

# L'Chaim



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe  
on the Torah portion

This week we read two Torah portions, *Behar* and *Bechukotai*. In *Bechukotai* we read that during exile, G-d will remember the promise He made with our ancestors: "And I will remember My covenant with Jacob and also My covenant with Isaac and also My covenant with Abraham..."

Why is the order of our ancestors reversed? Shouldn't the covenant with Abraham be mentioned first, then Isaac his son and finally Jacob?

Sometimes it seems that the real heroes and greatest leaders all lived in the past. We feel that we are not so holy, so capable, such giants... but our grandparents were. "How can I be expected to be great? How can small me make a difference?"

By reversing the order, the Torah is telling us that though our ancestors were great, we possess qualities and abilities that they did not. If we tap into our G-d given strengths, we can accomplish wonderful things. We can be great as well.

You may then ask, who am I to aspire for greatness?

One of the qualities Jacob had over Abraham, was that he was the descendant of great and holy people. Jacob was born great; all he needed to do was to bring to the forefront what he already was.

You, too, descend from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sara Rebecca, Rachel and Leah. You don't have to aspire for greatness, you were born that way. All you need to do is reveal who you are.

When I was diagnosed with ALS and started losing my ability to walk, talk, sing, dance, play the guitar, teach, etc., I was faced with a dilemma: What purpose is there for me? What is there for me to accomplish? What difference can I possibly make?

The answer became clear with the outpouring of love all around me. I saw how wonderful everyone around me is and I personally witnessed greatness from the most unexpected places. It dawned on me that if my crisis brought out greatness in others, perhaps if I dig deep I will find some way to make a difference too. I was pleasantly surprised to find that there are still ways for me to make a difference and in some ways, even greater than before.

You are greater than you think. Go make a difference.

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, [yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com](http://yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com). Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

## Reverse Recipes

by Rabbi David YB Kaufmann *obm*

Let's bake something. How about a cake, a knish, or maybe some cookies.

Or maybe we should make something more ethnic, like a lokshen kugel (a sort of noodle pudding), gefilte fish, or even chopped liver.

On second thought, let's stick with a basic: challah. You'll need:

5 pounds flour  
2 ounces fresh yeast  
2 tablespoons salt  
4 1/4 cups warm water (add an additional 1/4 cup for softer dough)  
3/4 cup oil  
1 1/3 cups sugar  
5 egg yolks

Here are the instructions: Put the eggs, yeast and salt in a bowl. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Put the bowl in the oven. Then mix the oil and water in another bowl. When thoroughly mixed, pour it into the bowl already in the oven (be sure to use gloves). When the oil or water or both begin to boil, add the dough. Wait 30 minutes.

What you'll have, of course, is a thorough mess. You won't have challah – or anything edible.

But why? We put all the ingredients in.

Ah, but we didn't do it in the right order. To make challah, first you have to activate the yeast. Then the ingredients have to be mixed (flour, sugar, yolks, water and the the activated yeast), and the mixing has to be thorough (12 minutes, medium setting if using a mixer). Then the dough has to rise (covered, in a warm place, for 2 to 3 hours). Only then can you separate the challah for the blessing, make the braids, and finally bake the challah (400 degrees for the first fifteen minutes, then

at 350 for another half-hour or so).

We all know that a recipe consists of more than the ingredients and that cooking requires more than throwing those ingredients together any way we want. Cooking is a process. Not only do we have to have all the ingredients, we have to have them in the right proportions. Too much salt, too little flour, not enough garlic – the recipe gets ruined.

And we have to add them in the right order. How the ingredients combine also determines how the recipe will turn out. Similarly, we have to cook it at the right temperature. Too much heat and it burns; too little and it doesn't cook.

*Mitzvot* (commandments) are like a recipe. If we want to "taste" the results, we have to "cook" them – perform them – the right way. The Sages established how to do a mitzva, when to do a mitzva and with what to do a mitzva, because they knew, by Divine inspiration, how each act would open a channel to G-dliness, serve as a conduit and a connection.

The word "mitzva" means "commandment." But more than that, it means "connection," for performing a mitzva connects the performer with the One Who commanded the act. We might say that mitzvot are G-d's recipes, and the Sages are the chefs who wrote them down and taught us how to make something that not only "tastes great" but is spiritually nutritious as well.

So the next time you're feeling "hungry" for some G-dliness, check out the "recipe book," the *Code of Jewish Law*, with your local "chef," your nearest Chabad rabbi or rebbetzin. And they might even know a great recipe for challah, too.

# SLICE OF LIFE

## Adopted at 91

by Ashira Weiss



Patty with Rabbi Mendel Nakkar

Patty Picarelli wasn't very hopeful as she dialed the number for the Chabad Jewish Center of Barrie, Ontario, fifty miles north of Toronto. The single mom of three had already reached out to 34 welfare organizations, governmental and private, Jewish and non-Jewish, both in Barrie and Toronto. None of them had been able to help. When the last call to a Jewish agency in Toronto again resulted in a no, Patty began to cry; she wasn't Jewish and was giving up so much for her Holocaust survivor friend, was there no one who would help her out? The tears seemed to affect the lady on the other end of the phone line, because she took a few more minutes to refer Patty to the Chabad Jewish Center.

In November 2019, Patty and her children had 'adopted' a 91-year-old woman named Madeline Jug. A child survivor of the Holocaust, Madeline was left with a life-long injury to her leg. The wound was inflicted by a Nazi who threw a knife at her when he saw her give a little bit of her water to a friend stricken with typhoid in Krakow, Poland. That injury saved her life as she and her friend were taken to the hospital where a German-British doctor arranged for them to be smuggled to a safe house in the Austrian countryside.

Patty met Madeline, a friend of her father's, in 2005 and the two stayed in touch even after his passing. In November, Patty heard that Madeline,

no longer able to live on her own, had moved into a home where she was being mistreated, even being called "dirty Jew." The younger woman was horrified. The disease and malnutrition that Madeline experienced as a child left her unable to have children. Her husband passed away years ago leaving Madeline alone in her old-age. "Our elderly gave up so much for the next generation. It is our duty to make sure they are surrounded by love and support in their later years," Patty shared.

So she rented a U-Haul and she and her children moved Madeline and her belongings to their modest home. No longer able to climb stairs with her injured leg, the family emptied their living room and dining room, and put up a door to provide Madeline with some personal space. "The bathroom was an issue," Patty said. There is only a powder room on the main floor so Patty rigged a hose to the sink so she could help Madeline wash. But she wanted to make her more comfortable so she began to brainstorm ways to raise the funds for a renovation.

After selling her TV and anything she could get a little money for, Patty started a GoFundMe fundraiser. Patty reached out to celebrities and friends asking that they share her page to no avail. Thus began the thirty-four-phone-call-marathon. "I wasn't asking for a lot and I wasn't asking for myself," Patty says, but she was appalled by the indifference. "I was shocked that this is how our generation respects our elders. They persevered through war to build our country and now, when they need it most, people act as if they are disposable," Patty says.

It was Chanukah time when, with trepidation, Patty dialed the number for the Chabad Jewish Center. Chabad representative Muci Nakkar listened to Patty's tale and immediately offered to help. She invited Patty to meet with the government officials who would be attending the public menorah lighting ceremony that she and her husband, Rabbi Mendel, were hosting. The politicians were polite and assured their assistance, but didn't come through. "They looked at me, shook my hand and said, 'we're not going to let you down,' but once the cameras had gone, they didn't respond to any of my calls," Patty says.

"We realized that we were the only ones willing to help, but we didn't have the resources to pay for the renovations on our own," Muci says. So they posted a request on the Chabad center's Facebook page and asked their friends to pitch in. "The community responded quickly and generously,"

says Rabbi Mendel. Within twenty-four hours they had raised \$2,500.

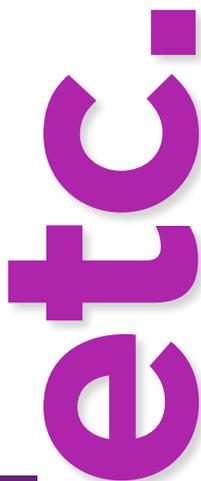
Sultana Mechali, a member of the Chabad Jewish Center, went to the local Home Depot. She explained her cause to the store's assistant manager. "He said, 'choose what you need,'" Sultana says. "He gave us about three quarters of the supplies needed, free of charge." The owner of MRK Contractors and Renovations, another Chabad community member, pitched in too, offering to do the \$8,000 renovation for just \$2,500.

The bathroom renovation and a ramp to the front door were completed mid-February. Patty was overwhelmed by the generosity suddenly shown to her. "I can't even put into words what it means that someone reached out. Thank you isn't enough to describe the gratitude Madeline and my family feel. The Nakkars and their community really stepped up to the plate when absolutely nobody else would," she says.

On February 26, Madeline suffered a heart attack and was sent to the hospital. Patty and her children visited every day until March 17 when the hospital closed its doors to visitors due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They continued to communicate virtually until Madeline was released back into Patty's care a few days ago. With much in short supply these days, Patty had a hard time finding the medical supplies needed. She improvises, using a potato to clean a surface wound at the time of this interview in lieu of antibiotic cream. "It's been a challenge because we have to be extra careful and the kids have to remain socially distant and are no longer able to help me with her care," she says.

Like Patty, Madeline has a fighting spirit. She keeps promising her caregiver that she will be feeling healthy for Patty's birthday in September so she can make her a special dinner. Patty is hoping to raise some more money by then so she can have the kitchen made accessible to Madeline and add a ramp to the backyard so that Madeline can enjoy the outdoors. She is also seeking government assistance to hire a nurse to assist in the older woman's care. "Madeline is funny, she has a heart of gold and is so accepting of everyone, but the most incredible thing is her positive outlook on life, even with all she's been through," Patty says. "I think she'll live beyond 100 and I'll do all I can to make these years comfortable and full of love and joy."

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## More Than Mazal Tov

For centuries, it has been customary for Jewish women to adorn the birthing room and the cradle with Psalm 121. The Psalm states our dependence on G-d for our safety and wellbeing, and His commitment to guard us at all times. For a color print of the Psalm call LEFJME at (718) 756-5700, e-mail orders@mikvah.org, or visit [www.mikvah.org](http://www.mikvah.org), or visit [www.LchaimWeekly.org/general/art/shirlamaalot.jpg](http://www.LchaimWeekly.org/general/art/shirlamaalot.jpg)



## Tablets for Education

Across the former Soviet Union, the Federation of Jewish Communities educational institutions continue to operate online. With more than 120 institutions and over 7,000 students that's not a small feat! To help the most impoverished students, FJC in Ukraine distributed 300 new tablets so that all children can continue with their schooling.

## WHO'S WHO?

**Rabbi Sholom DovBer Schneerson** of Lubavitch, who was known by the acronym, the Rebbe Rashab, was born in 1860 and passed away in 1920. He was the son and successor of Rabbi Shmuel, the Rebbe Maharash, and was himself the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe. Because of his systematic, intellectual approach to the teaching of Chasidut, he became known as "the Maimonides of Chasidut." He was the founder of the Lubavitcher Yeshiva, Tomchei Temimim.



# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Freely translated

You write that you are at a loss to find answers to such questions as, "What is the purpose of life? What is the meaning of a Jew?" etc., and that doubts and confusions are sorely afflicting you.

As you write that you have attended college and have studied science, you are probably aware of what the approach should be to an intricate problem. If we want to verify a certain system, as to the laws and principles prevailing in it, we begin by verifying the parts of it that lend themselves more easily to analysis and verification. When we have, step by step, verified the greater part of the system, we can then safely assume that if the greater part of it has been found to conform to certain specific laws, the rest of it is also ruled by the same laws. Even common sense justifies the assumption that if a certain law holds good in the vast majority of cases, it is true also in the case where it cannot be verified with certainty.

Applying this approach to the universe as a whole, we are increasingly convinced, year after year, of the law and order that rules in nature, including inert matter; to the minutest atom and even smaller particles. Nuclear science has discovered undreamed-of harmony and order in the some one hundred elements known to this day. In a universe of such orderliness and harmony, obviously man too must be subject to order and purpose.

Going a step further, the conclusion is inevitable that since there is such law and order in the universe, there must be a Higher Authority responsible for it. The analogy is well known: When we get hold of a printed

book of hundreds of pages, containing a connected story, or philosophy, we cannot by any stretch of the imagination assume that a bottle of ink has been spilled and has accidentally produced the book. Still less, and infinitely so, is it admissible that our universe, with its infinite number of atoms, molecules and particles, all arranged in perfect order and harmony, could have come into existence by accident. Obviously, there is a Creator and Architect, Who arranges and relates all the various parts of the universe in perfect unity and harmony, in conformity to the set of laws which He creates and supervises.

It is plain that the whole system is beyond our comprehension, since our comprehension, as our existence as a whole, is but an infinitely minute part of the entire cosmic order, and certainly in no degree comparable to the Creator Himself. It is, clearly, absurd to expect to comprehend the Creator, and even more nonsensical to deny His existence by reason of our inability to comprehend Him. Can "one" contain an infinite number of "ones"? And here at least there is some relationship, for both the one and the infinite number of ones are the same objects – numbers, while there is no such community between the created and the Creator.

Carrying the analogy from science a step further: In physics, chemistry, etc., when a law is deduced from a number of experiments, and verified by different people, under varying conditions, thus eliminating the possibility of error, side-effects, etc., such a law is accepted and becomes valid also for the future.

This scientific "rule" holds good also with regard to events and phenomena in the past. Where a certain event or phenomenon is attested to by many historians, and reported in an identical manner, there is no "scientific" doubt that is how the event actually took place.

*Continued in next week's issue.*

Freely translated by Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd, From *Mind Over Matter*

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

The first words of the Torah portion, *Bechukotai*, are, "If you will walk in my *chukot* - statutes..." According to Rashi, this verse refers to the study of Torah. Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of Chabad Chasidism, explained that *chukot* is from the same root as the word for "engraving" - *chakika*.

Combining these two meanings for the word *chukot*, one arrives at an interesting discussion on Torah study. One's study of Torah should be as letters that are engraved in stone.

Letters of ink are connected and united with the paper on which they are written. This is like the level of Torah study in which the student becomes united with the Torah; his actions reflect what he has learned.

However, the letters of ink are still an entity distinct from the paper. But, letters engraved in stone have no separate existence. The letter and the stone are one. In the same way, one's study of Torah should ultimately reach the level of the engraved letter.

The summer months are approaching. Summer is a time when many people have a tendency to relax and let matters slide. It is, therefore, important for us to make Torah study a priority. And what kind of Torah study? Classes, lectures or individual, private study time which will inspire us and enable us to truly become one with the Torah, like letters engraved on stone.

Our summer, then, will be a healthy one, both in body and in spirit. And, may I venture to say, also a more enjoyable one.

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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# MOSHIACH MATTERS

Since exile runs contrary to nature, one may ask: Why did G-d give man the potential to bring about exile? The answer reflects G-d's kindness. G-d desired that man reach a level of connection

with Him that surpasses the limits of creation – an "unnatural" bond as it were. This will be realized in the Era of the Redemption. Moreover, in His kindness, G-d desired that man attain this level through his own efforts. For this to be possible, He employed a catalyst, exile. For exile also runs contrary to the natural order, but can be brought about by man's conduct. (Shabbat Parshat Balak, 5744, *In the Path of Our Fathers, a study of Pirkei Avot, sie.org.*)

