

# L'Chaim



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe  
on the Torah portion

This week we read two portions, Acharei and Kedoshim. In the portion of Kedoshim we find the mitzva (commandment) of making and keeping honest measuring tools.

This mitzva applies whether measuring weight, dry measure, or liquid. It is forbidden to make or have in your possession inaccurate measuring tools, even if you have no intention to use them. After this mitzva is commanded, G-d declares, "I Am G-d your G-d who took you out of Egypt." What is the connection, between honest weights and measures, and the exodus from Egypt?

Another question, why is it a sin to merely own them, even if you have no intention to use them?

Rashi explains that G-d took us out of Egypt so that we can be a paragon of honesty in business dealings. As well, just as G-d discerned in Egypt who is a first born and who is not; similarly He discerns if someone falsifies his weights or is dishonest in business. But there is a deeper reason. False weights and measures are the tools of the evil inclination.

The evil inclination doesn't tell you to steal or rob. You would never go for that. First he says, "What is so bad about owning false weights? You would never use them." Then he goes a step further. "What is the big deal about using them? They are just a drop inaccurate." And step by step he drags you down until he's made a thief out of you.

Owning false weights and measures are the first steps. It is the beginning of dishonesty, though no action was done with them. They represent ill intent and bad choices, the prelude to dishonesty. And this is where Egypt comes in. Though G-d decreed that the Jewish people would suffer by the hands of the Egyptians, each Egyptian had free choice to bring suffering upon or not to oppress the Jews.

The Jewish people would have been oppressed without their involvement. It was each individual Egyptian's bad choice or evil intent to heap suffering upon a Jew and that is why the Egyptian was ultimately punished by G-d. It all begins with ill intent and bad choices. After commanding us to use honest weights and measures, G-d declares, "I took you out of Egypt, the place of ill intentions and bad choices. I want you to be better than them.

I want you to be a beacon of goodness and honesty. That is why I took you out of Egypt." Honesty is the basis for the mitzvot and defines us as G-d's people. To dispel dishonesty, we need to first dispel ill intent and bad choices. Get rid of bad influences and temptations. You will find it liberating, like a weight removed from your shoulders.

Honesty in business and with your acquaintances, is how you influence them to want to be more like you and to follow in G-d's ways. Additionally, by connecting honesty with the exodus from Egypt, G-d gives us a clear indication that honesty is a prerequisite to bringing the future redemption.

May it come 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.

## We Are Needed

By Rabbi Lazer Gurkow

### WHAT ARE WE NEEDED FOR?

What are we needed for? A Chasid once poured out his heart to Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi about his many needs. The Rebbe replied, you told me everything you need, but you said not a word about what you are needed for.

We often ask for the things we need, but life is much happier, satisfying, and meaningful, when we ask what we are needed for.

If we view life as a brief chapter in an endless story starting from Creation, we realize our time here is purposeful. G-d, perfect and purposeful, created each of us with a mission. Our task is to find it by exploring the intersection of our talents, passions, and the needs around us. If we can't find it easily, we must seek harder—even beyond our immediate community.

### ESCAPISM IS NOT AN OPTION

In our Parsha we read of two very holy men who did not want to be tied down to this world and the divinely assigned purpose that they were needed for. These men were Nadab and Abihu, the first two priests anointed by G-d to serve in the Tabernacle. They rushed into the holy of holies, knowing that the punishment would be death. But for these holy souls, it was better to die with a glimpse of G-d, than to spend a lifetime in His service.

Holy though they were, they were wrong. They might have needed to see G-d, but that is not what they were needed for. It was not why G-d needed them. If that were all G-d wanted from them, He would not have dispatched their souls to earth in the first place. G-d was not pleased with this despite the sanctity of their aspirations.

### THE HEALTHY WAY

We can learn from this too. In life, there are many duties and obligations. Some of them are more stressful than others. When the stress grows too difficult to handle, many of us opt for our favorite form of escapism. Some find all manner of alternate things that need doing before being forced to do what they find stressful. The healthiest approach to the difficult tasks that life throws our way is to face them and embrace them no matter how difficult they are.

It might not feel like something we need. But it will be what we are needed for. In the end, doing what we are needed for is the healthier, better, holier, more meaningful, and more productive way to live. When we live for what we need, we run out of meaning quickly. When we feel needed, we feel important and meaningful. When our lives our meaningful, they are fulfilling and satisfying. This is the ultimate source of bliss.

# SLICE OF LIFE

## Growing Confidence



Rabbi Shabtai Slavaticki

I grew up in a religious home, very distant from Chabad. But while studying at Jerusalem's Kol Torah yeshivah in the 1960s, I began attending a secret class on chasidic thought, and as those teachings sank in, I started to get involved.

From time to time, I would visit the yeshivah in Kfar Chabad to take part in farbrengens led by the renowned chasidic mentor Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Kesselman. Those gatherings made a strong impression on me, as did the yeshivah students themselves, who showed such love for their fellow Jews, especially in the way they welcomed us guests from other yeshivot.

Eventually, I began thinking about transferring to the Chabad yeshivah in Kfar Chabad. Aghast, my father sent several rabbis to dissuade me, which made me doubt whether it was the right decision. I decided to ask the Rebbe.

I wrote a detailed letter recounting all of this, and in his response, the Rebbe circled the part where I mentioned my doubts and wrote: "Based on this – stay and do not change."

It was precisely those words that ultimately prompted me to transfer. I realized – contrary to what others had claimed – that the Rebbe wasn't bent on bringing people into Chabad at any cost. He actually cared and thought about me. If I had doubts, regardless of their origin or validity, he preferred that I not make the move. So I stayed, until eventually, I felt confident that transferring was right for me. When I wrote to the Rebbe to say that my doubts had disappeared, I received his blessing to go to Kfar Chabad.

A few years later, I went to study in the Rebbe's presence, in New York. I arrived in 770 one afternoon before Passover of 1973, shortly before the Mincha

prayers. A few months earlier, my mother had passed away following a severe illness. Although someone in his year of mourning traditionally leads the prayers, because I suffered from a severe stutter, I sufficed with reciting the Kaddish; reading along with others helped ease my impediment.

Still, as I prepared for that first Mincha with the Rebbe, I felt terrible about being unable to lead the prayers. So, not wanting the Rebbe to notice, I stood in the northwest corner of the synagogue; he generally faced the other direction after the prayers, or so I was told.

As I lifted my eyes up after reciting the final Kaddish, I saw the Rebbe looking at me. I immediately lowered my gaze, waited a few seconds, and looked up again. But the Rebbe was still looking straight at me, with a gaze I will remember all my life. Finally, he gave me a slight nod and turned to go. "Welcome," he seemed to be saying. "I understand, and you don't have to feel bad. I'm with you."

When I had the honor of a private audience with the Rebbe later that year, on the occasion of my twenty-third birthday, I prepared a long letter in advance, listing all of my questions and issues – among them my stutter, which bothered me deeply. When, late at night, I finally entered his room, the Rebbe quickly leafed through the pages of my letter, before responding in detail to each question, in order, without looking at it again.

Regarding my stutter, the Rebbe gave me two suggestions: First, to strengthen my trust in G-d. As I understand it, this doesn't just mean having faith, but recognizing that if I have some deficiency, it's because G-d wants me to discover a new, inner strength that will compensate for it.

Secondly, if I ever get stuck on a particular word, rather than trying to force it out, I should choose a different word – express myself in a different way. I took this as a life lesson: When we run into some obstacle, rather than trying the same method again and again, we should look for a new path to reach our goal.

Another question I asked was about my shlichut, my mission in life. If it was going to be Jewish outreach, I felt that I needed to be learning now about how to be a positive influence on others and how to present the fundamentals of Judaism.

"Right now you are a yeshivah student," replied the Rebbe. "Your mission now is to study Torah diligently, and to engage in heartfelt prayer." In other words, you must live in the present. Thinking about the future will only distract you from your current mission. When the time comes, you'll see what your life mission is.

Over time, my father – despite his previous opposition to Chabad – saw that I was continuing to study Torah

seriously, and he began to draw closer to the Rebbe himself. While I was in New York, he even came for a private audience.

During the audience, my father asked for a blessing to marry off his two children: myself, and my sister who was about ten years older than me and still unmarried. The Rebbe looked him in the eye and said, "She will marry. He will marry. But you need to worry now that you will marry." That is, he strongly encouraged my father to remarry, following the passing of my mother.

At the time, the Rebbe didn't think I needed to get married just yet. "What do you want from him?" he asked my father. "He is busy learning Torah!" But in time, I did get married, and so did my sister. My father, however, didn't appreciate the Rebbe's advice. "I should get married?" he wondered after the meeting. "My children should!"

Years later, when he saw how hard being alone could be, he remarked to me: "Now I understand what the Rebbe told me."

In that same audience, the Rebbe also urged my father to increase the time he set aside for Torah study. My father objected. He already had a regular study session in the morning and another one straight after work. "I don't have time for more!"

Now, my father happened to be a very talented food chemist, with several patents to his name, and although he never mentioned this in that audience, the Rebbe responded with an analogy from chemistry.

"Every chemist knows," the Rebbe said, "that even a tiny addition to a mixture can significantly change the entire composition. The same applies in spirituality. Going beyond your habit and your nature by adding even a little extra Torah study has the power to influence your whole day."

When the Rebbe gave me the advice about my stutter, I followed it, and although it helped somewhat, it did not change me or resolve the issue. As the Rebbe understood, stuttering is generally not a physical issue, but a psychological or an emotional one; it's in your head, a result of looking at yourself a certain way.

But the Rebbe continuously encouraged me to go beyond my limits, as a yeshivah student, when I became a Chabad emissary in Antwerp, Belgium – after I got married – and later on as well.

Initially, our work in Antwerp was very challenging, but in time, things opened up. I began to work on the problem with my speech, and thank G-d, today I have no difficulty speaking or giving classes – things I hadn't dreamed of before. We understood that we had to believe in ourselves and our abilities – just as the Rebbe believed in us.

*Rabbi Shabtai Slavaticki has served as a Chabad emissary in Antwerp, Belgium, since 1977. He was interviewed in the My Encounter studio in July 2018.*



## Colel Chabad Holds Grand Bar Mitzvah for 123 Orphans at the Kosel

Throughout the war, now entering its 18th month, hundreds of Israeli homes have joined the tragic ranks as bereaved families, and thousands of children will grow up without the support of fathers who fell in battle.

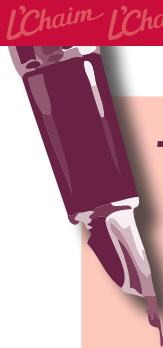
This reality made the annual Colel Chabad bar mitzvah commemoration for orphaned boys that much more emotional this year, as 123 boys—all of whom had lost at least one parent—came to the Western Wall to celebrate the momentous occasion.

Rabbi Sholom Duchman, director of Colel Chabad, said that while this event has been taking place for more than 34 years, Israel's current challenges reinforced the importance of finding joy amid tragedy.

## What is Pesach Sheni?

The 14th of Iyar is Pesach Sheni, the Second Passover. When the Holy Temple stood in Jerusalem, all those who weren't capable of offering the paschal lamb in its proper time on the 14th of the Hebrew month of Nisan (due to impurity or distance), would offer the Paschal Lamb exactly one month later, on the 14th of Iyar. It is customary to eat matza on the day of Pesach Sheni. There are also those who partake of matza on the evening following Pesach Sheni





# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Freely translated

Erev Shabbos Kodesh  
Rosh Chodesh Iyar, 5735 [1975]

20th Annual Convention  
National Council of Neshei U'Bnos Chabad (Lubavitch Women's Organization)

On the occasion of the forthcoming convention, taking place on the weekend of Pesach Sheni [the "second" Passover], I send greetings and prayerful wishes that the Convention should, with G-d's help, be crowned with hatzlocho [success] in the fullest measure. One of the teachings of Pesach-Sheni - as my father-in-law of saintly memory pointed out - is that in matters of Yiddishkeit [Judaism] one should never give up, and it is never too late to rectify a past failing.

This principle has also been one of the basic factors in the work of the Rebbe's Nesiim [leaders] since the beginning of Chabad, who dedicated themselves with utmost mesiras-nefesh [self-sacrifice] to bring Jews closer to Torah and mitzvoth [commandments], regardless of their level of Yiddishkeit, and not to give up a single Jew. The task of bringing Jews closer to Yiddishkeit is especially relevant to women, for it obviously requires a special approach in terms of compassion, loving-kindness, gentleness, and the like - qualities with which women are generally endowed in a larger measure than men, although all Jews without exception are characterized as rachmonim and gomlei-chasodim, compassionate and

practicing lovingkindness.

The theme of the Convention, "Bringing Light Into the World - The Obligation and Privilege of Every Jewish Daughter," is especially fitting in many ways, including this detail in light that it illuminate its environs regardless of the state of things, all of which are equally illuminated, and in a benign and friendly manner. This is the way Torah-Or [TorahLight] illuminates every Jew in every respect, as it is written, "Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace."

May G-d grant that the convention be carried through with hatzlocho, and should inspire each and all the participants to carry on their vital work in a manner full of light and vitality, and in an ever-growing measure...



16 Iyar 5711 [1951]

Blessing and Greeting:

I was pleased with the opportunity to exchange a few words with you. As you connected your visit with the day of Pesach-sheni which we observed on the day before yesterday, I want to make it the subject of this letter. One of the significant lessons of Pesach sheni is never to despair even when one has not attained the spiritual heights of others.

Thus, while all the people are celebrating the Passover at its proper time, and one finds himself "far away," or otherwise unfit to enter the Sanctuary, he is told: do not despair; begin your way towards the Sanctuary; come closer and closer; for you have a special chance and opportunity to celebrate the Second Passover, if you try hard enough. Please convey my regards and best wishes to your circle.

Cordially,

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Currently, we connect to G-d volitionally: in thought, speech and action we attempt to fulfill G-d's commands. In the times of

Moshiach, the connection will be innate and automatic: as a matter of course we will be aware of and fulfill G-d's Will, because the mitzvot (commandments) will express not just the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people, but their unified essence.

## A WORD

### FROM THE DIRECTOR

In Memory of Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman, Director of the Lubavitch Youth Organization and Founder of the L'Chaim Publication.

#### From the Archives

*The Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn, wrote: "The theme of Pesach Sheni is that it is never too late! It is always possible to put things right. Even if one was ritually impure, or far away, and even in a case when this impurity or distance was deliberate - nonetheless it can be corrected." Monday, May 12 this year is Pesach Sheni.*

*It's never too late! We can always make up for a past misdeed, omission or failing through sincere desire and making amends. It's never too late! What an inspiring and optimistic thought! There's always a chance to improve, to become better, to learn and do.*

*This is truly a motto worth memorizing (and hanging on the refrigerator). Rather than muttering about yourself or another person, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks," realize that it's never too late. You didn't put on tefilin yesterday? Today's a new day and it's never too late. You didn't light candles for Shabbat last Friday night? Do it this week; it's never too late. You never went to Hebrew school, so you can't read Hebrew? Enroll in an adult education course; it's never too late. You haven't yet enrolled your own children in Hebrew school (or Jewish summer camp)? Do it now, it's never too late. You never knew that Judaism had so much to offer? Now that you know, do something about it, because it's never too late!*

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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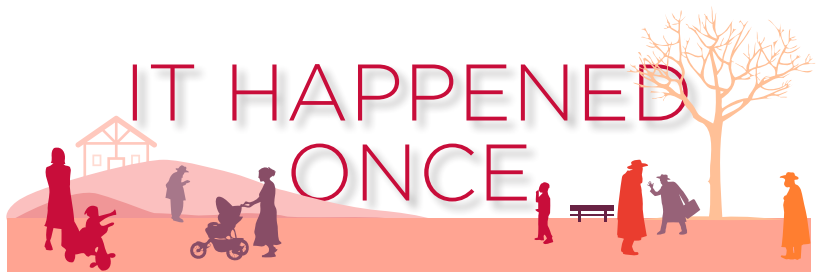
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# IT HAPPENED ONCE

Rabbi Peretz Chein was a great Torah scholar and a Chasid of Rabbi Dov Ber Shneuri, the second Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch known as the Mittlerer Rebbe. Reb Peretz was sent by the Mittlerer Rebbe to be the rabbi in the city of Beshenkowitz. Reb Peretz was very uneasy about taking on the position in Beshenkowitz; a man by the name of Reb Aharon had caused grief to all the previous Chasidic rabbis of the town.

Reb Aharon was a great scholar in his own right and was vehemently opposed to Chasidism. He used his genius to confound the rabbis and ultimately to get rid of them. Reb Aharon's way of operating was as follows: He would present all manner of difficult questions to the rabbi upon his arrival in Beshenkowitz. After the rabbi would render his decision, Reb Aharon and his friends would present a strong case for an opposing position. If at any time, a rabbi conceded that he had erred, he was ridiculed by Reb Aharon and his cronies until he left the town in disgrace.

Therefore, when the Mittlerer Rebbe assigned Rabbi Peretz to become the rabbi of this town, it was no wonder that the latter was nervous. He told the Rebbe his concerns, saying that under the circumstances he did not think he could go there. The Rebbe told him that "they had approved of this in Heaven," but Rabbi Peretz was still apprehensive. The Rebbe finally told him to go there, "oif meina pleitzes" (on my shoulders). Hearing this, Rabbi Peretz rejoiced and said, "Rebbe, I'm going! If it's on the Rebbe's shoulders, I have nothing to fear."

Rabbi Peretz arrived at Beshenkowitz and began leading the town as its rabbi. Reb Aharon, of course, began sending all sorts of questions his way through his various emissaries, but Rabbi Peretz always managed to prove the validity of his legal decisions. Reb Aharon once sent him a particularly complicated question. Rabbi Peretz scrutinized the item in question and pronounced it kosher. Reb Aharon immediately galvanized his friends into action. They attacked the rabbi's decision with strong, convincing proofs.

Rabbi Peretz worked arduously to justify his position. At the height of the debate, the antagonists repeatedly demanded, "What's your source? From where did you derive your decision?" Finally, Rabbi Peretz pointed towards a packed bookcase and said, "From there." Rabbi Peretz had meant that, in general, his decision had been based on the holy books housed in the bookcase, but evidently one of his opponents understood him to be referring to a particular book.

So he took the book out and opened it up to see what it said. Lo and behold, this was a book of Jewish legal responsa, and by an incredible instance of Divine Providence, the place he opened to was precisely the topic they were discussing! There the author referred to the sources the antagonists were quoting in attempt to disprove Rabbi Peretz, and

it went on to explain how each point was taken out of context. In the book of responsa, the final ruling was in accordance with the opinion that had been derived by Rabbi Peretz. When Reb Aharon and his cohorts saw the proof in black and white with their very eyes, they meekly left the house.

From then on, they no longer persecuted Rabbi Peretz. "That's when I saw," said Rabbi Peretz afterwards, "that the Rebbe had indeed taken me on his holy shoulders."

**THOUGHTS THAT COUNT**  
on the weekly Torah portion

**Akavya ben Mehalel said: "Reflect upon three things and you will not come near sin: Know from where you came, and to where you are going, and before whom you are destined to give an accounting..." (Ethics 3:1)**

Reflect upon three things - all three together. If you reflect on only one, or some of them, not only will they be ineffective, but such a meditation could even cause harm. If you reflect only on the first, you will come to the conclusion that you are not to blame for anything. If you reflect only on where you are going you might mistakenly believe that there is no ultimate judgment and accounting. Therefore, we are told to also reflect on "before Whom you are destined to give an accounting." All three aspects of this mediation are dependent upon each other. (*Midrash Shmuel*)

**This Mishna teaches a person that he must have three entities in mind and when he does so, he "will not come to sin." Generally, a person thinks about two entities, himself and G-d, for "I was created solely to serve my Creator." We must be aware of a third entity, the world at large. The world was created by G-d for a Jew to use in service of Him, i.e., that a Jew should refine his body and his soul, and spread refinement in the world at large, transforming it into a dwelling for G-d.**

(*The Lubavitcher Rebbe, 13 Iyar, 5751 1991*)

**Rabbi Shimon said: "... three who ate at one table and did speak words of Torah there, it is as if they had eaten from the table of G-d..." (Ethics 3:3)**

Three together can recite "let us bless," the opening phrase of the zimun, and in this way they form a "pool" of blessing so that each person partaking of the meal can draw off water according to his needs. But this must be preceded by words of Torah which enable them to form this pool of blessing. (*Tzemach Tzedek's Or HaTorah*)

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