

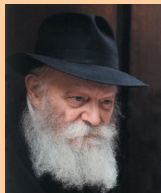
The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person

גוסד תוך ימי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson

"Jerusalem has mountains around it, and the L-rd is around His people from now and to eternity" (Psalms 125:2)

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.



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 pnimiut [inner teachings] of the Torah, namely, Chasidut, concerning which it is written in the Zohar (part 3, page 124b): "In the area of Pnimiut 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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