

L'Chaim



IT HAPPENED ONCE

For many years the Jews of Bukhara were terribly persecuted by their Muslim neighbors. In one historical period, the Muslims enacted 18 separate laws designed to oppress them and cause public humiliation. Failure to comply with any of these edicts was punished by whipping, having one's hands or feet cut off, and worse.

If the infraction was more serious, the Muslim courts had no compunctions about sentencing a Jew to death. In addition, whenever a Jew was arrested and imprisoned he would be subjected to immense pressure to convert to Islam, lured by the promise of a reduced sentence. The Muslims believed that their religion compelled them to convert as many Jews as possible. It was not unheard of for Jewish children to be kidnapped from their homes. In the event that a Jew did convert, willingly or unwillingly, his every step was eagerly scrutinized. If it was discovered that he had retained any Jewish custom or practice, he was immediately put to death.

The story of Khudadad, a young Bukharan Jew whose Hebrew name was Netanel, took place approximately 200 years ago. One day Khudadad was walking through the streets of the city when he thought he recognized an old childhood friend. Without thinking twice, the young man said hello and extended his hand in greeting. The stranger took the outstretched hand and shook it before he could see to whom it belonged. It was then that the unfortunate error was discovered.

The stranger was not an old acquaintance but, in fact, a religious Muslim, whose hand Khudadad was prohibited from shaking by law. The Muslim was very upset by what had happened. Through no fault of his own he had allowed himself to be disgraced publicly. Khudadad was the first to recover. In an attempt to smooth things over and dissuade the Muslim from hauling him off to the nearest police station, he clapped him on the shoulder.

This, of course, only incensed the Muslim further, who even more than he hated Jews was worried about what his friends might say if they saw him. "No matter, my friend," Khudadad said with a smile. "Do we not all believe in the same G-d and agree that He alone is the Creator of the world?" The Muslim, who by then had gathered his wits, seized the Jew's words as if he had suddenly stumbled upon a great treasure. "Did you hear that?" he cried out in a loud voice to the crowd of onlookers.

"This young Jew just accepted the Muslim religion upon himself!" Khudadad was immediately led to the emir's palace, where the Muslim testified that the Jew had converted to Islam of his own free will. Several Muslim bystanders also swore that they had heard the Jew's declaration of belief in G-d and the prophet Muhammad with their own two ears.

Khudadad realized that he was in far more trouble than he would have faced for merely shaking a Muslim's hand. "They're lying – it just isn't true!" he protested, but no one believed him. The emir accepted the witnesses' testimony and pronounced Khudadad an authentic Muslim. But the young Jew was unwilling to cut himself off from his Judaism, even outwardly.

"You can believe whatever you want, but I was born a Jew and I'll die a Jew," he insisted. In the face of such sacrilege the emir had no choice but to throw Khudadad into prison. The leaders of the Bukharan Jewish community did everything they could to save him, but the only concession they won (with the help of a sizeable bribe) was that Khudadad was allowed to remain under house arrest until his trial.

Even though the outcome of the trial was a fait accompli, Khudadad conducted himself calmly during this period, offering encouragement to his parents,

brothers and sisters, and young wife. "Just make sure to tell my children when they grow up that their father sacrificed his life for G-d and for the honor of the Torah," he told them.

On the day of the trial a huge crowd of Muslims and Jews gathered around the emir's palace, waiting tensely to hear the verdict. Again Khudadad was offered the opportunity to save his life by accepting Islam. But Khudadad remained unimpressed, and with a disdainful smile he refused their gesture. "Hurry up and carry out your sentence," he declared. "My revenge will ultimately be taken by the G-d of truth." That very day Khudadad was executed. The story of Khudadad, the young Jew who bravely sanctified the name of G-d, was passed down from generation to generation, and later greatly encouraged the Jews of Bukhara under the totalitarian Communist regime. At the end of the nineteenth century his children emigrated to the Holy Land and settled in Jerusalem, and many of his descendants are today pious Jews and Chasidim.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

For the person undergoing the purification there be taken two live kosher birds, cedar wood, yarn dyed crimson in the blood of a worm, and a hyssop branch. (Lev. 14:4)

The disease of tzaraat is the result of slanderous talk which is like babbling words. Consequently birds which babble continuously were required for his purification. The disease was also caused by pride. Through humility one rid himself of this trait. The lowly hyssop and the worm from the purification process allude to the necessity of viewing oneself with humility. (Rashi)

When Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev would hear someone speak poorly of another person he would go up to him and say, "My dear friend, aren't you ashamed? You are slandering G-d's tefilin upon which it is written, "Who is Your People Israel."

He shall shave off all his hair – his head, his beard, and his eyebrows. (Lev. 14:9)

Tzaraat came as punishment for three things: haughtiness, gossip, and jealousy. Therefore, the cleansing process for one afflicted with tzaraat was done in the following order: First, the hair on the head was shaved off, because the person's excessive pride caused him to desire to be above others; second, the hair of the beard was removed, because he did not control his mouth and spoke slanderously against his fellow man; and third, the eyebrows were shaved off, as they did not prevent his eyes from looking narrowly and with avarice at the possessions of others. (Klai Yakar)



7:35 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
4 Iyar / May 2
Torah Portion Tazria-Metzora
Shabbat ends 8:47 PM



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

This week we read two Torah portions, Tazria and Metzora. In the second portion, one of the laws pertaining to the Biblical affliction of leprosy (discussed in this week's Torah portion, Metzora), seems somewhat surprising.

If a person discovered an eruption, a bright spot, or a white hair indicative of the disease on part of his body, he was pronounced "impure" by the priest. If, however, the leprosy covered his entire body, he was pronounced pure. "[I]f it is all turned white, he is pure," the Torah repeats.

How can it be that when the leprosy is confined to one area, the person is impure, yet once it has spread all over his body, he is pure?

There are two possible explanations: The sole reason he is considered pure is because it is G-d's will. According to logic, the person whose leprosy covers all of his flesh should be impure; G-d, however, has decreed that he is pure.

The law itself is logical. When the leprosy appears on only a part of a person's skin, it is obvious that he is suffering from some sort of malady. If it covers all of his skin, it is indicative of the individual's constitution and nature, not symptomatic of a disease.

The Talmud cites this law in connection to the concept of redemption, using the affliction of leprosy as a metaphor for sin.

"The son of David [Moshiach] will not come until all authority has become heretical," i.e., when G-dlessness is officially sanctioned and widespread throughout the world. Here we may ask the same question raised regarding leprosy: If the world will be entirely dark, how will it be possible for the light of Redemption to shine through? Why will the Redemption occur precisely when evil is so powerful that it has overcome the entire world?

Again, the above two explanations may be applied to solve our dilemma: There is no logic involved. Moshiach will come when he does only because G-d will have decreed it thus; the Redemption will occur independent of the world's condition. An all-powerful and eternal G-d can certainly bring Moshiach no matter how degraded and evil the world becomes. The fact that evil is ascendent throughout the entire world is proof that something unusual is taking place; were this not so, some pockets of good would certainly have remained.

Rather, the absolute supremacy of evil indicates that all the negative forces have become externalized, as they have already been fully vanquished from within. Thus, the phenomenon of "all authority has become heretical" is actually part of the world's purification, a process of separating good from evil that will ultimately culminate with Moshiach's revelation. At that time, the world will be sufficiently prepared for the light of Redemption.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Professor's Sense of (Passover) Urgency

By Rabbi Mendel Rubin

In the two days leading up to Passover this 2025 I spent quite a bit of time with faculty and administration members dealing with one of my Passover religious exemption letters. The issue didn't involve the holiday dates itself (which the department chair excused) but the travel day back, which was further complicated by the fact that he was celebrating the full Passover with his family, and the family was celebrating Passover in a far-off state, a longer flight away.

(In most instances students might go home for the first days of holiday and back on campus for the rest or for the middle weekday days of the holiday, but some students do spend the entire 8-day holiday away).

In the end, the chair of the department got back to me, (on the Friday afternoon before logging off before Pesach) that excusing the holiday dates is justified, as would be the travel day back, but as the chair wrote me: "student responsible for returning to campus with a degree of urgency that will prevent further class absences, to the extent it is practicable".

The chair actually had personal

experience with flights to Albany from that state, and took the time and went to the lengths of checking out the flight schedule. He saw it was possible to get back for that afternoon class on the day after Pesach. If so, then some urgency and alacrity was expected of the student to get back as soon as possible.

While no doubt some will take issue with this professor being a stickler on this and considerations about what our holidays entail – that line about URGENCY in the department chair's letter jumped out at me!

Indeed, Passover is all about haste, rush and urgency. Alacrity! Our forefathers left Egypt in such an eager haste that the dough on their backs didn't have time to rise. Unlike bread which is given time to rise, and sometimes rise twice, Matzah is baked in a hurry, under 18 minutes from start to finish. Matzah teaches us to strike while the iron is hot, not to procrastinate and delay, instead with eager alacrity.

Rabbi Mendel and Raizy Rubin are the directors of Shabbos House - Rohr Chabad Jewish Student Center at at University at Albany.

SLICE OF LIFE

Chabad Around the World Sharing the Joy and Freedom of Passover



Students arrive at Chabad for comfort and safety after the shooting at Florida State University

FSU Chabad Offers Refuge During Passover After Campus Shooting

In the wake of a deadly shooting at Florida State University, Chabad-Lubavitch of the Panhandle-Tallahassee—which serves university as well as the area Jewish community—became a place of refuge and comfort for students seeking solace during the ongoing Passover holiday.

The shooting, which occurred in the same area of campus where Chabad regularly hosts its weekly “Lunch & Learn” Torah classes, has struck at the heart of the tight-knit community. The Chabad center, directed since 2000 by Rabbi Schneur Zalman and Chanie Oirechman, sits about a mile away.

“We started by checking in with the students we know to make sure everyone was safe and accounted for,” she said. “As the situation escalated, students started reaching out to us and we were flooded with worried messages from other Chabad centers across the world who have community members studying at FSU”

Less than a week earlier, Chabad of the Panhandle hosted 250 students and community members for the first Seder and 150 for the

second Seder.

As students continue to process the traumatic events, the Oirechmans say they are encouraging students to “increase in Torah and mitzvahs,” noting that illuminating the world with goodness and kindness is the only way to cope with such a dark event.

How 300 Volunteers Delivered Matzah to 16,000 Michigan Families

DETROIT—Levi Eber, a yeshiva dorm counselor in Scottsdale, came in from Arizona to help deliver matzah. He spent the week driving around Traverse City, Michigan, and surrounding areas, five hours a day, to deliver shmurah matzah and talk about Passover with residents.

He’s one of more than approximately 300 volunteers joining 30 Chabad centers directed by 50 Chabad couples to take part in a Chabad-Lubavitch of Michigan campaign to send matzah out across communities statewide. In all, approximately 16,600 households received matzah before the start of Passover.

“In 1954, the Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, launched a campaign to give handmade shmurah matzah out around the United States”, says Rabbi Kasriel Shemtov, executive director of Chabad-Lubavitch of Michigan. “Matzah is called the ‘bread of faith’. It is also called ‘bread of healing’. The Rebbe taught that the tradition of having handmade matzah that’s made especially for the Mitzvah is very important”.

Marilyn Yarbrough heard about the campaign online and delivered to 40 homes in Royal Oak and Southfield, while Susan Tulupman delivered matzah to 200 homes across Metro Detroit, when she could have been relaxing at home during a rare week off.

Bari Beckett of Waterford says she was glad to receive the matzah gift from one of the volunteers, and that it will enhance her holiday. “It was just lovely,” she says. “I don’t go anywhere for Passover, so it made a difference.”

Excerpts from an article which was published in collaboration with the Detroit Jewish News.

Sumy Community Miraculously Survives Air Strike

The holiday of Pesach was overshadowed by fear and tragedy for the Jewish community of Sumy, Ukraine, as a deadly missile attack shook the city.

Rabbi Yechiel Shlomo Levitansky, the city’s longtime shliach and rabbi, shared that although members of the Jewish community living in the vicinity were spared, it was nothing short of a miracle.

The attack took place on the first day of Yom Tov, just as the community was gathered in shul for Shacharis. Particularly chilling was the fact that one of the blasts struck near a basement where children had been preparing for a holiday event.

Despite the horror and chaos outside, prayer services continued inside the shul, with heartfelt prayers offered for the safety of the city’s residents. Several families experienced damage to their homes, including shattered windows, but were otherwise unharmed.

While fear understandably affected turnout to the community seder, nevertheless “most of the Jewish families were able to celebrate the Seder properly,” said Rabbi Levitansky. “For those unable to come due to the curfew and safety concerns, we personally delivered Seder kits, so they could fulfill the mitzvos at home.”

Before the holiday, the Chabad-led humanitarian network JRNU mobilized an impressive logistical effort across Ukraine to ensure a proper Pesach for all.

More than 50,000 packages of Kimcha D’Pischa—including shemura matzah, kosher wine, meat, and dairy products—were distributed, even to remote villages. Public Sedarim took place in dozens of cities, drawing tens of thousands of participants, despite the ongoing war.

In Sumy—as in many other cities across the war-torn country—life and faith triumphed over fear, with the Jewish community standing strong and united through the Yom Tov of geulah.

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

30 Tishrei, 5720 [1959]

I received your letter of the 17th of Tishrei in which you write about your background and activities. I was especially gratified to read about your activities to strengthen Yiddishkeit [Judaism] in your environment, in the field of kashrus [the kosher dietary laws], etc.

I was especially pleased to read you realize that there is a great deal more to do. For the realization that there is more to be done ought to bring forth additional forces to meet the challenge. All the more so, since every one of us is commanded to go from strength to strength in all matters of holiness, which should be on the ascendancy.

In this connection it is well to remember the saying of my father-in-law, of saintly memory, that at this time every Jew should consider himself in the position of a mountain climber climbing a steep mountain. In this situation he must continue to climb or slide back, for he cannot remain stationary... It is also a well-known law of physics that the rate of a falling object accelerates.

The lesson is obvious. I read with interest about the books you read and study. I was surprised to note the absence of the Tanya [the basic book of Chabad Chassidic philosophy] and other works on Chassidus, which you no doubt could study in the original, though part of this literature is available in English.

The study of Chassidus would not only be greatly inspiring to yourself, but would have a great influence on your work and inspiration on behalf of others. Young people not burdened by family responsibilities, and full of youthful

energy, should make the fullest use of their opportunities. I trust that you have friends among Anash [members of the Chassidic community] with whom you can discuss a method of learning Chassidus and what sources you should study, though I imagine you should have a fairly good idea.

But nevertheless, many heads are better than one. As for your question with regard to my attitude towards the Holy Land etc., I trust you saw my reply to the question “What is a Jew?” which has been published both in Eretz Yisroel [the Land of Israel] and here in America. Your particular question with regard to emigration and settling in Eretz Yisroel does not indicate whether it refers to yourself or is in a general way.

But my answer would depend on the circumstances of each individual, for it is not possible to give blanket advice on such an important question. As for your question with regard to my attitude towards the Holy Land... I should like, however, to emphasize one general point. No matter how much is expected of a Jew in regard to Torah and Mitzvoth [commandments], wherever he may be, a great deal is expected of him if he is in Eretz Yisroel, of which the Torah says “It is the land on which the eyes of G-d are upon, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.”

So much so, that it is regarded as a Holy Land even among non Jews. Our Sages refer to it as “The Palace of the King.” A person wishing to enter the Royal Palace must be prepared to answer such questions as on what business he is there, and he must be properly prepared in every way. It is demonstrated by his conduct and actions that he realizes he is in a Royal Palace.

It is unnecessary to elaborate. May G-d grant that you will succeed in what is your true and inner purpose in life, namely to spread Yiddishkeit, and in an ever-growing way, and may you have good news to report always,

released them naturally, avoiding the need for the plagues. However, the Jews were at grave risk and G-d removed them early, with external force.

By contrast, the final redemption will occur at full term, when the work of rectification is complete. Not only will the nations not resist, but they will assist, as Isaiah prophesied (66:20), “They will bring all your brothers from all the nations as a tribute to G-d.

(Shem MiShmuel/Yalkut Moshiah UGeula HaTorah)

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

Connecting Passover and the Holiday of Shavuot is the period known as sefira. We count the days of the Omer starting on the second day of Passover - our day of liberation from slavery.

We continue counting for 49 days until the day on which we commemorate the receiving of the Torah - the culmination of our liberation.

What, we might ask, is the point of counting days, measuring time? Time just marches on. We can all march to the beat of a different drummer, but we can't actually change time, can we?

Quantitatively, time cannot be changed. But, we learn from sefira, that qualitatively, time can be changed. Time is like a container. We can fill it with nothingness by wasting it away, or, we can fill it with meaningful activities.

In the days between Passover and Shavuot, we are preparing for the receiving of the Torah. During this preparation period, we should make sure to fill our time “container” with meaningful accomplishments. In this way, we will actually be able to “stretch” time.

By instilling our actions in the here and now with Jewish content, we fill our limited time with infinite and eternal acts. We transfer and elevate our own time beyond and above time.

Every day when we count the Omer, we are reminded to fill our time with the mitzvot that need to be attended to on particular day and not push them off for another time. In doing so, we will certainly hasten the Redemption and bring Moshiach, NOW!

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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From The Talmud

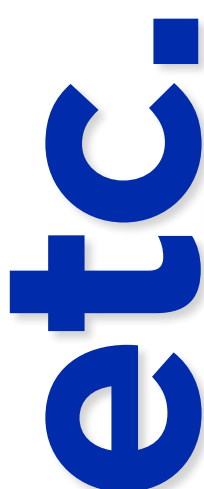
All Israel have a share in the World To Come, as it is stated (Isaiah 60:21): 'And Your people are tzadikkim (righteous).'

They shall inherit the land forever. They are the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, in which I take pride.

(Sanhedrin 90a)

MOSHIACH MATTERS

When a fetus reaches full term, its mother's body naturally initiates birth; the child descend and emerges of its own accord. By contrast, when a caesarian is necessary, the child is removed with external force. Had the Jews remained in Egypt for their full term of 400 years, Pharaoh would have



200 Jewish Servicemen Gathered for Combat and Crisis Seminar



Over the course of five days in early March, the streets of Bal Harbor, Fla. were filled with Jewish men and women who had flown in from around the world. However, these were not the typical religious Jews who normally walk the streets. These Jews were dressed in full military regalia.

A group of West Point cadets who will be serving as officers in the army also took part in the event. And more than 100 service members in their dress uniforms attended a Shabbat dinner. They were attending the Aleph Institute's 18th Annual Military Training Program, which ran from March 5-9 and drew some 200 soldiers, chaplains, family members and other guests for a program aimed at providing practical information, insights and connection.