



Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev and Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk eagerly joined the townsfolk in the *mitzva* (commandment) of marrying off the young couple, two orphans who had been brought up by members of the community.

Just as the wedding was about to begin, news spread that kidnappers were looking for young men of draft age. The hapless victims of such ruthless men would be enlisted in the Czar's army for 25 years. Often their bereaved families never saw them again. All the young men fled into hiding, but the bridegroom was so preoccupied with his wedding preparations that he neglected to hide, and so he was the only young man found.

When the terrible news became known, grief replaced the former happy bustle. The bride was inconsolable. Rabbi Menachem Mendel, who had helped arrange the match, came to the young woman and said, "I promise that this very day your groom will be returned to you." The words of the *tzadik* gave her strength and calmed her. Rabbi Menachem Mendel rushed to the office of the military attache, where he found a drunken officer sitting at the desk. He made an impassioned plea for the release of the groom. "You filthy Jew! You could be executed for trying to bribe an officer of the Czar! Why I wouldn't even take 3,000 rubles as a bribe to free the boy. Maybe I wouldn't take 5,000!"

When the *tzadik* heard those words his heart filled with hope. Obviously, the officer was open to bribes; now he had to figure out a way to raise the astronomical sum. He went to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak who answered, "Even if all the townspeople give everything they own they would not raise this sum."

"Nevertheless," replied Rabbi Menachem Mendel, "We must go to each and every house and see what we can gather, for the boy must be saved."

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak agreed and suggested that they bring their colleague, Rabbi Shneur Zalman with them to help persuade the people.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman agreed, but on two conditions: they must make a list of potential donors, and only he had the final say of how much each person should contribute. They agreed to the conditions and wrote out a list. When it was finished, Rabbi Shneur Zalman added an improbable name to the top of the page, that of the infamous Votzh (formerly Velvel), a fabulously wealthy Jew who was notorious for his lack of charity. Not only did Rabbi Shneur Zalman add his name to the top of the list, but he insisted that they visit him first.

When they were admitted to Votzh's mansion, Rabbi Shneur Zalman explained the tragic plight of the young couple and begged him to participate in this great mitzva.

"I will join in ransoming the young man," said Votzh. He opened his safe ceremoniously and withdrew a copper penny, green with age. Rabbi Shneur Zalman took it and solemnly thanked the miser, adding, "May G-d grant you many more opportunities to perform mitzvot." The three *tzadikim* headed to the door, but Rabbi Shneur Zalman's companions were aghast at such impudence.

Then a voice rang out saying, "Please don't leave yet." They turned to see Votzh withdrawing two heaping handfuls of coppers from his safe and offering it to Rabbi Shneur Zalman. Again he thanked the miser profusely, heaping blessings on him for his good deed. The scenario repeated itself ten more times, and each time Votzh increased his donation substantially, until he had given the three rabbis the entire enormous sum of 5,000 rubles.

Money in hand, Rabbi Menachem Mendel ran to the military attache, who gladly accepted the bribe, ordering his servant, "Bring the crippled Jew out. How dare they pass off a cripple as a proper military recruit!"

Together, the rabbis and the groom proceeded to the waiting wedding celebration. As they walked a carriage flew past. They caught a glimpse of the drunken officer just before the racing carriage plunged over a bridge into the black, raging waters below. They tried to rescue the officer, but the carriage, horses, and driver had sunk into the rushing water. As they walked in the darkness, the bridegroom's foot hit a hard object. It was a metal strongbox, which contained not only the 5,000 rubles, but other valuable objects as well.

The three rabbis and the shocked bridegroom hurried back to town where the wedding took place with great rejoicing. Later that evening, Rabbi Shneur Zalman explained, "I knew that we couldn't hope to raise so much money from the townspeople, and yet, since

Rabbi Menachem Mendel had sworn the groom would return, it had to happen. Velvel-Votzh was our only hope. I knew that once he had offered a copper penny to a beggar who threw it back in his face in disgust. Velvel was insulted, but not only for his personal honor. Even more painful to him was that his new god, money, had been put to shame. He resolved never to give more than a penny to anyone who would ask, and each time he offered the same pathetic copper penny. Of course, his offering was always greeted with the same disdain, and his anger continued to mount. For some 20 years that same penny lay in Velvel's safe until I accepted it from him.

"It is written, 'Make for Me an opening as wide as the eye of a needle and I will increase it to admit the largest wagons.' Once the tiny breach had been made in Velvel's heart, G-d was able to make it big enough for him to provide the entire ransom himself.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

In the beginning G-d created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was formless and empty, with darkness over the depths...And G-d said: "There shall be light." (Gen. 1:1-3)

These opening words of the Torah teach the approach all Jews should take in serving G-d: It was G-d Himself who created heaven and earth, and therefore He alone is Master of the world and of everything within it. At first, the world is dark and empty of G-d's light. But every Jew has his own portion of the world, which he has to improve and illuminate. The way to brighten his portion of the world is through "and G-d said"--fulfilling G-d's word by studying Torah and keeping mitzvot. Through this, the Jew accomplishes his purpose in the world and "There shall be light" – the world becomes illuminated with the light of G-d's Torah. (From a letter of the Rebbe)

And G-d saw that it was good (Gen. 1:10)

Unlike His other creations, G-d did not pronounce man good immediately after creating him. For man was created with free will, with the power to determine his own actions and define his own character. Accordingly, G-d waits to see which path we choose before pronouncing judgment. (Kli Yakar)

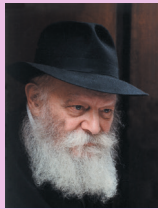
And G-d said, let us make man in our image (Gen. 1:26)

One reason the Torah uses the plural "us" is that man is a "compound" creation, containing within him all of the higher and lower elements of the universe. The soul of man embraces all of the higher spheres, while his physical body is made of dust, representing all of the lower realms. (Likutei Levi Yitzchak)



5:49 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
26 Tishrei/Oct 21
Torah Portion Bereishit
Blessing of the new month Cheshvan
Shabbat ends 6:46 PM



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

This week we start reading the Torah from the beginning with the Torah portion of *Bereishit*. The *Haftora* this week is from the book of Isaiah.

There are several reasons we read this *Haftora* on this special Shabbat:

The *Haftora* starts with, "So says the Almighty G-d, Who created Heavens . . . Who laid out the earth . . ." These words are similar to the Torah portion that speaks of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

The prophecy continues with a discussion regarding the Final Redemption, and the song that all of creation will sing to G-d on that day. Gd promises to punish all the nations that have persecuted Israel while they were exiled. The prophet also rebukes Israel for neglecting Torah study and *mitzva* (commandment) observance, but assures them that they will return to the correct path and will be redeemed.

What is the connection between all these things: creation, Moshiach, Torah, mitzvot and the Jewish people?

The reason why G-d created this world, is because, He has a Divine desire to dwell in this world openly, and that we make that possible through our efforts. This is what the Jewish mission is all about. We were not just chosen because of our ancestors, rather, we are part of G-d's Divine plan from the very beginning. G-d created an unfinished world, and made us His partners in creation, to complete it, of our own free will.

The soul of a Jew is an actual part of G-d. These souls are what enable us to bring out the potential hidden in creation.

He gave us Torah and mitzvot, with which to accomplish this mission. Every mitzva is done with physical objects, time or place. When you do a mitzva, you transform the physical into holy. Even when doing everyday activities, like working, eating, exercising, etc., if you are doing them, to support your life of Torah, they too become holy and transformative actions.

When our work is done, the purpose of creation will be realized, the world will be an open dwelling for G-d, and by definition Moshiach will be here.

The world, the Torah, and the Jewish people, are parts of a puzzle, which together, complete G-d's desire, the coming of Moshiach.

This is why we read these verses from the book of Isaiah as our *Haftora* on *Shabbat Bereishit*, because as we start the Torah from the beginning, its purpose must be made clear.

May we soon see the prophecies in this *Haftora* come true. May we witness the culmination of our transformative work, G-d's open revelation, with the coming of Moshiach. May it happen 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.

Soul Talk

Two souls met each other at the half-way point between heaven and earth. One was descending into this world to be en clothed in a body. The other was ascending, having completed its mission here.

"What's it like down there?" asked the first soul warily.

"Well, for three *kopecks* you can buy the strings for *tzitzit* (the fringes on a four-cornered garment)," replied the ascending soul.

"Wow, imagine that!" exclaimed the first soul, awed at the relatively inexpensive price of performing *mitzvot* (commandments). The soul began plummeting even more quickly, without fear or hesitation.

"Don't be so eager," the second soul called out after it. "Just wait until you see how hard you have to work to get that money!"

Thank G-d, it's not nearly as tough as it used to be to make a living. Most of us live lifestyles that would have been considered opulent in the days when *tzitzit* cost three kopecks. What our great-grandparents considered luxuries are today's bare necessities.

Most of us needn't be work-aholics to have money to spend on mitzvot. Loose change can be dropped into a *zedaka* box. A dollar can buy a box of a dozen Shabbat candles. For \$10 you can purchase a nice bottle of kosher wine over which to recite the "kiddush" on Shabbat. Forty dollars will get you a kosher mezuzah parchment.

Unlike our great-grandparents, most of us can hardly claim that doing mitzvot will take food out of our mouths. These amounts of money

are not an issue.

What our great-grandparents lacked in money, they made up for in unwavering commitment, enthusiasm and faith. They also inscribed in their minds and on their hearts the words contained in the first ruling of the Code of Jewish Law: Do not be embarrassed by scoffers. They weren't concerned with what the neighbors would say. For all these reasons and more, even when they really didn't have the three kopecks, they somehow found the money rather than neglect the opportunity to perform a mitzva.

If those two souls were to encounter each other in our times, the soul returning from its sojourn on earth would not comment on how hard it is to earn money to do mitzvot. Perhaps the conversation would go something like this:

"What's it like down there?" asks the first soul warily.

"Well, for only \$20 you can buy a nice bottle of kosher wine to use for *kiddush* on Shabbat," replies the ascending soul.

"Wow, imagine that!" exclaims the first soul, awed at the relatively inexpensive price of acquiring mitzvot. The soul begins plummeting even more quickly, without fear or hesitation.

"Don't be so eager," the second soul calls after it. "Just wait until you see how hard it is to convince your body that it's important to make kiddush on Shabbat let alone break your teeth on the Hebrew!"

Do a mitzva. Your soul will surely appreciate it, and so will you! You'll both be glad you did.

Dedicated in honor of dear friends
of the Lubavitch Youth Organization
and the L'Chaim Publication
Dovid and Chani Junik

SLICE OF LIFE

Celebrate!



Over 20,000 people attended the "Mega-Hakel" outside of Chabad World Headquarters 770 Eastern Parkway in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

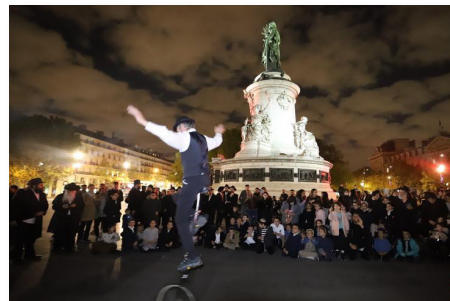
Chabad Centers around the world held celebrations throughout the holiday of Sukkot. Holiday meals, special events throughout the seven days of the Sukkot festival so that participants could fulfill the mitzva of eating the sukka and make the blessing on the lulav and etrog, fun-filled afternoon programs for the kids, evenings filled with live music and dancing for *Simchat Beit HaShoeiva*, and huge gatherings bringing together thousands of people during this Hakhel Unity Year. Children, teens, college and university students, seniors – there were programs and activities to include everyone and anyone.



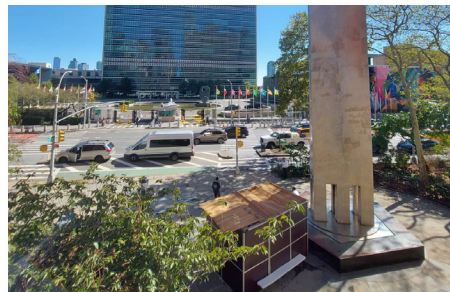
A sukka event in Auckland, New Zealand, one of the latest places in the world to begin the holiday.



Celebrating at a public Sukka in Frankfurt, Germany



A public outdoor gathering in Paris, France, including live music and entertainers.



The Lubavitch Youth Organization United Nations Sukka, in Ralph Bunch Park, near the Isaiah Wall



In the midst of the on-going war, a children's gathering in the sukka of Chabad in Odessa, Ukraine



50,000 people gathered at the Western Wall on the fourth night of Sukkot. The massive Hakel event including the welcoming of three new Torah Scrolls as well as dancing in honor of *Simchat Beit HaShoeiva*



Enjoying a Sukkot meal at Chabad at NSU in Davie, Florida



Making the blessing on the lulav and etrog at Chabad of Aruba



Even in the rain, celebrating with Chabad CBD Melbourne, Australia.



First-ever double-decker Sukka in Corpus Christi, Texas



A floating sukka in Venice, Italy

Hakhel–Unite

"It is within the capability of every man and woman, ... There are those who think they are only 'small people' and can't really do much... The truth of the matter is that every person was given the highest and most amazing capabilities!" (The Rebbe, 6 Tishrei 1987) Reach out to everyone you know and bring them together during this special year for a hakhel gathering. Find out more at hakhelnation.com

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Translated from a letter of the Rebbe. This letter was written three weeks after the Yom Kippur War. This year is also a Hakhel year.

Beginning of Marcheshvan, 5734 (1973)
...The month of Tishrei ushers in the new year.

In particular, it is the festivals of this month that provide the resources – spiritual powers and material means – to accomplish the above [to fulfill the imperative, "All your actions should be for the sake of heaven," and "Know Him in all your ways."]

Inasmuch as all matters of the Torah are meaningful in all their details, how much more so such a comprehensive matter relating to Tishrei.

It is significant that all the festivals of the month of Tishrei are "sealed" with the Season of our Rejoicing and Simchas Torah.

This pointedly re-emphasizes the explicit commandment, "Serve G-d with joy," – with true joy derived from G-d's Torah and G-d's precepts that "rejoice the heart."

What has been said above regarding the meaningfulness of all details in Torah, applies, of course, also to the time element.

For although each year the month of Tishrei sets the tone and provides benefits for the entire year, each new year also introduces additional new elements pertaining to it, and each year brings its own distinctive teaching.

Thus the special teaching of the current year is related to its distinctive features which set it apart from the six years which preceded it and the six years which follow, in that it is the year of *Hakhel* [gathering]: "Gather together all the people, men women and children."

To be sure, this *Mitzvah* [commandment] – in its plain and actual form – is confined to the Holy Land, "the land which...always [including the time of exile] G-d's eyes are on it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year," and to the time of the Holy Temple. However, the spiritual aspects and content of all *Mitzvot* are eternal, being

part of our eternal Torah.

The general character of the *Mitzvah* of *Hakhel* calls for the implementation of its contents and purpose, not on an individual basis, but in the manner of *Hakhel*, i.e. congregationally and collectively, with multitudes of participants, and with special emphasis on congregating the young, including boys and girls of tender age, and for the purpose specified in the Torah, "That they should heed to do all the words of this Torah."

Specifically:

That they should heed," also in the sense of eager anticipation and longing; "to do" – in actual practice, not being content with merely a "good heart," "good intention," or "good resolution," but in actual deed; "all the words of the Torah" – a person should not think that since his merits outweigh his demerits, and by a substantial margin, he has already done his duty, for one is required to fulfill all the words of "this Torah" – as if "pointing a finger" demonstratively and emphatically that this is the Torah exactly as it was given to Moses at Sinai, the Written Torah together with its interpretation, the Oral Torah, free from any, G-d forbid, distortion, misinterpretation, compromise, etc.

The significance of the said *Hakhel* concept has been accentuated by the events that began on the Holy Day (Yom Kippur) in this Hakhel-Year, directed against our men, women and children as a Holy Congregation.

But the togetherness of our people in the spirit of *Hakhel* will stand our people in good stead, as it did in the past, in fulfillment of the prophetic promise: "The L-rd of Hosts shall shield them" – His people, the "unique and united people on earth"; "He redeemed them, elevated them, and exalted them all the days of the world."

And as Jews gather together to increasingly implement the *Hakhel* objective, they should heed all the words of Torah, spreading the light of Torah and mitzvot in an ever growing measure. Thus, they dispel the darkness of the exile and thereby (through Torah and *Mitzvot* in daily life) bring closer the coming of our Righteous Mashiach and our true and complete Redemption: "And the earth will be filled with (G-d's) glory."

This is an appropriate time to call attention again, to the appeal for Torah and *tzedakah* (charity) in every day practice, in light of the prophet's words: "Zion shall be redeemed through *Mishpat* (Torah) and its returnees through charity."

an acronym for the names of three central figures: Adam, (King) David and Mashiach. The Baal Shem Tov derives from this that there is a spark of the soul of Mashiach within every single Jew. Thus he concludes that it is incumbent upon every individual Jew to perfect and prepare that part of the spiritual stature of Mashiach to which his soul is related. (Living with Mashiach by Rabbi Dr. J.I. Schochet)

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Adam's soul was a composite of the souls of all his descendants-all of mankind. The Hebrew term for a human thus is adam. Mystics note that adam is

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

This Shabbat is known as "Shabbat Bereishit," the Shabbat on which we read the first portion of the first book of the Torah – Bereishit.

The Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, used to say that "the position which we adopt on Shabbat Bereishit determines the nature of our conduct in the entire year to come."

Shabbat Bereishit represents the transition from the holidays of the month of Tishrei to our regular, day-to-day life of the coming months.

Shabbat, in general, is known to elevate the spiritual service of the previous week. As Shabbat Bereishit follows the holidays of Sukkot and Simchat Torah – holidays that collect and internalize all the influences of the holiday-filled month of Tishrei – Shabbat Bereishit perfects and elevates the holidays of Tishrei.

In addition, Shabbat Bereishit is the Shabbat on which the month of Marcheshvan is blessed. One of the reasons that the prefix "mar" is added to the name of the month Cheshvan is that "mar" means bitter. Cheshvan has no holidays and is therefore a "bitter" month, especially in comparison to holiday-packed Tishrei.

Because Shabbat Bereishit has both of these aspects – the culmination of the previous month and the blessing of the upcoming month – it can potentially influence the entire year.

Thus, the position we adopt on Shabbat Bereishit has the potential to influence the entire year; it can bring the spiritual inspiration of Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Simchat Torah into our regular, day-to-day living.

May we all have a very "successful" Shabbat Bereishit.

Shmuel Beilman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA
זכרון 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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