



Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev was justly known far and wide for the tremendous hospitality he extended. In his endless kindness, he would take anyone into his home; a poor man felt just as welcome and was honored in the same way as a wealthy man. Whoever crossed Rabbi Levi Yitzchak’s threshold left satisfied in body and in spirit. In that town, however, there was a wealthy man whose ways deviated completely from the Rabbi’s. He had no time for the common people.

On the contrary, he would accept only the famous or wealthy as house guests. When word came to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak about the rich man’s conduct he was horrified, and he set out to remedy his character flaw. When the next Shabbat arrived Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was prepared to deliver his customary sermon, but this time it was pointedly directed to one particular member of his congregation.

The rabbi began: “As is well known, it is a basic tradition that our ancestor Abraham was very hospitable, a trait that has been greatly praised and has been ingrained in the character of the Jewish people in his merit. But wasn’t his nephew Lot also hospitable?

Why then is all the credit given to Abraham? The answer is that there was a tremendous difference in the kind of hospitality each of them demonstrated. Lot would allow only angels into his home; simple folk were refused. Abraham, however, led any person to his table with acceptance and even honor. In this merit Abraham earned his reputation and set the example we still follow today.” *** During the time when Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was serving as rabbi in Pinsk, Reb Shlomo Karliner, a disciple of the Maggid, lived nearby.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak sent a messenger requesting Reb Shlomo to come to him. The two tzadikim sat for many hours looking intently at each other, but saying nothing at all. After hours had passed, they began laughing out loud. Then, suddenly, Reb Shlomo stood up and took his leave. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak’s aide had been watching the whole time and was completely baffled. Finally he asked the rabbi to explain. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak replied:

“For some time I have known that the Jews of our province have been under the threat of a terrible decree. I had discovered that the great nobles of the region were about to meet in order to confirm this edict. I tried my hardest to bring all their plans to nothing, but to no avail. One day I prayed with such extreme fervor begging G-d to crush the evil plan, that I felt my soul almost depart from my body. But, try as I might, I received no answer to my prayers.

I then received a message from G-d that if Reb Shlomo would join me in my petition, it would surely be granted, for isn’t it true that Elijah the Prophet himself often visits Reb Shlomo? “I lost no time in summoning him to me. He arrived at the exact same time the evil noblemen were gathered at their meeting, discussing the final implementation of their terrible plan. We were paralyzed with fear as we observed the meeting in a vision.

The evil nobles were unanimous in their decision to expel the Jews from the entire province, and we were helpless, unable to utter a word. It is

known that, according to the law, if there is even one dissenting vote, the decree becomes annulled. Can you imagine our surprise when we saw Elijah the Prophet enter the meeting? Disguised as a white-haired squire, he sat down unnoticed. The noblemen were passing the document around the great table, and each one signed it in turn. When it was handed to Elijah, he began to object loudly: ‘I disagree with this whole idea! I refuse to sign this calumnious paper!’ “All of a sudden, their unanimity was destroyed; the verdict was overturned in a flash! A terrible commotion erupted in the hall and in the course of the demonstration, the document was torn up. Elijah vanished and there was nothing for the assembled noblemen to do but leave. This was such a completely amazing turn of events that Reb Shlomo and I both burst into laughter at the sight.”

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

Speak to the Children of Israel, that they may bring me an offering (Ex 25:2)

The word “offering” has two meanings: something set aside for a special purpose and that which is picked up and raised. An offering made to G-d achieves both of these objectives. Setting aside one’s money to do a mitzva elevates the actual physical object that is bought with that money, transforming the material into holiness, as it says in Tanya: “G-d gives man corporeality in order to transform it into spirituality.” (Likutei Sichot)

“The fool gives, and the clever man takes,” states the popular expression. What does this refer to? The giving of tzedaka (charity). The fool thinks he is parting with something belonging to him; the clever man realizes that whatever he gives , he actually receives [its reward]. (Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin)

Two and one-half cubits its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height (Ex. 25:10)

The ark was measured in fractions, not whole numbers, teaching us that to achieve spiritual growth, one must first “break down” and shatter one’s negative characteristics and bad habits. (Sefer Hamamarim U’Kuntreisim)

Of a talent of pure gold shall it be made (Ex. 25:39)

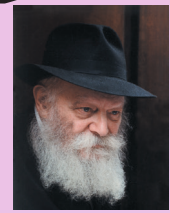
A person’s purpose in life is to illuminate his surroundings with the light of Torah and mitzvot. This responsibility holds true no matter what the individual’s circumstances or mood may be. The numerical equivalent of the Hebrew word for talent, “kikar,” is 140 – the same as the numerical equivalent of “mar” (bitter), and “ram” (lofty). No matter what our situation, our task remains the same. (Previous Rebbe)



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3 Adar / February 20
Torah Portion *Terumah*
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L'Chaim

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נוסד תור ימי השלושים
Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"Our help is in the name of the L-rd, Who made heaven and earth" (Psalms 124:8)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

In this week’s Torah portion, Teruma, we read about the Shulchan, the intricate table that was in the Temple. The Shulchan was made of many different pieces.

It was made of wood overlaid with gold, and the rest of its parts were made of pure gold. On the Shulchan was a golden trim like a crown around the table. It had a golden framework, with golden trays, that held 12 loaves of bread, called “Show bread.”

This unleavened bread had ends that turned up, and then turned again, so that the two ends faced each other. On the table were two golden spoons filled with Frankincense. What is the symbolism of the Shulchan? How do we experience the Shulchan in our lives today?

According to the Zohar the Shulchan brought blessings of sustenance to the tables of the whole world. The Talmud explains that the crown around the Shulchan is symbolic of royal wealth. So the Shulchan brought blessings of sustenance to all and wealth to those who deserved it. How can we harness these blessings in our own lives?

By taking a deeper look at the Shulchan and its parts, we find hints that guide us. First there is a table; the table is the center of the home and therefore is symbolic of the home, the center of Jewish life. Laden with pure gold and surrounded with a royal crown alludes to our dress and sense of dignity.

How do we act? Do we see ourselves as ordinary, and dress and act that way? Or do we see ourselves as the royalty we are, the children of the King of Kings, and act accordingly. The way we see ourselves affects the way we act. The way we act, controls the flow of blessings to our homes. On the table was the unleavened Show Bread. Bread is symbolic of livelihood. Unleavened symbolizes humility, recognizing that our wealth is from G-d and not arrogantly thinking that it is merely our personal accomplishment. The breads’ ends faced each other, symbolizing love for one’s fellow.

The fact that it is one loaf, shows that we are essentially one at our core. Frankincense is a pleasant-smelling spice, a white resin from a growing tree. A good scent is symbolic of one who does mitzvot. White connotes doing without an ulterior motive. From a growing tree alludes to the need to be constantly growing in mitzvot. Finally, the Shulchan was placed on the north side, the left side, because in Kabbalistic teachings, the Shulchan is connected to the cognitive faculty of Bina, which is on the left.

Bina is the ability to take an abstract concept, and develop it into a concrete, understandable and meaningful idea. This is done by breaking down the many parts of the concept and understanding them thoroughly.

This refers to the study of Torah. Learning, digesting, developing and finally bringing it down into the concrete, making it accessible to all. This, in essence, is the Jewish home. A royal abode, a place of dignity, humility, and love. A place of Torah and mitzvot. A place where G-d wants to be and gives His blessings.

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.

Great and Grand or Small and Simple?

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

Can human beings really build a House for G-d? The Almighty Himself instructs us to do just that: “And they shall make Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell among them.” How are we to understand that the Infinite Creator can be contained in a physical house built by finite men and women?

Let’s do what Jews have always done and answer this question with another one.

Why is the Sanctuary described in this week’s reading so small? One would imagine that the very first House of G-d would have been spectacular. It was smaller than a starter home! A roof of animal skins, held together with bolts and nuts, hooks, pegs and sockets. And while it was, admittedly, covered in gold, it was a far cry from the magnificent palaces and citadels of others.

The moral of the story? Where is G-d found? In the nitty-gritty nuts and bolts of a simple synagogue.

Back in 1983, the Torah Academy Shul in Johannesburg had purchased a large tract of land which had previously housed a Catholic institution and the new synagogue was going to be situated in what was previously the chapel. At the time, Rabbi Betzael Zolty,

a respected halachic authority was visiting the community and was asked “Do we need to do anything special to convert the chapel into a shul?”

His sharp and simple reply? “Make a minyan!”

A minyan, a quorum of Jews praying together, is all that was needed to inaugurate and consecrate the synagogue.

And that is exactly how we invite G-d into our synagogues and make Him feel welcome. Sometimes we think we must conquer the cosmos to bring heaven down to earth, but all we need to do is make a simple minyan.

The Alter Rebbe, founder of Chabad chassidism, once said:

Avodah—true service of G-d—does not imply, as some think, altogether erroneously, that one must pulverize mountains and shatter boulders, or turn the whole world upside down.

No!

The absolute truth is that any act is perfectly satisfactory when performed with authenticity and true intent. A blessing pronounced with concentration, a word of prayer as it should be with awareness of “before Whom you stand,” an act of kindness and compassion expressed in befriending another person with love and affection.

The nine Lazaroff children have been raised around this unusual family. Far away from the nearest typical Jewish community, these kids grew up with friends aged 18 to their early 20s. They come along to help out at events and sit at Shabbat tables side by side with the students. This built character and resilience; Mrs. Lazaroff

A large group of students, mostly young men, are posing for a group photo in front of a large, multi-story brick building with many windows. The students are arranged in many rows, filling the foreground and middle ground. The building in the background has a classic architectural style with multiple gables and windows. The sky is overcast.

Workshops were presented in English, French, Hebrew, and other languages, reflecting the many countries these shlichos call home.

The Rebbe Writes

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