

# L'Chaim



It was Friday afternoon and Reb Yossele was on his way home after a long day's work. He was a peddler who made his living selling new pots and repairing old ones throughout the little villages of White Russia.

Some days business was good, especially before the holidays, when the housewives had to prepare special foods and found they were missing a necessary pot or pan. Other times he had barely enough to live on. Today had been a good day, but Shabbat was approaching and he was anxious to get home.

The sun shone brilliantly and the wind shuffled the leaves just enough to feel pleasant against the skin. Suddenly, the wagon stopped and tilted to one side.

Yossele couldn't believe it, but a glimpse confirmed his worst suspicion: the axle had broken. With the tools he kept in his wagon he set about fixing it, but the sun had risen high by the time the repair was completed.

Reb Yossele was nervous. He had unexpectedly lost a lot of time, and his village was still quite a distance. What could he do but continue on and hope for the best?

The sun had set when Reb Yossele slunk into the back road of the little village. All the Jewish men were in the shul praying the evening service, but Reb Yossele didn't go; he was too ashamed and horrified at what he had done. For Yossele had never violated Shabbat before in his life.

His shame and guilt plagued him all through Shabbat, and when the first few stars lit the evening sky he made his way to the home of his rabbi in the hopes of receiving advice on how to purify his soul of the transgression. He reluctantly and with great difficulty told the whole story to the tzadik.

"Indeed, this is a difficult thing," the rabbi said. Your atonement must fit the seriousness of the transgression. You must afflict your body by lying in the snow and immersing in the frozen river. This will cleanse your soul and bring you to complete repentance."

Reb Yossele listened with wide eyes to this prescription for teshuva. He sighed and a tremor ran through him. He thanked the tzadik for his help; he was willing to do anything to erase this miserable blot from his soul.

One early frigid morning, after an attempt at immersing in the river, he sat in his cottage despondently wondering what he should do. How he longed to do the teshuva that would cleanse his soul from the transgression which overcame him accidentally, and yet was devastating him. Reb Yossele roused himself and walked to shul for the morning prayers. This morning the room buzzed with news of the impending visit to a neighboring town of the famous tzadik, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov. Reb Yossele suddenly felt less tired. He even smiled. The Baal Shem Tov would surely help.

Two days later, Yossele set off to visit the Besht. He related the entire episode of the Shabbat desecration and the penance prescribed by his rebbe. The Baal Shem Tov listened and then said, "Buy candles and set them in the study hall this Friday."

Yossele could hardly believe his ears. Could it be so simple? But, the Besht was unquestionably a great tzadik, and Reb Yossele trusted his words completely. He went straight to the store and purchased the candles.

That Friday Reb Yossele joyfully brought the candles to the study hall, set them in the candlestick holders and lit them.

But suddenly, to his shock and horror, a large dog ran into the room, grabbed the candles in his terrifying jaws and ground them into crumbs. Reb Yossele's eyes brimmed with tears. G-d did not want his teshuva!

Reb Yossele sadly returned to the Besht and told him about the dog. "It seems that your rabbi isn't pleased with my advice, but it will be all right. Go and buy more candles and place them in the study hall just as before. You have my promise that this time it will be just fine. And when you return home, please tell your rebbe that I would like him to be my guest next Shabbat."

Reb Yossele relayed the message to his rabbi who was very happy to receive an invitation from the Baal Shem Tov.

On Friday morning the rabbi harnessed his horses and set out for the town where the Besht was staying, a short distance away. But things didn't go right. He made a right turn at the

junction, but it brought him down the wrong road. Then he turned back, but got lost in a thicket.

Each wrong turn led to another, and he became hopelessly lost. As the sun began to set, he had no choice but to walk toward his destination. With each step he berated himself. How could he have been so careless? How did he lose his way?

When the rabbi arrived at the door of the Baal Shem Tov his host was standing with kiddush cup in hand, waiting to recite kiddush over the wine.

"Now you know exactly how Reb Yossele felt when he desecrated the Shabbat. Before this evening you had never transgressed, and therefore, you couldn't understand the pain that a person feels when he sins. You thought that penance must be painful and difficult, but really, all that a person needs to atone is a truly broken heart."

Two joyous Shabbat meals occurred simultaneously – one in the home of a sinless Reb Yossele, and the other at the table of the Baal Shem Tov.

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

**Judges and officers shall you place at all your gates (Deut. 16:18)**  
It is explained in our holy books that these "gates" refer to the entrances to the "small city" (the human being in microcosm): the eyes, ears, nostrils and mouth. When one places "judges and officers" at these "portals," i.e., when one utilizes them properly, the body is thereby transformed into a "G-dly city." This is especially appropriate to consider during the month of Elul (when this Torah portion is read), for it is a time when we take a full accounting of everything that has transpired in the "small city" – thought, speech and deed – during the previous year. (*The Rebbe*)

**You shall be perfect with the L-rd your G-d (Deut. 18:13)**  
Just as it is important to safeguard one's physical health, a Jew must take steps to ensure that his soul is whole and that all his spiritual "limbs" are healthy. For just as there are 613 components in the human body -- 248 limbs and 365 sinews -- so too are there 613 parts of the Jewish soul whose state of perfection is dependent on observing the 613 commandments of the Torah. (*Likrat Shabbat*)

**You shall appoint a king over yourself (Deut. 17:15)**  
The inner intent of this commandment is to instill in the Jewish people a sense of nullification before G-d and acceptance of the yoke of heaven. For a Jewish king is completely nullified before G-d; submitting to his sovereignty contains an element of nullification before G-d as well. (*Derech Mitzvotecha*)



**7:38 Candle Lighting Time**  
NY Metro Area  
**5 Elul/Aug. 13**  
Torah Portion *Shoftim*  
Ethics Ch 6  
Shabbat ends 8:39 PM



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

This week's Torah portion, *Shoftim*, begins with Moses' instruction to the Jewish people to appoint judges and law enforcement officers in every city. In this context, Moses enjoins the people with the famous words, "Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may live and possess the land the L-rd, your G-d, is giving you."

The portion contains many mitzvot (commandments), among them the laws governing the appointment and behavior of a king.

One of the laws a king must follow is that he have two copies of the Torah scroll made for him. One of the scrolls is to be placed in his treasury, and the other should accompany him constantly. The reason for the scroll accompanying him is "and he shall read it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear the L-rd his G-d, to keep all the words of this Torah..."

Isn't one Torah enough, why did a king need two? What point is there in having one Torah kept in his treasury?

To be a king means to wield great power. Whereas every Jew is obligated to write a Torah, a king must write two. This act is an extra measure and different from other laws pertaining to kings, as it doesn't make sense. The king goes through this experience merely for its humbling effect. This Torah is put in his treasury or lit. *beit gnazav*, his hidden place, a place the king goes to when important decisions need to be made. Going to war, taxes, major projects, etc. Seeing his Torah there (and possibly the Torahs of the kings before him) is a strong reminder, that while the great power to make these decisions are in his hands, he should be humbled and bend to G-d's will when making them.

We are all consider kings and queens, as G-d empowers us to make decisions that effect our "kinG-doms" big or small. Yourself, your family, your wealth, your treatment of others, etc. You May be learning from the outside Torah, yet you must write it in the deepest recesses of your being. So that when making important decisions you will bend to G-d's will.

Royalty fails in arrogance and succeeds in humility. A Jew is royalty, in dress, in speech, in thoughts and action.

Now in month of Elul, the King of kings, is open to all of us. Get close to G-d now, go out to greet Him. He, in turn, will grant you a happy and sweet New Year.

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.

## When Did That Happen

Standing near your front door you overhear someone exclaiming in surprise, "These trees blossomed overnight. I'm sure the flowers weren't here yesterday."

You wonder to yourself, "Hmm, were the flowers there yesterday? They couldn't have appeared overnight. Maybe I just didn't notice them!"

The next time, it's you wondering how that house on the corner lot that's been empty for years suddenly appeared. It seems to have materialized from nowhere. Why, you pass this way everyday and never noticed it before.

As you go to put gas in your car, you notice the price. "When did coffee get so expensive," you gasp. "Was it the hacking of the pipeline? Danny? Elsa? Felecia? Or maybe you just haven't driven so much lately that you even bothered looking at the prices getting higher?"

Night descends slowly, though suddenly you notice that it is no longer light outside. Light creeps through your window, day dawns. But didn't darkness enveloped the world just moments before?

This phenomenon is common to many of life's experiences; though taking place over hours, weeks, months or even over the course of years, they seem to suddenly be manifest in their completeness before our very eyes.

The visual and verbal image many have for the Messianic Era is the "dawning" of a new age, a better world, a perfect world. Not surprisingly, sunrises seem an appropriate illustration of this concept.

Many Jewish sources discuss how the Messianic Era will materialize:

Moshiach will come riding on a donkey or on clouds of glory; G-d promises that the Redemption of the Jewish people and the entire world will come "in its time" but that He will "hasten it."; The Talmud tells us that if we see certain behavior and attitudes pervading society (all of which are prevalent today) we should "listen for the footsteps of Moshiach." The Rebbe declared that the time of the Redemption has arrived, if we open our eyes we can see that the table is literally set for the Messianic banquet, all we need to do is greet Moshiach. Yet, we have yet to step over the threshold and into the actual Redemption.

There seem to be contradictions between the sources, even within a particular source, because the movement toward the Redemption is not necessarily perceived. But it's happening.

Since the creation of the world nearly 6,000 years ago, when the spirit of G-d hovered over the waters (and as the commentaries explain, the "spirit" is that of Moshiach) we have been moving toward Moshiach and the Redemption.

The time for the Redemption, as the Rebbe stated, has arrived. And the Rebbe sees the dawning (not just the day but the actual process of dawning) of the Redemption with a clarity of perception and vision that most of us lack. What we can and must do is to adjust ourselves now to this new era. We can do this by incorporating into our lives at this very moment how we will naturally be living very soon: performing additional acts of goodness and kindness; studying more Torah; experiencing Jewish living more fully; trying to see G-d's hand everywhere.

# SLICE OF LIFE

## Experience it Yourself



Students at Machon L'Yahadus

Excerpted from students' reflections on their studies at Machon L'Yahadus Women's Yeshiva by Rochel Basya Prinsloo

This past year was my first year in Machon L'Yahadus. I didn't grow up in a Jewish environment. I came into it late, so I was missing a lot of fundamental knowledge about basic Jewish life. I also wanted to get a deeper understanding of what I did know, and strengthen my connection with G-d.

My first day of school was amazing. I was very impressed with how nice and friendly and warm all the teachers were, and how helpful the second year students were, showing us new students the ropes. I was also really happy with the classes. I really appreciated that there was a good mix of very practical learning, such as Jewish and Jewish Home, coupled with more spiritual learning, like the Thirteen Principles of Faith and Pirkei Avot.

One of the most amazing programs in the school is the opportunity to learn one on one with teachers and meet with mentors. I learned a lot through these programs. Another favorite

of mine was optional chavrusa after school. I had three amazing learning partners the whole year, and I'm hoping to have more next year when I come back.

I learned so much with my chavrusas, and even though half the time we would talk and not learn, I felt like we spoke about meaningful things and built quality friendships.

In addition to learning in the classroom, there was so much more learning going on outside of class as well. Going to host families in Crown Heights for Shabbat was a learning opportunity because we were able to experience how a Shabbat meal is conducted, how people do things differently on Shabbat including laws we discussed in our Jewish law classes.

Eating out on Shabbat with families and in the dorm were always the highlight of my week. I enjoyed meals we ate in the dorm as well, because we were able to bond and spend time together with each other, and I enjoyed going out because it gave us the opportunity to meet some of the community in Crown Heights, and become part of the community.

The Shabbaton get-aways and trips during the intermediate days of the holidays were also very memorable. They were really fun and it became a great opportunity for us to work together and appreciate one another. Most of all, it was the girls who made the experience. The ahavat Yisrael (love of one another) in this school is beyond limits. Everyone is here for each other, and no one is left out.

One of the most amazing things I encountered here is when we would run into alumni, now married with kids and living a proud Jewish life. Just because we all learned at this school gave us a special connection. Seeing how successful the alumni are in their lives, running Jewish homes, gave me so much encouragement that I too, with G-d's help, will be able to reach that point in my life some day.

The past year at Machon L'Yahadus has really set a solid foundation for the rest of my life. It's something I will always build off of and refer back to at all walks of life. I'm very thankful that I had the privilege to come here and learn under such knowledgeable and special

teachers, be a part of the Rebbe's school, and to have made friends with all the girls. I want to thank everyone for contributing to such a successful year of growth and learning.

I would like to give a big thank you to Rabbi Shloma Majeski – dean, Mrs. Shterna Rodal – dorm mother, and all of the teachers and chavrusas for dedicating so much time to our benefit this past year.

by Maya Hernandez

I would like to share a little bit about my experience as a second year student at Machon L'Yahadus. I'll start by saying that words do not do justice to what I experienced; you have to experience it yourself to really understand.

The classes are amazing, very deep, practical and personalized. The rabbis and teachers are incredible, there is no question about it. I came here knowing just a few letters of the *Alef Bet* and now I can read, write, understand can even read and translating Rashi's commentary.

Although when I arrived two years ago I already had some Jewish knowledge, through my journey of learning I received the title within my family of "La Rabina" or "rebbezin" in Spanish.

In Machon, I have experienced true joy. I've never seen something so genuine and precious than everyone with their own stories and journeys from all over the world, signing and dancing in unity when hearing good news.

Those little moments are the ones that make the whole experience so unique, special, and able to teach life changing lessons.

Rabbi Majeski shared in class that once the famed Arizal said: It would take him up to 60 to 70 years to say everything he saw in a dream. As well it would take pages and pages to share all of the lessons and precious moments I have experienced in Machon L'Yahadus over these past two years.

I don't have enough words to thank you Machon, my school, the place that gave me the tools to become a better Jew in every way.

*Machon L'Yahadus is for women at all points on their Jewish journey with a genuine desire to study and grow. From basic Hebrew to Torah's deepest teachings. For more info visit [womensyeshiva.org](http://womensyeshiva.org) or email [womensyeshiva@gmail.com](mailto:womensyeshiva@gmail.com)*

# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Erev Shabbos Kodesh Mevorchim Chodesh Elul, 5740 (1980)

I was pleased to be informed about the forthcoming Annual Dinner, celebrating the first decade of Bais Chana. May G-d grant that the event should be crowned with much hatzlocho [success] in every respect.

There is a special relevance in the fact that this event is taking place in the month of Elul, the last month of the outgoing year, which serves as a preparation for the New - and better - Year.

The significance of the month of Elul is alluded to in its very name, which as our Sages point out, is an acrostic of Elul, Ani L'dodi v'dodi Li - "I turn to my Beloved, and my Beloved turns to me: (Song of Songs 6:3). It is the time of the year when Jews turn to G-d ("my Beloved") with a resurgence of love, and take the initiative to strengthen the bond with our Heavenly Father, through special efforts in Torah, prayer, and acts of loving kindness - the Three Pillars on which the world at large, and the small world of the individual, rest.

It is also the time when "my Beloved turns to me" and promptly reciprocates and requites this love, and graciously bestows His blessings on all of us, as we are about to enter the New Year on a new dimension of mutual attachment. And since G-d's love knows no bounds, His blessings are boundless in all our needs; both spiritual and material.

In light of the above, I am confident that all friends of Bais Chana will - in the spirit of Elul - make a special effort on behalf of this most worthy educational institution, where Jewish daughters are educated and inspired to be worthy of our Jewish Mothers - Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah, the Founders of the House of Israel, and will proudly fulfill their preeminent role of Akeres HaBayis - the Foundation of the Jewish home: a home permeated with love of G-d and filled to overflowing with Torah, prayer, and mitzvot [commandments], to illuminate also its environs.

May G-d grant that the spirit of Elul will truly be reflected in your own generosity as well as in active personal involvement, to enlarge the

circle of friends and supporters of Bais Chana as it enters the next decade of dedicated service to the community and to our people as a whole.

With prayerful wishes for hatzlocho in all above, and wishing each and every one of you, and yours, a kesiva vacha-simo tova [may you be written and sealed for good] for a good and sweet year,

12 Elul, 5724 (1964)

To the Campers of Camp Gan Israel

G-d bless you all-

I have, of course, followed with particular interest, the reports of your camp life and camp activities. I am pleased to know that you are doing well, and are benefiting physically and spiritually.

As the time approaches when you will soon take leave of your beloved camp and return to your homes and educational institutions, I want to express my hope that the benefit and inspiration which you have received from your camp will be a source of lasting strength to you in the coming year, and that you will share these benefits with others who were not as fortunate as you to spend weeks and months in Camp Gan Israel.

We are now in the significant month of Elul, the month of preparation for the new year. This is the month of opportunity, the month of special Divine grace and mercy. Of this month the Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman - founder of Chabad Chasidic philosophy] said that this is the time when, as it were, the King is in the Field. Instead of having to seek an audience with the King in His Palace, the King comes out to meet His subjects in the field. At such a time everyone can easily approach the King and present to Him a petition, and the King receives everyone with a gracious smile and fulfills the petition.

I firmly trust that every one of you will take the fullest advantage of this propitious time, to rededicate yourselves to the study of the Torah and the fulfillment of the mitzvot with a growing measure of devotion and diligence.

May you always strive to be a living example to others of what it is to be a son of Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov, a son of our people Israel and a member of the tribe of Gan Israel.

May G-d bless you with hatzlocho to carry out your good resolutions, in good health and with gladness of heart, and may He bless you and all your near and dear ones with a kesiva vachasimo tova.

# A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

This week we entered the month of Elul.

*In Elul we prepare for the upcoming High Holidays by blowing the shofar each morning, having our mezuzot and tefilin checked to make sure they are still fit, being more careful about keeping kosher and saying special selichot (penitential prayers) toward the end of the month.*

*Why do we do all of this in the month of Elul? Can't it wait until we're closer to Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur - most of us "work" better under pressure anyway?*

*These questions can be answered with a beautiful parable told by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (the founder of the Chabad-Lubavitch Movement):*

*"Once each year, a very mighty king leaves his palace, his guards, his finery, and goes out in the field to meet with his subjects. At that time, they do not need to wait in long lines, go through security checks, be announced ceremoniously. They can speak with him without hesitation. When the king returns to his palace, his subjects will once again have to go through all kinds of protocol to meet with him. So, of course, his subjects make the most of the opportunity.*

*"During the month of Elul, G-d is "in the field." We don't need to go through all kinds of red tape to reach Him. We need only come out to meet Him, as it were, with a humble heart, and He will listen to us. He will accept our repentance and consider our requests most carefully. The king will soon be in the field. Make sure not to miss this opportunity."*

*And may we imminently merit the era when G-d will continuously be "in the field" the Messianic Era when "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d like the waters cover the ocean."*

*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.

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## Mitzva Guess Who

*Mitzvah Guess Who? A Lift-the-Flap Book Mitzvos fill our days and give us a way of connecting to Hashem in our everyday lives. From the very youngest age, children are so enthusiastic, interested in mitzvos, and eager to perform them. What better way to encourage their love of mitzvos than with a book of mitzvah riddles... Mitzvah Guess Who! Rhyming clues provide insight into each precious mitzvah, and your child will love lifting the flap to reveal the right answer! From Torah, Tefillah, and Tzedakah to Kibud Av Va'Eim, Shimras HaLashon and Keeping Shabbos, children will enjoy showing how much they know while reading Mitzvah Guess Who!*



## Australian Encounters

Australian Encounters is a collection of firsthand accounts by Robert Kremnizer who is a highly-respected lawyer, businessman, and writer who is based in Sydney, Australia, portraying his interactions with the Rebbe, both in his professional capacity and in his private life.



## Today Is...

**11 Elul**  
On Shabbat Teitsei 5603 (1843), at the Kiddush table by day, the Tzemach Tzedek said: "This world is a world of falsity, therefore even good is adulterated with chaff and must be purified 'from below upward' as well as from 'Above downward.' Olam haba (the Coming World) is the world of truth. In Torah there are discussions of matters which may appear negative, yet the same matters, as they are studied in gan eden1 - are actually positive qualities."

# MOSHIACH MATTERS

And this is the case of the slayer...whoever unwittingly kills his neighbor...he shall flee to one of those cities, and live (Deut. 19:4,5) The Torah designates six cities of refuge where a person who has

inadvertently killed can flee and atone for his deed. When Moshiah comes and the borders of Israel are expanded three more cities of refuge will be established. But why will additional cities be necessary at that time? There will be no violence between people. What purpose will these cities of refuge serve? The cities of refuge will allow those Jews who accidentally killed someone throughout the centuries of exile to seek atonement and be worthy of the Messianic Era. (Hitvaadyot, Rosh Chodesh Elul 5746)