



The Baal Shem Tov was so great that even many who were otherwise opponents of Chasidut stood in awe of him. One of these antagonists was Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Margolios, the Rabbi of Dubnow.

Once, Reb Yaakov of Kaiden told the following story: "I was a teacher in the village of Yanov, which is near Kovno. At that time Reb Chaim Mordechai Margolios was the rabbi there, and he owned several forests on the outskirts of the city. He used to come to inspect the woods, and on one of those trips he came to Kovno. Many wealthy and learned men came to greet him, and they exchanged words of Torah. I was privileged to be present and I listened to their learned discourse. At one point the conversation got around to the topic of Chasidut. There were some who spoke very disrespectfully of several of the great Chasidic Rebbes. One man even spoke out against the Baal Shem Tov himself.

"At that, Rabbi Margolios spoke out crying, 'My dear friends! Please do not speak in this way! I refuse to allow any negative comments about the Baal Shem Tov. Don't misunderstand me, I am as opposed to Chasidut as you are, but the Baal Shem Tov is different; he is completely beyond reproach. Why, he is considered as great as the Talmudic Sages, as great as the famed Kabbalist, the Ari Zal himself!'

"The people were shocked to hear these words spoken by their rabbi, and they begged him for further explanation. 'What was the Baal Shem Tov really like?' they asked. 'If he was truly so great, why was there such controversy about him? And why did he act so strangely, so different from the other great rabbis and scholars of his time?'

" 'You are asking very good questions. It is true that his behavior was at times very strange and his Torah interpretations were definitely unusual. However, you may not challenge his interpretations, even when they seem to deviate from the traditional understanding of the verses. He was a unique individual and he was given the power from Above to do as he pleased with his interpretations. I will explain this to you with a story:

" 'Once there was a great king who loved his only son very much. Out of his great love, he entrusted his son with the keys to his vaults where he stored all of his most valuable possessions. One day, the officers of the royal guard appeared before the king with a complaint: 'Your Majesty, you have given all of your royal treasures to your son, the prince. We are sure that Your Majesty has done the best possible thing, by bestowing this honor and responsibility upon His Highness, the Prince, but we want to tell you, Sire, that with our small intellect, we cannot understand what the Prince is doing with the treasure. His arrangements are so completely different from anything Your Majesty has ever done before, it seems very strange to us.'

" 'The king nodded his head in understanding, saying, 'I have given my dear son all of my treasures to do with as he sees fit, and I am fully confident that he will not betray my trust. In his deep wisdom, he has a plan for all of his actions, and that plan is good and just.'

"This," Reb Yaakov concluded, "was how Rabbi Margolios described the greatness of the Baal Shem Tov, whom G-d entrusted with His greatest treasures of the Torah."

The Rabbi of Kadinov used to say that the main goal of the Baal Shem Tov was to learn the Divine service that would exist in the Era of Moshiach. From the time of the Baal Shem Tov onward, the spark of Moshiach began to burn in the souls of the leaders of the generations.

This is how we can understand the verse in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 96), "The last two thousand years of the world will be the era of Moshiach." The word thousands in Hebrew is "alafim," which can also be connected to the title "aluf chochma," which translates, "teacher of wisdom." The Baal Shem Tov taught himself the special wisdom which will characterize the Era of Moshiach - Chasidut - which consists of the two basic doctrines of humility and joy.

Dedicated in honor of our dear children

Yisroel, Mendel, Rosie, Riva, & Leah ז"ל
לברכה והצלחה בכל הענינים בגו"ר, בשמחה ושוב לבנו

By Ezzy and Malka Rappaport
Bay Harbor Islands, FL

One day a childless woman came to the Baal Shem Tov weeping and beseeching him for a blessing. He promised her a son; however, since she was truly unable to bear a child, and his promise disturbed the natural course of events, he was punished. The verdict was that he would lose his portion in the World to Come.

When the Baal Shem Tov heard this sentence pronounced upon him, he rejoiced, for he would now be able to serve his Creator without possibility of reward. His decision to now continue his Divine service for entirely pure motives elevated his soul to the most sublime heights. Then, he was told by his teacher, the prophet Achiya Hashiloni that this had all been a test given to him in order to achieve spiritual perfection.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

And I pleaded with the L-rd (va'etchanan) at that time (Deut. 3:23)

One reason the Torah uses this phrase instead of "va'etpalel" ("and I prayed") is that the numerical equivalent of "va'etchanan" is the same as "tefila" ("prayer") and "shira" ("song"). This teaches that it is commendable to pray in a melodious, pleasant voice, utilizing the best of one's G-d-given abilities for speech and song for a higher purpose. (*Pa'aneiach Raza*)

You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor shall you diminish from it (Deut. 4:2)

The Torah is a life-giving elixir, a Divine "prescription" for purity and holiness. It is therefore forbidden to add or detract from the Torah's commandments in the same way one mustn't tamper with the proportions of a medicinal compound. Too much or too little of any one element can be extremely detrimental, and the "doctor's" instructions must be followed exactly. (*Rabbi Yehonatan Eibeshutz*)

Rabbi Eziel Hildesheimer was once visited by a delegation seeking to "amend" the Torah. There are many Jews, they claimed, who would like to observe mitzvot, but find it difficult to observe all of them. The solution is to alter the Torah and make it less demanding. Countered the Rabbi, "It states, 'Nor shall you diminish from it, that you may keep the commandments of the L-rd your G-d.' Even for the sake of ostensibly doing mitzvot is it forbidden to decrease their number."

And they will say, "Surely a wise and understanding people is this great nation" (Deut. 4:6)

In a different verse (Deut. 7:7) the Torah calls the Jewish people "the fewest of all the nations." How, then, can they also be "great?" In number, the Jews are a very small people. But by accepting their role of keeping the Torah's mitzvot they become qualitatively great, enjoying an elevated status in society and wielding great influence in all areas of life. (*Nofet Tzufim*)

8:01 PM Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area

Av 10 / July 24

Torah Portion Va'etchanan

Shabbat Nachamu

Ethics: Ch 3

Shabbat ends **9:05 PM**



L'Chaim

בסי"ח

1933

10 Menachem Av, 5786

July 24, 2026

**The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person**

נוסד תור ימי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson

"Jerusalem has mountains around it, and the L-rd is around His people from now and to eternity" (Psalms 125:2)

Thirst

After their long exile in Egypt, the people of Israel faced one final challenge before entering the Land of Canaan. For forty years they journeyed through the Sinai Desert, overcoming the last obstacles before fulfilling their mission as a holy people in a holy land.

More than four hundred years ago, the master Kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria (the Holy Ari) taught that the final generation of exile—the generation destined to welcome the ultimate Redeemer—would be the reincarnation of the very generation that wandered through the desert. Moses described their journey as passing “through the huge and awesome desert... [a place of] thirst without water.” These words also capture the spiritual landscape of our own generation as we stand on the threshold of Redemption.

A WORLD THAT SEEMS OVERWHELMING

The first challenge of today’s “desert” is that it appears “great and awesome.” These words describe not only the desert itself but also our perception of it. Although wilderness covers more of the earth than cultivated land, size alone does not determine significance. What matters is purpose. Places where people transform their surroundings and direct them toward a higher goal possess greater value than vast stretches of untamed land.

The same principle applies spiritually. It is easy to become discouraged by the apparent dominance of negativity. After thousands of years of striving for

goodness, evil can still seem to outweigh good. Yet this judges success by quantity rather than impact.

Our task is not only to cross the desert but to overcome our perception of its greatness. A small amount of light dispels great darkness. We must learn to judge by quality rather than numbers and recognize that while the desert may be vast, it is neither truly great nor deserving of awe.

A GENERATION THIRSTING FOR MEANING

The second defining feature of our generation is that it is a time of “thirst without water.” Many people are searching for truth, meaning, and purpose. They long for spiritual direction, yet the “water” that could satisfy this thirst—the wisdom and knowledge they seek—often seems hidden behind barriers of ignorance or distance.

The thirst, however, is real. People are ready to drink if only they are shown where to find the water. Our challenge is not to create a desire for truth but to make it accessible to those already searching.

The great gift of our generation is that these living waters are now within reach. The revealed teachings of Torah, together with its inner dimension, offer the clarity, purpose, and spiritual nourishment so many seek. For all who truly thirst for meaning, the revealed and inner Torah provide the living water that alone can quench the soul’s deepest thirst.

Based on an address by the Rebbe, Shabbat Eikev 5717 (1957).



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

The Fifteenth of Av (Tu B'Av) is a special holiday, about which our Sages declared, "There were no days as festive in Israel as the Fifteenth of Av and Yom Kippur." The significance of Yom Kippur is obvious, but what was so exceptional about Tu B'Av?

In the times of the Holy Temple, an ample supply of wood was required for the altar. The season for felling trees began in the month of Nisan and ended on Tu B'Av, the warmest time of year when the trees dried out and had little chance of worm infestation. Tu B'Av thus marked the day on which the great mitzva (commandment) of preparing the wood for the Temple was completed.

But what was so joyous about the fact that the trees were no longer cut? And what is the significance of cutting trees, anyway? To explain: Both Tu B'Av and Tisha B'Av are associated with the Temple. However, on Tisha B'Av we mourn the destruction of the Temple; on Tu B'Av we rejoice in a mitzva that relates to the Temple's continued existence.

When the Temple stood, cutting the trees enabled our ancestors to fulfill this mitzva; indeed, it epitomized the Temple's very purpose: to serve as a "House" for G-d where sacrifices could be brought.

As is known, the Second Holy Temple was destroyed on account of the sin of baseless hatred. Tu B'Av, however, was characterized by a sense of unity. The wood that was cut for the altar caused a great benefit for all Jews - the atonement of their sins, as effected by the sacrifices.

Tu B'Av was also known as "The Day of the Breaking of the Axes." On that day, all the axes used to fell the trees for the Temple were destroyed. Why were the axes not saved?

An axe is a tool made of iron. According to Jewish law, it is forbidden for iron to touch the stones of the Temple's altar, as in addition to its positive uses, iron can also be forged into weapons of destruction. Accordingly, once the axes had fulfilled their function, they were destroyed to preclude being used for unholy purposes.

Tu B'Av can thus counteract the negative elements of Tisha B'Av, especially the sin of baseless hatred. We must act toward our fellow Jew with "baseless love." The reason for the destruction of the Temple will thus be nullified, and we will merit the building of the Third Holy Temple, now!

Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Volume 24

SLICE OF LIFE

Iceland Gets Its First Jewish Center

Reykjavik's Beit Shvidler Jewish Center is first in country's history

By Shloimy Galperin / Chabad.org



The distinctive 9,000-square-foot structure is the country's first Jewish center and Jewish culture house.

The distinctive 9,000-square-foot structure is the country's first Jewish center and Jewish culture house.

"We dreamed of this moment for years," Rabbi Avraham Feldman told the crowd packed into the brand new center on July 7. "And now we are sitting in this dream that has become reality."

The dream in question is the Beit Shvidler Jewish Center of Iceland, a 9,000-square-foot structure that opened that evening as the country's first Jewish center and Jewish culture house. Three stories tall, its distinctive color and design makes the building a landmark and instantly recognizable.

Jews have lived in Iceland for more than a century, but the community spent most of that time without a permanent rabbi or a synagogue of its own, an absence that set Reykjavik apart from every other capital in Europe.

That changed in 2018, when Rabbi Avraham and Mushky Feldman, moved to the city as Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries and opened Iceland's first Jewish center. For the past eight years, the Jewish Community Iceland—Beit Tovah Chabad- the only active Jewish organization in the country- has been operating out of the Feldman's home and temporary spaces. Until now.

"The center is a home. It's a place where you can walk through the door and feel comfortable," Feldman said in his remarks. "Where you can simply be Jewish."

Serving both Iceland's local Jewish community and the Jewish travelers who pass through the country, the center will also have space for programming that the community's previous, more limited quarters could not accommodate. It will house a Judaica and kosher store, as well as a stunning social hall for community events.

It is also designed to open outward: any Icelander curious about Jewish life can now walk in and encounter it directly. The center will host the Gallery of Jewish Life in Iceland, a new permanent exhibit that traces more than a hundred years of the island's Jewish history through photographs and documents that, until now, had nowhere to be shown. Now, that history finally has a home.

"This is exactly the kind of place the Lubavitcher Rebbe envisioned when he spoke of ahavat yisrael, giving every Jew the chance to connect with and celebrate their Judaism."

A COUNTRY-WIDE CELEBRATION

Jón Gnarr, Reykjavik's former mayor and now a member of the Icelandic Parliament, used his remarks to talk about the country's debts to its Jewish

community, and the Jewish authors he has been influenced by. He described the new center as "a living bridge, connecting cultures, dispelling ignorance, and fostering dialogue and understanding."

"Many Jews in Iceland have felt hesitant to say out loud that they're Jewish," Gnarr said. "That's why education and dialogue are key."

Acting U.S. Ambassador Joanie Simon, Rabbi Mendy Kotlarsky, community member Patrick Sulem and Mushky Feldman also addressed the gathering, while cantor Aryeh Leib Hurwitz brought the sound of traditional chazanut into a room that had never held it before.

The opening drew recognition from the highest levels of Icelandic government.

Prime Minister Kristrún Frostadóttir, a guest of Jewish community events in the past, sent a letter describing the center as "an important milestone for the Jewish community and for Icelandic society," and expressed hope for "continued cooperation between the Jewish community and the Government of Iceland." Þórunn Sveinbjarnardóttir, Speaker of Althingi (parliament), wrote separately to recognize the occasion.

The evening closed with thanks to the donors whose generosity built the center, among them Eugene Shvidler, whose vision, leadership and generosity helped propel the center from an idea into a building people could actually walk into and celebrate Jewish life, philanthropists Isaac and Tovah Cohen, George and Pamela Rohr, The Shmuel Isaac and Miriam Popack Foundation and Dovid and Rivka Feldman.

"Together," Rabbi Feldman told the room, "we are writing the Icelandic chapter in the story of the Jewish people."

ETHICS: CHAPTER 3

Rabbi Eliezer the son of Azariah would say: If there is no Torah, there is no common decency; if there is no common decency, there is no Torah. If there is no wisdom, there is no fear of G-d; if there is no fear of G-d, there is no wisdom. If there is no applied knowledge, there is no analytical knowledge; if there is no analytical knowledge, there is no applied knowledge. If there is no flour, there is no Torah; if there is no Torah, there is no flour.

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

11th of Menachem Av, 5720 [1960]

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 28th, with the enclosure.

I thank you in anticipation of the film which you sent, even though you write that it did not come out as well as desired. However, to see the children marching, with radiant faces, etc., surely this is the most important thing.

I note your plans for visiting the Holy Land, and I send you my prayerful wishes for an enjoyable and inspiring trip. No doubt you will visit the Chabad institutions, although some of them may have reduced programs in view of the vacation period.

Having just observed the sad period of the Destruction [of the Holy Temple] (may G-d convert it to a period of joy), I need hardly emphasize to you that the purpose of such observance is to be inspired to do everything possible to remove the causes which brought about the Destruction and Exile, as we say in our prayers "Because of our sins we have been exiled from our land." Every activity of "Depart from evil and do good," helps to offset these causes and to lay the foundation for the Geulo Shleimo [complete Redemption].

Included in this category is, of course, also your work for strengthening Yiddishkeit [Judaism] in your community, especially in the field of Kashrus and Kosher education, and I trust both you and your wife will continue to make growing efforts in this direction, in good health, with minimum of business anxiety and a maximum of Parnosso [livelihood], including Tzedoko [charity].

Hoping to hear good news from you always,

With blessing,

MOSHIACH MATTERS

"The teachings of Chasidut," someone might argue, "are indeed likened to gems and pearls but I'm not one to chase after pearls; I'm satisfied if my clothes aren't

15th of Menachem Av, 5719 [1959]

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of August 17th, and thank you also for the regards from our Holy Land, in connection with your recent visit there. I also appreciate your sending me the clipping and for your intention to send me a copy of the films you took in Kfar Chabad, if they come out well. I am looking forward to receiving them.

With regard to the necessary documents for your son, the matter was turned over to the Yeshiva Administration, and no doubt they will take care of the formalities.

May G-d grant that, in as much as when the Beth Hamikdosh [Holy Temple] was in existence the 15th of Av was a very special and joyous day, may it inaugurate for you and yours a period of increased Divine blessings in all the matters you mention in your letter.

With prayerful wishes and kind regards to you and Mrs. J-, and with blessing to all your family,

15th of Menachem Av, 5717 [1967]

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter of July 29th. As the 15th of Menachem Av begins an auspicious period, of which our Sages said that he who increases his effort in matters of Torah and Mitzvot [commandments], receives increased Divine blessings, I trust that this will be so in your case, and that you will, therefore, not take it too much to heart that the last deal did not materialize, especially as no human being can know what is best for him.

In accordance with this period mentioned above, I trust that you and Mrs. J- will make increased efforts in strengthening Yiddishkeit in your community, and thus merit increased Divine blessings.

With blessing,

I had been hoping to receive good news from you about a shidduch [match] for your brother J-. May it come to pass very soon.

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 Shabbat, the 11th of Menachem Av, is the yartzeit of one of the most famous and colorful Chabad Chasidim, Reb Hillel Paritcher.

Reb Hillel was born in 1795 and was married before his bar mitzva (!). As he was still too young to don tefilin and could only wear a talit, he was called "Chol Hamoed" ("the Intermediate Days of a Festival," when tefilin are not worn). By 13 he had already mastered the entire Talmud, and was fluent in Poskim and Kabbala. By 15, he was expert in the writings of the holy Arizal.

Originally a Chasid of Reb Mordechai of Chernobyl, he became a Chabad Chasid the first time he opened the Tanya. His lifelong dream was to meet the Alter Rebbe, the Tanya's author and the founder of Chabad Chasidism, but this was not to be. For years Reb Hillel trailed the Alter Rebbe across the Pale, but never caught up to him.

One time he arrived in the city where the Alter Rebbe was expected and hid under his bed. While waiting, he formulated in his mind the question on Tractate Erachin that he would ask the Alter Rebbe. When the Alter Rebbe entered the room, before Reb Hillel could even emerge from his hiding place, the Alter Rebbe said in his characteristic sing-song: "When a person has a question about Erachin [literally 'assessments'], he must assess himself first..." Reb Hillel fainted, and by the time he woke up the Alter Rebbe was gone.

It wasn't until after the Alter Rebbe passed away that Reb Hillel came to Lubavitch, where the Mittler Rebbe enjoined him to "collect materiality [funds for charity] and sow spirituality."

His most famous work, published posthumously, was Pelach HaRimon. He is buried in Kharson.

May his memory be a blessing for us all.

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.



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

Chairman
Director
Publishing Director
Program Director
Secretary
Administrator
Layout
Associate Editor
Chairman Editorial Comm.
Rebbe photo

Rabbi David Raskin זצ"ל
Rabbi Shmuel Butman ז"ל
Rabbi Yosef Y. Butman
Rabbi Kasriel Kastel
Rabbi Moshe P. Goldman
Rabbi Shlomo Friedman
Rivky Laifer
Dovid Y. B. Kaufmann ז"ל
Rabbi Nissen Mangel
S. Roumani

L'Chaim contains words from sacred literature. Please do not deface or discard.

All contents © 2026 by L.Y.O. ISSN 1050 0480

L'Chaim Subscriptions

For a one year regular or gift subscription, send \$55, payable to LYO

(\$60 elsewhere) to: L'Chaim, 1408 President St, Bklyn, NY, 11213

Please call our office before sending in any subscriptions.

Learn about Moshiah

Visit www.moshiah.com or call (718) 953 6100