The Western Wall, the *Kotel*, is the one remaining wall of the great walls which surrounded the Holy Temple. Its name refers to the fact that it stood on the western side of the Temple. When the Temple was destroyed, G-d swore that this part of the wall would remain forever.

Our Sages say that the Divine Presence never leaves this holy site. For this reason, the Kotel has become the national spiritual focal point. The Kotel consists of four layers of stones, dating from different time periods and constructed in different styles. The lowest level consists of the largest stones, which date back to the first Temple of King Solomon. The largest stones are actually several meters high – one even measuring a huge twelve meters in height and calculated to weigh 400 tons!

The second level of stones dates to the time of the Second Temple. The third level was laid 700 years ago. The highest seventeen upper rows, which consist of much smaller stones, were laid only about a hundred years ago by Sir Moses Montefiore.

Architects and engineers are puzzled as to how the huge blocks of stone were quarried and brought to the site without modern methods of transportation.

Our Sages, however, have given the answer: The enormous stones were borne aloft and laid one on top of the other in a miraculous fashion.

The great tzadik, Rabbi Chaim ben Attar, known as the *Ohr Hachayim* (HaKadosh), after his work of the same name, had many remarkable students.

One of them was Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai, who is known by the acronym of his name, the Chida. When the Chida went to live in Israel his teacher gave him, as is the time-honored custom, a note to insert between the stones of the Kotel. The Chida took the note, put it in a safe place, and resolved to follow his master's bidding as soon as he arrived in the Holy Land.

When he arrived in Israel, the Chida decided that rather than depend on charity of any kind, he would work by the sweat of his brow. To implement his plan, he bought a donkey and a wagon and set about earning his meager subsistence as a hauler of clay.

He lived in this way for the first few years, satisfied that he was managing through his own efforts, and avoiding accepting charity. Then, suddenly his donkey died, leaving him with no means of support.

The Chida was crushed by this unforeseen turn of events, and as Torah teaches us, he searched into his actions trying to discover the reason for his suffering this calamity. Then he realized: the note! He had completely forgotten about it.

The Chida first immersed himself in a mikva. Then he hurriedly found the paper on which the Ohr Hachayim had written his message, and rushed with it to the Kotel. Once there, he inserted it, unread, into the deep crevices of the ancient stones. He immersed himself in prayer, asking the forgiveness of his teacher.

Feeling much relieved, the Chida returned to his usual place in the study hall. But something was different. People were looking at him with different gazes than before and treating him with great deference and awe, as if he was a notable personage.

"What has happened that you are behaving in this strange manner towards me?" he asked them.

But the people themselves couldn't explain what it was about him that provoked their reaction. "Maybe you can tell us what is different about you today," they replied.

With that, the Chida told them about his misfortune, which he regarded as a punishment for his forgetting about the note he had forgotten about for so long.

He explained to them that today he had at last completed his task and obeyed the Ohr Hachayim by placing the note in the stones of the Kotel.

When the scholars of the study hall and the heads of the community heard this story, they were very curious to know what was written on the note.

Dedicated in honor of **Dr. Warren J. Wexelman** 

Invoking all their authority, they implored the Chida to show them where he had placed the note. He took them to the exact spot at the Kotel where the note lay. They took it out and opened it.

The message on the note read, "My sister, my bride [mystical references to the Divine Presence which rests at the Kotel] I beg you to help my beloved student in his time of need."

When word spread around Jerusalem of this wondrous story the people understood the greatness of the Chida and decided to appoint him Chief Rabbi of the Holy City.



The L-rd put a word in Bilaam's mouth... (Deut. 23:5-7) Bilaam's prophecy is unique, in that it was uttered by a non-Jewish prophet who was forced to foretell of the gentile nations' ultimate subservience to the sovereignty of King Moshiach. Bilaam's words are also considered part of Isaiah's general prophecy concerning the Messianic era, when even the non-Jewish royalty will honor and serve and Jewish people: "And kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers; they shall bow down to you with their face toward the earth, and lick the dust of your feet." (Likutei Sichot)

### You shall see but the utmost part of them, and shall not see them all (Num. 23:13)

It is only if one looks at a "part" of a Jew, a small detail of his make-up, that one might notice any flaws; if he is considered as a whole, no defects will be visible. (Ohel Torah)

### According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel what G-d has done (Num. 23:23)

It is from this verse that Maimonides derived that prophecy would return to the Jewish people. Bilaam's prophecy was uttered in the year 2488 after the creation of the world; accordingly, the ability to prophesize would be restored to the Jews 2488 years later. This corresponds to the year 4976 (785 years ago or 1216), the era of Rabbi Shmuel the Prophet, followed by Rabbi Eleazar Baal HaRokeach, Nachmanides, the Ravad, Rabbi Ezra the Prophet, Rabbi Yehuda the Chasid and others; indeed, prophecy flourished in the generation of the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples. In our generation, the Rebbe has prophesied that the time of our Redemption has arrived. (*Peninei HaGeula*)

#### He couches down, he lies down as a lion (Num. 24:9)

Even when the Jew is "asleep" in exile he is considered "as a lion," for his heart is always "awake" to G-d, to Torah and to mitzvot. (Ohr HaTorah)







# REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

In this week's Torah portion, *Balak*, we read how Balak and Bilaam schemed to curse the Jewish people. G-d protected them, not allowing Bilaam to curse the Jews; instead Bilaam blessed them and eventually prophecized the coming of Moshiach. The Torah portion concludes on the "low note" of the Jewish people getting involved in indecency and immodesty.

The weekly Haftora reading from the prophets is always connected to the essential themes of the Torah portion.

In the Haftora, Micah prophecizes about things that will happen with the coming of Moshiach. Then, he brings the plaint of G-d to the Jewish people. "What have I done for you... I brought you up from Egypt... from a house of slavery. I redeemed you... I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam... remember please what Balak advised and what Bilaam answered him... So you can know the righteous acts of G-d..." The Haftora concludes with Micah saying G-d doesn't care for grandiose gestures, rather, "He has told you... what is good and what G-d demands of you, only to do justice, to love loving-kindness and to walk modestly with G-d."

The Torah portion and Haftora both have two themes: G-d affording us safety and protection, and the coming of Moshiach. And at the end of the portion and Haftora we are conveyed the key as to how to receive these gifts.

In Balak, we see that our failure to keep the commandments and a lack of modest conduct, caused us to lose our protection.

The Haftora conveys this in a positive, proactive way. It gives us three rules to follow:

Do justice – which means to keep G-d's laws, *mitzvot* (commandments), etc.

Love loving-kindness – In Torah language, love is not a feeling, it is an act. Here it means to do acts of loving-kindness.

To walk modestly with G-d - to be aware of G-d's presence. When one is aware of G-d's presence, it is more than belief. Being aware means our relationship with G-d has reached a point where you know He is there, He is real to you. This changes the way you do things. The way you talk, act, dress and even think become more refined, because G-d is part of your reality.

These three things are who we are; it is the definition of acting and living Jewishly. When we get away from our essential selves, we lose our protection, because G-d wants to protect us, not someone whom we are copying.

Becoming who we are meant to be by living according to these three principles – keeping G-d's laws, doing acts of loving-kindness and making G-d part of our reality – is the key to bringing Moshiach as prophesied in our portion. May he come soon.

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

## More Memory

2TB hard drive. 8 GB SDRAM, 1 TB cloud storage.

In today's jargon, these terms deal with the amount of memory a computer hard drive has, the amount of working memory, or how much information can be stored externally. Can you imagine a memory that stores, say close to two thousand years of history, experiences and emotions?

The collective Jewish memory has this unusual and state-of-the-art ability. We are beginning the time known as the "Three Weeks" from the 17th of Tamuz (Sunday, July 27 this year) to the Ninth of Av-Tisha B'Av (August 18 this year). During these three weeks many calamities befell the Jewish people, the most devastating of which was the destruction of the first and second Holy Temple on the Ninth of Av

In the times of the Second Holy Temple, on the 17th of Tamuz, the Romans breached the walls of the city of Jerusalem. For the next three weeks the city was besieged until finally, on the ninth of Av, the Holy Temple was burned by the Roman General Titus.

After celebrating numerous Jewish holidays, you might well point out that our festivals aren't just cerebral experiences, happenings in history that stay put in the past. Oftentimes, the mitzvot associated with a particular holiday actually help us relive the experience as our ancestors did. It's like using the right computer codes to access and later store important data in our memory.

Reliving an experience is also true of the "Three Weeks." During the period of mourning for the destruction of the Holy Temple, we become

mourners. No weddings or other joyous celebrations take place, we refrain from cutting our hair, wearing new clothes, even eating a fruit that we did not yet eat this season. The mourning process is only interrupted for Shabbat, a day on which joy must prevail.

On the first of the month of Av, our mourning intensifies. On the Ninth of Av, we truly act as mourners, sitting on low stools, not greeting others, etc. In computer terms, you might call these actions "memory enhancers."

But the truth is, that adding on to, enhancing or accessing the memory is not the most important part of such a powerful tool. Remaining connected to the source is. Because if any memory, computer or human, becomes disconnected before it has a chance to be stored properly, that memory doesn't have a chance.

Whereas a little over a decade ago, 40 megabytes of memory, a 512K RAM (and 5 1/4 floppy discs with 360K) were all considered state-of-the art, today such computers and hardware would only exist in a museum of modern history! Just as with computers, times they are a changin'. In previous generations our focus during this three week period was on the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the Jewish people.

Today, however, as we stand literally at the threshold of the Redemption, these three weeks should be used to study more about the Redemption process and the Messianic Era, to do more mitzvot in general and acts of goodness and kindness in particular, and to rejoice in the knowledge that soon we will open the door and actually greet Moshiach!

# SLICE OF

A Dollar, a Shul and a Minyan by George Yosef Mordechai Gati



Ed.'s note: Mr George Yosef Mordechai Gati periodically submits delightful anecdotes about his interacts with Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries around the world and his own encounters with his fellow Jews, using these opportunities to engage and inspire them to do another mitzva.

About nine years ago, my wife Adina and I went to Venice, Italy on vacation. We checked into our hotel in the center of the city. We had reservations at the Gam Gam restaurant for Shabbat run by Chabad of Venice.

Rabbi Rami and Rebbetzin Shachar Banin were very warm and friendly to us during our threeday stay. The Shul Friday night was filled to capacity with Jews from around the world.

During the dinner a young Lubavitcher student studying in Venice for the summer approached our table and asked us, "Would you like to learn together with me tomorrow after the morning services?" I looked at my wife and she nodded her head for me to accept his invitation to learn.

We studied together several times during our three days in Venice. Sunday after morning services I was studying again with this young Lubavitcher student he asked me if I ever met

Booths.

affiliation.

**New Emissaries** 

the Rebbe. "Yes, I met him several times when he was giving out Dollars on Sundays," I

Then he asked me, "Do you have dollars from the Rebbe?"

"Yes I have dollars from the Rebbe."

I very much enjoyed learning with this young Lubavitcher student. We exchanged e-mails and I thanked him for his time that he took to study

About four years later, I received an invitation to this young man's wedding that would be taking place in Crown Heights. How could I refuse his invitation? Of course I went to the wedding!

The groom and bride looked so happy together.

During the celebration after the Chuppa, I went over to the groom and said, "I'd like to speak to you privately."

As we spoke I reached into my pocket and gave him a dollar that I had received directly from the Rebbe. I wished him and his new wife long life and that they continue to study Torah and perform mitzvot until the arrival of Moshiach!

1 worked for 20 years as a sales manager for a certain sweater company. Last June new management came in. Many people were let go and I was one of them. I went on interviews for a new job. One Sunday, during the time that I was looking for a new job, I went to the Rebbe's Ohel in Queens. I wrote a letter to the Rebbe. I didn't ask for a good salary, or even to find a new job. I asked the Rebbe that there should be a shul (synagogue) within two or three blocks from the place where I will eventually find

That Monday morning I got a call from one of the five companies that I had interviewed with and the owner asked me to come in again.

I went in and the owner showed me around the various offices and then said, "You're hired, please start tomorrow."

As I was leaving I noticed an office door half open. I asked the owner, "What room is this?"

He said, "This is our shul where we pray the afternoon and evening services every day."

Rabbi Mendy and Esther Heber moved recently to Williamsburg,

Virginia. to open a Chabad on Campus servicing students at William

& Mary University. William & Mary is the second oldest university in

the USA, founded in 1693. The greater Williamsburg area is home

to thousands of Jews. Rabbi and Mrs. Heber will offer Torah classes,

Shabbat meals and Holiday programs, women's circles, and Mitzva

Rabbi Eliezer and Chana Tunk have moved to Bricket Wood,

Hertfordshire in England to establish Chabad Lubavitch Bricket Wood.

Bricket Wood, a village on the outskirts of London, has grown over

60% in the number of Jewish families moving in. Rabbi and Mrs. Tunk

will be offering Shabbat and holiday programming, Jewish educational

opportunities for children and adults, as well as a welcoming open door

to Jewish people from all walks of life, no matter their background or

My heart missed a beat! The Rebbe did indeed answer my letter, the very next day!

One Friday, I was in my office, sitting at my desk when I got a text message from the rabbi at the Chabad Torah Center Kollel in Manhattan near where I work. He needed me for the morning minvan as an elderly gentleman needed to say Kaddish.

I responded to the text that I would be there in six minutes. I rushed to get there and as I entered the shul I was number seven.

Hmm, what should I do now? I went outside looking for three more Jews to complete the Minyan. With hundreds of people walking and rushing to work I didn't think it would be too

"Excuse me, are you Jewish and if yes can you please come in and help us with the Minvan?" I stopped many passersby for the next three or four minutes but with no luck. Then I saw an older man with a white beard and bushy hair approaching.

I asked him, "Are you Jewish and can you help us out for the minyan?"

He says, "Yes, where do I have to go?"

I shlep him in and he is number eight. Out I go again. Next door to the Chabad Torah Center Kollel is the New York Yankee Company store which sells all N.Y Yankee products. I see a young fellow opening the door to go in.

"Excuse me, are you Jewish?"

"Yes I am."

"Would you like to join us for the morning minyan?" Lo and behold he lets go of the door handle, reaches into his pocket and takes out his

In we go! Now we are nine.

Out I go again looking for number ten!

Strolling down Fifth Avenue, I see two Lubavitchers with Tefillin bags under their arms. I wave to them, "Come come."

They ask, "Where to?"

16 Tammuz

I say, "Follow me!" Into the shul we go. Now we are 11 and an elderly Jew can say Kaddish for his dearly departed relative.

Today Is...

The Baal Shem Tov's ahavat yisrael (love

of fellow Jew) was beyond imagination.

The Maggid said: If only we could kiss a

sefer-Torah with the same love that my

Master kissed the children when he took

them to cheder as a teacher's assistant!

# The Rebbe

of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

22nd of Adar II, 5733 [March 26, 1973]

Mr. Mordechai Shoel Landow

Greeting and Blessing:

Your letter of March 1st reached me with some delay. I regret that my acknowledgment has been unavoidably delayed by the intervening days of Purim. Please accept my

First of all, I want to express my gratification at your response to the suggestions which I proposed to you during your visit here. It was, of course, a pleasure to make your personal

Frankly, I had wondered what your reactions might be to my "un-American" manner of welcoming you. For, the accepted American way, if I am not mistaken, is to greet one with a shower of compliments and praise, even if not always fully merited. In your case, of course, it would have been very well deserved credit, for I was fully aware of your accomplishments and generosity in behalf of the Lubavitch work in your community, given in the best tradition of inspiration and dedication, even to the extent of getting your friends involved in it. Yet, instead of verbalizing my appreciation at length, I glossed over it briefly, and immediately challenged you with new and formidable projects.

However, the fact is that I felt impelled to use the precious time at our disposal to discuss with you those matters which, in my estimation, are of vital importance, namely the expansion of our program in Miami and also the project in our Holy Land, knowing that however much we could extend the late hour, the time would still be too short to discuss the vital need of these matters in all their ramifications.

My quiding principle in this case, as when meeting with people in general, is the bon mot I heard from my father-in-law of Saintly memory: "When two Jews meet, they should

not be content with the benefit that the meeting brings to each of them, but they should immediately be concerned with the prospect of bringing a benefit to a third Jew, a fourth, and to as many Jews as possible." Moreover, I was hopeful that you would accept my suggestions in the right spirit, precisely because you have already made a magnificent start. And as I wrote to you in my previous letter, quoting our Sages of blessed memory, "He who has 100 desires 200," etc., or, in other words, since achievement is the greatest incentive to further and more ambitions achievement, I had reason be believe that your achievement in the past will widen your horizons and intensify your desire for even greater things. Hence, without losing time, I embarked upon the practical aspects of our meeting for the benefit of so many of our fellow Jews. This, I felt, would ensure also our share of the benefit, yours and mine, and yours even more than mine, since the actual implementation of these projects is something which Divine Providence has entrusted in your hands.

"When two Jews meet, they should not be content with the benefit that the meeting brings to each of them, but they should immediately be concerned with the prospect of bringing a benefit to a third Jew, a fourth, and to as many Jews as possible."

As for the projects themselves, I can hardly overemphasize their importance. The development of the educational facilities in Miami on all levels up to and including the highest, goes beyond the thing itself, for, as the point was mentioned. Miami is a showcase for American Jewry from all parts of the U.S.A., so that every accomplishment there, in the area of Torah education and revival of Yiddishkeit, has the significance of a "pilot" project for others to emulate. Similarly, giving new direction to the networks and other media, would trigger off beneficial repercussions on a global scale.

Thus even a small accomplishment in these areas could be multiplied on an unforeseen scale; how much more so a substantial accomplishment.

continued in next issue

The site of the Holy Temple was designated as holy from the beginning of creation. However, it wasn't the Temple was destroyed, the Divine Presence has not departed from Mount Moriah. Thus, when Moshiach comes, he will "build the Temple on its place" for "this is My resting place forever." May our study of the uniqueness of the site of the Holy Temple cause that uniqueness to become apparent with the rebuilding of the Temple. And may this take place in the immediate future. (From Seek Out the Welfare of Jerusalem published by Sichos in English)

sacrifices in other places was forbidden. Although

# FROM THE DIRECTOR

This coming Sunday, June 27, coincides with the Hebrew date the 17th of Tammuz. Until Moshiach comes and the Third Holy Temple will be rebuilt, the 17th of Tammuz is a fast day (unless it falls on Shabbat in which case the fast is pushed off until Sunday). The act of fasting recalls tragic events and brings us to repent for the misdeeds that caused those events as well as our own repetition of those misdeeds

The first tragic event to take place on the 17th of Tammuz was when Moses descended from Mount Sinai and witnessed the Children of Israel sinning with the Golden Calf, which led him to destroy the Tablets. Later on there were tragedies involving the destruction of both the first and second Holy Temples

*In the time of the first Holy Temple, on the 17th* of Tammuz the priests were no longer able to bring the daily sheep-offering, as enemy soldiers had surrounded the city of Jerusalem. When there were no more sheep left in the city, their enemies prevented them from getting more.

During the second Holy Temple, on the 17th of Tammuz the walls around the city of Jerusalem fell and the enemy soldiers broke into the city. Both Temples were destroyed on the 9th of Av, exactly three weeks after the 17th of Tammuz. Therefore, the 17th of Tammuz begins the period on the Jewish calendar known as "The Three Weeks." It is a time of mourning, when we schedule no weddings and refrain from listening to music.

Within this sad time also lies hope. A central belief of the Jewish people that has withstood the test of time is the belief in the coming of Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Holy Temple. As we read about the destruction of our glorious Holy Temple and we mourn its loss, we should be inspired to improve in the areas of learning the Torah and doing its mitzvot, knowing that in doing so, we are bringing the world closer to its purpose, the arrival of Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Holy Temple.



### L'zichron **CHA**ya I **M**ushka לזכרוו חי'ה 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

until the Temple was built that the uniqueness of this site became manifest to the extent that offering