

# L'Chaim

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson  
"Unveil my eyes, that I may perceive the wonders of Your Torah." (Psalm 119:18)



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

This week we read two Torah portions, *Matot* and *Maasei*. *Maasei* lists the travels of the Jewish people, from when they left Egypt until when they entered Israel, there were 42 places where they camped.

The Baal Shem Tov tells us that the 42 travels parallel the life of a Jewish person, every one of the travels representing a period in one's life, with different happenings and different challenges. Birth is the Exodus from Egypt and the end of life is the entry into the Israel, the world of truth.

But some of the places where the Jewish people encamped are known for the terrible episodes that happened there, where the Jewish people went against G-d! Does it mean that we are condemned to an episode in our lives of sinfulness?

For example, one of the places where they camped was "*Kivrot Hatava*," where the Jewish people complained that G-d took them out of Egypt and that they missed the food that they used to have there. They even cried about it. They weren't happy with the manna, the "bread from heaven"; they craved meat. G-d gave them a lot of meat, but many of the complainers died and they were buried there. That is why it is called *Kivrot Hatava*, which means, "the graves of those who craved."

Why would we want to go through that?

The Baal Shem Tov explains that each place had two possible outcomes, positive or negative. And it was up to the Jewish people to choose between a positive or a negative outcome. It could have been a place where they buried their desire, done what is good in the eyes of G-d, and been grateful for being taken out of Egypt and for the holy manna that fell from heaven. And that was probably the true intended purpose of traveling there. But the Jewish people created a different outcome and many were buried there.

The same is true for every one of us, we will have every one of these "travels," and it is our choice to make it what it ultimately will be, a positive or negative episode in our life.

I know how hard life can be, the challenges G-d throws our way are so great, they can be paralyzing and debilitating. We can feel that they are too much to handle and maybe they are.

Right now, before the coming of Moshiach, it is especially difficult, it is the darkest time. It is difficult to stay positive for such a prolonged time. Sometimes you will overcome and sometimes you may fail, but every time you do overcome, G-d revels in your victory and it brings Moshiach ever closer. The greater the challenges you overcome, the more powerful is the effect.

Don't let your failures get you down, instead count your victories! Be proud of your victories. Know how much your victories accomplish. You are amazing, revel in your victories they will strengthen you and empower you. G-d is proud of you!

It is enough of the suffering, may G-d send Moshiach, when "G-d will erase the tears from upon every face." May it happen soon

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.

## Why Does it Take So Long?

by Rabbi Eli Cohen

We live in the Experience Age, quick experiences, short attention spans and instant gratification. In such a world, it may seem foreign to us to take out a chunk of our day to mumble passages of a 2,000 year-old text and stand in silent devotion. Wouldn't a simple "G-d is great" or "thanks a lot" be enough, and then on with our day?

Does the Infinite need to be told how wonderful He is? One would hope not. Why then are we enjoined to spend 45 minutes or more a day extolling His virtues?

Imagine writing a poem to express your affection for someone very dear, a spouse or child, for example. Would the three words, "I love you" be enough? Not very romantic. You would probably want to put into words the reasons for your love, the special qualities which endear this person to you, the wonderful feelings you get from being in his or her presence.

Consider a toast master who gets up to introduce the honoree at a banquet:

"Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Ed Forman. He's great."

That's not enough. No, we must be told every time he is honored about his presidency of the Global Jewish Association and his chairmanship of a particular national foundation and so on, in what can often become a shopping list of good works. These are recited, not because the honoree likes to hear them, but because his resume of accomplishments establishes a feeling of admiration,

perhaps even awe on the part of the audience, that makes them more receptive to whatever the honoree says after such an introduction.

Our prayers are not merely a recital of our needs and wants.

When we approach G-d in prayer, we are nurturing a relationship with our Creator. It is a two-way relationship built on two emotions, love and awe.

When we stand before Alm-ghty G-d on a daily basis, we give expression to our deep feelings of connection to something more vast than anything we can possibly imagine.

In our prayers we cherish the link between the finite and the Infinite; between puny, insignificant man, tiny grain of dust in the entire cosmos and G-d, Who constantly gives life to the entire universe and yet cares and looks after little me.

As we pray we hear the words of praise resounding in our minds and we are filled with emotion. On the one hand, we feel that warm tingling feeling we get when you start describing someone who is near and dear. On the other hand, we are filled with a dread and respect that we might feel ten minutes before a meeting with a top corporate executive or a world leader.

The Talmud calls prayer "the service of the heart." To make it a meaningful service, it must involve painting the word pictures and taking the time to develop the emotions which comprise a real interface between man and G-d.

# SLICE OF LIFE

## One More Mitzva

by George Yosef Mordechai Gati



The Gatis with Rivky Reizes in the Chabad House of Tel Aviv

George Yosef Mordechai Gati met the Rebbe for the first time in 1985. Since then, he has been active in encouraging his fellow Jews to do be more involved in Jewish observance and learning.

Last year in June, my wife Adina and I traveled to Israel. After checking into the hotel in Tel Aviv, we went to the Central Chabad-Lubavitch office. There we met Rebbetzin Rivky Reizes. She was very accommodating. She offered us refreshments and asked what she could do for us. I asked her for five sets of Shabbat candles with the blessings inside. The next morning we were having breakfast in the hotel. Our waitress was Sabina who we knew from our visit two years ago. I asked her if she lights Shabbat candles. She said, "Not really."

I showed her the set of Shabbat candles and handed it to her. "Wow! For me?"

"Yes, for you!" I told her

She thanked me and said, "Now I will light Shabbat candles this coming Friday."

The next day we went to the shopping mall in Ramat Aviv. Hundreds of people were coming and going. Adina noticed the Louis Vuitton store and

said, "Let's go in."

How could I refuse? She looked at several hand bags and other items. A sales girl came over to assist her. She was very pleasant and said her name was Shanee. Several minutes later I asked Shanee if she lights Shabbat candles. She said, "Not in a long time." I handed her the Shabbat candles and she froze right there.

She said, "Now I will light! Thank you very much!" And she proceeded to kiss my wife on both cheeks.

As we were checking out of the hotel early Thursday morning, I asked the front desk receptionist her name. "My name is Jenny," she said. Jenny had come to Israel with her parents several years ago from Russia. I of course asked her, "Do you light Shabbat candles?"

She said "My grandmother in Russia lights Shabbat candles but I do not light." I handed her the box of Shabbat candles and she became teary-eyed. She was overcome with joy. She said that now she will light as her grandmother does back in Russia.

Finally we were on our plane waiting to take off from Ben Gurion airport to J.F.K. The El Al Israeli stewardess came over to us and asked if we needed anything. Before take-off, I asked her name. She said, "My name is Netta."

The plane took off. After our delicious lunch I asked her if she lights Shabbat candles. She was hesitant to answer.

Finally she said, "For several weeks I have been thinking of buying Shabbat candles. And now here you are offering to give me Shabbat candles. *Metzuyan!* (terrific) I will take them! Thank you very much!"

A different time, Adina and I checked in at the Delta Counter at J.F.K. Airport for our flight to Milan, Italy. After about 15 minutes I saw four pilots and eight flight attendants approaching the check-in counter.

One of the pilots took the loud-speaker and said, "This is Captain Cohen your pilot, we will be arriving 15 minutes early into Milan. The weather is sunny and 81 degrees. Let's have a safe flight! Thank you."

The flight did arrive 15 minutes early and the weather was indeed beautiful and sunny.

I was waiting in line to leave the plane when I thought about giving pilot Captain Cohen a

*L'Chaim* publication. At the exit door next to business class the flight attendants were thanking us for flying Delta and telling us, "Have a nice day."

I asked one of the flight attendants if she could give Captain Cohen this publication.

"Sure I'll give it to him now." She turned around and headed for the cockpit to give him the publication.

We were now waiting in line at the security check point ready to go through customs.

Hundreds of people were in line. I looked up and noticed the four pilots and the eight flight attendants cutting the line heading to where the sign said, "Crew only." Captain Cohen cut right in front of me. I asked him if he got the publication from the flight attendant.

With a smile he said, "Yes I did get it! And thank you very much!"

And I thanked G-d for giving me the opportunity to share Judaism with my fellow Jews wherever I travel!

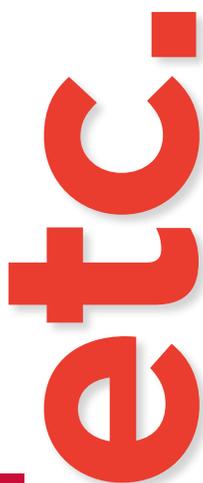
Another story: It was the first day of Rosh Hashanah. I was getting ready for Mincha (the afternoon service) at our Shul.

Suddenly I heard my wife Adina calling me. "Come quick! Hurry!"

"What could it be?" I thought to myself. I ran down the stairs and Adina was at the front door, holding it open. "Quick, give me the Chabad weekly Russian publication that we have on our coffee table!"

Our neighbor, an elderly Russian woman, was passing by walking slowly pushing her walker. "Hurry, hurry," my wife said to me. Then out into the street she went, running after our elderly neighbor. By now, the woman had reached the next block. Adina finally caught up with her. She handed the woman the publication in Russian and the neighbor hugged her. "*Spaciba, spaciba,*" she said with a huge smile.

A few days later, on Sunday morning, I was coming back from my weekly visit to the Rebbe's Ohel. As I turned onto our block, lo and behold I see our elderly Russian neighbor. At the Ohel I had picked up various publications to have available to give out. I pulled my car over and took the Russian calendar for the new year that I had just gotten at the Ohel. I gave it to her and she was overcome with joy.



## The Letter and the Spirit Volume 5

A new volume of *The Letter and the Spirit* was recently published by Nissan Mindel Publications. This newest release is the fifth in a set of 10 volumes of the Rebbe's letters that will be published. The letters were originally penned by the Rebbe in English. Before his passing, Rabbi Mindel – who was a member of the Rebbe's secretariat – selected the letters for this collection with care and maintained his high standards of strict confidentiality. Rabbi Mindel organized these letters into numerous topics and wrote an introduction to each section, highlighting the particular subject of the section. These topics cover a broad range of interests, questions and situations, matters of great importance to the reader.



## WHO'S WHO

**Naftali** was the son of the Patriarch **Jacob** and his wife, **Bilha**. He was named by **Rachel**, the name referring to her "wrestling" with her sister Leah to bear a child. Naftali was one of the Twelve Tribe, known for his ability to run swiftly and for his beautiful singing voice. He was blessed by his father with fertile territory whose crops ripened first. The Kings of Israel had their gardens and orchards in the territory of Naftali. In the battle against the Canaanite King Sisera, men of the tribe of Naftali fought valiantly under the leadership of the prophetess Devora and General Barak.



# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Continued from the previous issue, from a letter dated 16 Tammuz 5743 [1983]

Needless to say, the layman cannot be familiar with all the sources and has no way of verifying the facts. But what does a layman do in other areas, medical science for example? A patient may well have his doubts about the efficacy of a drug prescribed by his physician. Will he refuse to take it until he has been able to attend medical courses and learn all that his doctor has learned in his lifetime studies and experience? Will he not rely on the authority of the medical specialist? If he has doubts about the expertise of one doctor, he can obtain a second opinion, and a third; but when all agree that he needs that medicine and the prescribed medical regimen, would he refuse to take that expert advice, even if he still has "strong doubts" about it?

By the same token, if you will ask any "specialist" in *Yiddishkeit* [Judaism] – a person who has dedicated his life to the study of Torah and actually lives by the Torah and *mitzvot* [commandments] in his everyday life and conduct, what is the right thing for you to do, the answer will be the same, because Jews have only one Torah and one *Halachah* [Jewish law]. Indeed, if in matters of physical health it is logical that *na'aseh* [we will do] must come before *nishma* [we will understand] – how much more so in matters of the eternal soul (with which the wellbeing of the body is also intimately connected).

I have taken time out to write to you at some length, even though it is also common sense, and it is not original with me, for you can find it, and more, in such sources as the Kuzari and other works of our great Jewish philosophers, because I have in mind the saying of our Sages, "There is

no point in bewailing the past." I trust that the wrong actions you are contemplating and have already initiated as a result of your woefully erroneous conclusion, may yet be reversed, and that this letter may help you see your way clear to do what is good and proper, good and proper also for you and your family, which is also why this letter is being sent via Special Delivery.

**A patient may well have his doubts about the efficacy of a drug prescribed by his physician... if he has doubts about the expertise of one doctor, he can obtain a second opinion, and a third...**

Incidentally, this letter is being written on the day before the Fast of the 17th of Tammuz, commemorating the fateful breach in the wall of Jerusalem under siege, which eventually led to the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdosh* [Holy Temple]. It reminds us, everyone of us, to do our utmost to eliminate the cause that led to the Destruction and *Golus* [exile], the sole cause being, as we say in our prayer *Umipnei chato'einu* – "Because of our sins we have been exiled from our land."

It particularly reminds us how careful one must be not to let anything make even a crack in the wall that protects "Jerusalem," *yira-shalem* [total awe], the "inner *Beis Hamikdosh*" which is the most cherished possession of every Jew – the indestructible counterpart of the physical *Beis Hamikdosh* that stood in Jerusalem of old. This inner Sanctuary is what G-d desires most, as implied in His order and request, "Let them make Me a *Mikdosh* [Sanctuary] and I will dwell among [in the midst and within] them"; within them – within every Jew and every Jewish home.

With blessing,

house [the Holy Temple]." The "fifth month" is the month of Av, when the Holy Temple was burned and destroyed. An even more essential connection between Aaron's death and the burning of the Temple is as follows: The Second Temple was destroyed because of unmotivated hatred. The remedy for unmotivated hatred is unmotivated love, which was exemplified by Aaron. Aaron "loved peace, pursued peace, loved all creatures and brought them closer to the Torah." (*Likutei Sichot*)

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

*This coming Wednesday (July 22 this year), is the first day of the Jewish month of Av. With the beginning of Av, the three week mourning period over the destruction of the Holy Temples in Jerusalem intensifies.*

*The first of Av was also the day on which Aaron, the High Priest and brother of Moses, passed away.*

*Concerning his passing, the Torah tells us that "All of the house of Israel wept for Aaron for thirty days." But only the men wept for Moses and not the women. Why was this? Because Aaron had made peace between a man and his wife, and between a person and his friend, so all of the Jewish people mourned him.*

*We have much to learn from Aaron and his passing. But, most importantly, we must learn to emulate the wonderful example he showed us, that of doing everything in our power to bring peace and harmony amongst our fellow Jews. When this happens, we will no longer mourn the passing of Aaron, nor the destruction of the Holy Temples, for we will all be united, together as one, in the Third and Everlasting Holy Temple.*

*Our Sages say that the Holy Temple was destroyed because of reasonless and unwarranted hatred amongst Jews. In previous generations, a focus during this time has been to increase in ahavat Yisrael - love of a fellow Jew - as an antidote to the destruction. However, the Rebbe stated unequivocally that even this terrible sin, on a national level, has been rectified.*

*What remains for us to do is, especially at this time, is to increase in ahavat Yisrael as a foretaste of the manner in which we will live when Moshiach comes and the Temple is rebuilt. This behavior, says the Rebbe, will prepare us for and hasten the Redemption.*

*We must all strive to put aside our differences and join hands, one to another. Then surely we will be able to approach G-d's holy throne and petition Him to take us out of exile and bring us to the Holy Land with Moshiach, NOW, may it be rebuilt 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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## MOSHIACH MATTERS

In this week's portion we read, "Aaron the Priest went up onto Mount Hor at the command of G-d and died there...in the fifth month on the first of the month." (*Num. 33:38*) Our Sages said that "the death of the righteous is equal to the burning of G-d's



# IT HAPPENED ONCE

Reb Yehoshua Milner owned a mill in Jerusalem over a hundred years ago. A devout and scholarly man, he made a good living from the mill, although he almost never went there. The old-fashioned mill was situated near a river and the huge millstone was turned by the steady and patient treading of a horse which spent its days pacing round and round in an endless circle. The working of the mill was supervised by the manager, Reb Shmuel. And so, Reb Yehoshua was free to devote all his time to Torah study.

When Reb Shmuel passed away another man was hired to be the manager of the mill. This new manager decided to improve the mill by replacing the slow, old horse with a new massive one, stronger by far than the other horses that had worked there before. The new horse accomplished work so much more quickly than the previous ones, that it became known as “the wonder horse.”

Soon word of this magnificent horse spread through the countryside, and bidders came from near and far to try to buy the fabulous animal. Much more money was waiting to be made through the horse if it would be used for other more demanding tasks, such as pulling huge loads, or transporting the wealthy from place to place.

Reb Yehoshua was unwilling to sell the horse, and he refused all bids that were presented to him. However, no matter how many times he said “no,” and how many people he rebuffed, offers continued to come his way from people who wished to purchase the horse.

Finally, when Reb Yehoshua tired of the continual interruptions to his Torah study, he set a price for “the wonder horse” of 25 Napoleons, a sum that would support a family for two years. Surely, no one would be so foolhardy as to make an offer like that! Reb Yehoshua, however, underestimated the tenacity of his would-be buyers. One merchant actually came up with the sum and a deal was struck.

The night before the sale was to be finalized, Reb Yehoshua couldn’t sleep. He tossed and turned in his bed until, finally, in the middle of the night, he gave up. He dressed and left the house, telling his family he would soon return.

His employees were shocked to see the owner, Reb Yehoshua, arrive at the mill. As he never visited the mill during the day, what was he doing there in the middle of the night? Reb Yehoshua walked straight up to the horse as all of the employees looked on. He stopped at the horse’s side and whispered in the mighty animal’s ear, “Shmuel, I forgive you completely.” When the horse heard those words, it literally dropped dead. Reb Yehoshua said nothing and returned to his home.

The next day news quickly spread that “the wonder horse” had died the previous night, for no apparent reason. “A healthy horse!” everyone exclaimed, and a horse worth 25 Napoleons! Who had ever heard of such a thing!

Reb Yehoshua called his family and friends and related the amazing story of the previous evening. “Last night I couldn’t sleep. I tossed and turned and when I fell asleep at last, I had a very strange dream. In the dream my former employee, Shmuel, appeared to me and said, ‘I must confess to you. I wasn’t the wonderful manager you thought me to be. I stole from you throughout all the years I worked at the mill. When I died and appeared before the Heavenly Court, I was informed that the only way I could expiate my terrible sin against man and G-d was to return to earth in the form of your mill horse so that I could repay my debt to you.

“I was given an especially strong body so that I could work extra hard. For months I toiled tirelessly, making up for what I stole from you throughout the years. But it

seems I did my job too well, for I became renowned for my strength and stamina. When I heard that you were planning to sell me, I was horrified. I would not be able to expiate my sins unless I was working for you in your mill. If you would sell me, I would have to return to earth once more, perhaps in an even lesser form, to atone for my misdeeds. I cannot bear the idea of returning again, so I beg you, please forgive me for what I did to you.’

“When I heard his plea, I jumped up out of bed and ran immediately to the mill. I went up to the horse and told him that I forgave him with all my heart. And when he heard my words, he expired, for he had fulfilled his purpose here on earth. Now, poor Shmuel will find his peace in the next world.”

**THOUGHTS THAT COUNT**  
on the weekly Torah portion

**These are (Eileh) the journeys of (masei) the Children of Israel (Bnei Yisrael) (Num. 33:1)**

The first letters of these Hebrew words allude to the four exiles of the Jewish people: *alef-Edom* (Rome); *mem-Madai* (Persia); *beit-Bavel* (Babylon); and *yud-Yavan* (Greece). (*Nachal Kadumim*)

**These are their journeys according to their starting places (Num. 33:2)**

The Hebrew word for starting places or departures (*motza'eihem*) comes from the same root as descendants, alluding to the future Redemption and the ingathering of the exiles that will occur in the Messianic era. At that time, all 42 journeys made by the Children of Israel in the desert will be duplicated by the Jewish people as they make their way back to the Land of Israel. (*Abarbanel*)

**And you shall not render unclean the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the L-rd dwell in the midst of the children of Israel (Num. 35:34)**

Not only does G-d’s Divine Presence accompany the Jewish people throughout the exile, but G-d Himself, as it were, goes into exile with them, sharing the suffering of the Children of Israel. Because of G-d’s great love for His children, He does not abandon them even when they are exiled because of misdeeds. When Moshiach comes, the Divine Presence, no less than the Jews, will also be redeemed from exile. (*The Rebbe*)

Dedicated in Honor of  
**Mr. Howard Lorber**

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**25 Tammuz/July 17**  
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