For a long time the Soviet government had been carefully scrutinizing the actions of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, the Chief Rabbi of the city of Yeketerinaslav (and the father of the Lubavitcher Rebbe). A network of spies had infiltrated his synagogue and was observing his every step. Indeed, a thick dossier of his "crimes" had already been gathered.

The truth is that it wasn't all that difficult to substantiate evidence of the Rav's defiance. Nonetheless, by dint of his courage and ingenuity, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak had so far succeeded in avoiding their traps.

Take, for example, the time the government decided to conduct a census in which all Soviet citizens were asked if they believed in G-d. Because of the great danger involved in responding truthfully, many Jews, even observant ones, had planned on answering in the negative.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, however, would not hear of such a thing, and ran from one synagogue to the next begging people not to deny the G-d of their fathers. As a result of his campaign he was summoned to appear before the authorities.

"What is there to find fault with?" Rabbi Levi Yitzchak answered innocently. "When I learned that some Jews were intending to lie, I merely did my job as a Soviet citizen and urged them to tell the truth."

The day came when Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was invited to appear in court on charges of conducting Jewish activities in his home. As this was strictly against the law, if he were found guilty, the punishment was potentially severe.

The Rav's apprehension only grew when he saw the two main witnesses for the prosecution. The first was the director of the housing unit in which he lived, a young Jew who was a sworn Communist. Appointed by the authorities to keep track of the residents' comings and goings, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak knew that he was the housing director's primary focus. The other witness was his next-door neighbor, a woman whose husband was the regional head of the Communist Party in charge of transportation.

In truth, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak had much to fear from these two witnesses. And recent events had given him even more cause for worry.

Not long ago a young Jewish couple, both high-ranking government employees, had suddenly appeared on his doorstep in the middle of the night and asked that he marry them "according to the laws of Moses and Israel." It was a very dangerous proposition: Not only did the Rav not know them personally, but in order to conduct a Jewish ceremony under a chupa, ten Jewish men would have to be found.

Within a short time, nine Jews were hastily assembled in Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's home. But where to locate a tenth? With no other option the Rav had taken the bold step of asking the director of the housing project to participate. "Me?!" the man had jumped as if bitten by a snake. "Yes, you," Rabbi Levi Yitzchak had answered in earnest. Surprisingly, the director had agreed, and the clandestine wedding was held. But who knew if this would now be counted against him?

The second witness had also recently been involved in an activity that could possibly implicate him. One day a secret messenger had come to the Rav's house and informed him that the following day, the woman's husband, the high-ranking Communist, would be away on business from morning till night. The real reason for his absence, however, was to allow the Rav to perform a brit mila on their newborn son.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak did not know if he was walking into a trap. But the next day, the tiny infant was entered into the Covenant of Abraham.

That evening, the baby's father returned home and made a big commotion about the "terrible" deed that was done without his knowledge. Thus, it was difficult to predict how the neighbor woman would now testify in court.

The tension was great as the trial opened. The director of the housing project was the first to testify: "As you all know," he began, "I am well aware of everyone who enters and exits Rabbi Schneerson's apartment. But the only unusual visitors I've noticed are two old

Dedicated in memory of
a dear friend of the Lubavitch Youth Organization
Mr. Jack Weprin OBM

relatives who drop by from time to time."

Now it was the turn of the second witness to speak. "As a neighbor of Rabbi Schneerson," the woman testified, "I always expected that as a spiritual leader, he would try to establish contact with members of his faith. I therefore find it surprising that I have never noticed any illegal activities in all the time he has lived next door to me."

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson thus emerged unscathed from this particular incident. But the evidence against him continued to mount until in 1940, he was declared an "enemy of the people" and exiled to Central Asia. After much suffering he returned his holy soul to its Maker, on 20 Ay, 1944.



I beg, let me go over, and see the good land (Deut. 3:25)
At first glance, Moses' request that he "see the good land" seems superfluous; if G-d allowed him to cross over the Jordan, wouldn't he automatically "see" the land? Rather, Moses was praying to avoid the same transgression as the Twelve Spies, and see only the "good" in the Land of Israel. (Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk)

You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor shall you diminish from it (Deut. 4:2)

The reason why it is forbidden to decrease the number of mitzvot in the Torah is obvious, but what is the harm in adding extra ones? The answer is that when commandments are added, the end result is that they will also be decreased, as our Sages stated: "He who adds, actually diminishes." (Likutei Sichot)

Keep therefore and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the nations (Deut. 4:6)

Some people mistakenly think that wisdom and understanding are unnecessary requirements for fearing G-d, and that any fool can do so easily. In truth, however, a great deal of wisdom and intelligence is necessary to be able to keep the Torah properly. (Rabbi Moshe Chafetz)

#### Take therefore good heed of yourselves (Deut. 4:15)

According to Torah law, a Jew is required to take care of his body and refrain from things that are harmful. But a person must never place too much emphasis on his own physical welfare, while treating someone else's spirituality as his own domain, i.e., offering unasked-for reprimands and comments about the other person's conduct. In fact, the correct order is the reverse: As regards the self, an individual's primary focus should be spiritual. But when relating to others, the primary concern should be helping with material needs. (*Rabbi Yisrael of Salant*)







# REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

In this week's Torah portion, *VaEtchanan*, we read about Moses' powerful description of the Exodus from Egypt and the Giving of the Torah as unprecedented events. "Has any god performed miracles to come and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, with trials, with signs, and with wonders, and with war and with a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great awesome deeds, as all that the L-rd your G-d did for you in Egypt before your eyes?"

Why is it important for us to know that G-d took for Himself "a nation from midst of another nation?" What lesson can we learn from here that we can apply in our personal lives?

The Hebrew word for "Egypt" is "Mitzrayim" from the word "maytzar," meaning "constraint" or "limitations." When G-d took us out of Egypt, He removed us from all constraints—physical, psychological and spiritual. When we cleave to G-d and His Torah we are open and free. The only constraints we have are the ones we accept upon ourselves.

In every situation we have the ability to be free. Even in this exile when the world seems against us. Even in our personal lives, when we have difficulties, suffering, and pain.

Our choices express our free nature, not our predicaments. In every situation we can find a way to free our essence, our Jewishness.

Today this seems harder than ever, as there is a strong pull to be like the rest of the world and blend in. But we have been there before; if we try, G-d will surely help each one of us free ourselves from our personal Egypts.

On a deeper level, each of us have the ability to free ourselves from our current status, standards and stations and reach higher heights. Yesterday's freedom is today's Egypt. If you are not growing you are not free. If you can will yourself: How can I improve myself? How can I get closer to G-d? Then you are free.

Finally, realize, that to get closer to G-d, you need to love His children, and see them as "us."

Loving each other is the key to our redemption, it is how we break the chains of this exile. Perhaps that is why it is so difficult, nevertheless, we will overcome this as well. 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.

# Winning Numbers

Nothing happens by chance. Whether you choose your own number for your lottery ticket or let the computer do it for you, the fact that you won (or most likely didn't win!) didn't happen by chance. It's all part of G-d's Divine plan.

The idea that nothing happens by chance is a primary teaching of the Baal Shem Tov, founder of Chasidism. He goes even further and says that everything that happens in the world is for a purpose. The Baal Shem Tov's most famous example of this precept is a leaf that falls from a tree in order to shade an ant from the beating sun.

If this is true of a leaf falling from a tree, a blade of grass swaying in the wind, a bird flying through the air, how much more so is it true of the movement of the planets and stars in the constellations which affect the lives of hundreds of billions of people and an almost unlimited number of creatures.

The Jewish calendar is reckoned according to the lunar cycle. It is not by chance that 15 is a "winning number" in the Jewish calendar, i.e., the day on which many of our Jewish holidays fall. On the fifteenth day of the month, the moon is whole. It "shines" at its fullest potential. And for the Jewish people, who are likened to the moon which waxes and wanes, the wholeness of the moon is very significant:

G-d has implanted a soul within each one of us. Chasidic philosophy defines the soul as "an actual part of G-d." We are expected to help our souls shine brightly, to their fullest potential, thereby lighting up our

surroundings.

The full moon on the fifteenth of the month teaches us that it's not enough if only a part of us, half or three-quarters, shines. We must illuminate fully and perfectly.

And the light we give off must shine in every way possible – through luminous thoughts, with bright words, and by way of shining actions. Our "moon-shine" should light up our homes, offices, communities, until we light up the whole world.

We are now in the Hebrew month of Av. From the fifteenth day of Av (occurring on Shabbat this year), the nights become longer. Jewish teachings explain that the longer

evenings should be used to delve into Torah. G-d even gives us an incentive to study more Torah beginning on the



fifteenth of Av, saying that if we pursue Torah studies at night, G-d will "add on to our lives"; He will give us more energy and enthusiasm than we had before.

Nothing happens by chance. The seasons change and the nights become longer for a reason: so that we can become more involved in Jewish pursuits; so that we can learn how to help our soul shine; so that we can get closer to G-d.

Pick a winning number this month by participating in an evening Torah study class or lecture.

# SLICE OF

Blendina Torah and Science by Rabbi Rabbi Levi Greenberg



Dr. Alexander Friedman earned his doctorate in brain physiology from Bar-llan University in Israel and joined the University of Texas at El Paso last year after completing his post-doctoral training and working as a research scientist at MIT for 10 years. He also authored three major publications in the Cell journal and two in the PNAS journal.

Dr. Friedman moved to El Paso in August 2020 together with his wife Miriam and their children. A chassidic scholar and graduate of the Chabad Yeshiva in Kfar Chabad, Israel Dr. Friedman combines a unique passion for Torah and the exact sciences.

Rabbi Levi Greenberg: What led you to become a scientist?

Dr. Alexander Friedman: I was born to a family of scientists in the former Soviet Union. My grandfather Dr. Olodovsky was a prestigious physicist and both my grandmothers were science professors. It was a profession many Jews preferred since it was possible to observe Shabbat with minimal hassle.

Providing a proper Jewish education in the USSR was very difficult but my parents did their best under the circumstances. I was always attracted to the sciences and after applying to several universities I was accepted to Machon Lev in Jerusalem which led me to make Aliyah to Israel.

Machon Lev combines a university education and a Yeshiva education and while earning my B.A. I caught up on my Judaic studies as well. I was introduced to Chassidic philosophy by Dr. Yaakov Friddman, a great scientist in his own right, and I decided to spend a gap year pursuing more intense Torah study at the main Chabad Yeshiva in Israel. After a year I wanted to continue full time, but Rabbi Zalman Gopin, the chief Chassidic mentor at the Yeshivah insisted that I earn my doctorate.

I enrolled in Bar-Ilan University which is a half hour drive away from the Yeshiva and divided my day between the Yeshiva and the university.

LG: Is it possible to balance these two seemingly opposite studies?

AF: I admit they were very long and grueling days, but they were stimulating and rewarding. Rabbi Gopin explained to me that although learning Torah full time is a privilege, with my background and education it was crucial for me to excel in science to discover how it all blends beautifully with Torah teachings and observance. It's not the typical route for a Yeshiva student, but everyone has their journey and purpose in life. Being simultaneously submerged in both worlds was a unique experience that shaped my life work ever since.

LG: Has your scientific research enhanced your appreciation of Judaism and vice versa?

AF: The definition of science is discovering the principles of the organization of the universe. When studying physics, chemistry and biology you discover how complex yet astoundingly exact nature really is. Obviously none of this could happen randomly and it was certainly created by a superpower.

My field of research is brain physiology and, let me tell you, even the brain of a mouse is extremely complex. The tremendous discoveries we make in their brains help us understand the human brain which is far more sophisticated. To date we understand precious little about the nerve center of our body, yet we take for granted that there are billions of these in the world. Multiply this by trillions of other organisms, minerals and particles and you have yourself an awesome universe created and maintained by an awesome creator.

5,781 years ago, when Adam the first human being was created on the day we celebrate Rosh Hashana. he intuitively realized this and called out to creation to acknowledge G-d's sovereignty. That's why the High Holy Days liturgy is packed with these ideas

and it's the core of what Judaism is all about.

G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish nation at Mt. Sinai. Fascinatingly, this only happened after Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, who was also the greatest scientist and philosopher at the time recognized that G-d is the supreme power of the universe.

When the Jews stood at Sinai and heard the Ten Commandments from G-d, all humanity realized with brilliant clarity - albeit temporarily - that all of nature is truly a reflection of G-d. This was preceded by Jethro's conversion to Judaism to illustrate how this clarity must come from within nature itself. The more we know about nature the more we know G-d.

Since then the world is progressing in its scientific knowledge and its appreciation for and knowledge of G-d so that the Sinai experience becomes a permanent reality. This is the definition of the Messianic Era; that every created being will recognize the creator. Not only Jews – everyone!

LG: Have you found this attitude in modern science as well?

AF: Certainly. Sir Isaac Newton defined scientific experiments as our way of asking G-d how to do things. In my opinion he continues to be the most important scientist of the modern era and I find it fascinating that the overwhelming majority of his works were translations of Torah scholarship. Ivan Pavlov, the father of brain physiology and the legendary chemist Dmitri Mendeleev were both deeply religious and their religious convictions impacted their scientific work. Faith does not hamper scientific discovery. It enhances it, just like it enhances every detail of life.

LG: Do you feel this idea can be experienced by everyone

AF: Such an attitude needs to be nurtured. I study Chassidic philosophy daily to keep this perspective fresh and relatable. You don't need to be a neuroscientist to appreciate how complex and awesome our world is, but to experience life in a way that allows you to discover the divine element in everything and to introduce peace and serenity into every detail of life – it's crucial to study Chassidic philosophy.

The good news is that there is so much available in multiple languages in so many formats and platforms and it's very convenient to learn it nowadays. Clearly this is another sign of the imminence of the Messianic era when, as Maimonides writes, the knowledge of G-d will fill the entire world and there will be global peace and tranquility for all.

Reprinted with permission from the El Paso Chabad Times

# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Freely translated

Aleph d'Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, 5710 [1950] This is in reply to your question regarding the significance of the custom during the marriage ceremony that the bride makes seven circuits around the groom under the Chuppah.

The answer to this question, it seems to me. has to cover the following sub-questions: 1) The significance of the circuit, 2) its repetition seven times, 3) the bride circling around the groom and not vice versa, 4) the bride then joining the groom, standing by his side within the circle.

I trust that the following may give you a satisfactory answer.

It is stated in the Zohar (Part III, 7:2) that marriage, which is a union of two distinct persons, is in reality a union of two halves of the same soul. Each one, when born, possesses but half 1 of that soul which becomes one and complete only in wedlock, through Chuppah and Kiddushin.

This is why marriage is one of the greatest soul-stirring experiences of the bride and groom, for their respective souls have found at last the other half. Something of this joy is experienced, by way of illustration, at the re-union of two close relatives or beloved friends who had been separated for decades.

To a certain extent, therefore, the marriage marks the beginning of a complete and full life, while the pre-marital life of either the bride of groom may be considered in the nature of a preparatory period.

The union of the two parts of the same soul is not a union of two identical halves which make one whole. But they complement each other, each of them enriching the other with powers and qualities which hitherto were not possessed by him or her. For the "masculine" and "feminine" parts of the souls have basic differences, reflecting, broadly speaking, the character differences of the sexes. One such difference is what our Sage called "the nature of the male to conquer," i.e., the propensity of the male to conquer new provinces (in business, profession, science, etc.) outside his home. This quality is generally not found in the female. On the other hand, the woman is called in our sacred literature the "Foundation of the House," for within the house her personality and innermost qualities are best expressed and asserted (Psalms 45:14).

It has been mentioned earlier that marriage,

in a sense, marks the beginning of a full life. The wedding ceremony reflects this by an allusion to the beginning of all life. The Blessings of Betrothal (Birchoth Hanesuin) also begin with a reference to the creation of the first man, the first woman, and their wedding.

Ever since the Creation of the world, human life has been based on the seven-day cycle. G-d created the world in six days and hallowed the seventh as a day of rest. Man was then commanded to work for six days of the week, but to dedicate the seventh as a Sabbath unto G-d. When a Jew is about to set up a home and begin a full life, it is fitting that this basic principle of a happy life should be symbolized during the weddina ceremony.

Hence the "Seven Days of Feasting," and the "Seven Blessings" (Sheva Berachot). This brings us also to the seven circuits of the bride around the groom.

Bearing the above in mind, as well as the earlier introductory remarks concerning the basic character differences between the male and female, the ceremony of the seven circuits which the bride makes around the groom suggest the following explanation:

The groom, who takes the initiative 2 in bringing the union to fruition, is initially the center of the new Jewish home. He is the first to take his place under the Chuppah. When the bride is led to the Chuppah, she proceeds to make a circle around the groom. This symbolizes the delineation (in space) of their own world within the outer world, with her husband-to-be as its center. She continues to make circuits one after the other seven times, symbolizing that she, the "Foundation of the House," founds an edifice that would be complete on the first day of each and every week to come as on the second, third, etc., to the end of all times and seasons, a lasting and "eternal edifice" (with the infinity of the "cycle"). Her own contribution to this sacred union is also implied in the fact that she makes the circuits around the groom.

Having completed the seven circuits, she stand besides her husband-to-be in the center of the circle, for after the preparations for the building of their home, both of them, the husband and the wife, form its center. From here on, throughout the entire ceremony both the bride and groom form the center of the holy ceremony, like king and queen surrounded by a suite of honor. Their lives become united into One full and happy life, based on the One Torah given by the One G-d.

With all good wishes and kindest personal

regards,
1) This does not mean that it is half a soul, but in the sense that in some respects an individual is but a "half," and his soul is likewise a "half." 2) This is expressed by the saving of our Sages that "it is the custom of the man to seek a wife." During the marriage ceremony this is symbolized by the fact that the groom declares "You are betrothed unto me " while the hride remains silent

you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:7) Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch offered a Chasidic explanation: "When you sit in your house" refers to the time when the soul is contained in the physical body; "when you lie down, and when you rise up" refers to the period after the resurrection of the dead. (Sefer HaToldot)

## **66** A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

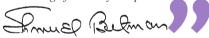
The Shabbat is Shabbat Nachamu, Sabbath of rejoicing. We are hopeful that G-d will console us for the destruction of the Holy *Temple and Jerusalem. The Haftora portion* for this week and the next six weeks reflects this theme of consolation.

This Shabbat is known by the special name of "Shabbat Nachamu" because we read the Haftora portion which begins, "Nachamu, nachamu ami – Console, console My people."

Our Sages have taught that it is significant that there are seven Haftora portions of consolation. The first consolers are the tzadikim trying to comfort Jerusalem upon her loss. But she will not be comforted. The second, is the patriarch Abraham. Again, the city will not be consoled. Next is Isaac, then Jacob and then Moses. Each time the city will not be consoled. The sixth Haftora is Jerusalem's plea for consolation and finally, G-d Himself, consoles the Holy City.

According to the Midrash, the reason why the word "console" is repeated twice is that *G-d is comforting us for the destruction of* the first Holy Temple and also for the second Holy Temple. G-d's consolation and our comfort lies in the fact that G-d has promised us that there will be a third Holy Temple, greater than the first two. This will take place through Moshiach in the Messianic Era as the Rambam writes: "In the future time, the King Moshiach will arise and renew the Davidic dynasty, restoring it to its initial sovereignty. He will rebuild the Beit HaMikdash and gather in the dispersed remnant of Israel."

This year may we merit to have the true consolation which G-d has promised us all these years with the coming of Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Holy Temple.



#### L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרוז חי'ה י מושקא

The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chava Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.



Lubavitch Youth Organization 408 President St, Brooklyn, NY, 11213 ne 718 778 6000

Chairman

Associate Edito Chairman Editorial Comm

Rabbi Dovid Raskii 7 ( Rabbi Shmuel Butman Rabbi Kasriel Kastel Rabbi Moshe P. Goldman Rabbi Shlomo Friedman Yehudis Cohen Dovid Y. B. Kaufmann 5"3 S. Roumani

Rabbi Dovid Raskin 5"t

Rebbe photo

All contents @ 2021 by L.Y.O. ISSN 1050 0480

L'Chaim Subscriptions

For a one year subscription send \$47, payable to LYO (\$60 elsewhere) to: L'Chaim, 1408 President St., Bklyn., NY, 11213 L'Chaim on the Internet Current issues and archives: Icha Learn about Moshiach Visit www.moshiach.com or call (718) 953 6100

New Emissaries

Rabbi Arie Leib and Yehudit Tkatch have moved to Taganrog, Russia, a port city on the north shore of the Sea of Azov in Southern Russia. In 1860, the city's Grand Synagogue was built. During WWII all but one Jewish teen out of the 2,500 Jews who hadn't escapted were murdered by the Nazis. In the past few years a Jewish community started forming again and the Tkatchs became the Rebbe's emissaries for the fledgling Jewish community.

#### New Center

A new Chabad Center was opened in Boryspil, Ukraine, known to many as the home of Kiev's International Airport. Dozens of synagogues functioned in Boryspil before the Russian Revolution in 1917, but were closed by the Bolsheviks during their early antireligious campaigns. Now, after more than 100 years, the city's Jews again have a place to pray, study, gather and celebrate. The Chabad House is also equipped with a state of the art mikva.

### Today Is...

#### 20 Av

Just as with the commandment of tefillin for example, there is a designated place for them on the head and arm, and one feels the weight of the head-tefilla and the tightness of the hand-tefilla, so too with the commandments of love and fear (awe) of G-d. As Maimonides writes (Yesodei Hatorah 2:1): It is a commandment to love and fear the revered and awesome G-d, as it says, "Love the L-rd your G-d", and "You shall fear the L-rd your G-d."

### MOSHIACH MATTERS

"And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of them when