



The Talmud illustrates the bounty of the Land of Israel with the tale of various sages who enjoyed the wonderful fruits of the land said to be flowing with milk and honey. Once the scholar Rami ben Yechezkel was visiting Bnei Brak and came upon an orchard of fig trees. It was the height of their season and the trees were heavy with fruit which fell to the ground oozing their delectable syrup. As he watched, a flock of goats which was grazing nearby was attracted by the smell, and began eating the fallen fruits. He noticed that the goats were full to bursting with milk, with dripped from their udders, and Rami ben Yechezkel exclaimed, "See, how this is truly a land which flows with milk and honey! Here are the words of Torah so clearly seen!"

The Talmud further tells of the time Rav Yehuda of Saskin asked his son to go to their attic and bring him some dried figs which were stored in a barrel. The boy went up to the attic, but when he put his hand into the barrel, he felt only a thick, sticky substance. "Father," he called, "I cannot find the figs. It seems there is only something sticky and wet in the barrel."

His father replied, "Put your hand further into the barrel. What you are feeling is the fig honey. The figs are deeper in the barrel." His son did as he was told, and lo and behold, he found huge, soft figs, so rich in honey, that they dripped with thick, sweet syrup.

In one more illustration of the wonder of the fruits of the Land of Israel, Rav Yossi of Tzipori once asked his son to bring him some olives which were kept in a barrel. The son went as his father asked, but he couldn't even get to the container, for the floor was slippery with the shiny olive oil which had spilled onto the floor. The olives of that time were so full of oil that the oil flowed out of the barrel in which the fruits were being stored. The blessings which were so apparent in those days have not been seen since, but in the time of Moshiach, these wonders will be common once again, only in a much greater measure.

Once a great sage was visiting the court of a famous Rebbe. In his honor, a special bottle of wine from the Land of Israel was brought to the table. This wine was used sparingly, and only for great occasions, since it was a rarity to obtain wine from the Holy Land.

Everyone looked forward to a small taste of this unique wine, but when it was served, the sage refused to partake of it, opting to drink instead the simple local wine. Everyone was surprised at his reaction and questioned him about his refusal to partake of the special wine.

The guest was reticent, but when pressed for an answer he replied, "I am no expert on wine; in fact, I know nothing about the relative merit of different types and varieties of wine. I am afraid that if I taste the wine from the Land of Israel I will not be able to sense its true value, and therefore, I will sin against the Holy Land, insult its fruits. That is why I prefer to drink only the simple wine of this land."

When his famous pupil, Rabbi Chaim Vital, arrived in Tzefat to study with the Holy Ari, the Ari took him to the banks of the Kineret, where he filled up a cup and gave him water to drink.

"This water comes from the well of Miriam, the water which sustained the Jews through their travels in the desert. It has special powers and drinking it will enable you to learn Kabala and absorb it."

And it was true that Chaim Vital was given the ability to learn the holy, mystical secrets of the Kabala and master that knowledge.

In his autobiographical work, Shem Hagedolim, the Chida (Rabbi Yosef David

Azulai) writes that during the lifetime of the Ari, Jerusalem had a gentile governor. This man wanted to solve the water problem of the city. He studied the ancient history of the city and discovered that during his war with Sancherib, King Hezekia had stopped up the Gichon spring, which flowed from the Holy Temple and provided water for the entire city. This he had done to prevent the enemy forces from gaining control over the water resources.

The gentile governor called all of his advisors and charged them with finding a way to clear the spring. Finally, they suggested that Chaim Vital be called. He was known to be a saintly rabbi and he would be able to release the waters.

Rabbi Chaim didn't want to obey the governor, who had commanded him on pain of death. And so, through the use of holy names and prayer, he transported himself out of the Land of Israel and far away to Damascus. That night, the Holy Ari appeared to him in a dream. "It is very tragic that you disobeyed the governor, for you had a chance to repair King Hezekia's error. It was wrong of him to close up the spring of Gichon, and you could have remedied his mistake. If you had heeded his words, you would have hastened the Redemption."

Rabbi Chaim was crestfallen. "Should I return to Jerusalem now and do as the governor ordered?" But the Ari replied, "The chance has passed; it is too late for now."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah portion

When you light the lamps, then shall the seven lamps give light toward the body of the candlestick (Num. 8:2)

The seven branches of the menorah are symbolic of the seven branches of secular wisdom; the body of the menorah is symbolic of the G-dly wisdom of Torah. All knowledge of the natural, physical world should be used to "give light toward the body of the candlestick" - enhance our understanding of Torah - thereby enabling secular wisdom to truly illuminate. (*Melech Machshevet*)

And if they blow with but one [trumpet], then shall the princes assemble themselves to you (Num. 10:4)

If genuine Jewish unity is the goal, "then shall the princes assemble themselves" - there must first be true unity among our leaders, who must cease infighting and provide a proper example for others. Only then can they demand unity from the rest of the people. (*Olelot Efraim*)

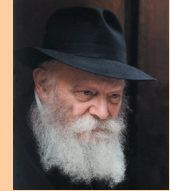
For G-d has spoken good upon Israel (Num. 10:29)

The words "spoken good" occur only twice in our Scriptures, here and in Megilat Esther, where we find the phrase "spoken good for the king." According to our commentators this is an allusion to G-d: When a person speaks well of his fellow Jew, it is considered as if he spoke well of the Master of the world. (*Igra D'Kala*)

8:05 PM Candle Lighting Time
NY Metro Area
20 Sivan // June 5
Torah Portion Behaalotcha
Ethics: Ch 2
Shabbat ends **9:14 PM**



L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

In this week's Torah portion, Behaalotcha, we read about the Menorah. First we read about how Aaron the Kohen (priest) was to light the Menorah. "When you kindle (literally "raise") the lamps, the seven lights should shine towards the center branch of the Menorah." Then the Torah explains that the Menorah needed to be hammered out of one solid piece of gold.

The Torah previously told us how the Menorah was to be made, why the repetition here? This section of the Torah seems intended to teach us about lighting the Menorah, so how does its construction fit in?

Though the Menorah was complicated to make, the artisan could not weld it together from separate pieces, rather it had to be hammered from one piece of gold. Why? Because the Menorah symbolized the Jewish people. The seven branches symbolized seven different spiritual pathways of our souls. It had to be hammered from one piece because although we have different pathways, our souls are one at their source.

When the Kohen lit the lamps of the Menorah, he was igniting the souls of the Jewish people. The Torah uses the word "raise" instead of "kindle" to tell the Kohen that he is to kindle it until the flame rises on its own.

The problem is that while the Menorah is made of one piece, the different branches give the opposite impression. It seems divided which is the opposite of its purpose.

The Kohen's job was to complete the Menorah by setting the wicks so that the flames faced the center branch, which tied the whole thing together. Now the Menorah, once again, gave the impression of unity and oneness. So, the kindling of the Menorah completed its construction.

G-d tells us that we will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation to Him. Each of us has the ability to ignite the souls of the Jewish people. Here we are taught the right way to do it.

First, you must know that we are essentially one. Then, you have to recognize that every Jew has a unique pathway, and you're not to force him down your path. Your job is to ignite the other's soul with light and love until the soul is burning bright on its own. Last but not least, it should be done in a way of unity, so that he feels he is one with his people and that his people are one.

Each of us needs uplifting, needs our souls to be ignited. This dark exile has gone on long enough. We need to be Kohanim for each other and lift each other up.

I have found that there is nothing more important than lifting another's spirit. Even from my bed, using only my eyes, my heart and my smile, I try my best to lift people's spirits. Every person has good and positive qualities; if you pay attention, you will see them. When you point out those qualities, you bring out who they are, and their spirit is lifted. Make a positive difference in a person's life and you will change the world.

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.

Path of Least Resistance?

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

This week's Parshah tells the story of a group of men who were unable to bring the Passover offering on its appointed time, and approached Moses: "Why should we lose out?" It so happened that these individuals had been occupied with a good deed—according to some it was nothing less than carrying the remains of Joseph from Egypt to the Holy Land—and because of their contact with the dead were "ritually impure" and thus unfit to bring the offering.

Moses consulted G-d and was told that, in fact, the men were quite right. Henceforth, those who were ritually impure or far away at the time the Passover offering was brought on the 14th of Nissan would be given a second chance exactly one month later on the 14th of Iyar to make good their lost opportunity.

I'd like to share with you an important message about this story of Pesach Sheini, the second chance, that I once heard from the former head of the Johannesburg Kollel, the late Rabbi Mordechai Shakovitzky, may he rest in peace.

He said that what those men did was actually quite inspiring. They didn't really have to come and plead with Moses for a second chance. After all, they had the perfect alibi. They could have simply said, "Sorry, we were busy with another mitzvah."

They had no reason to feel guilty. They couldn't be faulted. And yet, it did bother them. They felt left out and genuinely desired to be together with their brethren in the observance of another mitzvah, the Passover offering. People who had every opportunity to be free of obligation and willfully chose to seek obligation are indeed deserving to be singled out in the Torah for their sincerity and devotion.

We're very good at making excuses. Too many of us take the path of least resistance. Parents arranging a Bar Mitzvah for their son sometimes look for the easy way out. "Can we have it at Minchah, Rabbi? That will be less demanding on our son. He's very active in the school sports program and won't have that much time to learn." Brides and grooms don't always appreciate the beautiful way of life Judaism can offer our most intimate relationship. "Do we have to attend the classes, Rabbi? Is the Mikvah compulsory?"

"The difference between a success and a failure is that a failure makes excuses and a success makes a plan."

Don't opt for the easy way out. Let us learn from the men in the wilderness who could have had every excuse in the book and yet happily chose to look for a new mitzvah and to share in the good deed of their community.

SLICE OF LIFE

Conversations at the Western Wall

By Reb Gutman Locks



Rabbi Gutman Locks helping a visitor put on Tefillin at the Western Wall

He's visiting from South Africa. After reading the Shema in English, I explained how fulfilling a mitzvah opens the Door to Heaven, and that he should go stand by the Kotel and talk to Hashem for a minute or two.

When he came back, he kept saying, "Thank You," over and over again. I asked him why he was so thankful. He looked up and said, "For the place... for the experience... for the feeling"

When we begin to move away from our entirely physical and mental experience, and begin to think of the spiritual reality, we feel uplifted. And for one who hasn't had that experience before it is a wondrous experience.

It was not just this place that helped him to be able to look up, although this place certainly does that. He had that elevated feeling because he sincerely directed

his heart to Heaven. Whenever you do a mitzvah, before you move away, talk to Hashem.

Eleanor asked: My mother is not a practicing Jew however her family carries Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry, quite closely too (grandparent level to myself). As this is on my mother's side am I automatically a Jew or as she is not practicing and has never practiced has that broken the tie?

My Reply: If your mother's mother was a Jew, then your mother is a Jew. If your mother is a Jew, then you are a Jew no matter what you do, or do not do. Learn what it means to be a Jew. Learn the history of the Jews, and learn the future of the Jews. Marry a Jew, raise a Jewish family, fulfill your purpose in having been born a Jew. Be well.

There is a basic Torah teaching, middah k'neged middah. It means, "What goes around comes around." It is learned from Hillel when he saw a skull floating on top of the water. He said (to it): "Since you drowned [others, others] drowned you. And in the end, those that drowned you will be drowned."

Not only do negative deeds bring about more negative deeds, but certainly good deeds bring about more good deeds. This is an added reason for doing something good. Not only did you please Hashem when you did that first good deed, but doing it will bring you the opportunity to do another good deed.

Do something good today and see if you can recognize what further good opportunity it brought to you... and that will bring you another good

opportunity....

He is from Russia, but has lived in Israel quite a while and speaks fluent Hebrew. After reading the Shema I told them to pray for their heart's desires.

He started praying and he cried right away. When they finished, I asked him why he was crying. He said that his father was not feeling well. I explained that Hashem hears all of our prayers, but when we listen to Him by fulfilling a commandment, He is more likely to answer us favorably.

I told him whenever he wanted to send his father a blessing he should put a coin in a charity box, or do some other mitzvah, and then pray for his father.

Whenever we do a mitzvah, it creates a "time of favor," a time when, as if to say, Hashem listens to our prayers with both ears.

When saying the Shema, the custom is to cover our eyes with our right hand. The Shema says, "Hear O'Israel, the L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is One". Perhaps the reason we cover our eyes is not to be seeing any object when we are referring to Hashem.

When holding the fingers, the fingers are shaped into three letters. The three middle fingers form a shin, the thumb forms a dalet and the little finger forms a yud. This spells one of Hashem's holy names.

Rabbi Gutman Locks is a prominent teacher and author best known for his decades of outreach at the Western Wall (Kotel) in Jerusalem

Ethics: Chapter 2

He would also say: It is not incumbent upon you to finish the task, but neither are you free to absolve yourself from it. If you have learned much Torah, you will be greatly rewarded, and your employer is trustworthy to pay you the reward of your labors. And know, that the reward of the righteous is in the World to Come.

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

5th of Nisan, 5719 [1959]

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you on having such a fine son as Y. A., and although I have not met him personally, I have been receiving good reports about him, and I also gather as much from the letter he wrote me recently. I am very gratified that your son is making such fine progress in his studies, and I hope that you and your wife are giving him every encouragement in this direction. For, in the presence of confusion and conflict, which is making so many young people unhappy, unfortunately, it is a vital necessity to provide children with the solid and unbreakable foundation of Torah and mitzvot, to guide them happily and cheerfully through life.

I hope that you and your wife conduct your home in accordance with the Torah, which is so-called "Torat Chaim," the Law of Life, meaning that it is the guide to a happy life on this earth. But no matter how good things are, there is always room for improvement, and may G-d grant also to send you increased blessings, to you and all your family.

Wishing you all a kosher and happy Pesach, With blessing,

18th of Sivan, 5719 [1959]

I received your letter, in which you write about your anxiety in regard to the question of parnasa [livelihood]. Needless to say, I am much surprised at you, that you should allow yourself to be so affected by this. For you surely know how often our Sages have impressed on us the importance of trust and confidence in G-d, in order that we realize that all difficulties encountered in life are only trials and tests of a passing nature.

To be sure, the question of parnasa is one of the most difficult tests -- nevertheless, G-d does not subject one to a greater test than he can withstand, as our Rabbis expressed it, "According to the camel, so is its load."

The very trust in G-d is a vessel and channel to receive G-d's blessings, apart from the fact that such confidence is good for one's health, disposition, and therefore is also a natural means to the desired end. All the more so, since, as you write, you have noticed an improvement in recent weeks.

This should serve as an encouraging sign and greatly strengthen your trust in G-d. No doubt you also remember the commentary of my father-in-law of saintly memory in regard to the saying of our Sages that "Life is like a turning wheel," at which my father-in-law remarked that "When a point on the wheel reaches the lowest degree, it is bound to turn upwards again."

As for your request for advice, in my opinion you ought to set a period of time for the study of pnimut [inner teachings] of the Torah, namely, Chasidut, concerning which it is written in the Zohar (part 3, page 124b): "In the area of Pnimit HaTorah there is no place for negative things and evil," and as further explained in Igeret HaKodesh, chapter 26.

In addition, I suggest that you should set aside a couple of pennies for tzedaka [charity] every weekday morning before prayer, and also before Mincha [the afternoon service]. Also to recite at least one kapitel Tehilim [chapter of Psalms] every day after the morning prayers, including Shabbat and Yom Tov.

All the above should be bli neder, and at least until Rosh Hashanah. It would also be very good for you to know by heart several perakim Mishnayot [chapters of Mishna], and at least one perek Tanya [chapter of Tanya].

I am confident that the above, together with an increased measure of bitachon [trust], will soon bring an improvement in your parnasa.

In accordance with the teaching of our Sages (Bava Batra 15, 2) that money from a good and saintly source brings G-d's blessings, you will find enclosed a check from one of the treasuries for my father-in-law of saintly memory, to deposit to your business account, and may G-d grant that the prediction of our Sages will be realized in your case also.

Hoping to hear good news from you and with blessing,

P.S. Enclosed you will find a copy of a message which I trust you will find useful.

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In the present, the Torah is garbed in narratives - the story of Laban [Jacob's

father-in-law], the story of Bilam [the non-Jewish prophet], and the like. In the time to come, however, it will become apparent how these stories in fact speak of G-d, of the building of the supernal world.

(Keter Shem Tov)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

In Memory of Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman, Director of the Lubavitch Youth Organization and Founder of the L'Chaim Publication.

From the Archives

"Do not separate yourself from the community," the great Sage Hillel counsels us in Chapter 2 of Ethics of the Fathers. The Jewish concept of community (tzibur) is unique for when a minyan of Jews (ten) comes together, a new entity is formed that did not previously exist: a tzibur.

A tzibur is more than the sum of its parts. The spiritual power of a Jewish community is infinitely greater than our power as individuals - which is why we assemble in groups to pray, learn Torah and observe other mitzvot. The measure of sanctity brought down into the world by a community engaged in a holy pursuit is much greater than that which even many individual Jews can effect.

Take a look in our siddur (prayer book) and you will find that most of our service of G-d is communal. Reciting prayers and benedictions in the plural binds the individual Jew to the Jewish people as a whole, and gives our acts of devotion an added "punch."

In truth, a Jew needs to identify himself with the larger Jewish community in order to be complete. This implies certain responsibilities, such as supporting and participating in Jewish communal efforts.

Furthermore, the actions of a single Jew have a ripple effect throughout the community. Whenever a Jew publicly increases his observance of Torah and mitzvot, it imbues others with the strength and resolve to follow his example.

It states in Proverbs, "In the multitude of people is the King's glory." May we all come together in true Jewish unity and merit G-d's ultimate blessing - the revelation of Moshiach and the Messianic era.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה י מושקא

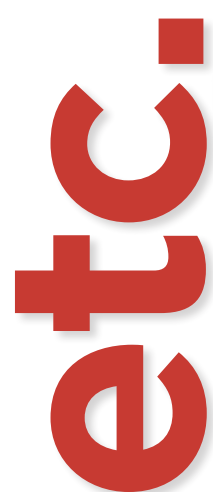
The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.



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Princeton Academics Are Discovering the Depth of Chassidus

Every summer, students at America's top universities compete for internships and exclusive fellowships at academic institutions and corporations. Joining these opportunities this summer is the 'Princeton Institute for Hasidic Thought's' fellowship program. It's ten spots have already been taken by scholars from Stanford, Harvard, and Princeton.

The Institute's roots go back to 2022, when Eli Scharlatt, a political philosophy graduate student at Princeton, met Rabbi Bentzi Brook at a Rosh Hashanah dinner at the Scharf Family Chabad House at Princeton.

The pair began a weekly study session, in which Scharlatt and Brook pored over Chasidic texts. The class eventually led to the establishment of a much larger program which has attracted many students to the study of Chassidut.