

L'Chaim



The great Rabbi Moshe Sofer (the Chasam Sofer) was sitting with his students one day when they were interrupted by the Parness (the head) of the Jewish community.

He hadn't want to disturb the Rabbi when he was busy with his students, but when the Chasam Sofer noticed the man's distraught face, he excused himself and called the Parness into an adjoining room.

"What has happened?" the rabbi inquired.

The man answered with a sigh. "I am in deep trouble. I have lost my entire fortune. There's no hope, for I am in such deep debt, and I've signed promissory notes for others as well. I'm on the brink of utter ruin. Tomorrow, when it becomes known that I didn't go to the fair at Leipzig, my creditors will come running, and that will be my end."

"How much money do you need to go to the fair?" the Chasam Sofer asked.

"Oh, Rabbi, the amount I usually bring is not worth talking about. At this point, I would be grateful for travelling money and a bit of cash." The Parness mentioned an amount.

"That's no problem. I think I have just that amount here." The Chasam Sofer went to a certain drawer in his desk and withdrew the cash.

"Rabbi, I can't take the money from you. I came to you for advice, not a loan. If I take your money, how can I guarantee that I will be able to repay you?"

The Chasam Sofer smiled. "Don't worry, with G-d's help, you will repay me. May you have much success."

Deeply grateful and with new hope, the Parness took the money and left. He caught the early train to Leipzig, and upon leaving the train met a friend who was a big wholesaler and importer.

He offered the Parness a shipment of newly arrived coffee. The price was right, so the Parness gave a deposit and concluded the deal. Before the day ended, news reached the fair that the crop in Brazil had been damaged by bad weather, and the price of coffee had risen.

The Parness sold the coffee at a great profit. The next day he bought large quantities of merchandise. The pattern repeated itself every day of the fair, and by the end, he had not only recouped all his losses, but had become even richer than before.

It occurred to the Parness to buy something special for the Chasam Sofer. Knowing the rabbi's knowledge of jewelry, he purchased a valuable gem to present to him. Back home, he went at once to visit the rabbi and tell him the good news. "Your blessings were fulfilled beyond my dreams. In addition to repaying you, it would be an honor if you would accept this gift."

The rabbi took the box in his hand and opened it, revealing the gem. "It's beautiful, and very valuable as well," he said turning the gem this way and that. Then he handed it back to the Parness.

"But, Rabbi, it's yours."

"No. You see, if you had given it to me at any other time, perhaps I would have accepted it, for it would support my yeshiva for some time. But since I gave you the loan, I cannot accept even something which has 'the dust of interest' on it."

The Parness left, and some students who had observed the scene came to their rabbi with a question: "If you had no intention of accepting the gift, why did you receive it with so much happiness and pay it so much attention?"

"I will tell you a story which will answer your question. Once I was traveling with my Rebbe, Rabbi Nosson Adler of Frankfurt. The weather was bad, but it was a trip of extreme urgency to the Jewish community, so we left immediately.

"We started out after dark, and after we had gone but a short distance, the team of horses refused to budge. The driver went off to get help and we tried to shake off the cold by immersing ourselves in learning.

"Finally the driver returned and readied the team to continue the journey. Suddenly, my Rebbe leaped out of the carriage and began dancing in the snow. I was shocked and couldn't understand his actions.

"Don't you see, Moshe, the driver has harnessed a team of oxen together with horses!"

"I got out of the carriage and explained to the driver that we were forbidden to be drawn by a team composed of mixed species (*kilayim*, is forbidden, since the animals have differing strengths and it causes them great hardship). I offered him extra money if he

would go and exchange the oxen for horses.

"When he had gone, I asked my teacher to enlighten me as to his strange behavior. He answered, 'My dear Moshe, when in Frankfurt do I get to do the rare mitzva of kilayim? Now, that it comes my way, once in my life, should I not rejoice?'"

"That is why, when I got the chance to do the mitzva of *ribbis* (not accepting interest from a fellow Jew), I rejoiced. Who comes to a rabbi to request a free loan? When that mitzva came my way, I couldn't conceal my joy and excitement!"

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

And you shall not deceive one another (Lev. 25:17)

Can a person really deceive another, especially in spiritual matters? Even if he succeeds in his deception, the victory is only temporary and the deceit is always eventually revealed. The only person, therefore, who has been effectively deceived is the deceiver himself. And is it so difficult to fool a fool? (Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch)

If your brother becomes destitute and his hand falters beside you, you shall support him [whether he a convert or a resident, so that he can live with you. (Lev. 25:35)]

A "sojourner" is defined as anyone who renounces idolatry. This teaches, said the Baal Shem Tov, that even if this is a person's only merit he is worthy of G-d's sustenance and eternal salvation. For the children of Israel are servants to Me

The Jewish people is likened to a single body, with all the corresponding physical components and organs: head, heart, etc. Just as when there is pain in one limb the entire body suffers, so too should every Jew experience the pain of his fellow, and take steps to alleviate it. If you see someone floundering in the mud, the only way to help him is to jump down and pull him up. To help a fellow Jew, we must be willing to sink down into the mud up till our neck. (Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin)

For the children of Israel are servants to Me; they are My servants, whom I took out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord, your God. (Lev 25:55)

The Jewish people are sometimes referred to as G-d's servants and sometimes as His children. As far as the Jewish body is concerned we are His servants, unconditionally accepting the yoke of heaven to carry out His will. As concerns the soul, however, every Jew is a child of G-d, for the soul serves G-d with love as a child serves his father. (Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntresim)



7:53 Candle Lighting Time
NY Metro Area
19 Iyar/May 20
Torah Portion Behar
Ethics Ch 4
Shabbat ends 8:59 PM



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

This week, we read the Torah portion of *Behar*. In *Behar* we learn about the commandment of *Shemita*, the Sabbatical year. "Six years you should sow your fields... and gather its produce. And in the seventh year, the land must be given a complete rest, a Sabbatical for G-d, you may not sow your fields..."

This is one of the most difficult *mitzvot* (commandments), because if all of Israel refrains from sowing their fields, what will everyone eat?

In answer to this question, G-d says, "I will command my blessing for you in the sixth year, and it will yield (enough) produce for three years." For the end of the sixth year, the whole seventh, and until after the harvest of the eighth year.

Still we find that this mitzva is so difficult, that during the First Temple era, 70 Sabbatical years were not kept properly. Because of this, after the destruction of the first Temple, we were in exile for 70 years. It is obvious that this mitzva is very important and that keeping this mitzva is crucial to bringing Moshiach.

By taking a look at what is at the core of this mitzva, everything becomes clear. What is at the essence of this mitzva?

We all have a relationship with G-d. For some of us it is weak, for others it is stronger, and yet for some, it is one of rejection. Many of us run the gamut, a roller coaster ride relationship with G-d.

What G-d wants most from us, is that we trust in Him. And this is, what is at the core of this mitzva. Trust is stronger than belief, and we are tested regularly by G-d to see if we put our trust in Him.

Yet it is hard to trust in any person or even ourselves for that matter. How often do we watch ourselves fail at what we set out to do? How often are our hopes dashed, only to find ourselves hurt and broken? We have trust issues.

When it comes to G-d, we need to take a different approach. Because in Him we truly can trust, and the more we get to know Him, the stronger our trust in Him becomes. You come to realize that He is the only one you can actually trust in.

G-d takes care of us. This becomes clear in the sixth year of the Sabbatical, when one would think the field has been drained of its nutrients, due to five years of sowing and reaping. When the sixth comes, there is nothing left for the field to give. It is our trust in G-d alone, that make our fields yield three times their normal produce.

The same is true for Jewish parents. You give, and give, and give, until you feel there is nothing left to give. It is your relationship with G-d, your trust alone, that gives you the strength you never would have imagined you had.

It is my hope that through our building our trust relationship with G-d, we will merit the coming of Moshiach very soon.

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.

Sleepless

Have you ever had one of those nights when you just can't get to sleep? You try all the old remedies – lying still and focusing on something relaxing – say, the sound of the ocean surf lapping the shore. After a few minutes, though, the storm clouds gather and what you've got is a hurricane in your mind, complete with thunder, roiling clouds and lightning.

So you get up and pour a glass of warm milk, a little wine – something to relax you. After a few minutes you do feel a little more relaxed – just enough that your mind's on full alert. So you sit down to read something.

By now you've been up or wandering around the house for almost an hour, trying to be very quiet.

Then you might try the fool-proof method: open a Jewish book and start studying. After all, it's an old Jewish joke that learning cures insomnia. And if you don't fall asleep, at least you'll be making good use of your time.

Fifteen minutes and three sentences later, you regret having that glass of wine. You're too awake to sleep and too tired to concentrate. You close the book and decide to read the latest issue of *L'Chaim* online, then check your phone. An hour and a half later, you look at the time and realize it's 4 a.m.

How are you going to function in the morning? And why can't you get to sleep? A half-hour later you collapse from sheer exhaustion and stumble through the day.

Why couldn't you get to sleep? Most likely you had something on your mind. Some crisis happened at work, your favorite team narrowly lost an important game, you had an argument with an old friend. Your adrenaline's up and you're so "wired" your body's in overdrive.

Or there's some problem nagging at you, or some idea rattling deep inside. You're not even aware of the problem or idea, just a vague discomfort or uneasiness, a sense that something's out of place - and until you know what it is, until from knowledge you build a plan, your subconscious won't let go, and your mind gets caught in its own feedback loop.

Psalm 126 compares exile to dreaming. A dreamer doesn't know he's dreaming; he doesn't realize the story he's telling himself isn't real.

But an insomniac, one who can't sleep, has, in a sense, the opposite problem. He wants to dream, he wants to retreat into the illusionary dream world. But his mind won't let him. His inner consciousness forces him to solve a real but as yet unidentified problem, forces him to confront a hidden truth.

Centuries ago we were like dreamers – asleep and unaware that we were asleep. In exile, we're still dreaming.

But in a sense, we're also insomniacs now. We want to go back to sleep; we want, superficially, the dream of exile. But we can't, not now, because we're on the doorstep of Redemption. Our subconscious minds – really, our Divine soul – is pushing us, forcing us to stay awake, to open our eyes and see the reality – Redemption – before us.

How can you sleep at a time like this? the Divine soul demands. We don't "hear" it but we sense it, and it becomes our restlessness.

Since we can't sleep anyway, because Moshiach is "knocking at the door," let's not fight our wakefulness, but embrace it. Let's stay on the alert, do a good deed, fulfill a commandment, learn Torah, do an act of goodness or kindness - and open the door.

to dedicate an issue call (718) 778-6000

SLICE OF LIFE

Taking Time for Torah



People of every age and background use JNet to study the weekly Torah portion, discuss the history of Judaism, analyze the Talmud, and discover Kabbala. The following are short interviews with JNet partners.

Yehuda Evron (above left) studies with Yonason Lewis (right): I was born in Romania where I started studying Torah when I was five-years-old. My father was religious and my grandfather would study all day. Unfortunately, due to the hardships of the time, I didn't receive that opportunity. I decided that when I retire I will go back to my Jewish studies.

I learn *Tanya* with Rabbi Yonason Lewis and we have been learning once a week for the past three years. He is a wonderful person and he even came to visit us with his wife. We have a very good connection and I have learned a lot from him.

Learning the *Tanya* has definitely had a major impact on my life. We live in a material environment where people value the physical over the spiritual. *Tanya* helps us focus on the spirit of things and how G-d is really running the show.

I like the philosophy of *Tanya* because it really has the answers for everything. More importantly, it provides us the tools to practice

positive thinking. I recommend that every Jew should go learn more about Judaism and study Torah and *Tanya*.

Stephanie Elmaleh studies with Chany Pinson: Learning with someone who lives in another part of the world, with a different religious upbringing, has taught me how diverse our religion is. I also love that we know we will learn every Monday. It feels like a little social gathering, which is really great, especially during this pandemic.

I like learning with Chany as we are a really good match and we both bring a different point of view. We like to explore deeper into our perspectives and get answers to our questions.

An interesting thing that we found out about each other is that we are both descendants of prominent Rabbis.

It's very important for me to know people more religious than me who I can look up to and get inspired by. I think that with Chany it's easy because she is open-minded and I don't feel nervous to ask hard questions that sometimes comes up in the path of teshuva.

I believe this program does very important work in connecting Jews from across the world, helping them see outside their bubble, to grow and learn Torah. The importance of fixing a date and time for Torah learning has greatly improved my journey and my love for learning. I believe everyone would benefit from taking part in this amazing opportunity provided by JNet.

Chaya'le Sorkin studies with Barbara Galizia: We usually start off our learning sessions with reading a page or two from "Seeds of Wisdom." It's incredible how so often the random page we open to ends up containing an inspiring message that one of us feels is just what we needed to hear that day!

Although we've never met in person, we've become great friends and I look forward to learning and catching up with Barbara all week. Our learning sessions are so enjoyable, and always give me such a boost!

Learning with Barbara has had a profound impact on me. I am inspired each week anew by her commitment and resolve to grow in Torah

knowledge and mitzva observance. Barbara often asks me different questions about Jewish law, and I learn so much from researching and finding answers to her questions. She's shown me the value and importance of doing things right, down to the very last detail. My chavrusa learning with Barbara has helped me realize that giving is getting, and we all have what to learn and gain from each other!

Michael Silber studies with Mendel Rubashkin: The most enjoyable part of this Chavrusa experience is having someone knowledgeable to regularly connect with about questions and concepts is really eye opening.

JNet has helped me realize that even someone from a secular background like me can discover new concepts in Judaism that are actually woven into my everyday life and a deeper knowledge of them is a spiritual enhancement and a blessing.

Mendel is really a great teacher and has been very generous with his time and gracious with my very basic level questions.

Elka Matusof studies with Yedes Fasatag: What I find so special about our learning is that my Chavrusa asks deep questions and makes insightful comments that bring a whole new dimension to the learning. It provides me with a deeper perspective and a new understanding of the topic, bringing the learning to a completely new level since she gets me to explore and research further.

When I prepare for our studying, I think to myself, "What is Yedes going to ask?" Presently we are learning "The Book of Mitzvos" by Maimonides. We also study part of the weekly portion with some of Rashi's commentary, and then we read an article on Chabad.org related to the topic discussed. Yedes likes Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks who discusses the Parsha based on teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. It is wonderful being part of the Jewish Learning Network, and I thank my Chavrusa for her friendship and for helping me grow in my Torah learning in new and exciting ways.

JNet - Jewish Learning Network, provides people the opportunity to study any area of Torah on any level in any language with a study partner. To become a JNet Study Partner call 347-770-JNet, or email info@jnet.org. A division of Merkas L'Inyonei Chinuch.

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

13th of Iyar, 5720 [1960]

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your two recent letters, and thank you in anticipation of keeping me posted on developments. May G-d grant that the time come soon when the saying of our Sages which we say every day in our prayers "Talmidei Chachomim [Torah scholars] increase peace in the world" - in the world at large and certainly in and on immediate surroundings and affairs, will be fulfilled. It is not difficult to see the tremendous influence of the *Yetzer Hora* [evil inclination] "dancing" in areas of communal activity and spreading unfounded animosity and disunity, despite the fact that these factors were responsible for the destruction of the *Beth Hamikdash* [Holy Temple], as is well known.

Now that we are in the days of *Sefira* [counting the Omer] and approaching Lag B'Omer, behind which, as the *Gemoro* tells us, was the disunity and disrespect among the students of Rabbi Akiva, let us hope that the lesson will not be lost. Hoping to hear good news from you, with blessing,

22 Iyar, 5721 [1961]

I received your letter of April 24th, in which you write about the apparent contradiction between the latest scientific attempt to penetrate outer space, especially reaching the moon, which seems to you to contradict the statement in the Torah, "The Heavens belong to G-d and the earth He gave to the children of man."

Actually it is no contradiction at all, if you consider the term "earth" not in the narrow sense as referring only to our globe, but in its proper sense as meant in this verse, which includes also the atmosphere and the entire physical universe with which

mankind is concerned and directly affected by.

We must not confuse the terms "heaven" and "planets."

The stars, planets, moon, etc. are not called "heaven," since "Heaven" is something spiritual, whereas the planets are physical and belong in the physical universe.

The fact that G-d created the so-called heavenly bodies to serve our world, to give light, warmth, and energy to it, and placed them in the firmament of the sky at a certain distance from our earth, does not preclude man's attempt to learn all about them.

You write about the apparent contradiction between the latest scientific attempt to penetrate outer space...

Similarly, when the Torah states that G-d placed the moon in the sky to give light to the earth, it does not exclude the possibility of man's landing on it at some future time.

The meaning of the verse, "The Heavens belong to G-d," etc. is in the sense that while G-d is everywhere, including the heavens; man was placed in the physical universe, and is part of it, and, therefore must make the most of it, as long as there is life on this earth.

There is nothing in actual scientific experiments and accomplishments that contradict the Torah, nor is there such a possibility since the Torah is Truth.

Judging by your writing and background, I firmly hope that you are conducting your daily life in strict accordance with the Torah, which is called *Torath Chaim*, the Law of Life, and the *mitzvot* [commandments] whereby Jews live, and that you attempt to make steady advancement along this road, in compliance with the principle that "All things of Holiness should be on the upgrade."

MOSHIACH MATTERS

And the L-rd spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai (*Lev. 25:1*) Rashi's famous question, "What is the connection between *Shemita* [the Sabbatical year] and Mount Sinai?" can be interpreted as follows: The "Sinai desert" alludes

to the "desert of the nations," the period of exile, whereas the Sabbatical year symbolizes the Days of Moshiach. The Torah juxtaposes these two concepts to teach us that we must contemplate the imminent Redemption now, during the last moments of exile, in order to derive a "foretaste" of the Messianic era. For human nature is such that a person rejoices even before a happy event, just knowing that it is about to take place. (*Likkutei Sichot*)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

We find the following difference of opinion between the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud concerning Shabbat.

The Babylonian Talmud states that if the Jews keep two Sabbaths, we will be immediately redeemed. In the Jerusalem Talmud it states that if the Jewish people keeps one Sabbath we will immediately be redeemed.

Which one is it? How can these two opinions be reconciled?

The Messianic Era is likened to the Sabbath, and is, in fact, called, "The day which is entirely Shabbat and rest for eternity."

There are various forms of rest.

We can refrain from heavy physical labor, thereby giving our bodies their much needed rest.

We can also have a less physical, but more spiritual type of rest which also rejuvenates the body, a rest which includes the cessation of the worries and cares of the mundane world and the intensified immersion into spiritual matters.

Thus, when we observe Shabbat, we are actually observing both physical and spiritual rest.

With this in mind, we can reconcile the seeming difference of opinion between the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud. If the entire Jewish nation keeps both aspects of Shabbat on one Sabbath, we will immediately be redeemed.

We can hasten the attainment of this goal by experiencing Shabbat this very week.

Indulge yourself this Shabbat in a truly restful and rejuvenating (and re-Jewvenating) experience. Observe and celebrate Shabbat in all its beauty and simplicity.

This Shabbat, let us all join together with one common goal - to bring the Redemption for all humankind.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA

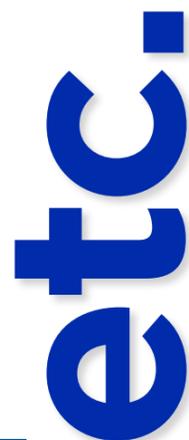
The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.



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New Emissaries

Rabbi Avrohom and Cheina Dyce recently moved to Gresham, Oregon - in the Greater Portland Metropolitan area, to establish the town's first Jewish center. The Dyce's hosted the community's first ever Pesach Seder and distributed a hundred boxes of hand-baked Shmura Matza. They will be offering holidays programs, classes, Shabbat services and programs for children and youths.

Likkutei Sichos

The third volume of a curated selection of Rebbe's original *Likkutei Sichos* is available in English, the book of *Vayikra* - Leviticus. The Rebbe's *Likkutei Sichos* revolutionizes Torah study, Jewish life, and G-dly experience. Translated by Rabbis Eliyahu Touger and Sholom B Wineberg, published by Sichos in English.



Today Is...

20 Iyar

There is no one for whom to pride oneself. We must toil strenuously. With patience and friendliness we can prevail in all things, with G-d's help. With a denigrating attitude toward others and inflating our own importance we lose everything, G-d forbid.