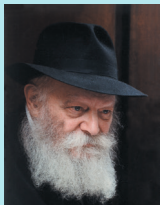


L'Chaim

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson

"May there be peace in your wall, tranquility in your palaces" (Psalm 122:6)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

In the beginning of the Torah portion of Tazria we find the commandment "and on the eighth day shall the flesh of his foreskin be circumcised." Hundreds of years before this commandment was given to the Jewish nation, Abraham was instructed to circumcise himself "and your seed after you, for generations." Yet, Jewish boys are circumcised from the command in this week's Torah portion, and not because of our forefather Abraham.

The command given to Abraham to circumcise himself was a commandment given to an individual and revealed by G-d through prophecy. The mitzva of brit mila in this week's portion is one of the 613 commandments of the Torah which were given to the entire Jewish People at Mount Sinai, to which every single Jew was witness.

Chasidic philosophy explains that a Jew's G-dly soul enters the physical body upon performance of the brit. Before the brit mila, the joining of the spiritual, G-dly soul and the corporeal body was incomplete; brit mila effects a linking and union between the two. This is why, according to many of our Sages, only after brit mila does a Jew have a share in the World to Come.

The word "brit" means "covenant," for indeed it is a sign of the Covenant between G-d and the Jewish People. So great is this bond that it finds expression in the very physical flesh of a Jew, testimony to the depth of his relationship and commitment.

Brit mila is unique in the sense that it is a perpetual mitzva. The Talmud relates that once while King David was visiting a bathhouse, he suddenly grew despondent, concerned that he was also "unclothed without mitzvot" before his Creator. But after he reminded himself of the sign of brit mila engraved in his flesh he was reassured that he was not without merit for even one moment.

An additional advantage brit mila has over other commandments is the fact that it involves the physical body. Other mitzvot, even if they necessitate the use of various limbs of the body to carry them out, are primarily concerned with matters pertaining to the soul. The mitzva of mila is so great that it effects a change even in the physical realm, which the human eye can witness as testimony to the sacred bond between G-d and the Jewish people.

This explanation also sheds light on why a baby is circumcised before he can even comprehend the significance of the act. Performed on the physical body, the mitzva of mila effects a bond even greater than intellectual comprehension can grasp; in this respect, infant and adult are equal. The circumcision is therefore performed on the earliest possible date, the eighth day of life.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Four Steps to Freedom

By Simon Jacobson

When the Torah relates the story of the exodus of Egypt and how G-d told Moses that He will redeem the Jewish people from Egypt, G-d uses four terms for the word redemption, corresponding to the four cups of wine at the Passover Seder and the four stages of the Exodus (Exodus 6:6-7):

The different terms for redemption refer to:

1. First, the end of the 210 year oppressive bondage – "I will take you out from the suffering of Egypt."
2. The end of hard labor, six months before the Jews actually left Egypt – "I will deliver you from their bondage."
3. Physically leaving Egypt and the elimination of the Egyptian enemy – "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm."
4. The Jewish people become a free nation, driven by a higher mission – "I will take you to Myself as a nation, and I will be to you a G-d."

Mitzrayim (the Hebrew word for Egypt) means constraints. The redemption from Mitzrayim gives us the power to achieve freedom from all our constraints.

For us as well, four steps are necessary to achieve freedom from limitations in our lives, which correspond to the four above-mentioned terms and the four levels of the human soul.

1. "I will take you out from the suffering of Egypt." First you must get out of the line of fire. As long as you remain in range of a force that is hurting you, you cannot begin the journey toward freedom.

This step is the hardest because after years of pain you can become so resigned to oppression that it is hard to even acknowledge that there is an "enemy".

2. "I will deliver you from their bondage." Even after their hard labor ended the Jewish people needed to be delivered from the psychological hold of being a "slave" for so long.
3. "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments." Finally you get out of "prison," but the enemy is still lurking. At this stage you need an "outstretched arm" to embrace you, reassuring you that you will be safe.
4. "I will take you to Myself as a nation, and I will be to you a G-d." Freedom is not merely the absence of slavery – escaping the negative. Ultimate freedom is to discover your Divine calling and serve it with all your faculties and resources.



At the Seder Table we pour a fifth cup for Elijah the Prophet, corresponding to the fifth expression: "I shall bring you to the land."

After we are freed from our own personal constraints, corresponding to the four levels of the soul, the fifth dimension emerges – which is the Essential level of the Divine, with the coming of Moshiach and the final redemption, announced by Elijah the Prophet.

This fifth level only surfaces after we travel through the first four phases.

SLICE OF LIFE

How a Jewish Publisher Got Its Own ZIP Code



Expansion promises new horizons for largest Jewish publisher with thousands of active titles

A Jewish publisher receiving its very own ZIP code is a story in itself. Considering the publisher's trajectory from a small post-Holocaust operation makes the story even more remarkable.

The publisher is Kehot Publication Society, the official publishing division of Chabad-Lubavitch. Founded in 1941 by the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson, it originally published only several titles per year in Hebrew, Yiddish, and English. Today, Kehot boasts an active catalog of over 2,750 titles in eight languages, distributed across the globe.

Here is the story of how that happened.

THE START OF A TRANSFORMATION

In 1940, when the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe arrived in New York, admirers explained that passionate, proactive Jewish life was for the old country. Here in "the Golden Country," bare ritual observance sufficed, and even that was in decline.

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak remained convinced that by sharing the "Torah of the heart," a Jewish soul in America could soar to the heights of any in history. As one of his early activities, he founded Kehot to publish prayer books, curricula, and Chassidic teachings in a language that American Jews understood and felt.

In 1942, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok appointed his son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson

– who became the seventh Rebbe in 1951 – as director and editor-in-chief. Over the following years, the future Rebbe invested countless hours to publish an ever-expanding list of titles.

FROM THE BASICS TO THE MOST PROFOUND

In the early years of Kehot, the Rebbe spearheaded the publication of Jewish essentials, which were so desperately needed in the aftermath of the destruction of Jewish life in Europe. These included prayer books, holiday literature in French and in English, educational literature for children, and fundamental works of Halacha – Jewish law and Chassidic philosophy and mysticism.

The Rebbe also initiated mammoth projects to print and distribute previously unpublished works of the Rebbes of Chabad. Up until that point, most of the teachings authored by the Rebbes had remained in manuscript form, with a select few informally published by mimeograph and even fewer typeset and published in an organized fashion.

Under the leadership of the seventh Rebbe, a team of scholars studied the voluminous manuscripts of each Rebbe and published the priceless teachings contained within. Slowly but surely, a full catalog of each Rebbe was published, from the 35-plus titles of the first Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, to the hundreds of titles by the seventh Rebbe, in our generation.

In addition to the titles in their original Hebrew and Yiddish, Kehot strives to make these teachings as accessible as possible, with English translations and titles. Thanks to their efforts, the English reader now has access to a wide range of titles, ranging from halachic works to esoteric Chassidic teachings.

WORLDWIDE REACH

In addition to publishing and maintaining the catalogs of seven Chabad Rebbes, Kehot also works closely with Chabad centers across the world to maintain their libraries of prayer books and Chumashim, as well as provide them with their vast corpus of Jewish literature.

Before each holiday, Kehot supplies the Chabad centers in over 100 countries with books and publications for the upcoming occasion. Before the High Holy Days, many thousands

of machzorim – High Holiday prayer books are printed and shipped. Before Purim, it is various editions of Megilat Esther – the biblical text which retells the story of the holiday. And before Pesach, Haggadahs in no less than eight languages allow Passover Seders to run smoothly wherever they are located on the map. As soon as each holiday concludes, Kehot immediately begins preparing for the coming year, ensuring they have enough of the relevant titles for each date on the calendar.

With branches in Israel, France, Argentina, and other locations, Kehot also features a growing library of titles in Spanish, French, Italian, Russian, Portuguese, Dutch, German. There are even a select number of Kehot titles that were published in Farsi and Arabic, for the Jewish communities of the Middle East.

100,000 SQUARE FEET OF JEWISH BOOKS

As the number of Kehot's offerings grew, so did their need for more space. Headquartered in Brooklyn, NY, where each inch comes at a premium, Kehot was limited to what they could keep in stock. Third-party warehouses and their current 16,000-square-foot were hardly enough to store the 150,000 books printed per year.

"We are at capacity," Rabbi Mendel Laine, director of sales at Kehot, told Chabad.org for an article about the publishing house. "Up until this point, we've sometimes had to limit our orders when we go to print based on purely physical constraints."

To allow them to continue their unprecedented growth, Kehot purchased a 100,000-square-foot facility in Scranton, PA, in collaboration with Lahak Hanachos, which translates and publishes the talks of the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe.

The new facility once housed an online high school that was the largest high school by enrollment in the United States. The school once sent and received so much mail that it received its own ZIP code, which remains to this day. With the purchase of the building by Kehot, the publishing house becomes the first Jewish publisher to have their own ZIP code.

"Our growth in recent years made this move absolutely necessary," said Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman, director of Kehot. "We're not just relocating; we're setting the stage for the next phase of growth in Jewish publishing."

Despite War, Kyiv Community Inaugurated a Stunning Mikvah



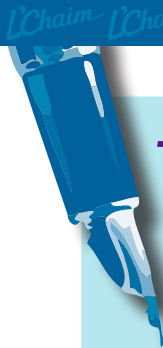
Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, has been home to a significant Jewish presence for hundreds of years. But the "Left Bank," across the Dnipro River from the historic center, was only developed in the latter half of the 20th century, during the Communist era.

This means that it has never had a mikvah of its own. "Recently, we were privileged to inaugurate the mikvah with 150 of our women in attendance and, for the first time in history, the Left Bank has a mikvah of its own," explained Mrs. Devorah Levenharts, who together with her husband Rabbi Motti, serve as Shluchim to Kyiv, and have built a thriving Jewish community. Dozens of Jewish women got to see a mikvah with their own eyes, and they were awed by its elegance and beauty. The Levenharts thanked G-d for being able to reach this incredible milestone and thanked the Rebbe, whose vision and inspiration brought them to Kyiv. They are deeply grateful to their community and supporters who have stuck with them through thick and thin.

What's New

Buy One Today!

The very last commandment in the Torah is for one to write a Torah scroll for him/herself. The Lubavitcher Rebbe highlighted this mitzva when he established the Sefer Torah Campaign over 30 years ago. For a nominal fee, one can "purchase" letters in a Torah scroll, thereby connecting with millions of Jews around the world. To date, over 6 million Jewish men, women and children have participated in this mitzva. For the special Children's Sefer Torah visit www.KidsTorah.org or call Tzivos Hashem at (718) 467-6630. Call your local Chabad-Lubavitch Center to find out how adults can participate in this special mitzva.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Excerpts From a Pre-Passover Letter

To the Sons and Daughters of Our People Israel, Everywhere — G-d bless you all!

Greeting and Blessing:

The central point of the Geulo (redemption) from Mitzrayim — (as G-d indicated to Mosheh Rabbeinu) “When you will lead the people out of Egypt...” is, of course, “...you will serve G-d on this mountain”: to receive the Torah from Sinai, study it and observe its Mitzvos in actual practice, for “the essential thing is the deed”, and to do all this in complete freedom.

At the same time, each Torah-related action has an impact on the mental and emotional faculties of the person learning Torah and doing Mitzvos, refining him or her both in intellect and character, as the Rambam — the Guide of the Perplexed of his generation and of all subsequent generations — emphasizes in many places.

Needless to say, since each and all of the Mitzvos have been given by G-d, who is Ein-sof (Infinite), so are the teachings and effects of every Mitzva and Torah-aspect infinite in scope and dimension. And the more comprehensive and all-embracing is the Mitzva, the deeper, wider, and more variegated are the aspects stemming from it.

In addition to the teachings of the Mitzva itself, there is also the instruction that can be derived from the kevius-occurrence — of the Mitzva as it becomes due on a particular day of the week, which varies from year to year. And while the general message always remains in force, the particular occurrence of the Mitzva in point of time underscores specific aspects of the Mitzva even more pointedly and emphatically.

If the above pertains to every Mitzva and aspect of Torah, how much more so in regard to such an all-embracing event as Yetzias-Mitzrayim, which we are obligated to remember and to mention every day, twice daily, in our prayers, and in a particularly

pronounced way during the days of Pesach so as to permeate thereafter every day of the year.



In light of the above we take special note of the fact that this year Pesach is ushered in, i.e. the kevius of the first day of Pesach, as well as of Rosh Chodesh, the first day of the Month of Geulo, is on the third day of the week, the day which the Creator blessed twice with “good” tov lashomayim v'tov labriyos, “Good to Heaven and good to the creatures.” Hence, this year’s Pesach, the Festival of Our Freedom, in addition to all its other teachings, prominently conveys the instruction that we ought to put in an extra measure of vitality and effort in both areas of Divine service, namely, “between man and G-d” and “between man and man” in our everyday life throughout the year.

One of the inner aspects of being “good to Heaven and good to the creatures” is that it is the most effective medium of unity between two extreme opposites: the Creator (“Heaven”) and the created (“creatures”), as well as between the creatures themselves, where each individual has his own will and his own interests; but being good to each other brings about peace and unity between them, in the fullest sense of shalom, namely, that both sides gain a measure of completeness (shleimus).

It follows from the above that what has been said about being “good to Heaven and good to creatures” means that these do not remain two distinct concepts, but they become (like) one and the same — as the Alter Rebbe taught that v’ohavto Ire’acho komoicho (“love your fellow like yourself”) is a “vessel” to v’ohavto es Hashem elokecho (“love G-d, your G-d”).

Even where it appears at first glance that it is merely a matter of tov lashomayim, yet since it stems from v’ohavto es Hashem elokecho, it must express itself in the fulfillment of His Mitzvos with true enthusiasm, including, especially, the “Great Principle” of the Torah, v’ohavto Ire’acho komoicho — tov labriyos.

And conversely, inasmuch as the Mitzvos refine the person, his character, intellect and dispositions, as mentioned above, they are the instruments whereby to achieve the highest degree of loving G-d “with all your heart, and will all your soul, and with all your might” — tov lashomavim, because the refined soul-powers become attuned and drawn to spirituality and G-dliness.

cosm of “the era that is all Shabbat and rest for eternity” and the thee Shabbat meals are a reflection of the feast to be served on that day.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Have you started getting ready for Passover yet? After all, in a week from this coming Monday night, the festival of Passover begins.

In the Mishna, two different opinions of our Sages are stated as to how much before Passover one must begin one’s preparations for the holiday.

According to one opinion, we study and inquire about the laws of Passover a full 30 days before the holiday. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says that one begins two weeks before the holiday.”

Although the halacha (Jewish legal ruling) was decided according to the former opinion, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel’s view is also significant as our Sages teach, “These and these are the words of the living G-d.”

Interestingly, it is actually possible to fulfill both opinions. To explain: One should start preparing by reviewing the laws of Passover 30 days before the holiday. As the holiday approaches, however, one should reassess one’s situation and increase both the quality and the quantity of one’s preparations.

Just as we must make an effort to prepare for Passover, we must also make efforts to provide others with their Passover needs, giving “maot chittim,” the special charity associated with Passover. Here too, even if one gave 30 days before Passover, as the Passover holiday grows nearer, one must reassess and increase his donations.

As G-d sees the extent of one’s generosity, He will provide one with more blessings. A person who gives without reservations and limitations, will likewise receive Divine blessings that know no bounds.

Shmuel Butman

L’ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה י מושקא

The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.



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MOSHIACH MATTERS

Every Shabbat (Sabbath) is a micro-





IT HAPPENED ONCE

Three men, all prisoners, could think of nothing but the imminent festival of Passover. As thousands of Jews—including their own relatives—were being sent to their deaths on a daily basis, Yaakov Friedman, Moshe Goldstein, and Rabbi Yekusiel Halberstam (the Klausenburger Rebbe) had the bravery and presence of mind to secure matzah for Passover 1945.

Here is Moshe Goldstein’s account of the amazing turn of events that afforded them the ability to observe the Festival of Freedom amidst abysmal suffering and death:

In the days preceding Passover, the war was nearing its end. The relentless droning of American aircraft filled the German skies, followed by the whistling hail of bombs that pounded the Mühldorf railway complex into rubble.

Spared of destruction were the nearby forced labor camps where we toiled under the harshest conditions. We prisoners celebrated this mighty display of Allied destruction, but the anxiety of our German overseers ran high. The railway was vital to the war efforts, and orders were issued to immediately repair the damage. The Germans decided to send a group of 12 Jewish slaves to begin the cleanup.

I volunteered to go. I knew the work would be excruciating but I hoped that perhaps I would find some food amidst the rubble.

We arrived at a scene of utter devastation. Freight cars lay on their sides, smoke rising from gaping holes. Stretches of railing were ripped off the ground and tossed aside in twisted heaps. Nearly every building suffered extensive damage. It was clear some of the cars were unrepairable.

I managed to disappear between the rows of trains that were still upright. It took a while, but I eventually found a boxcar from Hungary loaded with wheat in burlap sacks. Wheat! And so close to Pesach! G-d had granted us a good start, but how could I possibly smuggle the wheat into the camp?

A faint groan from amid the wheat sacks caught my attention. There, in a dark corner of the boxcar, lay a man, crushed by the enormous weight of the grain. The man mumbled something more, which I recognized as Hungarian, my native tongue. I saw he wore the gray uniform of an SS officer.

“What happened?” I asked. The SS officer moaned weakly about being pinned under the sacks. “I understand. Let me help you.”

As I approached, I noticed the officer’s boots, deep black in color and luxurious in appearance. On my own were bits of tattered leather, barely held together.

“I’m going to take off your shoes,” I said. “That way, you’ll feel less restrained, and then we’ll see what we can do.”

Once I had undone the laces, I slipped the heavy boots off. Then, wielding whatever strength and hate I could muster, I swung at the man’s head. I took the boots and continued my search.

I knew I did not have much time and I needed to think of a way to bring in as much wheat as possible without the guards knowing. Lugging the sacks through the main gates didn’t even occur to me; the wheat would be confiscated and I would be shot without a second thought.

I rummaged around some more, and discovered two pairs of pants. I put them on and cinched the bottoms around my ankles with some rope. I was then able to pour a small quantity of wheat into the space between the two pairs of pants. Once my legs were filled with as much wheat as I dared carry, I began the long walk back to the camp.

The bombings left the Germans rattled and fearful, and for the initial days following the air raid, the inspection of prisoners at camp gates was enforced almost half-heartedly. I was thus able to smuggle in a fairly large amount of wheat. We had wheat, but now what?

Reb Sender Direnfeld, a fellow inmate and a Belzer Chassid, offered to hide the wheat, and amazingly, he managed to keep it away from prying German eyes.

Later, an old mill was procured from somewhere. We ground the wheat in the dead of night, and using a clean piece of cloth, sifted the flour from grit. Next we needed fuel for a fire.

During one stint in the field, I asked everyone to find a stick and carry it back to the camp. The branches were conspicuous and caught the attention of a German guard. He motioned me over.

“Why is everyone with a stick?” “What difference does it make?” People want to walk around with a stick,” I answered.

We had flour and we had fuel. We were ready to bake matzah.

One night just before Passover, we set about baking matzah. Near the barrack door stood a prisoner, standing guard with fearful eyes.

We lit a fire under a metal can which functioned as our oven, and the Matzah baking—under Nazi noses—began. The Rebbe, Reb Yaakov, and I mixed the flour and kneaded the dough. We worked quickly, not only because of the strict 18-minute limit, but also because of the ever-present danger of being caught. We ended up with 20 small matzahs.

On Pesach eve, after returning from work, our small group sat down for the Seder. On wooden slats around us lay sleeping bodies, exhausted from the relentless work. For those celebrating, the hardships of the Holocaust and daily camp life melted away as we experienced the Biblical redemption from Egypt. Unable to sit for long, we each ate an olive-sized piece of matzah, the taste of tears mingling with the matzah crumbs in our mouths.

We could not sit leisurely and recite the Haggadah, but in those moments we each prayed—more fervently than ever before or ever since—the words that still ring in my ears: “Next year in Jerusalem.”

Adapted from Yaakov Friedman’s memoirs, Tiferet Yaakov (Hebrew), written by his son-in-law, Rabbi Sholom Horowitz.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

When a woman conceives and gives birth... (Lev. 12:2)
 This Torah portion is immediately preceded by the words “to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten,” to teach that keeping kosher has a direct effect upon the spirituality of future generations. (Nachmanides)

And on the eighth day shall he be circumcised (Lev. 12:3)
 The Midrash says: “How great is the Sabbath day, that a baby is not circumcised until he has passed one Shabbat.” A circumcision (brit mila) is performed on the eighth day of the baby’s life, insuring that he will have passed at least one Shabbat. The Shabbat itself makes the child holy, and prepares him for the holiness of the mitzva of brit mila. (Yalkut Yehuda)

At a brit mila we say, “Just as he has entered into the Covenant so may he enter into Torah, into marriage and into good deeds.” It is a Chabad Chasidic custom to make an advance payment on the tuition fees for the child’s Jewish education at this time. (Hayom Yom)

Dedicated in honor of a dear friend
of the Lubavitch Youth Organization
Mr. Victor Braha
Wishing you a Kosher and Happy Passover



7:15 Candle Lighting Time
 NY Metro Area
4 Nissan / April 12
 Torah Portion *Tazria*
 Shabbat ends **8:16 pm**