

Living Jewish



Tell your Children

I Will Always Be With You

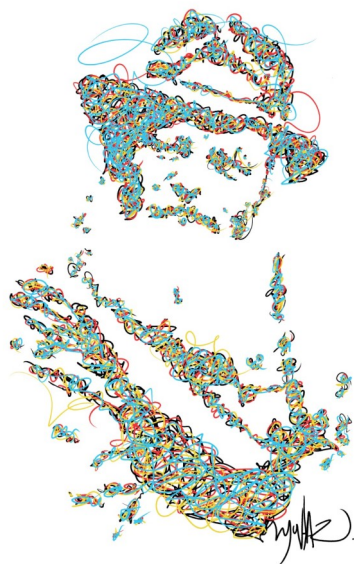
In honor of the birthday of the Lubavitcher Rebbe on the 11th of Nissan, we present the following story:

A little over three years ago, arriving early to shul one Friday night, I noticed a young man standing at the back of the shul quietly and demurely, looking a little bewildered and out of place. I walked up to him and asked him if he had a place to eat for Shabbos. He spoke neither Hebrew nor English but I managed to communicate with him in broken French. He said he would love to join me and so, after davening, we walked home together and spent a pleasant Friday night and Shabbos lunch together with my family.

The guest, who we will call David, did not tell us too much about himself except that I gathered that he was a fairly new baal teshuva who had studied for a short while at the Lubavitcher yeshiva of Brunoir on the outskirts of Paris, but was unable to cope with its high level of learning. So he came to Israel to study at the French speaking yeshiva in Ramot where I live. He was older than all of the other boys and the only Lubavitcher. We invited him a few times and told him he would always be welcome. Then he disappeared into the ether.

About a year later, one Friday night I was sitting in my place davening when somebody blocked my light and stood in front of me. It was David. With a gigantic grin on his face and obviously in a really joyous and happy state of mind he said, "well you said I could come whenever I want, so here I am." We hugged and back he came to eat with us and this time we heard the whole long story of his life and how, amazingly, against all odds, he had become a baal teshuva.

He told us he came from the town of Bordeaux in France. He had been studying at the university, and was one of the only two Jews in the whole institute. His grandfather had been an officer in the Nazi (yemach shemo) army and had escaped justice by running away to South America. The officer's son, David's father, went to France to seek his fortune. He remained a rabid anti-Semite throughout his life. After a lightening



Painting by Shmuel Halimi, Munbaz.com

courtship he married David's mother, a Jewess, and after she gave birth he disappeared never to be seen again. David's mother was vehemently anti-religious and warned him that if he were to become involved in Judaism in any shape or form she would immediately disown him. That was how David was raised. Nevertheless he developed a deep desire to find out about Judaism, learning and reading up as best as he could, never daring to tell his mother. Furthermore, he befriended a young Lubavitcher family living not far from his university and they encouraged him in his quest.

One night he fell asleep and had a dream: He was standing in front of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's desk and the Rebbe picked up a letter from a pile in front of him and read out loud, "we have in our town, a young man named David who is searching for meaning in life and we have befriended him. However, there is no Chabad shaliach in this section of Bordeaux who could help him. Would the Rebbe please send a shaliach to help him become a properly committed Jew." The Rebbe put the letter down and, addressing David, said "no, I will not send a shaliach. I will take responsibility myself to bring this young man to Judaism."

He told me to leave university and go to yeshiva and that he would be with me wherever I went; there was nothing to be frightened or concerned about.

After hearing this story I asked him what happened next. He told me what I knew; that he had been to Brunoir and had then come to Eretz Yisrael. He went on to relate that one fine summer's day, his yeshiva went to the Kever of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai in Meron. Whilst he was there somebody pointed out to him a book that he was not familiar with, 'Igrot Kodesh (letters) of the Lubavitcher Rebbe,' and suggested that he write to the Rebbe. He wrote a letter asking the Rebbe for help and guidance in his studies and placed the letter randomly into the book. He nearly passed out when upon opening the book to where he had placed his letter, he read the words, "why are you concerned? I told you that I have taken responsibility for you. I will be with you in all your endeavors. Just concentrate on learning Torah." That is exactly what David did from then on.

As mentioned above, there was only one other Jew in the university of Bordeaux, a medical student who David had courted. After a couple years, David returned to Bordeaux to renew this courtship. The girl had become religious as well, despite having a background as far away from Judaism as David's was. She too had a non-Jewish father who had come to live in France; he had come from Libya. And just like David's, her mother was fiercely against Judaism. The young couple had agreed to marry and the reason why David was back in Jerusalem was to get married on the day after that Shabbos.

continued on page 3

Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	6:25	7:38
Tel Aviv	6:42	7:40
Haifa	6:35	7:40
Beer Sheva	6:42	7:39
New York	7:05	8:06

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Everyone is Essential

This week's Torah reading, Tzav, begins with the command to remove the ashes from the altar. At night, the limbs of the sacrifices would be offered on the altar and in the morning, the priests would take the ashes from the altar and bring them to a special place outside Jerusalem.

There were priests chosen to offer animal sacrifices and others chosen to bring the incense offering. And there were still others who were given the task of cleaning the ashes from the altar.

Happy to Serve our Creator

Our Sages emphasize that this was a lesser service, so much so that it could not be performed while wearing the ordinary priestly garments, but instead required special, less dignified robes.

Nevertheless, those priests also performed their jobs eagerly. They were serving G-d in the Temple. It did not matter how they were serving Him. As long as they were serving Him, they were happy.

Outside of the Temple, G-d's presence is not overtly revealed. Thus we do not have the same inspiration to carry out His service. But that is only because we are unaware. From His perspective, our service is cherished whether we are aware of the

powerful spiritual effects it produces or not.

And this is so regardless of what service we are asked to perform. R. Sholom Dovber (the Rebbe Rashab) would say: "Even if G-d had commanded us to chop wood — i.e., an activity that appears to have no spiritual content — we would do so happily."

I Place G-d Before Me

The Baal Shem Tov communicated this concept in his interpretation of the verse in Psalms: "I placed - שויתי - G-d before me at all times." שוה - the root of the word שויתי - also means "equal". When G-d is before me at all times, everything is equal for me. There is no difference which path of service I'm given, whether the most sophisticated or the simplest. Every positive act is a means of connecting to Him. Every positive act brings us one bit closer to the coming of *Mashiach*.

Similar concepts apply with regard to the Jewish people. There is no Jew who is better than any other. Each person was created by G-d with different potentials and challenges. A person with one set of gifts should not look down on a person with lesser potentials.

On the contrary, the fact that the other person is able to continue in his Divine ser-

vice despite the fact that he has lesser potentials should make him worthy of respect and honor.

Preparing the World for Moshiach

G-d desires all these different modes of service. For His intent is that every element of this world — from the top to the bottom of the spectrum — should be elevated.

For this reason, when *Mashiach* comes, no Jew will be left behind. Bringing the world to its desired state depends on each person's individual contribution.

Each one has a certain dimension that only he can add. Through that contribution, he will elevate that portion of the world that was designated for him.

As each individual prepares his personal corner for the Redemption, the larger picture comes into focus. We appreciate how our missions interlock, for the world is greater than any one of us and we begin to understand how the world as a whole is G-d's dwelling.

Adapted from the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Reprinted from Keeping In Touch, Vol. 2, Sichos in English. From our Sages & Moshiach Now! reprinted from www.LchaimWeekly.org – LYO / NYC

From our Sages

This is the law...and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings (Lev. 7:37)

The Rabbi of Lublin used to say: It is far better to have an imperfect peace than a perfect controversy. It is preferable to live in peace with one's neighbor, even if that peace is only superficial and not with a full heart, than to engage in controversy, however well intended.

A perpetual fire shall be burning on the altar, it shall not go out (Lev. 6:6)

A Jew must be careful to preserve the spark of his attachment to G-d throughout the day, thus ensuring that the love he feels for the Creator can be easily rekindled at any time. If, however, the spark is allowed to cool off, the "fire" must be relit whenever he wishes to pray or study Torah.

(The Baal Shem Tov)

A fire shall continually be kept burning upon the altar; it shall not go out. (6:6)

A person who studies Torah with a friend

awakens an eternal G-dly fire. "It shall not go out" - this merit will stay with him forever.

(HaYom Yom)

And here, the child asks (from the Haggada)

Said Rabbi Aaron of Karlin, in the name of his father, Rabbi Asher of Stolin: "Here," on the night of the seder, every Jewish child may request of his Father in Heaven anything he wishes, and he will receive extra strength and vitality for all of his needs.

(Beit Aharon)

For not only one stood against us to destroy us (from the Haggada)

Why have our enemies sought to destroy us? Because we were "not only one." Lack of unity among the Jewish people is the primary cause of all our troubles.

(Sefat Emet)

Reciting the Haggadah

On the first night of Pesach, 5723, after visiting the *yeshiva* dining room and giving his blessing before the *seder*, the Rebbe returned to 770 to conduct his *seder* upstairs in the Previous Rebbe's apartment.

As the Rebbe walked in, he asked a few *yungerleit* (young men) who were standing in the lobby if they knew the tune to which the Previous Rebbe would chant the *Haggada*. They didn't.

The Rebbe said, "They say that Yoel Kahn catches a tune well...", but Reb Yoel also did not know it. The Rebbe turned to Reb Avremel Shemtov, but he also could not be of help.

The Rebbe explained that the reason it is not clear to him, is because he also heard the *Haggada* from his father.

Reb Yankel Katz, who would traditionally lead the *Haggada* recitation at the Rebbe's *seder*, said, "Anyways, I don't want to spend a long time on the *Haggada*."

The Rebbe replied, "But I do..."

reprinted from Merkaz Anash, on-line at TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com

Chassidus page

Leaving Egypt

The Mishna teaches that in each generation a person must see himself as if he personally left Mitzrayim (Egypt). In Tanya, the Alter Rebbe adds that the obligation is not only in every generation, but each and every day! Chassidus explains there is more to going out of Mitzrayim than just leaving the actual confines of the land of Egypt; the word, Mitzrayim, can also mean, boundaries and limitations.

So what is leaving our personal Mitzrayim? The Previous Rebbe explains: A person sets up his life by planning and scheduling everything according to his needs. First and foremost, a person must go out of Mitzrayim. That is, regardless of his plans and schedules, he must add a set time to study Torah every day, and properly devote himself to davening.

After going out of Mitzrayim there is the splitting of the sea. Once a person starts on the path of the service of going out of Mitzrayim, he will immediately encounter various disturbances along the way. For that, one will need Hashem's help, much like the splitting of the sea was performed by Hashem Himself. But in order to receive the Heavenly assistance, one first needs to "jump into the sea"—the approach of self-sacrifice. Then, Hashem will turn the "sea" into "dry land," removing all the obstacles along the way.

The Rebbe teaches, "the only important thing is to serve Hashem and do what He wants without any limitations whatsoever." Practically this means: "Every person must have his own personal geulah; going beyond his limitations and constraints.

One must give tzedakah without limitations. One must daven properly; even if he thinks that his busy schedule and business life doesn't allow him to daven with a minyan and have adequate kavana (intent), he should pay no heed to these thoughts. The same is true with setting times for Torah study, especially on Shabbos. One must study Torah in a manner that transcends all limitations.

In Egypt the Yidden suffered backbreaking labor. The Gemara interprets this as "women's tasks were assigned to men and men's tasks to women." This was especially difficult, for even if the tasks were not so hard, the workers were not accustomed to such work. In our time as well, to leave this galus, we don't necessarily need to do the biggest and most difficult tasks. We need to break ourselves by doing those things that we are not accustomed to—changing our usual habits.

It's about pushing to go the extra mile. As the Alter Rebbe quotes in Tanya, when one hired a donkey driver for ten parsas, he paid one zuz; but to go eleven parsas the rate was two zuz. Because the extra parsas made the trip longer than the usual distance, it cost the rider double, even if it wasn't double the distance.

In our generation, we only need to complete the small tasks in order to bring Moshiach. Everything else was accomplished by our predecessors. We need to do things small but significant, small but difficult for our nature. With that we will merit the geulah from today's Mitzrayim.

Adapted and reprinted from Derher

Don't Mention That Word

After maariv on the first night of Pesach, the Rebbe would visit various Pesach seders. At first only the yeshiva students were visited, but as the years passed, other institutions were added. The visit to Machon Chana (a seminary for young women that hadn't received a religious education) in 5739 was truly a lesson for everyone. As the Rebbe went from floor to floor and room to room he attempted to open one door which proved to be locked. Mrs. Ganzburg, the dorm mother, explained, "[It's closed because] there is chometz inside." The Rebbe immediately replied, "It is not appropriate to mention that word on Pesach." He then gave the Ganzburgs a special blessing.

Reprinted from Derher

I Will Always Be With You

cont. from page one: He told me that there was not a single guest from either side of the family who would be attending the wedding, apart from his mother. She had become reconciled with David's return to Judaism and had even begun to keep mitzvot herself. Sadly, the bride's mother refused to go to the wedding. My local Chabad shul in Ramot arranged an impromptu ofruf for David. The French yeshiva sent students to sing and dance at the wedding, and then sent them again to liven up all of the sheva berachot.

The end of the story is even more astonishing. Whilst in Bordeaux David went to visit his Lubavitcher friends and told them about his dream and the letter that the Rebbe had read to him and his comments. The wife went pale and barely managed to articulate, "on what date was your dream?" David told her and she promptly fainted. When she had recovered somewhat she told him that the letter the Rebbe had read out to him was the very same letter that she had written asking the Rebbe to help him, and she had placed it into Igrot Kodesh on the morning immediately preceding his dream.

By Rabbi Yaakov Cass. Rabbi Cass is a Lubavitcher chossid living in Jerusalem. Until recently he was a senior official in the Israel Ministry of Health.

Moshiach Now

A Single All-Encompassing Intent

"All the days of your life" as including the Era of Moshiach. (Hagada)

Le'havi translated as "including" literally means "to bring." Thus, this Talmudic passage, quoted in the Hagada, can be interpreted as a directive: All the days of your life should be permeated by a single intention: to bring about the coming of the Era of Moshiach.

(The Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Human Interest

Mayanot On-Line

Mayanot Yeshiva in Jerusalem has not allowed coronavirus lockdown to stop the learning of Torah, moving its classes online for students.

Thanks to modern technology the post-high school program director Rabbi Shneur Broh will continue to deliver classes to his students using Zoom remote video conferencing program, so that they will be able to login anywhere in the world, for several hours a day and take part in classes on Halacha – Jewish law, Chassidut, and Gemara.

As Rabbi Kasriel Shemtov, the Executive Director explained, “we might not be here together in Jerusalem physi-



cally attached, but the Torah has been the connecting force for Jews over the centuries. It will continue to bind us from around the globe, through online Torah classes.”

Other Mayanot Rabbis including Rabbi Meir Levinger, Rabbi Yitzchok Kaufmann, Rabbi Kasriel Shemtov, and Rabbi Shlomo Gestetner will be offering classes online as well. At the Mayanot Women's Program, Torah classes will be led by Adi Silverman and Rivka Marga Gestetner.

Rabbi Shlomo Gestetner, Dean of Mayanot added, “...corona-virus has taught us how truly interconnected the world is. One clear lesson is that we must utilize the tools we have at our disposal with online platforms to unify the world and bring more light, Torah and G-dliness to all.”

Adapted and reprinted from COLlive.com

Cooking Tip of the Week

How do you make food tasty with no spices throughout Chol HaMo-ed Pesach? Marinate meat (or chicken) in a mixture of wine and fresh squeezed citrus juice, then grill or bake. Ideally marinate it overnight.

*Alizah Hochstead,
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Halacha Corner – The Search for Chametz

Bedikas chametz (the search for chametz) is conducted after Ma'ariv. Various options are presented in *Shulchan Aruch*, but the accepted practice is to conduct the search immediately after Ma'ariv. (See also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 17, p. 434.) For this reason, Ma'ariv must be recited in its due time and not delayed. As the Alter Rebbe explains, “Since Chazal established a time [for *bedikas chametz*], one who fails to conduct his search at that time is not merely considered slothful [in fulfilling his duties], but he is called a transgressor, for he has transgressed an enactment of Chazal” (*Shulchan Aruch Admur HaZaken, Kuntras Acharon*). From approximately half an hour prior to nightfall (*tzeis hakochavim*), it is prohibited to sit down to a meal or to study, to perform work, or to enter a bathhouse (activities that may easily grow protracted, causing him to neglect conducting the search).

One who intends to travel on *erev* Pesach in order to spend Pesach in a different location should not sell his entire property to a non-Jew as *chametz*. Rather, he must leave at least one room that will not be included in the sale, in order to be able to perform *bedikas chametz* the night of the fourteenth of *Nisan* in at least part of his home. One who travels *before* the fourteenth of *Nisan*, need not leave a room unsold. Instead, he is obligated to perform *bedikas chametz* the night of the fourteenth wherever he may be.

Day-To-Day Halachic Guide, Pesach 5779, Rav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita, Member of the Badatz of Crown Heights, crownheightsconnect.com

Farbrengen

Question: I have so much anxiety about the Coronavirus. I am scared that my family will get it. I can't sleep, I am tense, I am constantly cleaning the house—I can't relax. I try and ignore, push it away and feel happy, but the anxiety returns. It won't leave me. I need relief.

Answer: In Chapters 14 and 17 of Tanya the Alter Rebbe explains that only Tzaddikim have control over their hearts. A tzaddik can arouse a love of G-d, directly, without employing his intellect to arouse his emotions. On the other hand, every person is born with the inherent capability for the mind to rule over the heart. Therefore, although not in direct control of one's heart, as is a tzaddik, everyone has the potential to influence the heart by way of the mind. Along these lines, in Chapter 12, the Alter Rebbe explains that one should push away unwanted thoughts with both hands. Two hands implies not even acknowledging the existence of the thought. In other words, the person is not required to *actively* push the thought away; he simply ignores the thought, and diverts his attention to a different topic. By so doing, the unwanted thoughts will eventually disappear.

This is regarding thoughts. However, as mentioned above, most of us do not have direct control over our emotions. Therefore, ignoring, denying and running from an emotion usually leads to an intensification of the emotion or the emotion finding expression in other ways, i.e. stress, depression, physical symptoms, etc. When unwanted emotions surface, allow the emotions to simply be. Do not criticize yourself, flee or fight with the emotions. However, every emotion has its source in conscious or subconscious thoughts. Although we cannot simply push away an emotion, our thoughts are in our control and can be used to influence and change our emotions.

As devastating and traumatic as the Coronavirus is, we must remember that Hashem is in control and Hashem is all good. Now is an opportunity to deepen our faith in G-d and Divine Providence. I recommend reading, *As a Father Loves His Only Son*, which can be found on the Sichos in English website, sie.org.

In conclusion: 1. Allow the anxiety to simply be; don't criticize, flee or be afraid of the feelings; 2. Read and listen to classes on the topic of faith and Divine Providence. Constantly fill your mind with these thoughts. As your fear is replaced with thoughts of trust in Hashem, the feelings of anxiety will subside.

Aharon Schmidt - marriage, pre-marriage & individual coaching. For an appointment or to share a question contact: coachingandcounseling1@gmail.com

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