



The Baal Shem Tov sent one of his disciples, Avraham, on a trip. The ship on which Avraham was traveling encountered a terrible storm and capsized. Avraham was thrown into the tempestuous ocean and the next thing he knew, he was on the beach of a small island. Neither the wreckage of the ship nor the other passengers were anywhere in sight.

Avraham explored the island, going a little further each day, in the hope of finding someone who could help him. When Thursday arrived, Avraham went the deepest into the island he had gone yet. He found a little village that was eerily still, perfectly silent.

Avraham explored the entire village which was comprised of a synagogue and a few dozen houses. He was astonished to see that the entire village was empty and yet every single house was immaculately clean. The village was truly a mystery.

Avraham decided to return to the deserted village on Friday and spend Shabbat there, albeit by himself. Friday morning, Avraham made his way to the village. But now the village was packed with people, all busy preparing for Shabbat. He asked one of the villagers excitedly, "Where did all of you come from? I was here just yesterday and no one was anywhere in sight. It is as if you materialized out of thin air!" Avraham concluded.

Politely but firmly, the villager responded, "Excuse me, but I am very busy preparing for Shabbat. Go to the synagogue this evening. There you will find our rabbi who will certainly tell you everything you want to know."

Avraham did as he was told and after the evening services asked the rabbi for an explanation. The rabbi responded: "Be my guest this Shabbat and we will discuss this topic as well as many more interesting subjects."

That Shabbat in the rabbi's home was the most sublime, the most exalted, the holiest Shabbat he had ever experienced in his life. Avraham felt as if the very gates of the Garden of Eden had been opened to him and he was partaking of the same Shabbat that the souls there experience. In fact, so unique was this Shabbat that Avraham totally forgot to ask the rabbi the question.

As the end of Shabbat approached, all of the villagers gathered in the synagogue. The rabbi recited the special prayer (Havdala) separating Shabbat from the rest of the week. The rabbi and all of the other villagers then dipped their fingertips into the wine of Havdala and passed their fingers over their eyes. And then, they all... vanished. Before Avraham even realized what had happened, everyone was gone. The entire village was once more deserted.

Avraham waited in the village the entire week for the holy Shabbat to arrive. When he awoke Friday morning, he smelled gefilte fish cooking, challahs baking, chicken roasting. The village was once more busy with preparations for Shabbat. And once more, when Avraham tried to ask anyone where they had been the entire week, he received a polite but firm rebuff.

Shabbat arrived and what a beautiful, magnificent, holy Shabbat it was. Avraham once more was the guest at the house of the rabbi. And once more, Avraham forgot to ask his question.

But, when Shabbat ended this time, Avraham suddenly remembered that he must find out the village's story. When the rabbi had finished reciting Havdala, Avraham grabbed hold of his hand. "I will not let go of you until you unravel the mystery of your village for me," Avraham told the rabbi.

The rabbi, having no other choice, told Avraham the following story: "Everyone in this village was a resident of a small town outside of Jerusalem when the Holy Temple stood. Shabbat was the favorite mitzva of our little town and we celebrated it gloriously. When the Holy Temple was destroyed our town was also destroyed and all of its inhabitants were killed.

"When we went to Heaven, we all approached the Divine Throne united, as one, just as we had always been united in our love for and observance of Shabbat. We protested to G-d, 'Heaven – which is totally spiritual – is not a just reward for our community, as our true love and desire has always been to uphold and celebrate the holy Shabbat. And this we will not be able to do in Heaven. Let us return to the physical, mundane world each week, on the eve of Shabbat, celebrate Shabbat there, and then we will return to Heaven.'

"G-d agreed. And since that time, for these thousands of years, each Shabbat eve we return to the physical world and celebrate Shabbat."

The rabbi then took a piece of parchment and wrote upon it various combinations of the letters of G-d's Name. He told Avraham to take this parchment to the ocean. Avraham was to close his eyes and begin walking into the ocean, all the while holding the parchment in his hand above the water. When he felt he could walk no further, Avraham was to throw the parchment

into the air and he would find himself on the shores of the water near his home. The rabbi then passed his fingers over his eyes and vanished.

Avraham made his way to the shore and did as the rabbi had instructed him. When the water was almost covering his nose he pulled back his arm to throw the parchment. But then he felt a hand grab hold of his arm and drag him along. Avraham opened his eyes to find himself near his home. The Baal Shem Tov was holding his arm so that he could not throw the parchment into the air.

The Baal Shem Tov asked Avraham for the parchment. "This is why I sent you on the mission," the Baal Shem Tov explained to Avraham. "I will be able to use the kabbalistic formula written upon this parchment to arrive instantly (k'fitzat haderech) anywhere in the world. I will be able to help Jews wherever they are and further spread the teachings of Chasidism which will hasten the coming of Moshiach."

THOUGHTS
THAT COUNT
on the weekly Torah portion

Go forth from the ark (Gen. 8:16)
"Your whole approach is wrong," G-d told Noah. "A person should not remain isolated from the world, safe and secure within the 'four cubits of Torah.' It is not right to think only about yourself. 'Go forth from the ark' – go out into the marketplace and mingle with the crowd, where you can influence them for good." (Peninei Torah)

I have set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of My covenant between Me and the earth...and the waters will no more become a flood to destroy all flesh (Gen. 9:13-15)
Why does the rainbow signify that G-d won't bring another Flood? Before the Flood, clouds were thick and dense, obscuring the sun's light. The Flood, which purified the earth, also refined the clouds and made it possible for the rainbow to be observed, a phenomenon caused by the sun's rays. The rainbow, a product of the process of purification, is thus symbolic of the Redemption that will come about through the refinement of the world. Its appearance in the sky is a sign of the imminence of Moshiach, as the Zohar states: "When a rainbow appears with its shining multicolored hues – await the arrival of Moshiach." The Messianic Era, when the world will reach unprecedented levels of holiness and refinement, is the culmination of that process of purification. (The Rebbe, Parshat Noah, 5721)

G-d descended to see the city and the tower (Gen. 11:5)
Why does the Torah tell us that G-d "descended" to investigate? Isn't G-d All-Knowing and All-Seeing, present in all worlds and omnipotent? Rather, these words contain a lesson for mankind: One must always investigate a matter thoroughly and never pronounce judgment on something one has not personally witnessed. (Our Sages)



6:08 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
2 Cheshvan/Oct 8
Torah Portion Noah
Shabbat ends 7:05pm

L'Chaim

בס"ה
1692
2 Cheshvan, 5782
Oct 8, 2021
The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person
נסד תור ימי השלושים
Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"... I have called out to the L-rd and He answered me" (Psalm 120:1)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

In this week's Torah portion, *Noach* (Noah), we read that after the flood, Noah sent a dove out of the ark. It returned, "and behold, it had plucked an olive leaf with its beak," and Noah knew that the water had subsided from the earth.

Why does the verse tell us what kind of leaf it was? And why does it say that it was plucked? What about this olive leaf told Noah that the water had subsided from the earth? And where in the world was the leaf from?

Why an olive leaf? Rashi explains that olives are bitter and the dove was hinting that he would rather have bitter food from the hand of G-d, than sweet food from the hand of man.

Even more. Olive trees are very hardy trees, and we see that Noah knew this, as Rashi tells us, that Noah took on to the ark a "(grape) vine and a fig sapling." However, he didn't take an olive plant, because he was certain that being a very strong tree, some would survive. Therefore, it makes sense that the dove would have found an olive tree.

Why does it say that it was plucked? This means that Noah was able to tell that it was a fresh leaf and not one that was found floating on the water. It was a new leaf that grew after the flood.

This was also what indicated to Noah that the water had subsided from the earth. Because even if the tree was on a mountain, the fact that it had enough time to grow new foliage indicated that there had been enough time for the water to subside.

According to a number of our Sages, the olive tree was in Israel, which was also purified by the flood. But why would Israel, the Holy Land, need to be purified by the flood?

While the flood purified the earth from the evils of the generations that preceded the flood, it also added a new level of holiness to the earth. For, what point would there be to send the whole flood, just to have the earth return to its prior state. (We also see this from the fact that our *Haftora* calls the flood, the "Waters of Noah." Noah also means, "it is good," that is that the flood had a positive side, it raised the status of the earth.) This is what the Holy Land gained by having the flood, it was raised to an even higher level of holiness.

The flood is symbolic of all our troubles. Just as the flood's ultimate purpose was to raise the status of the earth, so too, every difficulty in life is really a positive in disguise. It is a necessary hardship, which is there for your benefit, to bring you to a higher place, spiritually and physically. And if you can see it this way, life will start to become easier and happier.

Soon all the floods will end. There will be healing, livelihood, children, all our desires for good with the coming of Moshiach. Then, we will not be the same as before the struggles, we will have been elevated to a higher state, both physically and spiritually. 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.

Me and My Shadow

Shadows are awesome. As children, we chased our shadows or played shadow games where the point was to step on the other kids' shadows while making sure that they didn't step on ours.

As adults we learned that shadows can help us get our bearings even without a compass. Whether we're lost or simply trying to figure out which way is east (the direction toward which Jews to the west of Jerusalem traditionally stand in prayer), shadows can point us in the proper position.

Spiritual shadows are also awesome.

King David, in Psalms, taught that "G-d is your shadow at your right hand." The Baal Shem Tov explains this to mean that G-d has implanted a spiritual dynamic into the universe: Just as the movement of a person's body is reflected and magnified by the shadow, every step of our conduct in this world likewise arouses spiritual forces of incomparable power.

If we're outside on a sunny day, it's clear to us that every movement we make is accompanied by the movement of our shadow. Similarly, every positive action we take, every negative action we resist, every *mitzva* (commandment) we do, creates spiritual energy which we could best imagine as "shadows."

Like "regular" shadows, spiritual shadows have no corporeality. Although we may see the reflection of a mitzva (light from a Shabbat candle, a charity box filling up

with coins and eventually used to purchase food for a poor person, a smile on the face of an ill person we've visited), we don't see, nor can we touch, the spiritual reflection and energy created by that act.

Spiritual shadows are also greatly magnified in comparison with the energy or effort expended in performing the mitzva. What better example of this assertion can there be than Maimonides' statement that a small deed can tip one's personal "scale" and the global scale, bringing redemption to the entire world.

A distinction, however, between ordinary shadows and spiritual shadows is that our conduct is always producing spiritual shadows, even in the dark of night or the absence of light. For, ultimately, the mitzvot we do create their own spiritual light which generates the shadow.

Every Jew can not only magnify his shadow but can even cast a giant shadow through bringing more Jewish learning and living into his life. In the 60s movie "Cast a Giant Shadow," American-born West Point graduate David "Micky" Marcus (who was one of the first generals of the fledgling Israeli army) asserts, "Life isn't a spectator sport, you've got to get involved."

You don't create shadows, ordinary or spiritual, by sitting around and talking about it. "Action is the main thing" Judaism teaches. Get involved. Don't be afraid of your own shadow!

SLICE OF LIFE

Chabad Trajectory



One of my earliest memories is of my dad excitedly rushing through the front door, dropping bags of groceries on our kitchen table, exclaiming to my mom, “Jill, Jill, there is an orthodox Jewish rabbi at Walmart!” and my Mom looking at him incredulously, one eyebrow raised. (The rabbi we later found out is Chabad Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz.)

My mom’s quizzical look was par for the course as Temecula, California, where I was raised, was a small, dry, farm town before it became an internationally known tourist spot.

Although I was raised in a Jewish family and was very proud of being Jewish, I did not have a strong Jewish education. There were not many options in our small town at the time, so like my parents, we were always excited to meet another Jewish person. I internalized the notion that although we were small in numbers, the Jewish nation was strong and special. Going to public school in a mostly Mormon and evangelical Christian community, the feedback I would get was from curious and celebrated to negative and anti-Semitic.

My father is not Jewish, but he is and always has been proud and supportive of his Jewish

children. He would research the history of the holidays and read the stories to us and prayers to say. My father gave me the motivation and strength to discover more about my Jewishness while my mother blessed me with Judaism through birth, culture and heritage.

When I was very young my parents were founding members and briefly involved in a Reform congregation. However, they denied my father the opportunity to be a support in any leadership roles. This hurt my mother to the point she lost motivation for participating in any organization and did not have a Jewish community to call home in Temecula. But G-d had other plans for our family.

Our family became involved in Chabad after I returned from a Birthright trip to Israel. My parents were divorcing at the time and, as the oldest, I was very involved in caring for my younger siblings. I was doing my best to keep them happy even though it felt like the foundation was pulled out from under us.

Little did we know at the time that our foundation in Torah and with G-d is stronger than the one we thought we were losing.

I came home from my Birthright trip inspired by Israel and Googled “Jewish Temecula.” What popped up was “Chabad Temecula” run by Rabbi Yonasan and Netanya Abrams, at the time new emissaries to Temecula, who came to work with the Hurwitzs when Rabbi Yitzi was diagnosed with ALS.

I showed up the very next Shabbat. An old family friend excitedly waved me over to sit with her and guided me through the prayer book. After the service, the rabbi introduced himself with a bright and welcoming smile. He asked me about myself and I explained my interest in enrolling my three younger siblings in Hebrew School. Rabbi Abrams invited my family to his home which began both a dear friendship and our involvement in the community.

Chabad welcomed our family with open arms and thanks to the positive influence and structure in our lives our family began to heal. One of my brothers, 11 at the time, embraced religious

life immediately and solidified his commitment and love for Judaism after an amazing summer camp experience at L’man Achai.

My parents also embraced Chabad and were deeply supportive of my brother. They provided him with the respect, time, and space, even making the home kosher. It took me several more years of deep questions and debate before I realized a life of observing Torah and mitzvot (commandments) was a life to which I could fully commit. It started with me eating Kosher and learning everything I could on Chabad.org, and countless questions for my rabbi.

Finally, in April 2021, I asked my rabbi to help me find a place to study and thank G-d he told me about Machon L’Yahadus Women’s Yeshiva. Initially, I took three weeks leave from my job as a caregiver at a hospital in California to come to New York. After just a week, I decided that I would continue until the end of the school year. I had found the place I was searching for. And even before I realized that myself, a tentative spot was held for me at the Jewish Summer Fellowship so that I could continue to study in the summer. After the summer I returned to Machon L’Yahadus, where I am continuing my studies this year.

Chabad has changed the trajectory of our family. This summer, my youngest sister spent four weeks at Camp Gan Israel Poconos and returned with love, connection, and pride in her Judaism. Even my mother recently returned from a Bais Chana retreat in Utah, also with a deeper appreciation and connection with observing mitzvot and Shabbat.

Chabad has transformed not just me, but my entire family. We have all come together again since discovering Chabad, like beads of water gathering on a leaf and flowing into a body of water. Chabad in Temecula, and the various Chabad schools, learning programs and camps that my family members have attended, create a warm, welcoming, accessible community for any Jew to be a Jew no matter where you are. *Machon L’Yahadus-womensyeshiva.org, 718.552.2422; Bais Chana-baischana.org, 718.604.0088; Jewish Summer Fellowship-mjjsf.org, 516.967.9697; CGI Poconos-cgipoconos.org, 845.425.0903; L’man Achai-campmanachai.com, 718.436.8255*

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

15 Cheshvan, 5733 [1972]

This is to acknowledge receipt of your correspondence.

You write that you would love to learn what it means to walk in the presence of G-d, etc. I trust that you know of the so-called Seven Commandments given by G-d to Noah and his children.

These are:
the establishment of courts of justice;
the prohibition of blasphemy;
of idolatry;
of incest;
of bloodshed;
of robbery;
of eating flesh cut from a living animal.

These Seven Commandments which G-d gave to the children of Noah, i.e. to all mankind, are the basic laws, with far-reaching ramifications, which embrace the whole life of society as well as of the individual, to ensure that the human race will be guided by these Divine laws of morality and ethics, and that human society will indeed be human, and not a jungle.

To be sure, Jews, the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were later given many more Divine commandments which obligate them, but not the rest of mankind.

However, this in no way diminishes the fact that gentiles can and must attain complete fulfillment through the observance of the above-mentioned Seven Commandments of man, with all their ramifications, for, inasmuch as they are G-d-given, they provide the vehicle whereby to attain communion with G-d, and thus “walk ever in the presence of G-d,” as you write in your letter.

I would like to make an additional essential point.

If there was a time when some intellectuals thought that there was no need to connect the laws of ethics and morality with Divine authority, inasmuch as these are rational principles, the fallacy of this thinking is now abundantly clear.

For we have seen, in our own day and age, a whole nation which had boasted of great philosophic advancement and ethical systems sink to the lowest depth of inhuman depravity

and unprecedented barbarism.

And the reason for this was that they thought that they could establish a morality and ethics based on human reason, not subject to the authority of a Supreme Being, having themselves become a super race, as they thought. There is surely no need to elaborate on the obvious.

From what has been said above, it is clear that no individual can rest content with his own observance of the Divine Commandments, but it is his responsibility to his friends and neighbors, and society at large, to involve them in the observance of the Divine Commandants in daily life and conduct.

19th of Elul, 5745 [1985]

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to acknowledge receipt now of your letter of the first of Iyar, in which you write about your desire to learn Torah, though you are not Jewish.

I trust you know that the Torah itself has instructions as to the approach in such a situation. This is that the Torah -- and in a broader sense it not only includes the Written Torah, but also the Oral Torah (Talmud, etc.) -- contains parts which are in order to be studied by gentiles, namely, those that deal with the so-called Seven Noahide Laws, in all their ramifications and details, which are incumbent upon all human beings, both Jew and gentile. On the other hand, there are parts of the Torah which are of no relevance to gentiles, and for various reasons, gentiles should not be encouraged to take time out to study them, time that they can use to better and practical advantage by studying, practicing and promoting the said Seven Noahide Laws.

In light of the above, I suggest that you personally discuss the matter with a competent Orthodox rabbi, who orally could explain the above more fully, and at the same time provide you with guidance as to how to go about your study of Torah.

I would like to add a further point, which I trust you know, that from the Torah viewpoint, there is no need whatever for a gentile to convert to Judaism, in order to achieve fulfillment in accordance with the design of the Creator. On the contrary, Jews are required to discourage a would-be convert from the idea of conversion, which could also be further explained to you by the rabbi you will consult with.

I take this opportunity -- inasmuch as Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, is a day of Divine Judgement pertaining to all peoples and nations -- to extend to you prayerful wishes for success in the new year.

With blessing,

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

We have now begun the Jewish month of Cheshvan, referred to as Mar-Cheshvan, “bitter Cheshvan,” as it is a month bereft of holidays.

With the arrival of the month of Cheshvan we enter a new phase in the Jewish year, representing a transition from a month of festivals to the ordinary service of the year. In the month of Elul we prepared ourselves for the Days of Awe. During Tishrei we welcomed the new year and stood before G-d in judgement, which was followed by the joyous days of Sukkot. But now Cheshvan has arrived and our mission is to carry the holiness of the month of Tishrei with us as we reenter the “real world.”

Chasidic thought describes this mission as “V’Yaakov halach l’darko - and Yaakov went on his way.”

The name Yaakov [Jacob] represents the entire Jewish nation. Just as Jacob had to leave the house of his father, his source of spirituality, so too do we have to leave the spiritual and festive month of Tishrei. And just as Jacob was able to not only take with him the lessons of his father’s house, but utilize his travels to further his spiritual growth, we too have to take with us all that we have gained during the holidays. And as the year progresses, we should continue to attain higher goals of spiritual growth.

May we travel through the year 5773 always reaching higher, striving further, until we have achieved our ultimate goal, the coming of Moshiach.

Shmuel Butman

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.



Chairman
Director
Program director
Secretary
Administrator
Editor
Associate Editor
Chairman Editorial Comm.
Rebbe photo

L’Chaim contains words from sacred literature. Please do not deface or discard.
All contents © 2021 by L.Y.O. ISSN 1050 0480
L’Chaim Subscriptions
For a one year subscription send \$47,
payable to LYO (\$60 outside of U.S.A.) to:
L’Chaim, 1408 President St., Bklyn., NY, 11213
L’Chaim on the Internet
Current issues and archives: lchaimweekly.org
Learn about Moshiach
Visit www.moshiach.com or call (718) 953 6100

TODAY IS...

4 Cheshvan

Torah-study every day is crucial to life itself. This applies not only to the soul of the one studying but also to the souls of his family. For then (through Torah-study), the atmosphere of the home becomes an atmosphere of Torah and piety.

MOSHIACH MATTERS

A verse in Amos (9:13) in its prediction of the future Messianic Era states: “Behold, the days come, said the L-rd, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper...” The Midrash comments that the

“plowman” here refers to the Moshiach, the scion of David. Moshiach is the one who will plow the earth. In spiritual terms this means he will uplift the entire world, including its lowliest levels, on both the macro and micro level. His efforts will truly bring complete comfort to the world. Instead of the not-quite-good-enough Noah, with his risk of relapsing, there will be the permanent version of Menachem-eternal comfort. (Rabbi Y. Fried, Torah Times)