

The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person

נוסד תור ימי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson

"May there be peace in your wall, tranquility in your palaces" (Psalm 122:6) Year of Unity - Hakhel

L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

This week's Torah portion, *Nasso*, is the longest portion with 176 verses. It is always read right before or right after the holiday of Shavuot. This is a clear indication that there must be something of great importance to be learned from here that is central to our keeping of the Torah.

Nasso starts with the tribe of Levi's responsibilities of transporting the *Mishkan* (Sanctuary). This is followed by the Priestly blessing. Finally, it ends with the offerings brought by each of the Israelite tribal princes for the *Mishkan*'s inauguration. This adds to the central importance of the message to each tribe and each classification, *Kohen* (priest), Levi and Israel, with regards to our service of G-d, symbolized by the *Mishkan*.

What central lessons can be learned from these three sections, Levi's responsibilities, *Kohen*'s blessing and Israel's inaugural offerings?

The service of the Levi was manual labor, moving and hauling parts of the *Mishkan*. This teaches us that even physical work can be holy and that we must serve G-d not only with Torah and *mitzvot* (commandments) but also our day to day actions.

The *Kohen*, with love, blesses all the Jewish people with blessings of physical abundance, physical grace and physical peace. The *Kohen*, is made to recognize that G-d loves and values every Jew, in every place and at every time and wants him to have material abundance, etc. So too, we must recognize the value of every Jew and seek to have them included in G-d's service. We must find pleasure in each others good fortune and seek to help those who haven't found their good fortune yet.

It seems that all the princes brought the same offering, but if one is to delve deeper into the symbolism of each prince's offering, you will find, that what looked the same was unique in meaning and therefore, truly different. When we do a *mitzva*, it might seem that it is the same as the next guys *mitzvah*, we both put on *Tefilin*, we both light Shabbat candles. In truth, we are all different and though we are doing the same action, the *mitzvot* we do couldn't be more unique. No one can do your *mitzva*. This is why each offering had to be separately written, though they look alike, they are not.

So you see, your physical action is holy, your physical abundance is cherished and your *mitzva* are unique, the same but different. We can't do without you.

The Jewish people and the Torah are one. We are the ones who live it. We are living Torahs and everything we do can be holy and special.

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

Chewing It Over

There is a loud crunching sound. You look around wondering if anyone else hears it. Everybody else seems to be oblivious to the noise, or perhaps they are just being polite. You wonder, don't they notice it too?

But, of course, they don't hear the sound because it's you who is munching on the celery or chomping on the carrot. Since you are the perpetrator of this cacophonous conduct and the clamor is emanating from inside your head it resonates in your ears, blocking out other more subtle sounds. But ask someone seated just a few feet away from you if they can hear you chewing and they will assure you that they don't detect anything.

Perhaps it is for this very reason that the great Jewish thinker and sage, Rabbi Joshua ben P'rachya taught (*Ethics 1:6*) "Provide yourself with a master; acquire for yourself a friend; and judge every person favorably."

When a person finds himself in a situation where he has to make a big decision, he's sure to "chew" it over or "ruminate" on it for awhile. But, inevitably, whatever thoughts or opinions are in that person's head will come through loudest and clearest, making an objective decision essentially impossible.

However, if a person takes Rabbi Joshua's teaching to heart, he will find a "master," someone he respects and whose opinion he values. A master is not a friend whose advice we solicit but when we don't like the recommendation we ignore it. A master, or *rav* in the original Hebrew, is someone whose wisdom and

knowledge of Torah teachings guide his advice, someone who will tailor his counsel to the person's nature, character and unique situation.

Consulting with a "master" when making decisions that affect one's quality of life will enable a person to come to conclusions that are acceptable to himself, pleasant to those around him, and pleasing to G-d.

It is worthy to note that Rabbi Joshua was a *nasi*, a leader of the Jewish people. That it was Rabbi Joshua who presented this advice teaches us that even someone of a very high stature, a person who is very learned and who has perhaps even reached the peak of human perfection, should humble himself and seek a teacher or "master."

Rabbi Joshua also recommends that we "acquire a friend." Jewish teachings speak of the importance of friendship and urge us to exert ourselves in these relationships. Unlike a master, though, a friend is a peer, someone on our own level who can share the trials and tribulations of life with us. They've been there and done that (or they're in the process).

The Hebrew words for "acquire" can also be understood as "buy." Rabbi Joshua is not suggesting that we "buy" our friends. Rather, we should know that even if we have to go out of our way, to give of ourselves, we must do so in order to nurture friendships.

Whether master or friend, another person will help us filter out our more personal ruminations and cogitations allowing us to really "chew over" the matter in a more objective manner.

SLICE OF LIFE

The Book that was Left Behind

by Dovid Zaklikowski



My grandparents' home in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, was a second home to me. Many a weeknight supper, almost every *Yom Tov* (Jewish holiday), and for several years every Shabbos, I sat at their large dining room table. It never struck me as odd that the walls of the room were almost invisible, lined with the bookcases that held my grandfather's extensive collection of holy books. The same went for the bedrooms, the living room, the basement, the office. Every room was a library, except for the kitchen – my grandmother's sanctuary.

Looking back two decades after my grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Meir Bukiet, passed away, I marvel at his love for Torah study. He never left home without a Jewish book in his hand, to be used at every free moment, whether he was waiting for a city bus or a friend.

Even his rebukes to his lively grandson took the form of a learned discourse. I'll never forget how he would say in his Polish Yiddish, "*Dovid, Ich hob geleint oifem veg in a sefer vos Ich hob gefinen...*" (I read in a Jewish book on the way, where I found...). Then would come the law that prohibited whatever it was I had just done, or the piece of wisdom that he tried to encourage me to make better choices.

An amateur sleuth of historical documents and information, I often asked him about his eventful life. But for many years he resisted all my questions. He was living in the present, and reveled in every moment he could study another page of Torah. Then, out of the blue, at the Shabbos table, he said with a

smile, "If I were you, I would not have sold the sefer with the Chofetz Chayim's signature in it..."

For the first time, he described some of his experiences during the war (later he would share many more details). He was a young yeshiva student in Otwock, near Warsaw, when war broke out. Inexplicably, the small resort town, then the home of the previous Rebbe and the Lubavitch yeshiva, was among the first targets for the Luftwaffe on September 1, 1939. My grandfather described the scenes of carnage and bedlam as the civilians reacted to the surprise attack. The yeshivah immediately disbanded, the students scattered, and my grandfather, an only child, returned to his hometown of Chmielnik.

His town was soon occupied by the Germans, who made their intentions toward the Jewish population clear. Meanwhile, the Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, was sending urgent messages to all the yeshivah students, begging them to go to Vilna, which he believed would be a safe haven. Reluctantly, my great-grandmother agreed to allow my grandfather to make the dangerous trip. She bid him farewell and gave him her precious ring, saying, "Use this in a time of dire need."

Vilna turned out to be only the first stop on a long journey, as the group of several dozen Lubavitch students fled the German onslaught. Eventually, they arrived in Shanghai, where they established a yeshiva in exile. There was only one problem: they had no books and no money. It was then that my grandfather decided to pawn his mother's ring. With the money, he purchased books from another exiled Jew in the city. Many of them were rare editions signed by great rabbinical figures.

After the war, the group of Lubavitch students made their way to the United States on a ship organized by the Previous Rebbe, who was now in New York. They were greeted with great joy at Chabad headquarters and went on to become leaders of the Chabad community in America.

While some of his companions became emissaries in other cities, my grandfather settled down in Brooklyn. His love of Torah study required a large library, and he decided to sell some of the rare Jewish books he had purchased in Shanghai to pay for more books.

By the time he passed away in 1998, he had more books than he could count. I was studying in Israel at the time and did not return for the funeral. When I did, I thought more of my grandmother than of the books. I dreaded seeing my kind, gracious *bubbe*

devastated by her husband's loss.

The first visit was as difficult as I had feared. As my grandmother sat sobbing in the kitchen, I walked around the apartment. Now, I realized, I had missed an important opportunity. The shelves were bare. Uncles, aunts, siblings, and cousins had emptied them. There was almost nothing left to take. It hurt, but I understood. He had been their grandfather too.

Recalling the last time I had spent Shabbos there, I made my way to the dining room/living room. In the corner was my grandfather's favorite La-Z-Boy. There he would sit, sawing to and fro, humming a tune, his eyes glued to the book in his hand. There he would learn his daily lessons, and there he would take the tens of phone calls, rabbinical questions that he received.

I looked at the chair's worn-out pink material. I could only imagine how much good had been done from this humble piece of furniture. Next to the chair stood yet another bookshelf, where he kept the seforim he used most often. It was almost full, a testament to the poor state of the books – many were literally in tatters.

There was his prized *Rambam*, which he used for his daily study regimen, and there was his one-volume *Shulchan Aruch* of Rabbi Shneur Zalman. At some point it had fallen apart and been rebound with the cover of a different book (that had also fallen apart).

I took it out and admired it. How many times had he used it to answer difficult questions? How many people had he aided in their struggles as he leafed through the brittle pages?

This was going to be my heirloom, I decided. Its market value was probably nothing, but to me it was precious, a tangible expression of my zaide's love for learning. Today, it sits on a shelf in my office among my relatively new and beautifully bound Jewish books. I do not answer questions in Jewish law as my grandfather did. But I make a point of using it when I need to look something up. I know my grandfather would not want it to go unused.

The volume came in especially handy when I was working on a project of a basic introduction to Judaism for those interested in learning more about their heritage. It seemed appropriate that it should be written using my grandfather's well-worn book. *Judaism in a Nutshell* is dedicated to my dear zaide in tribute to a life devoted to Torah.

Dovid Zaklikowski is a biographer and story teller. His books are available on HasidicArchives.com or Amazon. He can be reached at dovidzak@gmail.com.

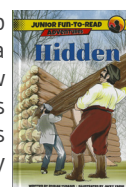
Whatever It Takes

Whatever It Takes is a collection of true stories of courage and hope, as told by Rabbi Shea Hecht. As a community rabbi, Rabbi Hecht has seen it all, from glory to disaster and back again to greater glory. Now, he has put his experiences into book form. *Whatever It Takes* is storytelling at its most poignant and powerful. Published by Mosaica Press.



Hidden

Hidden details an incident in the life of the great Reb Yitzchak Zilber *obm* when he was imprisoned in a Russian work camp for refusing to tell on a fellow Jew. *Hidden* is the first book in Hachai Publishing's new series, Junior Fun-to-Read Adventures. *Hidden* is written by Rivkah Yudasin and illustrated by Jacky Yarhi.



Hakhel – Unite!

The first ever Hakhel gathering occurred 22 years after the Israelites entered the land of Israel (in the 13th century BCE). In the presence of all the Jews gathered in the city of Shiloh, then home to the Tabernacle, Joshua read the prescribed Hakhel reading. The Torah says that Hakhel gathering follows the Shemitah year, and the Shemitah cycle did not begin until after the Jews completely conquered and divided the land - a process that lasted 14 years. (*Chabad.org*)



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

To All Who Are Active in Torah Chinuch
[Torah education]

And to All Who Cherish Torah and Mitzvos
in General,

Greeting and Blessing:

On this day, concluding the post-festival period of Shavuot, the Festival of *Mattan Torah* [the Giving of the Torah], and pursuant to what has been said and emphasized during the festive gatherings on, and before and after, Shavuot, based on the declaration of our Sages of blessed memory that only upon the assurance of the Jewish people that "our children will be our guarantors," (for the keeping of the Torah), did G-d give the Torah to our Jewish people;

I take this opportunity to reiterate an urgent call in a matter which is both a sacred duty and great *Zechus* [privilege] for every Jew, man and woman:

That they do everything within their ability to promote Torah-true education for each and every Jewish boy and girl, and not only during the hours dedicated to Torah study, but also during the rest of the time of the day and night, bearing in mind that the need is even greater in after-school hours.

And while this duty and *Zechus* are in effect all year long, the call of duty is particularly urgent in the days connected with the festival of *Mattan Torah* and those immediately following, which recall the corresponding days in the first year of the Liberation from Egypt, culminating in *Mattan Torah*, when the said guarantee first took effect.

May I also call attention to the special opportunities which present themselves in the forthcoming summer months, in this country and many other countries, where the regular school curriculum is suspended

or curtailed for the summer recess:

This is the time when many teachers and instructors are relieved of their regular duties, and they would surely wish to participate in activities designed to promote and expand the work of Kosher Chinuch.

While thousands of school children, boys and girls, are released from school, thus providing a special opportunity, hence a compelling challenge, that they be helped to join appropriate summer camps, where they could benefit from a uniform atmosphere permeated with true *Yiddishkeit* [Judaism] for a considerable length of time, relatively speaking, which is not always possible during the rest of the year, when some tension is inevitable between the atmosphere at school, at home, and in the street.

This, therefore, is a very special and unique opportunity of inestimable value in terms of lasting influence and education. Hence, every effort in this direction is worthwhile. And surely these efforts will justify the promise, "Try hard and you will succeed."

May G-d grant that each and every one whose vocation is in Chinuch, or is involved in Chinuch, and everyone else who can help in this, whether through personal participation or through activating others, will do so to the utmost of his and her ability, and thus help raise legions upon legions of Jewish boys and girls who can be "recognized by all who see them as G-d blessed children," studying His Torah, "*Toras Emes* [the Torah of truth]" and "*Toras Chaim* [the Torah of life]," and keepers of its *Mitzvos* [commandments].

So that we may soon merit to see the fulfillment of the prophecy: "I will bestow My spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters will prophesy... (and as it written before this:) and you will praise the Name of G-d your G-d, Who has dealt wondrously with you" at the coming of our righteous Moshiach, of whom it is written, "And he will reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the end of the earth."

With esteem and blessing,

MOSHIACH MATTERS

"The L-rd bless you and guard you. The L-rd make His countenance shine upon you and be gracious to you. The L-rd turn his countenance toward you and grant you peace" (*Num. 6:24-26*) This special blessing was uttered by the priests in the Holy Temple and continues

to be invoked by kohanim in synagogues today, but with one significant difference: In the Holy Temple, the priests would actually pronounce G-d's ineffable Name, indicative of the sublime level of holiness that was brought down by their blessing, whereas today we are forbidden to do so. When Moshiach comes kohanim will return to their former practice, at which time the power of the blessing itself will be even greater than during the time of the Holy Temple. (*The Rebbe, Mishpatim 1992*)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Summer is a great time for kids. Without the pressures of school, children have the opportunity to spend their summer vacation in enjoyable and educational pursuits. The summer schedule is particularly suitable for children to grow spiritually, by attending a day or overnight camp with a vibrant, exciting and Torah-true Jewish atmosphere.

Each year, without exception, as the summer approached, the Rebbe emphasized the importance of Jewish children attending Jewish camps. The amount that a child can learn in the summer, unencumbered by the pursuit of reading, writing and arithmetic, goes far beyond what he can accomplish at any other time of year. And, as this knowledge is being imparted in an atmosphere of fun and excitement, in an environment totally saturated with Jewish pride, it remains with a child long after the summer months are over.

It's still not too late to enroll your child or to encourage your grandchildren or neighbor's children to be enrolled in a Jewish camp. And it's certainly not too late to facilitate other children attending a Jewish camp if you do not have camp-age kids. By calling your local Chabad-Lubavitch Center, or visiting chabad.org, you can find out about a summer camp experience for someone you know, the benefit of which will last a lifetime.

By the way, adults, too, should take advantage of the more relaxed atmosphere of summer to revitalize and nourish themselves Jewishly. Try a Jewish retreat or even just a weekly Torah class to enhance your Jewish pride and knowledge.

And may this summer be our last one in exile and our first in the Era of the Redemption.

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.



Published by
Lubavitch Youth Organization
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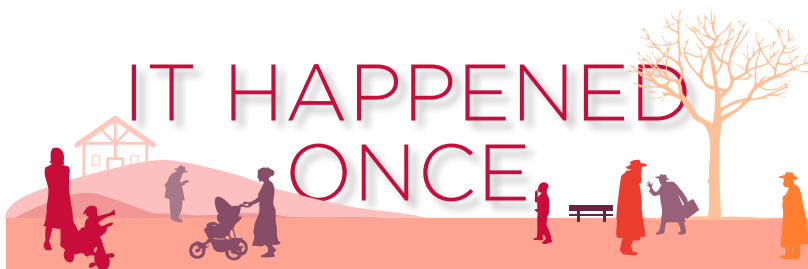
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This story took place in the time before the name of Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov had become known in the world. He was then a “hidden tzadik” (holy man) who traveled through the cities and towns spreading the basic concepts of Chasidism amongst the simple people. He strengthened their faith, inspired them to love their fellow Jews, and stressed the importance of praying with the proper devotion and of saying Psalms.

Once, in the course of his wandering, he came to the city of Brod. As was his custom, he went directly to the market place and began to talk to the simple, common Jews. Soon he was surrounded by an enthralled circle of people, listening eagerly to his tales of great Rabbis, and their ways and customs.

As he was speaking, he noticed a particular Jew, a porter by trade, passing through the marketplace with a heavy load on his shoulders. His appearance was quite miserable. His clothes were torn, he was wearing wooden shoes, his face was covered with sweat. But the Baal Shem Tov saw something that the others there could not see: above the man’s head shone a pillar of pure, bright light.

“Hershel, you should carry your burden in peace,” called out some of the assembled people to him. There were those who added in a mocking tone, “Go in peace, Hershel-goat.” Hershel the porter answered all, with a benevolent expression on his face, “You should be blessed,” and continued on his way.

From the people of the city, the Baal Shem Tov heard that this Hershel was a widower, who had lost his wife some ten years previously. He had two sons who learned in yeshiva. He made a good living, but spent most of his income on the upkeep of four goats who lived together with him. Everyone assumed that he loved goat’s milk. This is how the nickname “Hershel-goat” came about.

Over the next few days the Baal Shem Tov watched Hershel but could not find anything extraordinary. Wanting very much to have revealed to him the man’s secret, the Baal Shem Tov fasted for three consecutive days and nights, during which time he prayed and begged G-d to help him uncover the secret.

On the afternoon of the third day, as he was leaving the synagogue, he met Hershel. “Reb Hershel,” he appealed to him, “I would very much love a glass of warm goat’s milk. I have heard that one may buy some from you.”

“Come with me,” invited Hershel with a radiant face. “I will give you a cup of fresh milk. However, I will not accept money from you, as I too would like to fulfill the *mitzva* (commandment) of hospitality.”

For quite some time the two of them wended their way through the narrow alleys, until they reached the outskirts of the city. When Hershel opened the door of his little hovel, he was greeted by the happy bleating of his goats, who rushed over and began to lick his hands. He took a pan and milked the goats, strained the milk, poured a cup of the warm fresh milk and handed it to his guest the Baal Shem Tov. Hershel then began to tell him his life story.

He told him about his wife, a woman of great kindness, who dedicated herself in particular to the *mitzva* of ministering to the sick. “There was no sick person whom she did not assist, and for whom she would get all possible help. She also attended to poor women who were giving birth.

“After she passed away, ten years ago, she appeared to me in a dream,” he continued. “She told me how wonderful it was in the World of Truth, and how great is the merit of doing a kind deed for a Jew. When her soul ascended on high to the Heavenly Court, it was happy to recognize many people whom she knew. These were all the people whom she had helped and supported during their illnesses. They had all come to bear witness to her goodness.

“After she told me how much appreciated in Heaven is every favor that is done for a fellow Jew, she suggested that I concern myself with charity work.

“You are a simple Jew” she said. “You don’t know how to learn Torah. Busy yourself with charity and good deeds, and especially help the sick, the poor, and women giving birth. But you must do this in a way so that no one will know.”

“I obeyed my wife’s words: I saved every penny and bought four goats. I feed them fine food, so that they will produce nutritious milk. This milk I distribute to the sick and the poor, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, Who heals all flesh, helps and the milk makes the sick people well.

Hershel also told his guest that his wife had revealed to him that the next day he would meet a poor Jew who would request a glass of milk. “Invite this person to your home and tell him about your deeds,” his wife had told him. “Through him you will receive many blessings.”

Now the Baal Shem Tov realized that because of the pure, honest work of Hershel, his goodness of heart, his giving of himself and his love of fellow Jews, he merited the crown of light which accompanied him wherever he went. The Baal Shem Tov brought Hershel into the circle of “hidden tzaddikim” who taught him Torah step by step. But even when he became very learned in Torah and accomplished in his studies, he didn’t stop taking care of the sick and the poor.

Eventually, Hershel passed away unrecognized, at the age of approximately one hundred. But up in Heaven, a glorious welcome was accorded the soul of the holy man who was once known in Brod as “Hershel-goat.”

THOUGHTS

THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion



The L-rd bless thee and keep thee (Num. 6:24)

The Priestly blessing is said in the singular because it is primarily the blessing of unity that the Jews need. (*O’lot Efraim*)

The princes of Israel brought their offerings, the heads of their fathers’ houses... they brought their offerings before the L-rd (Num. 7:2-3)

Twelve times the Torah repeats this phrase, detailing the identical offerings brought by each of the princes of the twelve tribes. Why the repetition? These offerings were the same only externally; in actuality, each prince brought his offering in a different manner, a manner corresponding to the tribe’s spiritual source in Heaven. (*Likutei Torah*)

And the one who offered his offering on the first day (“bayom harishon”) was Nachshon the son of Aminadav, of the tribe of Judah (Num. 7:12)

Each letter in the Hebrew alphabet has a numerical value. The sum of “bayom harishon” is 620, which is the same as “keter,” crown. This alludes to the fact that Judah, the tribe to which Nachshon belonged, was the progenitor of the Jewish monarchy (including Moshiach, a descendant of King David). (*Ohr HaTorah*)

The princes of Israel... brought their offering before the L-rd (Num. 7: 2-3)

Although each of the 12 princes brought exactly the same things, the Torah enumerates their offerings separately. This is because the offerings were only the same externally; on the spiritual level, each prince made his offering in a way that was specific to the Divine Source of his tribe, drawing down Divine illumination to its members. “And even today, when the particulars of these sacrifices are read in the Torah, this nullification [before G-d] is drawn down to each and every tribe.” (*Likutei Torah*)



8:03 Candle Lighting Time

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13 Sivan/June 2
Torah Portion Nasso
Ethics Ch 1
Shabbat ends 9:11 pm

Dedicated for a speedy recovery
Refuah Shleima
for Asher Ben Sheyndla
לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות