

L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

In this week's Torah portion, B'Shalach, we read about the manna that sustained the Jewish people during their journey in the desert. One month after leaving Egypt, their provisions ran out. Faced with hunger, the people complained to Moses, and G-d responded by promising to rain down bread from heaven each morning.

Moses instructed the people to gather one omer of manna per household member each day. A remarkable miracle occurred: regardless of how much a person collected, each household arrived home with exactly the amount it needed—no more and no less. Moses also commanded the people not to leave any manna over for the next day. Except for one exception, the manna would spoil overnight.

That exception came on Friday. When the people went out to collect the manna, they found they had gathered a double portion. Moses explained that since no manna would fall on Shabbat, the extra amount was meant to last for both Friday and Shabbat. Notably, this is the first time Shabbat is mentioned in the Torah.

What is the connection between Shabbat and the manna? At first glance, logic suggests that if you don't work, you won't have. Observing Shabbat—refraining from work and business for an entire day—appears to contradict that logic. Yet Shabbat is an expression of trust in G-d: a declaration that sustenance does not come solely from human effort, but from Divine blessing.

The manna embodied this same lesson. Each morning, the Jewish people had to trust that G-d would provide again that day. They could not hoard for the future or rely on yesterday's supply. Their survival depended on daily faith. Shabbat and the manna are both exercises in bitachon—trust in G-d.

This trust is not only the source of sustenance, but the channel through which blessing flows. When we place our trust in G-d, we open ourselves to His care in ways that often defy logic.

During a time when our own world felt as though it was falling apart, my wife received simple but profound advice from a friend: "At times like this, let go and allow G-d to take over." It was the best advice we could have received. Blessings soon came in the form of good, kind, and loving people, for whom we remain deeply grateful. That message has carried us through every difficulty since.

When answers seem absent and hope feels lost, remember this lesson of the manna and Shabbat: G-d is there for you. When it feels like there is nobody else, He remains.

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

Why Jews Need An Army

By Rabbi Lazer Gerkow

When the Jews left Egypt, they were a nation of newly freed slaves—not trained soldiers. Yet, the Torah describes them not as a wandering people, but as an army. This terminology is intentional: they were the "Army of G-d," and their battlefield was not physical, but spiritual.

THE INTERNAL BATTLE

G-d does not need an army to defeat physical enemies; He needs an army to fight darkness on Earth. The mission at Sinai was to introduce light into a world of paganism and hedonism.

This war is fought within every individual. Whenever we struggle with lust, greed, pride, or distraction during prayer, we are in a state of combat. By labeling these internal voices as "enemies," the Torah teaches us a brilliant psychological strategy: these negative impulses are not who we are. They are external forces we are tasked to defeat.

THE SOLDIER'S MINDSET: ACTION FIRST

In a physical army, the mission rules the day. Planners understand the global strategy, while soldiers execute specific orders. If a soldier refuses to move because they don't understand the "big picture," the entire effort is jeopardized.

The Jewish response at Sinai—"We will do and we will understand"—perfectly mirrors this hierarchy. In a spiritual army, action is the primary task.

Understanding is a bonus, but the mission requires execution first. We trust the "General" (G-d) even when the specific command seems counterintuitive.

SYNCHRONIZED MISSIONS

A soldier never fights a war alone. The mission is achieved through a synchronized effort across various divisions.

Just as an army has different units, Judaism assigns specific missions to Kohanim, Levites, and Israelites, or to men and women. We don't need to do everyone's job; we only need to fulfill our specific assignment.

Success depends on precision. Just as a flanking maneuver must happen at an exact moment, Jewish traditions have specific measures. The Seder belongs to Passover, and Shabbat candles are lit in a choreographed dance that follows the sunset around the globe.

THE GLOBAL STRATEGY

Each of us occupies a unique slot in history. Our lifetime is our "tour of duty," coming after our predecessors and before our descendants.

We don't have to complete the entire task of perfecting the world alone, but we cannot desist from our part. When every soldier performs their specific mission at the right time and place, the collective goal is achieved: the eradication of unholiness and the ushering in of the era of Mashiach.

SLICE OF LIFE

Law School Waited, My Neshama Couldn't

By Ariel Feffer

My Judaism lived in a strange middle space. I grew up around Chabad. It was warm and familiar, something that framed my life without ever demanding too much of me. By the time I was in college at Arizona State, my Chabad house was where my friends were. It was where I laughed, ate, stayed late, and felt grounded socially. For a long time, that was enough.

On Friday nights, I would light Shabbos candles in my apartment, pause just long enough to feel that the week was shifting, and then sit back down at my desk to keep studying for the LSAT. It was an in-between version of observance. Eventually, I would pack up my books and spend the rest of Shabbos at Chabad. That rhythm felt safe. I did not have to ask too many questions about what I was doing or why.

At the time, my entire world revolved around one plan: law school. It had been my goal since fifth grade, and every decision I made pointed in that direction. Judaism mattered to me, but it sat quietly in the background while I focused on building a future that felt clear and controlled.

That certainty cracked during my junior year.

It was Simchas Torah, October 7th. At ASU, there is a tradition of dancing in the fountain at the center of campus. That year, no one moved. People stood around, unsure whether it felt right



Ariel Feffer

to celebrate at all. I remember the weight of the moment, the hesitation, and then turning to my rabbi and saying, "If we do not dance, they win." So we danced.

That moment stayed with me. I realized that I could not keep my Judaism compartmentalized, something I visited only when it was comfortable. In the months that followed, I poured myself into advocacy. I testified on bills, challenged administrators, ran for and won a seat on my university's student government, and spent countless hours defending Israel on campus. At the same time, I naturally began keeping more of Shabbos and becoming more careful with kashrus. But much of that year was fueled by anger, anger at those trying to hurt us, anger at those who stayed silent, and, if I am honest, anger toward Hashem.

That summer, I went to Israel thinking it would be a pause. A chance to breathe before returning home to start my internship at the Attorney General's Office and continue moving forward exactly as planned. My sister and friends stayed longer in Jerusalem to attend a learning program. I did not plan to. Learning was not part of the picture.

And then one Shabbos, at the Kotel, I met a woman named Tal.

She wore a rainbow tie-dye scarf with the Nova Festival logo. She told me how her boyfriend had jumped in front of her and caught a grenade, saving her life at the cost of his own. She introduced me to her friends nearby, each carrying their own story. As I looked around, I realized the plaza was filled with people wearing the same scarves.

Tal explained that they were there, davening and keeping Shabbos in honor of friends who had been taken hostage or murdered.

Standing there, something in me softened. I felt my anger loosen its grip. I could not hold onto mine while watching people who had lost everything show up with such faith. That Shabbos changed me. From then on, I fully kept Shabbos.

Wanting more did not come with clarity. It came with tension. I started thinking about staying to learn, about what it would mean to choose something that did not fit neatly into my

plan. But I was afraid of delaying my future, of what my friends would think, of stepping into a version of myself I did not yet recognize.

When I spoke to my rabbi a few days later, he told me that deepening my Judaism would not take anything away from me. It would sharpen everything else. Still, the timing felt impossible. My internship required me back in Arizona within two weeks. I asked for an extension, expecting to hear no. On Gimmel Tammuz, I heard back. They pushed my start date, and I could stay.

It was only ten extra days, but they changed the direction of my year. Back in Arizona, learning filled the spaces of my life: podcasts between classes, chavrutas wherever I could find them. I fell in love with Chassidus, and the idea of learning full time became real.

It still felt unreasonable. I had just been accepted to law school. This was not the path I was supposed to interrupt.

And yet, the thought would not leave me.

I applied to defer one year, even after being strongly advised against it. The dean was Jewish and offered me a year deferral, though they could not guarantee my scholarship. I took it anyway, unsure whether this choice would quietly close doors I had worked so hard to open. I worried about how I would explain myself and whether I would feel alone.

Instead, I found myself in classrooms with girls whose stories echoed mine—girls who had also lived in the in-between, balancing ambition, fear, faith, and timing. Slowly, the thing I had worried about most, losing connection, turned into the thing I gained.

Just a few days ago, I heard back from the law school. Not only did they renew my scholarship, they increased it by eight thousand dollars. It felt like a reminder that choosing growth does not mean losing what is meant for you.

This year has taught me that growth rarely arrives fully formed. Sometimes it begins in the uncomfortable middle, in the moment when you stop studying, light candles, and do not go back to your desk. Sometimes it begins when you choose to show up, unsure of how everything will work out, but willing to trust that it will.

This Stunning 40-Foot Mural Greets Visitors at Mikvah Chana's New Center in Tzfat



Days of Creation through

Created over two years in Muchnik's Brooklyn studio and installed in Israel in three weeks, the mural enhances a center that adds education and inspiration to the mikvah experience for local women and visitors.

The project reflects a shift begun in 1975, when the Rebbe elevated family purity as a foundational mitzvah, urging communities to build beautiful, welcoming mikvahs and placing the practice alongside core mitzvot like tefillin and kosher.

THE BAAL SHEM TOV

The Baal Shem Tov, meaning "the Master of the Good Name," was born Yisrael, son of Eliezer and Sara on Elul 18, 1698. His teachings, emphasizing the worth of every Jew in G-d's eyes, lifted the spirits of the Jews at that time. He also attracted some of the greatest spiritual giants of his age to his foundational Chassidic teachings. Two of his main teachings are: to love every Jew regardless of his status; and everything that happens is a result of Divine Providence. When the Baal Shem Tov ascended to the heavenly chamber of Moshiach, he asked, "When will you come?" Moshiach replied: "When your teachings will be spread out."

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Greeting and Blessing:

I duly received your letter of January the 15th. In general, anything which may have even the remotest connection with Avoda Zara [idolatry] is something which a Jew should give a wide berth to and have nothing to do with it, not even to have any discussions about it, either with one's self or with others.

Even if there is doubt whether it is Avoda Zara, it is sufficient reason for a Jew to run away from it. Needless to say, any possible "benefit" that you mention that one might get from it, you could certainly get through Lehavdil ["to separate"] the observance of the Mitzvah of prayer in accordance with the Shulchan Aruch [Code of Jewish Law], which goes back to Mattan Torah [the Giving of the Torah] at Sinai, and which a Jew is dutybound to observe three times a day.

Rabbi Lipskar could explain to you in greater detail all about it. It is hardly necessary to emphasize that the benefit you will get from observing Tefillah [prayer] three times a day is a true and lasting benefit, and incomparably greater to any benefit that one can find in strange pastures, G-d forbid. There is no need to elaborate on this. I would suggest that you should have your Tefillin checked to make sure they are Kosher, and it would be good also to have the Mezuzos of your home checked.

May G-d grant that you should have good news to report in all the above, especially that you are firmly and confidently walking in the path of Torah with inspiration and joy. Since you wrote your letter in proximity to the Yartzeit [anniversary of the passing] of

my father-in-law of saintly memory on the tenth of Shevat, about which you no doubt heard from Rabbi Lipskar, I trust that you are familiar with the significance of this day, especially with the life and work of the Baal Hahilulo [person whose yartzeit is being observed], and how much hope and confidence he placed in our Jewish youth for the preservation of our sacred heritage.

28th of Shevat, 5725 [1965]

I received your letter written on the day before the hilula [anniversary of passing] of my father-in-law of saintly memory. As requested, I will remember you in prayer in the matters about which you write. I trust that you participated in the observance of the hilula, and may the inspiration be with you throughout the year. With blessing,

P.S. In reply to your question how to divide your time between self-advancement in study and helping others, it is of course impossible to set definite limits.

However, it is clear that provision should be made for both, as our Sages ruled (which you quote), "He who declares I will have nothing but Torah, etc." As for your question whether you should learn Tanya [the basic book of Chabad Chasidic philosophy] in view of your difficulty to understand it- this is obviously a surprising question. Why should you not understand it?

If you will only learn with a desire to understand, you will certainly understand. And while you will not understand it as deeply as those who have been learning it for a long time, you should remember that the same applies to the learning of Chumash [Five Books of Moses], Gemara [Talmud], etc.

There is the principle which applies to all parts of the Torah: "If one says, he has tried hard but did not succeed, don't believe him." The reverse is also true, and likewise in all parts of the Torah: "If one says, he has not tried but succeeded, do not believe him." See more on this subject in [the booklet] Kuntres Limud Hachasidus.

MOSHIACH MATTERS

"A person is like the tree of the field." (Deut. 20:19) A person is compared to a tree. A tree produces fruits which in turn cause other fruit-producing trees to grow. In like manner, we shouldn't suffice with our own growth in matters of Torah and good deeds. We should produce fruits with seeds for new trees and new fruits.

We should exert positive influence upon friends and anyone we happen to meet – that they also produce "fruits." This will cause all of creation to blossom, thus bringing about the redemption. When our conduct reflects the trees of the field, that "the shoots taken from you will be like to you," to blossom and cause a chain-reaction of self-perpetuating fruits of Torah and good deeds in oneself and others, we can be sure of the imminent coming of Moshiach.

(Living with Moshiach, Rabbi J.I. Schochet)

"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

It's almost Tu B'Shevat (this year Monday, February 2), that fruit-eating and tree-planting time of year. Now, someone out there might be wondering what he would do if he was in the middle of planting a tree and Moshiach came.

Interestingly enough, one of our Sages answered that question over 1,500 years ago! Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai used to say: "If there is a plant in your hand when they say to you: 'Behold, the Moshiach!' – go and plant the seedling, and afterward go out to greet him."

What does this mean to you? Take a moment to think about it and then read on. "Behold, Moshiach is coming." The Rebbe made this statement publicly at numerous gatherings. One might conjecture that, once such powerful statement were made, all that was left for us to do was sit around and wait for some kind of high-tech, multi-media, miraculous event to take place which would herald the Messianic Era.

On the contrary, the Rebbe told us to prepare ourselves to greet Moshiach by performing acts of goodness and kindness, doing more mitzvot, studying more Torah, and performing mitzvot in a more perfect manner. "Go and plant the seedling," the Rebbe tells us.

Continue and increase all of the good and G-dly things you are presently doing. Learn more. Give more. Do more. For the more we plant now, the more bountiful will be our harvest in the Messianic Era. When Moshiach comes, the presence and life-giving energy of the Master of the Universe will be totally revealed in every aspect of our lives. "Go and plant the seedling," Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai tells us. And surely, with all the fruits of our labor; from all the seedlings we have planted, we will be able to greet Moshiach in a dignified and proud manner.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חייה ימושקה

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
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All contents © 2025 by L.Y.O. ISSN 1050 0480

L'Chaim Subscriptions
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Once it happened that the people of the town of Ludkia were greatly in need of oil. They appointed one man to go and procure it for them, instructing him: "Go and get for us oil in the amount of one hundred times ten thousand."

The man set out on his journey, asking everyone he encountered where such an enormous quantity of oil might be purchased. His first stop was Jerusalem. Entering the bustling marketplace—amid merchants calling out their wares and shoppers bargaining loudly—he boldly announced, "I need oil in the amount of one hundred times ten thousand." He was told that if such a quantity could be found anywhere, it might be in the town of Tzor.

Encouraged, the emissary gathered his modest provisions and traveled on to Tzor. Once again, he went to the marketplace and proclaimed his need. Yet even there, no one possessed such a vast supply of oil. They suggested, however, that he continue onward to the town of Gush Chalav.

When the man arrived in Gush Chalav, he repeated his announcement in the marketplace. This time, he was directed to the home of a particular resident. Thanking G-d and hoping his mission was nearing completion, the emissary went to the address he had been given. At the door he was told, "The master of the house is not home now; he is tending to his olive trees."

Undeterred, the emissary went out into the olive fields to find him. When he finally located the man, he explained his mission and said, "I am in need of oil in the amount of one hundred times ten thousand." The olive grower was not fazed in the slightest. Calmly, he replied, "Please wait for me until I have finished my work in the grove."

When the man completed his labor, he gathered his tools and returned home together with the emissary. Yet the olive grower appeared so simple and unassuming that the emissary began to doubt. Could it truly be possible, he wondered, that this man—who was just working among the trees—can supply such an immense quantity of oil? Perhaps I have come all this way for nothing, the victim of a joke.

His doubts began to fade when they entered the man's home. A maidservant brought pitchers of warm water for her master to wash his hands and feet. Then she brought out a solid gold vessel filled with oil, into which he dipped his hands and feet, fulfilling the verse, "And he dips his foot in oil." Shortly thereafter, finely prepared food was placed before them, and they ate and drank.

When the meal concluded, the man said, "If you will come with me, I will gladly measure out the oil for you now." The emissary followed and watched in amazement as oil worth one hundred times ten thousand was measured out with ease.

Turning to the buyer, the olive grower asked, "Do you want more oil?"

The emissary replied in astonishment, "I have no more money."

"That is no obstacle," the man said. "I will gladly measure out the oil and accompany you back to your town, where I can collect the remaining payment." He then measured out an additional eighteen times ten thousand worth of oil.

It is said that the buyer used every available mule and camel to transport the

staggering volume of oil back to Ludkia. Upon his arrival, he was greeted with great celebration by the townspeople. He told them, "Direct your praise solely to this man, for all the credit is his. I am still indebted to him for eighteen times ten thousand."

And thus was fulfilled the saying: Some appear to be rich yet are paupers, while others appear poor and are exceedingly rich.



And He took off the wheel of their chariots, and He made them drive heavily (Exod. 14:25)

Had G-d removed all four wheels of their chariots, the horses could have exerted themselves and dragged the chariots on the ground. However, by removing only one wheel, G-d caused their ride to be turbulent and agonizing, with the chariots swaying from side to side. (*Sha'ar Bat Rabim*)

And it was told to the King of Egypt that the people fled; Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart. (Ex. 14:5)

The children of Israel were originally destined to be slaves for 400 years in Egypt, but were only there for 210 years. The word "barach" -- "fled" has the numerical value of 210. When the Egyptians began to complain to Pharaoh that the people "barach" -- that the Jews were there only 210 years -- again his heart hardened and he regretted sending out the Jewish people prematurely. (*Rabbeinu Bachaye*)

G-d made the sea dry land and the water split (Exod. 14:21)

According to the Talmud, pairing two people in marriage and earning a livelihood are as difficult as splitting the Sea. When the Jews saw the Egyptians chasing them, they formed a number of plans of action, one group favored a battle with the Egyptians, another group advised leaping into the sea, a third said to surrender and return to Egypt, yet another suggested fleeing into the wilderness. No one dreamt that the sea would split and they would march through on dry land.

Young people will often fantasize about their most suitable match, but very often one meets one's intended in a totally unanticipated way. Similarly, in earning one's livelihood, a person may make plans and calculations, but ultimately G-d provides him an unanticipated source of income.

((*Harav Baruch Cohen*))

From Vediarta Bam by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky

Dedicated in honor of our dear parents

Misha and Olga Rovner

and our dear children

Jacob and Jordanna Rovner

By Anna and Serge Rovner



4:53 PM Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area

12 Shevat / January 30

Torah Portion Beshalach

Shabbat ends 5:55 PM