

# L'Chaim



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe  
on the Torah portion

In this week's Torah portion, *Teruma*, we read how G-d tells Moses to ask the Jewish people to willingly bring as offerings 13 different materials. These materials will be transformed into the Mishkan, the traveling Sanctuary in the desert, that the Jewish people are commanded to make with the words, "They shall make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell in their midst."

While most of the vessels in the Mishkan were constructed from a combination of materials, two vessels - the Kaporet (the golden covering of the ark) and the Menora - were made from solid gold. Welding was forbidden, they were only to be hammered from solid chunks of gold.

What significance do these two hold? Why did they have to be made of one solid piece?

The Kaporet covered the ark. It was a rectangular plate that had two cherubim protruding from the top, one with the face of a girl and the other with the face of a boy. The Kaporet symbolized the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people. It was one solid piece because, though at times our relationship seems flimsy, we are in essence one and therefore symbolized by a single piece.

The Menora symbolized the relationship of the Jewish people to one another. The Menora had seven branches, suggesting unique qualities or differences. Yet like the Kaporet, it was from one solid piece, because at the core we are one. This core is the soul which, as is explained in Jewish mystical teachings, is truly a part of G-d. The more we are in tune with our soul, the more love we feel towards other Jewish people, because we all share a single essential core. Loving him is loving yourself.

The Kaporet and the Menora were both made of a single piece of pure gold to show how important these two ideas are. We need to implement both of these principles in our lives to accomplish our mission - to change the world into a Mishkan, a place where G-d's presence can dwell openly.

First the Kaporet, being one with G-d, we can accomplish extraordinary things and we "can" change the world.

Second the Menora, recognizing that each of us has a unique mission, however we are all in this together. Being there for each other is necessary to accomplish our common goal. Loving each other is the catalyst for change.

*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.*

## The Jewish People

Is the Jewish people singular? Or are the Jewish people plural?

After a minute amount of research, we discovered that it is acceptable to consider "Jewish people" as singular or plural; both are correct.

While English dictionaries unambiguously define "people" as a plural noun, English textbooks, such as New College Grammar, by Mason Long, categorizes it as a "collective noun," which is singular:

"Concrete nouns also contain a third class of nouns known as collective nouns. A collective noun denotes a collection of persons, places, or things, regarded as one. The objects which are thus collected into one term have some characteristics in common, enabling us to regard them as a group.... The most important question that arises with regard to a collective noun is whether the verb used with it should be singular or plural. It may be said that, strictly speaking, a collective noun is always singular, but that the verb, in some exceptional instances, and for special reasons, may be plural."

The exceptional instances and special reasons are when the group is revealing its diversity, such as when there are differences of opinion or disparate activities.

A basic teaching of Chasidic thought is that everything we see or hear is a lesson in our service of G-d.

Although one might consider the question of defining the term "Jewish people" as singular or

plural seemingly trivial, there is actually a deep lesson we can learn from this discussion.

Judaism has always acknowledged that there are divisions amongst the Jewish people. When Moses addressed his last words to the Jewish people, he stated: "You are all standing before G-d, your L-rd - your leaders, your tribal chiefs, your elders, your law enforcers, every Israelite...even your woodcutters and water drawers."

Moses was definitely speaking to a most diverse crowd. And yet, when that same Jewish people, years earlier, encamped at Mount Sinai, awaiting the Giving of the Torah, their encampment is referred to in the singular - "he encamped." This means that they were totally united, "like one person with one heart," as the commentators explain.

Saying that the Jewish people is singular is not denying the fact that we have varied occupations, positions, opinions, physical qualities, emotional attributes, intellectual capabilities, etc.

When writing "the Jewish people have" we are acknowledging the differences amongst our people. These differences, however, do not have to cause disunity, discord, divisiveness or discomfort. For, at the same time as we are plural, we are also singular, we are one, intrinsically and essentially united.

Although New College Grammar was published in 1935(!), the unity of the Jewish people is something that will never be outdated.

# SLICE OF LIFE

## Living is Giving

by Rabbi Motti Lipskier



This past fall, I went to visit my childhood friend Rabbi Yehuda (“Yudi”) Dukes at NYU. He had been battling Covid-19 for over six months and was finally able to have a few visitors. He was extremely fragile but excited to be able to eat soft foods, so I texted him, offering to bring him a smoothie or ice-cream.

“Bring a shofar,” he painstakingly replied. “I heard shofar on the phone, but I would love to hear in person.”

Yudi had an unquenchable thirst for mitzvos, but that doesn’t adequately describe him.

Over the next few weeks, I tested positive for Covid-19 and couldn’t visit him so we spoke over the phone. He enjoyed telling me the Torah insights he’d come up with and asked if I’d be able to type them up for him.

One day after Sukkos he told me, “You know that the four *minim* represent four types of Jews, and the *arava* (willow), which has no taste or fragrance, represents the Jew who has neither *mitzvot* (commandments) nor Torah. But how can it be that a Jew has not even a single mitzva?!” He then explained that over the past few months he felt that he had been an arava. In a coma, he was unable to utter a word

of Torah or do even a single mitzva.

It sounded like he was feeling down on himself, but that wasn’t like Yudi at all. He continued: “One of my Jewish doctors explained to me that the bark of the willow tree was used as a pain reliever. This got me thinking that even an arava can have a good influence.”

He went on to say how happy it made him to know that while he was comatose, thousands of people were inspired by him to do more mitzvot and study more Torah. He was so proud that his wife was able to turn their sorry situation into a means of inspiring others.

Yudi had not only an insatiable thirst to learn Torah and do mitzvot himself; he had a never-ending passion to give Torah and mitzvot to others as well.

Most hospital patients, and especially those in the ICU, are recipients. They need others to give them time, love, and care. But Yudi was different. Even as a patient, he was not only a taker, but a giver. It became protocol in his hospital room that anyone – from the nurses to the head physician – who came into his room took a coin from a bowl sitting there and put it in the adjoining pushkah.

He shared Torah and inspiration with everyone in the hospital. The non-Jewish staff knew to be prepared for an inspiring sermon every time they checked up on him.

During my first visit with Yudi in the ICU, I got a frantic phone call from a Chabad rebbetzin. She had just been notified that the patient in the next room had passed away and no one was there to guide the family, so she asked me if I could help.

I felt bad leaving Yudi, but when he heard what was going on, he insisted. “Tell them to take on a mitzva in her honor.” I did as he requested, and the family was indeed very moved and touched that someone in Yudi’s state was concerned about them.

The Rebbe taught that living is giving. And that is what bothered Yudi so much about being an inactive arava. And that’s why he was so happy to discover that an arava, too, could be a giver. “G-d allowed me to be like an arava and heal others,” he said so humbly, “and now

that I’m awake, I need to keep on giving and healing.”

But this still doesn’t capture my friend Yudi.

For approximately 15 years, Yudi directed JNet, a dynamic program operating out of Chabad Lubavitch Headquarters, pairing thousands of Torah study partners around the globe. Given his love for Torah and the passion to share Torah to others, it’s no wonder that running JNet was his calling.

What thrilled Yudi most with his JNet work was when a student reached the point of knowing enough to become a teacher. I distinctly remember meeting him in 770 one morning and seeing his face beaming. He had just received an e-mail from a former JNet student informing him that not only had he begun teaching others, but his daughter had now become a teacher. Yudi’s joy knew no bounds. This was a dream come true for him.

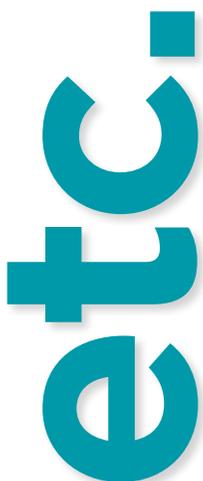
Yudi had not only a thirst for Torah and mitzvot, and not only a passion to give it to others; Yudi had an endless dream of others becoming givers. He knew that you start living when you begin giving, and he wished this life for every single person.

This was Yudi.

G-d took Yudi from this world, but his life continues through our actions. Every one of us can continue what he started and reach out to other Jews, teach them, heal them, and lift them up so they too can give to others.

I can’t begin to imagine how much someone like Yudi will be missed by his wife Sara, his six children, and other family members. Only G-d can provide them with true comfort. But if I know Yudi, he’s not content in Paradise. I can only imagine that he’s rallying for Moshiach to come and bring him back so that he can once again teach the world about G-d. May that day come to pass very soon.

*Yudi battled Covid-19 for nearly 10 months. This Friday marks 30 days since his passing. JNet – Jewish Learning Network, provides the opportunity to take the time to study any area of Torah on any level in any language with a study partner. To become a JNet Study Partner call 347-770-JNet, or email [info@jnet.org](mailto:info@jnet.org). A division of Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch.*



## New Emissaries

**Rabbi Moshe and Chaya Sasonkin** are establishing a new Chabad Center in **Casa Grande, Arizona**. Located approximately halfway between Phoenix and Tuscon, many families are moving to Casa Grande as it offers more affordable and spacious housing while being able to commute to work in either city. **Rabbi Levi and Faigy Meijers** will soon be moving to **Tracy, California** to establish a new Chabad Center in that city. A little more than an hour east of San Francisco, Tracy’s number of Jewish families is growing. The Meijers plans to open a Sunday Hebrew School as well as other Jewish educational programs for children and adults.

## L’Chaim Zoom

To join the L’Chaim Weekly Publication virtual Torah classes on Wednesdays from 7:00-7:30pm (est), or to join our virtual Lunch & Learn Torah class, Tuesdays from 12:30-12:50 pm (est), please email [lyo1408@gmail.com](mailto:lyo1408@gmail.com), for the Zoom link and for more information.

## TODAY IS...

### 7 Adar I

It is imperative that every Jew know that he is an emissary of the Master of all, charged with the mission – wherever he may be of bringing into reality G-d’s will and intention in creating the universe, namely, to illuminate the world with the light of Torah and avoda. This is done through performing practical mitzvot and implanting in oneself fine character traits. (From *Hayom Yom, a book with daily thoughts bursting with choice gems*)



# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

15th of Shevat, 5734 [1974]

To All Participants in the First European Convention of the Neshei uBnos Chabad, London, England.

Blessings and Greeting:

I was pleased to be informed about your forthcoming Convention. May G-d grant that it should be with the utmost *Hatzlocho* [success] in every respect.

In accordance with the well known adage of the *Alter Rebbe* [Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism], to the effect that "a Jew should live with the times," that is to say, in the spirit of the current weekly *Sidra* [Torah portion], it is to be hoped that the Convention will be inspired by the *Sidra Terumah*, with which it coincides.

The word *Terumah* has two meanings; in the plain sense it means a contribution to a sacred cause, as in the case of the *Sidra* - the building of the *Mishkon* (Sanctuary) in the desert.

In a deeper sense, *Terumah* means "elevating." Both meanings go hand in hand together, because by making a contribution to a sacred cause connected with Torah and *Mitzvos* [commandments], the donor "elevates" not only the money from its material state to a higher spiritual plain, but thereby also elevates his whole being, with all the energy and effort that went into earning the money contributed to the sacred cause.

It is well known that in connection with the building of the *Mishkon* - the first great undertaking after *Mattan Torah* [the giving of the Torah], designed to make a Sanctuary for the Divine Presence in the midst of the Jewish people - the women excelled themselves above the men, as indicated in

the verse, "And the men came (following) upon the women (Exodus 35:22)."

It has often been emphasized that the Torah, *Toras Chaim*, meaning instruction and guide in life, provides practical instruction in every detail of its narratives, and being eternal, its teachings are eternal for all times and places. Thus, the above mentioned vignette in the story of the building of the *Mishkon* provides a significant instruction that whenever a great *Mitzvah* or sacred task is to be undertaken, Jewish women have been given special capacities to be first and foremost in carrying it out with dedication and enthusiasm.

**Whenever a great Mitzvah or sacred task is to be undertaken, Jewish women have been given special capacities to be first and foremost in carrying it out with dedication and enthusiasm.**

The greatest task in the present day and age is to revitalize *Yiddishkeit* [Judaism] and spread it among those of our brethren, men and women, who are not as yet fully committed to Torah and *Mitzvos*.

And in this task there is much that each and every Jewish woman can accomplish, and even much more can be accomplished by a concerted effort, such as your forthcoming Convention.

I therefore hope and pray that the Convention, the first of *Neshei uBnos Chabad* in the United Kingdom, will fulfill all its expectations, and will set in motion a veritable chain reaction of continued and growing accomplishments in the way of strengthening and spreading *Yiddishkeit*. May each and all of you make the most of your opportunities and capacities, and carry out all your activities in accordance with Chassidic teaching - with vitality and enthusiasm, with joy and gladness of heart.

With blessing,

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

*This Shabbat we read a special portion from the Torah known as "Parshat Zachor." The Torah commands us to remember what the Amalekites did to the Jewish people when they left Egypt. It also tells us to "blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget."*

*But why does the Torah give us a mitzva that we cannot fulfill in practical terms? Why are we supposed to "remember Amalek" every day of our lives?*

*According to Chasidut, Amalek is not only to be understood literally but in the broader sense, as a negative character trait and outlook on the world. This approach is so devoid of any positive element that the only way to "fix" it is by "blotting it out" completely.*

*Amalek attacked the Jews at what was then the highest point in their history. The Jewish people had just left Egypt amidst wonders and miracles, the Red Sea had just parted, and all the nations of the world were in awe of the power of the Almighty. When Amalek attacked, it was not due to a lack of knowledge about G-d; it was also completely illogical. Amalek "recognized his Master and deliberately rebelled against Him." He knew exactly what he was doing, which is why he is symbolic of the ultimate in "chutzpa."*

*Amalek is also associated with "coldness," as it states, "...how he met you ['korch'a] - from the Hebrew word for 'cold' on the way." Amalek stands for everything that "cools off" and dampens a Jew's natural enthusiasm for Torah and mitzvot. Amalek is also the master of doubt, sowing seeds of skepticism for the sole purpose of preventing a Jew from serving G-d.*

*So why is it important to remember Amalek? Being aware of this "internal" Amalek allows us to be ever vigilant against his negative influence, which is so destructive that it cannot even be negotiated with. For the only way to get rid of Amalek is by "blotting out his memory from under the heaven..."*

*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

And you shall make for it a frame a handbreadth wide all around, and you shall make a gold -

*zahav* - crown for its frame all around. (Ex. 25:25) The numerical equivalent of the word "zahav" is the same as "David," as the crown of sovereignty was promised to King David and his descendants forever, culminating with King Moshiach who is a descendant of David. (Baal HaTurim)

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# IT HAPPENED ONCE

Shortly before the Jews were to enter the Promised Land G-d appeared to Moses, His beloved servant, and informed him that he would not be permitted to enter the Land with his people, but instead would die in the desert as a punishment for having struck the rock at Merivah. These bitter words were unacceptable to Moses. Could it be that he would be denied his supreme wish – to serve his Master in the holiness which is found only in the Land of Israel?

The day of Moses' death approached, but when the people heard of the decree, they cried out and said, "We will not allow it." Even the sun came before G-d, saying, "I will not set today so that your servant Moses will not have to die." G-d would not be moved. He sent the Angel of Death to bring Moses' soul to Him, but Moses forbade the angel to approach, and the angel fled in fear.

G-d Himself then came to Moses and consoled him, saying, "If you live longer than the usual number of years, people will turn you into a god and worship you. Furthermore, you know that even Adam, whom I fashioned with my own hands, had to die." But Moses continued to plead his cause. "Please, allow me only to cross the Jordan River, if not as a leader, then as a plain Jew; if not as a plain Jew, then as a servant." But G-d replied, "I have made two oaths: one that you will not enter the Promised Land; and the second, that I will never destroy the Jewish people. If I break the one vow, I will have to break the other."

When Moses heard this, He recoiled in fright. "I would rather die a thousand deaths than allow You to destroy even one Jewish soul. But don't I deserve to witness the triumph of my people whom I led faithfully throughout all these forty years?" G-d replied only: "Moses, do not fear, I Myself will take care of them, but you must allow the Angel of Death to approach you, for it is Joshua's turn to lead the people."

Moses still was not reconciled to his fate. He appealed to the heavens and the earth to intercede for him, they replied, "How can we pray for you when it is written 'the skies were like smoke' and of the earth it is said, 'and the earth like a garment shall wear out'?" Moses then asked the sun and the moon to pray for him, but they answered, 'We can't pray for you since it is said, 'The moon was put to shame and the sun was disgraced.'"

The stars and the mountains and the seas likewise were not powerful enough to help. Moses continued to plead for himself: "The Jews sinned many times, and yet You always forgave them. Am I worse than they that You cannot forgive me also?" But G-d replied to him, "Justice for the many is not the same as justice for one. I could forgive the sins of an entire people, but I cannot forgive yours."

Moses realized that nothing would avail, and that G-d would not retract His decree. He wrote out 13 Torah scrolls, one for each Tribe and one to remain in the Holy Ark. Moses and Joshua, the new leader, went together to the Tent of Meeting, where the Divine Presence always spoke with Moses. After they entered, a pillar of cloud descended separating Moses from Joshua. When it departed Moses turned to his former pupil and asked, "Master, what did G-d say to you?" Joshua relied, "I am forbidden to tell you." This was the first time that G-d had communicated with Joshua instead of Moses, and Moses was deeply pained. He cried out, "Better one hundred deaths than envy even once!"

Now Moses was ready to pass on. G-d showed him all the sights of Israel, present and future, even until the time of the Final Redemption. Then, commanding the angels to lock up the gates of prayer, lest Moses' heart-rending pleas penetrate, G-d Himself descended to take Moses' pure soul, telling it: "My daughter, leave his body immediately and I will allow you to rest under My Throne with the angels." G-d then kissed Moses, took his soul and brought it up to Heaven where even the angels wept.

Moses was born on the seventh of Adar and died on the seventh of Adar. On the day that he died a Heavenly Voice announced: "Moses was awarded the crown of

Torah, the crown of the priesthood, and the crown of royalty, yet the most important crown he earned was the crown of a good name."

Moses' body never degenerated, nor does anyone know the place of his grave, lest they see the light shining from there. When the Holy Moshiach redeems his people, Moses will be together with us once more.

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

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**And they shall take for Me an offering (Ex. 25:2)**  
 The word "offering" has two meanings: something set aside for a special purpose and that which is picked up and raised. An offering made to G-d achieves both of these objectives. Setting aside one's money to do a mitzva elevates the actual physical object that is bought with that money, transforming the material into holiness, as it says in Tanya: "G-d gives man corporeality in order to transform it into spirituality." (*Likutei Sichot*)

**... make for Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell in their midst (Ex. 25:8)**  
 "Within each and every Jew," comment our Sages, noting that every Jew is holy and considered a sanctuary to G-d in his own right. Throughout the long exile, the site of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem always retained its holiness, as it states, "The Divine Presence never parts from the Western Wall," for the destruction only damaged the upper building and not its foundation. Likewise, the sanctuary within every Jew, the holy Jewish soul, always remain whole and untouched. Only the "building" is subject to spiritual defilement. (*Hayom Yom*)

**Of a talent of pure gold shall it be made (Ex. 25:39)**  
 Man's purpose in life is to illuminate his surroundings with the light of Torah and mitzvot. This responsibility holds true no matter what the individual's circumstances or mood may be. The numerical equivalent of the Hebrew word for talent, "kikar," is 140 – the same as the numerical equivalent of "mar" (bitter), and "ram" (lofty). No matter what our situation, our task remains the same. (*Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok, the previous Rebbe*)

**Two and one-half cubits its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height (Ex. 25:10)**  
 The ark was measured in fractions, not whole numbers, teaching us that to achieve spiritual growth, one must first "break down" and shatter one's negative characteristics and bad habits. (*Sefer Hamamarim U'Kuntreisim*)

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**Mr. Jerome Belson OBM**



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