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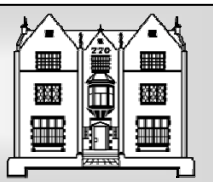
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## Living with the REBBE



At the close of this week's Torah portion, Bo, the Torah relates how the oppression and suffering of the Israelites in Egypt reached its height. So intense was the suffering of the Hebrews that Moses felt constrained to exclaim to G-d: "Why have You dealt badly toward this people... and You have not delivered Your people." Even Moses, who was utterly devoted and faithful to G-d, could find no explanation for the extreme misery and darkness of the Exile.

Soon, however a most remarkable turn of events took place. Immediately after this darkest hour of the Egyptian exile, the process of the redemption was set in motion by G-d. When all hope seemed to have been lost, precisely then did the first rays of hope begin to shine for the Jews.

It is a well-known fact that the darkest part of the night is just before dawn. Our Sages compare exile to night. So too, when the night of the Egyptian exile seemed blackest, when the suffering of the Jews reached such a degree that even Moses complained "Why have You dealt badly....," it was then that the rays of deliverance began to shine.

The Talmud states that while the other nations of the earth calculate the yearly cycle according to the rotation of the sun, the Jewish People base their calendar on the rotation of the moon. For the Jews are likened to the moon, whose light wanes and diminishes, and finally seems to disappear. But it is precisely at that point that the new moon is born, and begins to grow steadily. Jewish history throughout the ages reflects the "lunar cycle." In the Egyptian exile, after reaching the lowest depths of oppression, when the long night of exile seemed at its very darkest, it was then that the deliverance and renewal of hope began. Such was the case in each subsequent exile.

There is much inspiration and encouragement to be derived from the above. There are times in one's life when it seems that the "wheel of fortune" has reached the lowest point of its cycle for him. It appears to him that his situation is beyond hope. Yet he should not lose faith and fall into despair, but should bear in mind that the darkest hour of exile - of our people as a whole, as well as, the "exile" of each individual - comes just before the start of the redemption. ■

*Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.*

### **Starry, Starry Night**

Just how many stars are there? And why does it matter?

Until recently astronomers thought there were 100 sextillion stars. But now, according to a new study, there may be three times as many - 300 sextillion stars!

How did the scientists manage to overlook so many stars? It's not like misplacing some grains of sand!

Here's how it happened: scientists looked at our galaxy, the Milky Way, which is spiral-shaped, and assumed that all galaxies had the same ratio of red dwarfs (the most common kind of star) as ours.

But a third of the galaxies are elliptical, not spiral. And elliptical galaxies have more red dwarf stars than predicted, 10 or 20 times more.

Here's where the numbers get mind-boggling: Scientists estimate there are 100 billion to a trillion galaxies in the universe; each, scientists thought, had 100 billion stars - until they discovered all those red dwarfs hiding in the ellipticals. They now think the ellipticals have as many as 1 trillion to 10 trillion stars.

Crunch the numbers and you get about 300 sextillion stars.

One scientist discovered an interesting "coincidence." He looked up how many cells are in the average human body: 50 trillion or so. He multiplied that by the 6 billion people on Earth. Guess what the answer was - 300 sextillion.

So the number of stars in the universe equals the number of cells in all the people on Earth.

The scientist called it a "funny coincidence." Anyone who's studied Chasidic teachings knows better.

Man is called a microcosm - a mini-universe. This is true of each individual and it is true of humanity as a whole. Just as our physical DNA replicates itself into a complete human being - each of our individual 50 trillion and collective 300 hundred sextillion cells having a specific function, gathering together into organs, organs into systems, such as the digestive, respiratory, etc. (similar to the way stars gather into galaxies and galaxies into clusters), so too our spiritual DNA replicates itself - each mitzva, each positive commandment and negative commandment - into the ethical structure of existence.

Jewish mysticism also explains the "coincidence" - correspondence, really - of the number of human cells and the number of stars from a different perspective, a perspective that also parallels the galaxies-clusters/organs-systems correspondence. Jewish mysticism explains that the process of Creation takes place by means of a condensation of the Divine Life Force, through a series of four spiritual worlds. From the last, G-dliness is so condensed, so concealed, that this physical, finite realm can appear.

These four worlds - and thus all of existence are composed of 10 Emanations, each of which manifests a different aspect of Divine energy. They are structured in parallel to human anatomy - a structure through which we express our own intellectual and emotional attributes.

The bottom line? Though "the universe is more complicated than we think," as one scientist put it, both we, as individuals - because G-d created us - and each mitzva however trivial - because G-d commanded it - have cosmic significance. It's in the stars. ■

## MEZUZAH DID YOU KNOW???



Why is the mezuzah inclined towards the inside of the room and the bottom towards the outside? How did this come about?

In the Arba Turim, Rabbi Jacob ben Asher (13th-14th centuries) cites two conflicting opinions. He first quotes Rashi who taught the mezuzah should be placed vertically. He then brings the view of Rashi's grandson, Rabbeinu Tam, who opined that placing the mezuzah in "standing" position is not respectful. Rather, he taught that it should be placed horizontally, similar to how the Tablets and Torah scroll were arranged in the Holy Ark in the Temple.

Think of the situation in the synagogue when the Sefer Torah is removed from its ark: All the time that it is being held up vertically, all the people stand. As soon as it is placed down to rest, the people also may sit. Rabbeinu Tam seems to be saying the same about the mezuzah.

Rabbi Jacob ben Asher concludes that those who are careful to do the mitzvahs in the best way possible fulfill both opinions (at least partially) by placing their mezuzahs on a slant. This is the prevalent practice in Ashkenazi tradition, while Sephardim follow Rashi's opinion, affixing their mezuzahs vertically. ■

## The Rebbe Writes

*Continued from previous issue, from a letter dated 10th of Nissan, 5721 [1961]*

(2) You ask, how can one accept the mishnah "All Israel have a portion in the world to come" and how, by the widest stretch of the imagination, can one believe that the worst apikores [heretic] will have a share in the world to come?

The answer to your question may be found in various sources and is especially illuminated in the sources of Chassidus at length.

The belief of our Jewish people in true Monotheism is, of course, the very basis of our faith and way of life. This means not only that there is only One G-d and none other beside Him, but "nothing else beside Him" (ein od milvado). The whole Creation and all the worlds have no reality of their own, for there is only one Reality - G-d, inasmuch as a spark of G-dliness animates and keeps everything in existence, as it is written, "By the word of G-d the heavens were created," etc. This "word" of G-d is the essence and reality of everything.

Thus, the individual you call "apikores" is also animated by the "word" of G-d, which is surely eternal, for that individual is also a part of Creation and is animated and sustained in the same way. Except that it was the will of the Creator that this individual, created by the word of G-d, should have complete freedom to choose good or bad, life or death, as it is written, "Behold, I place before you this day life and good, and death and evil."

The individual who misuses this gift of freedom and chooses evil loses and forfeits that part of this G-d-given energy which went into the commission of the sin or omission of the mitzvah [commandment], which, had he chosen otherwise, would have been imbued with an eternal quality. However, the very essence of his reality, that is, that which has been created and came into being by the word of G-d, cannot be destroyed, so long as it retains its essential character. It can only be soiled and stained by sin, G-d forbid.

But inasmuch as every individual Jew is a "whole world," as our Sages said, and, moreover, the whole universe was created for his sake, and as the Sages commented on the word Breishis [In the beginning] - for the sake of Yisroel called "Reishis," [first] the Jew who sinned most undergo various transformations and stages of purgatory to be cleansed of the impurities which had attached themselves to his soul, which is his essence, and which has a portion in the world to come because of its eternal quality.

This is also what our Sages meant when they succinctly said - as they often compress a far-reaching idea into a few concise words by way of explanation immediately following the statement in the said mishnah of Kol Yisroel: "For it is written, 'and Thy people are all righteous . . . a branch of My planting, the work of My hand to be glorified (by them).'" Because every Jew contains in him something which is like a branch of the Divine Tree and the work of G-d's own hands, it is eternal, and that is why "every Jew has a portion in the world to come."

I trust that in harmony with your search for knowledge which you display in your letter, you have regular daily periods of study of the Torah and the Torah view, and that is the kind of study which leads to action and practice in the daily life, as our Sages emphasized that the essential thing is the deed.

The enclosed message will surely be of interest to you.

Wishing you and your fellow students a kosher, happy and inspiring Pesach.

With blessing, ■

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

This Shabbat we read the Torah portion Bo, describing the Jewish people's redemption from Egypt.

In many places it is explained that the first exile of the Jewish people in Egypt, and their subsequent redemption, is the prototype of each future exile and the ultimate redemption which we avidly await, may it come now.

Just as in those days, we were brought out of Egypt with wonders and miracles, so too, when we merit to witness the Final Redemption, will we witness events and wondrous happenings that are miraculous beyond imagination.

But wait. Three times each day, in the special Amida prayer, we thank G-d for His miracles that occur every day and His wonders and kindnesses that occur each moment.

In truth, we don't need much of an imagination to realize that miracles and wonders do happen to each one of us, every moment of every day. Now more than ever, we need only open our eyes, open our hearts, open our minds, and we will see that everything around us is truly miraculous, especially that which we've come to take for granted.

A few cells are miraculously coded to grow into a baby. Scientific breakthroughs allow billions to live without the fear of diseases which only a century ago ravaged entire communities. We can fly anywhere in the world, not necessarily on the wings of eagles but in the comfort and relative safety of metal birds.

What seemed far-fetched and impossible, something which could only be termed miraculous a few generations ago, has become commonplace. But because many things have become mundane and routine they are no less wondrous. Let's all open our eyes and see the miracles and wonders happening all around us. Perhaps through this very special kind of exercise we will merit to see the greatest miracle of all - the revelation of Moshiach. ■



# SLICE OF LIFE

## A Mezuzah Story

by Tzvi Zimmerman

I live in Rockaway, New Jersey. I am a real estate agent, a father, a son, and a husband. And this evening, I would like to talk to you tonight about Jewish identity and a life with meaning.

My search for Jewish identity began at an early age. I never felt like I had a very Jewish name and I always longed for one of the really Jewish names of my friends. Wolf didn't sound Jewish and I always wanted something like Goldstein, Farbman, Bergowitz. I would've even taken a Hebrew last name. Something like "chhhhh." Easy to remember, just difficult to spell. My first name, Ian, is Scottish. And I am not sure there are many Scottish Jews.

Despite my feelings about my name, I did the most important things a Jew should do: I went to Synagogue on Yom Kippur, I didn't mix milk and meat, and every Christmas Eve I ate Chinese food and went to the movies.

In Some sense I think all of us struggle to find our Jewish identity. Where do we fit in? What is the standard? What are we supposed to be doing?

About six years ago I discovered Chabad. I always felt I was an unlikely candidate for Chabad. I never considered myself very religious and I could never really grow a beard. I met Rabbi Herson, who is really so much more than a Rabbi. He is a great community leader and more importantly a trusted friend. He has not just taught me more about being Jewish, but more about myself. Because of Rabbi Baumgarten, I have begun studying Talmud, something I used to think only those in yeshiva could do. And I have a new friend to discuss not just Judaism with but politics, real estate, and life. What I have discovered in my journey with Chabad is there is no judgment or distinction with regard to your level of

observance. Having a desire to learn more is all that is required.

Everyone is welcome at Chabad, and more importantly everyone feels welcome. Chabad gives all Jews access to their Jewish identity. They teach you about kosher, which these days can be confusing. All those kosher symbols are like a new language: "O-U, Kaf-k, O-K, yippee ki yay." It can be overwhelming. Chabad is there to help. Some think kosher is limiting. Chabad shows you it is delicious and liberating. And a round of applause please for the Crystal Plaza for proving how true this is tonight.

A few weeks ago we read in the Torah about Abraham and Sarah and that they are referred to as "coming into their days," an interesting phrase. This is an important distinction, as most people find their days coming into them. It is how we got phrases like "Thank Goodness it's Friday," and "Someone's got a case of the Mondays." Abraham and Sarah came into their days. They welcomed each day and made each day special. Chabad helps all to elevate the world around them and come into their days. Tefilin used to be an unnecessary task to me, now tefilin is as essential as a morning cup of coffee to me. Tefilin gives me that morning pick-me-up and, of course, I take it black. Tefilin sets the tone for my day, reminding me to love my fellow man as myself and to have gratitude for all that is around me. Without Chabad, I would be missing this essential component to my morning.

I give you one personal example, but the truth is, there are endless examples of the ways Chabad elevates the world around them: the adult education, the pre-school, the Hebrew school, the mikvah, the celebrations, the support. We are all touched by Chabad on some level. That is why this room is full this evening.

Chabad is timeless. There is no minimum age and there is no maximum. My parents, myself and my wife, and my children all have deep connections with Chabad. My children aren't just learning about being Jewish; they're being given an opportunity to have a Jewish identity. All three generations of my family are comfortable and able to thrive with the home that Chabad provides to the Jewish community.

What is incredible to me is how far reaching Chabad is. I know people who aren't even Jewish who are huge supporters of Chabad, who donate money to Chabad, because of the way they have been touched by the organization. Of course, you can't elevate the world around you if you leave anyone out. I have traveled occasionally on business, and have found myself in need of a place for a kosher Shabbat meal on Friday night. Whether I was in Virginia or Texas there was a Chabad with open doors and a home cooked meal. My parents were living in China for a time and were even able to attend a Passover Seder there at Chabad. In fact, recently while in Dallas, I had the first Shabbat meal I have ever eaten under a deer antler chandelier. The rabbi claimed it was a shofar chandelier. I am still suspect.

There is no need to travel for a Chabad, because Chabad comes to you. Whether it is a knock on your door to shake a lulav on Sukkot, or on Rosh Hashanah to hear the shofar, you can count on Chabad to ensure that your Jewish identity remains intact. The Sukka mobile even came to my office. I was elated because, you can't beat cake and l'chaims with free delivery.

Chabad has not just elevated the world around them. They have allowed countless others to come into their days, to add significance to their daily routine, and they have made an impact that will not only last but be carried on for generations. So many people spend decades searching for more out of life, searching for meaning. But, really all you need to search for is Chabad. ■

## Moshiach Matters

In Exodus (12:2) we read: "This month [Nissan] will be for you the head of the months. (Ex. 12:2) "For you" seems superfluous. Nissan was and always will be month of miracles and redemption. By saying "for you" the Torah is emphasizing that the ultimate redemption - the coming of Moshiach - depends on you, the Torah study and good deeds of each every individual Jew. ■ *(Iturei Torah)*

## What's In A Name?

**YONATAN** means "gift of G-d." Yonatan was the son of King Saul and the best friend of King David. About their friendship it says, "...but if it [love] is not dependent upon a specific consideration - it will never cease...and one which is not dependent upon a specific thing? The love of David and Yonatan." A variation is Yehonatan. The Ashkenazic pronunciation is Yonason.

**YOCHEDVED** means "G-d's glory." Yocheved (Exodus 6:20) was the mother of Miriam, Aharon and Moshe. She, and her husband, Amram, were from the tribe of Levi.


## News

**New Emissaries** Rabbi Shmuel Sholom and Faiga Serebransky recently arrived in Eastern Orange County, New York, where they run Chabad programs there. Rabbi Chaim and Mushka Zaklos will be moving to Battery Park City, New York, where will be establishing a Chabad House serving the needs of the Jewish community.

**New Center** The island of Florianopolis, in southern Brazil, now has its own Chabad Center, opened this past month by Chabad of Parana.

**Chabad Emissary Chief Rabbi** Rabbi Yoel Kaplan, the Lubavitcher Rebbe's emissary in Thessaloniki, Greece, was appointed Chief Rabbi of Albania at a ceremony attended by Israel's Sephardic Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar, Rabbi Aryeh Goldberg, deputy of the Rabbinical Center of Europe (RCE) and Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik of Chabad in Milan, Italy, and co-founder of RCE. Albania's Prime Minister, Salia Berisha, had met with the RCE and requested a Chief Rabbi for the Jewish population. ■



<b>Important Times</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>January 7 – 14</b></span> <i>Shacharis</i> 7:00am   Sunday 8:00am   Monday/Thursday 6:45am <i>Minchab/Maariv</i> 5:15pm   Shabbos 5:05pm <i>Shabbat</i> <u>Chassidus Club</u> <b>8:15am</b>   <u>Kabbalah of Cholent</u> <b>9:05am</b>   <u>Shacharis</u> <b>9:30am</b> <b>Light Candles 5:17pm</b> <b>Shabbat Ends 6:16pm</b>	Brought to you by: <b>Chabad-Lubavitch in Cyberspace</b> <a href="http://www.chabad.org">www.chabad.org</a> Copyright © 2010 Lubavitch Youth Organization <a href="http://www.lchaimweekly.org">www.lchaimweekly.org</a>	Re-printed by: <b>Chabad of Scottsdale</b> (480) 998-1410 <a href="http://chabadofscottsdale.org">chabadofscottsdale.org</a>  <b>The Jewish Learning Center of Scottsdale 480.443.5362</b>
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**It Once Happened** After the passing of his mother Devorah Leah, Menachem Mendel, who was to become the third known as the Tzemach Tzedek, was raised by his grandfather, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism, known as the Alter Rebbe. They formed a special bond, a relationship so strong that it was able to extend even beyond the bounds of space and time. For even after his passing, the Alter Rebbe revealed himself to his grandson in order to help him resolve certain difficult problems in halacha (Jewish law) or other aspects of Torah study.

This phenomenon occurred so regularly that Reb Menachem Mendel came to expect his grandfather to appear to him whenever he had the need of his guidance. Once, he was dealing with a difficult and perplexing problem and he had a strong desire for the help of his grandfather. Whereas usually the Alter Rebbe would be revealed to him, this time, try as he may, his grandfather failed to come. Several days passed and Reb Menachem Mendel again tried to reach the Alter Rebbe. He davened and meditated in the prescribed manner, but he was not rewarded with success. When, after waiting for a few days he failed to perceive the spirit of his grandfather, Reb Menachem Mendel attempted to bring down the holy soul by means of various Kabbalistic methods. When even these strenuous efforts failed and he was deeply disappointed, he couldn't understand why the Alter Rebbe would not appear to him anymore.

One day, soon after these events, Reb Menachem Mendel went to the synagogue in Lubavitch to pray the early morning service. He took his talit and placed it over his head in preparation for the morning prayer. Suddenly, in rushed the butcher of the town. He ran over to Reb Menachem Mendel and said: "Please forgive me, Rabbi, for interrupting you, but you know, this is market day and all the local farmers have brought their livestock into town to sell. Since many of my customers have not yet paid me, I don't have any money to buy animals, and unless I can buy them now, I won't have any livelihood this week, and the townspeople won't have any meat. Please, Rabbi, lend me the money just for one week, and I'll be able to repay you on the next market day."

The Rabbi looked up at the butcher, "My friend, please don't worry. Of course, you know I trust you completely, and I would be very happy to lend you whatever you need. But, you see, I have already put on my talit and begun my preparations for the morning prayer. I would like to finish my prayers, and then when I am done in two or three hours, I will go right home and get the money for you."

The butcher was relieved, but at the same time he was also disappointed, for the market was in full swing now, and who knew what kind of animals would be left when Reb Menachem Mendel finished his prayers in a couple of hours. Still, the butcher had no choice, so he thanked Reb Menachem Mendel, and made his way home, intending to return to the shul after the morning service.

Reb Menachem Mendel was about to wrap himself in the voluminous folds of his talit, when he suddenly realized what a mistake he had made. Why, how could the butcher wait several hours to purchase his animals! In that space of time it was possible that all the choice cows and sheep would be bought already and he would have lost his livelihood for an entire week. He quickly took off his talit and lay it on the table. Then he rushed out of the shul and headed for his house. His amazed household looked on as he wordlessly ran through the door, took his purse and losing no time, left again. He quickly made his way to the home of the butcher. The butcher was surprised to see the rabbi standing at his door, money in hand. The man happily rushed out to the market and was able to complete all of his business successfully, purchasing good quality animals to supply the town of Lubavitch with meat. Reb Menachem Mendel returned to shul ready to pray with an easy heart, happy in the knowledge that he had helped the butcher in that crucial hour.

Reb Menachem Mendel picked up his talit, intending to resume where he had left off, when he suddenly perceived quite near him, the spirit of his grandfather, the Alter Rebbe. The Alter Rebbe spoke to him, saying, "My son, know that the mitzva (commandment) which you just performed by helping a fellow Jew is even greater than your most elevated prayers. In the Upper Worlds as well as in the Lower Worlds the mitzva of ahavat Yisrael (love of a fellow Jew) is precious." In the merit of this great mitzva Reb Menachem Mendel was again graced by his grandfather's spiritual presence. ■

### **We know not with what we must serve G-d, until we reach there (Ex. 10:26)**

While we yet live in this world, we cannot accurately assess the value of our Torah learning and our performance of mitzvot, or even know if they were done only for the sake of heaven. It is only after we have reached the World to Come, the World of Truth, that we will know how faithfully we fulfilled our tasks.

(Chidushai Harim)



### **And Moses said, With our young and with our old we will go (Exodus 10:9)**

Moses mentioned the children before the elders as the need to remove them from Egypt's corrupting influence was more urgent. The young were in greater danger than the older generation, who were already firmly rooted in their Judaism.

(Daat Chachamim)



### **This month shall be to you the first of months (Ex. 12:2)**

The Talmud states (Sukka 29a): "Israel reckons [the months] according to the moon; the nations of the world, according to the sun." Metaphorically, this means that the gentile nations flourish only when the "sun is shining," when things go well for them. As soon as the "sun" goes down, they cease to exist. But the Jewish people is able to flourish even in times of darkness, spreading the light of Torah and illuminating the gloom.

(Sefat Emet)



### **And the L-rd struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt (Ex. 12:29)**

Comments Rashi: "Whenever the Torah states 'and the L-rd,' it refers to G-d and His heavenly court." When it comes to meting out punishment, G-d gives the decision over to the heavenly angels, who do not know the thoughts of man. (A Jew is not punished for negative thoughts, as it states, "A bad thought is not considered part of deed.") By contrast, when it comes to reward, G-d does not consult with His heavenly court, as "a good thought is considered part of deed," and only G-d knows our thoughts and intentions.

(Nezer HaKodesh)