

# L'Chaim



## IT HAPPENED ONCE

The evening had finally come, an end to another busy day in the market, and the merchants all prepared to close their stalls. The perfume seller, an unpleasant fellow in the best of times, was especially disgruntled tonight.

He had had another bad day. Few people had set foot in his shop, and when they did, they almost all left without having made even the smallest purchase. He poured all the perfume he had on display back into the large casks, put his meager profit of one coin into his pocket, and closed up his shutters for the day. As he was about to leave, he saw his neighbor, an oil merchant, also setting off for home. My neighbor, he thought bitterly, has all the luck. So many customers flock to his shop that he has even had to hire another worker to serve them. Then, an evil thought entered his mind.

Tonight, he thought, I will come back to my shop when no one is in the market, and I will drill a hole in the wall that separates our shops. Then I will be able to spy on my neighbor whenever I wish. He wasn't even sure at that moment what use he would make of this peephole, but an idea was germinating in his jealous mind.

Late that night the perfume merchant returned to his shop in the darkened market. He took out a small hand drill and chiseled an almost imperceptible hole in the wall which separated him from the oil merchant. By now his devious plan had fully developed in his mind; he knew exactly what he would do. It only remained to find an opportune moment to strike, and that occurred the very next day.

Dusk fell in the shouk and the shutters of the shops were closed one by one. The perfume seller approached his clandestine hole in the dividing wall between the two shops, and sure enough, he saw what he had anticipated. There was his neighbor, the oil merchant, tallying up his daily profit. He took the pile of shining coins of all denominations, put them into a red handkerchief and into his pocket. He blew out his lamp, closed his door and went out into the dusk. No sooner had he emerged than the perfume merchant ran past him screaming, "Help! Help! Thief! This man has stolen all my money which I was wrapped in my red handkerchief". People came running from all directions, and soon the gerdames surrounded the shocked oil seller and had him bound in chains. He loudly protested his innocence, but shortly he found himself locked in a dark cell.

The arrest and trial of the Jewish oil seller was all the talk of the town. Emotions ran high as the people divided into factions, pro and con the merchant, and they had even laid bets as to the outcome of the trial. Who was telling the truth? It seemed impossible to tell. In just a few days, the high court, with the Sultan sitting at its head would meet to hear the arguments of the accused and the accuser, but although the Sultan had reviewed the matter in his mind many times over, he still was full of indecision. Who would guess that a small Jewish boy would be the one to solve the mystery and bring the light of truth to bear on the final outcome of the trial.

It came to pass that the day before the trial, the Sultan was out strolling through the streets trying to clear his mind in preparation for the difficult deliberations ahead. He overheard childish voices saying: "Yes, let's play the perfume seller and the oil seller." "I'll be the judge," said one small boy.

The Sultan stood out of sight waiting to hear this play being enacted by the group of Jewish children. The little judge questioned both merchants, and each vigorously insisted on the truth of his claims. Finally, the child called for silence and made the following pronouncement: "Have the court clerk bring in a bowl of boiling hot water and place the coins in the bowl. If oil rises to the top, it will be apparent that the money belongs to the oil seller; if the water becomes perfumed, we will know that the perfume seller is telling the truth."

The Sultan, amazed by the insight and intelligence of the Jewish child, hurried back to his residence, confident that he now had a fool-proof approach for the forthcoming trial.

The court room was packed with eager spectators, anxious to see the fascinating spectacle. The presentations of both sides were complete, and the crowd awaited the decision of the court. The Sultan suddenly made a strange request--he called for a bowl of boiling hot water. When it appeared, he took the money in question, and one by one dropped the coins into the bowl. Then he called the members of the court to come and see the result. Hundreds of tiny beads of oil were swimming on the surface of the water, and the outcome of the proceedings was no longer in question. The oil seller was released, and his erstwhile accuser was put into chains.

### THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah Portion

**Go now and see if it is well with your brothers (Gen. 37:14)**

When Jacob sent Joseph to look for his brothers, he enjoined him to see only that which was "well"--the goodness and positive qualities they had. In such a way would the brothers maintain their unity. (Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Pshischa)

**Reuven returned to the pit, and behold, Joseph was not in the pit (37:29)**

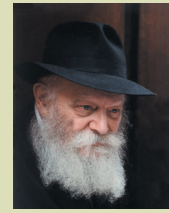
Reuven's absence allowed the other brothers to sell Joseph; had Reuven been present, he would not have permitted them to do it. And where was he? Rashi says Reuven was preoccupied with fasting and perfecting himself. Because he was concerned only with himself, Joseph was sold and the whole series of events was set in motion that would lead to our forefathers' exile in Egypt. An important lesson is learned: One must not be concerned solely with his own perfection to the exclusion of others. We must always have our fellow Jew in mind and truly love him, lest he be ignored in his time of need. (Likutei Sichot)

**He asked the officers of Pharaoh...Why do you look so sad today? (40:7)**

While in prison, Joseph was assigned the task of managing the daily affairs of the prison. Wasn't inquiring after every sad and depressed prisoner beyond the call of duty? And wasn't it natural that these former high-ranking members of the royal staff would be saddened to find themselves reduced to such a sorry state?

Joseph truly believed that every person should always be joyous, simply because he was created by G-d--the essence of goodness. When Joseph saw his unhappy fellow prisoners he wanted to help them. Joseph's one small action brought about his own release from prison, his appointment as second in command over all of Egypt, and saved the entire world during the years of famine that followed.

(Lubavitcher Rebbe, Shlita)



### LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

The Torah portion Vayeishev chronicles Joseph's trials and tribulations from the time he left his father's house and was sold into slavery until his eventual appointment to the position of second in command of the entire Egypt.

Indeed, Joseph's life closely parallels the life of every Jew, and by studying his story we can better understand our own mission in life.

During his youth Joseph was the most beloved of Jacob's children, and enjoyed a special relationship with his father. Not only did Jacob make him the famous coat of many colors, but he learned Torah with him day and night, while the other brothers were busy shepherding the flocks.

For Joseph, this period was his happiest, both spiritually and physically. This situation is analogous to the condition of the Jewish soul before coming into the body. A "veritable part of G-d," it exists on the highest plane, enjoying the proximity of only holiness and G-dly light.

But suddenly, Joseph's idyllic existence was interrupted--"Joseph was brought down to Egypt." Sold as a slave, his situation continued to deteriorate until he found himself a prisoner in Pharaoh's jail.

This symbolizes the soul's dramatic descent into this world. No longer can it bask in G-d's glory--the soul finds itself trapped in a physical body, subject to its whims and fancies. It must endure the temptations to which the body is drawn, and overcome all sorts of trials.

The soul longs to return to its source above. Yet we learn that Joseph triumphed and attained an even higher position than he had enjoyed while in his father's house, as the Torah calls him, "Joseph the Righteous," for despite his elevation to high office Joseph retained his purity and goodness.

Joseph turned his descent to Egypt into triumph and ascent. This then is the purpose of the soul's journey down into this world and its imprisonment within the body: Our task is to subjugate the Evil Inclination and conduct our lives according to the dictates of Torah. Overcoming the obstacles which try to prevent us from doing mitzvot enables us to attain greater spirituality than would have been possible had the soul remained above.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

## All's Well – When it Ends

By Rabbi Baruch Epstein

When did Chanukah become a Holiday?

After describing the events of Chanukah the Talmud (tractate Shabbos 22B) concludes: "the next year they established these eight days as a festival".

When does a war end? When the last shot is fired? When there is a signed armistice?

In the year of the war, on the original 25th of Kislev, there was calm, yet uncertainty.

Had the Greeks surrendered, or just gone to summon fresh troops and more war Elephants?

It was only after a year of peace could a retroactive victory be declared.

When do we know we have made the right choice in our internal battles? With no guarantees or "do-overs," when is the victory lap?

How do parents know they made the right decision to send their children to Jewish Day School? It's not always evident after the first semester; it may only be years later when they stand under the chupa that every tuition penny seems worthwhile.

When is the battle against

materialism won? When my neighbor's new car makes my 800 credit score feel boring? Or when I've saved enough to help him avoid financial ruin?

Today is tomorrow's history. It's the seeds for all the "shoulda, coulda woulda" that can become weeds of regret.

The Greeks argued, "What you can feel is all that's real;" revel in the immediate. If it can't be debated or seen under the microscope I'm not interested. Infinite and ethereal are interesting but don't inspire me to put down my popcorn and leave the theatre.

The Macabees declared there is no power like Hashem; no Greek indulgence can compete with the Infinite. Trust in Hashem and you'll avoid the enticement of the merely tangible.

By focusing on the Eternal, the Jew is vulnerable to scorn. The truly valuable often can't be appreciated in the right now. Celebration comes after the accomplishment; the hard choices of life are filled with second guesses

Plant a seed, water it, nurture it, guard it and with Hashem's Help it blossoms.



### 4:13 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area  
19 Kislev / December 20  
Torah Portion Vayeshev  
Shabbat ends 5:17 PM

לרפואה שלימה  
איתן לב בן תמר  
For a speedy recovery  
Eitan Lev Ben Tamar  
By the Fellus family

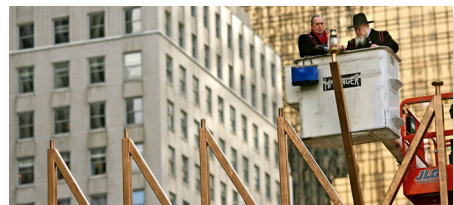


# SLICE OF LIFE

*Rabbi Shmuel Butman, Raised the Jewish Profile in New York and Beyond*

Directed Lubavitch Youth Organization, annually kindled the World's Largest Menorah

By Menachem Posner / Chabad.org



World's Largest Chanukah Menorah Lighted by Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman, Director Lubavitch Youth Organization and New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg.

He was a sight to behold: A rabbi with a flowing beard riding by helicopter from Midtown Manhattan—where he had just presided over the kindling of the “World’s Largest Menorah”—to Brooklyn, N.Y., in a frantic effort to make it home before the onset of Shabbat.

To the countless men, women and children who participated in the yearly lighting of the World’s Largest Menorah at Manhattan’s Grand Army Plaza, he will forever be remembered for his prominent role in the annual event, his booming voice announcing the participating dignitaries, and encouraging the crowd in joyful singing from high-atop the cherry-picker.

“May the lights of the Chanukah menorah that everyone is putting up throughout the world,” he would commonly sign off, “usher in the eternal lights of Moshiach and the great redemption for all.”

Rabbi Butman passed away late on Monday, July 22 (17 Tammuz), 2024. He was 81 years old.

## SCION OF A DISTINGUISHED FAMILY

Shmuel Menachem Mendel Butman was born in the Soviet Union on 24 Shevat, 5703 (Jan. 30, 1943), to Rabbi Shneur Zalman and Yehudis Butman.

Yehudis was the daughter of Rabbi Mendel

Schneerson—a great-grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek, the third Chabad Rebbe—after whom he was named. Rabbi Shneur Zalman Butman was a member of the Chabad “underground” and worked tirelessly to ensure that Jews were able to live observant Jewish lives, to the extent that Communist authorities exiled him to Siberia for four years.

In 1946, the family joined hundreds of other Chabad Chassidim who were prying their way out of the Soviet, eventually making it to the west and settling in Paris.

It was there that young Shmuel first met the Lubavitcher Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson—who would become a guiding figure in his life. The Rebbe was there to accompany his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, who had recently escaped the Soviet Union, to the United States.

Since Rebbetzin Chana was living in the Butman home, the Rebbe became a frequent visitor, coming to see his mother twice daily. Years later, Rabbi Butman wrote a Hebrew book, *Harabbi BePariz* (“The Rebbe in Paris”), documenting the Rebbe’s years in the city.

In 1954, the family moved to Brooklyn, and Shmuel was enrolled in the central Chabad yeshivah there. In 1962, while still a teen, he was dispatched by the Rebbe to serve as his emissary to the Chabad yeshivah in Lod, Israel.

## IMMERSED IN COMMUNAL ACTIVITIES

With the Rebbe’s blessing, following his marriage in 1966 he joined the staff of the fledgling Lubavitch Youth Organization. The Rebbe had founded the organization in 1955 to lead many of Chabad’s outreach efforts, and it was under the direction of Rabbi Dovid Raskin.

In the course of his activities, Rabbi Butman was in close contact with the Rebbe, often submitting notes with questions. The Rebbe, in turn, would often reply with brief jottings, showing a keen interest in even the smallest of details.

## THE WORLD’S LARGEST CHANUKAH MENORAH

One of his highest-profile projects was one of the most recognizable Jewish events in the world: The “World’s Largest Menorah,” situated outside the iconic Plaza Hotel on Fifth Avenue and 59th Street in Manhattan.

Rabbi Butman first placed a giant menorah in that location in 1977.

The gleaming 32-foot-high sculpted bronze structure that Rabbi Butman faithfully lit every year since 1986—36-feet including “shamash”—was designed by Yaacov Agam, Israel’s most collected artist.

“This menorah stood in miniature on the Rebbe’s desk,” Rabbi Butman would remind the gathered

every year that “The menorah stands as a symbol of light and determination for all people regardless of race, religion, color and creed.” Hundreds of news outlets cover its kindling, bringing the message of the Chanukah lights to millions more.

Additionally, one of Rabbi Butman’s most public events—one greatly treasured by the Rebbe—was the annual Siyum Harambam, the completion of the study cycle of Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah*.

## THE WEEKLY L’CHAIM PUBLICATION

After the passing of the Rebbes wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, Rabbi Butman established the weekly L’chaim publication in her memory which is personally distributed every Friday by Lubavitch students around the world, to thousands of readers, as part of the Rebbe’s Mitzva campaign.

Over the years the Rebbe showed great appreciation for the L’chaim publication. The diverse content of L’chaim has made it a most treasured publication, which is read by tens of thousands around the world every week.

Also at the Rebbe’s behest, Rabbi Butman headed an association of all descendants of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the first Rebbe of Chabad.

Another one of the projects he spearheaded was the first Jewish Children’s Sefer Torah, an initiative of the Rebbe to unite all Jewish children through the symbolic purchase of a letter in a special Torah scroll.

## DAYS OF EDUCATION

It was Rabbi Butman who led the effort in New York State, where the governor traditionally declares a series of days, corresponding to the years since the Rebbe’s birth, dedicated to education.

Another one of Rabbi Butman’s many initiatives was hosting a sukkah at the United Nations. In fact, that sukkah was the place where in 1984 he first met an aspiring young Israeli diplomat named Benjamin Netanyahu. Following their meeting in the sukkah, Netanyahu came to celebrate Simchat Torah with the Rebbe in 770, and a connection was formed.

As a Chabad representative, he would often bring elected officials to the Rebbe for blessings and advice. In one instance, he recalled in his interview, in 1990 he brought New York Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan to visit the Rebbe. The Rebbe asked him to make accommodations for the Chinese-American community, who needed help learning English and acclimating themselves to American life.

Following the meeting, Moynihan expressed his amazement at the religious leader who cared for other communities as if they were his own, asking why that would be the case.

“Why?” reflected Rabbi Butman. “Because the Rebbe cared, the Rebbe cared for everyone.”

## CUSTOMS

Why the custom of giving Chanuka gelt?

The word “Chanuka” has two meanings. It means “dedication,” for on the 25th of Kislev the Holy Temple was rededicated, and “education.” Concerning the second meaning, it was customary to test children on their Torah knowledge during Chanuka and give them gelt, or money, as a reward.

# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

## THE MIRACLES OF CHANUKA

From a letter of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

As has been often said before, all matters of Torah are an inexhaustible source of lessons and inspiration for our daily life, especially when they take the form of practical mitzvot, since the Torah and mitzvot are infinite, being derived from the Infinite. I mention this here apropos of the mitzva of the Chanuka lights, especially in relation to one particular aspect which, at first, appears quite puzzling.

I am referring to the fact that although Chanuka recalls many miracles and wonders, the main event for which Chanuka was instituted was the miracle of the cruse of oil, the one and only one that was found in the Beit Hamikdash (the Holy Temple), that was intact and undefiled by the enemy, which was then kindled and which lasted for eight days, until new, pure and holy oil could be prepared.

What is puzzling about it is that the oil was not required for human consumption, nor for the consumption of the Altar, but for fuel in the Menora to be burnt in the process of giving light. It would seem, at first glance, of no consequence, insofar as the light is concerned whether or not the oil had been touched and defiled, for, surely, the quality and intensity of the light could hardly be affected by the touch.

Yet, when the Talmud defined the essence of the Chanuka festival,

the Sages declared that the crucial aspect was the miracle of the oil. Not that they belittled or ignored the great miracles on the battlefields, when G-d delivered the “mighty” and “many” into the hands of the “weak” and “few,” for these miracles are also emphasized in the prayer of “Va’l Hanissim.” Nevertheless, it was the miracle of being able to light the Menora with pure, holy oil, without any touch of uncleanness, which gave rise to the Festival of Lights.

The obvious lesson is that in the realm of the spirit, of Torah and mitzvot, as symbolized by the Chanuka lights, there must be absolute purity and holiness. It is not for the human mind to reason why, and what difference it makes, etc.

To carry the analogy further, it is the purpose of the central Holy Temple to illuminate and bring holiness and purity into the individual “Holy Temple”—i.e., every Jewish home and every Jewish person, which is also the obligation of every Jew toward his fellow Jew, in accordance with the mitzva of “love your fellow as yourself.” But special precautions are necessary that the Holy Temple itself be illuminated with the purest, sanctified oil, so that even the High Priest, if he should happen to be impure, could not enter the Holy Temple, much less kindle the Menora.

May G-d grant you success in the spirit outlined above, truly reflecting the spirit of the Chanuka lights, lighting ever more candles and increasing their glow from day to day.

P.S. One of the essential messages of Chanuka is the need to preserve the purity of the Torah and mitzvot, especially in the education of our children, for the miracle of Chanuka occurred with the cruse of pure and undefiled oil.

# MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Hebrew letters of the word “Moshiach” have the numerical value of 458. The word “shaliach”

(emissary) is ten less--448. When one uses the 10 powers of his soul--wisdom, knowledge, understanding, kindness, strength, beauty, endurance, majesty, foundation, sovereignty--in the observance of mitzvot, he becomes an emissary for bringing Moshiach.

# 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

On the 19th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev, Jews around the world gather together for joyous celebrations in honor of “Yud Tet Kislev.” *Yud Tet Kislev, is the day on which, in 1798, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of the Chabad Chasidic movement, was released from Czarist imprisonment. In a letter written soon after his release from prison, Rabbi Shneur Zalman wrote that he received the good news about his freedom when he was reading the daily portion of Psalms and specifically the verse (55:19): “[G-d] has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle against me, for many were with me.”*

*This was not merely a coincidence, but most assuredly Divine Providence. The Rebbe explains the message that this Divine Providence has for each one of us: Everybody is in need of a personal liberation from all the difficulties and hindrances encountered in daily life which hamper the attainment of our goals--both material and spiritual.*

*Our Sages in the Talmud commented on the above-mentioned verse: “G-d said, ‘A person who engages in Torah, and in acts of loving-kindness, and prays with the congregation is regarded by Me as if he redeemed Me and My children from among the nations of the world.’”*

*In this way, our Sages emphasize that the personal redemption of every Jew, as well as of the Jewish people together with G-d (so to speak), is directly linked with the dissemination of the Torah, acts of benevolence (“duties towards our fellow-Jews”); and prayer (“duties towards G-d”).*

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.



Published by Lubavitch Youth Organization  
1408 President St, Brooklyn, NY, 11213  
phone 718 778 6000

Rabbi Dovid Raskin ז"ל  
Director Rabbi Shmuel Butman ז"ל  
Publishing Director Rabbi Yosef Y. Butman  
Program Director Rabbi Kasriel Kastel  
Secretary Rabbi Moshe P. Goldman  
Administrator Rabbi Shlomo Friedman  
Layout Rivky Laifer  
Associate Editor Dovid Y. B. Kaufmann ז"ל  
Chairman Editorial Comm. Rabbi Nissen Mangel  
Rebbe photo S. Roumani

L’chaim contains words from sacred literature. Please do not deface or discard.  
All contents © 2024 by L.Y.O. ISSN 1050 0480  
L’chaim Subscriptions  
For a one year subscription send \$55,  
payable to LYO (\$60 elsewhere) to:  
L’chaim, 1408 President St., Bklyn, NY, 11213  
Learn about Moshiach  
Visit www.moshiach.com or call (718) 953 6100