



One day, Reb Shraga Faitel Levin was learning with Reb Shmuel Berzinz, the local shochet, in the *shul* (synagogue) of Nevel, when the shochet's son suddenly arrived, searching for his father. Reb Shmuel's son was a wealthy butcher who lived in a different town.

"I'm just passing through," his son explained. "The Rebbe Rashab (Rabbi Sholom Dovber, the fifth Chabad Rebbe) is close by at his place of vacation and I am on my way to visit him."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Reb Shmuel. "I wish I could also go!"

His son did not miss a beat. "I will buy you a ticket," he said.

Reb Faitel promptly seized the opportunity to express his overwhelming desire to see the Rebbe, and to his pleasant surprise, the young man bought him a ticket as well. The group set out on their journey.

The Rebbe Rashab was staying at a resort location not far from the Black Sea. The trio reached the closest port on Friday morning. It was a few-mile walk to the village where the Rebbe was staying, with other small villages in between.

Before they began their walk, they decided to immerse in the Black Sea. Reb Faitel and the shochet immediately emerged from the water, but the son continued to swim around for quite a while. When he finished swimming, he rejoined the others to walk to the Rebbe's home.

Suddenly, the son dropped to the ground and lay there motionless. All his father's efforts to arouse him were to no avail; the young man was unconscious. Reb Faitel helped the distraught father carry his son to the nearest Jewish home, and as the son lay immobile in bed, their hosts ran out to fetch the closest doctor.

When the doctor finally arrived, he examined the patient. "I can't understand what happened," the father explained. "We were just swimming in the Black Sea and my son was healthy. When we continued walking, he collapsed to the ground, and he's been lying like that ever since."

The doctor looked at them in shock. "The Black Sea?" he repeated. "You swam in that water?" "We didn't stay too long," the shochet said. "My son was there longer than us. He probably swam for a few minutes."

"A few minutes!" the doctor shook his head in dismay. "I'm sorry, but there is little I can do. That water is contaminated and prolonged contact has always proved fatal. Your son is in a coma, far beyond human help!"

The doctor packed his bag, and ignoring their protests, headed out the door. The shochet turned to Reb Faitel in desperation. "Only the Rebbe can help us," he said. "We must go to him!"

They left the invalid in the house and continued walking to the resort, arriving at the Rebbe Rashab's residence on Friday night at midnight. When they arrived, the shochet immediately asked the assistant of the Rebbe Rashab to grant him a private audience, but he was refused.

"The Rebbe is not seeing anyone now," explained the assistant. "However, if you really must speak with the Rebbe, wait outside his room – the Rebbe always goes from one room to the next between three and four in the morning. Then you can ask him whatever you want."

The shochet and Reb Faitel waited outside the Rebbe's room for hours. Suddenly, at 3:30 a.m., the door opened and the Rebbe came out.

"What do you want?" the Rebbe asked.

Reb Shmuel burst into tears and quickly related what had occurred. When he finished, the Rebbe made a dismissive gesture with his hand. "He will be here for *Havdala* (the ceremony marking the end of Shabbat)," he said. With that, the Rebbe went to a different room.

The pair looked at one another in amazement: Reb Shmuel's son was in bed, practically lifeless, and yet the Rebbe expected him to walk five miles to the resort in time for Havdala! However, being true Chasidim, they did not question the Rebbe's words. In fact, the shochet was so overjoyed by the Rebbe's words that he decided to stay there until after Shabbat, for if the Rebbe promised his son would recuperate, then returning to the village would be a futile waste of time.

A little while later back in the village, the young man suddenly awoke to find strangers looking at him. "What am I doing here?" he said. "Where is my father?" He tried to get up but fell back, exhausted by the effort.

"Watch yourself!" said the woman of the house. "You are very ill and the doctor said you will die soon! Don't move or you might make it worse!"

The family tried all they could to get him to stay in bed, but he resisted. "What do you mean?" he said indignantly. "I came here to see the Rebbe, not to stay in bed!"

Gradually, he mustered enough strength to sit up. Then he stood up and walked around. After eating something, he left the house, against the strong exhortations of his hosts to remain and gather his strength. When he arrived at the house of the Rebbe Rashab, he opened the door to find the Rebbe standing at the table with the cup of wine in his hand, just ready to begin Havdala. He had arrived in time.

Decades later, one of Reb Faitel's sons related this story to his children. "This story," he observed, "illustrates the incredible faith of the Chasidim. This man had left his son on his deathbed with the doctor saying there was no hope for him, yet when the Rebbe said he would be fine, the Chasid did not return to check to see if the son had returned to health. The Rebbe had spoken; his word was enough!"

by E. Lesches, reprinted from *Beis Moshich Magazine*

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

Abraham called the name of his son...Isaac (Gen. 21:3)

In the Messianic age, it is specifically of Isaac that we will say "for you are our father" (a verse from the book of Isaiah). According to Chasidut, the name Isaac – *Yitzchak* is an expression of laughter and delight; when Moshiach comes, the supernal joy and delight of our present service of G-d will be fully revealed. (*Likutei Sichot*, Vol. I)

And Abraham drew near (Gen. 18:3)

Rashi notes that Abraham approached G-d "to speak [with Him] in a harsh manner," to plead that He change His mind and not destroy Sodom. Abraham, the epitome of loving-kindness, nonetheless saw fit to go against his natural inclination and "speak harshly" with G-d! We learn from this that when it comes to saving lives, either literally or in the spiritual sense, a Jew must pull out all the stops and do all in his power, even if it goes against his very nature. (*Likrat Shabbat*)

For I know him...that he will do justice and judgment (Gen. 18:19)

What is the connection between justice and judgment? Whenever G-d gives a person an abundance of blessings, he must ask himself: Do I really deserve so much goodness? Why me and not someone else? This "self-judgment" will then prompt him to give *tzedaka* (charity) in a generous and unstinting manner. (*Sefer HaMaamarim*)



5:47 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
16 Cheshvan/Oct 22
Torah Portion *Vayeira*
Shabbat ends 6:45 PM

L'Chaim

בס"ד
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16 Cheshvan, 5782
Oct. 22, 2021

The Weekly Publication for Every Jewish Person

נסד תוד ימי השלשים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
...I have called out to the L-rd and He answered me" (Psalms 120:1)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

This week's Torah portion, *Vayeira*, begins with the words, "And G-d revealed Himself to Abraham..." This revelation took place three days after Abraham circumcised himself at the age of 99 as commanded by G-d. That same day, three guests appear at Abraham's tent. They are angels, disguised as men. One of the guests announces that, in exactly one year, the barren Sara will give birth to a son.

Later, G-d "remembers" His promise to Sara. "And G-d remembered Sara as He had said, and G-d did for Sara as He had spoken. And Sara conceived, and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the appointed time of which G-d had spoken."

(The day on which G-d remembered Sara was Rosh Hashana, and we read this Biblical narrative as the Torah reading on that day.)

The above verses can give each one of us much strength. They can fill us with joy, belief and trust.

How? Why?

For starters, the Jewish people according to the laws of nature are not supposed to be here, our entire existence is a miracle. These verses express how Abraham and Sara are blessed with a baby, though Sara was infertile. On top of that, he was 100, she was 90, far past the age of childbirth. G-d returned Sara's youth to her and opened her womb to conceive; to Abraham he gave the ability at this advanced age to sire children. The birth of Isaac, our forefather, is only by miracle.

Imagine Sara's joy when she recognized that she was pregnant after all this time, her anticipation to give birth and finally, holding her baby in her arms. Just the thought can fill us with happiness.

G-d promised Abraham that he would have a child with Sara. Through His messenger He told them when. At the precise moment, G-d gave them Isaac, from whom all Jews descend.

In G-d we can trust, in G-d we can believe. G-d makes promises and delivers on them. One can never lose hope, because G-d can and will do miracles for you, just as He did for Abraham and Sara.

He will also keep His promise, to send Moshiach and take us out of this long and dark exile. The time has come.

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.

Retirement Funds

by Rabbi Dr. Dovid YB Kaufmann *obm*

What with the world economy still dealing with the pandemic, many people are thinking about money matters more and more. One of the biggest areas of concern are retirement funds.

Investors and individuals are looking for innovative ways to create and protect retirement funds, so that should help. Some people are delaying retirement, or foregoing retirement altogether, working into their seventies and eighties.

When it comes to the "retirement fund," we're finding that we can get one and build one by many different paths.

What's the purpose of a "retirement fund" anyway?

Simply put, it's a fund – money accumulated over a period of time – that generates money – funds, income – we can use when we retire, when we're no longer working. Or working as much. We create and grow the retirement fund by putting money in it during our working years – regular contributions, usually monthly, almost always a fixed amount. This money is invested, earns interest, and hopefully grows enough to provide us with an income when we can't provide one for ourselves, or don't want to work quite so hard.

It's an investment of the present for the future, a postponing of present pleasure for future security. A retirement fund is also a testimony to a life of hard work, a financial verification of our successes.

Judaism too has a "retirement fund" – a way of investing for the future. Instead of money, the Jewish people invest *mitzvot* (commandments). Every *mitzva* yields a great return on the investment – and when you "deposit

a *mitzva*," its value always goes up. *Mitzvot* never depreciate, they only increase, generating more *mitzvot* in this world, and more spiritual reward in the World-to-Come.

The *Mishne* teaches: "one *mitzva* leads to another."

Still, as with any "investment," some have better "yields" than others. In our case, some of our "mitzva" investments begin "paying dividends" even in this world, while we collect full value of the "principle" in the World-to-Come.

There's a *mishna* in the Talmudic tractate of *Shabbat* that lists these "special investment, high yield" *mitzvot*. The Sages incorporated this *mishna* into the daily prayer service, placing it at the very beginning of the morning blessings.

It goes as follows: "These are the precepts, the fruits of which a person enjoys in this world, while the principle reward remains in the World to Come: honoring one's father and mother, performing deeds of kindness, early attendance at the House of Study morning and evening, hospitality to strangers, visiting the sick, dowering the bride, escorting the dead, concentration in prayer, bringing peace between one person and another, and between husband and wife. And the study of Torah is equivalent to them all."

Why not check on your "retirement fund," see how your "spiritual portfolio" is doing by reciting this *mishnah* in the morning? And it's probably a good time to make a deposit – no automatic deductions – in your retirement fund, and increase the value of your "investment," by doing one of the *mitzvot* listed – or any *mitzva*, for that matter.

Dedicated in honor of dear friends of the Lubavitch Youth Organization and the L'Chaim Publication
Dovid and Chani Junik

SLICE OF LIFE

Touching Lives Years Later
by Rabbi Sholom Dovber Avtzon



Some weeks ago I received a call from my sister Chanice Zirkind who is an emissary of the Rebbe in Fresno, California. She was in Nevada for a Bar Mitzva and met someone who remembered me from over 40 years ago. Danny (a pseudonym) wanted to know if I remembered him.

Danny was one of over 1,800 young adults and children who left Iran during and after the revolution in 1979.

He was part of "Operation Exodus,"* an historic effort to rescue the Jewish children of Iran. With help from the Crown Heights community and an army of volunteers, the operation was spearheaded by the late Rabbi Yaakov Yehudah (J.J.) Hecht, and personally approved and encouraged every step of the way by the Rebbe. Operation Exodus was by far the largest organized effort to rescue the embattled Jews of Iran, and by the time it wrapped up in 1981 had brought 1,800 children to the United States.

Danny had spent one year in Crown Heights. We reminisced about the time we were together, I as his counselor and advocate, and he as a 12-year-old boy all on his own.

In the course of our conversation, I asked him about the *yechidus* (private audience) that I arranged for him and a few other boys to have with the Rebbe. He told me that Rabbi Yossi Raichik *obm* brought them in and the Rebbe asked Rabbi Raichik if these are the children of Teheran.

When Rabbi Raichik replied "yes," he said "Rebbe, I am from Shiraz." The Rebbe then asked a few more questions and then the private audience concluded.

Danny, as a youngster, would attend Shabbat services in "770" – the main synagogue and Chabad-Lubavitch world headquarters. He would stand on the *bima* (platform where the Torah is read) when the Rebbe was called up to recite the Maftir; the look on his face showed that he was enamored and inspired.

He was so thankful to the Rebbe for saving him that on Purim he and his friend Moshe asked me to show them the Rebbe's house. They wanted to bring *Mishloach Manot* (food gifts customarily given on Purim) to the Rebbe!

Eventually, Danny left New York, and went to live in Los Angeles with relatives. Life continued and we lost touch.

Some ten years later Danny heard from his friends that Rabbi Raichik, who was born and raised in Los Angeles, was in town and was looking for him.

He was happy to meet him, as Rabbi Raichik, as well as Rabbi Sholom Ber Hecht and Rabbi Hertzell Illulian, had been one of the Lubavitchers who had traveled to Iran before the revolution began. At that time, he had offered to take 20 boys back with him to America. Rabbi Raichik offered to teach them Torah so that they could return to their hometowns and become the rabbis and educators.

(Once the revolution started, hundreds of families beseeched Rabbi Raichik and Rabbi Illulian to accept their children as students. The young rabbis contacted their colleague Rabbi Hecht who was already back in New York. Rabbi Hecht told his father, the legendary Rabbi J.J. Hecht about the situation. Rabbi JJ Hecht asked the Rebbe what to do and the Rebbe told him that he and his organization, The National Committee for the Furtherance of Jewish Education should obtain student visas for all of them.)

Upon meeting Rabbi Raichik, Danny asked him why he was looking specifically for him as there were numerous Iranian boys and girls that he brought out, who were living in California.

Rabbi Raichik replied, "The Rebbe instructed me to find out how you are doing."

We are speaking of an individual whose path intersected with the Rebbe for a short period of time, and then Danny thought he had moved on. However, the Rebbe was still concerned about his well-being.

I related to Danny the story that I had written two years ago of when the Rebbe instructed a teacher to tell one of her students that the Rebbe did not have self-sacrifice to take him out of Iran so that he would behave in a manner that he would have never even contemplated in Iran.

Although the Rebbe did not address it to him, Danny saw how the Rebbe's words could be applicable to him today.

Towards the end of our enjoyable conversation Danny shared that as we were talking, he was remembering anew the special times he was in the Rebbe's courtyard.

Adapted from the weekly story by Rabbi Sholom Dovber Avtzon. Rabbi Avtzon is a veteran educator and the author of numerous books on the Chabad Rebbes and their Chasidim. He is available to speak and can be contacted at avtzonbooks@gmail.com.

**For the fascinating story of these efforts read "Operation Exodus: The Chabad Effort That Saved 1,800 Iranian Jewish Children" on chabad.org*

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

26th of Teves, 5742 (1982)

Greeting and Blessing:

This is my first opportunity to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Dec. 15, 1981. In it, after kindly paying tribute to the work of the Lubavitch movement, you express your reservations about the "Tzivos HaShem" [lit. "G-d's Army] Campaign, on the ground that it is based "on the glorification of the military and an aggrandizement of arms, war, and battlefields."

A letter is hardly the proper medium to explain fully the reasons that impelled us to introduce the establishment of the Tzivos HaShem organization, the purpose of which is to bring young Jewish children closer to Torah and Mitzvoth [commandments], as I am glad to note you fully recognize. Needless to say, it was done only after due deliberation, which I can only briefly outline in this letter.

To begin with, "Tzivos HaShem" – as you surely know – is not a "foreign" idea. It is first mentioned in the Torah in reference to "G-d's Hosts" who were liberated from Egyptian bondage. The term is clearly not used in the strict military sense. Rather it indicates that the Hosts who had been enslaved to Pharaoh to serve him, were now G-d's Hosts, free to serve G-d, and G-d alone.

Of course, the Torah does not glorify militarism, war, and the like. On the contrary, "Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace." And, as our Sages declare, "the Torah was given to bring peace into the world," and "there is no greater Divine blessing than peace," and much more in this vein.

Parentetically, with all the emphasis on pacifism, the Torah (from the root *Hora'ah* [guidance]) also provides guidance in situations where military action is necessary, and prescribes the laws of warfare, as you are, of course, aware. To be sure, Rabbi Akiva's fame rests on his spiritual contribu-

tion, but there was a time when he found it necessary to be Bar Kochba's "arms-bearer," as the Rambam notes in his Code (*Hil'chos* Mochim 11:2).

When the "Tzivos HaShem" was instituted recently, careful consideration was given to using a minimum of military trappings, and only such as would be consistent with the spirit of the Torah. For example, "spying missions," which you mention in your letter as one of your objections, was categorically excluded. Furthermore, the whole Campaign is limited to children of pre-Bar Mitzvah and pre-Bat Mitzvah age. The idea is that reaching that age they become full-fledged Jews, and by then they will have had the benefit of the experience, and will realize that it had served its purpose for them.

The question is: Since the term "Tzivos HaShem" would seem to some people to smack of "militarism," what were the overriding reasons that out weighed such reservations as you expressed in your letter? Could not the same results be achieved through other means or other methods?

This brings us to the core of the problem. As an educator, you know that children need activation, but that is only one aspect of the problem. The most important aspect, in my opinion, in this day and age, is the lack of *Kabolas Ol* [accepting the yoke], not only of *Malchus Shomayim* [the kingdom of Heaven] but also general in submission to authority, including the authority of parents at home and of teachers in school, and the authority of law and order in the street. There remains only the fear of punishment as a deterrent, but that fear has been reduced to a minimum because there has in recent years been what amounts to a breakdown of law enforcement, for reasons which need not be discussed here.

On the other hand, American children have been brought up on the spirit of independence and freedom, and on the glorification of personal prowess and smartness. It has cultivated a sense of cockiness and self-assurance to the extent that one who is bent on mischief or anti-social activity, feels that one can outsmart a cop on the beat, and even a judge on the bench; and, in any event, there is little to fear in the way of punishment.

continued in next issue

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

The twentieth of Cheshvan (this year October 26) is the birthday of Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber (1860 - 1920) known as the Rebbe Rashab.

There is a beautiful story concerning the Rebbe Rashab illustrating the high esteem in which he held every Jew.

One of the Rebbe Rashab's followers, Reb Monye Monissohn, was a wealthy gem dealer. Once, when they were sitting together, the Rebbe spoke very highly about some simple, unlearned Jews.

"Why do you make such a fuss about them?" Reb Monye asked the Rebbe.

"Each one of them has many special and noble qualities," explained the Rebbe.

"I can't see any of these qualities," said Reb Monye.

The Rebbe remained quiet. A while later, he asked Reb Monye if he had brought his package of diamonds with him. Indeed, Reb Monye had brought the diamonds but asked the Rebbe if he could display them later, when they could be seen to their best advantage.

Later, Reb Monye took the Rebbe into a different room and arranged the diamonds for him to see. Reb Monye pointed to one gem in particular, extolling its beautiful color and quality.

"I can't see anything special in it," the Rebbe said.

"That is because you have to be a "maven" to know how to look at diamonds!" explained Reb Monye.

"Every Jew, too, is something beautiful and extraordinary," the Rebbe said. "But you have to be a maven to know how to look at him."

Shmuel Beilman

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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Today Is...

16 Cheshvan

Thought is a garment and servant of the intellect and emotions. Even when it is not serving the intellect or emotions, it continues to function, thinking and meditating. However, this activity is then not only devoid of content, but also open to depravement... It is explained that alien or evil thoughts are caused by "emptiness of the head." For when the mind is occupied, the thought has something to serve, and there is no room for stupid and vain thoughts devoid of substance.

MOSHIACH MATTERS

"G-d appeared to [Abraham] in the plains of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of the tent in

the heat of the day." (Gen.18:1) With the Messianic redemption, we too shall merit a manifestation of the Divine Presence, just like Abraham. Thus it is written, "Your Master will no longer conceal Himself, and your eyes shall see your Master" (Isaiah 30:20). The people of Israel will be able to see this with their physical eyes-an empirical perception. (*Living with Moshiach, Rabbi JJ Schochet*)