

# REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

In this week's Torah portion, *Va'etchanan*, we learn of one of the Torah's positive commandments, which is to recite "Shema," the central proclamation of our faith, twice each day.

The Torah specifies when we must say it: "when you lie down," i. e., at night, and "when you rise," i.e., during the day.

"Hear O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is One. And you shall love...and you shall speak of them...when you lie down and when you rise...and upon your gates."

With the declaration of "Shema Yisrael," the Jew testifies that G-d is One, and that nothing else exists except for Him.

The word "echad" (one), is composed of three Hebrew letters: alef, chet and dalet.

The numerical equivalent of alef is one. G-d is alone and unique in the universe.

The numerical equivalent of chet is eight. Only G-d is Ruler over all seven firmaments and the earth below.

The numerical equivalent of dalet is four. This expresses the concept that G-d is the sole Sovereign over all four directions: east, west, north and south.

By saying the "Shema," the Jew negates the independent existence of the world. He declares that all of creation – the celestial spheres, the earth below and the four winds – are completely nullified before Him. G-d is the One Who sustains and rules over them; without Him, they would not exist. G-d is One; there is nothing else but Him.

A Jew is obligated to recite the "Shema" by night and by day, two opposites that allude to the variety of situations and circumstances a Jew will encounter throughout his life.

Night time, in the allegorical sense, is a time of spiritual darkness, when G-d's light is hidden and concealed. At such times it is hard for the Jew to perceive G-dliness; his spiritual condition is as dark as night.

Daytime, by contrast, is a time when the sun illuminates. Symbolically, this alludes to the illumination of the Jew's soul, when G-dliness is readily perceived and apparent.

Yet regardless of one's spiritual condition, no matter if it is day or night, the Jew must always remember (and remind others) that the entire world is only G-dliness! G-d is the only King of the universe. G-d is One.

Indeed, a person's purpose is to reveal G-d's oneness within creation, and the obligation to nullify the world in His presence is independent of our personal situation and circumstances.

"Hear O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is One... when you lie down and when you rise."  $\,$ 

Adapted for Maayan Chai from Likutei Sichot, Volume 4

# Saying Good-Bye

We've all seen or been part of a scenario repeated dozens of times. At a family gathering, a synagogue event, a Jewish lecture, a simcha, someone says, "I'm leaving," and moves to get his coat. Twenty minutes later he's still there. Either in to an all-new conversation, still hugging the Bubbies and Zeidies, or noticing an old friend/relative he didn't have a chance to chat with yet. This phenomenon transcends gender, age, and country of origin. But it does seem to be particularly prevalent among Jews.

It's called a Jewish good-bye and it seems to go on forever. Because Jews never really say "good-bye." We say "shalom – peace to you." Or we say in Hebrew "Go in peace." One whose background is more Yiddish might say, "fort gezunterheit – travel in health." But we never say "good-bye."

In fact, even were you to scour the modern Hebrew language, you wouldn't find a word for "goodbye." All you'd come up with is "l'hitraot," which means "see ya later." (Some Israelis do say, "bye-bye." But pronounced with that decidedly Hebrew accent you know that it's been borrowed from English.)

At a Jewish gathering, private or public, we take a long time to go because, after all, who wants to leave the warm embrace of family – and all Jews truly are one family. All Jews share in each others simchas and each others sorrows.

Is there any basis, though, in Jewish tradition, for this seeming inability

to just say "good-bye"?

The *Talmud* enjoins us, "Whatever your host tells you, do, except leave." One of the commentaries explains that a guest must immediately comply with everything the host tells him to do except when the host tells him it is time to leave. The guest should show the host his reluctance to take leave of his company!

In addition, Jewish teachings encourage us that when we part from a friend, we should share a *d'var halacha*, meaning a "word of Jewish law." But d'var halacha can also be interpreted as a "word for the way."

So, it's not hard to understand why Jews don't say good-bye. Firstly, we don't really want to leave. Secondly, even when we do realize that we absolutely must leave, we should show our reluctance to leave. And lastly, when we already have our coat on, we should share a thought for the journey (however short) with our friend.

Ultimately, though, one might speculate that not saying "goodbye" has a more eternal and confident message. For, deep within every Jew is the fundamental belief in better times, the best times, the times of Moshiach. In that era the Era of the Redemption – we will see the fulfillment of one of the principles of Jewish belief, the revival of the dead. And at that time, we will all be reunited with our loved ones. And when we rejoice in being together again with them, we will fully understand why we never really said, "good-bye."



Filling the Soul by Nosson Avrohom



Gil Barak was born in Petach Tikva, Israel, and grew up in Ramat Gan in a typical Israeli family.

Gil was extremely smart with a quick mental grasp. He was put in a class for the gifted students in elementary school. He also excelled in sports.

"My mother, like all of her family, was an accountant, and my father was a successful contractor. Materially, I lacked for nothing but regarding Judaism, even growing up in Israel, I knew nothing about Torah and its commandments."

Gil was accepted to the exclusive Bleich High School while he continued with his successful sports career. At his mother's request, he concentrated on biology. After the army he worked as a mega-event planner in Tel Aviv and was tremendously successful.

"Anyone looking at me would think I had it all. But when I would return to my apartment in the wee hours of the morning after an event, I would feel totally empty.

"My friends thought I was crazy. 'You have half of Tel Aviv in your pocket. Why can't you enjoy it?' they would ask me. I didn't have an answer for them."

As time passed, the emptiness became more unbearable until one day I felt I had to make a

change."

Gil shocked everyone. He announced that he was taking time off to examine his feelings, and was leaving the business registered in his name to his partners.

"My first stop was Bangkok, Thailand. All the Israelis I met directed me to the Chabad House where I was invited to come for the Friday night meal.

"I showed up and loved it. It was the first time in my life that I was exposed to Kiddush and a Shabbat meal with singing. I enjoyed it tremendously but it didn't touch me. I didn't think for a moment that I could slake my inner thirst in the Chabad House. I had planned a long trip and the next day I went into isolation on the beaches of Thailand. There too, at first I enjoyed the experience and was excited but then the empty feeling returned."

As Gil sat and contemplated the wonders of nature on one of the gorgeous beaches of Thailand, he picked up a book.

"It was about a person who had plenty of material wealth but he threw it all away and found happiness in mysticism. The pleasures of the world are transient while spirituality offers something that remains forever. This appealed to me and I decided to listen to the advice in the book and leave Thailand for India. I kept referring to the book during that time. I considered it the oracle that guided my life.

"My first stop was an ashram in Puna. I quickly became an integral part of the place. I shaved off my long hair and I was there day and night, reading books and doing yoga and meditation.

"This was the first time in my life that I felt good. For quite a while I felt calm and serene. I had the feeling that I had found inner happiness. I felt removed from the world and was no longer in the rat race but was completely immersed in spirituality.

"This feeling was eviscerated suddenly one evening when there was a special party. All members of the ashram were asked to don white robes. Music played and we all danced. When excitement reached a peak frenzy, the organizers suddenly removed a white curtain which revealed a statue of the deceased founder of the ashram. People began bowing to him. But I couldn't do that. I had this indescribable feeling. I had to escape from there.

"Suddenly, all the feelings of emptiness returned and struck me harder than ever. I threw off the white robe and ran to where I lived. I collected my things and fled from Puna."

Gil's next stop was Pushkar. "I met a friend who was becoming religious. He took me to the Chabad House. I was very skeptical at first. What touched me more than anything else was the class in the Rebbe's talks. I was there for nine straight days. Every night we learned another talk of the Rebbe and I felt that this was filling me up. In the Chabad House I understood what the difference is between Judaism and the mysticism of the nations of the world. Here you operate within the world while there you seek to disconnect from reality.

"Even after I understood in my heart that Torah is true and Chasidic philosophy is the path that leads a Jew to serve his Maker, the question persisted on an intellectual level. Eventually someone in the Chabad House shared with me a lecture that explained systematically how everything is derived from Torah.

"I remember that night I really understood not just emotionally but intellectually as well that Torah is true. I couldn't sleep. My soul had finally found it's home. I cried until the morning. This time, they were tears of joy upon discovering my Creator."

After a stay in Pushkar in which he acquired the basics, Gil decided to travel to Australia as planned. As soon as he landed in Melbourne, he visited Rabbi Dudu Lieder's Chabad House, which caters specifically to Israelis, where he studied for two months.

When Gil returned to Israel, his parents, family and friends were surprised at the change in him. But they soon realized he was serious about his observance and they respected his decision.

Gil went to study in the Chabad yeshiva in Ramat Aviv. During those years he also studied psychology at the Open University.

After seven years, Gil married and settled in Ramat Gan. "On our first date, my wife told me that she also visited the Chabad House in Pushkar. She showed me a picture that she took there and told me about a young man who was there and teaching Torah who impressed her. I looked at the picture and was astounded. It was me! Some time after becoming Torah observant, I had flown back to India again to help out at the Chabad House and that is when my picture was taken!"

Today Gil is a marriage counselor. He combines Chasidut and psychology in his work with couples. He has also written two books on the subject.

Condensed from Beis Moshiach Magazine



## Completing Maimonides When the Rebbe instituted the daily

When the Rebbe instituted the daily study of Maimonides Mishneh Torah in 1984, he explained that one of the intentions was to achieve unity by



having the entire Jewish people learning the subject at the same time. The Rebbe had suggested a daily study regimen of three chapters, finishing the entire Mishneh Torah in under a year. For those unable to study three chapters on a daily basis, the Rebbe proposed learning one chapter a day, allowing the learner to finish the entire work in just under three years. For those who found even the daily chapter to be a challenge, the Rebbe instituted a third track: studying Maimonides' Sefer Hamitzvot ("book of commandments"). This past month, the 39th cycle of daily study came to its conclusion with three study tracks all concluding simultaneously. This trilogy of conclusions created a momentous occasion with hundreds of celebrations taking place all over the world in person and on Zoom.

### WHO'S WHO?

**Ruth** was a descendant of the prophetess Miriam. She lived in Bethlehem together with her husband Elimelech and sons Machlon and Kilyon. During a famine she did not want to leave but felt it proper to follow her husband to Moab. There, her sons married the princesses Ruth and Orpa. Upon the passing of her husband and sons she returned to Israel and Ruth returned with her, becoming a righteous convert and the ancestress of King David and the eternal Jewish monarcy which will be reestablished with the coming of Moshiach.

# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

15th of Menachem Av, 5725 [1965]

To All Participants in the Dedication Exercises at Camp Gan Israel Linden, Michigan

This is to convey my prayerful wishes to all of you, and particularly to the families of the distinguished friends of the camp who will be honored on this occasion. The memorial to the late Zeev Hordes, as well as the other distinguished Jews whose memory will be honored, will surely provide visible symbols for their families and friends, to inspire and stimulate them to ever greater accomplishments.

I have chosen the 15th of Av as the date of this letter because of its special significance and also because of its proximity to the day of these dedication exercises.

Our sages tell us that the 15th day of Av was a very joyous festival in the olden days, especially for the younger generation, with particular emphasis on the religious ideals and values of our Jewish way of life.

Coming so soon after Tisha B'Av, the radical transition from a mood of sadness to that of joy is doubly significant. Firstly, it signifies that any sad interlude in Jewish life is only transitory, and is based on the principle of "descent for the purpose of ascent." In other words, any and all sad events in our history which are commemorated on the few sad days on our calendar, are backwards steps which are necessary for a greater forward leap.

Secondly, that the very transition from sadness to gladness intensifies the joy, and adds real quality to it, which could not be appreciated otherwise.

The message of these days is best applied in the efforts on behalf of our Jewish

youth. All too often we hear about the "lost generation," or our "lost youth." It is therefore most gratifying to see your efforts to provide true guidance, direction and inspiration to the younger generation in your community and your environs. Your efforts have, with G-d's help, been fruitful in the past; I hope and pray they will continue in a growing measure of success in the future.

#### 15th of Menachem Av, 5735 [1975]

I was pleased to receive the report about your activities, and may G-d grant that they should continue and expand with much hatzlocho [success].

In the present days, having concluded the Three Weeks, which are connected with sad events of the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh [Holy Temple], and having entered the period of the Seven Weeks of Consolation, which bring us the good tidings of the forthcoming Geulah [Redemption] and restoration of the Beis HaMikdosh — every action which is connected with the strengthening of Yiddishkeit [Judaism] in general, and with the special Mitzvah [commandment] campaigns — notably those most pertinent to Jewish women: candle-lighting, kashrus, and taharas hamishpocho [family purity] — in particular, is especially significant.

For as mentioned in the well-known prayer "Umipnei Chataeinu," the only cause of the sad events of the past, the destruction and exile, was the neglect of Torah and Mitzvos. Therefore, through rectifying and removing the cause, the effect will also be removed. This is why every activity to spread Yiddishkeit is so vital, especially the efforts to provide the right influence and proper chinuch [education] for Jewish daughters, since this is the way to raise generation after generation of fully committed Torah-true Jewish families, in an endless chain reaction.

I send my prayerful wishes to each and all participants in these endeavors, which are at the same time a wide channel to receive G-d's blessings also in all personal needs.

May G-d grant that you should have good news to report in all above.

# **CAWORD**FROM THE DIRECTOR

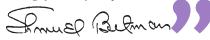
The Shabbat is Shabbat Nachamu, Sabbath of rejoicing. We are hopeful that G-d will console us for the destruction of the Holy Temple and Jerusalem. The Haftora portion for this week and the next six weeks reflects this theme of consolation.

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 לזכרון 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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MOSHIACH MATTERS

"Everything is prepared for the feast." (Ethics 3:16)
"The feast" refers to the World to Come, the Era of
the Redemption. In the present age, this teaching
is particularly relevant for, to echo the analogy, the
table has already been set, the food has already been

served, Moshiach is sitting with us at the table. All we need to do is open our eyes. In past generations, Moshiach's coming was delayed because the Jewish people had not completed the tasks expected of them. Now, however, those tasks have been accomplished; there is nothing lacking. To return to the above analogy: the feast is prepared; now we have to prepare ourselves. We have to ready ourselves to accept Moshiach. (Sefer HaSichot 5752, Vol. 1, In the Path of Our Fathers, a study of Pirkei Avot, sie.org.)



Reb Nachum and Reb Gedalya were the two wealthiest citizens in their respective counties. Thus, when a match was arranged between the two families it was the talk of the town.

Several weeks passed as preparations were made for the celebration, an event that was already being referred to as "the" event of the year if not the decade. Then, all of a sudden, a rumor began to circulate that Reb Nachum, the father of the bride, had lost his fortune.

Eventually the bitter truth came out: Reb Nachum had been forced to declare bankruptcy. Not only had he lost his personal wealth but he had even had to sell his house to appease his creditors. With nowhere else to go the family moved into a tiny apartment paid for by the community.

When Reb Gedalya heard the news he immediately sent a messenger to Reb Nachum with a letter expressing his sympathy. Reb Nachum's reversal of fortune sincerely touched his heart. At the same time, it was obvious to him that the match between their children could no longer take place; it was simply a mistake to be remedied as soon as possible.

However, what was obvious to Reb Gedalya was not all that obvious to Reb Nachum. "A match is a match," he insisted, refusing to back out of the agreement. "It should have nothing at all to do with financial considerations."

When the messenger returned to Reb Gedalya with Reb Nachum's reply his compassion quickly turned to anger. Without a moment's delay he set out for Reb Nachum's house, taking with him all of his son's engagement gifts so he could return them.

Reb Nachum, however, was equally adamant in person about refusing to annul the match. "It's not my fault I lost all my money!" he exclaimed. "'A person who sinned under compulsion, G-d exempts from punishment.'"

Reb Gedalya thought long and hard about his frustrating dilemma; then an idea occurred to him. "How about a third party making the decision?" he asked. "The famous tzadik, Rebbe Chaim of Sanz, lives not far from here. Let us go to him together, tell him what happened and follow his advice."

Reb Nachum was unmoved. "I am not calling off the match under any circumstances. It would never have been agreed to if it were not decreed from on high. If you want to go to the tzadik, fine. But I'm not going anywhere." Annoyed, Reb Gedalya had no choice but to make the trip alone.

It was late Friday afternoon when he arrived in Sanz. Although the Rebbe did not usually receive visitors so close to Shabbat, an exception was made for Reb Gedalya.

It is most likely that the tzadik was already aware of Reb Gedalya's story, as there was almost no one in the region who hadn't heard it. Nonetheless, he listened attentively as Reb Gedalya poured out his tale of woe.

The Rebbe was silent for a few minutes before responding. "You are very fortunate to have come here," he finally said. "However, as it is almost Shabbat, it is too late now to discuss it any further. Why don't you stay here as my guest, and after Shabbat we will continue this conversation."

Reb Gedalya left the Rebbe's presence greatly encouraged and in a hopeful mood. The tzadik had listened to his every word and seemed to agree with him. Surely he would rule in his favor; hadn't he told him that he was "very fortunate"? Reb Gedalya spent a delightful Shabbat in the Sanzer Rebbe's courtyard.

Right after Havdala, Reb Gedalya was again admitted into the tzadik's chamber. With awe and trepidation he awaited the Rebbe's pronouncement.

"Reb Gedalya," the Sanzer Rebbe told him, "I want you to leave immediately for Reb

Dedicated in honor of a dear friend of the L'Chaim Publication

#### Mr. Victor Braha

לברכה והצלחה מתוך הרחבה גדולה בגשמיות וברוחניות Wishing you much continued success in all your endeavors Nachum's house and deliver the following message:

Tell him that although he agreed to pay for half of the wedding, as he does not have even a penny left to his name, you, Reb Gedalya, will be happy to pay for the entire celebration, which will take place on the date already agreed upon."

After Reb Gedalya had recovered from his shock he surprised himself by daring to ask for an explanation. "But Rebbe!" he stammered. "I don't understand. Didn't you tell me that I was 'very fortunate'?"

The Rebbe looked directly into Reb Gedalya's eyes and smiled. "I guess you didn't understand my intention," he said. "I meant that you are very fortunate that it is you who has come to me and not your future in-law, Reb Nachum. Can you imagine how you would feel if it were the other way around, if the wheel of fortune had turned for you instead of him?"

Indeed, Reb Gedalya's son and Reb Nachum's daughter were wed in a good and auspicious time. And the Sanzer Rebbe himself conducted the ceremony.



## From there you will seek the L-rd your G-d and will find Him (Deut. 4:29)

It is precisely when you seek the L-rd your G-d "from there" – from the depths of your heart and with a sense of complete nullification before the Creator, that "you shall find" – the sudden revelation of the greatest G-dly light. (The Baal Shem Tov)

## You have been shown to know that the L-rd is G-d (Deut. 4:35)

When G-d revealed Himself on Mount Sinai to the soul of every Jew of every generation, He thereby made it possible for any Jew who sincerely desires to serve Him to perceive the true essence of the world, despite the darkness and concealment of what presents itself as reality. (Sefat Emet)

#### In the heavens above, and on the earth below (Deut. 4:39)

"In the heavens above" – in matters of the spirit – a person should always look to those who are on a higher, more advanced level, and strive to emulate them. As for material concerns ("on the earth below"), one should always look to those who have less, and be grateful and happy with what he already possesses. (The Rebbe)

#### I stand between G-d and between you (Deut. 5:5)

While this verse in Torah is a direct quote from Moses, the early Chasidim used to interpret it allegorically as follows: It is the "I" – one's ego and sense of self – that erects the barrier that separates him from G-d...



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10 Av/July 31

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