the king's personal fortune. As Herod had promised, all preparations were firmly in place before he began the demolition.

It happened as Ben Buta had said. After three years the messenger returned with this reply, "If you have not demolished the old building yet, do not do so. If you have already demolished it, do not rebuild it. If, however, you have already done it, you are no better than any other willful slave who first does what he wants and then asks permission. You may flaunt your power, but we know what you are! You are neither a king nor the son of a king, but a lowly slave who freed himself!" But, by the time the reply was received, the work was under way and could not be reversed.

Construction continued for eight years. The newly rebuilt Holy Temple was completed in the year 3738 and stood for ninety years, until the ninth of Av, 3828.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

He has not beheld any wrong in Jacob, nor has he seen evil in Israel: The L-rd his G-d is with him, and the glory of the king dwells among him. (Num. 23:21)

Rabbi Yitzchak of Vorka used to say: It states in the holy Zohar that "The Holy One, Blessed Be He, the Torah and Israel are one." The same way one cannot pick G-d or His Torah apart by saying, "This particular verse of the Torah doesn't appeal to me," so too, should we approach our fellow Jew, treating him with respect and acknowledging his importance to the Jewish People as a whole."

What this people will do to your people in the end of days (Num. 24:14)

The Torah tells us that right before Moshiach's arrival there will be those who will want to turn "this people" into "your (Balak's) people"--for Jews to adopt the ways and practices of the non-Jewish nations. (Reb Bunim)

And now come, I pray you, and curse me this people (Num. 22:4)

It is interesting to note the language Balak used when he asked Bilaam to curse the Jewish people: "Curse me" he said, words which can also be interpreted to mean that he himself should be cursed, which is exactly what eventually happened. One must always think before speaking and pay attention to the words we use. (Shaloh Hakadosh)



8:05 Candle Lighting Time
 NY Metro Area
13 Tammuz / July 19
 Torah Portion Balak
 Ethics Ch 6
 Shabbat ends 9:10 pm

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