



The upcoming holiday of Shavuot is the anniversary of the passing of King David. Living in the Holy Land of Israel in the times of King Saul and King David, there were constant wars. Time and again, the Philistines attacked the Jews, sometimes in small bands, often with large armies.

One time, the Canaanite armies overpowered the Jews. They swarmed into Shilo, destroyed the Tabernacle, and carried off the Holy Ark in triumph. But their rejoicing was short lived. First they placed the Ark in the temple of their god, Dagon. But the next morning, they found the idol on the floor, with its head and hands off. Terrified, the people sent the Ark to a different city. But after a few days, everyone there became sick and started dying. From one place to another, wherever the Ark went, it brought only death and terror.

The Philistines realized that they had to get rid of the Ark. Their wise men advised placing it in a beautiful new wagon, together with gifts of gold and silver. The wagon would be hitched to two nursing mother cows. "Let us see where they pull it to," they said scoffingly. To their amazement, the cows ignored their hungry baby calves, and pulled the wagon right back to the Jews. It was an open miracle. All Israel rejoiced. For the next 20 years, the Ark remained with a righteous man named Avinadav.

In the meantime, David became king and fought a series of battles until he had totally defeated the Philistine enemy. "Now at last," he thought, "there is peace. I can bring the Ark to where it belongs, to Jerusalem." In his heart, David yearned to build a permanent home for the Ark, a Holy Temple that would be an eternal dwelling place for G-d's Presence in this world.

Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem was not simple. This was the Ark of G-d, with the Ten Commandments in it. Special honors and a ceremony had to be arranged. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were invited to attend. The Ark would be brought in the same beautiful wagon that the Philistines had made, to remind everyone of the great miracle that had taken place.

But the decision to use the Philistine wagon proved to be a fatal mistake. A huge crowd accompanied King David to the home of Avinadav. The Ark was loaded onto the wagon pulled by prize oxen. Lively music filled the air. Musicians played the harp, the flute, and drums. Tens of thousands of people followed the procession.

The Ark, however, is not allowed to be placed in a wagon. It must be carried on the shoulders of men from the Levite family of Kehot. As the procession passed by the farm of Aravna the Jebusite, where the Holy Temple would one day be built, the oxen suddenly lost their balance, and the wagon shook.

"Oh no!" cried Uzza, the son of Avinadav. "The Ark is falling!" Instinctively, he ran forward and stretched out his hand to support the Ark. No sooner did Uzza touch the holy Ark, than he suddenly fell lifeless to the ground. The Ark did not fall. It floated in the air, supported only by its own holiness. Whoever saw it was filled with fear and awe.

The procession could not continue. The death of Uzza put a halt to everything. The Ark was instead taken to the home of a righteous person, named Oved Edom. For three months the Ark stayed there, and Oved Edom prospered unbelievably. His fields produced bumper crops, and all the women in his family – his wife and eight daughters-in-law, gave birth to healthy children. Everyone could see that great blessing had come to him through the Ark.

Once again, King David prepared to bring the Ark to Jerusalem. This time the Ark was covered. The Levites carried the Ark on their shoulders. Miraculously, they did not feel its great weight. It even seemed like the Ark was carrying them.

Shofars and trumpets were sounded to remind everyone of the solemnity of the occasion. King David did not dress in royal robes, but in simple white linen, like a Priest on Yom Kippur. On his head he wore tefillin, and in his arm he cradled a small Torah scroll.

King David was euphoric. The Ark was returning. The Tablets that G-d Himself had given at Mt. Sinai had been taken away from the Jews. And now they were coming home. With boundless joy, King David danced before the Ark, leaping and cavorting with happiness.

Finally the Ark was brought into the city and placed in a special tent that had been prepared. Then the king blessed all the people, and presented every one with a loaf of bread, a portion of meat, and a flask of wine, so that they could all rejoice with their families.

When King David's wife, Michal, the daughter of King Shaul, saw David dancing and leaping in the street, she was very upset. She had never seen such behavior in her father's house. It seemed to her lowly and shameful for a king to make such a spectacle of himself in public.

When David came home, she could not contain her feelings, and burst out with harsh words against him. "How could you behave like that?" she said. "Have you no sense of dignity? You have brought shame on the kingship and shame on us all."

"No," said David, "that is not true. If I danced in public before the Ark, it was only for the honor of G-d. He is my great Master! Before Him I am nothing, less than a simple common person. For He is all my honor and my joy, and whatever I did is only for His sake."

And so the Ark with the Tablets of the Ten Commandments came to its resting place in Jerusalem. King David then began making plans for the building of the Holy Temple where the Ark would one day find its permanent home, may it be restored speedily in our days.

From The Moshiah Times

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT
on the weekly Torah portion

You shall number them according to their armies, you and Aaron (Num. 1:3)

When a census is taken it is generally unnecessary that the poll takers be of high rank or official status. Counting people does not require great skill or intelligence. Yet when G-d wanted His children to be numbered He insisted that Moses, Aaron and the heads of the tribes carry out the task themselves, to teach us how highly G-d esteems the Jews. (Sichot Kodesh)

The Levites shall keep charge of the Sanctuary of Testimony (Num. 1:53)

The Levites, whose job it was to "guard" the Sanctuary and the Holy Temple, were counted in the census from the age of one month. But how can a one-month-old infant possibly "keep the charge of the Sanctuary of Testimony"? The concept of "guarding" the holiness of the Sanctuary refers to spiritual guardianship, not physical protection. The Levites served not by virtue of their physical prowess or outstanding bravery, but because of their high spiritual stature, something that even a small ba by had already inherited. (The Rebbe)

Every male from 20 years old and upward; all that were able to go forth to war (Num. 1:20)

Every single person in the census was brave of heart and worthy of going forth to war, a miracle that does not occur among other nations. When Jews are strongly connected to G-d and His Torah they are not subject to the laws of nature. The census in the desert was taken not long after the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, when the Jewish people were still under its powerful influence. Still firm in their commitment to observing G-d's commands, they thus merited the miracle that not even one was found to be lacking. (The Ohr Hachaim – Rabbi Chaim ben Attar)



7:47 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
3 Sivan/May 14
Torah Portion Bamidbar
Ethics Ch 6
Shabbat ends 8:53 PM



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

As this week's Torah portion, *Bamidbar* (literally "in the desert") suggests, the Torah was given to the Jewish people in an uninhabited wilderness.

A desert is a vast expanse of land to which all people have the same claim. A desert is not considered private property in the same way a house or a tract of habitable land can be bought and owned by individuals.

Likewise, the Torah does not belong to any one Jew, but is the eternal inheritance and possession of all. Thus each and every Jew is able (and obligated) to study the Torah and apply it to his daily life.

The desert is a place of dust, earth and shifting sands. Vegetation cannot grow there and it is devoid of inhabitants.

We, too, must strive to be as humble as the dust, as the Torah is incompatible with haughtiness and pride. Indeed, our Sages stated, "Who is he who upholds the Torah? One who makes himself as the desert."

In the desert, the most important necessities for sustaining life – water, food and clothes – are absent. There is no rainfall, and no edible plants or fruit-bearing trees. Obviously, there is no place to buy or make clothing either.

Throughout the 40 years of the Jewish people's sojourn through the desert they relied on the merit of tzadikim, righteous people, for these necessities. In the merit of Moses, G-d caused the manna to fall. In the merit of Miriam the Prophetess, Moses' sister, a well provided the Jews with drinking water. In the merit of Aaron the High Priest, Moses' brother, G-d protected the Jews from harm with the Clouds of Glory. These clouds also laundered their clothes, which grew along with them and always fit perfectly.

We learn from this that when it comes to learning Torah, all other concerns fall by the wayside. Our job is to study Torah and observe its mitzvot, while relying on G-d to provide us with our needs.

Lastly, the desert is a place of great danger. Wild animals roam about freely, and snakes and scorpions lurk under rocks and in crevices. Yet it was precisely there that G-d chose to reveal His holy Torah.

Until Moshiah comes and ushers in the Final Redemption (may it happen immediately), the Jew is likewise in a dangerous environment – exile. The "snake," the evil inclination, is constantly trying to entrap him and cause him to sin. Thus it is precisely during the exile that the Jew must strive to connect himself to the Torah, and to perform its commandments to the best of his ability.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Vol. 2, and Hitva'aduyot 5745

The Marriage

The invitations, the hall, the caterer, the band, photographer, gown, flowers and guest list. Everything has been done for the wedding. The bride and groom have even been reading the latest best-sellers on how men and women differ, how they have unique ways of communicating, and how to make their marriage work in this day and age of divorce.

One thing the new couple knows for sure even without reading it or being told is: "In a relationship like marriage, there's no such thing as "minimum."

Whereas in business or other partnerships one might be able to ponder: "What's the least I can do in order to keep going?" such cannot be a consideration in marriage. Rather, "What can I do to enhance this relationship, to make it stronger, to help it grow" should be primary concerns of both husband and wife.

The approaching holiday of Shavuot (this year from the evening of Sunday, May 16 through the evening of Tuesday, May 18) is likened to the marriage of G-d and the Jewish people. The Jewish people, being the bride, received the Torah – our ketuba – from G-d on that day. Mount Sinai was our chupa.

Our relationship with G-d, then, is like that of wife and husband.

And, whereas the thought of "what's the minimum I can do and still remain in a healthy relationship with my significant other" could never be entertained in a human marriage, the same thought should never

be a conscious or subconscious consideration regarding our relationship with G-d.

"What can I do to enhance my relationship with G-d, to make it stronger, to help it grow?" are questions we can and should ask ourselves. For Judaism encourages asking sincere questions, and then genuinely trying to find out the answers.

One answer to the above question comes from the realization that, although "G-d wants the heart," G-d also wants every other part of our bodies. Our marriage to G-d makes our relationship with Him anything but platonic. To have a healthy relationship with G-d we have to get physical.

Our hands, our feet, our brains, our mouths, should be physically involved in this relationship: our hands to give charity or light a Shabbat candle; our feet to walk to shul or to visit a friend who isn't well; our brains to study Torah and find answers to our questions; our mouths to pray and only speak well of others.

And as our relationship with G-d grows, as our love deepens and intensifies, we will come to realize that we are truly content that G-d chose, over 3300 years ago, to become united with the Jewish people, His eternal bride.

In truth, there have been tough times in this Divine marriage, as there are in any marriage. But the bride and Groom together eagerly await the time when this union will be truly perfect, in the Messianic Era.

לעילוי נשמת
החסיד המהולל הרב מרדכי צבי בן הרב חיים יוסף שלמה גרינוולד ע"ה
Dedicated in memory of a devoted Chasid and renowned educator
Rabbi Mordechai Tzvi Greenwald OBM
who selflessly guided and inspired thousands for over fifty years
ת"נ צ"ב ה'

SLICE OF LIFE

Yaakov's Torah



Rabbi Schusterman with "Yaakov's Torah"

As "communicated" to Rabbi Nechemia Schusterman by a "resident" of the Holy Ark.

Once upon a time, the neighborhood in Rhode Island that I was born in, raised during my formative years, and lived in, was a thriving, bustling Jewish community.

Jews of all ages came to shul, which is where I lived, and where I got to know them. Sadly, over time, the neighborhood changed and soon there were less and less Jews, and even less Jews coming to shul. It got to the point that our shul was left with no choice but to merge with another congregation.

Our new shul was simply beautiful! It was one of the most magnificent edifices I had ever seen. The shul was so grand I had only imagined such places exist. There was a huge main sanctuary, where they prayed on Shabbos and Yom Tov, and a small shul for weekdays. The Hebrew school facilities were upstairs. The women's balcony was splendid. They even had a proper Mikvah. I should mention the kosher commercial kitchen... I could go on but I guess you just need to have been there to fully appreciate it.

I think what impressed me even more though, was the community. There was just such an interesting array of people. There were the old and rigid, the young and fresh, those who wanted every child silent, because that is the "way it ought to be," those who were more flexible.

And then there was Yaakov.

Little Yaakov loved the shul, he loved his father, he loved to watch the comings and going in hustle and bustle of the place. You see, the shul was like Yaakov's second home. Watching the older men pray and then grab a schnapps after morning services, perhaps a few too many after a Shabbat Kiddush, this little kid, just soaked it all in. He cared for me, and for the place.

As time passed, and some of the older folks passed on or were no longer able to perform some of the basic duties, Yaakov – now a young man – assumed the responsibility upon himself to take care of my "colleagues" and me. He also looked after some shul maintenance, security and basic accounting.

Even once Yaakov was grown up, moved, married and had kids of his own, he continued to take an active interest in our shul and me.

I watched as Yaakov's dear father grew old, from a young man saying a "I'chaim" after services to an adult who sadly became an angry alcoholic. I saw his mood swings, his temper tantrums. He was never physically violent, G-d forbid, perhaps out of respect for me, but his addiction caused his family pain. I saw the tears that would form at the corners of Yaakov's eyes and times they even overflowed in my presence. Yet the indomitable spirit could not be erased. This was a tragedy waiting to be overcome. Fortunately, Yaakov's dad had the strength to finally accept his addiction and seek treatment; however, there were many years of joy lost.

I watched and I cried with Yaakov during his challenges and I laughed with him during his successes. I was there when he married and tended to his ailing sick father, and got reports of his failing marriage and his father's imminent passing. I watched with frustration yet awareness that while Yaakov struggled, I knew in my heart that Yaakov would prevail.

But, our magnificent, grand shul of many years was also growing old, the neighborhood again was changing. Attendance at services was down to three days of the High Holidays. A pipe burst back in the

Hebrew School area too expensive to fix properly. The shul's roof sprung a leak – much too expensive to fix. The rain storms finally took their toll: shingles had fallen off the roof and the shul was filled with wet carpets that smelled musty from mold and asbestos.

Some time before the true state of the shul became apparent to all, Yaakov had connected with the fledgling new Chabad in Peabody where he now lived. Yaakov knew Chabad of Peabody met for Shabbat at the home of the Schustermans, at hotels and other meeting venues for holidays and family programs, that they were in need of a Torah scroll. Being a member of the board of his beloved shul, Yaakov was in a position to do something about this.

Yaakov did not want to simply close the doors of our ailing shul. After one last High Holiday service, Yaakov wanted to arrange a healthy merger to bolster another shul in the vicinity.

What would be of me? Would I be displaced, without a home? Yaakov let me in on his plan; he let me know about this young and growing new shul in his new neighborhood. From his description it seems similar to the shul where I had first begun. Except this one had a twist, they focused on outreach and other good activities. They did prayer services and were actually kid friendly and other virtues that would be novel to me. I would be moving there, by myself this time, without my "colleagues" to do my part and assist them. I was a little nervous at first, but after being transported respectfully as appropriate, I actually began to find it warm and inviting.

It had been so long that I had trouble remembering the last time someone had actually looked at me, much less spoken to me, save little Yaakov of course. This new home however was feeling nice. It was very special to be seen and heard on Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and almost every Shabbat. It was like old times... I felt reborn. I felt like I now had a more meaningful purpose.

I now see Yaakov more regularly than I had in a long while. He still looks at me lovingly as he did when he was that little kid in my first shul. And when Yaakov thinks back to his youth, his family and his shul, there seems to be something that I keep pure for him. I would like to think that I play a little part of that.

For I am a Torah scroll and Yaakov is my friend.

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

22nd of Iyar, 5726 [1966]

To All Participants in the Annual Dinner of the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch in Detroit, MI

Greeting and Blessing:

I send greetings and best wishes to the esteemed chairman, committee members, and all participants in this annual event. May the Almighty bless your efforts to make it the success it deserves in every respect.

It is noteworthy that this year's Anniversary Dinner takes place in the meaningful days of the counting of the omer which serve as a preparation for Shavuot, the festival of *Mattan Torah* [the Giving of the Torah].

Our Sages tell us that when G-d was about to give the Torah on Mount Sinai, He requested guarantors to ensure that the Torah would be studied and observed. All guarantees were rejected, until *Moshe Rabbeinu* [our teacher] declared, "Our children will be our guarantors!" Without this guarantee, not even *Moshe Rabbeinu* could have received the Torah. Henceforth it became the responsibility of *Moshe Rabbeinu*, and, indeed, of all Jews to see to it that the Torah and Torah-way of life would be perpetuated through our children.

Thus we are taught that no matter how great a man may be, and however important the task in which he is engaged, the Torah education of our children takes precedence, and none may be excused from participating in work and effort dedicated to Torah-true Jewish education.

It is also significant that this year's Annual Dinner is taking place in the week of the *sedra* [Torah portion] *Bamidbar*, "Numbers" as this fourth *Chumash* is called after the *sedra*, because it begins with the Divine commandment to number the Children of Israel.

This portion of the Torah is always read on the Shabbos before Shavuot – an indication that when it comes to receiving the Torah, all Jews must stand up and be counted, for each and every Jew has a Divinely given share in the Torah and is soulfully bound up in the holy Torah. We are also forcefully reminded that no single Jew

must ever be given up as "lost."

The above-mentioned basic tenets are truly exemplified in the work of the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch in many parts of this country and the world over. Fortunate indeed is the Jewish community of Detroit to have the Merkos in its midst, and to have also many devoted friends and dedicated partners in this very vital endeavor.

May the Alm-ghty bless each and every one of you with success in your efforts in behalf of our children - "our guarantors" for the perpetuation of our Jewish way of life and, indeed, for our survival and happy future.

Isruchag HaShavuot, 5739 [1979]

Blessing and Greeting:

I received your correspondence, and may G-d grant the fulfillment of your heart's desires for good in the matters about which you wrote.

I trust you had an enjoyable Shavuot – *Z'man Mattan Toraseinu*, the Season of the Giving of Our Torah – in that the inspiration will be with you in all the days ahead throughout the year.

The designation of Shavuot as the Festival of *Mattan Torah* is significant in that – among other things – it conveys the concept that the Torah was given as a "*matana*," a gift. For unlike a sale or barter – involving an exchange of value for value, or an award or prize – for a special effort or merit, a gift is given freely and graciously, without previous effort on the part of the receiver.

Needless to say, if the giver of the gift is a very distinguished person and, moreover, the receiver is a person of humble station, it makes the gift even more precious, and the receiver cherishes it all the more, treats it with honor and pride, and takes good care of it.

Reflecting on the above, and remembering that the Giver of the Torah is G-d Himself, and the Torah and *Mitzvot* [commandments] are the most precious gift which G-d gave us to keep as our Torah, and that we received it out of pure love, without effort on our part – should surely make every one of us most appreciative and grateful, and absolutely determined to cherish and honor it.

As to how we have to honor the Torah – this is clearly indicated in the Torah itself: by conducting our everyday lives in full accord with the spirit and letter of the Torah, with the accent on the actual fulfillment of its *Mitzvot*, for the essential thing is the actual deed.

May the inspiration of *Z'man Mattan Toraseinu* permeate every aspect of your daily life in an ever-growing measure.

Master come?" and he answered: "By this you shall know: In the time when your teaching will become public and revealed in the world, and your well-springs will burst forth to the farthest extremes, that which I have taught you and you have comprehended, and they also shall be able to perform unifications and elevations as you, and then all of the kelipot will cease to exist, and there shall be a time of good will and salvation."

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Shavuot is "the season of the giving of our Torah," the time when G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people. On Shavuot, the Chabad Rebbes would bless the congregation to "receive the Torah with happiness and inner feeling."

This blessing intimates that not only does Shavuot commemorate when we were given the Torah, but also the time when we accept and "receive" the Torah.

The Rebbe explained that our personal experiences on Shavuot should reflect both of these qualities: giving and receiving the Torah.

It was during this same talk that the Rebbe urged every Jewish man, woman and child to become a teacher of Torah. The Rebbe explained that the matter was of utmost urgency and that everyone should become a teacher of at least ten other people.

The following Shabbat, and the Shabbat after that, the Rebbe reiterated his expectation that everyone involve him/herself in this campaign which was a matter of immediate necessity.

The Rebbe also explained that not only would the people being taught benefit from the Torah study, but that the teacher would benefit greatly as well.

The Rebbe explained the reason for this particular call to action: the need to reach out and involve others in study groups is particularly pressing in the present age. There are hundreds of thousands of Jewish men, women and children who lack knowledge of the elemental aspects of Torah and mitzvot. These are the last moments before the coming of Moshiach, and to prepare for his coming it is necessary to extend the knowledge of Torah, both Torah law and the inner dimensions of Torah, to as many individuals as possible...

Our Sages have assured us that an increase in Torah study will bring about increased blessings in all matters. May this also lead to the ultimate blessing, the advent of the age when, "A person shall no longer teach his colleague... because they will all know Me," with the coming of Moshiach and the ultimate and complete redemption. May it be in the immediate future.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה'י מושקה

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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Today Is...

8 Sivan

The physical universe is a mixture. It is a meeting-place where G-d meets together (as it were) with man, the select of all creatures; yet it is also *ginat egoz*,¹ "a garden of nuts," the word *egoz* having the numerical equivalent of *cheit*, "sin." G-d gives man the capacity to choose freely, that man may choose for himself a path in life.

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In a letter of the Baal Shem Tov to his brother-in-law Rabbi Gershon Kitover, he described a heavenly visit and wrote: "I asked Moshiah: 'When will the