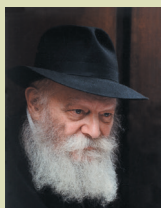


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

*from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion*

In this week's Torah portion, *Yitro*, we read. "And Moses went up to G-d, and G-d called to him from the mountain saying, 'So shall you say to the House of Jacob and you shall tell to the Children of Israel.'"

Rashi, the foremost Torah commentator explains that the "House of Jacob" refers to the women and the "Children of Israel" refers to the men. He also explains that when you teach Torah to women it should be in a gentle way, emphasizing the positive and the rewards for keeping the Torah and its commandments. However, to the men, speak harshly, tell them the punishments for not observing the Torah and *mitzvot* (commandments).

Why the difference between women and men when it comes to teaching the Torah? Why does G-d tell Moses to first talk to the women and only after the men? What general lessons, about how to talk to women, can we learn from here?

Jewish women have a special place in Jewish life. Most of the nurturing and upbringing of the next generation are in their hands. The Jewish woman is also the backbone of the Jewish home, if she wants her home to be more kosher, it will be, if she wants it to be more observant, it will be. The future and Jewishness of her family are under her influence.

It stands to reason that G-d would want the women on board first, because so much rests on them. Therefore, women need to be knowledgeable in Torah and *mitzvot*, so they can create a Jewish atmosphere in their homes and their environs.

According to Jewish tradition, women are naturally spiritual and close to G-d. This is the reason why they don't need harsh words to be convinced to do what they sense is right. Harsh words would only have the opposite effect, they only cause women to close up and become unreceptive.

This is also a lesson for men. The success of your home depends on your relationship with your wife and that is dependent on your tone of voice.

A successful Jewish home, affects the family, the community, the Jewish people and ultimately, the whole world. This is the power of a Jewish home, this is the power of the Jewish woman.

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.

What Am I Doing Here?

"What am I doing here?" you ask yourself as you stop in the middle of the room, trying to figure out why you came there in the first place.

Or perhaps you're waiting in the long line at the mega-supermarket. "What am I doing here?" you mutter to no one in particular, as you weigh the few cents you'll save against the time you're wasting.

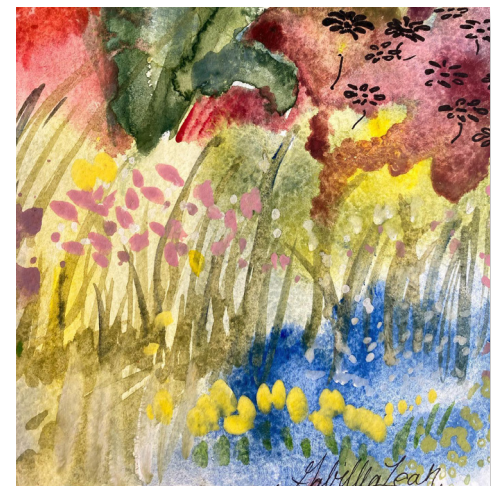
Maybe your question is bigger, triggered by a mid-life crisis, a blow out with your boss, or on a more positive note, achievement of a financial goal. "What am I doing here? Where do I go from here?"

The soul, the spark of G-dliness within every person, could ask itself a similar question. "What am I doing here? Why did I leave my holy, heavenly environment and descend into a physical body in a very physical world?"

Jewish mystical teachings would answer the soul, "You descended from your lofty place into this world for the purpose of an ascent." Regardless of how lofty the soul was before, its sojourn in the physical body serves as a springboard to attain ever higher heights, an "aliya" in Hebrew.

While the soul – in its pre-birth state – is exalted, it is also spiritually immobile, fixed in its status. The soul yearns to enter the physical world, though there it will be challenged with moral dilemmas and temptations. For it is precisely these confrontations that provide an opportunity for spiritual growth.

When the soul in this world overcomes the challenges and performs *mitzvot* (commandments), it goes through a transformation and becomes elevated. At the end of this physical journey, the soul will return to heaven at a higher and more elevated level than before its incarnation.



The day of birth is a great opportunity for the yearning soul. However, the day of passing after a lifetime of genuine fulfillment is even greater. For on this day we celebrate the actual, not the potential; we rejoice in what the soul has accomplished during its sojourn in this world.

The 22nd of Shevat, corresponding to January 24 this year, is the anniversary of the passing of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson, wife of the Rebbe. Surely it is a fitting time to ask oneself the question, "What am I doing here?" Then listen to your soul, it will give you some important answers.

SLICE OF LIFE

World's Bravest Uncle

by Leah Englander



This story was taken from Here's My Story and is presented with permission from JEM's My Encounter with the Rebbe oral history project, which is dedicated to recording first-person testimonies documenting the life and guidance of the Rebbe. MyEncounterblog.com

I always had a love and a longing for Judaism. I was a little girl from a traditional Conservative family, but when I would see Chasidic-looking people I would say, "Oh, they're so beautiful," like I wanted to be like them. When I grew up and got married, I lit Shabbat candles and kept a kosher home but I was not Shabbat observant.

And then my brother Levi Reiter and his wife Raizel became Lubavitcher chasidim. Through them, I started coming to classes in Crown Heights every Sunday and then I became a lot more observant.

I went on to have three children, and before each of them was born, the Rebbe gave me a blessing for everything to be okay. At one point, he told me I would have tremendous nachas from my children, and as it turns out, they are all amazing, thank G-d.

But when my middle son, Yehoshua Leib, was one year old, he had his first seizure. The doctor felt it might have been caused by a fever, but then there was another mild seizure, maybe six months later. Apparently, he had a kind of seizure disorder. Then one night in 1981, when he was nearly three years old, I went in to check on him. Even in the dark, I

could just tell something was wrong.

I turned on the lights and his face was blue. I don't know how much time he had been in that state, but by the time I got there, he was totally limp and his breathing was very shallow. We picked him up and ran outside, hoping that the cold night air would revive him, but nothing did. We called the ambulance.

At the hospital, while the doctors were checking him out, they mentioned something, in this matter-of-fact way, about his paralysis.

"What?" I gasped.

"Didn't you notice?" they said. "Half of his body is paralyzed." They showed me that his eye was drooping, and so was his lip. They picked up his hand and it just fell down. "Yes," they confirmed, "he's paralyzed."

I immediately called my brother and told him what was going on, and that I need a blessing from the Rebbe.

He gave me his word: "I'll take care of it." Just hearing that gave me a lot of confidence, because my brother always comes through.

I didn't know at the time, but it wasn't so easy to accomplish. By the time we spoke, it was 10:30 PM on a Saturday night, and the Rebbe was already home after Shabbat. My brother later told me that he called everyone in the Rebbe's secretariat to get the message through. But, understandably, they were hesitant to disturb the Rebbe when he was home for the night. They said they would try their best, but couldn't promise to give over the message at that hour.

Back in the emergency room, I asked the doctors, "What are my son's chances of recovering?"

"Well," they explained, "with this type of paralysis, he may get better to some degree and recover some movement, but it will never be back to normal."

"Okay," I thought, "I'm going to need to get him a wheelchair, I'm going to need to find a special school, I'll need a physical therapist..." I was trying to focus on doing the right thing for my son.

Meanwhile, my brother knew how urgent the situation was. The Rebbe needed to know, that very night, what was happening with my son. And so, he decided to go straight to the Rebbe's house himself.

Normally, there were yeshiva students stationed nearby who kept an unofficial watch over the

Rebbe's house, making sure that there were no disturbances. So my brother drove over with a friend and sent him out of the car towards the Rebbe's house. The students went over to question the friend, and while they were distracted, he slipped past and went straight to the Rebbe's front door. Now his heart was pounding so hard that he thought he would faint, so he just closed his eyes and rang the bell.

Lights came on inside the house, here and there, and after a couple of minutes, the front door opened up, and it was Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka. My brother had never even seen the Rebbe's wife before.

"Please come in," she offered, inviting him into the house. "How can I help you?"

He was choked up by that point, but he went ahead and told her everything. As he was telling her about what was going on with my son, she gave a deep sigh, "Ach, ach..." and it was obvious how intensely concerned she felt. It all made a lasting impression on my brother – the regal look on her face, and the way she became completely invested in what we were going through.

She asked for my son's name and for my brother's name. "I will tell my husband," she said.

I don't know exactly when the Rebbe actually gave his blessing – the Rebbe's secretary called my brother back in the morning to say that he had – but we saw the results in the hospital well before then. At around 1:20 AM, my son suddenly started moving again. "I don't believe it," the doctor exclaimed. "I don't believe it!" It was like he just completely recovered.

There were some other specialists there, and I remember them asking, "He's really moving? On the paralyzed side of his body?!" They were amazed.

I told the pediatrician, who was Jewish, that it was because of a blessing from the Lubavitcher Rebbe. "Well," he replied, "you might be right about that because we've never seen anything like this before."

After that, every few months we would go to a pediatric neurologist to have my son checked. He loved when we would come because Yehoshua Leib would come running in and jump up on the examination bed. I think it was a thrill for him to see a child who had recuperated so completely. Of course, it was a miracle; it was from the Rebbe's blessing.

Mrs. Leah Englander is a retired ultrasound technologist. She was interviewed in January of 2014.

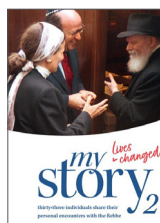


First Jewish Center in the Metaverse

Rabbi Shmuli Nachlas of Toronto, Rabbi Yisroel Wilhelm of Boulder, Colorado, and technology-enthusiast Alex Gelbert have ventured into the metaverse to launch the first VR Jewish Center: the MANA Jewish Center in Decentraland. People have always said that there will be a Chabad House on the moon if and as soon as people live there. Well, now that people are starting to "live" in the metaverse, Chabad has set up shop. Visit jewishvirtualreality.com

My Story Two: Lives Changed

From the homesick twelve-year-old to the presidential advisor; the budding artist to the mother who is struggling to make ends meet, *My Story Two: Lives Changed* features 33 inspirational stories of the Rebbe from the *My Encounter with the Rebbe* oral history project. These stories are complemented by family photos and documents, as well as a stunning selection of portraits of the Rebbe from the Living Archive picture collection.



Today Is...

22 Shevat

There are two sorts of statutes: a) statutes that create life, and b) statutes created by life. Human laws are created by life so they vary from land to land according to circumstances. The A-Imighty's Torah is a G-dly law that creates life. G-d's Torah is the Torah of truth, the same in all places, at all times. Torah is eternal.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Erev Hilula of Yud Shevat, Parshas Yisro, 5731 [1971]

To All Participants in the Ninth Annual Mid-Winter Conference of Neshei UBnos Chabad Cleveland, Ohio

Blessing and Greeting:

I was pleased to be informed of your forthcoming Mid-Winter Convention, taking place during the weekend of Parshas [the Torah portion of] Yisro, the Sidra [portion] of Mattan Torah [the Giving of the Torah].

You surely know of the teaching of the Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism] to seek in the weekly Sidra directives and inspiration for the events of that week. Accordingly, you will recall the special role of Jewish women at the time of Mattan Torah. Our Sages, commenting on the verse "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and speak to the children of Israel" declare that the "House of Jacob" refers to the women. Consequently, the Torah indicates that the women were approached first, before the men, when the Torah was about to be given. This emphasizes the women's primary role in the preservation of the Torah and Mitzvoth in their homes, as well as for the Jewish people as a whole.

Commenting on another verse, Chorus Al Haluchos ("engraved on the Tablets"), our Sages see in the word Chorus the implication of Cheirus ("liberation"). They go on to explain that true liberation can only be achieved through the Torah, when it is truly engraved upon the hearts and minds of the Jewish people. For when a Jew lives his daily life in accordance with the Torah, he is truly free; free from servitude to his own natural temptations, free from anxiety, etc.

The Torah concept of freedom is the very opposite of what nowadays passes for

"liberation," which really is nothing but a clamor for freedom to do as one pleases, in order to gratify the natural appetite without restrictions and inhibitions. This kind of liberation is nothing but an attempt to legalize the lowest animal passions, and there is surely no greater slavery than being a slave to one's own passions.

True liberation from enslavement to the self and to the negative aspects of the society in which one lives, can be achieved only by submission to the Will of G-d

True liberation from enslavement to the self and to the negative aspects of the society in which one lives, can be achieved only by submission to the Will of G-d and the acceptance of the "yoke" of the Torah and Mitzvoth. Only in this way can the Jew attain the highest degree of spiritual development in his daily life, and make his life truly worth living. For it is the Torah, *Toras Chaim* [the Torah of Life], which elevates the life of the Jew and gives life true meaning and fulfillment, so that the Jew can realize his destiny of being created in the image of G-d. Indeed, it has been explained that the Hebrew word Odom (man) is derived from the expression Adameh l'Elyon ("I will aspire towards the Supreme Being").

I trust the above few lines will lend further substance to the theme of your Convention, and, what is most important, that it be truly implemented in the activities of the Neshei uBnos Chabad, collectively and individually, in accordance with the traditional role of Jewish womanhood, as indicated above.

With all good wishes for your *Hatzlocho* [success], and may G-d grant that you should have good news to report always,

With blessing,

of the righteous women of that generation, as our Sages say, "The generations are only redeemed as a reward for the righteous women of the generation." Especially in light of what is explained in *Kabala* – that the generation of the Redemption will be a reincarnation of the generation that left Egypt. Accordingly, the righteous women of our generation, in whose merit we are redeemed, are the very same righteous women in whose merit we left Egypt. (*Sichos Parshas Bo, B'Shalach, 5752*)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

This week we commemorate the *yahrzeit* of our beloved Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, wife of the Rebbe.

It is with tremendous gratitude that I look back on the times my family had the privilege of meeting with the Rebbetzin. I would like to share with you the thoughts of one of our daughters, written soon after the Rebbetzin's passing:

My family and I were privileged to meet the Rebbetzin on four separate occasions. We cherish each moment spent with her as a priceless treasure. I remember walking into her home and thinking it resembled a palace. And there, at the head of the table, stood the queen.

We stood at attention, not daring to breathe. She must have sensed our discomfort, for she smiled a warm, beautiful smile, and with her gentle sense of humor invited us to sit down. It was as though she was being honored to have us!

In her own special way, the Rebbetzin gave me more than anyone else in the world. The moments spent with her are irreplaceable. She showed a sincere interest in each of us, asking us what grade we were in and what we were learning in school.

She spoke softly and personally, making each of us feel as though no one else in the room existed except the Rebbetzin and the person to whom she was speaking.

I remember when my father called the Rebbetzin to tell her of the passing of his father, my grandfather (of blessed memory). After expressing her deepest sympathy, she suddenly asked, "And how is your lovely daughter?" To the Rebbetzin, we were all lovely, all special, all unique. I was just one of her many lovely daughters.

Certainly the Rebbetzin continues, in an even stronger way now, to support all of the Rebbe's work, especially his life goal, to bring G-dliness into this world in a real, tangible way, through the revelation of Moshiach. We pray that very soon we will be reunited with the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin, and Moshiach will lead us to the long-awaited Redemption.

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
Program director
Secretary
Administrator
Editor
Associate Editor
Chairman Editorial Comm.
Rebbe photo

Rabbi David Raskin י"ד
Rabbi Shmuel Butman
Rabbi Kasriel Kastel
Rabbi Moshe P. Goldman
Rabbi Shlomo Friedman
Yehudis Cohen
David Y. B. Kaufmann י"ד
Rabbi Nissen Mangel
S. Roumani

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

All contents © 2021 by L.Y.O. ISSN 1050 0480

L'Chaim Subscriptions

For a one year subscription send \$47,
payable to LYO (\$60 outside of USA) to:

L'Chaim, 1408 President St., Bklyn, NY, 11213

L'Chaim on the Internet

Current issues and archives: lchaimweekly.org

Learn about Moshiach

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

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Our Sages say, "In the merit of the righteous women of that generation Israel was redeemed from Egypt" So too, concerning the future Redemption – about which it says, "As in the days of your leaving Egypt, I will show you wonders" – it will be in the merit



The Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Shneerson, sent a long letter to his daughter, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, describing the personal metamorphosis several individuals underwent as they became Chasidim. Although it is a personal letter from father to daughter, the first 120 pages of it became public. The conclusion of the letter, however, remained private. The following story is excerpted from that letter in connection with Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka's yartzeit on the 22nd of Shevat.

One day there was excitement in the study hall of Zaslov: two emissaries of the Baal Shem Tov – the *tzadikim* Reb Nachman Horodenker and Reb David Furkas – arrived on a mission from the Baal Shem Tov [known also as the Besht]. The Besht had instructed them to raise the sum of sixty gold florins that very day. This money was needed for *pidyon sh'vuyim* [redemption of captives]; the entire sixty florins had to be delivered immediately by special messenger, for time was short.

The emissaries arrived just as the people were finishing the recitation of Psalms. As soon as the emissaries finished speaking, a list was drawn up of all residents of the town who were the Baal Shem Tov's Chasidim. A Rabbinical Court was constituted to assess how much each citizen could afford to contribute. This court appointed collectors to go to peoples' homes immediately and collect the imposed tax. If there was anyone who did not have sufficient cash on hand, they could take from him some article of value as collateral until the sum was paid in cash.

Within less than three hours, the collectors returned to the study hall with the full amount of sixty gold florins. They had also drawn up a ledger in which they had recorded the names of those who had paid their assessment in cash, those who had made pledges and given collateral, and those who had given loans guaranteed by the collateral taken from those who had not yet paid.

Just then, wailing was heard in the antechamber of the study hall. Several women whose husbands were not at home had arrived: one was a tailor who worked somewhere in the country; one was a peddler who went from place to place with a pack full of merchandise; one was a teacher at an inn.

These women had heard that the Besht had sent emissaries to collect contributions for a great mitzva. Since no one had approached them to ask for a contribution, they had come themselves, bringing pledges (for they had not cash on hand). One had brought her candlesticks, one had brought a kiddush-and-havdala goblet, another had brought a down-stuffed pillow.

The collectors, in turn, declared that their mission was to demand cash or pledges from those whose names appeared on the assessment list given to them by the court. From people whose names did not appear on the list, they had no authority to accept cash or pledges. Upon hearing that their husbands' names were not even mentioned on the list, the women raised such a cry that even Reb Nachman and Reb David heard it, and became very frightened.

When the members of the Rabbinical court learned that the collectors had returned with their mission accomplished, they hurried through the rest of their prayers. Against their better judgment (for the husbands were very impoverished Chasidim), they accepted the pledges from the women. The special messenger was dispatched to bring the sixty gold florins to the Besht.

When the Besht's emissaries finished praying, a feast was prepared in honor of the great privilege the Besht had bestowed upon them. For the Besht loved them so much that he had given them the privilege of participating in the mitzva of *pidyon sh'vuyim*; he was so devoted to the Chasidim in Zaslov that he had sent to them the two famous *tzadikim*. All the Chasidim were in such a joyful mood: you can't imagine how great their delight was.

When the feast was finished, Reb Nachman spoke about the women who had wept while begging the collectors to accept their contributions toward the sum the Besht had assessed the Chasidim of Zaslov. "The Rebbe," said Reb Nachman, "is very fond of simple Jews. He says that a simple Jew who recites a chapter of Psalms with his whole heart and sincerely loves his fellow Jew is favored by the Supreme King more than great *tzadikim*.

"How profoundly genuine those women's tears were! Their sole desire was for their husband's names to be included in the list of those assessed to contribute money for the great mitzva of *pidyon sh'vuyim*. A mitzva is so precious, and the Besht so sacred to them, that when their

husbands' names were omitted from the list their poor hearts broke and they burst out weeping. How precious such tears are to the Master of the World; how sweet and delightful they are to the Angel Michael and his 180,000 legions of defending angels! Such genuine heartfelt tears can annul all evil decrees."

Reb Nachman then related an awe-inspiring story about an evil decree against an entire Jewish community. When a certain woman uttered a few truly sincere words that came from the depth of her heart while she wept profusely, the decree was annulled. "If only we would weep on the holy Yom Kippur with the same sort of tears with which our own women wept!" he concluded.

Translated by Shimon Neubort, published by Sichos In English in The Making of Chasidim.



The people come to me to inquire of G-d. When they have a matter it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his fellow; and I make them know the statutes of G-d (Ex. 18:15-16)

Every Jewish leader of his generation fulfills three functions: He must pray on behalf of every individual Jew ("the people come to me to inquire of G-d"); resolve monetary disputes and disagreements ("judge between a man and his fellow"); and teach Torah to the Jewish people ("make them know the statutes of G-d"). (*Nachmanides*)

And you shall be My own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine (Ex. 19:5)

The Jewish people's status as G-d's "treasure" is not dependent on the behavior of the nations of the world; i.e., whether or not they worship idols or recognize false gods. Even in the Messianic era, when all mankind will accept G-d's sovereignty ("For then I will convert the peoples to a clear language, that they may all call upon the name of the L-rd, to serve Him with one accord"), the Jews will continue to be the "chosen people." (*Yakar Mipaz*)

When the ram's horn sounds long, they shall come up to the mountain (Ex. 19:13)

When the Torah was given, all vestiges of idolatry had to be removed from the Jewish people, including the idea that any creation can have its own inherent holiness; only G-d can impart sanctity. Thus in order to make sure that no one thought that the reason the Torah was given on Mount Sinai was that the mountain itself was holy, G-d commanded that immediately afterward it revert to being a "regular" mountain, with animals grazing on it, etc. The "sanctity" of Mount Sinai lasted only as long as the Divine Presence rested upon it. (*Meshech Chochma*)



4:42 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
19 Shevat/Jan 21
Torah Portion Yitro
Shabbat ends 5:45 PM

Dedicated to
Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
wife of the Rebbe, daughter of the Previous Rebbe
on her yartzeit, 22 Shevat