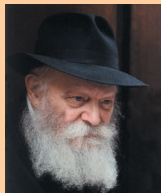


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

The name Shabbat Shuva is taken from the opening words of this week's haftora, "Shuva Yisrael - Return, O Israel." The second name, Shabbat Teshuva, is derived from the fact that this Shabbat falls out in the middle of the Aseret Yemei Teshuva, the Ten Days of Repentance. This name is also associated with the haftora, as its central theme is returning to G-d.

The two names of this Shabbat reveal a timely lesson.

The phrase "Shuva - Return" is grammatically a command. G-d commands us to return to Him in repentance.

Teshuva, by contrast, is a noun denoting the action itself, the actual return to G-d.

The word "Shuva" relates more to the One who issues the command than the person being addressed. It implies a situation in which the command has already been issued, but not yet carried out. The command itself imparts a certain measure of strength, but does not ensure that it will necessarily be fulfilled in the future.

"Teshuva," on the other hand, implies that the action has already been taken, i.e., that the teshuva has already been done. But if that were the case, why would we continue to refer to this Shabbat as Shabbat Teshuva?

The answer is that the act of teshuva consists of both the command to return to G-d and its subsequent implementation.

Shuva teaches us that even after a Jew has done teshuva, he still needs to work on himself. No matter how much teshuva a person has done, it is always possible to rise higher; hence the directive, "Return, O Israel unto the L-rd your G-d." Thus it is understood that there is always room for improvement, for an even deeper and more infinite level of teshuva, as G-d Himself is Infinite and without limitations.

This, then, is the lesson of Shabbat Shuva: A Jew must never content himself with whatever spiritual accomplishments he has already attained. He must never think that, because he has worked on himself a whole week, he is now entitled to "rest" because it is Shabbat. No, today is Shabbat Shuva! Even after one has done teshuva, more work is required. For the service of teshuva is continual and without end.

Adapted from *Hitva'aduyot 5744, Volume 1*

The Rainmaker

By Rabbi Lazer Gurkow

Before his passing, Moses composed a beautiful song of lilting poetry. "May the heavens listen as I speak / And may the earth hearken to my words / May my teaching flow like rain / And may my words drip like dew."

The Midrash offers the following homily: "Israel requested that their inspiration flow like rain, to which G-d replied, 'No, not like rain. Better that it should drip like dew.'" What is the difference? Both are moist and both can be seen on the ground.

The difference is in the origin. Rain is formed when moisture from below evaporates and rises into the atmosphere. Dew is formed here on earth, when warmer vapors come in contact with cooler surfaces.

OSCILLATING SOULS

Souls oscillate between the lower spiritual planes, which are further from G-d, and the higher spiritual planes, which are closer to G-d.

Like the waters upon the surface of earth, we are often content with life here below where we are spiritually distant from G-d. Tossed about upon waves of whim, we often focus on the body rather than the soul. But eventually we too feel the need to ascend.

It is then that our minds turn to G-d and we remember our spiritual void. We pine for a more meaningful existence. Our enthusiasm for our material lifestyle evaporates and we rise to a higher, more spiritual plane. From this vantage point we look back

with dismay and form clouds of remorse in the higher atmosphere.

But these clouds must not be permitted to linger. Beads of inspiration must form within our heart and precipitate a torrential outpouring of love for G-d and inspire us to observe the Torah and mitzvot.

SPONTANEOUS DESIRES, CONSCIOUS RESPONSE

Like raindrops that form from evaporated waters below, so did Moses ask G-d to accept our penitence, raise us to a higher plane and precipitate within us an outpouring of love for G-d.

G-d replied that inspiration would instead drip like dew.

Dew forms on the surface below and does not require its vapors to rise. G-d was saying that He would work to inspire our souls "down below," independently of the choices we make.

We suddenly experience a need to attend a service at a synagogue or to join a Torah class, to light Shabbat candles or to donate to charity. These desires appear spontaneously; they are not stimulated by anything we see or hear.

G-d stimulates the desire but leaves the implementation to us. We can either confine ourselves to a single inspiration, or we can utilize this inspiration to stimulate further inspiration for additional mitzvot.

In other words, we can either make rain or wait for the next dew.

Let's choose to make rain.

SLICE OF LIFE

Moving My Parents

By Chaya Rochel Zimmerman



My parents, Shammus Sam and Doris Greenberg

My family was the only thing left behind.

When the last truckload, crammed with boxes of prayer books, stacks of chairs, and the four-foot-tall wooden dais, drove away, my father locked the doors of the synagogue as he had done for the past nine years.

Our beloved synagogue had opened its doors in 1913 on Staten Island, New York and now, in 1972, stood empty, except for a faint flickering on the wall of muted colors streaming through the stained-glass window. The Polish, Italian and Jewish immigrant families, who had inhabited my once thriving childhood neighborhood, had moved away when the streets gave rise to rough and rowdy teenagers playing loud music late into the night.

My elderly father worked hard to own his home and never thought about moving, nor of giving up his job as the physical and spiritual caretaker of the synagogue, a position he inherited upon the passing of my grandfather.

The synagogue purchased another building much further away to continue servicing its aging congregants. So, at the age of sixty-eight without any complaints, my ever-conscientious father, began walking the two plus miles back and forth on Shabbos and the holy festivals through the now dangerous neighborhood.

Although my father's sweet smile and sincerity could melt anyone's heart, my mother and I feared for his life. Within a few months, my small father was mugged twice, each time explaining to some tall dark man that it was the Jewish Sabbath and he didn't have any money or cigarettes on him. Mercifully they let him go. I decided it was time to move.

I was twenty-one, in college, and the only child living at home; my brother had made Aliyah the year before and my married sister was busy with her two preschoolers.

I started packing, not sure yet where we would move to. "What are you doing?" said my father alarmed. My mother stood nearby in silent agreement, but helpless to verbalize it.

"It's time to move," I said. "This is my home."

"I know. I'll find you another home. It's too dangerous for you to walk home on Shabbos." "I'm not moving."

We had both walked these streets for years in safety, but now it was time to admit, it had changed. Torah commands us not to not put our bodies in danger, lest our souls leave this world. I continued working.

I gathered, sorted, packed and discarded. This last category ended in deadlock. My attempts to throw out what I considered worthless and what my father considered priceless, threatened the whole move. Do piles of yellowed Yiddish newspapers from the last twenty years count as valuable? Or extras of old weekly synagogue bulletins, or unread catalogues that came through the mail?

It would be impossible to fit everything they owned into a small rented apartment, so I continued working against the rising resistance of my father who refused to allow me to dispose of the growing bags of garbage before he sorted through each one. This wasn't just a matter of elderly clutter or hoarding. I was disregarding his core beliefs that ran generations deep.

My father was a European product, born in Lomazy Poland, and had lived in Biala Podlaska, Berditchev, the Bronx, the Lower East Side and Staten Island. Moving was not new to him. He had lived through WWI in Europe and the Great Depression in America and it pained him to see anything usable destroyed or disposed of. The

wrinkles on his balding forehead deepened as he paced the floor, watching me continue to sift through the layers of his life. His agitation increased as the pile of moving boxes grew. It was a matter of trust.

My true intentions were to uphold the fourth commandment, "To Honor and Fear Your Mother and Your Father So You May Lengthen the Days of Your Life". I wasn't sweating this backbreaking task to lengthen the days of my years, but to lengthen their days.

It also pained me to leave behind the place that held my childhood memories: reading a good book leaning against the tree heavy with peaches surrounded by the tall uncut grass we hid in when we played hide go seek, sitting on the steps of the wooden front porch sharing childish secrets with my friends, playing kick ball with my brother inside the house where the Angel of balls ensured that nothing ever broke, celebrating my good marks after studying with my mother at the kitchen table, smelling my mother's eggplant roasting atop the gas fire.

The Torah equates the honor and fear of one's parents with the honor and fear of G-d himself. Rambam explains that to fear your father means not to contradict his word nor offer an opinion that outweighs his. I felt I paid a high price for not respecting my father's wishes, but surely moving was his inner wish.

My mother and I searched for an apartment in vain, until my aunt came to town at the last hour. She was my father's only sister, twenty-one years his junior, born in America, and he loved her dearly. My aunt, with my sister's help, found a house for rent two blocks from the new synagogue location and ordered a moving van.

Eventually, my father blessed me for moving him, forever grateful to be close to the synagogue. However, he remained troubled over the things I had disposed of in the moving process, that he felt still had value.

Although I had the noblest of reasons for moving my aging parents, it's not a decision to be taken lightly.

Chaya Rochel Zimmerman, is the author of: Lemons in the Fog, The Next Pair of Shoes and Seattle to Strawberries / You can contact her through: zimnovels.com

Numerous Mezuzos Replace One Mezuzah Vandalized at Harvard



After an anonymous vandal ripped a mezuzah off the door of a college freshman at Harvard University's room, in a valiant show of fighting darkness with light and hatred with acts of goodness, the students at Harvard University and their shliach, went to many rooms of Jewish students and proudly affixed a mezuzah to their doorway for the first time.

"We must recognize this incident for what it truly is: a hate crime," Rabbi Hirschy Zarchi wrote in the college paper, the Harvard Crimson "To tear down a Mezuzah is to send a message of intimidation and erasure," he added. "It's not just a matter of vandalism; it is an attack on the very identity of the Jewish community at Harvard."

Many took to social media to call out the hate crime and bring light to the new mezuzah campaign instigated, encouraging all students on campus to be proud Jews and place a sign of their identity at the doorway.

A Call to Action - Teshuva

Spend time during these "Ten Days of Repentance" in sincere introspection with the knowledge that "nothing stands in the way of repentance." Our Sages taught that our transgressions are turned into merits if we repent properly. The Rebbe adds that by beginning to fulfill a commandment that one had previously neglected and encouraging others to do so, one can actually retroactively rectify any spiritual damage caused by one's neglect





The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

A letter addressed to a group of students.

Tishrei 7, 5713

Sept. 25, 1952

The Ten Days of Teshuva – Repentance – which begin with the two days of Rosh Hashana and continue through their culmination point, the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, are the ten days of the inauguration of the new year. Between these three most solemn days of the year we are given a period of seven days, containing every day of the week: one Sunday, one Monday, and so forth. This complete week, neither more nor less, is given to us to enable us to atone and repent for any wrong deeds accounted for during the previous year, and to better our way of life in the new year. That we have been given a complete week in which to accomplish this is significant: Spending the Sunday of this week as we should, and making the most of the time, serves as a repentance and atonement especially for all the wrong done on all the Sundays of the previous year; the same for all the Mondays of the past year on the Monday of this week, and so on.

However, repentance implies two essential conditions: regret for the past and resolution for the future. Therefore this seven day period is also a means of planned preparation for the forthcoming year. On the

Sunday of this week we should plan especially for better Sundays in the new year. This will give us the strength and ability to carry out and fulfill our obligations on the Sundays to come. Likewise with regard to the Monday of this week, and all the rest of it.

In thinking of ourselves alone, however, we would only deal with part of our obligations. As I have emphasized many times in the past, one should not and must not be content with leading a proper Jewish life personally, in one's own home and family. One must recognize and fulfill a duty to the environment in a way of influencing everyone in it to adhere to the Torah and to its precepts. This duty is particularly required of youth, in whom G-d has bestowed an extra measure of natural energy, enabling them to become leaders, particularly among their own youth groups, to inspire others in the ways of our Torah and Torah-true way of life.

I hope and pray that everyone of you will become a leader and source of good influence in your environment, leading Jews, and Jewish youth particularly, to a true Jewish life, a life of happiness, a life where its spiritual and material aspects are properly balanced. Such perfect harmony of the spiritual and material can only be found in the Torah and Mitzvoth, and in the light of the Torah you will lead your colleagues and friends to true happiness.

G-d Bless you and your respective families with a Chasimo and Gmar Chasimo Toivo.

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Shpoler Zaida once said: "Our greatest sages begged of You to bring Moshiach and You didn't want; The Ari begged and You didn't want; other great people in each generation

begged and You didn't want; until it came to the point that an insignificant one such as I, stand before You and ask for Moshiach, and even now You refuse. I say to You: 'There will come a generation that will not want You and will not want Moshiach--then You will bring him.'"

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

This coming week on Vov Tishrei, the sixth day of the Hebrew month of Tishrei, we will mark the Yahrtzeit, the anniversary of the passing of Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, of blessed memory, the mother of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

The Haftorah reading for the first day of Rosh Hashana is from the book of Shmuel (Samuel.) It tells of Chana and her entreaties to G-d to bless her with a child, whose life she would dedicate to holiness and G-dly service. Finally, a son was born to her, and when he was weaned she took him to Eli the High Priest in Shilo to fulfill her vow. There, she offered a song of joy and praise to the Alm-ghty: "My heart rejoices in the L-rd, my horn is exalted in the L-rd; my mouth is broadened over my enemies; because I rejoice in Your salvation." Because of Chana's self-sacrifice and under Eli's tutelage, Shmuel became one of the greatest prophets of the Jewish people.

In a book published about Rebbetzin Chana, one person remembers, "After each talk I had with Rebbetzin Chana, of blessed memory, 'Chana's Song' from the book of Shmuel came to my mind. For it is the song of a great Jewish mother who, after years of suffering and difficulty was blessed with a son who became a prophet among the Jewish people.

"Like Chana of old, tremendous hardships and obstacles were Rebbetzin Chana's lot. Yet, she kept this to herself, except for when her lips moved quietly in prayer. Years of loneliness and waiting were her portion. But, in the end a time came when 'my heart rejoices in the L-rd'--when the heart of Rebbetzin Chana was filled with happiness and exalting."

Rebbetzin Chana passed away on the sixth of Tishrei, 5725 (1964), at the age of 85. At the same time as her pure soul was returning to its Maker, Rebbetzin Chana's chair in the women's section of the main Lubavitcher shul at 770 Eastern Parkway inexplicably caught fire.

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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IT HAPPENED ONCE

In the city of Berditchev a very wealthy man, regarded by all as a miser, died. When famed Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev heard of the man's passing, he was grieved and said he would attend the funeral.

When the news spread that Reb Levi Yitzchok would come, never was there such a crowd as attended the funeral of this richman. Yet, no one could understand why Reb Levi Yitzchok was showing so much respect for the dead miser.

After the funeral, Reb Levi Yitzchok said, "Nobody really knew this man as I did. He had a noble character that I discovered through three separate incidents when he came to me." And he told the following stories:

A wine merchant who acted as agent for other merchants was going on his usual purchasing trip when he suddenly discovered that his money was missing.

When he realized his terrible situation, he fainted. A doctor was called and managed to revive him. But, as soon as the agent regained consciousness and remembered his great loss, he fell into another swoon.

A Jew suddenly stepped forward from the crowd and declared that he had found the missing bag of money. Everyone was delighted and the agent revived miraculously!

"Some time later," related Reb Levi Yitzchok, "two Jews came to see me. One was the man who was just buried. The second Jew claimed that he, in fact, had found the wine agent's money but could not resist the temptation to keep it. However, when he found out that someone had given away such a large sum of money in order to save a man's life, his conscience troubled him. He had repented and was now eager to repay the money.

But the first man (whose funeral was just held) refused to accept the money, saying he did not want to give up the mitzva of saving the agent's life.

"And my verdict," said Reb Levi Yitzchok, "was that he was not obliged to accept the money if he did not wish to. The man who had repented would have to find some other way of making amends."



There was a Jew who was unsuccessful in business and could not support his family. He decided that he would go away to try his luck somewhere else. He told his wife that this same rich man had engaged him to do business in a certain city and that she should go to collect part of his salary each Thursday at the rich man's place of business. The wife didn't know that this "arrangement" was her husband's invention.

On the first Thursday she presented herself at the office and demanded her husband's salary. The rich man overheard her conversation with his secretary and said, "She is quite right. Pay her the money each Thursday. Sorry, I forgot to tell you about this arrangement sooner."

Time passed and when the husband returned home, after having been very successful, he found that his wife had managed well on the "salary" she drew every week. With that, the husband went off to see the rich man, thanked him for his good-heartedness and tried to repay him. But the rich man would not hear of it.

The case was brought before Reb Levi Yitzchok. "My verdict was that the husband could not compel the rich man to accept the money."



A certain man in great financial difficulties came to this rich man and asked for a loan.

"Who will be your guarantor in case you cannot repay the loan?" he asked.

The only guarantor I can offer you is the Alm-ghty" he answered.

"Very good," said the rich man. "You could not have chosen a more reliable guarantor."

Sometime later, the man came to return the money he had borrowed.

"Your Guarantor repaid me the loan through an unexpected profit," said the rich man. "So, you see, you don't owe me anything."

The grateful Jew insisted that the case be brought before me," said Reb Levi Yitzchok. "This time, too, I said that the rich man could not be compelled to accept money which he did not want."

"So you see, my friends," concluded Reb Levi Yitzchok, "that the deceased was not mean or miserly. He just preferred giving charity anonymously. And that way of giving charity is the highest form of charity-giving. The man who has just been buried was truly a great, saintly Jew."

From "The Storyteller"

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah Portion

Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth (Deut. 32:1)

Why did Moses address the heavens and earth? Because G-d had already likened the Children of Israel to these things.

G-d said to Abraham: "Look up into the heavens and count the stars...so shall your seed be." G-d also promised, "And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth." (Sifri)

Of the Rock that bore you were you unmindful, and you forgot the G-d Who bore you (Deut. 32:10)

When G-d created man He gave him the gift of being "unmindful"--the ability to forget and allow time to heal the wounds which would befall him in this world. But, G-d claims, what did you do with this gift? You misused it, and forgot about Me! (Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk)

He was corrupted; the blemish is not to his children (Deut. 32:5)

No matter how corrupt and degraded a person may be, he always wants better for his children. He does not want them to continue in his sorry ways...

(Rabbi Yonasan Eibeshutz)

And G-d saw and He was angry, because of the provoking of His sons and daughters (Deut. 32:19)

G-d's wrath is aroused when He sees the "provocation of His sons and daughters," that is, ill-feeling and controversy between one Jew and his fellow. Such behavior brings down G-d's anger upon His children.

(Rabbi Moshe Pollak)



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 Shabbat Shuva
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