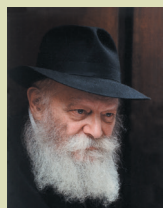


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

In this week's Torah portion, *Vayishlach*, we read how Jacob (Yaakov) struggles with an angel and wins. The angel tells Jacob that he will be also called Israel, "because you struggled with G-d's angel) and with men, and prevailed." Later in our portion, G-d tells Jacob that his name will now be Israel. He goes on to be called by both names, sometimes Israel and other times Jacob.

And these are the names by which the Jewish people are called – *Bnei Yisrael* (the Children of Israel) and *Beit Yaakov* (the House of Jacob).

What is the significance of these names? Why keep both names? If Yisrael is so special, why keep Yaakov?

As Jews we have a constant inner struggle. On one hand, we are part of this physical world, with all the pleasures and hardships that go with it. On the other, there is our ability to rise above it all and be one with G-d.

Our name Yaakov, which means heel, is the part of us that deals with this world. Yaakov also means to trick, being clever, because it is our mission to transform this world into a G-dly place. Since this world is a world of lies and corruption, we must be clever not to be taken in by the veneer.

Yisrael is our ability to rise above it all. We can rise above both the physical and spiritual realms. Because both realms are G-d's creations. We can connect with our essence, our *neschama*, which is actually a part of G-d, and not subject to the deceit of creation.

While Yisrael sounds nice, it doesn't effect the change we are meant to accomplish in the world. Yet it is necessary for us to go there from time to time, to rejuvenate and remind ourselves of our purpose. Yaakov is the part of us that transforms this world, which can only be done by taking part in it.

On an individual level, our lives are full of pain and struggles. It is there that we accomplish our primary purpose. Our struggles have meaning, our suffering is accomplishing amazing things. It is hard to see it this way. That is when we need to connect with G-d, rise above and rejuvenate. From time to time we need to let go and allow G-d to take over.

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.

Daily Numbers

Numbers are a part of our lives. From the time we're one or two years old we begin to learn about them: "Eat two more bites and then you can have dessert," or "You can have three jelly beans."

As we get older, numbers take on a new importance in our lives. Numbers describe grade levels in school and marks on exams. They are used to announce game scores. We use numbers to establish quantities of salaries and savings in IRAs. Numbers mark the passage of time surrounding anniversaries and birthdays. And of course, in these last few months we've been obsessed with covid statistics and numbers of votes.

Two hundred and seventy-four years, in a celestial encounter, the Baal Shem Tov (founder of Chasidism) asked Moshiach, "When will you come?" Moshiach answered him: "When your teachings will be spread to the outside."

Fifty years later – 224 years ago – Rabbi Shneur Zalman, one of the foremost proponents and expounders of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings, published the *Tanya*, the basic book of Chabad Chasidism.

Tanya maps out the relationship between a person and G-d. *Tanya* discusses how a person can create his life, change himself and direct his experience, his feelings, and his thoughts toward ever higher levels.

The 19th of Kislev is celebrated as the New Year of Chasidism. It is the anniversary of the release of Rabbi Shneur Zalman from imprisonment after opponents of the Chasidic movement falsely accused him of treasonous acts. His release marked the resumption of the spreading of Chasidic teachings.

In 1984 the Rebbe asked that *Tanya* be printed in every city in the entire world where there is even one Jew.

Since the Rebbe initiated the campaign to print the *Tanya* worldwide, over 7,500 editions of *Tanya* have been printed, from Azerbaijan to Zimbabwe, in large cities, small towns, villages and army installations in more than 100 countries on all seven continents have been printed.

What is the point of all these statistics? Is this merely a sophisticated numbers game?

The Rebbe writes in his introduction to the English translation of *Tanya*, "Chasidic philosophy in general, and Chabad Chasidic philosophy in particular, is an all-embracing world outlook and way of life which sees the Jew's central purpose as being the unifying link between the Creator and Creation. The Jew is a creature of "heaven" and of "earth," of a heavenly Divine soul which is truly a part of G-dliness clothed in an earthly vessel constituted of a physical body and an animal soul." The purpose, writes the Rebbe, is to "realize the transcendency and unity of his nature, and of the world in which he lives, within the absolute Unity of G-d."

Tanya teaches us to recognize the different forces at work in our lives and to rise above the inner conflicts between our G-dly components and our earthly parts. When we do so we find an inner harmony which puts us in touch with the Unity of G-d.

In simple terms, ultimately all the numbers in the world, whether added, subtracted, multiplied, divided, or extrapolated, equal ONE – the unity of all of creation with G-d, which will be realized when Moshiach comes, may it happen imminently.

SLICE OF LIFE

Are You the Rabbi?

by Kevin Whyte



From a speech at the regional Conference of Chabad Emissaries in China

I was born in Windsor, Berkshire, England. Our family was one of three Jewish families in town. The closest synagogue was 20 miles away.

When I was 13 years old we moved to London. We approached the local Reform Synagogue so I could have a Bar Mitzva. But we were told that I was not learned enough.

In Ilford, London, I attended a school that had 1,500 students ages 11 – 18. It was one of the largest schools in London, and had a relatively high percentage of Jewish students.

At the time, Ilford was the most densely populated Jewish area in the UK. The Lubavitcher Rebbe had asked Rabbi A.D. and Henny Sufrin to bring further light to the Jewish people in the area.

Mrs. Sufrin taught in our school. She was the first Jewish studies teacher in a non-religious state school in the UK. Mrs. Sufrin was petite in stature, of Irish descent, and had bags of energy. Chabad had arrived in school! Little did I know that meeting Mrs. Sufrin would lead to a spiritual journey, a Jewish journey, a journey of belonging, a journey of partnership with Chabad.

I became the chairman of the school's Jewish Society. I was not chosen for my Jewish intellect but probably because I was a Jewish Rugby player with an outgoing personality. And someone needed to look out for Mrs. Sufrin!

Mrs. Sufrin made sure that we had a *minyan* in school for the afternoon services and a kosher snack bar. She would remind us, "You are what you eat!" I learned enough from Mrs. Sufrin to be called to the Torah when I was 15 years old, before I lost my dear father to cancer at such a young age. Mrs. Sufrin was there for all the Jewish kids in that school. I can't imagine how different things would have been if she had not been there.

And now fast-forward to the recent past.

In 2011, I was sitting in my office in Dhaka, Bangladesh. A DHL package arrived. Inside was a Jewish book, all in Hebrew. (I later found out that the book was *Tanya*, the basic book of Chabad Chasidic philosophy.) To be honest, I opened it, saw the Hebrew letters, and put it on the bookshelf in my office.

Business and life carried on. In January 2013 I got a phone call from a company that owned a textile factory. We started doing business and our business relationship developed. In January 2014 I was in Germany at the Trade Fair, the largest home textile show in the world. I visited the booth of the textile factory. A Chassidic man started walking towards me. I was intrigued. He was at the booth of the factory that I believed was owned by a Muslim gentleman.

I say, "*Shalom*, I'm the only Jew living in Bangladesh!"

He responds, "I know who you are. Your name is Kevin Whyte."

Now I'm puzzled.

He then says, "And your rabbi in London is Rabbi Odom Brandman and I had dinner with him last week..."

Now I'm more than puzzled.

And then he says, "I'm the one who sent you the *Tanya*..."

Now I am totally lost.

"*Tanya* is the Jewish book I sent you. You have one of 100 copies that we printed in our factory in Bangladesh, the factory you have been doing business with, the same place that prints your bedding, the same printing presses..."

Suffice to say that meeting with that Chabad

gentlemen, Max Cohen, led to further friendship. And that friendship led to Max's Muslim partner loaning me ransom money when I was kidnapped in Bangladesh a few months later. In recounting what he had done, the partner told Max that he saved me because I was Jewish.

So sometimes we don't know what actions today will result in actions in the future. And we don't know what plans G-d has for us... but there is a plan.

We are all partners together: daveners, doers or donators. We all have our part to play, all equal in merit and different in approach. We are all individuals on our spiritual journey but above all we are Jewish and partners of Chabad

How did my partnership with Chabad of China start? Shortly after I left Bangladesh, on Sukkot, I was walking with a friend trying to find the Chabad of Shanghai *shul*. We rounded the corner near Starbucks, and there were Rabbi Shalom and Dini Greenberg walking towards us!

"Are you the rabbi?" I asked.

"Do I look like I'm the rabbi?" answered Rabbi Greenberg.

There and then started a warm friendship. Except that I didn't come back for quite a while. Three months later, I decided to go to shul again, this time on Friday night. I had the "Jews Abroad Away from Home" syndrome. It happens when Jews who may not be regular shul-goers, end up going to shul when they are away from home because their soul calls out to them.

That Friday night, the shul was packed. I hadn't reserved for the meal in advance but I was welcomed with open arms. After services and the meal, I walked out singing, and still wearing my *kippa*.

I told the rabbi the following week that I would learn how to say the morning prayers and that I would put on *tefillin* each weekday. These would be my spiritual coat of armour to face the world outside.

Everything seemed to fall into place, and I knew I would be okay in China after the traumatic events I had endured in Bangladesh.

I thank all the Shluchim and their families who have returned to China to carry out their phenomenal work despite difficult journeys, circumstances and quarantine, so that we have your support, guidance and inspiration, as we go about our daily lives.

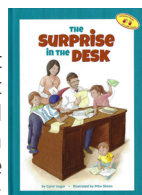
World's Largest Menora

Be part of the Chanuka celebrations at the World's Largest Chanuka Menora at Fifth Ave. and 59th St. in New York City. The Menora will be lit on Thurs, Dec 10, Sunday, Dec. 13 – Thurs, Dec 17 at 5:30 pm. On Friday, Dec. 11 it will be lit at 3:45 pm and on Saturday night after Shabbat at 8:30 pm. For more info call the Lubavitch Youth Organization at (718) 778-6000. For public menora lightings in your area call your local Chabad-Lubavitch Center.



The Surprise in the Box

Rabbi Muroff needed a comfortable desk. When he bought a used one, he discovered a surprise inside, something that belonged to the previous owner! This beautifully illustrated story highlights the *mitzva* of sanctifying G-d's name. Children will enjoy the suspense, the adorable illustrations, and the message. Great for encouraging honesty and doing what is right. Written by Carol Unger, illustrated by Mira Simon, HaChai Publishing.



WHO'S WHO?

Rivka (Rebecca) was the daughter of Betuel and sister of Laban. Rivka was born at the exact moment that Yitzchak was brought by Avraham as a sacrifice. She was renowned as a person of sterling character traits from a young age. She married her cousin Yitzchak (Isaac) and they had twin sons, Esau and Yaakov (Jacob). Rivka, like the other matriarchs, was a prophetess. She is buried in Hebron in Maarat HaMachpela.





The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

The Eve of Yud Tes Kislev, 5724 [1963]

...In one of his well-known letters, the Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad-Lubavitch Chasidism] declares that the happy tidings of his liberation reached him when he was reading the verse (Psalms 55:19): "[G-d] has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle against me, for many were with me."

This Providential coincidence surely carries a message for every one of us. Indeed, every individual is in need of a personal liberation from all the difficulties and hindrances encountered in daily life which hamper the attainment of the goals which should be achieved every day, in both material and spiritual endeavors.

Thus, our Sages make the following meaningful commentary on the verse: "Said the Holy One, Blessed Be He: He who engages in Torah, and in acts of loving-kindness, and prays with the congregation, is regarded by Me as if he redeemed Me and My children from among the nations of the world" (Talmud, Berachoth 8a).

In this way, our Sages emphasize that the personal redemption of every Jew, as well as of the entire Jewish people, together with G-d (so to speak), is directly linked with the dissemination of Torah, acts of benevolence ("duties toward fellow-Jews"), and prayer ("duties toward G-d").

Thus, every man or woman who is involved in these three things brings liberation and redemption to himself as well as to our people as a whole.

The Eve of 19 Kislev, 5730 [1969]

The Festival of Liberation of the Alter Rebbe on Yud Tes (the 19th) Kislev, and the festival of Chanuka, though widely apart in historic perspective, have much in common in spirit and significance. It is therefore no accident that Divine Providence has brought both of them together in the same auspicious month of Kislev, within a week of each other.

The Alter Rebbe sought to illuminate Jewish life, even Torah life, with the inner light of the Torah

and mitzvot [commandments], giving a new dimension of vitality and meaning to each and every Jew in his daily life. However, the light of Chabad Chasidus was threatened with extinction just as the light of the Torah and mitzvot was in danger in the time of Matathias. Thus, Yud Tes Kislev, the day on which the Alter Rebbe and Chabad were completely vindicated, may be considered a "festival of lights" much in the same way as Chanuka.

Similarly, both Yud Tes Kislev and Chanuka stress the importance of Jewish education in all its Torah purity, permeated with the spirit of self-sacrifice. It is no exaggeration to say that the dedicated workers of Chabad-Lubavitch are true heirs of the Hasmoneans of old. They render a most vital service in forming Torah outposts and strongholds in many parts of the world, in order to preserve and spread the light of the Torah and mitzvot, and to strengthen the foundation of Torah-true education.

19th of Cheshvan, 5733 [1972]

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to be informed of your forthcoming Dinner celebration on the 20th of Kislev. It is significant that the event will take place one day following Yud-Tes Kislev, the historic anniversary of the release and vindication of the Alter Rebbe [the "Elder" Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman], founder of Chabad. Moreover, the 19th of Kislev will this year also mark the 200th Yartzeit anniversary of the illustrious Maggid of Miezeritz, whose disciple and successor the Alter Rebbe was.

Anniversaries in Jewish life are observed for the purpose of their instructive significance, so that each and every one of us can learn from and be inspired by the life and work of our great leaders of the past, and translate this inspiration into actual deeds in our daily life and conduct.

The two great luminaries, the master and his disciple and successor, led consecrated lives, dedicated to the material and spiritual betterment of Jews and Judaism. Their selfless dedication knew no bounds. Furthermore, they set out from the beginning to involve the masses, for their love of a fellow Jew embraced all Jews. They laid particular stress on the education of the young, both the young in years as well as the young in Jewish knowledge and experience, and instilled this spirit in all their numerous followers.

The same spirit of love, responsibility, and dedication animates all those who are associated with the Chabad-Lubavitch educational activities in the present day, reaching out to our fellow Jews everywhere..

that journey. Our Sages ask: Would Jacob, the embodiment of the attribute of truth, lie? They explain that Jacob's words were future-oriented. When would he keep his promise? In the era of the Redemption, when "saviors will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau." (From *Keeping in Touch*, adapted by Rabbi E. Touger, published by SIE.org)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

The first Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, was imprisoned on trumped up charges of anti-government activities. We celebrate his release from prison on the 19th of Kislev, this Friday night and Shabbat (Dec. 5) this year.

During his imprisonment, one of the Czar's officers – having heard of Rabbi Shneur Zalman's keen intellect and outstanding genius in all areas of life – engaged him in a conversation.

The officer had an unsolved question. "It says that Adam 'hid' after he sinned by eating fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. When G-d wanted to speak with Adam, He asked him, 'Where are you?' Didn't G-d know where Adam was?" asked the officer.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman replied, "The Bible is eternal and its message is for all times. G-d was inquiring of Adam, and of all his descendants for all time, 'Where are you? Where do you stand in the fulfillment of your life's mission? How much have you accomplished today and what do you intend to accomplish tomorrow that will help you fulfill the special task with which you have been entrusted?'"

The question "Where are you?" is asked every day of each one of us.

The answer has to come from a place that goes beyond names, titles, affiliations and job descriptions. To be able to properly respond, our answer has to come from our very essence. For G-d does not direct the question to Adam or Eve, to Michael or Jennifer: He directs it to you: "Where are you?"

Being able to answer the question requires understanding who "you" are. The Chasidic teachings of Rabbi Shneur Zalman – the dissemination of which was the true cause for his imprisonment – explain that "you" are comprised of a G-dly soul and a body chosen by G-d at Mount Sinai.

Torah, primarily as elucidated by Chasidic teachings, can help us understand these components of ourselves. Together with that understanding comes the ability to begin to answer the question, "Where are you."

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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1408 President St, Brooklyn, NY, 11213
phone 718 778 6000

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

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MOSHIACH MATTERS

Our portion relates that, at their encounter, Jacob promised to visit Esau at his home in Seir. In fact, however, he never made



The black carriage was already waiting. Inside the house, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of the Chabad Chasidic movement, made final preparations before his arrest and imprisonment.

Rabbi Yisrael Kazik, the Rebbe's brother-in-law, managed to exchange a few words with him. "What shall be done?" he asked worriedly.

"Travel to Petersburg," the Rebbe answered, "immediately!"

The officer in charge ordered the armed police to surround the Rebbe, who was making his way toward the carriage. The black carriage drove off, leaving the distraught Chasidim behind.

The charges brought against the Rebbe were extremely serious. The government informants claimed that the money the Rebbe sent to Israel in order to strengthen Jewish settlements was actually supporting the Turks, who were, at the time, at war with Russia.

The Rebbe was brought to the prison, but not one chasid knew his whereabouts. There were many prisons in Russia, and it would be dangerous to search through them. The elder Chasidim instructed everyone to pray, and they appointed a committee to be in charge in the meantime.

The Rebbe's brother-in-law didn't waste a minute. Rabbi Yisrael didn't even take time to change out of his Chasidic garb, which he knew could cause him some difficulty in the capital city. As he didn't even have the proper travelling documents with him, which could lead to his own arrest, he borrowed the documents of another chasid.

Meanwhile, in a prison in Petersburg, the Rebbe was interrogated for many hours. His interrogators were impressed by his strength of character and integrity. Deep down they knew that the accusations against the Rebbe were false, but they were bound by the law that did not allow for his release without an investigation.

One day, one of the officers said to the Rebbe, "I would like to do you a favor. What can I do for you?"

The Rebbe requested that his family be informed that he was alive and that he hoped that G-d would soon make his innocence known. The officer readily agreed to his request. He asked, however, how he would be able to contact someone from the Rebbe's family as he didn't know them.

"Before I was brought here," the Rebbe told the guard, "I instructed my brother-in-law, Reb Yisrael Kazik, to travel to Petersburg. He is wearing the traditional Chasidic garb, and he is probably wandering near a prison."

After searching for some time, the guard noticed a Jew who fit the Rebbe's description. When the guard was sure no one was looking, he motioned to the Jew to come over to him. When he asked the Jew, who was Reb Yisrael Kazik, to identify himself, Reb Yisrael identified himself with the name on the documents he had borrowed. The guard accused him of lying and left.

Reb Yisrael figured that the officer wanted to give him a message. After consulting with other Chasidim, he continued to wander through Petersburg in case the guard returned. The guard told the Rebbe of his meeting with a Jew who fit the description, but whose name was not Yisrael Kazik. The Rebbe told the guard to try once more.

The officer again met Reb Yisrael, who identified himself as such. Without exchanging another word, the guard began to walk away, and Reb Yisrael followed him discreetly. They arrived at the guard's home. The guard went inside, and while Reb Yisrael stood outside and wondered what to do next, a watermelon fell out of a window of the house. Reb Yisrael understood that it was for him, and he quickly picked it up and carried it away.

He brought it home, and in the presence of the elder Chasidim, opened it carefully. Inside the watermelon was a note that read, "Hear O Israel the Lord our G-d the Lord is One." The Rebbe was alive! But they still didn't know where he was being held.

Meanwhile, the Rebbe's health was in danger, because he would not eat the prison food. The warden offered to obtain kosher food for the Rebbe and went to Reb Mordechai of Lipeli, and asked him to prepare kosher food for a Jewish prisoner. Reb

Mordechai sensed that this prisoner was the Rebbe, and on the bottom of one of the jars he hid a note that said, "Who is the one eating this, and where is he found?"

The jar was returned, and under a bit of food was a small note written in the Rebbe's handwriting. The Rebbe informed the Chasidim of his situation and where he was being held. The news quickly spread throughout Russia, "The Rebbe is alive!"

Eventually the Rebbe was exonerated of all charges and released on the nineteenth of Kislev, which is celebrated as the Festival of Redemption, when the Chasidic movement and the right to disseminate Chasidic philosophy triumphed.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

And Jacob came whole to the city of Shechem (Gen. 33:18)

Rashi explains this to mean that Jacob was sound in body, his wealth was intact, and his Torah-observance was uncompromised. We learn from Jacob to always strive for excellence in all areas of our lives. Even a person whose primary path in the worship of G-d is through practical mitzvot – charity and good deeds – should also strive to be perfect in study. (*Likutei Sichot*)

I am not worthy of all the mercy... which You have done (Gen. 32:11)

The Hebrew for "I am not worthy" can also be translated, "I have become small." Jacob our ancestor said: The great mercy which G-d has done for me has caused me to become more small and humble. The mercy which G-d shows toward a person brings him closer to G-d, and the closer one is to G-d, the more humble he becomes. (*Tanya*)

And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men (Gen. 33:1)

Jacob went to meet with his brother Esau even though he knew that his life might be endangered by the encounter. But he didn't discuss the matter with anyone, or think twice about it. He just did it. From this we learn how important it is to DO things, because DOING is what will bring Moshiach. (*The Rebbe*)

Thus Rachel died, and was buried on the road to Efrat, which is Bethlehem (Gen. 35:19)

Why didn't Jacob bury Rachel in the Cave of Machpela where Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sara, and Isaac and Rebecca were buried? Instead he buried her at the crossroads of Bethlehem in accordance with a Divine Command. When Rachel's children would, in the future, be exiled by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylonia, they would pass Rachel's tomb. She would entreat G-d for mercy for her children, and G-d would listen to her prayer. (*P'sikta Ravti*)

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ר' אברהם מיכאל הלוי בן שפרינצא רעכיל
לרפאה שלימה וקרובה
From the Lang Family



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