

L'Chaim

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The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person

נוסד תור ימי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson

"Jerusalem has mountains around it, and the L-rd is around His people from now and to eternity" (Psalms 125:2)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

*from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion*

The Torah portion of Devarim (the first portion in the book of the Torah known as Deuteronomy) is always read on Shabbat Chazon (literally "The Sabbath of Vision"), the Shabbat before Tisha B'Av - the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av. As nothing in Judaism is coincidental, the Torah portion of Devarim and Shabbat Chazon must be interconnected.

The Book of Deuteronomy is unique in that, unlike the first four Books of the Torah, it was transmitted by Moses to the generation of Jews that was about to enter the Land of Israel.

The generation of Jews that wandered through the desert is known as "the generation of knowledge." Because they occupied such a high spiritual level, commensurate with Moses', they merited to lead a completely spiritual existence. The generation that entered Israel, by contrast, began a whole new chapter in Jewish history. Because they had to involve themselves in more mundane affairs, their spiritual level is considered to be lower than that of the generation that preceded them.

Nonetheless, it was precisely the generation that entered Israel that was able to successfully fulfill G-d's plan. G-d wants us to serve Him within the context of the material world, establishing a "dwelling place" for Him in the "lower realms."

Accordingly, although the Jews who entered Israel were spiritually inferior in comparison with their parents, they possessed a certain advantage over their elders: The Jews who entered Israel merited to attain a level of "peace and security" that was denied the previous generation.

Shabbat Devarim is thus a resolution of two opposites. On the one hand, the Jews' entry into the Land of Israel was a very great descent, for it signified the need for daily contact with worldly matters. On the other hand, it was precisely by means of this descent that they were able to attain the highest ascent of all: the fulfillment of G-d's plan.

Likewise, Shabbat Chazon is a study in contradiction. Shabbat Chazon occurs in the middle of the Nine Days, a period in which we mourn the destruction of the Holy Temple. Yet, at the same time, as the famous Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev explained, on Shabbat Chazon every Jew is shown a vision of the Third Holy Temple, an edifice that will be infinitely superior to the two Holy Temples that preceded it.

Thus Shabbat Chazon expresses the same theme of descent for the purpose of ascent as Devarim: It is precisely through the descent which caused the Temple's destruction in the first place that we will achieve the highest ascent of all: the establishment of the Third Holy Temple by Moshiach, may it happen at once.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot, vol. 2

Memory

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

On Tishah B'Av, we recall the destruction of our Holy Temple nearly 2,000 years ago by fasting and mourning and the other observances of the day.

For over 19 centuries, we have been remembering and observing this event and it has become the saddest day in our calendar. Why? Why not let bygones be bygones? It's history. Why keep revisiting old and painful visions?

They say that Napoleon was once passing through the Jewish ghetto in Paris and heard sounds of wailing emanating from a synagogue. He stopped to ask what the lament was about. He was told that the Jews were remembering the destruction of their Temple. "When did it happen?" asked the Emperor. "Some 1700 years ago," was the answer he received. Whereupon Napoleon stated with conviction that a people who never forgot its past would be destined to forever have a future.

Jews never had history. We have memory. History can become a book, a museum, and forgotten antiquities. Memory is alive. And memory guarantees our future.

Even amidst the ruins, we refused to forget. The first temple was destroyed by the Babylonians. As they led the Jews into captivity, the Jews sat down and wept. "By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept remembering Zion." What did we cry for? Our lost wealth, homes and businesses? No. We

cried for Zion and Jerusalem. Amidst the bondage, we aspired to rebuild; amidst the ruins we dreamt of returning. And because we refused to forget Jerusalem, we did return.

We have rebuilt proud Jewish communities the world over, while our victors have been vanquished by time. Today there are no more Babylonians while we, inspired by memory, emerged revitalized and regenerated and forever it will be true that Am Yisrael Chai — the people of Israel lives!

A Torah scholar and his nephew studied the Talmud together in the concentration camp during the Holocaust. When the time came that the uncle saw himself staring death in the face, he said to his nephew, "Promise me that if you survive you will finish studying this book of the Talmud." Amidst the misery, desolation and tragedy, what thought preoccupied his mind? That the Talmud should still be studied. This was his last wish on earth.

Only if we refuse to forget, can we hope to rebuild one day. Indeed, the Talmud assures us, "Whosoever mourns for Jerusalem, will merit to witness her rejoicing." We need to observe our National Day of Mourning. Forego the movies and the restaurants. Sit down on a low seat to mourn with your people; and perhaps even more importantly, to remember. And, please G-d, He will restore those glorious days and rebuild His own everlasting house. May it be speedily in our day.

SLICE OF LIFE

The Man Who Knew How To Ask



Rabbi Sholom Nemtsov

My story begins with my grandfather – Rabbi Avraham Sender Nemtsov – in Russia.

In 1897, after spending six years as a conscript in the Czar's army – during which he managed to keep Torah and eat only kosher – he arrived in the town of Lubavitch, where the Rebbe Rashab, the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, was in the process of opening his new yeshivah, Tomchei Temimim.

At first, my grandfather was rejected by the yeshivah's administrator, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, the seventeen-year-old son of the Rebbe Rashab. The reason was that my grandfather was by then a married man of twenty-seven, whereas most of the other students were teenagers.

But my grandfather insisted on making his case to the Rebbe Rashab himself. He argued that he could have gone to another, more-established and better-known yeshivah where he would have received a stipend. Instead, he was coming to a brand new yeshivah, with no reputation, and he was doing so because he had come from chasidic roots and wanted his descendants to be chasidim. He told the Rebbe Rashab: "Don't let me in just for myself, but for my grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and all the generations to come." And because of that, he was allowed in.

The Rebbe Rashab's decision had a direct effect

on all our lives – on my father, on myself, and on my children. We are all Lubavitchers and committed to spreading chasidic teachings wherever we find ourselves.

My grandfather spent several years studying at Tomchei Temimim, where he became friendly with the administrator who had initially rejected him, the Rebbe Rashab's son, who would later succeed his father as the sixth Rebbe and become known as the Rebbe Rayatz.

Even after my grandfather left the yeshivah to become a kosher butcher (shochet) and immigrated to Manchester, England, he maintained regular contact with the Rebbe Rayatz via correspondence. They saw each other only once – in 1937, when the Rebbe Rayatz visited Paris and my grandfather went there to meet him. At that meeting, the Rebbe Rayatz famously told him, "Du hust gezucht der emes, du hust gefunen der emes un du lebst mit der emes – You searched for truth, you found truth and you live with truth."

My grandfather remained in England, earning a living as a shochet for forty years, until he retired in 1945. When the Rebbe Rayatz passed away in January of 1950, my grandfather sent a telegram to the chasidim in New York, famously concluding: "v'Hashem yisborach yinachameinu b'Menachem – May G-d console us with Menachem," referring to the late Rebbe's son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, also known at the time as the Ramash, who many of the chasidim favored to be the next Rebbe.

My grandfather was among the first who discerned that the Ramash should be the next Rebbe and his influence proved significant. On the first anniversary of the Rebbe Rayatz's passing – after a year had gone by without the Rebbe formally accepting the position – my grandfather came to New York and played a decisive role.

In commemoration of that occasion, a farbrengen was held and people came from far and near to witness the historic event, in anticipation of how it would turn out. The crowd – some 800 men strong – filled the synagogue wall to wall, anxiously awaiting what would happen next.

At the outset, the Ramash delivered several

Torah talks (sichot) during which he spoke about the Previous Rebbe and encouraged all the chasidim to continue the work he had begun. After about an hour had passed, my grandfather – who was in his 80s by then – stood up and said, "Everyone wants to hear a chasidic discourse (maamar). Torah talks are good, but now we need to hear chasidic teachings."

To my grandfather's mind and to the minds of the chasidim who were gathered there, a chasidic discourse – which is generally delivered only by a Rebbe – would indicate that the mantle of leadership was being accepted.

Everyone understood this, and when my grandfather made his declaration, the entire synagogue fell silent. They all waited with bated breath.

And then the Ramash famously began: "In the discourse that the Rebbe [Rayatz] issued for the day of his passing, he begins with Basi l'gani – I have come into my garden..." He began with the Previous Rebbe's teachings on this verse from the Song of Songs, and then went on with his own discourse from there.

After a while, the Rebbe took a break in the discourse, so with great excitement my grandfather got up and announced to all those gathered, "G-d has helped us! We have a Rebbe! Let us all say l'chaim to the new Rebbe!"

The joy of the chasidim was indescribable.

That is the story of the momentous event that has gone down in the history of Chabad. It was because of the entreaties of chasidim like my grandfather that the Rebbe accepted the leadership at a time when he was reluctant to assume the position.

And this is how my story comes full circle. Had the Rebbe Rashab not allowed my grandfather into the Tomchei Temimim yeshivah, he would never have arrived to that time and place where he stood up on behalf of the chasidim and implored the Rebbe to lead them. I would venture to say that the Rebbe Rashab had great foresight – he knew exactly what he was doing.

Rabbi Sholom Nemtsov resides in Five Towns, New York, where he manages Aniyay Ircho, a charity organization. He was interviewed in April of 2012.



New Emissaries in North Israel Care for IDF Soldiers Stationed Nearby

Up near the Lebanese border, nestled on the Mediterranean coast, sits the small community of Liman, whose residents recently welcomed Rabbi Yisroel and Chana Blau.

A large focus of their work is caring for IDF soldiers stationed at nearby bases, providing them with encouragement, uplifting Jewish experiences and spiritual support. The Blaus are dedicated to strengthening Jewish life for local residents by creating meaningful holiday events, women's programs and adult-education classes.

Their motto, "working under the sun and under fire," reflects both the agricultural rhythm of the region and the security realities of living near the Lebanon border.

Ethics: Chapter 2

Rabbi Shimon would say: Be meticulous with the reading of the Shma and with prayer. When you pray, do not make your prayers routine, but [an entreaty of] mercy and a supplication before the Almighty, as is stated "For He is benevolent and merciful, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness, and relenting of the evil decree" (Joel 2:13). And do not be wicked in your own eyes.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

5th of Menachem Av, 5735 [1975]

To All Participants in the Bais Chana Scholarship Dinner and Dedication of Boschwitz Hall at Lubavitch House Minneapolis, Minn.

Greeting and Blessing:

In these days deprived of joy in commemoration of the Destruction of the Bais Hamikdosh [Holy Temple], it is particularly gratifying to receive the good news of your constructive efforts and accomplishments for Torah Judaism in general and Torah education of our youths in particular.

The sacred activities of Torah and Tefilah (Prayer) give the Lubavitch House the status of a Bais Knesses [synagogue] and Bais Medrash [House of Study], hence of a Mikdosh Me'at ("Small Sanctuary" - a replica of the Bais Hamikdosh), and according to the Zohar (III, 126a) of a Mikdosh.

This is most significant in these days, for it is through such activities as you are gathered to celebrate that the cause of the Destruction is gradually eliminated, and with it the effect, or, in the words of the familiar prayer, umipnai chatoeinu golinu me'artzeinu - "because of our sins we have been exiled from our land," etc. Thus every effort to strengthen Torah and Mitzvos hastens the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu [our righteous redeemer] and the Geuloh shleimo [complete Redemption].

The most desirable wish and blessing that can be offered on such an occasion is that the present beautiful facilities should soon prove inadequate for the expanded Torah activities of Lubavitch in Minnesota and bring about even greater and more extensive facilities of this kind.

May we all soon see the fulfillment of the prophecy that these days of sadness shall be transformed into days of rejoicing, gladness and festivity - especially as your celebration is taking place on the auspicious day of the 15th of Av.

With blessing for Hatzlocho [success] and good tidings,



15th of Menachem Av, 5730 [1970]

The Campers and Counselors

Camp Emunah

Greenfield Park, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to receive a report about your life and activities in the camp through Rabbi J. J. Hecht. He also turned in your Tzedoko [charity] collection of Tisha b'Av [the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av].

Every effort to strengthen Torah and Mitzvos hastens the coming of Moshiach and the complete Redemption.

As I mentioned on the Shabbos before Tisha b'Av, which no doubt was conveyed also to you, Tzedoko is particularly important in connection with the day of Tisha b'Av to hasten the Geulo [Redemption] in accordance with the prophecy, "Zion will be redeemed through justice, and all that return to her - through Tzedoko." Especially significant is the Tzedoko before Mincha [the afternoon prayer], when the prayer "Nacheim" is said.

May G-d grant that in the Zechus [merit] of your Tzedoko in connection with the above, and the Tzedoko of all Jews, together with the Zechus of the Torah, which is indicated in the beginning of the verse mentioned above (in the word Mishpat - "justice"), that is to say, the daily life in accordance with the Torah and Mitzvos - should speedily bring the Nechama [consolation]. Then you, with all other Jewish children as well as adults, will come out to meet our righteous Moshiach, and the days of sadness will be turned into days of gladness, as promised by our holy Prophets in the holy Torah.

With blessing,

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In this week's Torah portion we read the promise from G-d, "Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the L-rd swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to

Jacob, to give to them and to their seed after them." (Deut. 1:8) This verse does not say that the land will be given "to you," but "to them" - Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is an allusion to the resurrection of the dead in the times of Moshiach.

(Sanhedrin)

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

In the Book of Zecharia it states that when Moshiach comes, four fast days on the Jewish calendar -17 Tam-muz, 9 Av, 3 Tishrei and 10 Tevet - will be abolished and celebrated as joyous festivals. As Maimonides explains, "Not only will all these fasts be abrogated in the Messianic era, but they will be observed as holy days and days of rejoicing."

It is obvious that when Moshiach comes there will be no need to commemorate the Temple's destruction and thus no reason to perpetuate these fasts. But why will they be celebrated as "holy days and days of rejoicing"?

The answer is that the four fasts are not just commemorations of tragic dates in Jewish history, but contain a hidden good of such magnitude that we will only discern it when Moshiach comes. In fact, the fasts represent four stages in the progression toward Moshiach. We would never be able to attain the revelation of Moshiach were it not for the destruction and the exile. The entire exile may therefore be termed a "descent for the purpose of ascent."

During the exile, we mourn on these days because we cannot perceive the good concealed within. To our eyes, the world appears to continue its descent into greater and more intense darkness. But when Moshiach comes, the ascent that was hidden within the descent will be fully revealed, and the four fast days will indeed be celebrated as "holy days and days of rejoicing."

The Lubavitcher Rebbe stated that the Redemption is upon us. "Not only is the Redemption about to commence, it is literally standing on our threshold, waiting for each and every Jew to open the door and pull it inside the room." The Rebbe explained, "The 'spiritual eyes' of the Jewish people can already perceive the Redemption; it is now necessary to open the fleshly eyes as well."

May the fast of Tisha B'Av be immediately relegated to history, and may we merit to celebrate it this year as a day of unprecedented rejoicing with Moshiach himself.

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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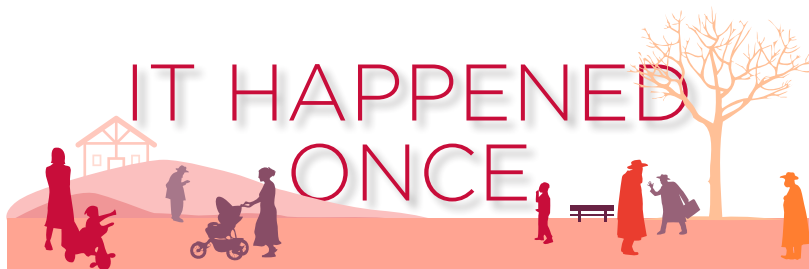
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IT HAPPENED ONCE

In general, the study hall of Rabbi Boruch was a joyous place. During the Nine Days before Tisha B'Av, however, the atmosphere was rather somber, as if a dark cloud hovered above.

The tzadik himself had disappeared; no one knew where he was. Rumor had it that Rabbi Boruch had disguised himself as a beggar and was wandering from town to town, the better to experience the exile of the Divine Presence.

In the village square stood a wagon driver next to his horses. To all outward appearances he looked like any other wagon driver, but it was really Rabbi Boruch in a new disguise. It didn't take long until a Polish nobleman asked to engage his services.

The tzadik made a quick calculation: If everything went well, he would make it back to town on the day before Tisha B'Av. He agreed to take the nobleman to his destination, and the two set off.

Now, the horses that Rabbi Boruch had procured were not exactly in their prime; the poor specimens could barely pull the wagon and stopped often to rest. The most tranquil of passengers would have found it irritating; how much more so did the Polish nobleman, who was in a hurry to reach his destination. The tzadik was subjected to a steady stream of curses and insults. But he remained silent, feeling acutely the pain and affront to the Divine Presence in exile.

The journey would take several days, and each evening the two travelers sought refuge in an inn. The nobleman obtained the finest accommodations, while Rabbi Boruch slept in the barn with his horses. The tzadik made sure to don his tefilin and pray several hours before the nobleman woke up. Only afterwards would he rouse him to resume their travels.

One morning, however, when Rabbi Boruch knocked on the nobleman's door he received no answer. The nobleman, he soon realized, was in a drunken stupor, having spent the night before carousing with some local peasants. With great difficulty the tzadik managed to haul him over to the wagon and dump him in. Throughout it all, the nobleman remained unconscious.

The next stage of the journey took them through a dense forest. The horses plodded along at their usual sluggish pace, keeping time with the nobleman's loud snores. Rabbi Boruch was lost in thought.

Suddenly, a terrible pain ripped through the tzadik's head. When he woke up he found himself tied to a tree, with the Polish nobleman in similar circumstances. The horses and wagon were gone, but Rabbi Boruch noticed that his prayer book, talit and tefilin had been tossed aside. Immediately he thanked G-d for having saved his life.

Moving his arms and legs the tzadik was able to gradually loosen his bonds. The first thing he did was to pick up his prayer book, talit and tefilin and kiss them. Next he turned his attention to the Polish nobleman, who was still unconscious but appeared to be breathing.

Rabbi Boruch found a stream and splashed some water on the man's face. Nonetheless, it took a few hours until his eyelids fluttered. "What happened?" the nobleman stammered. "Why am I lying on the ground?"

The tzadik told him what had happened, but as soon as he heard the word "robbers" he began to scream. "My money! My money!" Rabbi Boruch tried to calm him down and told him that he should be grateful for being alive, but the nobleman remained extremely agitated and kept looking at the tzadik with barely concealed suspicion.

With no other choice the two set out on foot. After wandering for several days they came upon an encampment of hunters, some of whom were the nobleman's friends. Out of earshot of the wagon driver, the nobleman told them that he suspected his companion of having stolen his money. His suspicion was based on the simple fact that the driver was the only person who had known of its existence.

One hunter suggested that they shoot him immediately, but the oldest member of the party demurred. "Let's tie him to a tree," he proposed. "If he's guilty, he will die. If not, then G-d help him." The tzadik was immediately seized and bound.

Night fell, and Rabbi Boruch's tears flowed freely as he prayed the evening service. From the depths of his heart he implored G-d to save him, his voice echoing back in the eerie silence.

The sound of approaching footsteps suddenly cut off his words. It was the old hunter who had returned, the very one who had objected to killing him. "I wanted to see how you were," he said. "I never thought you were guilty in the first place. The real robbers have just been apprehended and have admitted to everything. It seems that when our foolish friend got drunk the other night, he boasted to everyone about all the money he was carrying."

It was the night of Tisha B'Av when Rabbi Boruch arrived back at the study hall, where his disciples were waiting for him expectantly. And everyone noticed that the tzadik's reading of the Book of Lamentations was especially emotional that year.



The Book of Deuteronomy

What is the difference between the Book of Deuteronomy and the other four Books of the Torah? In transmitting the first four Books, Moses acted strictly as G-d's emissary, repeating the message word for word without involving his own intellect in the process. Deuteronomy, however, was transmitted precisely through the intellect and understanding of the leader of the generation, in response to the exact needs of the people and its particular spiritual level. Accordingly, Deuteronomy - given to the Jewish people just prior to their entry into the land of Israel, and the new lifestyle it would entail - contains many explanations of concepts that were only alluded to in the first four Books. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Moses began (ho'il) to explain this law (Deut. 1:5)

The Hebrew word "ho'il" contains the same letters as "Eliyahu" - an allusion to the time to come when Elijah the Prophet will answer all our difficult questions. Also, the questions posed by the last few generations before Moshiaich will be complicated and troublesome; their answer will only be found through the same self-sacrifice that was shown by Pinchas, whom our Sages explain was reincarnated as Elijah the Prophet. (Yalkut Moshe)

How can I alone bear your weight, your burden and your strife? (Deut. 1:12)

As Rashi explains, the "burden" referred to by Moses was the heretics among the Jewish people. Commented Rabbi Nachman of Breslov: "The heaviest burden a person can bear is apostasy. The heart of a Jew who believes in G-d is calm and tranquil, while the heretic must constantly contend with the weight of his doubts and troubling thoughts."

לעילוי נשמת ה"חזור"
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