



The previous Rebbe once had to travel to another town and stopped at a hotel. The word of his arrival quickly spread, and within hours there was a line of people waiting at his door for advice and blessing. One woman arrived together with her 30 year old son and begged the Rebbe to help him return to a Torah observant life.

It seems that the young man had become a successful lecturer in some German university and had thrown away all trace of Judaism. He stood haughtily before the Rebbe with a condescending look. "Well, Rebbe" he smiled, "my mother tells me that you are a very wise man, not like all those other rabbis steeped in superstitions and nonsense. So do tell me something wise, Rebbe."

"Do you put on Tefillin?" asked the Rebbe.

"Certainly not!" answered the young man.

"What about Shabbat or Kosher food?" The Rebbe continued.

"Well I see that our conversation is over? I see you are no different from the others, living in your dark world. When will you wake up to the real world?"

"May I tell you a story?" asked the Rebbe.

"All right," said the visitor in a disgusted tone, "I have already wasted an entire morning, what difference does it make if I lose a few more minutes. Who knows, maybe now my mother will leave me alone with her foolishness!"

The Rebbe began his story: "Once there was a mathematics professor who suddenly had a brilliant idea during one of his lectures. He went home that night and thought about the idea until morning. The next day, he roughly mapped out his idea and showed it to some of his colleagues and then to the head of the math department. Everyone was enthusiastic.

"They all agreed that if his theory was as correct, as it seemed to be, he had really stumbled on a revolutionary breakthrough.

"He obtained a leave of absence from his lectures and threw himself completely into developing his new discovery. At first he proceeded cautiously, consulting with others, but after a few months he became inflamed with ideas of genius, and worked alone as a man possessed.

"One year later his work was finished; a 200 page masterpiece of mathematical prodigy.

"He'd been over each stage of his essay, tens, nay, hundreds of times, writing and rewriting each idea so that future generations would see that he was not only a genius in deep thinking but a perfectionist in expression as well."

The Rebbe looked at his guest and the young man had forgotten his haste and was listening.

The Rebbe continued. "The professor carefully placed the finished manuscript on his desk and decided to step outside into the beautiful summer afternoon for a short walk before taking his paper to the printers.

"It was over a year since he had strolled outdoors; today he felt like a new man at the dawn of a new era. Yes, he would be famous, but he wouldn't let it go to his head. He would continue working at his university until the pressure from Princeton or Harvard became so great etc. etc.

"After several minutes he returned to his apartment, opened the door and was horrified by what met his eyes. His manuscript was strewn all over the floor and on each page was... a thick line... a line of cancellation!

"Obviously someone had entered the house (he probably forgot to lock the door), checked his essay and found a mistake! Why else would anyone make a slash through each page!? His mind was reeling 'Where did I go wrong? How can it be?'

"The next-door neighbors heard a loud thud and a crash. They ran next door just in time to see him try to get on his feet again and then suddenly look around, put his hands over his eyes and yell 'Ohhh my masterpiece!!' and fall once more unconscious to the floor.

"It was about ten minutes later that the doctor arrived and he immediately understood that the problem was serious. Every time that he woke the professor with smelling salts, the he would again look around, give a moan and pass out. The doctor began to look about him. He examined the room until suddenly he smiled. He bent down over the unconscious professor and spoke quietly into his ear, 'Professor, it was only a cat, a cat. A cat put those lines through your paper.'

" 'Eh,' said the professor as he opened one eye 'A cat, only a cat? What do you mean?'

"The doctor helped the professor to his feet and showed him that a cat must have entered the room through the window, dipped his tail inadvertently into the ink bottle and put slashes through the papers as he knocked the manuscript to the floor. 'Ha! A cat! It was only a cat!' And the professor began to laugh and laugh.

In Loving Memory of
R' Raphael Ben R' Nissen Isaac A"H Andrusier
dedicated by
Yankie and Devorah Leah Andrusier and Family

"That is the end of the story," announced the Rebbe, "did you understand it?"

"That's the end?!" yelled the young man "that was a stupid, infantile story and a complete waste of time!"

"No," Said the Rebbe "The point of the story is that the professor laughed when he realized that only a cat had cancelled his theory, because what comparison has a cat's intelligence to that of a professor?"

"Well," continued the Rebbe "that is only a fraction of how ludicrous your attempt to cancel the Torah is. Your understanding of the Creator's infinite wisdom is much less than a cat's understanding of mathematics!"

The young man became silent and for several minutes sat before the Rebbe lost in thought. "Thank you, for the story" he quietly said as he stood and shook the Rebbe's hand before leaving the room, the Rebbe had planted the seed of change.

By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton, ohrtminim.org

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

This is the statute of the Torah which the L-rd has commanded (Num. 19:2)

Comments Rashi: "Such is My decree: you do not have permission to second-guess the Torah." The same word for permission appears in the *Mishna* (*Pirkei Avot* 3:15): "Everything is foreseen, yet permission (freedom of choice) is granted." Permission implies that something is possible; "you do not have permission" implies that second-guessing G-d is outside the realm of possibility. In truth, it is against a Jew's nature to question a Divine decree. If doubts do exist, they are only the product of the Evil Inclination. (*The Rebbe*)

Balak saw and the people of Moab were afraid (Num. 22:3-3)

When Balak, the king and leader of the Moabites, saw the approach of the Jews his fear quickly spread to his people. This contrasts sharply with the behavior of Moses, leader of the Jewish nation. When he was afraid of Og, king of Bashan, it was only "in his heart." He did not allow his fear to show even to himself, let alone to others. This is a lesson for Jewish leaders in all times. Even in the most difficult times they must exude only hope and encouragement. (*Divrei Chachamim*)

How good are your tents Jacob, your dwelling places, Israel. (Num. 24:5)

It is a good for Jacob to build tents – synagogues and yeshivas. But only on the condition that they become "your dwelling places, Israel" – that Jews should actually be in them. A synagogue should not be built solely for its beauty, it should be full throughout the week, not only on Sabbaths and Festivals. (*Rabbi Yaacov Yosef of Polanye*)



8:13 Candle Lighting Time
NY Metro Area
11 Tammuz/June 30
Torah Portions *Chukas-Balak*
Ethics Ch 5
Shabbat ends 9:21 PM



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

This week we read two Torah portions, *Chukat* and *Balak*. In *Balak*, we read how the Moabite King Balak hired the wicked Bilaam to curse the Jews. But ultimately, G-d forces him to bless them instead. Thus Bilaam says the famous words, "How goodly are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel! ... Those who bless them will be blessed, and those who curse them will be cursed."

The utterly disgusted Balak sends Bilaam away for blessing the Jews rather than cursing them. Before leaving, though, Bilaam goes on to say a prophecy of the end of days and Moshiach's coming: "I see it, but not now; I behold it, but not soon. A star has gone forth from Jacob, and a staff will arise from Israel which will crush the princes of Moab and uproot all the sons of Seth..." He also speaks about the eventual destruction of Esau, Amalek and Assyria.

What purpose does it serve for G-d to have the prophecy of Moshiach's coming said specifically by a wicked, Jew-hating person like Bilaam?

Just to add fuel to the fire. This prophecy is found in the Torah portion of *Balak*, which is named after a wicked, Jew-hating king. In addition, there are no *mitzvot* (commandments) in this portion and the portion ends with the Jewish people degrading themselves to a low level of immorality.

In what seems to be the lowest Torah portion, the lowest of people – Bilaam – prophesies the greatest event the Jewish people will ever experience. This event is one of the 13 principles of Judaism: the coming of Moshiach.

This is truly a testament to the power of the Jewish people, to transform even the darkest of places, the darkest of situations.

We have the ability and the obligation to shine light and lift and transform even the most profane to holiness. What's more, G-d puts us in these dark situations and gives us the power to transform them.

When you lift from the bottom, you lift the whole thing.

That is the message found in the fact that the prophecy of Moshiach is found in this portion, seemingly the lowest, by Bilaam the lowest of people. Even a Bilaam changes to be able to say Moshiach's prophecy.

How amazing is G-d that He has ordained that through us, the lowest, darkest situations and most evil people can and will be transformed to goodness and light. We are truly blessed.

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com. Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

Prayer for the Nation

In 1940, the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn, was miraculously saved from the Nazis and arrived on the safe shores of the United States. Soon after the Rebbe's arrival, he revealed that his mission in the United States was to transform it into a place of Torah.

There were those who attempted to inform the Rebbe that, "This is, after all, America; it is not like the 'old home.' " "To these people," the Rebbe replied, "America is no different; with regard to Torah study and observance of its commandments, America is no exception!"

In the months after the Previous Rebbe came to the United States, he composed a "Prayer for the Welfare of the Nation."

The idea of praying for the government has a Biblical source, in the book of Jeremiah: "Seek the welfare of the country where I have sent you into exile; pray to the L-rd for it, for your welfare depends on its welfare."

In the *Mishna*, Rabbi Chanina the deputy High Priest said, "Pray for the welfare of the government, for without the fear of it, man would swallow his fellow alive." (*Ethics of the Fathers* 3:2)

Throughout the ages, Jews have always prayed privately and communally for the welfare of the government and the leaders of the government of the countries in which we find ourselves. Today is no different.

Take a moment to recite this prayer, and to share it with a friend. We do not know which person's

mitzva (commandment) will be the one to tip the scale of justice and bring redemption to the entire world, but it could just be yours or mine! Let's give it a try:

"Our G-d and G-d of our fathers, great, mighty and revered. G-d, we beseech You, in Your abundant mercy restore the world unto its true basis, under the guidance of kings and rulers who shall reign with justice and righteousness, without discrimination between nation and nation, race and race.



"We beseech You, O merciful and gracious G-d, guide our illustrious President whom You have chosen as leader of these United States. Strengthen and encourage him and his honorable ministers and counselors of state and the honorable representatives of the citizens in both houses of Congress. Bless their efforts to save this land and the neighboring lands from war and destruction, and wherever they turn in the cause of humanity and in behalf of this land and for the benefit of Your people Israel, send the angels of blessing and success to welcome them, and cause war and its calamities to be ended and an era of peace and justice with its blessings to begin even in their and our days. Amen."

SLICE OF LIFE

Forever Community by Nili Gruenzweig



From a speech at the Machon L'Yahadus Graduation

I'm from Staten Island, New York. One might think that Staten Island is so close to Crown Heights, Brooklyn, what possible kind of journey could occur within this 10 mile radius? I can assure you that to the *Baal Teshuva* (one returning to her/his Jewish roots), something so close can also be worlds apart.

My journey actually starts in the Fall of 2020, also known as the height of Covid. I had waited a decade to go to college and I was now finally starting...virtually. During the previous summer, I had met some very special young women who told me that they live in Crown Heights and are "Chabad."

My parents were not excited at the idea of me relocating from urban suburban Staten Island to "hipsterville" Brooklyn. So I did the only thing that a 19-year-old knows how: I had to explore on my own.

My new friends from Crown Heights brought me to a wonderful place that looked like mini-Israel to me, Kingston Avenue. From there, I established a community for myself, a *shul* that I attend weekly and was an active

social member in, I organized and attended events and more. It was a true dream to be in a Jewish community with such great social opportunities.

Regarding the "Chabad" aspect of Crown Heights and the Rebbe, my thoughts were, "I'm just a visitor here. I am not really a part of this."

However, one pivotal moment changed things around for me. An older woman who I had gotten close to in the community recognized my desire to learn more and seek further connection. "You should attend the Machon L'Yahadus winter program, I think it'd be great for you," she told me one day.

Although I was a little skeptical, I think I was ready to see Crown Heights from a new perspective. It was in the Machon L'Yahadus Winter Program where I learned Chassidic teachings for the first time and made close friendships that I still have till this day.

The band aid was ripped off, I was exposed to something new, meaningful, wholesome and true; a much different experience than simply spending time in Crown Heights. This was a beautiful school with bright, eager-to-learn young women with shared values of growth. I saw it for what it was, but I was not ready to make a serious commitment. I was a 20 year old girl navigating my journey alone in one of the busiest cities in the world; leaving what I knew was hard. So I started slow. Last year, I attended classes part time. I got acquainted with teachers and my peers, while also knowing that I still have my "other life" outside Machon.

However, at the end of last year, I thought to myself "where will I be in one year? Who will really be my community and where will I really find meaning in my life?" There was no starting "tomorrow," I had to start today. At that moment, I made the switch and committed to Machon, ready to really attend classes at the start of the academic year and after my summer studying at Machon Alte in Safed, Israel.

This past year, I attended two semesters of classes as a full time student. I have never felt

more full in my entire life.

My year was filled with so much learning, skill building, love, deep friendships, growth in so many areas in my life, and more. From my experience, Machon is more than just a school, and the dorm is more than just a house. Machon L'Yahadus is a home that belongs to each and every young woman who attends it. We learn so much from our staff and teachers about what it means to create a meaningful life and home. We learn not only the fundamentals of Torah and Chasidic teachings, but we also learn how to apply it to our everyday lives.

Rabbi Shloma Majeski our principal is dedicated to every girl who enters the doors of the school. Mrs. Yehudis Cohen, our assistant principal, guides the students with wisdom and direction. Our teachers know us on a personal level and are constantly available to advise us. We are not alone in our journeys, mentors are ready to help.

It is clear how Machon L'Yahadus differs from any other institution. Each student is taken into consideration, her feedback matters. It is the best feeling to come to school, to a place where everyone is on a similar path, looking to grow further and connect.

I felt this impact even more when I moved to the dorm. Mrs. Shterna Rodal, our dorm mother, has gotten to know me on a deeper level over these past two years; she has seen my growth and where I have come to.

Machon L'Yahadus is an institution that is more like a family. A home that girls return to consistently after graduation, marriage or even children. This will always be their home despite time or distance.

Going back to how I found out about Machon L'Yahadus – I had only learned about it via a previous dorm counselor from perhaps more than two decades ago. The impact that Machon has is one that lasts forever. I am grateful to have my life changed by Machon L'Yahadus and to have found my forever community.

Machon L'Yahadus is a full-time yeshiva for young Jewish women at all points on their Jewish journey. Study programs are available from 12-days to two years. For more info visit womensyeshiva.org or call 718-552-2422.

Hakhel – Unite

According to the Talmud, even very young children were brought to the Temple on Sukkot for the great Hakhel assembly. Their parents were travelling from all over the Holy Israel. The children could not be left at home with the few individuals who are exempt from this commandment. So, although these children would be present in any event – as a consequence of practical considerations – the Torah legislates their inclusion in the assembly. As part of the mitzva, these efforts are worthy of reward. (*HaKatav VeHaKabalah*)

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

8th of Tammuz, 5738 [1978]

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 13th of June, in behalf of yourself as chairman of the committee.

I was gratified to read in your letter about the favorable impact of Lubavitch in South Africa, and in your city and congregation in particular. I trust that this good influence finds the fullest expression in actual deeds, namely in promoting of matters of *Yiddishkeit* [Judaism], Torah and *Mitzvot* [commandments], in your community, in accordance with the saying of our sages that, "The essential thing is the deed." And in matters of Torah and *Mitzvot* even one good deed is very important, since "one *Mitzvo* leads to another *Mitzvo*." Even more important it is where Jewish education is concerned, especially as I note that your *Shul* [synagogue] is situated on the campus of, and used by, a Jewish Day School of approximately 1,000 children and where your congregation has been blessed with many families, adults and children – may their number grow. For, as I have had occasion to emphasize this many times, every beneficial influence on a child is like the benefits and care given to a young seedling, which multiplies in due course many times over, when the seedling becomes a full-grown fruit-bearing tree.

As we are approaching the auspicious anniversary of the liberation of my father-in-law of saintly memory on the 12-13th of Tammuz, I trust that you know the history and significance of this date. The main point of it is that he has shown what a Jew can achieve when he is absolutely determined to live up to his commitment to Torah and *Mitzvot* regardless of the circumstances. And there is no need to spell out what these circumstances were under the Communist regime 50 years ago*. And although who can compare to his stature, nevertheless having accomplished what he did, he has made it easier for all those who would follow in his footsteps. Certainly those of us who are privileged to live in incomparably happier circumstances, where one does not have to endanger his life, G-d forbid, to observe the Torah and *Mitzvot*, and whatever difficulties there may be are for the most part imaginary and can certainly be overcome, so that in the

final analysis it is mainly a matter of one's own will and determination. This makes it the duty and privilege of every one of us to do all one can, by example and precept, to spread *Yiddishkeit*, Torah and *Mitzvot*, in one's surroundings, and it is certain that every such effort is bound to be blessed by G-d with *Hatslocho* [success].

With blessing,

P.S. With regard to your writing about your desire to visit me with a group from your congregation, I regret that for the present "Ye-chidus" [private audience] has been suspended for reasons beyond my control. I trust, however, that before long it will be resumed, and it will then certainly be a pleasure to meet with you personally.

Tammuz, 5740 [1980]

I duly received your correspondence, and may G-d grant the fulfillment of your heart's desires for good in all the matters about which you wrote.

At this time, in proximity to the anniversary of the *Geulo* – deliverance – of my father-in-law, the Rebbe, of saintly memory, from the Soviet regime, fifty-three years ago*, on the 12th-13th of this month, it behooves us to reflect again on those history-making events and how they relate to every one of us here and now. For, as he indicated in his first letter on the occasion of the first anniversary of his *Geulo*, and as we see it clearly now, his deliverance was more than a personal one; it was a turning point in the survival of Russian Jewry, and is of lasting significance for every Jew everywhere.

This timely reflection should make every one of us all the more deeply appreciative of the blessing of freedom to live a full life of Torah and *Mitzvos*, and, what goes with it, the sacred obligation to do one's utmost to spread and strengthen *Yiddishkeit*, with enthusiasm and love – the love of G-d, love of the Torah, and love of our Jewish brethren, which are inseparable.

Moreover, by his total *Mesiras Nefesh* [self-sacrifice] even in the face of overwhelming odds, and by his eventual triumph, with G-d's help, he has shown the way, and trodden the way, for every Jew can follow in his footsteps, with complete assurance that when a Jew is firmly resolved to work for Torah and *Yiddishkeit*, he or she will overcome whatever difficulties there may be, and be *matzliach* [successful] with G-d's help.

I hope and pray that the inspiration of... [the Previous Rebbe]...will stimulate you and yours to redouble your efforts in the said direction in the days ahead, which will also widen the channels to receive G-d's blessings for yourself and all yours, in all needs, both material and spiritual.

*from the date of this letter

MOSHIACH MATTERS

There shall come a star out of Jacob (*Num. 24:17*) Nachmanides interprets this verse as an allusion

to Moshiah; according to the Jerusalem Talmud, it refers to every Jew. However, this is in no way contradictory. Every Jewish soul contains a "spark" of Moshiah. It is the individual's function to bring that spark out of concealment, as preparation for the revelation of Moshiah in the world at large. (*Likutei Sichot*)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

This Shabbat and Sunday, the 12th and 13th of Tammuz, we will celebrate the Festival of Liberation of the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn. The Rebbe (who was also born on the 12th of Tammuz) was arrested and detained for the "crime" of disseminating Torah and mitzvot. In the end, of course, he was totally vindicated and released from Russian prison. The Rebbe's liberation in 1927 was a victory for all Jews, for it signified the triumph of goodness and truth over the forces of evil.

Somewhat less known are the circumstances surrounding the Rebbe's birth. Several years after their marriage the Rebbe's parents – his saintly mother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, and the Rebbe Rashab – were still without children. Following an incident on Simchat Torah on which the young Rebbetzin acutely felt her childlessness, she lay down and cried herself to sleep.

The Rebbetzin dreamt that an old Jew entered her room and asked her why she was crying, whereupon she poured out her heart. "Don't cry," the stranger told her: "I promise that this year you will be blessed by a son. But only on two conditions: Right after Yom Tov you must give 18 rubles of your own money to charity; and no one must know of your deed." The man disappeared, and returned a few minutes later with two other visitors. After repeating his promise in their presence, all three gave the Rebbetzin their blessing.

After she woke up, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah related the dream to her husband, who insisted that she tell it to his father, the Rebbe Maharash. After pressing her for a detailed description the Rebbe determined that the visitors in the dream were the Tzemach Tzedek, the Mittlerer Rebbe and the Alter Rebbe – the third, second and first Chabad Rebbes respectively.

The Rebbetzin fulfilled the conditions that had been set out, and the Previous Rebbe, an only child, was born the following year:

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

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