

L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

In this week's Torah portion, *Pinchas*, we read about the laws of inheritance of the land of Israel, specifically the story of the daughters of Tzelafchad.

The daughters of Tzelafchad were five women who were very learned in Torah, and they had no brothers. In the laws of inheritance, when there are brothers and sisters, the land goes only to the brothers. This enables the tribe's territory to stay intact.

The question that the daughters of Tzelafchad had was, what if a man only has daughters, who inherits his land? There are two possible answers. Either it goes to the closest male relative, or to the daughters. In Tzelafchad's case, if it goes to the closest male relative, it will get swallowed into his estate, and not be identified as Tzelafchad's land. And that is what his daughters wanted, that a part of the land of Israel should carry their father's name.

Rashi tells us that Moses forgot the law. Not that he didn't yet receive the law from G-d, but rather, that he knew it and forgot it. One of the reasons brought by Rashi for this memory lapse, is that G-d wanted that this law "be written by their hands," meaning, in the daughters of Tzelafchad's merit.

Why would G-d make it that Moses, the teacher of the Jewish people, should forget specifically these laws? It is obvious that it was necessary for him to forget them, and that there is a positive gain and outcome from his lapse of memory in these laws. If not, what was the purpose of telling us these stories. So what is the positive outcome of this event?

Why is so much prominence given to the daughters of Tzelafchad? They are mentioned by name three times in the Torah.

The daughters of Tzelafchad are mentioned three times in the Torah, each time it says their names, Machla, Tirtza, Chagla, Milka and Noah, specifically connected to the laws of inheritance. This is because of their self sacrifice and total investment into these laws. Their father died in one of the first years after the Exodus, so some of them were born yet in Egypt and their case was brought in the fortieth year after the Exodus. They all refrained from getting married until their case would be heard, because once they would be married, their case would not be so strong, because they would be connected to their husband's land. This was a major sacrifice on their part, now they were around forty. They also delved into the subject with all their being, making it theirs, hence they merited to have it "written by their hands," in their honor.

This is a lesson to each of us, that if we put our effort into Torah study and do it with self sacrifice and not for a personal gain, like the daughters of Tzelafchad. Then the Torah becomes ours, and as if it was written in our honor. This is true for any sacrifice that is done for G-d and His Torah, it makes it yours and in your merit.

May the merit of our sacrifices for G-d and His Torah stand up for us, and storm the gates of heaven, asking that Moshiach should come already. The time has come.

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.

Summer Vacation

by Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

Are you planning a trip this summer with the whole family? Or do you remember when you were younger and you went away during the summer? Maybe your family just went for a day-trip into the country. Or maybe you visited relatives in a far-away city?

The trip had many stages, even if it was only for a day. There was the planning stage when the ultimate destination was decided. After all, if you didn't know where you were going you couldn't possibly proceed with the plans.

Next came organizing everything and packing up.

Finally you were on your way. Every once in a while the map (or more recently GPS) was checked. But within a short while little voices started asking, "When will we be there? Are we there yet? How much longer?" Your parents reassured you, "We'll be there soon. Only another few miles (or minutes)."

As you neared the destination the excitement—and impatience—increased. Finally, when you were almost there, everyone started recognizing sights and landmarks from past visits. The directions you were following now were more explicit. There weren't any more highways to stay on for miles at a stretch, but street names and traffic lights. The anticipation was palpable. You could see that you were in a different place. You could feel that you had nearly reached your destination.

When G-d created the world He had its ultimate destination in mind – the Messianic Era when the world would actually become perfect and complete. Little by little our ancestors started organizing things and started packing

the world's suitcases with a knowledge of a higher purpose for the world, a transcendence of mundane day-to-day living, and with the light of Divine morality.

We started our journey, but it's been no vacation; the road has been bumpy. For the directions given us take us on the road less traveled. And, as we have traveled, we have been asking in our tiny, little voices, "When will we be there? Are we there yet? How much longer?"

"We're almost there. We'll be there soon," is the answer. As we near the final destination – the Messianic Era—our excitement and impatience must increase. G-d has shown us sights and landmarks – like, for example, recent disarmament agreements which are a partial fulfillment of the prophecy of beating swords into plowshares—that we can readily recognize and which we will see even more clearly when we reach the Redemption.

And the directions G-d has given us, the map He has drawn up for us, are even more important as we reach our destination. No longer can we speed along the highways stopping only once in a while to spiritually "fill 'er up." We have to follow the directions more carefully now, making sure to turn right or left at the correct places.

The anticipation should be palpable. The air should be electric. And it can be when we open our eyes and see that the world is in a different place from when it started out. We've nearly reached our destination. After traveling for thousands of years the Messianic Era is in sight.

Adapted from a talk by Rabbi Greenberg. Rabbi Greenberg is the founder and director of the Jewish Discovery Center in Williamsville, NY and an internationally renowned Judaic scholar and author.

SLICE OF LIFE

Kotel Vignettes by Gutman Locks



I was walking up the stairs leaving the *Kotel* (Western Wall) area when a teenaged boy came running after me.

“Are you Gutman?” He must have recognized me from the YouTube videos.

I nodded.

“My father started keeping the Torah and *mitzvot* (commandments) after he met you!”

“That’s why you’re in the world,” I told him with a smile.

He laughed.

“Do you put on tefillin in the morning?”

He said that he did.

I explained how the blessing we say when we do a mitzva tells us that doing that mitzva makes us holy, and that he should think about this when he puts them on. I also told him that he has to be happy when he does a mitzva or he didn’t do it right.

He walked away, very happy that he met me, and for sure he was going to tell his father that he met me and what I told him.

I had 30 seconds to change the kid’s life. I hope I did.

I was standing at the Kotel at *Mincha* (noon prayers) yesterday when a young man with a small child in his arms walked quickly over to me.

“Gutman?”

I nodded.

“I came to you for a Shabbos dinner ten years ago. You gave me some great advice. I have been doing it every day since. You said to close my eyes, picture my family one at a time, with light on their faces and smiling, and ask G-d to bless them. Thank you so much. It really helps.”

I asked him where he is living... what he is doing. He told me that he made aliyah six weeks ago, is living in Beit Shemesh, and working at Hadassah hospital as a physical therapist.

“That’s great. You have a family, you’re living in the Holy Land, and you are making a living helping people! Wonderful! Thank G-d your prayers are being answered.”

When someone tells me that something I told them is really helping, it makes me feel good. It’s a blessing to do good and it is a greater blessing to learn that you did do good. Actually, it’s like getting a down payment. We are told that the real reward for helping Jews find their way comes in the World to Come.

Help someone anyway you can. It makes life easier for them... it makes them happy... it makes you happy... it makes G-d happy... and it even gives you a greater share in the Next World, too! All that from just doing a little kindness!

I asked the father if he had already put on

tefillin that day. He answered that he had, but his son whose bar mitzva will be in a month had not. I invited the boy to put them on, but he said that he did not want to.

“That’s okay. You don’t have to put them on until your bar mitzva, but if you want to, you’re allowed to put them on now.”

When he saw that I did not push, but backed off, he came forward. He held out his arm for me to help him. It is a special opportunity to help a young Jew. What he heard from me that day could very well stay with him the rest of his life... but if you try to give too much you can lose it all.

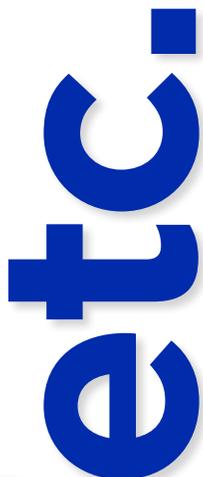
I placed the hand piece on his arm and explained the words he would say in the blessing say, “Who has made us holy with His commandments,” and this was what he should think about as we wrapped the strap on his arm. “When you do a mitzva, you receive holiness.” He smiled.

As I went to place the headpiece on, I explained that there are two ways to do it. One, as many Jews do, is to swing the straps around one side of their head and let them hang on their back until the head piece is in place, and then they bring the straps around, one on each side. Or you can hold the straps apart so they are shaped like a yoke... like the yoke of Torah... and then bring them over your head so each strap will be on its proper side right away.

After he read the *Shema*, I had his father bless the boy, and then I explained how fulfilling a commandment opens a spiritual opportunity, and that he should go stand by the Kotel and pray for his family and our soldiers who are at war. Then we took pictures ... the boy had a wonderful time.

Children are like tender vines... the way you bend them can shape the way they go for the rest of their lives.

Gutman Locks is well-known at the Western Wall for over two decades. He is the author of several books, musical tapes and many educational videos. See more of his writings at www.thereisone.com



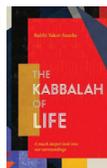
Gate of Trust

Shaar Habitachon (Gate of Trust) from *Chovot Halevavot* (Duties of the Heart) – the classical and timeless work authored by the eleventh-century Spanish scholar Rabbeinu Bachya ibn Pekuda has been newly published by Kehot Publication Society in partnership with Chayenu. This exciting new book features the Hebrew text with a new English translation, classical commentary, a fresh infusion of Chasidic and mystical teachings, and “bottom line” takeaways to help guide the reader.



The Kabbalah of Life

“The Kabbala of Life” is a look at current events as seen through the eyes of Rabbi Yakov Saacks. The unique blend of his Chassidic background and a common-sense approach gives way to bold compositions. One part spiritual, one part constructive, this introspective journey examines common sense, marriage, spirituality, and wisdom.



Today Is...

25 Tammuz

There are two characteristic expressions in Chassidus: (a) A Jew recognizes G-dliness and senses the supra-natural. He needs no proofs for these. (b) A Jew neither wants nor is able to be sundered from G-dliness. The truth is that these two expressions are one and the same: A Jew recognizes G-dliness and senses the higher-than-natural, and that is why he neither wants nor can he be torn away from G-dliness.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Continued from previous issue from a letter to Mr. Mordechai Shoel Ladow dated 22nd of Adar II, 5733 [March 26, 1973]

As Miami is the showcase for American Jewry, so Eretz Yisroel [the Land of Israel] is the showcase for world Jewry, due to the considerable and growing tourism. Add to this the fact that it is the "Holy Land" also for other faiths, and attracts non-Jewish tourists, too, in growing numbers. Eretz Yisroel must therefore serve as a model for all. The project has still greater merit because it is directly connected with the influx of the new immigrants.

In the light of all that has been said above, you can well understand that your letter has greatly relieved my mind, for you have indeed shown yourself big enough to overlook the scanty praise and to give your serious and favorable attention to the tasks at hand. I feel certain that the *Zechus* [merit] of your good deeds already accomplished has stood you in good stead.

I am very gratified to note that the activities in Miami are proceeding at an accelerated pace. No doubt these include the summer camp and day camp which came up in our conversation, as well as making your influence increasingly felt in the networks and news media, after the promising start you made.

As for the third project, namely, the one for Eretz Yisroel, may I say, with all due respect, that I do not agree with your contention that you are not equipped to develop it. I am certain that you are. However, it would in any case have to wait until the Miami program is well advanced, so as not to detract attention from the latter. Actually, I regret to say, there is also a different factor, which makes the present moment not very opportune for the immediate implementation of the Eretz Yisroel project. For, such a project must, of course, have the

utmost cooperation of various departments of the Israeli government. But, unfortunately, for various reasons, the present moment is not very auspicious to embark upon the project, so that it must be postponed for the time being.

Finally, with reference to the conclusion of your letter, on the subject of ritual observance, I need not emphasize to you, a successful businessman, that although knowledge and motivation etc. are very desirable things, the essential thing, after all, is the actual deed. As for the "disappointment" at the lack of greater progress, I would like to cite a basic Chasidic principle, actually deriving from the *Alter Rebbe* [Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism], in his classical work, the *Tanya*. It is to the effect that inasmuch as a Jew must utilize to the full all his capacities towards increasing the good and the holy within himself and the environment, "disappointment" (which usually is a negative factor, being closely linked with discouragement) can also be converted into a positive force, to redouble one's efforts in the right direction. Indeed, it can be made into a springboard for an even greater accomplishment, as in the case of a person who has to make a wide leap, which he can do only by going back, in his feelings of sophistication – not, G-d forbid, in doing *Mitzvos* [commandments], a few steps in order to gain momentum for that extra leap. May G-d grant that your hope for complete observance will be realized even sooner than you expect, and the *Zechus Horabim* (the benefit for many) will help you, since your way of life and conduct will surely be an inspiration to many.

With esteem and with blessings for good tidings,

P.S. I was pleased to receive personal regards from you through Prof. Yirmyahu Branover, who informed me that he gained the distinct impression that the Eretz Yisroel project has become much closer to your heart, not just theoretically, but also from the practical viewpoint. And while, as mentioned above, the time now is not opportune, the situation might change at any moment, though the Miami program must have top priority, as above; and, hopefully, the other project will have its turn at the proper time.

MOSHIACH MATTERS



The manifestation of G-d's Presence and man's sacrificial worship, will reach their utmost level of fulfillment in the Third Holy Temple in the Era

of the Redemption. For this will be "the Sanctuary of G-d, established by Your hands," and "there, we will offer to You our obligatory sacrifices... with love, in accord with the command of Your will." May our study of the different elements of the Holy Temple herald the time when we will rejoice in its construction. And may this take place in the immediate future. (From *Seek Out the Welfare of Jerusalem* published by *Sichos in English*)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

We are currently in the period of mourning for the destruction of the Holy Temples in Jerusalem known as the "Three Weeks." It began this past Sunday on the 17th of Tammuz and continues through the 9th of Av – "Tisha B'Av" (July 27 – August 18, this year).

If, G-d forbid, Moshiach has not come by Tisha B'Av, we will read the book of *Lamentations (Eicha)* on that day. In *Lamentations* it says, "Come and sing in the night." Chasidic interpretation explains this to mean that during the "night" of exile one can come and sing; despite the fact that it is dark.

The beauty and specialness of the Jewish people is that we can find reasons to "sing" in the night. While the whole world is enveloped in total darkness, we find a reason to sing.

What exactly is that reason? We view the darkness of night, the darkness which surrounds us, as if it were a tunnel. At the end of every tunnel, no matter how long, there is a light shining bright. And it is because of the fact that we are surrounded by the darkness of the tunnel that we can see the brightness of the light at the end. We realize, too, the darker the tunnel, the closer we are to the light at the end.

When the redemption and Moshiach will come, these days are going to be filled with the light of joy and happiness and glory. This is what we are waiting for, what we are hoping for. This is the reason we can and must sing and dance in the night. After all, we are already at the end of the tunnel.

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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