

# L'Chaim

1625

13 Sivan, 5780

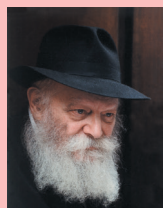
May/June 5, 2020

The Weekly Publication  
for Every Jewish Person

נוסד תור ימי השלושים

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's Torah portion, *Nasso*, is the longest portion with 176 verses. It is always read right before or right after the holiday of Shavuot. This is a clear indication that there must be something of great importance to be learned from here that is central to our keeping of the Torah.

*Nasso* starts with the tribe of Levi's responsibilities of transporting the *Mishkan* (Sanctuary). This is followed by the Priestly blessing. Finally, it ends with the offerings brought by each of the Israelite tribal princes for the *Mishkan*'s inauguration. This adds to the central importance of the message to each tribe and each classification, Kohen (priest), Levi and Israel, with regards to our service of G-d, symbolized by the *Mishkan*.

What central lessons can be learned from these three sections, Levi's responsibilities, Kohen's blessing and Israel's inaugural offerings?

The service of the Levi was manual labor, moving and hauling parts of the *Mishkan*. This teaches us that even physical work can be holy and that we must serve G-d not only with Torah and *mitzvot* (commandments) but also our physical day to day actions.

The Kohen, with love, blesses all the Jewish people with blessings of physical abundance, physical grace and physical peace. The Kohen, is made to recognize that G-d loves and values every Jew, in every place and at every time and wants him to have material abundance, etc. So too, we must recognize the value of every Jew and seek to have them included in G-d's service. We must find pleasure in each others good fortune and seek to help those who haven't found their good fortune yet.

It seems that all the princes brought the same offering, but if one is to delve deeper into the symbolism of each prince's offering, you will find, that what looked the same was unique in meaning and therefore, truly different. When we do a *mitzva*, it might seem that it is the same as the next guy's *mitzva*, we both put on Tefilin, we both light Shabbat candles. In truth, we are all different and though we are doing the same action, the *mitzvot* we do couldn't be more unique. No one can do your *mitzva*. This is why each offering had to be separately written, though they look alike, they are not.

So you see, your physical action is holy, your physical abundance is cherished and your *mitzva* are unique, the same but different. We can't do without you.

The Jewish people and the Torah are one. We are the ones who live it. We are living Torahs and everything we do can be holy and special.

*Adapted by Rabbi Yitzchak Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, yitzchurwitz.blogspot.com. Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.*

## Perceptions and Motivation

Your eighty-something year-old aunt saves wrapping paper, glass jars, and plastic shopping bags. She reuses them, as well as the cotton that comes stuffed into the top of medicine and vitamin bottles. She never has more than one light on in the house, and she is known to mumble something like "We don't need to make the electric company rich." Everyone in the family rolls their eyes. The best of you call her "thrifty," others call her "frugal," and a few shake their heads about "depression mentality" even though the depression was over more than half a century ago.

Your next-door neighbor cares about the environment. She was inspired time spent in Switzerland, the most eco-friendly country in the world. While she doesn't expend effort lobbying for legislation changes in air quality and climate protection at home, she does what she can, and tries to encourage those in her circle of influence to do the same.

She travels almost exclusively on public transportation, saves junk mail to use as scrap paper, and when she's washing her dishes (of course, she doesn't use throwaway) she first soaps all of the dishes and then turns on the faucet and rinses them so as to conserve water. She reuses wrapping paper, glass jars, and plastic shopping bags, as well as the cotton that comes stuffed into the top of medicine and vitamin bottles.

You marvel at your neighbor's devotion to the environment and resolve to emulate some of her earth-friendly behavior.

Is there a difference between the actions of your aunt and that of your

neighbor? Not really. What separates them is not their actions but why they're doing what they're doing. Or perhaps the difference is in how you perceive or react to their motivation?!

A similar scenario can be used to illustrate attitudes to the observance of commandments (or our attitudes towards those who observe them).

One person views Torah and *mitzvot* (commandments) as restrictive. "How can you limit yourself by doing a, b or c (or not doing x, y, or z)?" he asks. "Shabbat, for example," he continues. "You can't watch t.v., you can't talk on the telephone, you can't surf the net."

But another person perceives Shabbat differently. "Prohibitive?" he responds. "On Shabbat I have permission to do so many things! I can actually relax and enjoy a meal without being disturbed by the telephone. I have permission to read a book without caring if my stocks went up or down. My fingers don't itch and twitch to touch my phone or computer this one day a week. What a pleasure!"

A *Midrash* describes a bird complaining to G-d that she was created with cumbersome and weighty wings. How can she possibly get anywhere wobbling along on two tiny feet while balancing her feathered appendages? G-d explains to her how she can use the wings to gracefully and swiftly soar to the highest heights and furthest distances.

*Mitzvot* and Torah study are like wings. With the right attitude, we can use them to carry us to unimaginable heights and distances.

# SLICE OF LIFE

## Jewish Hour



The Shenkman Family

*The idea of releasing public school students for devotional religious study off school premises in the United States was first discussed in 1905. The first "Released Time" program took place in 1914. The program allows children to leave public school early one day a week for religious instruction. The Jewish Released Time program was established in 1940 by the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe and is now in its 81st year. It is under the auspices of NCFJE (National Committee for the Furtherance of Jewish Education).*

*The following is an interview with Steven Shenkman who himself attended and whose children attended Released Time-Jewish Hour:*

### Where is your family from?

I grew up here, in Brighton Beach (Brooklyn, New York). My Dad is from the States as well. My mom was a holocaust survivor.

### How far back does your family's connection to Release Time go?

Well, Actually, I myself was a student in the program. This goes back to the early 70s. Each week, I was brought to the F.R.E.E (Friends of Refugees of Eastern Europe) of Brighton Beach. Later, I had my Bar Mitzvah at Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson's *shul*, I remember him well. His son, Dovid, is now the rabbi of Young Israel

of Kings Bay where we now call home.

### Is there anything that really stands out from your time spent in R.T?

Many things do. First, I remember it being a place where Judaism was fun and alive. I also remember that at that time, many families were starting to immigrate from behind the "iron curtain." Released Time made it their priority to make sure that those kids would get a Jewish education. They knew they were Jewish, but not more than that. These were my classmates. It was a really memorable experience.

### How many of your own children went to R.T?

My twins, a boy and a girl, and my younger son. They loved it! Here's the thing; I went to R.T but that was it. I remained in public school and moved to public High School. I always knew that I wanted my kids to get something that I never had. Somehow I knew they would end up with a more formal Jewish education.

### Was it a simple decision to transfer them to Yeshivah?

Again, I always knew it was the right thing but I kept pushing it off. It was really thanks to Rabbis Shimon Simpson and Mendy Begun who followed up with me throughout the years. They were my children's teachers. They were the ones who really encouraged me to do it. I still keep up with them. I actually just visited Shimon in California.

### Why would you say the hour of R.T each week was not enough for your children?

I like to think of the hour as the doorway to a full day program. By the time they get the kids from their Public School there is only 45 minutes left. It's a great start but our kids need more, a lot more! They were all in Released Time from kindergarten through 4th grade. They now attend Mazel Day School in Manhattan Beach.

Besides for the significant advancement in Jewish Education, what else would you say makes you happy about Yeshivah.

More important than me being happy, the kids are happy! At first they were very reluctant but after a few months they knew it was the right

place for them. First off, there is this real sense of comradery in Yeshivah, one that they did not have in public school. It's a feeling that "we all belong together." One thing that is clear: In yeshivah the kids are not just learning academic subjects, they are also learning about life! They learn Jewish values and good character traits and they bring it all home.

*And what's happening with "Jewish Home" during these unusual times? Here are some*



*texts that Rabbi Sadya Engle, New York City coordinator, received recently:*

Thank you so much. She is asking for more Jewish studies. I got the alphabet today but I don't remember all the letters. She enforces Shabbat every Friday. I am so amazed thank you so much.

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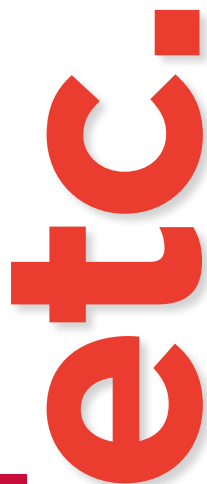
Good morning, Can you please talk to Adir. He is cursing all the time and doesn't listen. He is being disrespectful to his siblings and us. He likes your program and I told him that I will let you know about his behavior so you can talk to him. Thank you and have a great day, Sarit

*A few minutes later:* FYI, I told Adir that I texted you. As soon as he saw that he started to be kind.

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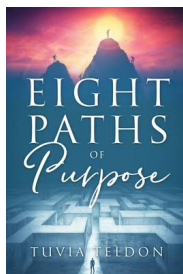
Thank you for the great work you and the organization do for the Jewish nation. I remember knowing nothing and this was the first introduction into Judaism.

*To find out more about Release Time/Jewish Hour call Rabbi Sadya Engel at 718.735.0215 or email [info.jewishhour.org](mailto:info.jewishhour.org) or visit [www.jewishhour.org](http://www.jewishhour.org)*



## Eight Paths of Purpose

The topic of Purpose is gaining popularity, but it remains somewhat of a mystery. *Eight Paths of Purpose* by Rabbi Tuvia Teldon is an introduction to this exciting topic. It explores the 'operating system' that guides, and drives, a sense of purpose. Rabbi Teldon delves into the topic from a fresh perspective and offers new and thought-provoking ideas. Whatever your nationality, religion, belief system, age or political leanings may be, the tools in this book will help you fulfill your purpose to a greater degree. The book does not define your individual purpose; it simply provides the general overview of how purpose 'thinks'. It then provides eight solid paths to help you flourish and stay focused – even when you face serious challenges in life.



## WHO'S WHO

**Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman** (1196-1270), known as Nachmanides, was the foremost Jewish legal expert of his time. He was from Gerona, Spain, and was both a physician and a great Torah scholar. His biblical commentaries are the first ones to incorporate the mystical teachings of kabbalah. He was well-known for his aggressive refutations of Christianity. He declared that it is a mitzva (commandment) to take possession of the Holy Land and to live in it. He fulfilled this commandment, moving to the Holy Land during the Crusades after he was expelled from Spain.





# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence  
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

7th of Nissan, 5740 [1980]

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter in which you write on various aspects of Torah and Yiddishkeit [Judaism] etc., requesting a reply.

No doubt you understand that these are topics that can hardly be discussed adequately in a letter. Besides, there is no need for it, inasmuch as there is a wealth of articles and books in which all aspects of Yiddishkeit have been discussed, and you can also discuss them personally with knowledgeable people in your community, especially as you mention several by name.

However, inasmuch as you have written to me, I will discuss very briefly several pertinent points.

There are matters over which a human being has control and can change and not merely a human being, but also in the so-called animal kingdom, certain species can adapt themselves to changing conditions in terms of habitat, diet, etc. But insofar as one's essence is concerned, this is not something that is left to a person's choice. By way of a well known analogy, our Sages cite the example of a fish which, when taken out of its vital element, the water, will for a time feel very distressed and could not survive. Yet there are occasions when some fishes jump out of the water and are trapped on the shore. Unless they can in some way get back to their own element, their fate is inevitable.

The Torah and *mitzvos* [commandments] and Yiddishkeit in general, are for a Jew what water is to a fish. There have always been Jews, individuals or groups, who attempted to jump out of their element and seek other pastures. Historically, this resulted in one of two ways: either they returned to the fold or were eventually lost to the Jewish people. The only difference is that insofar as a fish is concerned, it can be out of its element for a relatively short period of time, but in the case of Jews who deviate from authentic Judaism, G-d gives them a longer

opportunity to return, and this may sometimes take years. If one will take the trouble to reflect on our Jewish history, which is more than three thousand years old, it will be seen that there have been deviating movements ever since the Golden Calf worshippers right after the Torah was given at Sinai but, as mentioned, the results have always been the same, either-or: either they did teshuva or were completely lost through assimilation and the like.

Noting in your letter that you are about to graduate from college and surely have some acquaintance with the scientific method, I trust it is unnecessary to explain to you that in every branch of true science, conclusions are made on the basis of actual experience and facts, even if the facts in themselves are not understood fully. The true scientist will accept the facts and will try to understand them, but it would be both illogical and unscientific to ignore the facts only because they are not fully understood.

To summarize the above, at any rate briefly: while a Jew has the choice of being one hundred percent observant or less, since the Creator has given every human being free choice of conduct, such a decision is limited only to the actual conduct, but the inevitable results are clear, inasmuch as no Jew can change his essence.

As for the problem of one's upbringing or environment, etc., there is surely no need to explain to you that every grown-up and mature person can become master of his conduct and way of life regardless of how these were in the past. Certainly one's upbringing and environment can make it easier or more difficult to carry out the proper decision, but once one has decided to make the necessary change, "there is nothing that stands in the way of the will," as our Torah, *Toras Emes* [the Torah of Truth], assures us. Moreover, since G-d expects every Jew to live up fully to the Will of G-d, He certainly provides the necessary capacities to do so, so that in the final analysis it is a matter of one's own personal will and determination.

I trust that the above lines, though scanty in terms of the subject matter, will suffice to provide food for thought, to help you reflect deeply on your personal problems and make the proper decision, even if this may mean giving up certain material conveniences and pleasures. But this is a small price to pay for the great and everlasting reward of fulfillment as a Jew, with the consequent satisfaction and peace of mind....

With blessing,

(Ethics 1:17) This teaching according to *Talmud* (*Yevamot 63b*) hints to the Redemption, as it says, that Moshiach won't arrive until there are no more souls in the "guf." While "guf" in its simplest sense, as mentioned before, means "body" here it is referring to the heavenly abode of the souls until they down into bodies in this world.

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Rabban Gamliel's son, Shimon, would say: "All my life I have been raised among the wise, and I have found nothing better for the body ("guf" in Hebrew) than silence..."

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

*There is a story I would like to share with you about the Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan:*

*At midnight, when all were asleep, the Chofetz Chaim would enter his study, close the door and stand there in total darkness. The Chofetz Chaim would then commence to pour out his heart to G-d. He began by praising G-d for His kindness, detailing everything that had happened during the day. When he finished his own personal account, the Chofetz Chaim began speaking about the merits of the entire Jewish people.*

*At this point the Chofetz Chaim's style of speech, as well as his tone, changed drastically. Instead of thanking and pleading, he began demanding. The Chofetz Chaim would declare that G-d owes the Jewish nation a full accounting.*

*He would ask, "G-d, what have You given us? You gave us a great and Holy Torah, but it was sealed and closed. What have we done in return?"*

*We opened the Torah, gave you the Prophets, the sages of the Talmud, the Torah geniuses; we tied crowns to the Oral Torah. But alas, what have we received in return for this? We have received misfortune, persecutions, and murder. We were not prepared for this. Throughout the lands where we were dispersed and exiled, we brought our Torah with us, carrying it, saving it from our enemies, and we carry it still to this very day! It is firmly within our grasp."*

*This was how the Chofetz Chaim demanded the accounting. Then, he would proceed with the demand for payment of the debt.*

*"How much longer must we wait? Until when? We are totally broken. G-d, consider and ponder; is the heart of one Jew whole?"*

*This is what the Chofetz Chaim would do every single night. When the dawn came, he would return to his studies, eagerly awaiting Moshiach's arrival and confident that the debt owed would be paid.*

*Let us demand that which is due the Jewish people—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.



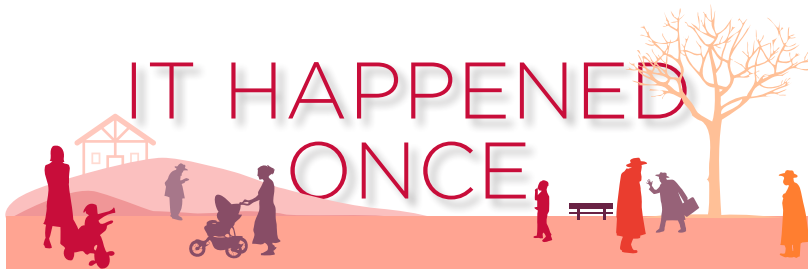
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As he approached Chernobyl the Chasid was in a happy mood. And why not? Silently he counted his blessings: a loving wife and children, a flourishing business, and soon he would be in the presence of his holy Rebbe, the famous Rabbi Mordechai of Chernobyl.

With these thoughts in mind he was enjoying the scenery when suddenly, he spotted a poor Jew trudging along with a bundle on his shoulders. Stopping the carriage he offered the traveler a lift, which was gratefully accepted.

For the first few miles both men were silent. But after a few minutes the poor Jew turned to the Chasid and asked him where he was headed. "To Chernobyl," the man replied, "to my holy Rebbe."

"Aha!" the traveler said with a smile. "So you're going to Mottele."

The Chasid was immediately offended. How dare this shabby-looking fellow refer to his holy Rebbe in such a familiar manner, as if they were intimates! On second thought, he decided to remain quiet.

"Are you one of Mottele's Chasidim?" the stranger persisted. "Yes," the man replied curtly in an attempt to end the conversation. "What *chutza!*" the Chasid thought to himself. Under other circumstances he would have put this impudent clod in his place, but he had no wish to ruin the journey further.

But the stranger was clearly in the mood to talk. "How do I know that you're really a Chasid?" he inquired. The Chasid was surprised by the question and said nothing. "A man is measured by his deeds, and especially by his pocket," the stranger continued. "I'll tell you what – if you will pay me the 20 gold coins your Rebbe owes me, I will believe that you are a Chasid."

The Chasid was shocked. What kind of nonsense was this? "If you can prove to me that my Rebbe owes you the money I will gladly pay his debt," he blurted out. The stranger smiled and fished around in his knapsack until he found a piece of paper: a promissory note for 20 gold coins, signed by the tzadik of Chernobyl. The Chasid examined it carefully. Yes, it really did appear to be the Rebbe's signature, and try as he might he couldn't find any evidence of forgery. Nodding his head, he folded the note several times and placed it in his snuffbox. He then took out his moneybag, counted out exactly 20 gold coins and pressed them into the stranger's hand.

The rest of the journey was conducted in silence. On the outskirts of Chernobyl they reached a crossroads and the stranger asked to be let off. Before he climbed down from the carriage, he thanked the Chasid for his kindness and blessed him with success.

The Chasid watched the stranger walk off into the distance. Within minutes the man and his bundle were no bigger than a tiny dot that eventually disappeared over the horizon.

The Chasid took out the promissory note and inspected it even more closely, but again could find no fault with it. By that time, however, he realized that he had arrived in Chernobyl. With more important things to attend to he slipped the note back into his snuffbox and promptly forgot about it.

It was a busy Friday when he arrived, and Chernobyl was filled with hundreds of other Jews who had come to bask in the Rebbe's presence. Shabbat was spent in a state of spiritual elevation. To the Chasid, the opportunity to pray with the Rebbe and hear his words of Torah was nothing less than a foretaste of the Garden Eden.

When Shabbat was over the Chasid requested a private audience with the Rebbe. Oddly, the first thing the Rebbe asked him was whether he had any snuff with him. "Certainly," the Chasid replied, immediately proffering his snuffbox. As he opened it he saw the note he had forgotten about, and after a moment's hesitation handed it over to the Rebbe, who had noticed him pause.

"How did this come into your hands?" the Rebbe asked him. The Chasid related the whole unlikely story of the stranger who had claimed that the Rebbe owed him money, and was shocked when the Rebbe verified it as true. "As Divine Providence has led you two to meet, I can reveal to you that that stranger is one of the 36 hidden tzadikim in every generation in whose merit the world exists," he explained, adding that he had taken it upon himself to uphold him financially.

An involuntary shiver passed through the Chasid's body. A hidden tzadik had traveled in his carriage – and he hadn't known! He had even mistaken him for an impudent clod...

Noting his distress, the Rebbe eased his mind. "Don't worry, you've done nothing wrong," he

reassured him. "If you were chosen to share in the mitzva of supporting a hidden tzadik, there is no doubt that it is a good sign."

From that day on, each year during his annual visit the Chasid gave the Rebbe 20 gold coins for the hidden tzadikim. And for the rest of his life he hoped to meet stranger again, but it never happened.



### The L-rd bless thee and keep thee (Num. 6:24)

The Priestly blessing is said in the singular because it is primarily the blessing of unity that the Jews need. (*O'lot Efraim*)

### The princes of Israel brought their offerings, the heads of their fathers' houses... they brought their offerings before the L-rd (Num. 7:23)

Twelve times the Torah repeats this phrase, detailing the identical offerings brought by each of the princes of the twelve tribes. Why the repetition? These offerings were the same only externally; in actuality, each prince brought his offering in a different manner, a manner corresponding to the tribe's spiritual source in Heaven. (*Likutei Torah*)

### And they shall confess their sin which they have committed (Num. 5:7)

Why is the commandment to confess one's sin – the first step on the path to repentance – mentioned here, where the Torah speaks about robbery? Because any sin a person may commit has an element of robbery in it. G-d gives a person life, in order that he use it to perform His will. If one takes these gifts and uses them to defy G-d, he is misusing and "stealing" the property of his Creator. (*Chidushei HaRim*)

### May G-d cause His face to shine upon you (Num. 6:22)

G-d's "face" symbolizes His love, good will and closeness to us. "May G-d cause His face to shine upon you" means that the innermost part of G-d's Divine Will should shine upon and illuminate the Jewish people and that which has its source in holiness. Of course, everything in this world comes from G-d, and even things that are not holy derive their life-force from G-d too, but this is an inferior and external sustenance. To what can it be likened? A king makes an elaborate party and invites all his highest ministers and officials to partake of the meal. Naturally, his servants and maids, and even the dogs, will eventually benefit from the leftovers, but this was not the king's intent when he made the feast. The dignitaries are influenced by the king's "innermost" will, and the servants, maids and animals receive only the "external" benefits. (*Kuntres U'Maayan*)



### 8:06 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area  
13 Sivan/June 5  
Torah Portion Nasso  
Ethics Ch 1  
Shabbat ends 9:14 pm

Dedicated in Memory  
of a dear friend of the  
Lubavitch Youth Organization  
Mr. Leon Charney obm