

L'Chaim



IT HAPPENED ONCE

The town was buzzing with the great news of the impending visit of the tzadik. Reb Yossele, the son of Reb Mordechai of Neshchitz, couldn't rest from the moment he heard that the tzadik Reb Yaakov Yitzchak, the famous "Seer" or "Chozeh" of Lublin would be passing through his town. He had heard many awesome reports about this holy man and he burned with the desire to meet him and glean some insight from him.

So intent was he to host the great tzadik that he commissioned a local carpenter to build a bed especially for the Chozeh. He undertook this extraordinary preparation because he had heard it said that when the "Seer" travelled and had to sleep in a strange bed, he would sometimes be heard to cry out, "It's prickly! It's prickly!" Wanting to avoid any possible discomfort for the tzadik, he decided to provide a brand-new bed for him, and thus eliminate any possible problem.

Reb Yossele was very exacting in his instructions to the carpenter. First of all, he was careful to choose a workman who was known to be a G-d-fearing man; second, he instructed the carpenter to immerse himself in the mikva before beginning his work, and to very carefully guard himself from impure thoughts while he was working.

For his part, the carpenter was not anxious to accept this complicated assignment. He was particularly unwilling since the work would have to commence during the first week of the month of Av, the intense mourning period for the Holy Temple. However, since his rebbe had made the request of him, he couldn't bring himself to refuse. He undertook the job in a depressed frame of mind, feeling spiritually unworthy of the task ahead. Despite his unwillingness, he worked well and completed his task successfully and in good time.

When the bed was finished, Reb Yossele placed it in a specially prepared room. He covered the bed with fresh, new bedclothes, and put next to it a small table, a lamp and a chair. Satisfied that his preparations would ensure the comfort of the Chozeh, he then closed and locked the door to guarantee that the bed would be untouched by anyone except the tzadik himself.

A few days later, when the Chozeh arrived in the town, Reb Yossele went out to meet him. His joy was complete when the tzadik accepted the invitation to be his guest. Reb Yossele happily escorted his honored guest into the newly appointed room. He proudly showed the Chozeh the bed, explaining that a G-d-fearing carpenter constructed it especially for the tzadik's use. Tired from his long journey, the tzadik lay down to rest.

After only a few moments had passed Reb Yossele heard the Chozeh exclaiming, "Prickly, help, it's prickly!"

Reb Yossele was astonished. What could these cries mean? He quickly went to the tzadik's room and not knowing what else to do, offered him the use of his own bed, hoping it would prove more comfortable. The Chozeh gladly accepted Reb Yossele's offer, and all was quiet. Reb Yossele, however, suffered a sleepless night wondering if the tzadik's rest would be disturbed by some spiritual unworthiness in his house. When morning came the Chozeh awoke refreshed and happy. He remarked to Reb Yossele, "Thank you so much, I had an excellent rest. Your hospitality has revived me!"

Reb Yossele was gratified by the tzadik's words, but still, he couldn't understand the Chozeh's initial reaction to the new bed, and he questioned him about it.

"Don't worry about it at all. The bed is perfect and kosher in every respect," the tzadik assured him. "The reason I couldn't sleep in it was because it had a certain smell of sadness about it since it was built during the Nine Days preceding Tisha B'Av. The carpenter, being a pious man, was mourning the destruction of the Holy Temple while he was building it, and the spiritual residue of his grief adhered to the bed."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

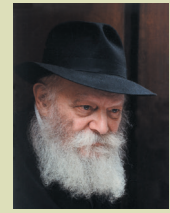
On the weekly Torah Portion

These are the words (Deut. 1:1)
The Midrash relates that G-d says of the Jewish people: "My children are like the honeybee--all that they toil to produce belongs to their keeper. The same way, all the mitzvot and good deeds performed by My children are done for the sake of their Father in Heaven." We learn a spiritual lesson from the bee as well. A honeybee does not think of itself when it produces its honey; it does so only because of the wishes of its Creator. The same should apply to us as well. "I have only been created to serve my Master," the Talmud states. (*Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

How can I by myself alone bear your trouble, and your burden, and your strife? (Deut. 1:12)
Rashi comments: "And your burden"--this teaches that the Children of Israel were apikorsim (skeptics and heretics). Rabbi Nachman of Breslov used to say: The heaviest burden a man can endure is that of skepticism. The heart of the true believer is much lighter than that of the heretic, who is always weighed down by the yoke of his doubts.

Shabbat Chazon
This Shabbat is known as Shabbat Chazon, from the Hebrew word which means vision or prophecy. On this day, every Jew is shown a vision of the third Holy Temple from afar. The situation is likened to the following: A father had a very expensive garment sewn for his son, who was too foolish to take proper care of his clothes. After the son tore the garment the first time, the father went out and had another sewn to replace it. The second time the boy acted irresponsibly and tore his clothes the father, much wiser by now, had another garment sewn, but decided not to give it to the son immediately. From time to time he would allow the boy to catch a glimpse of the outfit, telling him that if he behaved properly he would then be worthy of his father's gift. In such a way did the father train his son to improve his behavior and stay on the right path.

Shabbat during the "Three Weeks"
The three weeks between the 17th of Tammuz and Tisha B'Av are a time of sadness and mourning over the destruction of the Holy Temples. On Shabbat, however, we are forbidden to mourn. Even if Tisha B'Av falls on Shabbat the fast is postponed until the next day, and the day is spent as a day of joy. These Sabbaths are like the "cure which is sent before the illness," the illness being the destruction which was to follow. These Sabbaths also reveal to us the inner meaning of the exile, which is only a preparation for the final redemption, described as "a day which is entirely Shabbat." When Moshiach comes and everything is revealed, the Jewish people will even thank G-d for their years in exile. (*Lubavitcher Rebbe*)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

The Shabbat before Tisha B'Av is called "Shabbat Chazon" (vision), for on that day, as Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev explained, a glimpse of the Third Holy Temple is given to every Jewish soul, affording it strength and sustenance. Following the week's regular Torah portion (Devarim), the "Vision of Isaiah," a prophecy about the Temple's destruction, is read in the synagogue. Oddly, the word "vision" is used in connection to both the destruction of the Temple and its rebuilding.

About the destruction, our Sages declared, "A lion (Nebuchad-nezzar) came in the month whose sign is a lion (Av) to destroy Ariel (the lion of G-d--the Holy Temple), so that a lion (G-d) will come in the month whose sign is a lion and build Ariel." Once again we find the same word--"lion"--referring to both the destruction and the rebuilding of the Temple. What can we learn from this?

In order to understand the connection between the two, let us examine the true nature of the destruction. Our Sages explain that G-d Himself observes the Torah's 613 mitzvot. But if so, how could He have destroyed His Holy Temple, when we are expressly prohibited from razing a synagogue or place of worship? It is also forbidden to wantonly destroy an object of value. Why, then, did G-d allow His dwelling place on earth to be demolished?

One cannot explain the destruction and the subsequent 2,000 year exile by saying that the Jews lost their right to the Temple because of their misdeeds, for instead of destroying the Temple, G-d could have hidden it away as He did the Sanctuary, for such a time as the Jews would merit its return.

Rather, the only instance in which it is permissible to tear down a synagogue is when one wishes to build an even more magnificent edifice on the same site. It follows that the destruction of the Holy Temple also fell into this category. The Second Temple was destroyed only because G-d wanted to build the Third and most exalted Holy Temple--the one that would stand for eternity.

The inner purpose of the destruction, therefore, was solely to rebuild. That is why the Midrash relates that "the redeemer of Israel" was born at the moment the Temple was destroyed: from that moment on, the true objective of the destruction--the Redemption and the building of the Third Holy Temple--could begin to be realized.

It is for this reason that our Sages used similar words to refer to both the exile and the redemption, for just as the Temple's destruction was an integral part of its rebuilding, so, too, is the exile an integral part of the Final Redemption and the coming of Moshiach, may it happen speedily.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Leaving No Stone Unturned

The fast of Tisha B'Av commemorates the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem about 2,000 years ago. We sit low and read Lamentations. Jews from the world over pray at the Western Wall and embrace its stones--our only remnant of the Holy Temple's grandeur.

The words and the cry, "If I forget thee O, Jerusalem!" kept us going through our exile and wanderings. Wherever we settled, we turned back to Jerusalem in prayer. Our synagogues face east, and the "mizrach" decoration in Jewish homes points the way to our ultimate destination.

Even if we can't be there physically, we are there in heart and mind. Now, on Tisha B'Av, let's get as close as possible to these precious stones. Let us try to outline, if only on paper, our hopes and yearnings.

"Behold, my beloved stands behind our wall, looking in the windows, peering through the cracks," wrote King Solomon in the Song of Songs. The Divine presence never left the Western Wall.

The Western Wall is not only for the rich and famous. Every Jew owns a piece of the rock. And no one gets lost between the cracks. The stones reflect our differences: Big and small,

whole and broken, smooth and rough, together we form a formidable wall, a fortress of faith that endures forever.

The Western Wall is not just a tourist attraction or an archeological point of interest. Each stone block is like a page, each row a chapter, of our long Jewish history, written in stone. The Rock of Ages that guarantees Jewish survival.

But let's face it, it's incomplete. Let's not get too comfortable with just one wall. If our own home was ruined save for one wall--no dining room, bedroom, or kitchen--would we be satisfied living in a hole in the wall?

We pray daily for the Holy Temple's rebuilding through the righteous Moshiach speedily in our days. To some people, that may sound off the wall. But our belief in Moshiach is a cornerstone of Judaism. "I fully believe in Moshiach's coming. Each day I await him," is the foundation on which all else stands.

We must leave no stone unturned. We must study, do mitzvot, prepare and look forward to the Redemption as we conclude Lamentations. "Return to us, O G-d, and we will return to You. Renew our days as once before!"



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SLICE OF LIFE

Igniting Inspiration in Ithaca

By: Chaya Chazan



Rabbi Raffy Filler relates: I had a traditional Chabad upbringing in the large Lubavitch community in Montreal. As a young man, I was privileged to help Chabad representatives in various parts of the world. My wife Chana grew up in Stony Brook, helping her parents teach university students about Judaism.

We both added to our experience after our marriage, working with the Johnsons, at Chabad of the University of Texas. It was an invaluable experience under expert tutelage that empowered us, when we were offered a post of our own at Ithaca College, to accept it with confidence.

We're still in the beginning stages, having moved out just under two years ago. Our first order of business was getting recognized by the college as an official student club - not an easy feat in most US colleges.

We began by gauging student interest, offering programs or services they requested. We're continuing to grow our current programs, as well as adding more. We offer Shabbos and holiday programs, Sinai scholars, lunch and learns, and other one-on-one opportunities to deepen the student's understanding of their heritage.

Like many college campuses across the country, we haven't been immune to loud, anti-Israel demonstrations. With an overwhelmingly large

Jewish population, it's been much less dramatic than those staged at Columbia and Harvard, and the administration has taken a peaceable, neutral stance.

In the wake of the horrific attack on October 7th, we saw a surge of Jewish pride and yearning to connect. People who never wanted to put on tefillin before were suddenly volunteering their arms, and we got many calls of support.

We had an idea to take our students on a Shabbaton and give them a true Shabbos experience.

The Shabbaton was a massive success. The students experienced a real Shabbos for the first time in their lives, and it impressed them tremendously. It was so successful, we've decided to make it a recurring event every semester!

After the Shabbaton, we gave out Sinai Scholar T-shirts, emblazoned with the message I love being Jewish! We had a long, emotional talk about what it meant to have Jewish pride, and how to combat the fear of anti-Semitism and not let it hold us back. Many of the students resolved to wear their T-shirts on campus the next day.

Sharon* was extremely reluctant. She'd seen so many hateful messages and heard too many stories to become a walking target. Her mother advised her to remove her Magen David necklace. But when she thought more about our discussion, she overcame her fear and joined the other students, wearing her t-shirt to class. She even snapped a selfie and sent it to her mother.

Sharon's mother, Mattie*, was set to run the New York City Marathon a few days later. She'd been suffering the same cycle of fear and anxiety as her daughter. Seeing her daughter overcome her fear and wearing her I love being Jewish shirt inspired Mattie too. When she ran the marathon, she ran with the names of every hostage displayed on her back, and the name of a fallen soldier pinned over her heart. She ran, unafraid, through crowds waving the Palestinian flag and shouting hateful chants. She crossed the finish line with tears running down her face, and a heart beating fiercely with pride and love for her people.

Since we're still in the beginning years at Ithaca,

we don't yet have a big, beautiful building. Instead, we cram as many students as we can fit into our small home. For a regular Shabbos, we make it work. But Purim was coming up, and we wanted ample space for a much larger crowd.

After some creative thinking, we decided to rent a party bus. Not only would we have more space, we could also drive around from dormitory to dormitory, bringing the party to the students! Purim fell out on Motzei Shabbos so we arranged for the bus to come right after Havdalah.

While we enjoyed a calm, serene Shabbos at home, we had no idea what was taking place on campus. A pro-Palestinian organization had arranged a "die-in," where dozens of students lay on the floor, as if dead. It cast a pall over the entire campus, and a feeling of unease amongst the Jewish students.

Without knowing any of this, we came driving down the street, blasting festive Jewish music and pulling students in to dance. In moments, the mood switched from anxious and tense to happy, cheerful, and confident. And the city of Ithaca rejoiced and was glad.

Charlie's* whole family came to celebrate his graduation. Charlie had become quite a regular in our Chabad house, and he was excited to introduce us.

"Do you want to mark this special occasion by putting on tefillin?" I asked Charlie. "Sure!" Charlie said, rolling up his sleeve.

I offered Charlie's father and brothers in turn. It was their first time wearing tefillin. I explained I'd received that pair from my cousin, who asked me to use them to help people put on tefillin in honor of his father, my uncle, who'd recently passed.

I then turned to Charlie's grandfather, and offered him a chance to put on tefillin. "No thanks," he grunted. "Come on!" I pressed lightly. "When was the last time you put on tefillin?" "It was with a rabbi named Velvy Finkelstein," he answered. My jaw dropped. "That's the uncle I was just talking about!" Charlie's grandfather was shocked enough that he agreed to put them on. "Your uncle was a very special man who helped me a lot," he shared, emotionally. "I'm so happy I got to do something for him in return."

*Names changed to protect privacy

Ethics of the Fathers: Chapter Three

Rabbi Chalaftha the son of Dosa of the village of Chanania would say: Ten who sit together and occupy themselves with Torah, the Divine Presence rests amongst them, as is stated: "The Almighty stands in the congregation of G-d" (Psalms 82:1).

Rabbi Elazar of Bartosa would say: Give Him what is His, for you, and whatever is yours, are His. As David says: "For everything comes from You, and from Your own hand we give to You" (I Chronicles 29:14).

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

NURTURING THE SOUL

By the Grace of G-d
28th of Iyar, 5734
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Students of Grade II4
Oholei Torah Day School
500 S.W. 17th Avenue
Miami, Fla.

Greeting and Blessing:

Your teacher sent me your note-books in connection with your assignment, "My plans for the Summer," which I looked through with much interest.

I wish you a happy and healthy summer, and since every person has a body and a soul, a healthy person is one who is healthy both in body and in soul. As a matter of fact, the soul is the more important part of a person, and when the soul is healthy it helps the body to keep in good shape.

Since you are fortunate to be students of the Oholei Torah Day School, you surely know that the soul, like the body, needs constant nourishment, and the nourishment of the soul is the Torah and Mitzvos.

During the school period you spend time partly in the study of Torah and partly in the study of other things, like English and arithmetic etc. However useful these other things are, they do not make the soul healthier, for, as mentioned above, the soul receives health and strength only from Torah and Mitzvos.

But during the summer vacation, when you are free from other things, you have an opportunity to learn more Torah and do more Mitzvos, and in this way to give your soul a chance to get really strong and healthy, and to gather strength also for the coming school-year.

I have written more on this important subject in a special message to all students,

which your teacher will surely read and explain to you.

So I will conclude with the prayerful wish that you should, with G-d's help, make the most of your summer vacation along the above lines, and G-d will surely bless you to have a truly healthy summer, healthy both in soul and in body.

Wishing you a happy and inspiring Yom Tov of Mattan-Torah, and may the joy of this great Festival be with you throughout the summer and always,

With blessing,

DIFFICULTIES AT SCHOOL

By the Grace of G-d
12th of Shevat, 5721
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Miss. . .

New Haven, Conn.

Blessing and Greeting:

I received your letter, in which you write about your difficulties at school which seems to bother you very much.

As I know your parents, I am sure you must have heard from them about G-d's benevolent Providence, how He watches over every one individually, big and small, with love and care.

Therefore, you should be quite sure that G-d watches also over you and knows of your problem and wants to help you. But your cooperation is needed, and this is through your daily conduct as befits a Jewish girl, who is "the daughter of Sarah, Rifkah, Rachel and Leah".

If you will think and remember that you are learning the holy subjects not to please anyone but yourself, because of the great benefit that there is in store for you, it will help you be moresuccessful in your school work as well as in your daily conduct.

With complete faith in G-d and with strong determination, you will surely overcome your present difficulties, for our Sages of blessed memory have said "Nothing stands in the way of the will."

I hope you will have good news to report, and that you are also using your good influence with your classmates, to follow your good example.

With blessing

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Some people are apprehensive about the Redemption. What will come of businesses, property possessions, and friendships? The Redemption doesn't imply the annulment of the natural order, nor the loss of the good things that came into being (in the spirit of Torah) during

the Exile. Indeed, these very things will be elevated to a state of Redemption, to the level of their true perfection. This is hinted at in the fact that the Hebrew word for exile (gola) plus alef form geula--redemption. The positive aspects of the exile will not be annulled; rather, the alef within them will be revealed--an allusion to Alufo shel Olam, the Master of the World.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR From the Archives

This Shabbat, the Sabbath before Tisha B'Av, is called Shabbat Chazon. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev used to note that the name comes from the word machaze, meaning "vision," for "on that day everyone is shown the future Holy Temple."

The purpose of this vision is to inspire and encourage a Jew: having caught a glimpse of the Third Holy Temple in its heavenly perfection, all that is left for him to do is to bring it down to this world.

Although not everyone actually sees the Third Holy Temple, everyone is intrinsically affected by it. This is similar to the following episode from the Book of Daniel: "And I Daniel alone saw the vision; the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them..."

Our Sages ask why a dread fell upon the men with Daniel if they had not actually witnessed the vision. They answer: "Though they did not see it, their heavenly soul saw it."

In the same way, on Shabbat Chazon, the soul sees the future Sanctuary; moreover, this perception leaves an impression on the individual, even on his body.

Tuesday, Tisha B'Av, is a fast day. On that day we mourn the destruction of the First and Second Holy Temples and other devastating events that took place on that date.

The Rebbe spoke about the comment of our Sages that Tisha B'Av is the birthday of Moshiach. The Rebbe explained that this is true because the moment the destruction began, the potential for the Redemption also began. And, since Moshiach was "born" on Tisha B'Av, his mazal is stronger and shines brighter on that day.

May we celebrate in actuality the birthday of Moshiach this Tisha B'Av at which time we will be reunited with the Rebbe who will lead us all together to the Complete and Final Redemption.

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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