

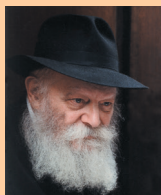
The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person

נסד תר"ץ 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)

L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

The two Torah portions that are read this week, Acharei and Kedoshim, share a common theme: holiness.

Acharei begins with a description of the most sacred service performed throughout the year: the Yom Kippur service, rendered by the High Priest in the Holy of Holies.

Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year, the Holy of Holies the most sacred place on earth, and the High Priest the embodiment of the highest spiritual level a Jew can attain.

Similarly, the second Torah portion, Kedoshim, begins with the commandment, "You shall be holy because I am holy."

How are we supposed to attain such elevated levels of holiness?

The answer lies in the above-quoted words: "Because I am holy." Because G-d is holy, and because every Jew possesses a Jewish soul, a "veritable part of G-d above," not only is holiness within our reach, but making sure that holiness is manifested in our daily lives is the obligation of every Jew.

The literal meaning of the word "acharei" is "after."

"And G-d spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they came near before G-d and died." Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu were so desirous of cleaving to G-d that their physical bodies became superfluous; consequently, their souls left their bodies.

However, lest we conclude that attaining such an elevated state of holiness is the ultimate objective, after which there is nothing left to do, the word "acharei" comes to remind us that there is much work for the Jew even after he has reached the highest of spiritual levels.

A Jew is never static; he must always strive upward, no matter how much he has already attained. There's always a higher rung on the ladder, another way of introducing sanctity into his daily existence.

From where do we get this power?

From G-d's command: "You shall be holy because I am holy." G-d's holiness is unlimited and boundless; no matter how sanctified a human being may be, there's always a higher level he can aim for.

This, then, is the lesson to be derived from this week's Torah reading: We must never be satisfied with our present spiritual attainments, but must always endeavor to attain ever-increasing levels of G-dliness and sanctity.

Adapted from *Likutei Sichot of the Rebbe*, Vol. 12

Whom Can We Trust?

By Rabbi Simon Jacobson

Trust is the central narrative of our modern era—or rather, the lack of it. We find ourselves questioning everything: political parties, media, financial institutions, and insurance giants. We even doubt the "holy grail" of our economic structure: Capitalism.

The uncomfortable truth is that money often corrupts. It is the ultimate expression of self-interest, a force to which no human is entirely immune. If personal gain is the primary engine of capitalism, how narrow is the bridge between healthy profit and destructive greed? While laws and regulations are meant to keep us honest, we have seen regulators fail and lawmakers rewarded by the very corporations they oversee. This leads to a daunting question: Can we trust people? Can we even trust ourselves?

The human cost of broken trust is devastating. When bonds are betrayed, the soul retreats into a cynicism that is difficult to heal. However, the Torah offers a "royal dose" of trust in its description of the Divine Sanctuary. Here, G-d entrusts humans to use gold, silver, and copper—the very materials associated with greed—to build a Temple for the Divine.

This presents a profound paradox. Many believe holiness requires detaching from the corrupting material world through isolated meditation. Yet, the Temple was

intentionally built from physical matter. The ultimate triumph is not building a sanctuary in a sterile heaven, but creating a sacred space "amongst you"—within a world of selfish materialism. G-d took a calculated risk, entrusting corruptible beings to rise above temptation and fulfill a higher calling.

This realization reveals a difficult truth: our distrust of others is often a projection of our distrust of ourselves. If you know you might compromise your integrity for self-interest, you will fear others will do the same. We break this cycle by looking at the words etched onto our currency: "In God We Trust."

Because humans are inherently biased, we cannot be the ultimate foundation of trust. Lasting trust can only be infused into man-made structures by introducing something that is not man-made. Trusting a Higher Power to whom we are all accountable provides the foundation for a just society. When an individual realizes they are here to serve a higher cause rather than their own ego, they become someone we can actually trust.

Our current crisis of trust is a reminder that when we trust only in man, we build on sand. The answer is literally in our pockets. The foundation of all trust—economic, political, and personal—is found in our willingness to answer to something higher.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

The first two paragraphs were written in Hebrew. The rest of the letter is in the Rebbe's original English.

10 Kislev, 5740-1980

Concerning the notification that you will soon be entering the age of mitzvot, it should be G-d's will that from 13 years of age you will grow to 15, etc. as it says in the Mishna (Avot Chapter 5), and you will increase in studiousness and diligence in the study of Torah, the revealed Torah and Chasidut, and you will be careful in the performance of mitzvot, and G-d will make you successful to be a Chasid, a fearer of Heaven, and a scholar.

P.S. The following is written in the "language of the land" so that he will be able, if he wants, to show it to his friends, in the spirit of the commandment of "And you shall love your neighbor as yourself," that if in all matters one must look for the good of others, how much more so in matters of Judaism, Torah and its mitzvot.

At first glance, it is strange that the day of Bar Mitzva, which is so important that the Zohar declares that for the Bar Mitzva boy it is almost like the day of Matan Torah (when Jews first received the Torah and mitzvot), yet, insofar as Tachnun [a special penitential prayer] is concerned, which is omitted even on the so-called "Minor Holidays," if it does not occur on Shabbat or Yom Tov (or another day that Tachnun is not said) -- Tachnun is said by the Bar Mitzva boy, as on any ordinary weekday.

One of the explanations is as follows:

When one considers that human capacities are limited in general, especially the capacities of a boy at the start of his fourteenth year, yet he must assume all the duties and responsibilities of a full-fledged Jew; and, moreover, fulfill them with joy, in keeping with the rule: Serve G-d with joy -- the question begs itself: How is he going to carry out all that is expected of him, especially

being a member of a people which is a small minority among the nations of the world; and even in this country, where one has every opportunity to carry out all religious duties, but most are more interested and engaged in the material aspects of life?

The answer is that the Torah and mitzvot have been given by G-d, the Creator of the world, and of man, and He knows all the difficulties that a Jew may encounter. G-d has surely provided every Jew with the necessary strength to overcome any and all difficulties to live up to G-d's Will, for G-d would not expect someone to do something which is beyond his capacity.

If, however, there should be a moment of weakness, when carrying out G-d's Will is not in the fullest measure of perfection, G-d in His infinite goodness makes it possible to "say Tachnun" -- to do Teshuva. Indeed, as the Alter Rebbe explains, teshuva is basically for the lack of perfection in Avodat Hashem [G-dly service].

Therefore, on the first day of becoming a full-fledged Jew, and after fulfilling the very first mitzva, namely, the saying of the Shema, by which a Jew declares his total commitment to G-d and obedience to all His commandments, the Bar Mitzva boy does say Tachnun the following morning and afternoon (provided it is not Shabbat or Yom Tov, etc.), for the essence of Tachnun is teshuva, and there is the assurance that "Nothing stands in the way of teshuva."

This knowledge will, moreover, also stand him in good stead when he will involve himself in the great mitzva of v'ahavta l're'acho kamocho [loving one's fellow Jew as oneself], to bring the alienated closer to Judaism. For remembering the rule that "Nothing stands in the way of teshuva," he will eagerly and compassionately apply it to them, especially when in most cases, the failure to observe fully the Torah and mitzvot is due to extenuating circumstances.

With all the above in mind, and being fortunate in growing up in a family where Yiddishkeit is a living experience in your everyday life, you will start out on your way of life as a full-fledged Jew with confidence, and will proceed from strength to strength, and be a source of true pride and joy to your dear parents and family, and to all our Jewish people.

desecration of G-d's name is taken just as seriously. The Prophet Ezekiel refers to the exile of the Jewish people as a desecration of G-d's name. The ultimate sanctification of G-d's name, however, will take place when Moshiach comes and the entire world is redeemed, at which time "My great name will be sanctified...and all the nations will know that I am G-d." (*Likutei Sichot Vol. 27*)

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

Rabbi Shmuel, known as the Rebbe Maharash, was the fourth Rebbe of Lubavitch. His birthday falls on the Hebrew date of 2 Iyar, which this year corresponds to Sunday, April 19. He is especially associated with the saying "L'chat'chila Aribet," teaching that when one encounters obstacles, the proper approach is to rise above them from the outset.

He explained, "The world says that when you cannot go under it, you should rise above it. I say, 'L'chat'chila Aribet'—the first approach should be to go above it." In other words, no obstacle should be considered too great. Whatever one does should be approached with confidence and strength. This idea defined his approach to life and leadership.

The Rebbe Maharash was known for his expansive and opulent style. However, this was not for personal pleasure, but to serve Hashem in a way that would impress the oppressive Russian government and encourage them to treat Jews with respect.

His unique approach was also evident in his dealings with the government. He was outspoken and bold, insisting that the government help the Jews not out of pity, but because it was in their own best interest.

In his final years, when pogroms broke out in Russia, he spoke out strongly against the violence. Despite threats of imprisonment for involving other governments, the pogroms ceased after his intervention.

His boldness affected his health. When his doctor warned him, he responded that the essence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's is to endure any consequence to help the Jewish people.

This approach of "L'chat'chila Aribet" reinforces the belief that no matter how hopeless a situation may seem, we must never give up hope. With Hashem's help, all obstacles can be overcome.

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

"You shall not profane My holy name, so that I may be sanctified among the Children of Israel." (Lev. 22:32) When a Jew gives up his life rather than commits certain transgressions, G-d's name is publicly sanctified. The

