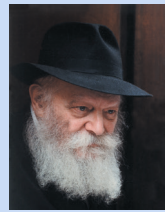


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

This week's Torah portion, Emor, is paired with a Haftorah from Ezekiel describing the future Third Temple. The Haftorah outlines who the Kohanim (priests) will be and the laws they must follow, including the prohibition against eating a neveila (an improperly slaughtered animal) or a treifa (an animal with a fatal defect).

The connection to Emor is clear: the portion begins with laws for the Kohanim. The Haftorah, however, introduces them with the phrase, "And the Kohanim, the Levites..."—raising a question: why are Kohanim called Levites?

On a simple level, Kohanim come from the tribe of Levi, so the term fits. But the Arizal teaches that in the future, Levites themselves will become Kohanim.

This seems difficult to reconcile with the traditional teaching, also cited by Maimonides, that the Torah's structure will not change in the era of Moshiach. We also say in our prayers that "the Kohanim will return to their service, and the Levites to their singing," implying distinct roles will remain.

To understand this, we need to look at the spiritual nature of each. A Kohen's service was to draw holiness downward into the world. Their souls are associated with water, which flows from higher to lower. In the Temple, they brought G-dliness into everyday reality.

Levites, by contrast, embodied upward striving. Their service—singing and music—awakened a deep longing in others to come closer to G-d. Their souls are associated with fire, which naturally rises.

These are two different approaches: drawing holiness down from above can inspire people in the moment, while awakening a yearning from within creates lasting inner change.

When Moshiach comes, and G-dliness has been drawn down so the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea, the Kohen's job will be to create an internal yearning in the people to strive to become even closer to G-d. Being that it is not in their nature to do that, G-d will give them souls of Levites, souls of fire, so it will become their nature.

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

Another Chance Awakens Within You

There are moments in life when we feel we've missed something important, an opportunity, a connection, a version of ourselves we were meant to become. Yet the deeper rhythm of existence whispers a different truth: nothing is ever truly lost.

There is always another doorway. The biblical story and commandment of 'Pesach Sheni—the Second Passover', is the story about the opportunity at a second chance.

The Torah relates that in the first year after the Exodus, when the Jewish people were preparing to bring the Pesach sacrifice: There were certain men who were not able bring the Pesach offering on that day. They came to complain to Moses who said to them, "Stand and hear what G-d will command concerning you."

And then came the response, G-d said, "If any man be impure . . . or on a distant way [on the day of the Pesach offering] he shall sacrifice the Pesach offering to G-d, in the second month, on the fourteenth day at dusk". Thus, the concept of a second chance was introduced.

Their question was simple and powerful: Why should we be left out? That question echoes within every human heart. It is the voice of the soul refusing to settle for disconnection.

And the answer they received still speaks to us now: it is never too late.

Life moves in cycles. There are times of awakening that come as gifts—sudden clarity, inspiration, breakthroughs that

seem to lift us beyond ourselves. But there are also quieter seasons, where growth is slower, more intentional. In those moments, we are invited to do the inner work—to refine, to heal, to gently transform what already exists within us.

True healing doesn't come from rejecting who we are. It comes from embracing every part of ourselves and elevating it. Even the parts we once labeled as "mistakes" or "failures" can become fuel for growth. Nothing within you is wasted when you choose to grow from it.

This is the deeper meaning of a second chance: not just to start over, but to start deeper. To move forward with intention.

It is the quiet knowing that you are meant to evolve, to expand, to become more aligned with your true essence. No matter how far you feel you've wandered, that inner light never disappears. It simply waits for you to turn toward it.

Growth is not a one-time event—it is a continuous unfolding. Each stage of your journey invites you higher, deeper, closer to your authentic self. What once felt like "enough" may no longer satisfy you, not because you've failed, but because you've grown.

So when you feel behind, remember: you are not late—you are being called forward.

There is always another step. Another opening. Another chance to rise.

And the moment you choose to begin again... you already have.

SLICE OF LIFE

Chabad of the Golan Heights, Israel
With Rabbi Sholom Ber and Devora Hertzel
By: Chaya Chazan



Rabbi Hertzel with IDF soldiers

After we got married, we settled near my in-laws, running the Yeshiva, Tzeirei Hashluchim, that my father-in-law, Rabbi Aryeh Leib Kaplan, opened. We also established a Chabad House in Rosh Pina. After almost 20 years on shlichus, it transformed into a beautifully flourishing Torah community.

It was then that Hashem threw a curveball into our lives. I was diagnosed with cancer and had to stay in Florida for extended treatments.

Baruch Hashem, I recovered completely, and we were able to move back to Eretz Yisrael. My wife and I agreed that like our forefather Abraham who was told by G-d to go “Lech Lecha - Go Forth” this was our “Lech Lecha” moment, pushing us to use the setback as a springboard for growth.

Looking to “go out” of our comfort zone, we moved to the Golan Heights and began our shlichus anew.

The Golan Heights is a mountainous area with a few scattered, isolated kibbutzim and yeshuvim. Anyone who wants to move to one of their communities must first be approved by a committee. Obviously, a Torah observant family wasn’t high on their lists, so it took a lot of effort to receive permission to move there.

The Golan attracts farmers who have the stamina and personality to weather whatever the harsher climate throw at them. They are hardy, no-

nonsense people; brusque and suspicious of strangers.

There are also a lot of army bases around, so we became involved in assisting soldiers with holiday programs, kosher food, and tefillin.

It took a long time, but very slowly, we won people over. They saw how much we helped the soldiers, and how eager we were to jump into any community effort.

We secured a large food truck and drove from base to base, making sure soldiers had good, hot, kosher food to eat. A part of our food truck served as a “shul,” where soldiers could put on tefillin and open a sefer for a few minutes.

After the recent war began, our truck parked permanently in the largest base and became a sort of command center. Many kindhearted people donated tactical gear and other necessary supplies, and we kept it stockpiled in the corner, available for any soldier.

We make sure a huge urn of coffee is constantly brewing, so soldiers on night guard duty always have a fresh supply. Many religious soldiers would need to get by on very little, if not for our kitchen on wheels. For soldiers on duty, we send prepackaged meals and Shabbos kits.

The Jewish people are resilient. This past year has been incredibly difficult. The attacks from Lebanon mean the air raid siren is almost never silent, and we’re sent running to our shelters. The constant strain and fear stretch every nerve to its last fiber.

When one family in a settlement a few towns over wanted to celebrate a Chanukas Habayis dedication of their new home, we were only too happy for an opportunity to celebrate.

I promised I’d come with a group of musicians and they promised to provide kosher food for the whole crowd. We were expecting 50-60 people, and the family cooked up a storm!

The day of the event, Lebanon began firing rockets and the entire city was advised to stay in their bomb shelters. The host family called me in distress. They’d worked so hard and were so looking forward to it.

After weighing the options carefully, I told them I’d still come. I was determined to help this family mark their happy occasion.

Baruch Hashem, as I approached the city limits, the restrictions were lifted, and people were

allowed to leave their shelters. A slow stream of visitors trickled in, but not nearly enough to do justice to the piles of food the hostess had so lovingly prepared.

But when word spread that I was there with my musician friends, more people started to join. In the end, a day that had started with explosions and rockets ended with camaraderie, Jewish pride, and some solid learning. Am Yisrael Chai.

I was holding the final meeting before Talia* and Shai’s* wedding, which would be a couple of days later.

“So who will walk you down to the chuppah?” I asked Talia. “Is it your custom to have your father, your mother, or both?”

Talia looked uncomfortable. She finally admitted that she hadn’t spoken to her father in 15 years. When I asked what had happened to cause the rift, Talia explained.

“As a little girl, my father was my hero. He was an important army officer, tall, strong, and handsome, and had such an air of command about him. I looked up to him so much.

“When I was a teenager,” she continued, her voice breaking, “my father was involved in a terrible car accident that left him disabled. I couldn’t believe that my strong, powerful father was now reduced to such a pitiful state, unable to do anything for himself.

It hurt too much to look at him, so I avoided him for as long as I could. Once I left home, I never called or visited.

One month turned into two, and the years passed by without a single communication between us. The longer I stayed away, the harder it became to overcome.”

“Talia, you need to make amends,” I said, quietly. “You need to speak with your father and get his blessing before you get married. It will be hard, but the challenge will just be momentary. After the first few seconds, you’ll see how naturally you and your father reconnect.”

Talia was still hesitant.

“I’m afraid that I won’t be able to marry you without your father’s blessing,” I said, knowing she needed a bit of pressure to convince her.

After my heartfelt plea, Talia reconnected with her father.

From dollardaily.org

New Haven Breaks Ground on Long Awaited Mikvah



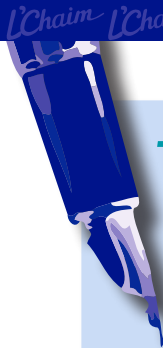
The New Haven Mikvah — Mikvah Mei Alessa Bina.

For decades, New Haven has been blessed with a mikvah established through the generosity of the Deitsch family, to whom the community is deeply grateful. It is upon this legacy that today’s project stands.

The goal is to build a sanctuary that raises the standard for Jewish life in New Haven and provide a mikvah experience that uplifts every woman who walks through its doors.

ETHICS CHAPTER FOUR

Ben Azzai would say: Run to pursue a minor mitzvah, and flee from a transgression. For a mitzvah brings another mitzvah, and a transgression brings another transgression. For the reward of a mitzvah is a mitzvah, and the reward of transgression is transgression.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Freely translated and adapted

Fourth Day of the Week of Emor...Veomarto, Pesach Sheni, 5740

Year of Shemitha, a Shabbos unto G-d.

To the Sons and Daughters of our People Israel, Everywhere -

G-d bless you all!

Greeting and Blessing:

As we are approaching the auspicious day of Lag B'Omer, the day of rejoicing of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochoi (RaShBy) - of whom his teacher Rabbi Akiva said, "(Only) I and your Creator know your powers,"

Let us reflect on one point, at least, of the inestimable powers of Rashby - a point that is especially relevant even to the most ordinary Jew, and certainly to one of higher standing.

As is well known, Rashby had to hide in a cave for twelve years, then for yet another year, because of his uncompromising stand in preserving Yiddishkeit [Judaism] under Roman rule and persecution. When he finally regained freedom, one of the first things he set out to do was to inquire, "Is there anything that needs to be rectified?" Upon learning of such a situation, he immediately sets out to rectify it, though it only meant saving Jews the trouble of making a round about way. Yet, since it was a matter of concern to Jews, it deeply touches him, and he spares no effort and time until he actually remedies the situation.

Consider: After spending thirteen years in a cave, with only sand to cover his body, and finally emerging painfully scarred by his ordeal - how does he begin his free life? He goes out to inquire immediately what there is to rectify, and - true to the principle that "action is the essential thing" - he throws himself into the task and does not rest until it is accomplished.

Needless to say, no one can compare to Rashby, but since the above (Talmudic) account is part of the [oral] Torah, and "Torah" means "instruction," it is certain that every Jew has the capability to carry out the moral lesson of this account, too; namely, to act in the spirit and direction of it, and with

assured success, all the more so since Rashby has shown the way and paved it for all of us.

If to do a Jew a favor materially - be it only to shorten the way for him to reach his destination - is such a great thing, how much more so is it to be able to show the way, and shorten the distance, in the spiritual sense, - "to the end that he may instruct his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of G-d, to do righteousness and justice." For it is the sacred duty of every Jew to walk in the way of G-d and to bring up his children to follow in this way, and to do all he can to spread Yiddishkeit, Torah and Mitzvos [commandments]; including the teachings of Rashby in his Zohar, Pnimiyyus haTorah [the inner teachings of Torah], which has a particular relevance to our generation awaiting the imminent footsteps of Moshiach, for "with this Zohar Jews will be delivered from the Galus [exile] with Divine mercy."



And here we come to a further point connected with Rashby, which comes to light right in the beginning of the Preface to his work, the Zohar.

In the Beginning: Rabbi Shimon opened, 'The blossoms have appeared on the earth,' etc. What sustains the world ... is the voice of young children learning Torah, and because of them the world is saved...

In Torah-true education of Jewish children, the above two points of Rashby's teachings converge and come to fruition. It calls for the utmost effort, until every Jewish child, boy and girl, is provided with the kind of education that will ensure their keeping the way of G-d in the fullest measure, and passing it on to their children and children's children. In the words of the Psalmist: "So we will tell Your praise (transmit Your heritage) to generation from generation" - to all the children of the present generation and to all the children of the next, and so on.



May G-d grant that everyone should be actively involved in all the above, within the overall effort to spread Torah and Mitzvos, and do it with great joy. And the Zechus [merit] of Lag BaOmer, the day of Rashby's rejoicing, and it was his wish that all Jews participate in his rejoicing, will surely stand everyone, man and woman, in good stead, to succeed in their efforts in matters of Torah and Mitzvos in general, and in the above matters in particular; and acting with joy and inspiration assures even greater Hatzlocho [success]. Moreover, the Zechus Horabbim [merit of the multitude] helps, too.

With esteem and blessing for much Hatzlocho,

the spark of G-d at our core. A time when the world we inhabit will no longer distort our intrinsic perfection but facilitate it and bring it to light. A time when the body and soul will autonomously achieve their deepest union - a union deeper than anything the most profound book and the most transcendent prayer can generate.

(From the Rebbe's journal, Lag B'Omer 5702 [1942], adapted by meaningfullife.com)

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

This coming Tuesday, on the 18th of Iyar (May 5 this year) we celebrate Lag B'Omer. Lag B'Omer is especially known for two historic events: On Lag B'Omer, the deadly plague which had attacked the students of Rabbi Akiva ceased. Years later, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai passed away on Lag B'Omer.

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai was one of the foremost Talmudic sages. He also wrote the Zohar, the primary text of Kabala.

It is customary to celebrate Lag B'Omer with outdoor activities. Children and students who would normally be indoors studying go out into parks and fields to play and enjoy nature. The intent of this custom is to bring Torah study "into the fields," to unify all aspects of Torah and Jewish observance with the world around us.

Another custom on Lag B'Omer is to light bonfires in the evening. In Israel, children collect firewood for weeks to assure a big, beautiful (supervised) bonfire!

This custom originates in the idea that on the day that Rabbi Shimon passed away, a great light filled the world because of all of the secrets of Torah wisdom that Rabbi Shimon revealed to his students. These secrets, now revealed, were recorded in the Zohar.

The sun did not set until Rabbi Shimon had revealed all that he was allowed to. As soon as he was done, the sun set and he passed on.

The Zohar also states: "With this book we will come out of the exile with mercy." may the end of exile and the beginning of the Redemption take place immediately 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

There will come a time when "No longer will a man teach his fellow...for all will know Me, from the smallest to the great-est"(Jeremiah 31:33). A time when we will no longer require instruction and guidance from without, for the illumination will come from within, from



IT HAPPENED ONCE

On Lag B'Omer it is customary for children to go out into the fields and play with bows and arrows. For adults, there is a custom of visiting the local cemetery on Lag B'Omer. In the town of Homil, every year on this day, all the Jews would pay their respects to the dearly departed: parents, Chasidim, Torah scholars and other beloved members of the community.

The Chevra Kadisha, or Burial Society, would also make its annual visit to the cemetery on the afternoon of Lag B'Omer. Notebook in hand, its members would make the rounds of all the graves and check on the condition of the tombstones. Anything requiring repair was duly noted.

Towards evening, their inspection over, the members of the Chevra Kadisha would gather together for a communal seuda (festive meal). It was always an inspirational event, dedicated to furthering the observance of "acts of true kindness" (as Jewish burial practices are called, as the dead cannot be expected to reciprocate).

It was also customary for the famous Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac of Homil (1770 - 1857, one of the greatest early Chabad Chasidim) to participate in the gathering, joining the Chevra Kadisha in their celebration. Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac, one of the greatest followers of the early Chabad leaders, would make a "IChaim" and deliver some appropriate words of Torah.

Before he arrived, however, Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac would always conduct his own pilgrimage to visit the grave-sites of his predecessors. Year after year he would follow the same schedule, until one time, something most unusual occurred.

That Lag B'Omer it was already growing late when Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac began his rounds, accompanied by the cemetery caretaker. The setting sun elongated his shadow, accentuating his long white beard. At each grave the Rabbi whispered something audible only to him before moving on to the next one.

At the very end of the cemetery, in the newer section where the most recently deceased were interred, the rabbi paused in front of an obviously new marble monument. Bending down, he read the inscription to make sure it was the one he was looking for before nodding his head slightly.

"Quickly!" he suddenly turned and called to the caretaker. "Go back to town and bring an ax. A strong one, with a heavy blade." The caretaker did as he was told, and few minutes later he was back.

"Now I want you to obliterate everything it says here," the rabbi instructed him. "Take off all the words of praise, all the flowery eulogies and tributes. Leave nothing but the name of the deceased and the date he died."

The caretaker hesitated, frozen in place. But Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac was insistent. "Please, just do what I tell you," he implored him.

With trembling hands the caretaker lifted the ax and demolished the engraving, erasing the litany of good deeds the deceased had accomplished during his lifetime. When the deed was done, a look of satisfaction could be seen on the face of the rabbi. "Good," he told the astounded caretaker. "Now I can attend the seuda with the Chevra Kadisha."

The news of what had happened quickly spread throughout Homil. Indeed, the rumor reached the ears of the members of the Burial Society even before Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac arrived at their celebration.

"Thank G-d I was able to do an act of kindness for a Jewish soul," the rabbi announced as he walked in the door. It was obvious from the way everyone was looking at him that they were completely mystified by his behavior.

The rabbi sat down and made a blessing over a glass of spirits. "L'chaim - to life!" he wished the assemblage before launching into an explanation:

"A few weeks ago," he began, "a simple Jew passed away in Homil. His funeral

was small and unassuming. Only a few members of his family were present, plus representatives of the Chevra Kadisha. Like many others, despite the fact that he wasn't particularly learned or saintly, he was a warmhearted Jew who had many mitzvot to his credit. On the other hand, he also occasionally faltered like everyone else. In other words, he was your average Jew.

"After he died, his soul went up to the Heavenly Court, where his good deeds and bad deeds came under intense scrutiny. The judgment was about to be issued when, all of a sudden, an angel stood up holding a glistening white marble tablet. It was the tombstone that the deceased's children had erected over his final resting place.

"It seems that the man's children had decided to bestow upon their father - or upon themselves - a number of undeserved honors. The lengthy inscription described a lifetime of devoutness and piety, which, in reality, was only a fabrication. The Heavenly Court was disturbed by this miscarriage of justice.

"Today I did a very great favor for the soul of the departed," the rabbi concluded. "When I erased all of the undeserved words of praise, the Heavenly Court ruled that the man's soul could now receive the true reward it was legitimately entitled to."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the Weekly Torah Portion

And you shall not profane My holy name (Lev. 22:32) The opposite of profaning G-d's name is the sanctification of G-d's name. When a Jew performs a mitzva (commandment) with devotion, and with pure intent, he is sanctifying G-d's name. When a Jew behaves in such a manner that only good things are heard about him, that too is a sanctification of G-d's name. However, the opposite is also true. (Rambam)

In the manner that he has caused a defect in someone, so shall it be done to him (Lev. 24:20) If one finds a defect or something lacking in his fellow man, this is a sign that "so shall it be done to him" - that he himself is the one that has the defect. "He who charges others, charges them with his own faults." (Kometz HaMincha)

And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Shabbat, from the day that you brought the Omer of the waving; seven complete weeks shall they be. (Lev 23:15) This verse discusses the laws concerning Sefirat HaOmer - the counting of the Omer which takes place between Passover and Shavuot. Rashi explains that "from the day after the Shabbat" refers to the day after the festival, i.e. the second day of Passover. He further explains that the word "complete" teaches us that one begins to count from the evening (the second night of Passover) or else the weeks are not truly complete

The word "u'sefartem - and you shall count" is from the same root as the words "sapphire" and "bright" as if to say, "Work on 'yourselves' until you are shiny and bright." (The Maggid of Mezritch)

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