

L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

This week we read the portion of *Pekudei* we read about how the artisans made the clothing of the *Kohanim* (priests), and several vessels of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). After every item was completed, it says, that they made it, "as G-d commanded Moses." Moses was so impressed by this, that he blessed them.

Later in the portion it tells of how Moses erected the *Mishkan* and placed all its vessels in it. After every job done, the Torah records that he did it "as G-d commanded Moses."

Why is it so important for the Torah to repeat this over and over again?

Artists and craftsmen have a creative spark in them. They have their way of seeing things and that influences the outcome of their work. It takes a special kind of person, who can listen to another person, and create the others vision, completely ignoring his / her inner creative spark. It is truly difficult to do what another asks, the way they want you to do it. The fact is, "I know better." And because of this, it is amazing that by the *Mishkan*, every step of the way was done "as G-d commanded Moses." Therefore Moses feels that they should be blessed.

How were they able to do it? In the case of the *Mishkan*, the artisans took it to a whole new level. It was not that they ignored their creative spark, rather they were so in tune with G-d, that their creative spark was totally in line with His will. When you are one with G-d, you find it easier to do what He wants.

The book of Exodus ends with this story, telling us that when the *Mishkan* was completed, G-d's presence filled it.

We too are all blessed with our own dispositions, natures and creative sparks. We all have our own unique way of thinking.

However, when people start thinking "Everyone else is wrong and I am right," the world becomes a dark place. When ego takes over, you are alone, because your ego leaves no space for anyone else.

When you bring humility in to the picture, you find value in others. When you begin to see and feel the other's way of thinking, you open the door to friendship, closeness, love and oneness.

The same is true when it comes to our relationship with G-d. We all have ideas of what G-d wants of us. However, through studying Torah, especially the esoteric, and Chasidic teachings, we get to know G-d in a more intimate way. Slowly we transform and align ourselves with Him and His will becomes our will.

Soon we will merit to see G-d's presence fill our actions, our Temple and our lives. May we come to see how our difficulties accomplished the transformation that brings Moshiach.

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.

Chemical Reactions

How did you fare in chemistry?

Was the thought of memorizing the periodic table enough to make your heart palpitate? Do your palms still sweat when you see diagrams of the molecular structure of water? Or were you a science whiz who loved the smell of sulfuric acid and ammonia, thrilled at the thought of yet another experiment, perceived writing out formulae as an enjoyable challenge?

Whether you loved chemistry or hated it, whether you slept through the experiments or bounded into the classroom on lab day, there's one type of experiment you undoubtedly remember: how a very small quantity of a particular substance can completely transform a tremendous amount of surrounding matter. Its action is that of a catalyst, effecting change without itself being altered in any way.

If we put this law of science to work in our daily lives, it can be inferred that applying even minimal effort can sometimes allow a person to have a profound impact on forces that appear to be more powerful or beyond his or her abilities.

With this in mind, it should come as no surprise that in the laws on repentance, Maimonides wrote: "Every individual should view himself and the world as being perfectly balanced between good and evil. Should he perform one good deed, he will tip the scales in favor of good and bring salvation and deliverance to himself and to the entire world."

"Salvation and deliverance" refers to the era of personal and global peace, health and Divine knowledge to be ushered in by Moshiach. And one *mitzva* (commandment) can tip the scale.

Are some mitzvot weightier, more readily able to tilt the Divine scale?

From chemistry we know that putting certain chemicals together elicits absolutely no reaction, while combining other chemicals can create an enormous effect.

While Maimonides did not specify any particular mitzva and we can therefore deduce that the above law applies to all mitzvot, there are specific mitzvot which have long been connected with hastening the Redemption.

"Charity brings the Redemption closer," the Talmud states. A coin in a charity box or a sandwich for a homeless person, who knows which one might tip the scale?

Love of a fellow Jew, even when one sees no apparent justification for loving him, can also tip the scale. (More easily accomplished when we focus on that which unites us rather than our differences.)

Increasing Torah knowledge in general and studying about Moshiach and the Redemption in particular hastens the Redemption. The Rebbe explained: "This is a way to begin to live one's life in the frame of mind of the Messianic Era, by having one's mind permeated with an understanding of the concept of Moshiach and the Redemption that are in the Torah."

One simple kind act or good deed can tip the scale and bring redemption to the entire world. In fact, the Rebbe once told a visiting reporter from CNN: "Moshiach is ready to come now. It is only necessary on our part to increase in acts of goodness and kindness."

And that one act might just be mine or yours! Let's do it!

SLICE OF LIFE

Clear as Mud by Chavie Bruk



The Bruk Family at Chaya's Bat Mitzva
Chaya's Bat Mitzva

I want to start off by saying what a big milestone this was for Chaya, me, and my husband.

I have a wonderful and gorgeous (inside and out) seventeen-year-old daughter yet being that we adopted her after she turned twelve, we didn't have the privilege of celebrating her Bat-Mitzva as a family. Chaya is our first child (not the oldest) it makes for a unique family where the oldest isn't the first and the first isn't the oldest.

I remember it like it was yesterday, in a parking lot a few blocks away from the adoption agency, waiting to get that phone call that would finally make us parents. That feeling is not something you can put into words. So now, 12 years later, looking at this sweet, funny, sensitive, complicated, human, takes me right back to that moment.

About six months earlier we had asked Chaya if she had any ideas or thoughts on how she wanted to celebrate her Bat-Mitzva. Of course, she had quite a lot of opinions. One thing she was very sure about was that she wanted it to be an event exclusively for women and girls. After exploring different ideas and options, we landed on a Challah Bake. I was supposed to do a community Challah Bake right when COVID-19 started and that, obviously, it

didn't happen, so it felt like the perfect opportunity to make Chaya's special day also Bozeman's first community Challah Bake, which we called Chaya's Challah bake.

I think it's important that I address the realities of putting on a big event, especially when you live in a small town with no access to a caterer, where all the Challah bake prep, all the décor and room prep and all the food was on me. It is hard! The other very significant thing was that our family, my son was not (and still not :) in a great space. We were at the end of a challenging summer; kids were home with camp being over and school still three weeks out. It didn't allow me to prep and be organized in the way that I usually am. Which basically mean that all the prep for the Bat-Mitzva basically took place the day of the celebration. It was a huge miracle! And I am so grateful for my family and amazing friend Chevee who flew into celebrate with us and basically helped make it happen in a big way.

It was a beautiful memorable evening.
Thank you, Hashem!

A Ten-Year Saga Lands a Bright Ending

Occasionally, we just get lucky and can visibly see the hand of G-d. Though I know that everything is orchestrated by Hashem (G-d), sometimes it's nice to see it, even if it takes 10 years to come to fruition.

Story time: about 10 years ago we bought a 5-acre property that's about a 15 minute walk from our home. This property was to become the home for our soon-to-be-built Chabad Center. We had some really grand plans and dreams.

We envisioned building a huge center, almost like a JCC with a pool, classrooms, a magnificent sanctuary, a social hall, I mean, you name it, it was all included in our plans.

A few years later we decided to downsize a bit, still planning to build and create a beautiful center just on a smaller scale. So, no pool, smaller spaces, a more of a condensed version of what we had originally planned.

We met with our architect and we started to draw up some concrete plans. We spent a lot of time, and money, tweaking and perfecting it, till we had what we thought was the perfect balance of our needs.

Bozeman is a beautiful place to live, yet, as more people discover its beauty, the cost of living (taxes, real estate, services, insurance) goes up. Our construction costs, I can safely say is one of the

highest in the country. In turn we were not getting anywhere near our fund-raising goals, as the more we raised, the less it was worth with prices skyrocketing.

Back to the drawing board we go. Revise, condense, reevaluate, repeat.

A little while before COVID we felt pretty stuck, construction costs were just so unfeasible, we decided to put the project on temporary hold and wait for the market to drop a bit.

Enter COVID, not only did the market prices not drop, but it shot up even more. Bozeman (like many other small towns in the west) became a very appealing place to live during a pandemic and we could feel the effects of that in a very real way.

A few months ago, one of our building donors decided that he wanted his money back. It's been a while, nothing doing, and he lost confidence in our project. Honestly, I didn't blame him, I kinda did too. Nevertheless, it was very hard to lose the money and it forced us to have a reality check.

With a lot of thought and the blessings of our donors, on the first day of Chanuka, we decided to put our property on the market. Long story short, a few days before Purim we sold our property for more the double our original investment. And on Purim day we closed on a 4,000 square foot unit fully finished, walking distance from our home and closer to Main Street.

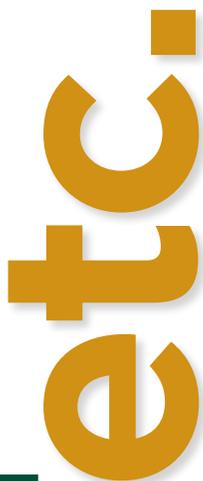
We did not have a mortgage on our property, so the sale was all profit. Those funds, along with the money we had fund-raised previously and a late infusion from a few gold hearted souls, allowed us to buy our current space all cash, mortgage free.

It hit me like a ton of bricks. This piece of land we had, was never meant to be the home of our Chabad Center. Hashem knew all along that this was an investment property, this is what allowed us to now own a home for Judaism, debt free.

Of course, this was a total Dream Detour. I always dreamed of creating a space from scratch, I have a passion for design, and I was itching to put it to use. Buying an existing space, forces me to work with what we have, give up on a lot of things (like a commercial kitchen) that I thought were essentials and will probably challenge my skills and force me to grow.

But after all is said and done, this is what was supposed happen, this is what our community needs. G-d had a plan and I'm just so grateful that after 10 years He shared it with us!

Chavie and Chaim Bruk founded and direct Chabad -Lubavitch of Montana in Bozeman.



I Can Help

Join a young brother and sister who are happy to do *mitzvot* and help throughout the day! In the morning, they help by washing, dressing, and putting their things away independently. At breakfast, they help set the table and serve some of the food. They enjoy sweeping the floor, watering plants, and choosing items to put in the shopping cart! Together, they help unpack groceries and clean up their toys.

I Can Help depicts a child's joy at being able to participate in real chores and activities. It presents the opportunity for discussion about what types of tasks are needed to run a home, and how each child can make a difference by helping! Written and illustrated by Rikki Benefeld, cheerfully illustrated laminated pages, published by HaChai Publishing.



Today Is...

2 Adar II

A blessing must have a hold in something, just as rain benefits only the plowed and sown field, and early and later heavy rains benefit the crops of field or vine. But a waste field, unplowed and unsown, will benefit from neither soft rain, nor the early or later heavy rains.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

continued from previous issue

In connection with the above I must take exception to the expression which you use in your letter, that you sometimes feel like "outcasts" within your family whose ways have parted from the Jewish way of life and who resent your adherence to traditional *Yiddishkeit* [Judaism].

As a matter of fact, the situation is precisely the reverse, for if anyone is to be considered an outcast, it is the one that excludes himself from the way of Torah and the Jewish tradition which goes back more than a hundred generations to the time when the Jewish people became a holy nation at Mt. Sinai.

Jewish history has clearly demonstrated what has been the mainstream of Jewish tradition and the very basis of Jewish existence throughout the ages.

We have always had deviationists, from the time of the Golden Calf worshippers to present-day assimilationists. But all these have been passing phenomena which came more or less to a swift end when some of the deviationists returned to the mainstream of Jewish tradition, while others, the outcasts, were lost. The same was true in regard to the Baal worshippers during the period of the first *Beis Hamikdash* [Holy Temple] in Jewish history, the Sadducees in the time of the second *Beis Hamikdash*, followed by the first Christians, later the Karaites, etc., etc.

The common denominator that bound all Jews together, and served as the basis for Jewish survival, cannot be considered in terms of territory – for Jews have been without a country for the greater part of their history. Nor can it be considered the language – because Jews spoke different languages, at different times and countries,

and even during the time of King Chizkiyahu, there were Jews who spoke Aramaic. Nor can other cultural and social factors be considered as the common denominator of Jewish survival, since these too have changed from time to time and from country to country.

The only things that have not changed in Jewish life are Shabbat observance, kashrut, tefilin, and all the other mitzvot of the Torah, both the Written Torah and the Oral Torah. It is therefore the Torah and mitzvot which are the basis of Jewish life and survival.

Consequently, the more one's daily life and conduct adheres to this pattern of Jewish living, the more one is attached to the Jewish people, and conversely, the more concessions one is willing to make, the more one lessens one's bonds to the Jewish people, until one may become an outcast, G-d forbid.

As for the "charge" that some people make to the effect that this sort of traditional Judaism is "fanaticism" and the like, this is also nothing new, for there have always been Jews, from the time of the Golden Calf worshippers mentioned above, who considered themselves "modern" and called others fanatics, fundamentalists and the like.

With regard to your personal question (if the question is still valid) as to the advisability of your taking a position in the educational field, a position which some of your local Chasidic friends who know you and know the position, have urged you to accept, it is surely unnecessary to emphasize to you at length the importance of education, and the privilege of being able to educate Jewish boys and girls. It should be borne in mind that every little bit of good influence while the children are young is multiplied many times as that child becomes of age.

The obvious illustration is that of a seed or seedling, when even a small scratch or defect at that stage could become crippling to the adult tree, while every benefit at that stage is multiplied many times.

I send you my prayerful wishes for the fulfillment of your heart's desires for good, especially for a *refua* [recovery] and good health, and the fulfillment of the mitzvot with joy and gladness of heart, and hope to hear good news from you.

people but are only being held for a future date as a "*mashkon*" (pledge); hence, the repetition of the word "Tabernacle." According to Jewish law, the guardian of a pledge is obligated to return it to its owner in perfect condition when the proper time comes. The Third Holy Temple will therefore possess all of the same qualities and characteristics as the First and Second Temples that were held as a pledge until Moshiach's coming. (*The Rebbe*)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we enter the second month of Adar, our thoughts immediately turn to the holiday of Purim.

Every holiday is a time of rejoicing for the Jewish people. The joy of Purim, however, exceeds that of all other holidays, even the holiday of Sukkot, which is referred to in the Torah itself as "Z'man Simchateinu" – the Season of Our Rejoicing.

The joy of Purim is limitless and unbounded. The joy of Purim is poretz geder; it "breaks" through life's day-to-day routines and the typical way of doing things.

As the joy of Purim is so great, even the preparations for Purim must be filled with great joy. What preparations do we need to make for Purim?

On Purim itself we send gifts of food, mishloach manot, to friends and neighbors. Children dress up in costumes. We listen to the reading of the Megila of Esther and stamp out Haman's name. We eat a festive holiday meal and we add the special Al HaNisim ("For these miracles") to our prayers.

Our preparations for Purim, then, include studying the laws and customs of the holiday, purchasing items for mishloach manot, making costumes, familiarizing ourselves with the Megila, readying the holiday meal, knowing when to recite Al HaNisim. The more enthusiasm and rejoicing we put into the preparations for Purim, the greater the happiness of Purim itself will be.

From the rejoicing of the preparations for Purim may we speedily experience the rejoicing with Moshiach now.

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.



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MOSHIACH MATTERS

These are the accounts of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle); the Tabernacle of the testimony (Ex 38:21) Our Sages said that although the First and Second Holy Temples were destroyed, they were never totally taken from the Jewish



IT HAPPENED ONCE

Shortly before the Jews were to enter the Promised Land G-d appeared to Moses, His beloved servant, and informed him that he would not be permitted to enter the Land with his people, but instead would die in the desert as a punishment for having struck the rock at Merivah. These bitter words were unacceptable to Moses. Could it be that he would be denied his supreme wish – to serve his Master in the holiness which is found only in the Land of Israel?

The day of Moses' death approached, but when the people heard of the decree, they cried out and said, "We will not allow it." Even the sun came before G-d, saying, "I will not set today so that your servant Moses will not have to die." G-d would not be moved. He sent the Angel of Death to bring Moses' soul to Him, but Moses forbade the angel to approach, and the angel fled in fear.

G-d Himself then came to Moses and consoled him, saying, "If you live longer than the usual number of years, people will turn you into a god and worship you. Furthermore, you know that even Adam, whom I fashioned with my own hands, had to die." But Moses continued to plead his cause. "Please, allow me only to cross the Jordan River, if not as a leader, then as a plain Jew; if not as a plain Jew, then as a servant." But G-d replied, "I have made two oaths: one that you will not enter the Promised Land; and the second, that I will never destroy the Jewish people. If I break the one vow, I will have to break the other."

When Moses heard this, He recoiled in fright. "I would rather die a thousand deaths than allow You to destroy even one Jewish soul. But don't I deserve to witness the triumph of my people whom I led faithfully throughout all these forty years?" G-d replied only: "Moses, do not fear, I Myself will take care of them, but you must allow the Angel of Death to approach you, for it is Joshua's turn to lead the people."

Moses still was not reconciled to his fate. He appealed to the heavens and the earth to intercede for him, they replied, "How can we pray for you when it is written 'the skies were like smoke' and of the earth it is said, 'and the earth like a garment shall wear out'?" Moses then asked the sun and the moon to pray for him, but they answered, 'We can't pray for you since it is said, 'The moon was put to shame and the sun was disgraced.'"

The stars and the mountains and the seas likewise were not powerful enough to help. Moses continued to plead for himself: "The Jews sinned many times, and yet You always forgave them. Am I worse than they that You cannot forgive me also?" But G-d replied to him, "Justice for the many is not the same as justice for one. I could forgive the sins of an entire people, but I cannot forgive yours."

Moses realized that nothing would avail, and that G-d would not retract His decree. He wrote out 13 Torah scrolls, one for each Tribe and one to remain in the Holy Ark. Moses and Joshua, the new leader, went together to the Tent of Meeting, where the Divine Presence always spoke with Moses. After they entered, a pillar of cloud descended separating Moses from Joshua. When it departed Moses turned to his former pupil and asked, "Master, what did G-d say to you?" Joshua relied, "I am forbidden to tell you." This was the first time that G-d had communicated with Joshua instead of Moses, and Moses was deeply pained. He cried out, "Better one hundred deaths than envy even once!"

Now Moses was ready to die. G-d showed him all the sights of Israel, present and future, even until the time of the Final Redemption. Then, commanding the angels to lock up the gates of prayer, lest Moses' heart-rending pleas penetrate, G-d Himself descended to take Moses' pure soul, telling it: "My daughter, leave his body immediately and I will allow you to rest under My Throne with the angels." G-d then

kissed Moses, took his soul and brought it up to Heaven where even the angels wept.

Moses was born on the seventh of Adar and passed away on the seventh of Adar. On the day that he died a Heavenly Voice announced: "Moses was awarded the crown of Torah, the crown of the priesthood, and the crown of royalty, yet the most important crown he earned was the crown of a good name."

Moses' body never degenerated, nor does anyone know the place of his grave, lest they see the light shining from there. When the Holy Moshiach redeems his people, Moses will be together with us once more.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT
on the weekly Torah portion

These are the accounts of the Tabernacle (mishkan); the Tabernacle of the testimony (Ex. 38:21)

A reason the word "Tabernacle" is repeated is to allude to the two Holy Temples – the spiritual one that exists in the celestial spheres above and the physical one that was built by the Jews below to reflect spiritual reality. (*Likutei Sichot*)

All the gold was used in the work to complete the sacred task (Ex. 38:24)

The only reason gold was created was for its use in the Sanctuary and the Holy Temples. (*Tiferet Yehonatan*)

For the cloud of the Lord was upon the Mishkan by day, and there was fire within it at night, before the eyes of the entire house of Israel in all their journeys. (Ex. 40:38)

The last verse in Exodus speaks about the "cloud of the L-rd that was upon the Sanctuary by day, and the fire that was on it by night." Day represents the times when the Jewish people flourish; night represents the darkest hours of Jewish history. The Torah assures us that throughout all our travels, regardless of whether or not the sun is shining, G-d's clouds and heavenly fire protect us and assure our safety and survival. (*Our Sages*)

They brought the Tabernacle to Moses. Ex. 39:33

The people knew that Moses had to erect the Tabernacle, even though they had done all the work of constructing and preparing its components themselves. The same applies to the inner, spiritual Tabernacle that we are to construct within ourselves. We must do all we can on our own to form and prepare all its parts, but after that we must enlist the aid of our "Moses" – the mentor who teaches us the Torah and shows us how to live according to it – whose task it is to connect us with G-d. Then we can be assured that all the pieces of our inner Tabernacle will unite seamlessly to perform their function in the fullest way. (*Likutei Sichos*)

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הור"ח אי"א התמים נר"נ עוסק בצ"צ רב פעלים וכו'
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ר' משה פינחס הכהן ב"ר אברהם מרדכי הכהן ז"ל
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