



The Talmud illustrates the bounty of the Land of Israel with the tale of various sages who enjoyed the wonderful fruits of the land said to be flowing with milk and honey. Once the scholar Rami ben Yechezkel was visiting Bnei Brak and came upon an orchard of fig trees. It was the height of their season and the trees were heavy with fruit which fell to the ground oozing their delectable syrup. As he watched, a flock of goats which was grazing nearby was attracted by the smell, and began eating the fallen fruits. He noticed that the goats were full to bursting with milk, with dripped from their udders, and Rami ben Yechezkel exclaimed, "See, how this is truly a land which flows with milk and honey! Here are the words of Torah so clearly seen!"

The Talmud further tells of the time Rav Yehuda of Saskin asked his son to go to their attic and bring him some dried figs which were stored in a barrel. The boy went up to the attic, but when he put his hand into the barrel, he felt only a thick, sticky substance. "Father," he called, "I cannot find the figs. It seems there is only something sticky and wet in the barrel."

His father replied, "Put your hand further into the barrel. What you are feeling is the fig honey. The figs are deeper in the barrel." His son did as he was told, and lo and behold, he found huge, soft figs, so rich in honey, that they dripped with thick, sweet syrup.

In one more illustration of the wonder of the fruits of the Land of Israel, Rav Yossi of Tzipori once asked his son to bring him some olives which were kept in a barrel. The son went as his father asked, but he couldn't even get to the container, for the floor was slippery with the shiny olive oil which had spilled onto the floor. The olives of that time were so full of oil that the oil flowed out of the barrel in which the fruits were being stored. The blessings which were so apparent in those days have not been seen since, but in the time of Moshiach, these wonders will be common once again, only in a much greater measure.

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Once a great sage was visiting the court of a famous Rebbe. In his honor, a special bottle of wine from the Land of Israel was brought to the table. This wine was used sparingly, and only for great occasions, since it was a rarity to obtain wine from the Holy Land.

Everyone looked forward to a small taste of this unique wine, but when it was served, the sage refused to partake of it, opting to drink instead the simple local wine. Everyone was surprised at his reaction and questioned him about his refusal to partake of the special wine.

The guest was reticent, but when pressed for an answer he replied, "I am no expert on wine; in fact, I know nothing about the relative merit of different types and varieties of wine. I am afraid that if I taste the wine from the Land of Israel I will not be able to sense its true value, and therefore, I will sin against the Holy Land, insult its fruits. That is why I prefer to drink only the simple wine of this land."

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When his famous pupil, Rabbi Chaim Vital, arrived in Tzefat to study with the Holy Ari, the Ari took him to the banks of the Kineret, where he filled up a cup and gave him water to drink.

"This water comes from the well of Miriam, the water which sustained the Jews through their travels in the desert. It has special powers and drinking it will enable you to learn Kabala and absorb it."

And it was true that Chaim Vital was given the ability to learn the holy, mystical secrets of the Kabala and master that knowledge.

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

**When a woman conceives (tazria)... (Lev. 12:2)**  
The Hebrew word "tazria" is from the word meaning "sowing." Sowing is not a one-time affair, but continues to exert an effect even afterwards, similar to seeds which when sown in the ground lead to growth. In addition, the purpose of sowing is to harvest produce of a much greater amount than that sown. The lesson from this is that all aspects of man's service should be in the manner of "sowing": A Jew may not remain content with a one-time effort, but instead, that effort should produce growth. Moreover, the growth produced should be in a large amount. In the words of Rabbi Sholom Dovber of Lubavitch: A Jew should be a "light to illuminate," giving light to other Jews, and in such a way that they in turn become "lights to illuminate," *ad infinitum* – similar to sowing seeds, which produce fruit which contain seeds, which in turn produce fruit, *ad infinitum*. (*Sichot Kodesh*, 5744)

**And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised (Lev. 12:3)**  
What does the *mitzva* (commandment) of *brit mila* – circumcision – emphasize? *Brit mila* draws attention to the fact that G-d did not create man in a perfect state from the womb. Just as perfection of man's physical form is by man's own hand, so is it within his means and power to complete his spiritual form by the worthiness of his actions. We learn from this *mitzva* that through our actions we have the opportunity to perfect ourselves and the entire world both physically and spiritually. (*Sefer HaChinuch*)

**Then shall the priest command to take for the one who is to be cleansed two healthy, clean birds (Lev. 14:4)**  
Why were two birds used in the purification of a leper? One of the causes of the affliction of leprosy was gossip, a sin that causes a good relationship between two people to turn sour. The Hebrew word for bird, "*tzipor*," has the numerical equivalent of 376, the same as the word for peace, "shalom." The Torah alludes to the fact that in order for the leper to be forgiven, he must first make peace between the two individuals he has caused to quarrel. Accordingly, two birds are used in the purification procedure, symbolic of the two people involved. (*Our Sages*)



### 7:19 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area  
4 Iyar/April 16  
Torah Portions Tazria-Metzora  
Ethics Ch 2  
Shabbat ends 8:20 PM



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe  
on the Torah portion

This week we read two Torah portions, *Tazria* and *Metzora*. In *Metzora* we read of a home afflicted with *tzara'at*, a spiritual plague that caused green or red patches to form on the walls of a home. What was the cause of this *tzara'at*? Rashi explains that Canaanites hid gold in the walls of their homes. The *tzara'at* would appear in these homes. To purify the home from *tzara'at*, the wall had to be demolished, thus revealing the gold within.

The Zohar explains that only a small number of Canaanites hid gold in their walls. While most Canaanites were resigned to G-d's plan to give the land of Canaan to the Jewish people, there were those who were not. These consisted of Canaanites who were deeply steeped in idolatry, and morally depraved even by Canaanite standards. These Canaanites hid their gold with the plan to one day come back and expel the Jewish people from the land.

The impurities of idolatry of most of the Canaanite homes were superficial and were removed when a Jew would observe commandments in the home. The walls of the homes of the deeply depraved, however, were penetrated with impurities and it took the presence of a very holy person to extract the impurities. Through Divine providence, only the holiest people moved into these homes. Then, impurities would come out in the form of *tzara'at*, the house would be demolished, and the gold would be found.

What lesson are we to take from the holy person in a house afflicted with *tzara'at*?

We all find ourselves in situations which at first glance seem like a punishment, similar to a holy person who finds *tzara'at* on the walls of his home. The person could rightfully think, "What have I done to deserve this?" But with time and trust in G-d that He knows best, you will find that it is all to reward you with a treasure.

The same is true when you find yourself hit with a devastating blow; you must realize that G-d specifically put you into this situation. Just as when G-d put a holy person into a depraved house, only YOU have the ability to extract the good from the predicament and reveal the treasure within.

Before I was born, my parents were blessed with a special needs child, my brother Shalom. My parents included him in everything we did. I grew up loving him as they did and did things with him all the time. I would get teased a lot and it hurt. But I think it is my relationship with Shalom that made me who I am today. Now I think, what a treasure, what a gift, to grow up this way.

Of course, this is only when dealing with difficult predicaments, but sometimes G-d hands a blow that is so devastating, for example, the loss of a loved one. What treasure could be found in this situation? Even if there is positive, it doesn't take away the pain. In this case all we can do is accept G-d's will and with His help the pain will lessen with time.

With all this said, it is time for Moshiach to come and put this discussion to rest.

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.

## Shining Days

by Rabbi Eliyahu Touger  
When Reb Pinchas Horowitz first became a disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch, the Maggid advised him to study with Reb Zusha.

Reb Pinchas went to Reb Zusha and told him of the Maggid's advice. Reb Zusha could not understand why the Maggid would send anyone to study with him, but that he would be happy to join Reb Pinchas in his studies.

"What should we study?" Reb Pinchas asked.

"Whatever you are studying," Reb Zusha replied.

Reb Pinchas took out a volume of Talmud and began explaining the following passage. "When there are only nine people in the synagogue, there is an opinion that the ark of the synagogue can be counted to complete the quorum of ten necessary for prayer."

As Reb Pinchas stated this, Reb Zusha interrupted: "What does the Talmud mean? Is the ark a person? Everyone knows the ark is only an object."

Reb Pinchas was puzzled; the question was obviously rhetorical. Didn't Reb Zushe appreciate that?

Reb Zusha continued: "Maybe it means that a person can be an ark containing Torah, a veritable repository of knowledge, but unless he is a person, unless that knowledge is integrated with his humanity, there is a question if he can be counted among the community."

Reb Pinchas understood that this was the lesson the Maggid had wanted him to learn from Reb Zusha: not how to augment his knowledge, but how to use his knowledge to refine himself and change his character.

Judaism considers personal growth a lifelong task for each of us, every day, every year of our lives. Nevertheless,

each year, time is set aside when these efforts become the focus of our attention. This reflects the spiritual significance of *Sefirat HaOmer*, the 49-day period between Passover and Shavuot.

The Hebrew word "sefira" means, "counting." Every night we count one of these 49 days. But sefira also means, "shining." During these 49 days, we should endeavor to make our personalities shine.

According to Jewish mystical teachings, we have seven fundamental emotional qualities. These qualities combine each one with another to form the full range of human feeling. Seven times seven equals 49, the number of days mentioned above. The cultivation of our personalities during these 49 days involves the refinement of our emotions and directing them to Gdliness. As we work to upgrade our emotional potential, we prepare ourselves to relive the experience of the giving of the Torah on the holiday of Shavuot.

The ultimate experience of personal refinement will come in the era of the Redemption, when "there will be neither envy nor competition...." At present, effort is necessary to look beyond our fundamental self-concern and appreciate the inner, holy core that exists in ourselves and in others. In the era of the Redemption, it will be the way we naturally view things.

What can we do to hasten the coming of this era? Conduct ourselves at present in a manner that demonstrates our awareness of this innate holiness. When we show genuine love to another person, we are highlighting the G-dly spark that we both possess and are establishing a connection between the two. How more Messianic can one be?

From *Keeping in Touch*, published by Sichos in English.



# SLICE OF LIFE

## Western Wall Vignettes by Gutman Locks



I watched the Israeli soldiers standing by the *Kotel* (Western Wall) reading the *Shema*. As soon he finished, he turned and walked away. I called out, “Wait a minute, you didn’t do the essence of the *mitzva* (commandment). Go back and talk to *Hashem* (G-d) in your heart.

He said, “I don’t know how?”

I said, “Go stand close to the *Kotel* and say, *Abba* (Father), I love You.”

He said, “Really?”

I said, “Speak sweetly and softly and tell Him everything that’s in your heart.”

He went back to the *Kotel* and stood there talking to His Father in his heart for the first time in his life. After five minutes, he turned, gave me a huge smile, and put his thumb up.

It doesn’t take much to change someone’s life... but you have to care to help.

\*\*\*

Very early in the morning... I am the only one at the *Kotel*. It is quiet...still... When it is quiet you can listen better. Listening is looking with your ears.

The best quiet at the *Kotel* happens when there are hundreds of Jews excitedly praying the morning prayers... then, just at the moment of sunrise, we all begin the standing, silent prayers. Palpable silence!

You can physically feel it.

Silence is a tool... a tool we can use to search for Holiness... In that stillness G-d’s Presence is felt...

The *Shechina*, G-d’s Revealed Presence, never leaves the *Kotel*, but you have to look for it if you want to see it.

“Stillness is praise to You.” (Psalm 65:2)

\*\*\*

I went to get my second vaccination yesterday morning. I rushed to the place where I got the first shot... where they told me to return to, in 21 days.

The guard said, “They moved!”

I hurried the 15-minute walk to the new location and made my way into the huge room filled with people waiting their turn. They gave me a number and I sat there wondering how long it would take.

Yikes! I looked at my number 2325 and I looked at the number they posted for the next person to enter; 325! 325? Double yikes! How could I wait there for what looked like it would take the rest of the day?

I had an idea. I walked up to the counter and brought out my 80s card. Here in Israel, they figured out if you have lived to be 80 or older you have already waited long enough, so they give you a card that allows you to go to the head of the line. But not all places pay attention to the 80’s card. They sent it to me a few years ago, and I have used it only once or twice, at the post office.

I flashed the card and said, “You don’t hold by these do you?” and she said, “Yes” and she motioned to the guy who was at the entrance to the booths where they were giving the shots and he waved me right in!

Thank G-d! I walked in, got the shot, and was out of there in a quarter of an hour. It’s worth having waited 80 (plus) years for.

\*\*\*

I was on my way to the *makolet* (grocery store) here in the Old City *Rova* (Quarter), when two dozen 13-year-old religious boys came running down the street. They were so excited to be out of their classroom and in such a place as the Old City! They were on a “tour” with a couple of their teachers.

When I returned from the store the boys were standing, spread out on the street in front of my apartment, on a popsicle break. I went to open my door and they came running over, happy to see someone who looked like he might be from their

community.

They came right up to me.

I looked at them and said, “You boys are the best we have!” That made them happy. “You are doing great... learning Torah and doing all the mitzvas..., but there is one thing you are not doing the way you are supposed to be doing it!”

They jumped right on it, “What do you mean?”

I said, “When you put on *tefillin*, and you make the blessing... and then you pull on the strap to tie it to your arm, you have the same intention you have when you tie your shoes! You are very particular that it shouldn’t fall off.”

Some said, “Yes.” Some nodded their heads... as if to say, “What’s wrong with that?”

I said, “That’s not the intention you are supposed to have when you put on *tefillin*.”

I asked them what is the blessing we say when we put on *tefillin*.

A few of them said it.

I asked, “What does “*asher kideshanu*” mean?”

They gave some answers like, “Who commanded us to do.”

I said, “No, that’s not what the words say. They say, ‘Who has made us holy with His commandments.’ When you put on *tefillin* you are receiving holiness! You are becoming holy! You are not tying your shoes.”

A few of them laughed. Then one of them asked, ‘How long have you lived in the Old City?’ I told them 35 years. We spoke a minute, and then when I went to open my door one of the boys looked at me and said, “Thank you very much for telling us about the holiness in doing a mitzva.”

I could see by his face that he “got it.” He truly understood what I said, and that he was going to change the way he thought when he puts on his *tefillin*. They continued on and I went inside.

What happened? A religious boy upgraded his service of Hashem. His life will change now.

And what happened to me? Did you ever give a poor person a thousand dollars? How would that make you feel? The boy got something worth a lot more than a thousand dollars.

Gutman Locks is well-known at the Western Wall for over two decades. He is the author of several books, musical tapes and many educational videos. See more of his writings at [www.thereisone.com](http://www.thereisone.com)

## The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence  
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Continued from the previous issue, from a letter dated 21 Av, 5728 (1968)

This is what he [Maimonides] states (Par. 4):

And when a king of the House of David will arise, dedicated to the study of the Torah and observance of the *Mitzvos* (commandments) like his father David, according to the *Torah Shebiksav* [Written Torah] and *Shebeal-Peh* [Oral Torah], and he will compel all the Jewish people to walk in it and strengthen its fences, and he will fight the wars of G-d, he is assumed to be the *Moshiach*. (Note that this is not yet a certain sign of the *Geulo* [Redemption], for all this can still take place in a state of *Golus* [exile]. However) If he did so and has succeeded (in the above matters, namely having won all battles and impelled all the Jewish people to study the Torah and to mend its fences, we are still not sure and require a further sign, namely), and built the *Beis Hamikdosh* [Holy Temple] in its place (clearly in the holy city of Jerusalem, indicating that there would be a large Jewish population in that city, yet we are still not certain of the end of the *Golus*, so a further factor must be fulfilled, namely), and he gathers in the dispersed ones of Israel – then he is certainly the *Moshiach*.

Surely no further commentaries are necessary.

I will only add a further significant point, namely that this ruling and *Din* [legislation] of the *Rambam* [Maimonides] is not contested by any *Posek* [Rabbinic authority]. Even the author of the *Shulchan Aruch* [Code of Jewish Law], who has written a commentary on the *Rambam*, including this very chapter, the well known *Kesef Mishneh* has nothing to question here, accepting it fully, nor are there any other *Poskim* to differ.

To be sure there are various homilies and references and allusions to the period of the *Geulo* in the *Aggadah* and *Midrash*, etc., but these are homilies, and do not affect the practical *Halachah* [Jewish law]. Even in the *Halachah* we find at first certain differences of opinion on different matters, in the *Mishna* and *Gemoroh*, but once the final decision and *Psak Din* [legal ruling] is arrived at, it is valid for all without question.

It is clear from the above *Psak Din* of the *Rambam* that before there can be a *Kibbutz Golyos* [ingathering of exiles] and the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdosh* in its place, there has to be a full and complete return to the Torah and *Mitzvos* while Jews are still in the *Golus*, and it is this that is the prelude and preparation for the *Geulo*.

I am aware of the fact that there are many individuals who wish to rely on this or that saying of our Sages, in the [Talmud] Tractate *Sanhedrin* or in the [Talmud] *Yerushalmi* and the like, in order to base upon it their view, but I have always marveled at the inconsistency of these individuals in regard to their entire approach. For surely the *Rambam* knew just as well those sayings of the Sages in the *Sanhedrin* or *Yerushalmi*, etc., and understood them at least as well as the individuals quoting them. The inconsistency is in the fact that these very individuals consider every word and expression of the *Rambam*’s elsewhere as most meticulous, and study it with awesome reverence. Yet when it comes to this simple and straightforward *Psak Din* of the *Rambam*, they simply ignored it altogether.

The reason I have written at some length in reply to your letter (though this length is overly brief in comparison with the subject matter), is that it is simply painful to contemplate how misplaced the concern is of some well-meaning individuals.

Instead of each and every Jew, young and old, man and woman, dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to reduce and eventually do away with the causes which brought about the *Golus*, namely “*Mipnei chatoenu* – because of our sins we have been exiled from our land,” and what these “sins” are is clearly spelled out in the *Shulchan Aruch* – there are many Jews, undoubtedly with good intentions, who use all their energy and influence to find all sorts of means and ways of human invention to bring about the end of the *Golus*.

This is doubly painful for, firstly, it is simply a deception of Jews to believe that there can be any other way of *Geulo* than that which G-d had specified, and secondly, while engaged in other ways and means in futile effort to end the *Golus*, they cannot engage fully in the true battle against the *Golus* in terms of the *Psak Din* of the *Rambam*.

May G-d grant that each and all of us in the midst of all Israel, should be inspired with true Heavenly inspiration to walk in the way of the Torah and to mend its fences, for it is this that will prepare the way for *Moshiach* to implement all the conditions necessary to bring about the truly full and complete *Geulo*.

will.” Make His will – Each of us has the ability to remake G-d’s will, to arouse a new desire on His part. To apply this principle: A person might think that since it is G-d’s will that we are in exile, we should resign ourselves to the situation. Nothing is further from the truth. G-d is anxiously waiting for us to arouse a new will on His part. He is waiting for us to motivate Him to bring the Redemption. (In the Paths of Our Fathers, SIE, Shabbat Parshat Masei, 1984)

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Rabban Gamliel used to say: “Make His will your will, so that He may fulfill your will as though it were His will. Set aside your will because of His will, so that He may set aside the will of others before your

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Rebbe spoke often of how important the Land of Israel is to the Jewish people and about the importance of maintaining possession of every inch of the land, saying:

“Just as the Jews are G-d’s chosen people, Eretz Yisrael [the Land of Israel] is G-d’s chosen land, a holy land given to the Jewish people, those living on the land at present, and those who are presently living in the Diaspora. No one is entitled to give up any portion of Eretz Yisrael to gentiles. Maintaining possession of these lands is the only path to peace. Succumbing to the pressure to surrender them will only invite additional pressure, weakening the security of the Jewish people and exposing them to danger. Heaven forbid that the government in Eretz Yisrael should consider surrendering any portion of Eretz Yisrael which G-d has granted us.”

The Rebbe’s approach to Eretz Yisrael could almost be described as that of “*L’chatchila Ariber*.” *L’chatchila Ariber* means, “to begin with, go over.”

This concept was innovated by the Rebbe Maharash (Rabbi Shmuel, the fourth Chabad Rebbe), whose birthday was celebrated this past Wednesday, 2 Iyar (April 14 this year).

The approach of *L’chatchila Ariber* teaches that if we come upon an obstacle to a task we are involved in, or an obstacle to a mitzva or project or good deed which comes our way (or we pursue), we should overcome the obstacle in the most direct manner.

The Rebbe Maharash explained that while some people propose that when confronted with an obstacle the best route is to go around, or under it - and the Rebbe Maharash says: “And I say one has to go *l’chatchila ariber* [from the start, go over it].”

May our pursuit of Torah and mitzvot be in a manner of “*l’chatchila ariber*.” Surely this fortitude and persistence will have its desired effect, true peace in the Land of Israel, and throughout the entire world, with the revelation of *Moshiach*, NOW!

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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## New Facility

The groundbreaking of a new building by Chabad of Toronto took place during the intermediate days of Passover. The additional building, which will be located 50 feet from the current Chabad Center, will boast a state of the art women’s Mikvah and the much needed eight large multi-purpose rooms for the highly successful summer day camp and a growing Friendship Circle which caters to special needs children.



## New Emissaries

Rabbi Nakhshon and Eden Yunaev recently moved to Baku, Azerbaijan to bolster the work of Chabad-Lubavitch in the capital city. It is a home-coming for Eden who hails from Baku.