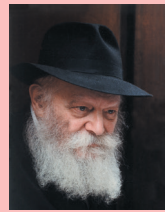


L'Chaim

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The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person
נוסד תוך ימי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"To You I lifted up my eyes, You Who dwell in heaven" (Psalm 123:1)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

The accounts of our ancestors found in the Torah are not merely chronicles of Jewish history. Every part of the Torah is included to teach us how to worship G-d and conduct our lives.

This week's Torah portion, Vayeitzei, speaks of Jacob's departure from Israel to Charan. In Charan he worked for his Uncle Lavan for 20 years, married Rachel and Leah, and established the Twelve Tribes. Vayeitzei also relates his return from Charan to the Holy Land.

Jewish mysticism explains the difference between Jacob's departure to Charan and his triumphant return. After setting out on his journey, Jacob merited a personal revelation from G-d ("And behold, the L-rd stood above him"). The Torah describes the circumstances: "And he reached a certain place"--Jacob had to be in a particular place in order to receive the revelation, and then it was only in the form of a dream. But we find 20 years later, when Jacob was returning from Charan, "angels of G-d met him there"--the angels, and G-d Himself (as explained in the Zohar), actively went out and sought him. Furthermore, this time Jacob was awake and not dreaming.

We learn from Jacob's 20-year sojourn in Charan how much can be accomplished by "descent"-- by putting one's physical efforts into bringing holiness into the world. Every Jew must likewise "descend" into his own "Charan"--where he must wrestle with his own version of "Lavan the Aramean," and emerge victorious, having successfully elevated the sparks of holiness hidden in the physical world.

This is no easy task, and it requires much study and preparation. Before setting out into the world, a Jew must first ready himself in "the Holy Land," which symbolizes the highest level of holiness. Before a Jew can positively influence his surroundings, he must be sufficiently educated and knowledgeable in Torah. Before Jacob left Israel for Charan, he prepared himself by learning in the yeshiva of Eber for 14 years. Every Jew must likewise prepare himself by dedicating time to Torah study. This underscores the importance of a good Jewish education, and in particular, the necessity of beginning a child's Jewish education even before he is ready for formal schooling.

The theme of preparing oneself before embarking on life's journey is also expressed in a Jew's daily life. A Jew does not rely solely on his own power and talents, but rather, begins his day by praying and asking for G-d's help in carrying out his mission in this world.

By preparing ourselves properly before attending to our daily concerns, we are assured of success in both the spiritual and physical realms.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Well Therapy

By Rabbi Yosef Y. Jacobson

THREE MATCHES

The Midrash relates that three of the greatest men of the Jewish faith encountered their future wives at wells of water: Isaac, Jacob and Moses.

Now, we could understand the site of a stream or a river as being uniquely conducive for romance.

But what was it about underground wells that brought about the union of our original fathers and mothers?

THE PATH TO MARRIAGE

Like all of the stories in the Torah, this one, too, contains psychological and spiritual symbolism that may assist us in our own efforts to find a spouse and maintain a meaningful relationship with that person.

A well, unlike other pools of water, contains opposite components.

On one hand, the well is of no value without human effort and toil. Unlike the readily exposed rain or ocean water, we must dig hard, and sometimes deep, to uncover the spring of water hidden below the crust of the earth.

On the other hand, we human beings do not create the flow of water of the well; our efforts merely expose that which already exists fully, prior to our labor.

This is the Torah approach to marriage as well. In the words of the Zohar, "A wife and her husband are two halves of the same soul." Each of our matches, just like a well, is made in heaven. The connection is there beforehand; the flow of water-energy from your soul to your future spouse's soul is already in existence. It may however be completely concealed

and the human job is to search, dig and expose that inner source of water.

WHEN CONFLICT EMERGES

And just as we cannot create a well, we can neither destroy it. We can stuff it, obstruct it or divert its flow, but we cannot annihilate it. When you experience a conflict with your spouse, do not conclude that the relationship is dead.

The bond between a wife and husband is an inherent condition, not an acquired one. It is sown into the very fabric of both of their souls. Your relationship is not subject to destruction.

Yet this may lay buried beneath lots of sand and gravel, and each of us needs to be committed to take a shovel in our hands and bring to the surface the inner wellspring of love that bond us to our partner in life.

Our fathers encountered their wives by wells to teach us that the relationship between spouses is etched into our very souls. Our labor is only to expose and enhance a preexisting bond and oneness.

HARD WORK

The marriages of Isaac, Jacob and Moses came about particularly through much sweat and toil. Jacob, as this week's portion tells the story, labored 14 years for Rachel.

The well symbolized their own attitude towards finding a spouse: The relationship, just like a well, is a preexisting reality. But since it is hidden beneath the surface of the earth, each person must dig in order to expose and maintain the inherent relationship between the husband and the wife.

SLICE OF LIFE

'The Almighty Helped Me Survive':

A Marine's Tale from the Pacific Theater

By Mordechai Lightstone



The first U.S. flag to be planted on Guam, 1944, Bernard Haller to the right.

When Bernard (Baruch) Haller enlisted in the United States Marines in 1941, he had two goals: to serve his country and to survive. To accomplish these goals, he knew that he'd need the help of a Higher Power. And so Haller, known to friends as Bernie, vowed then and there never to eat non-kosher meat and never to miss a day of tefillin.

So important was this commitment that before Haller passed away on June 29, 2009, he chose the words to be inscribed on his tombstone: "I served in the U.S. Marine Corp. in WWII as a Staff Sgt. I managed to put on tefillin every day even during combat in the Pacific and refrained from eating meat the entire time. The Almighty helped me to survive."

The epitaph, complete with the Eagle, Globe and Anchor insignia of the U.S. Marine Corps, is one that has gone viral in recent years. Each year, usually around Memorial Day, photos of the moving inscription are tweeted and forwarded on WhatsApp countless times.

"In many ways, I don't know what my father would think about the attention," said his son, Leibe Haller, "He always tried to stay out of the public eye."

Yet in his father's story lies a powerful message of Jewish tenacity in the face of all obstacles.

Bernie Haller was born on March 10, 1919, in Manhattan's Lower East Side, one of second-generation immigrants Wolf and Yetta Haller's four children.

Wolf, a tailor by profession, bucked the overwhelming tide of American assimilation and fought hard to keep Shabbat.

"The situation was such that if my grandfather had a job on Friday," Leibe Haller relates, "they'd fire him when they realized he wouldn't work over Shabbat, and he'd need to find a new job for the next week to come."

Money was tight for the Hallers, and as a result, young Bernie couldn't afford yeshiva tuition. Instead, Bernie used to head over to a local yeshiva after school and sit outside the window to catch whatever bits and pieces of the Torah lessons he could.

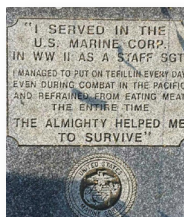
COURAGE UNDER FIRE

Despite the struggles, Bernie likewise remained committed to Judaism. When, in 1941, he enlisted in the Armed Forces along with 11 of his cousins, he took the Marine motto, *Semper fidelis*, Latin for "always faithful," to heart, both in regards to his country and to his Jewish faith.

Shortly before he was deployed, Haller married his sweetheart, Tziporah Malka Fried. Haller shipped out to the Pacific Theater in 1942, fighting in the Battles of Saipan and Guam. Later, he was stationed in the Philippines.

At one point, taking cover in a foxhole during the heat of battle, Haller counted 10 tracers flashing towards him. Tracers, used to assist in aiming, came on every tenth round of machine-gun fire, which meant that in total, some 100 rounds of fire had passed in the narrow space between his helmet and that of the Marine hunkered next to him.

Haller seldom spoke about his experience during the war, but his son recalls a time when, years later in the Bronx, his father awakened from a traumatic dream in the night and screamed for his rifle.



Bernard Haller: A proud Jew and a proud American

Haller's religious commitment in the Marines didn't come easy. When one cook found out that the Jewish staff sergeant was avoiding meat, he began adding lard to the vegetables he served out of spite. When Haller found out, he switched to eating only raw vegetables.

Harassment came in other ways as well. To avoid attracting undue attention from his fellow Marines, Haller would put on tefillin when no one else was around. Still, they taunted him with slurs, referring to him as "Benny the Heeb." One evening, a group held him down and began to ruffle his hair.

"What are you doing?" Haller asked in confusion. "We're looking for your horns," came the retort. "Jews hide them during the day, but they come out at night."

But as time went by and they saw Haller's courage under fire, the harassment faded.

HALLER DURING HIS SERVICE

Haller remained ever committed to G-d, recognizing His works and assistance in the many ways he survived. Like the time his platoon was to be sent to Iwo Jima in the winter of 1945. On the eve of the difficult, bloody battle—nearly 7,000 Americans lost their lives on the island—Haller's entire platoon developed yellow eyes, a sure sign of yellow fever. Their commanding officer held the platoon back, only for it to later be discovered that the change in eye color was caused by something the platoon had eaten. Because of that, their lives were spared.

After the war, Haller returned to New York. He and Tziporah Malka settled first in the West Bronx, followed by the Pelham Parkway neighborhood and then Riverdale, all in the Bronx. The couple had three children (Leibe Haller attended Chabad-Lubavitch's Yeshivas Achei Temimim in the Bronx under the auspices of Rabbi Mordechai Altein) and Bernie worked hard to earn a living, first selling confectionery products and later detergent.

But each morning throughout his long life, he'd rise, put on his tallit and tefillin, and pray to the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—dedicated to the end to his family, his people, his country and to the Almighty, who sustained him through it all.

New Shluchim Headed to War-Torn Kharkiv, Ukraine



Rabbi Sholom Ber and Chavi Moskovitz and their newborn son Menachem Mendel are joining the shluchim in Kharkiv, Ukraine.

While Kharkiv has been under attack since the first day of the war, the Jewish community—young and old in the city are turning to the Jewish community more than ever before. Whether it is for a food package or a shiur, a Chanukah program or a shabbaton, a kindergarten in the shule basement or a camp for their children – the community has been the lifeline for the thousands of Jews in the city.

The new shluchim will be helping with youth programs, shiurim, teaching in the school and running the extensive humanitarian help programs. Rabbi Sholom Ber Moskovitz is the son of the Chief Rabbi of Kharkiv, Moshe Moskovitz who was sent in 1990 by the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The young Moskovitzs are eager to begin their shlichus in Kharkiv and to brighten up the lives of so many Jews.

Customs

What is Kiddush Levana?

Kiddush Levana—the Sanctification of the Moon—is a blessing recited over seeing the new moon. The ceremony also includes several Psalms and an excerpt from the Talmud. It is recited outdoors when the new moon is visible, preferably on a Saturday night, when one is already dressed in festive clothing. According to Jewish mysticism it is best to sanctify the moon between the 7th and 15th of the Jewish month. However, one can recite it as early as the 3rd or 4th and up to the 16th.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

THE DEDICATION OF SHLUCHIM IN ACTION

By the Grace of G-d
Erev Shovuoth, 5722
Brooklyn, N.Y.,
Mr. Chayim Yaakov Lipschitz
168 Warberton Avenue,
Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y.

...In view of your mentioning that you plan a trip to Europe and to work in Italy, I trust you may have an opportunity to visit Milan and get acquainted with a young couple, Rabbi and Mrs. Garelik (Via Giulio Uberti 41).

Rabbi Garelik was born, and for the first decade of his life brought up, under the Bolshevik regime. His wife is an American born girl, who gave up all the amenities of American life to join her husband in a mission to spread Yiddishkeit in Italy, especially among the young generation.

Despite initial difficulties and the language problem, they have succeeded in their work thanks to their dedication and inspiration which have won them recognition and admiration.

It goes to emphasize the common bonds which unite Jewish people everywhere by means of the Torah and Mitzvoth which are eternal and know of no boundaries.

In a sense, the art of sculpture is analogous, in that by means of the creative idea it animates the inanimate raw material, giving it form and life that evoke responses in the viewer...



POSITIVE INFLUENCE IN THE CLASSROOM

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Of the 19 blessings in the Amida (Shemona Esrei) prayer which we recite three times daily, eight deal with Messianic ideals. According

By the Grace of G-d
8th of Kislev, 5718
Brooklyn, N. Y.
Mrs. Ratze Schildkraut
88 Kensington St.
New Haven, 11 Conn.
Blessing and Greeting:

I was pleased to receive your letter of the 28th of Marcheshvan, in which you write that you started teaching. Judging from the tone of your letter, you seem to be satisfied.

I am particularly gratified that you have clearly noted the improvements in the Yeshiva matters, and I trust that this will strengthen your faith in G-d, that everything will continue to improve in the future, even those things, which, for the present, do not seem to be quite in order, for all that G-d does is for good.

With regard to your writing that your children are nervous and not sufficiently attentive to their studies, this is a frequent occurrence with children, and is no ground for anxiety, especially as the conditions are stationary and not getting worse, G-d forbid.

One of the ways to improve matters would be that they should be in the company with other children of their age, so that they will, instinctively, try not to be different, and the condition will pass in due course.

Certainly it would not be advisable to make an issue of it, or let the child feel any exaggerated anxiety on your part.

Furthermore, you should quite dismiss from your mind any thought that this may have anything to do with your pregnancy.

At the same time, your work, as well as that of your husband, in the field of Kosher education, will surely stand you both in good stead, to have true Nachas, which is Yiddish Nachas, from your children.

With blessing,

to Maimonides, the 12 middle benedictions of the Amida contain the request for everything that is central to all of the needs of each and every individual as well as the needs of the community. Within this section, there are five requests for Moshiach and the Messianic Age!

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 Tuesday is the ninth of Kislev, the birthday and yahrtzeit of Rabbi Dov Ber (known as the Mittler Rebbe), the second Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch.

In 1816, Reb Dov Ber established a settlement of Chabad chasidim in Israel in the city of Hebron. He encouraged the chasidim already living in other parts of Israel to resettle in Hebron. In addition, his own daughter and son-in-law moved with their family from Russia to Hebron.

But the history of Chabad-Lubavitch support of people, institutions and settlements in the Holy Land predates even 1816. For the first Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, vigorously encouraged his followers to support the Jews in the Holy Land.

Each and every Rebbe of Chabad, up to and including our Rebbe, has unequivocally supported the Holy Land and spoken out boldly concerning anything that might have the slightest impact on the security of the Jews there.

Our brethren in Israel know first-hand about the Rebbe's concern for them and their lives. One such example is, how during the Gulf War the Rebbe's emphatic message that "Israel is the safest place in the world for G-d is constantly watching it" was continuously played on the radio. The hundreds of Chabad Centers that dot the Israeli landscape were deluged with callers during the Gulf War asking, "What is the Rebbe saying now?"

Without a doubt, and everyone can be sure of this, the Rebbe's policy remains the same, and has not changed one iota in the past 40 years nor has it changed from that of his predecessors. Based on clear guidance from the Torah and Jewish law, the Rebbe reiterates: No action can be taken that might negatively affect the safety of the Jews of the Holy Land.

In the merit of Rabbi Dov Ber, who established the first Chabad settlement in the Holy Land, may we be privileged to go together with Moshiach to the Holy Land, NOW.

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.



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