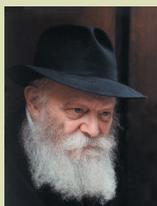


# L'Chaim



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe  
on the Torah portion

In this week's Torah portion, *Ki Tisa*, we read about the sin of the golden calf. The sin took place just months after G-d freed us from the shackles of Egypt, just days after G-d revealed His essence to us at Mount Sinai. We betrayed Him in the most hurtful way possible. We made and served a false god, and to throw salt on the wound we gave it credit for redeeming us from Egypt.

As a nation, the sin of the Golden Calf has been our biggest regret to date. It has also been our greatest catalyst to change and get closer to G-d. It weighs heavily on our national conscience and we continually atone for this grave blunder.

Ultimately, the sin and the sincere remorse, regret and repentance that followed, is what gave us the most powerful tool for atonement, the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. It is what shaped us into the great, unwavering, G-d centered, dynamic, world affecting people that we are.

All of us have regrets, all of us have done things that go against everything that we stand for at one time or another. Embarrassed and ashamed it weighs heavy on us. It feels like a dark cloud following us around.

The question is: Do we let it bring us down into depression? Do we ignore it and become numb, cold and insensitive? Or do you allow it to affect you and become a catalyst for positive change?

Falling into depression is not the way. G-d wants us to serve Him with joy. Becoming cold and insensitive is simply not Jewish. A Jew should be kind and caring. Being cold or depressed is miserable and no way to live.

Examine the guilt. If the wrong can be righted, then by all means, do so. If you hurt someone, apologize. You will be surprised how powerful an honest "I'm sorry" can be.

If it cannot be corrected, then allow the guilt to shape you into a better person. The guilt will then be transformed into the event that shaped you into the good person you have become. You will begin to see it as a positive rather than a negative.

Confined to a bed, I have a lot of time to think. How many experiences would I like to change? How many words would I like to take back? How many hurts would I like to soothe?

I know that your lives are busy and it's hard to find the time for this kind of introspection. However, this exercise will unburden you. It will allow you to rise above the hurt, the shame, and the resentments. You will be happier and those around you will be affected by the new and improved you.

If you can, please forgive me, please forgive you and forgive each other.

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, [yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com](http://yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com). Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

## New Math?

Do you remember sitting in geometry class, trying to figure out when in Life, if ever, you were going to use all of the information you were learning about degrees of angles, circumferences of circles, measurements of hypotenuses?

For a young child, "learning" math means addition and subtraction. For a high school student, a math class might be in algebra, trigonometry or pre-calculus with the help of a Texas Instruments TI-84 Plus CE Color Graphing Calculator (at a cost of over \$100...). For adults, well, we can just use our smart-phones to figure out the price of the suit after 30% off, and the Cash Option or Annual Payout of the MegaMillions...

Modern mathematics is based on knowledge that has accumulated since the days of the early Greeks and the philosopher Euclid. The whole field of mathematics is based on the general rules which they formulated, though these are constantly being revised and expounded upon.

The same is true of our holy Torah. Originally expounded as a set of general guidelines and principles, it contains instructions as to how it should be studied in order to arrive at the correct conclusions. The entire framework of the Torah was given to millions of people simultaneously at Mount Sinai over 3300 years ago.

Throughout the generations, our Sages followed these guidelines, thereby arriving at their conclusions in the authentic Torah manner. All resulting rulings are

based on the eternal principles received by Moses from G-d Himself. Therefore, if one wishes to resolve an issue that arises in contemporary society, he can do so by adhering to the Torah principles that continue to guide us today.

Let's get back to mathematics. We would hardly consider it wise to say that if a young child learns how to add and subtract, that will suffice for his entire life. What of fractions, percentages, not to mention multiplication and division. Similarly, the basic Torah principles that almost every Jewish child learns at some point – that G-d is one, that Jews don't worship idols, that the Ten Commandments forbid stealing, murder and enjoin us to honor our parents – are not sufficient for us to experience Jewish living as adults. Jewish education throughout one's entire life, is integral to living Jewishly.

A final basic principle of Judaism: There is one, simple mathematical equation where arithmetic and Torah do not come up with the same solution. According to the rules of addition, one plus one plus one equals three. According to the Torah they equal one! When is this the case? Jewish teachings declare that the one Jewish people plus the one Torah plus the One G-d "*kula chad*," are totally one.

There is an intrinsic bond between each Jew and his/her brother and sister that makes us one. And we are essentially bound together with the Torah and with G-d. This oneness will be totally revealed in the Messianic Era, may it commence immediately.

# SLICE OF LIFE

## To Be With My People

by Esther Jacobs



Drawing by Chana Jacobs of her grandparents

“We are here to visit my father, Theodore Kotin,” I said to the receptionist at the Grand View. Sunshine flowed through the large windows lining the hallway to my father’s wing. Walking past the rooms I was pleasantly surprised that the air smelled fresh, the hallways were wide, and the floors were spotless.

My father had suffered a stroke and could not move his legs. An easy going fellow, Dad humbly accepted life’s challenges – even a stroke – without complaining and making a fuss.

When we entered his sunlit room, my father was sitting in a wheelchair, his lunch tray attached, with an untouched meal. “Surprise!” we said in unison.

“Hey, you came,” Dad said with a glimmer of a smile. We showered him with hugs and kisses.

“Hey, Dad, this is nicer than your bedroom at home,” I laughed. Dad always laughed at my jokes. But not this time. “Dad, what’s wrong?” I asked.

“I want to be with my people.”

Mom knew what Dad wanted. “Your dad wants to be in the Jewish Home. That’s where Uncle Morris and Aunt Rosie spent their final years. And that’s where he wants to be.”

My mother sighed nervously. “Yesterday, the assistant administrator explained that his stay is transitional, not long term. He gave me a list of 10 nursing homes that will accept Medicare patients. Dad’s on the waiting list for the Jewish Home, but it can take a while.”

Dad liked being Jewish. Every Sunday morning, he used to turn on the radio and blast the Jewish Hour, while painting signs in his workshop, formerly known as our dining room. I remember him belting out Yiddish songs and dancing around his art table.

My grandfather’s wish had been that my brother Harold and I would go to Hebrew School. Dad sent us on Sundays and three afternoons a week. In May 1973, I had a simple Bat Mitzva ceremony at Hebrew school. In July my brother turned 13 and went to shul and said the blessings on the Torah and had a low-key Bar Mitzva party. We graduated Hebrew school and Dad felt he had fulfilled his father’s dying wish. “Children, I’ve done my part. Now it’s your decision how you will live as a Jew.”

Instead of continuing synagogue membership, Dad joined the Jewish Community Center and, in exchange for membership dues, made a deal to paint signs for their events. Later, Dad gave a class in Tai-Chi at the JCC. Both Dad and Mom were born in Rochester, New York, and even though they were on the shy side, being at the JCC made them feel happy and secure, that they were part of the Jewish community.

I graduated college knowing how to speak French fluently. Not knowing what to do with a major in French, I applied to the Peace Corps with the dream of living in some faraway land where I might discover the secrets of life. When I told my plans to the owner of the restaurant where I waitressed during my college years, Mr. Wong said, “Why not go to Israel and be with your people?”

The thought of going to Israel had never entered my mind, but Mr. Wong seemed wise and had been around the world so I went. Breathing the air of Israel enlivened my parched Jewish soul. Divine Providence led me to Machon Alta Women’s Seminary in Tzfat, which specialized in guiding and teaching young women like me.

After a year in seminary, I returned home. On the first Shabbat home, my father walked with me to the Chabad House of Rochester, a mere half mile away.

It was the first time either of us had stepped into the Chabad House. Rabbi Nechemia and Masha Vogel were delighted to meet us, like we were long lost relatives. When Rabbi Vogel discovered my father’s priestly lineage, his arms flew up, like he had won the lottery. “Please come for Rosh Hashana,” Rabbi Vogel said. “We need a *Kohen* to bless us.”

Within minutes, Mrs. Vogel, or Masha as she insisted on us calling her, had invited all of us – including my mother and brother, for a Rosh

Hashana dinner at their house.

Two weeks later, on the first day of Rosh Hashana, my father stood in front of the congregation. I had never before seen my father say the Priestly blessing. Dad was the only Kohen and he humbly repeated the words of the rabbi and blessed his people with love.

After the holidays, I felt like I needed another year of Jewish studies and living in an observant Jewish environment, so I moved to Crown Heights and studied under Rabbi Shloma Majeski.

Rabbi Vogel kept in touch with Dad and invited him to come for Shabbat. My father eventually became a regular on Shabbat mornings, and Rabbi Vogel used to introduce him as “Teddy, our Kohen in residence.”

The stroke had put an end to Dad’s honored role of resident Kohen at the Chabad House of Rochester. Now, Chabad came to him. Rabbi Dovid Mochkin, also an emissary with his wife Chany in Rochester, visited Dad every week to lift his spirits, say a few words about the weekly Torah portion and help him put on tefillin if he wanted. And Dad was given one of Masha Vogel’s famous challahs.

One day, my mother got a call from an old school friend of mine. “Hi Mrs. Kotin, it’s Lauren Howitt. It’s been about 30 years since we last spoke! My husband Richard and I flew up from Florida for my parents’ 50th wedding anniversary. How are you and Mr. Kotin?”

“Oh, I’m fine, but Mr. Kotin had a stroke and is in a nursing home.”

The following day Lauren met my mother at the Grand View and visited Dad. “Mr. Kotin, this place is nice, but you can’t stay here. It’s not kosher, and it’s not Jewish!”

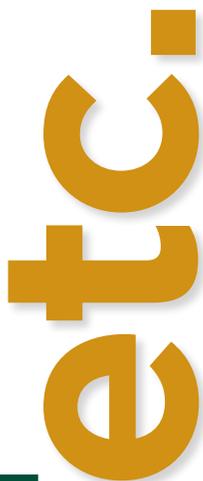
“I want to go to the Jewish Home,” Dad told her. “But they have a waiting list. It’s okay. I’ll go somewhere else.”

Lauren looked at Dad and said, “Mr. Kotin, knock out those negative thoughts. G-d wants you to be in a kosher place, so you’ll surely get in.”

A week later my mother received a call from the Jewish Home, “A bed opened up.”

Mom told me the good news. “Mom, today is Gimmel Tammuz, the anniversary of the Rebbe’s passing. Dad was the Kohen blessing his people in one of the Rebbe’s Chabad Houses, and now the Rebbe is blessing Dad with a kosher Jewish home for his final days.”

On the very next day, as Dad was being wheeled through the front door of the Jewish Home of Rochester, Dad lifted his eyes and smiled.



## 700th Chapter, 30 Countries, 3000 Teens

Estonia, a small country in northeastern Europe, is the newest and 700th Chapter of CTeen, Chabad’s Teen Network. The news was announced at the annual CTeen Jewish Pride event Saturday night at Times Square in New York City. Three thousand teens from 30 countries joined together at the annual international CTeen Shabbaton.

## New Mikva

**Chabad of Camarillo, California**, recently dedicated a new Mikva. Until its opening, the closest Mikvas were in Oak Park – 20 miles south, and in Santa Barbara – 56 miles north. To finish off the mikva, diverse weather conditions were required. Sunny days were necessary to pave the parking lot, and rainy days were needed to fill the mikva reservoirs with rain water. It rained for two weeks in historic proportions, unseen in decades, completely filling all the reservoirs. The miracle continued as the skies cleared and the sun shone for the remaining days needed to install the driveway leading up to the mikva.

## Hakhel–Unite

The use of keeping festivals is plain. A person derives benefit from such assemblies: the emotions produced renew the attachment to religion; they lead to friendly and social intercourse among the people. This is especially the object of the commandment of Hakhel – to gather the people together on Sukkot, as is plainly stated (*Deut. 31:12*): “That they may hear, and that they may learn and fear the L-rd” (*Guide for the Perplexed, Part 3 46:12*) To learn more visit [hakhelnation.com](http://hakhelnation.com)



# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

5733 [1973]

... Perhaps this is an opportunity to re-emphasize several basic points:

Those well-meaning persons who felt impelled to interpret certain passages in the Torah differently from the time-honored traditional interpretation, did so only in the mistaken belief that the Torah view (on the age of the world etc.) was at variance with science; otherwise they would not have sought new interpretations in the Torah.

The apologetic literature – at least a substantial part of it – that was created as a result of this misconception, relied on the principle that, as in the case of *"mutar leshanot mipnei darchei shalom"* [it is permissible to change for the sake of peace], there was no harm in making an "innocent" verbal concession to science, if it would be helpful in strengthening commitment to Torah and *mitzvot* [commandments] of many.

At the bottom of this attitude was the mistaken belief that scientific "conclusions" were categorical and absolute.

Parenthetically, some explanation for this attitude to science may be found in the fact (pointed out in my previous letter), that the Torah accords to science a higher status of credibility than contemporary science lays claim to, as is evidenced from the rule in halacha that the prohibition of *chilul* [desecrating] Shabbos may be waived on the opinion of a physician in the area of *pikuach nefesh* [saving a life] and many similar rulings.

The crucial point, however, is that the latest conclusions of science introduced a radical change into science's own evaluation of itself, clearly defining its own limitations. Accordingly, there is nothing categorical in science; the principle of cause and effect is substituted by "probable sequence of

events" etc.

Furthermore, contemporary science holds that scientific judgments and descriptions do not necessarily "present" things as they really are.

Science demands empirical verification: "conclusions" are considered "scientific" if they have been investigated experimentally – but certainly not in relation to conditions which have never been known to mankind and can never be duplicated.

In view of all that has been said above, there is no reason whatever to believe that science (as different from scientists) can state anything definitive on something which occurred in the remote past, in the pre-dawn of history. Consequently, there is no need to seek new reinterpretations in the Torah to "reconcile" them with science, as stated in the beginning of the letter.

Apropos of your special reference to Shabbos Bereishis, it is astonishing that those who attempted to reinterpret the Six Day Creation account in terms of eons etc. failed to even mention the contradiction of such a view with the text of a *get* [writ of divorce]. It is well known how punctilious the *halacha* [Jewish law] is in regard to a *get*. The text of the *get* begins with the unequivocal dating of it "according to the creation of the world" (e.g. in the current year it would read: *"Shnas Chameshes Alafim Sheva Meios Ushloshim V'Shalosh Libriyas HaOlam"* (the year five thousand, seven hundred and thirty-three since the creation of the world).

In the words of the *Megillah* [Scroll of Esther] which we read this week, "There is one people... and their laws differ from those of any other people".

May G-d grant that just as in those days our people felt justly proud of their uniqueness and difference and made no attempt to reconcile their laws and customs and views with those of the people among whom they were "dispersed and scattered," so may every Jew now also display the same courageous spirit, based on the one and the same Torah, since "this Torah shall not be changed or substituted" – one of the basic Thirteen Principles of our faith, as formulated by our Sages.

With esteem and blessing,

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

*This Shabbat we read an additional Torah portion in the synagogue known as "Parshat Para" (the "red heifer"). In the days of the Holy Temple, if a person became spiritually unclean through contact with a dead body, the ashes of the red heifer rendered him clean. As a person had to be in a state of ritual cleanliness in order to bring the Passover offering, these laws were read publicly in the weeks leading up to the holiday.*

*Although we cannot bring offerings in the literal sense at present, the spiritual lessons they contain are timeless.*

*Our Sages likened mitzvot to the human body. Just as the body is composed of 248 limbs and 365 sinews, the Torah is composed of 248 positive and 365 negative commandments.*

*But the Torah is also likened to the soul. Just as the soul animates the physical body and transforms it into a living being, so too does the Torah enliven the practical mitzvot and illuminate them with its light. When a Jew studies Torah and understands the deeper significance of the commandments, his mitzvot are performed with joy and happiness, and with a heartfelt enthusiasm.*

*This principle sheds light on the Talmudic statement, "He who studies the laws of the burnt-offering is considered as if he has brought one." During the exile, when we cannot bring sacrifices in the literal sense, our study of the law stands in its stead. The mitzva of bringing the sacrifice, however, just like the human body, is limited by the boundaries of time and space; the actual mitzva can only be fulfilled in the proper time and at the proper location (indeed, it is forbidden to offer sacrifices outside the Temple).*

*But our holy Torah, just like the soul, is spiritual; it is not limited by the restraints of time and place. Our study of the Torah's laws of offerings is therefore relevant and appropriate in any age and in any location.*

*As we gradually "rev up" for the Passover season, let us remember that every positive action we do draws nearer the day when "The spirit of uncleanness I will remove from the earth," with the coming of Moshiach and the Final Redemption. May it happen immediately.*

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.



Published by Lubavitch Youth Organization  
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# MOSHIACH MATTERS

Aaron called out and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the L-rd." (Ex. 32:5) How could Aaron, who was extremely righteous, have lied by referring

to the making of the Golden Calf as "a feast to the L-rd"? Actually, we see that his words were prophetic, as the day on which the Golden Calf was made was the 17th of Tammuz: Although in our times that date is observed by fasting, when Moshiach comes it will be transformed according to the prophet Zecharia into "a time of joy and gladness, and a cheerful feast to the house of Judah." (Maayana Shel Torah)



# IT HAPPENED ONCE

It was Reb Hillel Particher's custom to travel around the villages surrounding Cherson to visit the Jews who lived there. The settlements were comprised of all types of Jews: There were the scholars, who looked forward to Reb Hillel's learned discourses, and there were the simple folk, who understood not a word of his Chasidic teachings. Regardless of their level of learning, however, all of these Jews had been instilled from birth with certain precious Chasidic traits: they loved to do a favor for their fellow Jews; they prayed with true love and fear of G-d; and they lived in general harmony with one another.

Reb Hillel was a man who brimmed over with an overflowing love of his fellow Jews. He was also an extremely humble man. When he looked at even the most simple, uneducated Jew he saw only his pure soul, his neshama shining through; he never focused on the grubby exterior. And when he approached the common people, he never exalted himself over them. It's no wonder that they loved him, too. His arrival was greeted with great excitement in every town and village, and everyone would drop what they were doing to run out to greet him.

Reb Hillel himself was one of the most highly respected Chasidim. On each of his trips, he took the opportunity to explain the lofty ideas expressed in a Chasidic discourse to his listeners. Of course, since Reb Hillel was one of the greatest intellects of the movement, the villagers often comprehended very little of what he said. Once when Reb Hillel arrived in a village, so many people came out to hear him speak that there was no room in the entire village large enough to accommodate everyone. There was no choice but for Reb Hillel to address the crowd outdoors.

The small street was filled to capacity with men, women and children, all waiting in great anticipation for Reb Hillel to begin. As he spoke, Hillel noticed that many in the large crowd were weeping, and it dawned on him that the reason for their tears was that with their very limited education, they were unable to comprehend his words. Their tears bespoke their terrible pain at not being able to understand the profound insights of the Chasidut Reb Hillel was discussing.

When he finished the discourse, Reb Hillel told the people: "To create a letter in a Sefer Torah three things are required: ink, a quill and parchment. If there is no parchment, the letter cannot exist, even if the scribe possesses the finest quill and the best ink. Only when simple Jews, who are compared to the parchment, gather to learn Torah, the Torah scroll can be completed."

Reb Hillel continued, "There are no words to describe the tremendous joy created in the highest heavens when this happens. Now, that you, my dear friends, have come here, the Torah can be completed."

The Previous Rebbe concluded the farbrengen with the words: "The same situation is true for us today. No words can describe the great tumult in heaven as a result of our holy gathering. Not only are our physical bodies participating in this celebration, but our souls are also rejoicing."

\*\*\*

Early one summer morning, the Chasidim of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the founder of Chabad-Lubavitch, were gathered for the brit of his newborn son. Everyone knew how important punctuality was to Rabbi Shneur Zalman, and so, by seven o'clock, they had all assembled and were waiting expectantly for the brit to begin. Rabbi Shneur Zalman, however, didn't come as expected, and the hours began to pass. The Chasidim couldn't understand the reason for the delay, and even as the clock struck noon, there was no sign or word from Rabbi Shneur Zalman.

As they waited, the door to the shul opened and in walked a strange looking man. He was attired all in white, and despite the heat of the day, was wearing a fur hat. As soon as the stranger arrived, Rabbi Shneur Zalman also entered and greeted the man with an enthusiastic, "Sholom Aleichem, Reb Betzalel."

The infant was carried in and Rabbi Shneur Zalman gave the stranger the honor of bringing the child to "Elijah's chair." The Chasidim were amazed. Who was this man, whom none of them had ever seen? Why had Rabbi Shneur Zalman honored him and even held up brit on his account? There was only one explanation: He had to be a hidden

tzadik!

When the excitement had abated, the Chasidim approached the stranger and asked his name. "Betzalel the Shepherd," was all he replied. This curt answer piqued their curiosity, and they decided to try to speak to him later that evening. When they went to speak with him, however, to their bitter disappointment, the man was gone. Still very anxious to discover the stranger's identity, they went to Rabbi Shneur Zalman himself.

"He is indeed a shepherd," Rabbi Shneur Zalman replied to them. "In fact, he has been tending his flock for some forty years in a small village near Svitzien. Over the years he has committed the entire Talmud to memory – both the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds – he even has memorized many commentaries, including Maimonides! But the one accomplishment which has caused his soul to shine as it does is his mastery of the study of Mishnayot, for the letters which compose the word "Mishna" are the same as those which make up the word "neshama," soul. It is his devotion to learning the complete Mishna by heart that has raised him to the greatest spiritual heights."

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

**You shall make it incense (Ex. 30:23)**

Atonement before the Alm-ghty is similar to appeasement among people. Although one may have completely forgiven another for a wrong, it is still remembered. The next time the same transgression occurs, it is not forgotten so easily. The same is true of our sins, which are atoned for by means of the sacrifices. Some "unpleasant odor" may still remain even after atonement. The incense offering "wipes away" even that small reminder. *(The Tzemach Tzedek)*

**...he saw the [golden] calf and the dancing, and Moses' anger was kindled and he threw the tablets and broke them...(Ex. 32:19)**

From this incident we see clearly the great difference between hearing and seeing. Moses had already heard directly from G-d that the Jews made the golden calf. Yet, it wasn't until he actually saw the calf with his own eyes that his anger was kindled. *(Commentary on Tanya)*

**And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy (Ex. 33:19)**

The way an individual acts towards others is the way he himself will be treated by Heaven. If one is merciful to his fellow man, and behaves in a good and kind manner, G-d will be merciful towards him, even if he is really not deserving. "And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious" - G-d will act accordingly to the person who always says "I will be gracious," and will be merciful to the person who always says "I will be merciful." *(Razin D'Oraita)*

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