



A number of chasidim were gathered with Rabbi Yitzhak Meir of Ger, partaking of the festive meal after a brit mila, when the rebbe asked a certain chasid to relate a story about Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev.

The chasid began: "One of the followers of the Berdichever Rebbe was a cattle dealer. And it happened that once when he had many heads of cattle to sell the market price dropped drastically. The chasid was worried about the heavy loss he would have to sustain, so he travelled to Berdichev to consult his Rebbe for advice in the matter and a blessing.

"When he arrived in the rebbe's presence, Levi Yitzhak asked him, 'Is there any particular mitzva with which you occupy yourself?'

" 'Yes, replied the man, 'I am a mohel.' [one who performs ritual circumcisions].

" 'And what do you do in the case that an infant bleeds heavily after the circumcision?' asked the Rebbe.

"The man described at length the medications and salves he applied, and then the Rebbe responded: 'I will give you a certain medicinal herb to use if you are ever, G-d forbid, in such a situation. If you apply this to the wound, it will stop bleeding immediately.' And the Rebbe handed him some herbs.

" 'But Rebbe,' beseeched the chasid, 'what shall I do about the cattle?'

"But the Rebbe only replied, 'I have already explained that if you encounter an infant who bleeds excessively, just apply the herbs and the bleeding will stop immediately.'

"The chasid didn't repeat his question. He took his belongings and returned to his home."

At this juncture in the story Rabbi Yitzhak Meir interrupted the story with a comment: "From the behavior of this man we can tell that he was a true chasid, since he didn't persist in his questioning of the Rebbe, but simply assumed that the Rebbe's words contained the advice he sought, although he didn't as yet perceive the meaning in them."

The storyteller continued: "The chasid stopped at an inn on his way home, and in casual conversation found out that the innkeeper's infant son had not been circumcised. He was surprised and asked the reason for this. The innkeeper told him that his two previous sons had died because of excessive bleeding after circumcision. The chasid, remembering his Rebbe's words, asked the innkeeper, 'If I were to tell you that there existed a cure for this problem of bleeding, would you allow a brit to be performed on your son?'

"If my son could be circumcised without the possibility of danger, I would be prepared to pay the mohel a sum of four hundred silver rubles.'

"I have a very potent medication which will stop any bleeding. Allow me to perform the brit, and I will assume all responsibility. I will even give you four hundred silver rubles of my own, forfeit in the case of any problem, G-d forbid.'

"The innkeeper agreed on the stipulation that the mohel remain with them for a full month to watch the child, should any complications develop. The circumcision was performed, and in fact the child did bleed a great deal. But the mohel applied the herbs he had received, and all went well; the bleeding stopped at once. A few days after the brit, news reached the inn that the price of cattle had risen considerably. The chasid-merchant was anxious to return home and sell his livestock, but the innkeeper was adamant about their agreement, and refused to allow him to leave. Several more days passed, and word arrived that the price of cattle had gone even higher, and the chasid pleaded with his host to allow him to leave, as the baby was doing quite well. But the innkeeper was unmoved by his

argument, and answered that a deal was a deal, and he must remain the full four weeks.

"After the entire month had passed the chasid left the inn. The grateful innkeeper paid him the four hundred silver rubles he had promised and also returned the other four hundred he had held on bond. The cattle dealer was able to sell his cattle for a price far greater than he had ever imagined, making an enormous profit.

"When the time came for his customary visit to Berdichev he happily presented his Rebbe with four hundred silver rubles to be used charity, saying: 'Rebbe, this money rightfully belongs to you!'"

L'Chaim

The Weekly Publication for Every Jewish Person

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"May there be peace in your wall, tranquility in your palaces" (Psalm 122:6)

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah Portion

And Moses said: "This is the thing that G-d has commanded that you do--and the glory of G-d will appear to you." (Lev. 9:6)

Every mitzva in the Torah has a myriad of inner, esoteric meanings, which each Jew understands according to his or her intelligence and level of Torah learning. Even the most learned scholar cannot fully grasp these secrets, for human comprehension and understanding of the infinite is limited and finite. This is why Moses commanded the Jews--"This is the thing that G-d has commanded"--no matter how much one has studied and no matter how many inner meanings a person has learned, the real reason to do a mitzva is because G-d has so commanded. When your intent in performing a mitzva is solely because G-d wants that particular act to be performed, then "the glory of G-d will appear to you." (Tiferet Shmuel)

And Moses said to Aaron, "Draw near to the altar" (Lev. 9:7)

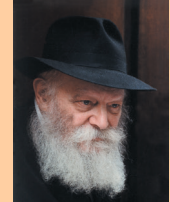
For his part, however passive, in the sin of the Golden Calf, Aaron was judged by G-d to be deserving of the punishment of feeling shame and embarrassment. When Moses saw that Aaron was hesitant to approach the altar, he said to him, "Why do you hesitate? For this you were chosen to be the high priest." Aaron's guilt and shame were atonement for his sin. (Maharim of Gastinin)

And Aaron lifted up his hands (Lev. 9:22)

In this verse, the Hebrew word for "hands" actually spells out the word "hand" (singular)--yud, dalet, vav, and is missing the other yud which would indicate the plural. Our Sages learned from this that when the kohanim (priests) raise their hands to pronounce the Priestly Blessing, the right hand is to be slightly higher than the left. (Bait Yosef)

Yet these you may eat (Lev. 11:21)

The Torah does not content itself with giving us signs of purity to look for when it tells us which animals are kosher, it actually lists each and every one which is permissible. In the thousands of years which have elapsed since the Torah was given, not one animal, bird or creature has been discovered by man to possess those signs, which was not specifically mentioned in the Torah. (Kuzari Hechadash)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

The Torah portion of Shemini opens with a description of the eighth and final day of the consecration of the Sanctuary, the day when the Divine Presence first rested therein. The name of the portion--Shemini--means "eighth" and alludes to the special significance held by the number eight. Eight symbolizes that which is above the laws of nature and the boundaries of our physical world. It stands for that aspect of G-dliness which exists even beyond the realm of our human powers of description.

One would think that the contents of so lofty a section of the Torah would deal with correspondingly lofty subject matter but we find that Shemini delineates the laws between kosher and non-kosher animals. Why such a mundane subject for a Torah portion which is supposed to express so high a level of holiness?

In many instances, a fine line exists between that which is kosher and that which is forbidden. In our own lives, we also occasionally must make decisions which are as fine as a hair's breadth. Choosing between good and evil when the choices are obvious and blatant is much easier than making a decision between two extremely fine points. For such decision making, extra help from Above is necessary.

The Evil Inclination sometimes disguises itself in a "robe of holiness." It discourages a person from performing a mitzva through guile and doubt, presenting all sorts of seemingly plausible and erudite excuses. A person may become confused when the two paths of action before him both seem to have merit. The Evil Inclination can even make a sin appear to be an actual mitzva.

How are we to overcome the wiles and cunning of the Evil Inclination? How can we be sure that the decisions we make are the right ones? By learning the lesson which is taught in Shemini.

Man alone, bound as he is by the laws of nature and the limitations of the human intellect, cannot always overcome his Evil Inclination. But when a person gives himself over to G-d, who is not bound by any natural law and is infinite, and asks His help to "distinguish between the unclean and the clean," one can indeed conquer the Evil Inclination and avoid falling into its net.

A Jew's connection to G-d is so strong that it cannot be split asunder by any power on earth. When a Jew does a mitzva--mitzva comes from the Hebrew word for binding together and connecting--he ties himself to G-d with a supernatural strength. Armed with this power, we can see through the mask of the Evil Inclination when we are presented with even the finest points of contention.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Finding Oneness In Diversity

By Simon Jacobson

One of the great paradoxes is reconciling between the individual and the collective, between personal interests and the common good. Can we find a way to preserve our diversity while being united without either being compromised?

The way to achieve this is through humility: When you sublimate yourself to a higher calling, your individuality unites with others serving the greater cause.

Your powerful commitment permeates your being to the point that it tempers self-interest, not allowing it to rip you apart from others. On the contrary, it helps build a unified community--diverse but united by a cause greater and one that transcends individual interests. Here is why the effort is worth it.

BEAUTY IN DIVERSITY

As pretty as one color may be, it still would not be defined as beautiful. As sweet as one musical note may sound, it cannot be called beautiful. Beauty is always a combination of many colors--as in a painting--whose balance and coordination creates a beautiful mosaic.

Many different musical notes, when played just the right way, generate a beautiful symphony. Take nature. The beauty of nature is in the fact that many different systems work together with astonishing synchronicity. Perhaps no better example of this is our own selves. The healthy human body is a miraculous piece of architecture. So many different organs, numerous diverse systems and

faculties. Let alone the multitude of cells, hormones and DNA. And all combined as one fascinating unit, working as one synchronized whole.

Something that strikes us as beautiful is the balance and symmetry of several--or very many--different elements, all combined in just the right blend. Beauty is the harmony within diversity.

HUMILITY IN DIVERSITY

We are all one: Together we comprise a single organism whose various cells, limbs, and organs complement and complete one another.

A body includes both the sophisticated, refined brain and the "crass" functional foot; but, ultimately, the brain is dependent on the foot just as the foot is dependent on the brain. The humble man looks at the larger picture rather than the particulars, at the unified purpose of life on earth rather than only at his function within this purpose. The knowledge that his own life's work is incomplete without his fellow's contribution arouse feelings of humility and indebtedness toward his fellow:

DEFINING HUMILITY

In this approach, humility is not equated with a sense of inferiority. Rather, it stems from a feeling of mutual need. You recognize that your own accomplishments require collaboration with others. Be humbled by the fact that every individual on earth has a unique and irreplaceable role to play, and that every one needs all the others.

לעילוי נשמת
הרה בן יוסף ע"ה
Dedicated in memory of
Cheresh Ben Yosef OBM

7:07 Candle Lighting Time
NY Metro Area
26 Adar II / April 5
Torah Portion Shmini
Parshas Hachodesh
Blessing of the new month of Nissan
Shabbat ends 8:08 PM

SLICE OF LIFE

From Celebrity Productions to Taking Off for Shabbat

By Eli Friedman



Eli Lunzer, finding the perfect balance between his work and his Jewish heritage

So you're Jewish, reaching for the sky in your business, and you're searching for the perfect balance between your Judaism and your work.

May I introduce you to Eli Lunzer?

Eli's career is peaking. His company, Eli Lunzer Productions, is a destination for some of the globe's top athletes and celebrities, and he has worked the NBA All-Star Game, Super Bowl, The Masters, US Open, Sundance Film Festival, SXSW, Golden Globes, Oscars, and more.

Career-wise, he's arrived. His influence is vast, his portfolio is dazzling, and his clientele is top-shelf.

And with all that, Eli's got wisdom too.

Incredibly, his clients and partnering brands all know - Eli is completely inaccessible from Friday evening to Saturday night, and if a meeting is going to include dinner, it'll have to be Kosher.

He may have lost some potential business over it, but Eli has been clear about his boundaries from day one. He has spiritual ethics that are non-negotiable, it's a personal thing he has going with G-d and he's not flexible about it.

Can you guess who one of his greatest inspirations is? That's right - Sandy Koufax. Koufax, one of the best pitchers in baseball's history, resisted enormous pressure to work a World Series game on Yom Kippur and sat it out. Above Eli's desk, there hangs an oversized portrait of Koufax with his immortal words: "There was never any decision to make, though, because there was never any possibility that I would pitch."

That matter-of-fact approach is reflected perfectly in Eli's own. He has lines he won't cross and it is what it is.

In a fascinating twist, he's discovered that specifically the top echelon athlete or celebrity is the most likely to relate to his rules of engagement. That they find themselves at the top of the pile is almost always the result of incredibly hard work and - here's the key -

discipline.

Whether it's workouts, training, or other regular exercises to maintain their edge, these outliers are inflexible about them. Their training time is off-limits and their devotion to those hours and those pursuits is complete. They attribute their success to that strict discipline and they find Eli's personal limits eminently relatable. Not always logical - but relatable.

Amazingly, the very approach many Jews fear will alienate potential high-powered clients is actually what they share in common with them: inflexible disciplines.

Eli urges fellow Jews to be proud of who they are. After all, to a billionaire who takes pride in himself, there's nothing more natural than you taking pride in yourself. And though the silence at times can be deeply frustrating, the vast majority of people he's met with are strongly - though quietly - supportive of the Jewish People. He finds no reason to cover.

Be spiritual, be soulful, and observe your Jewish obligations and restrictions proudly and without fear. Realize that a truly serious commitment to solemn principles is just the thing the most driven people in the business world have in common with you. Hold your head high and don't throw it away.

Eli Lunzer will tell you, it may just be your key to some serious success.

Ft. Lauderdale Names Central City Block 'Chabad Drive'



When Rabbi Moishe Meir and Penina Lipszyc moved to Fort Lauderdale in 1990 to establish a Chabad center, they were told that the upper-crust coastal city was notoriously inhospitable to Jews and the couple would be better served directing their efforts to other parts of Florida.

When the young Rabbi asked local Jews which part of the city was the most antisemitic. The consensus was the Galt Mile—a strip of luxury homes, condominiums and clubs that line roughly a mile of Fort Lauderdale's beachfront, and that's exactly where the Lipszycs chose to establish their new Chabad-Lubavitch of Fort Lauderdale.

Chabad moved from their rented storefront as their activities continuously grew. They soon began purchasing the properties that now form the 24,000-square-foot, \$9-million campus.

In recognition of Chabad's decades of service in the area, on Wednesday, March 6, the City of Fort Lauderdale officially renamed NE 35th St., where Chabad of Fort Lauderdale has been for the last 34 years, to "Chabad Drive."

"In a time when antisemitic sentiments are on the rise nationwide, this new street sign stands as a powerful symbol of hope, welcoming all to our community" said Mayor Trantalis.

Customs

What are some customs following a Brit?

Most of the many customs of the Brit Mila are rooted in the mystical teachings of the Kabala. When the actual brit is completed the guests all bless the child, saying "Just as he entered into the covenant, so may he be introduced to the study of the Torah, to the chupah and to good deeds." Also, it is customary to make an advance payment on the tuition fees for the child's Jewish education.

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Excerpts from a letter

By the Grace of G-d
10th of Iyar, 5729
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to confirm receipt of your letter, which was, in a way, supplementary to the article about you by your father, which appeared in the Post and Opinion.

Needless to say, I was gratified to read in your letter many additional personal details of your wanderings (spiritually speaking) until you found the right direction.

Inasmuch as you are fortunate to arrive at your destination, namely the Torah, Toras Emes—and emes [truth] ...you will now enjoy the relief that comes after such a journey, and will utilize all your capacities in the "four cubits" of Torah and mitzvah.

And although the expression speaks of "four cubits," these are the four cubits that embrace the whole world. I have already had occasion many times to emphasize that precisely in our day and age... We have seen the destructive forces that can be realized from a very small quantity of several pounds of atomic material.

If this is so in the negative and destructive aspect, how much more so is it in the good and constructive aspect, since the forces of good are intrinsically stronger than those of evil.

This is why the "four cubits" of Torah and Mitzvah, even of one single individual, can have a tremendous effect on the whole world.

Here again we can see the effectiveness of a single individual who brought about such destruction and the death of many millions of people, while other millions, of people stood by doing nothing.

This can serve as an illustration of what a good individual can do in the realm of goodness.

I am impelled to add a further point, namely that there are people who think that in order to bring about change in the world, it is necessary to do this through violent revolutions and loud propaganda, etc. This is not the way of our Torah, Toras Emes,

which teaches us that great things can be accomplished by comparatively small efforts.

A clear illustration of this can be found in the balances of a scale. When both sides of the scale are balanced, a small weight can radically tip the scale. And as always in Torah, where truth is embodied not only in an instructive way, but also in a practical way, we can see this principle as part of the Halacha, as we find in the code of the Rambam (Hil. Teshuva, ch. 3:4): "A person should consider himself equibalanced and all the world equally balanced, thus at any time (during the entire ear) when a person commits a good deed he tips the scale in favor for himself as well as for the whole world, and vice versa."

I trust therefore that you and your friends, in the midst of all our people Israel, will fulfill what is expected of you, namely to live a life of Torah and mitzvah, fulfilling the mitzvah with hiddur [glory], and without weighing the importance of mitzvah since all come from the same Source.

In your case there is the additional consideration...For if the mitzvah of v'avta l'recho komocho [loving your fellow neighbor] applies in relation to all Jews, it is even more so in regard to one's own parents, brothers and sisters.

Moreover, such influence assumes even greater importance in regard to your parents, since each of them has a circle of friends and readers much greater than the average person, who are influenced by them. Consequently, every additional good aspect of Torah and mitzvah in their life, is compounded many times in those who are influenced by them.

And insofar as your brothers and sisters are concerned, considering that they are still young and have yet to settle down in life, every advancement in their religious and spiritual life is likewise compounded when they will get settled and establish families and set the pattern of living for their children and offspring.

You may, of course, show this letter to anyone you think could benefit from reading it, including those mentioned in this letter, if thereby you will not lessen the influence on them in the desired direction.

As you no doubt expect me to, I will conclude my letter with the prayerful hope that you are making additional efforts in the study of the Torah, and the fulfillment of the mitzvah, going from strength to strength, in accordance with the promise, "He who is determined to purify himself (and others), receives help from On High."

MOSHIACH MATTERS

One of the most important traditions regarding the Messianic Age concerns

the ingathering of the Diaspora and the resettlement of the Land of Israel. There are numerous traditions that Jews will begin to return to the Land of Israel as a prelude to the Messiah.

(From The Real Messiah, by Aryeh Kaplan)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

In this weeks Sedra we learn of the death of two of Aaron's sons, Nadav and Avihu, after they brought a "strange" fire before G-d.

According to some commentators, the brothers brought an offering in accordance with the sacrificial laws as they had been practiced by our ancestors before the Torah was given by G-d to Moses. This, then, is what was strange about it.

Chasidic philosophy offers a unique explanation as to what was strange about the fire. A Jew's soul is likened to a flame, or, at times, a candle. Though placed in a body, it strives to reunite with its source, the G-dly flame. Nadav and Avihu's longing to be united with G-d was so great that they allowed their souls to leave their bodies, "consumed" by the G-dly fire.

However, the true purpose of the soul's descent into this world is not to leave the body and be reunited with its source. That union is meant to take place only when the soul has completed its mission. Rather, it descends to this world in order to transform and elevate its surroundings. If the soul leaves the body it cannot accomplish this.

Many stories have been told about great and holy people whose souls transcended this world and traversed other spiritual planes. They revel in the experience of enjoying the spiritual light and revealed G-dliness of these other worlds. But when the time comes for their souls to return to their bodies, they accede, knowing that this was the true purpose of their life to begin with.

Nadav and Avihu allowed their longing for G-d to supersede their mission in life--to bring G-dliness and holiness into this world.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA
לִזְכָּרוֹן חַי'ה י מוֹשָׁקָא

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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