

The year before the birth of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidic philosophy, the Baal Shem Tov knew that a new soul was soon to descend to this world. But who would be privileged to host it he did not know, so he searched for it in the heavenly palaces.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman's father, the saintly Reb Baruch, was one of the Baal Shem Tov's circle of hidden tzadikim. But no one knew of Reb Baruch's righteousness – no one, that is, apart from his wife Rebbetzin Rivka.

When a year had passed since their marriage and they had not been blessed with a child, Reb Baruch and his wife set out during the month of Elul to visit the Baal Shem Tov in order to ask for his blessing. The Baal Shem Tov blessed them and promised them that in the forthcoming year, 5505 (1745), they would be granted a healthy son.

The fact that this child was connected to the new soul that was destined to descend that year was hidden even from the Baal Shem Tov.

On Rosh Hashana of that year, the disciples of the Baal Shem Tov observed a marked difference from his accustomed mode of divine service. His abounding joy could be perceived in his manner of prayer, in the especially cordial tone with which he blessed them, in the Torah teachings at the meal thereafter, in the next day's sounding of the shofar, and in the additional prayer service.

The conclusion of Yom Kippur that year found the Baal Shem Tov in a distinctive state of holy elation, which remained with him until after Simchat Torah. His disciples understood that something wonderful must have transpired that holiday month, something that had brought him such joy that he had departed from his accustomed mode of divine service during the Days of Awe, for joy was now its dominant theme. But eager as they were to discover the reason for this joy, they were left disappointed.

Before Reb Baruch and his wife left Medzibozh, they called on the Baal Shem Tov to receive his farewell blessings. Rebbetzin Rivka, bestirred by spiritual emotion, told the tzadik that when the Almighty fulfilled his blessing and granted her a healthy son, she would dedicate him to the study of Torah and to divine service in the spirit of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov.

Seeing their state of spiritual arousal, the Baal Shem Tov gave them his blessing, and they left town with glad hearts.

On Wednesday morning, on the eighteenth of Elul, the Baal Shem Tov returned from his immersion in the mikva [ritual bath] in extraordinarily buoyant spirits. His disciples were mystified, but none of them ventured to breathe a question. Moreover, the tzadik personally led the prayers to the jovial rhythms of the festival melodies. And when he surprised them by omitting the penitential prayers, they realized that this must be a uniquely festive day.

He then invited them to share his visible joy at a festive meal, where he said: "On Wednesday, 'the day on which the luminaries were suspended in the heavens,' on the Wednesday of the week whose Haftorah opens with the words, 'Arise and shine,' on this day a new soul has come down, which will light up the world through the revealed levels of the Torah and through Chasidut. It will endure self-sacrifice for the sake of the spiritual path of Chasidut and will succeed in its mission until the coming of Moshiach."

When the Baal Shem Tov received Reb Baruch on Yom Kippur that year, he warned him that he should tell no one that he had had a son, nor should he tell anyone of the child's name. Later, when Reb Baruch was about to leave for home, the Baal Shem Tov gave him detailed instructions as to how the child should be attended to and how he should be taken out to the fields. He warned him solemnly, moreover, that the child should be kept out of public view, and in particular, out of the view of the local gossips.

And three times a day, the Baal Shem Tov remembered the newborn child in his prayers. On the child's third birthday, Rebbetzin Rivka and her sister-in-law arrived in Medzibozh for the child's third birthday, when it is customary to give the first haircut. As soon as the Baal Shem Tov had given the child his first training in leaving his peyot (sidecurls) uncut and had given him his blessing, he urged them to leave immediately and not to discuss between themselves where they had been. Finally, he wished them a good year and a safe journey home.

Dedicated in honor of

Srulik Lezell

May you continue to go from strenth to strength לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות

The little boy kept on asking who was this man who had cut his hair and left him with peyot, and who had blessed him.

"That was a grandfather," replied his mother. Thus, Rabbi Shneur Zalman referred to the Baal Shem Tov in the future, as his spiritual grandfather.

Excerpted from Likutei Dibburim by the Previous Rebbe



When you go out to wage war... G-d will deliver them into your hands and you will take captives ("shivyo") (Deut. 21:10)

The literal meaning of the word "shivyo" is "his captives," implying that we shall regain the enemy's capture, i.e., that which the enemy captured from us in the past. One of the tasks of Moshiach in the early stages of his revelation is, in the words of Maimonides, "He will wage the battles of G-d and succeed." At the end of the Messianic battle, the Jewish people will find restored all the precious spoils that were taken by the nations during the exile, first and foremost among them the Holy Temple. (The Rebbe, Shabbat Parshat Teitzei, 5750)

When you build a new house you shall make a parapet for your roof... if anyone fall from it (Deut. 22:8)

When a couple marries and makes the transition from their parents' homes to their own, the need to earn a livelihood brings them into contact with many new things. They must therefore make a "parapet" beforehand, setting the proper limits and spiritual standards, to ensure that no harm comes from their involvement in worldly matters. (The Rebbe)

You shall surely lift him up (Deut. 22:4)

When a person helps his fellow Jew, he himself is thereby elevated. Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the Alter Rebbe, wrote that when one does a spiritual favor for another, "his mind and heart are purified one thousand-fold"; his grandson, the Tzemach Tzedek, added that this is no exaggeration!

Remember what Amalek did... how he met you by the way and smote the hindmost of you, all that were feeble (Deut. 25: 17-18)

Amalek attacked only those Jews who had sinned and were expelled from the camp beyond the Clouds of Glory, thus no longer under their protection. From G-d's command, "Go out and wage war with Amalek," we see just how important it is to draw all Jews to Torah and Judaism, even those who are presently "outside the camp," in order to protect them from Amalek's assault. (Likrat Shabbat)





REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

This week's Torah portion, *Ki Teitzei*, tells us: "If there is a quarrel between (two) men, who come to court to be judged, the innocent one will be acquitted and the guilty one will be condemned."

In the Torah there is nothing extra. Here, however, there seems to be extra words. The verse starts, "If there is a quarrel," yet it could have started "men, who come to court..." Isn't it obvious that there is a dispute, when two men come to court?

The verse then continues, "the innocent one will be acquitted and the guilty one will be condemned." What other option is there? Isn't that what a court ought to do?

This is a special case. First the two men were quarreling, from the fighting a dispute arose. When they come to court the judges recognize that this case started as a quarrel. They might be tempted to deal with the true underlying issue instead of judging the case at hand. The Torah tells the court to judge the case properly.

There is a message here for us all. Don't think that quarreling with a friend is OK. Ultimately it will escalate and you will end up in court. Your case will not be judged according to your feelings but by the law.

We each need to think about our relationships. Is it really worth fighting with friends and family. How many of us haven't spoken to a friend or, even worse, a family member for a long time because of some petty matter?

Don't let it come to that. Whether you feel innocent or guilty in the situation, it's not worth the constant fighting, bickering and hurting.

Sometimes we lose focus, forgetting that G-d puts us in our situation. We start to feel negative about ourselves and everyone around us. Then the guarreling begins.

Practice recognizing G-d's hand in all that happens. It will keep you positive.

Life is short. Be positive and easy to get along with. Be a good friend and good family. Let the petty stuff slide. Be happy, friendly and smile a lot.

You will positively change the world for the good, and you will bring out the positive In those around you.

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.

Filling Space

After spending more time at home these past 18 months, including many people working from home, it's no surprise that we're looking for home organization and storage overhauls. According to California Closets, pantries and clothing closets topped the list of areas where people want to use space more efficiently with an organized presentation.

Squeezing more in, though, isn't a new phenomena: How many absolute essentials does a woman place in her evening bag? How many items does a man load into his suit pocket and still have the jacket lay properly? How many grapes can a youngster pack into his mouth before they come tumbling out?

Sand patted down by a child in a pail, and patted down yet again to make room for more; a suitcase so full that you have to sit on it to close it; making the margins on a document more narrow so that everything fits on one page, having just one more slice of the chocolate mud cake even though we're full beyond comfort.

People seem to be obsessed with cramming as many things as possible into a minimal amount of space. From closet organizers to pocket organizers, we want to make full use of space, both tangible and intangible.

There are times in the Jewish calendar when we are given a specific amount of "spiritual space" and encouraged to fill it up.

The month of Elul that we are

currently in is just such a time. Elul is the round-up time for the previous year. It is the "inventory" season, "year-end accounting" time and the moment when each person writes and reads to himself his own "State of the Union" address.

In addition to Elul being a once-over concerning the past, it is a focus on the future, an opportunity to plan ahead armed with the wisdom gained from experience. Elul gives us the chance to concentrate on how we will do things differently in the upcoming year.

But there is a third aspect to Elul, as well. While we're remembering the past and considering the future, we are still living in the present. And in this present, Jewish teachings invite us to use the entire month of Elul to fill up our spiritual space with as many mitzvot as we can. We are encouraged to add more mitzvot to our repertoire of mitzvot and to enhance the manner in which we are already perform various mitzvot.

In Elul, we are urged specifically to give extra charity; to spend more time connecting with G-d through prayer; to have our mezuzot and tefilin checked by an expert scribe (and to put mezuzot on those doorways which might yet need them); to observe the laws of kashrut more carefully; to bless our friends, neighbors and relatives with a good, sweet year.

Using the spiritual space we're given during Elul to its fullest capacity can only be to our benefit for the coming year

SLICE OF LIFE

Happy Campers!



Photos: Above Rostov on Don, Russia: Clockwise from top left, San Antonio, Texas; Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine; Cincinatti, Ohio: Jerusalem, Israel: Boquete, Panama: Pacific Palisades, California; Orlando, Florida; Andes,

There are hundreds of them around the world, with tens of thousands of campers. When the sun is at its zenith in every major city and on every continent, the Chabad-Lubavitch Gan Israel summer camps shine their light on another generation of Jewish children.

The Gan Israel camps span a diversity of cultures, languages and regions, extending from Alaska to Florida and from Australia to Zaire. But no matter how disparate they are - like some spiritual Starbucks - all alike in their trademark spirit, joy and Jewish pride that permeate the Gan Israel camp experience.

In 1956, the Rebbe launched Gan Israel, an international network of summer camps, where children of all ages and walks of life learn to love their heritage while enjoying the best experience that camping offers.

In those days, enjoying a summer camp complete with sports, arts, crafts, and entertaining activities was a novelty reserved for children of families with means. When Gan Israel summer day and overnight camps were founded, the guiding principle was that every child deserves to gain

Torahs Welcomed

recently the target of an anti-Semitic incident.

communism in the country 99 years ago.









from the integration of education and camp activities and that no child should be left out. Gan Israel has grown into the world's largest network of Jewish summer camps. Typical activities such as swimming and sport, as well more specialized

The Chabad Jewish campus in Anchorage, Alaska, welcomed a

new Torah scroll. the local Jewish community as well as politicians

came out to welcome the Torah to the Chabad House, which was

Almaty, Kazakhstan welcomed a new Torah scroll on the

anniversary of the passing of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson. Reb

The seventh Children's Sefer Torah was completed amidst much

celebration in **Jerusalem, Israel,** at the Western Wall. To date, over

2 million Jewish children have participated in these special Torah

scrolls by purchasing a letter in one of the Torahs. that have been

A completion ceremony was held recently in **Zhytomyr**, **Ukraine**.

The Torah was the first one welcomed to the city since the start of

Levi Yitzchak, who is buried in Almaty is the father of the Rebbe.









activities like science workshops, tennis, karate, and dance, all complement the spiritual programs that are the hallmark of Gan Israel: Jewish songs and creative Shabbat parties, ritual arts and crafts, and a variety of programs designed to generate interest and excitement in Jewish life and mitzva observance.

TODAY IS...

16 Elul

The Alter Rebbe interpreted the statement, "Whoever saves a single person of (the people) Israel is as though he saved an entire world1": One must perceive a Jew as he stands in the primordial thought of Adam Kadmon. There, each soul stands with all the generations destined to descend from it until the coming of

The Rebbe

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

8 Elul. 5723 (1963)

To the Participants in the Ground Breaking of the New Main Building in Camp Gan Israel and the Administration and Campers in particular:

It is with pleasure that I associate myself with you in the Ground Breaking celebration, taking place this coming Sunday....

The scheduled time is auspicious for more than one reason, especially as it occurs within the week of the 18th of Elul.

For Chai Elul is the birthday of the two great Iuminaries. Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, whose name Camp Gan Israel bears, and Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the "Alter Rebbe" and founder of Chabad, whose spirit is the guiding light of the

I hope and pray that this auspicious occasion will stimulate the steady expansion of the camp, with a view to increasing its absorptive capacity. In this day and age, and in this country in particular, the educational benefits and lasting inspiration which Camp Gan Israel has to offer, should be made available to the maximum number of children.

In view of the fact that the Ground Breaking ceremony is expressly related to the occasion of this year's 150 yahrzeit Anniversary of the Alter Rebbe, I will quote one of his teachings, expressed in very few words, but containing a most profound and comprehensive doctrine:

Commenting on the teaching of our Sages, "He who saves one Jewish soul is deemed as if he saved the whole world," the Alter Rebbe said: "One must see a Jew in the state in which he appears in the root of roots on high, where every soul stands with all its generations of its descendants down to the Coming of Moshiach, the True Redeemer.

"Hence, when one renders a service to a Jew, the benefit is one that extends to all those souls, to the end of all generations." (Hayom Yom, 16th

This brief but profound explanation inspires the desire to act kindly towards every Jew; it should certainly inspire a desire to help Camp Gan Israel, which is itself conducted with the spirit of this teaching. The help given to Camp Gan Israel is an everlasting benefit to every one of its campers, in body as well as soul. Such benefit. moreover, given to children as it is at an early age, is eventually multiplied manifold, as is readily understandable from the well-known analogy of a seed or sapling, in which a little extra timely care is incomparably rewarded when the seed or sapling becomes a fully grown fruit-bearing tree. It is a benefit which, in the words of the Alter Rebbe, is extended to all souls, to the end of all

I send my prayerful wishes for the success of this occasion, and may it be soon possible to celebrate the completion of the new building. May G-d also grant that the good efforts of all participating be for them a channel through which to receive G-d's blessings, everyone according to his or her needs, materially and spiritually.

With the traditional blessing for a kesiva vachasima tova [a good and sweet new year].

15 Elul. 5739 (1979)

Greeting and Blessing:

Concert on the eve of the 18th of Elul.

cious for the occasion. For the month of Elul is dedicated to teshuva – return to the roots and sources of Torah and mitzvot which are bound up with the real essence of every Jew.

The Alter Rebbe, founder of Chabad, explains in Tanya that the essential aspect of teshuva is in the sincerity of the heart, since it entails profound feelings of regret for past failures and the strongest resolve and commitment for the future. And it is well known that very often the heart strings can be touched more readily and effectively by an inspiring nigun [Chasidic melody] than by a word of admonishment.

Moreover, the concert is taking place on Chai and inspiration to our Jewish people.

May the concert event be a great success in every respect, a source of lasting inspiration to all of you, and stimulating the activities of Chabad Lubavitch to strengthen Torah-true Yiddishkeit in the community at large.

and sweet New Year.

I was pleased to be informed of the forthcoming

The date is particularly significant and auspi-

[the 18th of] Elul ("Chai" for "life") – the birthday of the two great luminaries, the Baal Shem Toy and the Alter Rebbe, who brought new life

Wishing you a kesiva vachasima tova for a good

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av (the first day of the month of Av) is associated with the greatest descent, the destruction of the Holy Temple. Within it, however, is also the potential for

the highest ascent which will be realized in the Messianic Age, when the fast days will be transformed into days of joy and celebration. Since the descent commemorated on Tisha B'Av is greater than that of any of the other fast days, it is self-understood that, ultimately, the ascent associated with it will also surpass that of the other fasts. (The Rebbe, Rosh Chodesh Av, 5749-1989)

6 A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

During the month of Elul we blow the shofar in preparation for the High Holidays. The Baal Shem Tov, whose birthday we celebrate on the 18th day of this month, told the following parable about the Jewish people and the shofar:

A mighty king had an only child Though the prince grew to be a well-educated young man, he and the king decided that by traveling to other countries he would further enhance his knowledge.

And so, the prince set out, laden with wealth and accompanied by nobles and servants. The prince travelled for years and years, studying the people and countries he encountered and acquiring a great taste for luxuries. The prince spent his money until he was finally left penniless, without servants or friends, far from his father's palace and comfortable

Slowly, the prince made his way back to his homeland. He arrived at his father's palace, bedraggled and exhausted. He had been away so long, though, that he had even forgotten his mothertongue. Through signs and gestures, he tried to convince the palace guards that he was the prince, but the guards just laughed and beat him.

Finally, the prince cried out in anguish and grief, a wordless cry full of desperation and agony. And his father, the king, heard and recognized the prince's cry and ran out to greet his son.

The king is G-d, the King of Kings. The Jewish people are the prince.

G-d puts the soul in the body to perform mitzvot and do good deeds. However, he often gets distracted and wanders far away. Eventually, however, when he notices the emptiness of his life, he returns to his "Father's palace" though he no longer even knows the language. So, he utters an incoherent cry, but a cry from his very depths the cry of the shofar. And the cry of the shofar is recognized by the King, who lovingly accepts him and all His returning children.

May we merit, even before Rosh Hashana, to hear the cry of the Great shofar which will be sounded at the commencement of the Messianic Era. Emuso Belmon

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 Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.



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