

L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

This week we read the Torah portion of *Pinchas*. The *Haftora* is from the book of Jeremiah, and begins with Jeremiah's lineage – that he is from a priestly family. It continues with G-d informing Jeremiah that He chose him as a prophet "Before I formed you in the belly, I knew you..."

Jeremiah responds, "I don't know how to speak; I am a youth."

G-d assures Jeremiah, "Don't be afraid of them, for I am with you to protect you... See I have appointed you today, over nations and over kingdoms, to uproot, to crush... to build and to plant."

G-d then tells Jeremiah of the devastation of Judah and tells him to warn the Jewish people. The *Haftora* ends on a positive note, describing how G-d remembers that we followed Him into the desert, trusting in Him.

The *Haftora* is always connected either to the weekly Torah portion or to the special time of year that we are in. The prophecy of devastation makes sense as we are currently in the Three Weeks of mourning the destruction of the Holy Temple. But what is the significance of Jeremiah's lineage and how he became a prophet?

Jeremiah lived in a time of spiritual darkness. He also personally experienced difficulty as he was taunted due to his pedigree. (His ancestress was Rachav, a gentile who became a righteous convert.) And yet, Jeremiah effected change from his dark situation.

We've had many great prophets and leaders. Some, like Moses, affected the world from a place of light. With so much light and revelation, the Jewish people were awed. But when the revelation ceased it was clear that the influence was not permanent.

Pinchas, like Jeremiah, was also coming from a place of darkness. He was also living in a time of deep spiritual darkness. He was also taunted because of his pedigree. (His mother was Jethro's daughter.) But his actions caused the Jewish people to repent and change themselves. This kind of change is real and everlasting. Therefore his reward was an eternal one: he and all his descendants would be part of the priestly family.

The Three Weeks is a time of mourning, symbolic of our exile. Through the *Haftora*, G-d is telling us how to approach difficult times, and how specifically in this darkness, we can bring true, everlasting change and light to the world.

You may think, "Who am I to make a difference?" To this G-d answers, you are from the Priests, you are holy and worthy.

The next thing is that we were hand-picked by G-d for this task. "Before I formed you in the belly, I knew you..."

Don't say "I am a youth," thinking you don't have the wherewithal to withstand the world's negativity. You can do it, "Don't be afraid... for I am with you."

G-d has spread us all over the world, he has appointed us "over nations and over kingdoms," to have a positive impact on our surroundings. And this is the message of The Three Weeks, that specifically from the darkness, we are able to do the most good.

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

Home Sweet Home

You've been away at camp for the whole summer, or in college out-of-town for a few years. Or maybe you're married with children of your own. Yet, you still reminisce about the home in which you grew up. You remember many of the antics you and your siblings or friends did there. You can point out the exact spot where you laid to rest your pet goldfish, turtle, or bird. You can even detect a faint scent of your family's favorite dinner as you walk through the kitchen.

Even if your family doesn't live in the house anymore, "just for old times' sake" you go back, or think of going back, for a visit. "This is where I used to live when I was your age," you tell your child who's sitting in the back seat of the car.

"Home is where the heart is," so the adage goes. "My heart is in the east, though I am in the west," writes Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi, famous Jewish poet, scholar, and philosopher of the twelfth century.

Why was the rabbi pining for the east? In many parts of the world, due east is Jerusalem the holy city and the site of the first and second Holy Temples.

Go to the "Western Wall" in Jerusalem and you'll see where the Jewish heart really is. Known simply as "The Wall," "*Koysel*," or "*Kotel*" (Ashkenazic and Sefardic pronunciations of the Hebrew word for "wall"), Jews from the entire spectrum of life visit it when they come to Israel.

Even if Israel isn't at the top of your list of vacation plans for right now, when you do get to Israel, you will

eventually go to the Wall. And more likely than not, you'll stand there with tears in your eyes, maybe even tucking a little note into the cracks and crevices of the ancient stones.

You will be standing there together with Jews who pray three times daily for Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Holy Temple. You will be standing with newly arrived immigrants, Israeli soldiers, chasidim, kibbutzniks and visitors from around the world. You might not even know that this wall is the last remnant of the Second Holy Temple, or for that matter, that there was a first Holy Temple, both of which were burnt to the ground on the Ninth of Av. But you will be there. Because your heart and your soul know that this is your home. And a homecoming is always sweet.

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, the Previous Rebbe said, "Though our bodies were sent into exile, our souls never were." The fire of the Jewish soul is eternal. It burns brighter and stronger than any physical fire that destroyed our Holy Temples. The soul is like a torch that leads the Jew, through the seemingly unending darkness, over the highest mountains and into the lowest valleys, through mazes of twisting roads and streets, until it finds its way home.

During the current three week period of mourning for the destruction of the Holy Temples, go home – to your soul. Find the flame and fan it, together with friends and family. The "welcome mat" of the soul are good deeds, sincere prayer, exploring Jewish knowledge. Come in!

SLICE OF LIFE

Positive, Uplifting and Inspiring
by Rische Deitsch



The following is excerpted from an interview by Rische Deitsch with singer Avraham Fried in honor of Fried's 40 years of inspiring and uplifting Jews around the world through his music:

I grew up in a home where music and singing played a central role. My parents lived next door to the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana. From her apartment the Rebbetzin and many a neighbor would often listen and enjoy the songs sung by my father, my seven siblings, and me.

My father, Reb Yaakov Moshe hakohen Friedman, gave us a special gift, a repertoire of songs that he heard from his father. These tunes are sung to this day by his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren all around the world.

My mother, Mrs. Miriam Tzimmel Friedman, would sometimes visit Rebbetzin Chana, and since I was the youngest, she'd take me along. At times, Rebbetzin Chana would ask me to sing. Since I was a shy little five-year-old, I sang for her from behind a curtain.

A few years ago, I found out that Rebbetzin Chana was once speaking with someone outside of her home. During the conversation, she pointed up to the window and said, "There lives a young boy, Avremel, who sings for me.

For sure he'll grow up to be a singer." That's how it all started. To me it's now clear that every moment the Rebbe took to answer and guide me through my singing career is because I brought joy to his mother. It was a great zchus to be her neighbor and sing for her.

My first album was "No Jew Will Be Left Behind," produced by Sheya Mendlowitz. The Rebbe taught us that when Moshiach comes, no Jew will be left behind in exile. Through songs like "The Time Is Now" and "Goodbye Golus," I got to express my feelings based on what the Rebbe was teaching and saying.

The song "Tanya" was also a massive success, with lyrics coming from the *Talmud*. It's a conversation between G-d and the High Priest, Yishmael ben Elisha. G-d asks the High Priest to bless Him, and he does so with a blessing, "May Your mercy overpower Your anger." The lyrics to the song "Aderabah" come from Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk, asking G-d to place in our hearts the ability to see only the good in our friends and not their shortcomings. Both powerful, beautiful songs are Yossi Green's compositions.

I composed the lyrics and melody to "Keep Climbing" to encourage myself and others to keep going and be strong in *emunah* (faith) despite the length of this exile. It would be a shame to give up now, we're almost at the top. I get a lot of positive feedback from people who deal with teenagers. They tell me that more than hours of therapy and speeches, it's this song that lifts them up.

I was getting ready for a concert in Haifa, Israel, some years ago, and the phone rang. A young woman said, "I know you're giving a concert soon, but my husband fell into a coma 12 days ago. He is a big fan, and you're not too far from the hospital. Would you mind coming in?"

A few minutes later, I was in a hospital room with the man, his wife, and their two young children. I sang to him, but he didn't react. After the concert I sent his name to the (Rebbe at the) *Ohel*. On Sunday I called to ask how he was doing, and I heard the woman say, "Yossi, want to talk to Avraham Fried?" The man came on the phone and said, "I know you were here; I heard you. Thank you."

A few months later, I returned to Israel. We had made up to meet at my hotel. I entered the lobby and there was Yossi – looking like a million bucks. He said, "I've been meaning to tell you something. The entire time I was in the coma, I heard nothing. At a certain point, I felt I was in a room filled with much light. Suddenly, I heard you singing the song 'Tanya,' and I felt your song *shlepping* me back into this world."

Thank G-d he is doing well, and he and his wife have been blessed with more children.

As a chassid of the Rebbe, I try to reflect the Rebbe's teachings in all that I do. The Rebbe tells us to live our lives always positive, uplifting and inspiring others. We need to make people feel joyful and good and hopeful.

I turn down songs that are depressing. They need to be positive. I try to be more of an "Isaiah," the prophet of Redemption, than a "Jeremiah," the prophet of destruction.

We need music. Especially in this generation, right before Moshiach when the exile is so long and bitter, music is the best remedy. Singers today have good messages in their songs, and can literally change people's lives.

A young fellow fell on hard times. He had no family or friends to turn to, no job, and his car became his home. It got to a point where he was considering doing the worst. He was sitting in his car and listening to music and my song "No Jew Will Be Left Behind" came on.

Hearing the song made a powerful impact on him and got him thinking. He took a deep breath and decided to change his life.

He began climbing up and out of the abyss. He got a job, an apartment, and went on to get married and have a family. He calls me sometimes to wish me good *Shabbos* or good *Yom Tov*, and very often mentions how the music saved his life.

Today, there are so many colors and styles within Jewish music that anyone can find Jewish music to their taste.

I am humbled and grateful to be able to do this. When I am told I inspired someone, I feel successful. To have a positive impact on others is what I have lived for, for the past 40 years.

Reprinted with permission from the N'Shei Chabad Newsletter. Rische Deitsch is the senior editor of the N'Shei Chabad Newsletter.

New Center

The opening of a new Chabad Center was announced at Highland Park's Evening of Healing and Unity that took place Chabad-Lubavitch of Highland Park-Central Avenue Synagogue. A new Chabad Center will open in **Lake Forest, Illinois**, where the Highland Park July 4 parade gunman was caught. "We know that whenever tragedy hits, it's a call for us to do more, to spread more light, to be a beacon of hope, warmth and light," Rabbi Meir Shimon Moscovitz shared in his announcement of the new Chabad center.

JLI Retreat

This year's National Jewish Retreat will take place in Miami, Florida. The Rohr Jewish Learning Institute will be offering 150 workshops at the highly anticipated retreat from August 9 – 14. A special track for students – Sinai Scholars, runs from August 10 – 14. To find out more visit jretreat.com.

Today Is...

25 Tammuz

There are two characteristic expressions in Chassidus: A Jew recognizes G-dliness and senses the supra-natural. He needs no proofs for these; 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

2nd of Tammuz, 5716 [1956]

I received your letter in which you ask the question "if a soul has come back to earth several times to complete its duty here, when Messiah comes in which form will the soul come back?"

...As for your question, it was already asked a very long time ago by one of our great teachers of the *Talmud*, Rabbi Hizkiah, as mentioned in the holy book "*Zohar*" (Part 1, page 131a). The answer given there by another great teacher of the *Mishnah*, Rabbi Jose, is that the soul will come back to life in the body in which it has accomplished Torah and *Mitzvoth* [commandments] during her lifetime on this earth, and that a body which did not practice Torah and *Mitzvoth* on earth will not come back to life. This answer must be considered in the light of a further explanation by the great Rabbi Isaac Luria, who lived about 400 years ago, and is known as Ari (the "Lion"). (About his life and work you may have read in the "*Talks and Tales*.") The saintly Ari explained that it is almost impossible for a Jew not to fulfill at least some *Mitzvoth*. Therefore, in accordance with the answer in *Zohar*, almost all bodies will come back to life. The question then is in which body will the soul return if it had been in more than one body. The answer, strange as it may seem at first glance, is that it will return in all bodies it had inhabited. To understand how this is possible, let us remember that the souls of mankind started from two people, Adam and Eve. Their souls included all the souls of the future generations, in a way a single seed includes in it future generations of trees, fruits, and seeds. In the same way the souls of parents are not just two souls, but they can split up into soul sparks, each of which is in turn a complete soul. Therefore, when a Jew performs a *Mitzvah*, the body takes part in it and it is no longer "dry wood" that rots away, but it will come back to life with a soul which is a Divine spark, and which was included in the original soul. Thus at the Time of Resurrection (after Messiah will come) all "parts" of a "general" soul will each have a separate body, just as parents will come back to life with all their children.

9th of Elul, 5718 [1958]

...In your letter you ask how can my statement that every addition in Torah and *Mitzvoth* brings additional Divine blessings, be reconciled with the Rabbinic statement that there is no reward for a *Mitzvah* in this world. In this connection let me point out to you the following:

Firstly, that the said Rabbinic statement obviously does not refer to such *Mitzvoth* which are mentioned in the *Mishna* and *Braysa* which we say during the morning blessings, whose fruits are enjoyed in this world.

Secondly, and this would refer specifically to the terms "vessel" and "channel," which I used, in the sense that even though this does not create the reward of the *Mitzvah*, nevertheless the very performance of the *Mitzvah* removes the obstacles that would have otherwise been created through the non-performance of the *Mitzvah*, preventing the flow of G-d's kindness to reach the person. This, therefore, refers to the flow of G-d's benevolence of the kind which is given even to children and to other people who are not duty-bound to observe *Mitzvoth*. In other words, G-d is always ready, willing and able to bestow blessings upon His creatures, whether merited or not, but the sin of commission or omission acts as a barrier. Therefore, the more *Mitzvoth* one performs, the more obstacles and barriers are removed to receive the flow of G-d's benevolence.

With regard to your question as to how to begin the study of Chassidus, surely Rabbi Dubov who lives in Manchester, could help you, and explain to you anything difficult. At any rate, generally speaking, one begins to study Chassidus with the *Tanya*, starting the third part of it, *Iggeres Hateshuvo* (especially pertinent this time of the year), going on to the second part, *Shaar Hayichud Veho-emunah*; going on from there to *Kuntres Umaayon*, etc. After you have done the above, you will be well on your way to continue your studies of Chassidus.

You asked if it is right that a Chassid should decry those who are opposed to the Chassidic movement, etc. Needless to say, I see no benefit in decrying or criticizing others, especially when one can find so much to criticize in one's own self, namely, the "animal soul" and all those things connected with it, from which no one is absolutely immune....

used for "observe" is often used to imply hopeful anticipation of a future happening. Though we do not have the opportunity to observe the laws of sacrifice while in exile, our constant anticipation and hope for the rebuilding of the Temple gives us a portion in the sacrifices which were previously offered there. (*Sfat Emet*)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our Sages have taught that for anyone who does not build the Holy Temple in his lifetime, it is as if he actually destroyed the Temple.

How can we be held liable for something that is not within our ability?

After all, Jewish law, as delineated by Maimonides, specifically states that the Third Holy Temple will not be built until Moshiach is revealed.

Jewish teachings also explain that when we learn the laws of the Holy Temple, its structure, the services and sacrifices practiced there, it is as if we are building it.

Thus, it is customary during the "Three Weeks" of mourning for the destruction of the Temple, to spend time studying those subjects that pertain to it.

According to the Zohar, the Temple will first be built and only afterward will the ingathering of all Jews to Israel take place.

The Midrash Tanchuma, however, proposes the opposite sequence.

First all the Jews will return to the Holy Land, and only afterward, the building of the Holy Temple will be accomplished.

Maimonides rules like the Zohar. He envisions the Redemption in the following manner: Moshiach returns the Jewish people to the path of the Torah, then he rebuilds the Holy Temple; only then does he gather in the exiles. In fact, Maimonides considers the ingathering of the exiles among those acts that confirm the candidate as Moshiach.

The Rebbe offers two possible reconciliations to these two opinions: The first is that Maimonides' legal ruling is only valid if the Redemption comes about in a natural manner: If, however, the Redemption comes about in a miraculous manner, the ingathering may take place first.

A second possibility is that we will experience a foretaste of the ingathering of the exiles before the rebuilding of the Temple. The Temple will then be rebuilt, and afterward we will merit the return of all Jews to the Holy Land.

Whether it will be the first possibility or the second possibility, We Want Moshiach NOW!

Shmuel Rubman

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

In this week's portion we read: "My sacrifice... you shall observe to offer to me in its time." (Num. 28:2) The Hebrew word



IT HAPPENED ONCE

Our Sages tell us that the Holy Temple was destroyed because of baseless hatred amongst Jews. The atonement: love of one Jew for another without any particular reason.

Here are two stories illustrating the cardinal *mitzva* (commandment) of love of our fellow: Once the two great Torah Sages, Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish and Rabbi Abbahu, students of Rabbi Yochanan, were traveling from the yeshiva in Tiberias to the city of Caesarea.

Many students from all over the land of Israel and even from other lands flocked to the great Torah center of Tiberias, to study at the feet of the greatest Torah giants of the time.

Caesarea was an international center populated not only by Jews, but also by the highest echelons of Roman society as well – aristocracy and wealthy merchants.

These Romans built beautiful palaces and lived an ostentatious and raucous lifestyle. They enjoyed theaters, sports, and the cruel spectacle of wild animal fights in which hapless prisoners were torn limb from limb.

Sadly, there were Jews who fell under the influence of the Romans, attending their theaters and joining in their vulgar entertainments, until some of them even deserted the path of Torah.

Rabbi Abbahu had once lived in Caesarea, and the closer he drew to the city, the more he longed to be back in the Academy in the company of the Sages. He remembered the unholy atmosphere of Caesarea with revulsion, and suddenly he wanted to turn back to Tiberias.

“Perhaps we shouldn’t continue on our trip,” he said to Rabbi Shimon. “The city of Caesarea is not the kind of place where we should spend our time. There are so many Jews who have strayed from Torah, it hurts me to see them.”

Suddenly, Rabbi Shimon dismounted from his donkey, and without a word of explanation, he scooped up a handful of sand and placed it in Rabbi Abbahu’s mouth!

Rabbi Abbahu was shocked. What could Rabbi Shimon be thinking to do something like this to him? He couldn’t speak for some time as it was difficult to clean his mouth from the gritty sand. When he finally could speak, he turned to his colleague and asked, “Why did you do that to me?”

Rabbi Shimon replied, “G-d is pained when anyone speaks ill of the Jewish people. The Jews are His beloved children, and just as parents love their children, even when they disobey them, G-d also loves His children even when they sin, and he doesn’t want to hear bad reports about them. If you see that the Jews are sinning, you should rebuke them and help them return to the proper paths.”

Rabbi Abbahu accepted this harsh lesson from Rabbi Shimon with humility. He became one of the greatest defenders of his people, especially before the Roman rulers.

Many times he succeeded in persuading the Roman Emperor to revoke evil decrees which were so common during that difficult period. Under his beneficent influence, even Caesarea developed into a city where Torah could blossom again.

The great Sages of the Talmud lived in an era of prodigious accomplishments in Torah. Life in the great Academies was vibrant with intellectual striving, but of equal importance was the students’ development of exemplary personality traits, such as respect and love for one another.

Once, the senior students of Rabbi Judah the Prince were gathered around him listening intently to his lecture. Rabbi Judah suddenly stopped speaking and gazed around the room, focusing his eyes on each of his students. No one understood what had happened.

“Whoever has eaten garlic, leave the room at once!” he exclaimed. Rabbi Judah had such a strong aversion to the odor of garlic that he was unable to continue teaching.

Rabbi Chiyya Hagadol, one of the most prominent of all the great rabbis present, rose from his place and left the House of Study. The students looked at one another in wonder, for it was well known to Rabbi Chiyya that his teacher disliked the smell of garlic and he would never have shown such disrespect for him.

Fearing that Rabbi Judah would suspect his great student, all the other students present also rose and left the study hall, except for one.

The one who remained was Rabbi Shimon, Rabbi Judah’s son, who saw how very upset the entire incident had left his father.

Rabbi Judah couldn’t bear to think that the learning had stopped for the whole day because of one student.

Rabbi Shimon decided to speak to Rabbi Chiyya the following day. “It was your fault that

my father interrupted the lecture and we missed out on a whole day’s learning!”

Rabbi Chiyya replied to him with this explanation: “You must know that I would never do anything to upset my teacher and master. I certainly would never do something which I know he abhors. However, I was concerned how the guilty person would be able to extricate himself. How embarrassed he would be to leave the House of Study. I knew that if I were to leave, all the others would follow suit, and the guilty party would then be able to leave undetected. In spite of the fact that precious Torah learning would be lost, that was preferable to one of my colleagues being shamed in front of everyone.”

That day Rabbi Shimon learned an important lesson from Rabbi Chiyya – how important the honor of another Jew should be in one’s own eyes.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

Let the L-rd, the G-d of all living souls, appoint a man over the congregation who will go out before them (Num. 27:16)

Rashi explains that Moses was asking G-d to appoint a leader who would be able to understand each person according to that person’s needs. Moses referred to G-d as the “G-d of all living souls.” This was to underscore that the leader should be one who loves all Jews in an equal and fair manner, regardless of their fear of G-d, or position. (*Kedushat Levi*)

Appoint a man whose soul “will go out” in love of every Jew. The most important trait of a Jewish leader is that he should have self-sacrifice for every Jew. (*Rabbi Yitzchak of Varka*)

Conventional thinking holds that as the generations become progressively lower and more degraded, mediocrity in leadership becomes more acceptable. However, the Torah tells us that the opposite is true: the more inferior the generation, the more it needs the guidance of superior leaders. Analogously, the more ill the patient, the more he needs to see a specialist... (*Chidushei HaRim*)

It is a continual burnt offering which was offered at Mt. Sinai (Num. 28:6)

A continual burnt-offering hints to the “hidden love” which every Jew has. This love is continuous; it never ceases. (*Ohr HaTorah*)

My offering, My bread for My sacrifices (Num 28:2)

The “offering” that G-d values over all others is “My bread for My sacrifices” – giving bread and tzedaka to the needy, as it states, “Give the hungry man of your bread.” (*Rabbi Pinchas of Koritz*)



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23 Tammuz/July 22
 Torah Portion *Pinchas*
 Ethics Ch 1
 Blessing of the new month *Menachem Av*
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