





# SLICE OF LIFE

## Western Wall Vignettes

by Gutman Locks



### Watch Out!

It is the custom at the *Kotel* (Western Wall), and many follow this custom when leaving a synagogue or any other holy place.... we back away. Some at the Kotel merely turn and face the Kotel as they leave the immediate exit, and some have the custom of backing away all the way from where they were standing to the very outside of the entrance.

When a religious Jew first saw the head rabbi of the Old City, Rabbi Avigdor Nebenzahl, backing all the way out from the Kotel, he ran over and asked him, “What should I meditate on when I back away from the Kotel? Should I have any particular holy thoughts in mind, or what?”

He answered as a true *tzadik* (righteous person) would, “You should be very careful that you do not bump into anyone!”

Maybe not all kind, sensitive people are righteous, but surely all righteous people are kind and sensitive.

### I Don’t Know

He’s an 81-year-old Israeli who has lived in Brooklyn for the past 50 years. When I called for him to come put on *tefillin*, he smiled and came right over.

He said, “I put on tefillin this morning, and I’ve put them on every day for 40 years! Forty years

ago, a Chabadnik came into my store and put tefillin on me, and I have been putting them on every day since!”

I asked him why he kept putting them on.

He said, “I don’t know.”

There must be something he likes about it or he wouldn’t be putting them on every day. One thing for sure, it makes him happy.

That Chabadnik probably doesn’t even know it, but he changed this Jew’s life forever, both in this world and in the World to Come!

### Welcome Home

Two Israeli soldiers happily brought a third soldier over for me to put tefillin on him. He obviously had never put them on before, and they were enjoying bringing him in.

I put the arm piece on his arm and told him to say the blessing by repeating after me. He was cooperative, but for some reason, I said, “You’re a Jew, right?”

He answered, “No.”

He’s not a Jew! Yikes! Tefillin is just for Jews! I slid the arm piece off his arm, and gently explained that tefillin are only for Jewish men. Again, he said that was not a Jew... but then he said that his mother was.

“What? Is your mother a Jew?”

He said she was, but that he never did any of the Jewish laws, so he wasn’t Jewish.

“If your mother is Jewish, you are Jewish!” and I put the tefillin back on his arm, had him say the blessing, read the *Shema*, and talk to G-d in his heart.

When he finished, I told him, “We are not a religion. We are a people. Your mother is a Jew so you are a Jew, a complete Jew even if you have never done any of the mitzvahs before.

His face changed. He went from being what he thought was an outsider, to being a member of the family. Baruch Hashem.... It was so nice to see his new face.

### I Got a New Job

He is a Deputy Sheriff, visiting from Florida. When I first tried to get him to put on tefillin he refused. I asked again. He refused again. No way! He had two Israel friends with him, they motioned, “Best to leave him alone...no way!”

His son spoke to him, and the father motioned, “Okay.”

The boy came over and I helped him to put on tefillin.

I told the father to come bless his son. He agreed, and repeated the blessing word for word. I had him say out loud the things he wanted for the boy. The boy began reading the *Shema*, and I tried with the father again, but he refused.

I asked, “What do you do for a living?”

He rather sternly said, “Law enforcement.”

I held the tefillin up toward him and said, “I do that, too! And I commanded, “Come here!”

He smiled. I took hold of his arm and pulled him in.

The Israelis were smiling, and nodding, “Yes! Yes!”

I got a new job! Law enforcement. Torah-Law enforcement? I never thought of it that way before.

### The Reward

His Hebrew name is Dan. He is 76 years old, a psychologist, born in Hungary soon after the war. His father had numbers tattooed on his arm. When he was a few years old they moved to Israel, stayed a few years and then moved to Canada where he has lived ever since.

He came up to the table where I was helping someone with tefillin. He waited very patiently until I finished, and then asked if I would help him to put them on.

He happily told me that a couple of weeks before, he had his bar mitzva on an Israeli Army base, and this would be his second time to put them on.

Why he put them on at his army base bar mitzva is obvious. It was his celebration. But why did he come up to me without my having asked, wait patiently, and then ask to put them on. He really wanted to do it.

There is a well-known teaching, “The reward of a mitzva is a mitzva.” One of the ways to understand this is that performing a mitzvah will lead you to perform another mitzvah. This certainly is what happened with Dan.

*Gutman Locks is well-known at the Western Wall for over two decades. He is the author of several books, musical tapes and many educational videos. See more of his writings at [www.thereisone.com](http://www.thereisone.com)*

## The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence  
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Freely translated and adapted

Adar 1, 5714 (1954)

From time to time I inquire about your wellbeing and receive news about your welfare from your children. I am surprised by the fact that on a number of occasions they have told me that your mood is not as it should be.

In general, each and every one of us, when we search and ponder our lives, even during the last few years when matters do not seem to be going so well, will observe G-d’s kindness and goodness, up to and including matters that were not at all expected.

In fact, the individual sees these things to an even greater extent than does another - as each person knows in his or her own life.

This should lead the person to recognize and acknowledge the blessings and goodness that he has received from G-d, and quite possibly, on more than one occasion, the person has received these blessings without any effort on his part.

This leads to the inevitable conclusion that if there do exist matters that are contrary to a person’s desires, then it may very well be one of two things:

Firstly, quite often a person does not truly know what is best for him and if that which he desires will indeed bring him true benefit or possibly the opposite.

Even when the individual concludes that he knows with one-hundred-percent certainty that the thing is good for him, he still cannot possibly know the reasons why he has not been granted these matters for the time being.

This is analogous to the business world: A good and experienced businessperson will not sell his merchandise at an inopportune time. And this is the case even when he

can realize a profit, but that he reckons that by selling his merchandise at a later date he can realize a far greater profit.

The same is so with G-d’s goodness. If it is delayed, it is in all probability because at a later time G-d’s beneficence will be in a much greater manner in both quantity and quality.

This is particularly true in your case, where G-d has blessed you with true *nachas* (pride) from children, something which is not so often found .... Since you and your wife can anticipate even more *nachas* from your children, your going around unhappy (something which can be interpreted as dissatisfaction – G-d forbid – with the manner in which G-d conducts your affairs) defies understanding. Moreover, to a certain extent this is an expression of ingratitude to G-d.

**A good and experienced businessperson will not sell his merchandise at an inopportune time.**

It is self-understood that I am not writing to you in order to admonish you but to convince you that even according to the way you look at your life, the good things in your life are incomparably greater and more significant than those matters that you think are – temporarily – not as they should be.

Bear in mind that when a businessman makes an accounting, he does not consider each item individually, but makes a total accounting of the inventory as a whole. And so too regarding the “balance sheet” of events in your life.

It is my hope that the above few lines will move you to reconsider the “calculation” that you are making. I am sure that when you will do so, you will reach a much happier conclusion than you have reached until now. ...

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

*The 7th of Adar (this coming Tuesday, February 28 this year) is the birthday and yahrzeit of Moses.*

*The Rebbe spoke numerous times about the significance of this date in our G-dly service. In one of the Rebbe’s public addresses, the Rebbe delved further into the significance of this date.*

*On a person’s birthday, “his mazal (source of influence) shines powerfully.” If this concept applies to the birthday of any Jew, surely it applies with regard to the birthday of a leader of the Jewish people. Nor is this relevant merely as an event in the past. Instead, each year, the positive influence associated with the 7 Adar is increased, reaching a level immeasurably higher than in previous years.*

*The birthday of a Jewish leader affects every member of the Jewish people, for the leader is the source of influence through whom G-d’s blessings are drawn down for the entire people.*

*Seven is symbolic of a complete cycle.*

*Thus, the Seventh of Adar should inspire every Jew to carry out his service in a complete manner. The positive influence of the month of Adar will facilitate the performance of this service.*

*Similarly, these positive influences will hasten the coming of the Redemption. It is of utmost importance that the Redemption come sooner, even a moment sooner, for the Divine Presence and the Jewish people are in exile. Therefore, it is important to hasten the coming of the Redemption; every single moment its coming can be speeded is significant.*

*The potential for this certainly exists: the very next moment can be the last moment of the exile, and the moment that follows, the first moment of the Redemption.*

*Shmuel Butman*

**L’ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA**  
**לזכרון חיה י מושקה**

*The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.*



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**Director**  
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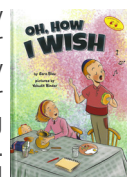


## New Emissaries

**Rabbi Mendel and Itty Wuensch** are establishing a new Chabad House for English speakers in **Netanya, Israel**. The new Chabad House will primarily service the neighborhoods of Ramat Poleg and Ir Yamim which both have high English speaking populations.

## Oh, How I Wish

Children are so enthusiastic about the activities they love to do! One loves to sing, another to draw, or dance, or bake. In *Oh, How I Wish*, children share many ways they can use their favorite activities for a higher purpose... singing to cheer up lonely people, dancing to make a bride happy, or baking to honor Shabbat. The engaging illustrations by Yehudit Binder and lyrical text by Sara Blau combine to create a great picture book! Hachai Publishing



## Hakhel – Unite!

The objective of the Hakhel assembly was to strengthen the foundations of Jewish education and observance. We can fulfill this commandment nowadays firstly by “assembling” all the various facets of our personalities in order to imbue them with the knowledge and reverence of G-d. We should assemble our families periodically and strengthen each other in a spirit of family love and camaraderie. (*Likutei Sichot*)  
Learn more at [hakhelnation.com](http://hakhelnation.com)

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

“They shall make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in their midst” (*Ex. 25:8*) According to Maimonides, this commandment refers not only to the erection of the Sanctuary, but the building of the First, Second

and Third Holy Temples as well. When Moshiach comes and the Third Holy Temple is established, the original Sanctuary built by Moses will also be revealed, for a special connection exists between the two. Just as the Sanctuary was built in the desert, by an individual who himself never set foot in the Holy Land, so will the Third Holy Temple reflect the good deeds we have performed and our service of G-d throughout the present exile. (*Peninei HaGeula*)