

L'Chaim

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Living with the REBBE



In the Torah portion of Mikeitz, Joseph orders his servants to hide his goblet in his brother's bags. He then sends a messenger to overtake them on the road. When the brothers learn that they are accused of stealing, they reply, "Far be it ("chalila") from your servants to do such a thing!"

One of the explanations offered by Rashi on the word "chalila," which is generally translated as "G-d forbid" or "heaven forefend," is derived from its root in the word "chulin," meaning profane or derogatory. The word also connotes common, i.e., anything that is not related to holiness. The brother's reply to Joseph's messenger thus not only denied their participation in the theft, but expressed a much deeper concept: that the very idea of their involvement in anything other than the realm of holiness was absurd. In other words, the brothers were on such a high spiritual level that relating to the mundane, physical world was somehow incongruous.

Each one of the Twelve Tribes embodied a different path in the service of G-d. And while not every individual Jew is blessed with all of their unique character attributes, there are certain general aspects of their service that we all share in common. The brothers' declaration of "chalila" thus contains a practical lesson to be applied in our daily lives.

A Jew must know that his entire being - his very essence - is holiness. The Jew and the secular realm are two entirely different worlds. The mundane level of existence does not truly pertain to the Jew, to the point that involvement in the material realm is essentially foreign to him.

This extremely high level is not only something the Jew must feel inwardly, but must also be reflected in all of its external manifestations. The nations of the world should be able to see that, to the Jew, the very notion of "mundane" is just as incongruous as the notion of stealing. Indeed, it is this concept that was proudly articulated by Joseph's brothers to the Egyptian messenger.

Of course, the Torah commands that a Jew work within the framework of the physical world. "Six days shall you labor, and do all your work." But the intention is not that the Jew lower himself to the level of the profane; on the contrary, it implies the exact opposite. A Jew is required to involve himself in the world for the purpose of elevating the material plane of existence to holiness. This demonstrates that all his deeds are for the sake of heaven, and brings sanctity into the world. ■

Adapted from Volume 15 of Likutei Sichot

Finding Your Passion

It's fascinating to read about people and their passions. For example, there is a woman named Evelyn Hayes who has a passion for the tomb of our Matriarch Rachel (Kever Rachel). Her heart and soul are devoted to Israel, particularly to Kever Rachel. She bought property nearby, does fundraisers for Kever Rachel, writes poetry about it, etc. I wonder where this comes from! I wonder, who was she in a previous incarnation?!

Former president Kim of South Korea asked Stephen Covey (of the "Seven Habits" fame), "Do you really believe the things you teach?"

Covey: I was taken aback by this question and sobered by it. After a short pause I said, "Yes, I do."

He then asked me, "How do you know you do?"

Covey: I answered, "I try to live by these teachings. I know I fall short, falter a lot, but I keep coming back to them. I believe in them and am inspired by them and I keep returning to them."

Kim said, "That's not good enough for me. Are you prepared to die for them?"

Kim went on to tell his story of many years of banishment, of being exiled, of being imprisoned, of several assassination attempts, pressure to cooperate, threats that he'd be killed if he didn't cooperate. He told them, "Then kill me, because if you kill me I'll only die once, but if I cooperate with you, I will die 100 times every day for the rest of my life."

Now THAT'S passion!

And it reminds me of Chana and her seven sons. Despite the

enticements and the threats, they were all willing to die for their beliefs.

Because Chana had taught her sons to love G-d and the Torah more than life itself.

The Antiochus' soldiers tried to convince Chana to save herself and her sons: "Foolish woman. Tell your sons to bow down to the idol so that they may live," the soldiers told her. But Chana knew that her definition of life was different from that of the pagan soldier. Her sons would die in this world sanctifying G-d's name, but they would live forever in the World to Come. She whispered encouragement to each son. "Remember that the L-rd is one, there is no other." Not one son bowed to the idol.

When they brought the youngest son, a boy of just seven, to the king - after having witnessed the cruel torture and brutal murder of his six older brothers - the king offered him gold and silver if he would do his will. The boy displayed the same courage as his brothers and taunted the king to carry out his threats.

"Who are you seeking to overpower with your words and enticements? I laugh at your foolishness. I believe in the Torah and in G-d Whom you blaspheme. You will remain an abomination upon all mankind, loathsome and far from G-d."

As the soldiers took her youngest son away to murder him like his brothers, Chana begged to kiss him one last time. As if speaking to all seven children, Chana said, "My children, tell your ancestor Abraham, 'You bound only one son upon an altar, but I bound seven.' ■

*The first column of this article is from
bikores.blogspot.com/*

**MEZUZAH
DID YOU
KNOW???**

Written on a mezuzah scroll is the Shema, a passage from G-d's holy Torah. Furthermore, the presence of mezuzah in a doorway is itself a mitzvah.

Did you know that it is forbidden to sweep trash or dirt from one room to another, passing through the doorway with a mezuzah on it? ■

**A WORD FROM
THE DIRECTOR**

Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman

During these days of Chanuka we emphasize the miracles that G-d wrought for our ancestors, "In those days, in our times." The first miracle was the victory of the small Jewish army over the vastly superior and more numerous Greek army. The second miracle, and this is the miracle which we symbolically celebrate each time we kindle the Chanuka menorah, is the miracle of the one small cruse of pure olive oil which lasted for eight days rather than the one day for which it was intended.

That G-d was and is willing to perform miracles for His people shows His tremendous love for us. But, G-d's expression of love for us depends on our expression of love for each other. Thus, in addition to the love we should show a fellow Jew because he is our brother, we must show him additional love because G-d loves him. The importance of loving our fellow Jews is emphasized by the fact that this course of conduct will enable each person, his family, and the entire Jewish people, and ultimately the whole world, to leave the exile in the immediate future.

The Chanuka lights that we kindle in our home on each night of Chanuka are a symbol of G-d's love for the Jewish people. They have their source in G-d's light, in the light of the miracle of Chanuka, a miraculous light. As we kindle the Chanuka lights on the remaining nights of Chanuka, let us remember the miracles they represent, the Source of the miracles, and why G-d performed those miracles for us. And let these thoughts spur us on toward greater love of our fellow Jew, especially including, of course, those closest to us.

May we merit not only the lights of Chanuka this year, but also the Great Light of the Final Redemption, through the revelation of Moshiach, NOW. ■

The Rebbe Writes

Chanukah, 5715 [1954]

...In this connection, and apropos of Chanukah, it would be timely to reflect on the significance of the Chanukah Lights. Although all Mitzvoth [commandments] issue from One G-d, the perfect Unity, there are many aspects to every Mitzvah, just as the complexity of our physical world is likewise created from His Mitzvah. Nevertheless, the performance of the Mitzvah, accompanied by an appreciation of its significance, is definitely beneficial.

With this in mind, I wish to point out what I consider very significant in connection with the significance of Chanukah, as it is emphasized by the Chanukah Lights, specifically by the two conditions attending the performance of this Mitzvah: (a) The light is to shine forth "outside" and (b) the light is to grow every night by the addition of one more candle each night of Chanukah. Thus, the message of Chanukah is to bring home to every Jew his duty to spread the "light" of the Torah and the "candles" of the Mitzvoth, especially in times of darkness, and to do so with ever growing effort.

A man's influence is generally limited, either to his immediate environment, his family and friends, or if he is a teacher or lecturer, to a wider circle. The journalist, however, whose words and thoughts enjoy wide currency through the printed word, enjoys a much greater influence; he is less limited in space, since the printed word travels far, and in time, since it endures on record.

Thus you are privileged to have far greater opportunities in exercising influence than the average person, to help illuminate the darkness of the night with, I trust, ever growing effect. These are not mere opportunities, for as everything in Nature strives to transform itself from a state of potentiality to actuality, so all human potentialities must be actualized for the general good, the true good. The way of Providence is inscrutable. Although logically, as the Chanukah candles indicate, one should begin by lighting up his home first, and then seeing to it that its light dispels the darkness outside as far as possible, the process is sometimes reversed; bringing light to others far away, brings success in carrying the light closer home.

I send you my prayerful wishes for success in your personal affairs, which is closely associated with your public work and your influence, all the more so, since in addition to being a son of the "kingdom of priest and a holy nation," you are actually a kohen among Jews.

With blessing,

23rd of Kislev, 5713 [1952]

Sholom u'Brocho [Peace and Blessing]:

...With the approach of Chanukah, I extend to you herewith my sincere wishes for a happy and inspiring Chanukah.

The message of Chanukah is important and timely to all Jews, but even more so to Jews living in surroundings with comparatively little Jewish vitality and activity. It is precisely in such circumstance that Chanukah offers many a useful lesson. One such lesson I wish to make the subject of this message.

It is noteworthy that the Chanukah lights must be kindled after sunset, when it is dark outside, unlike the lights that were kindled in the Beth Hamikdosh [Holy Temple] much earlier, or the Sabbath lights kindled on Friday before sunset.

There is another difference: the Beth Hamikdosh - and the Sabbath-lights have their place indoors, while the place of Chanukah lights is at the entrance to the home (when Jews lived freely in their land, the place was outside the entrance). Finally, there is yet another distinction: in the former two cases the lights remain the same, while the Chanukah lights are increased every night.

The lesson which seems to be indicated by the Chanukah lights is that besides lighting up the home (Sabbath lights) and the synagogue and Yeshiva (substituting for the Sanctuary of old), the Jew has the additional responsibility of lighting up the "outside," the whole environment. Moreover, when conditions are unfavorable (it is "dark" outside), it is then not enough to make a light and maintain it, though it is also an achievement in view of the darkness; but it is necessary to steadily increase the lights, through steadily growing efforts to spread the light of Torah and mitzvot, to illuminate not only one's home, but the whole environment as well... ■



SLICE OF LIFE
Heavenly Compensation

by Shoshana Monk

The names in this true story have been changed for reasons of privacy

Mrs. Spitzer answered the door and smiled when she saw her visitor. She had been married for nine years with no children. However, in a miraculous turn of events, the Spitzers had been blessed with quintuplets!

Before their quintuplets, the Spitzers had led a modest lifestyle, but now their expenses had quintupled. The visitor, Mrs. Schiff, had heard about their situation and had raised money and organized other endeavors to help the couple.

Mrs. Spitzer led her visitor into her children's bedroom. Mrs. Schiff looked at the five precious souls with a smile. Her gaze wandered around the room and was drawn to a small photo on the wall.

Suddenly, Mrs. Schiff gasped. She pointed to the photo, asking, "Who is that young woman?"

"She was my mother."

Mrs. Schiff looked at Mrs. Spitzer. "Your mother? Tell me, is she still alive?"

"I'm sorry to say that she passed away last year, just before I fell pregnant. She would have been so happy to see our long-awaited babies."

Mrs. Schiff was silent for a moment. Then she said, "I have a story to share with you. When I was 15 I was taken to Bergen-Belsen. I was placed in a barrack together with other girls my age. My four friends and I remained steadfast in our Jewish observance; we said we'd rather die Al Kiddush Hashem (to sanctify G-d's name) than in any other manner. One day, one of my friends, Rivka, called us together excitedly.

"Tomorrow is Chanuka!" she exclaimed. "We must light a menorah!" We devised a plan. We would trade our daily ration of bread for machine oil from a girl who worked in the factory. Thread from our uniforms would be wicks, and two stones would create fire. Round potato peels could serve as a menorah, but it would be risky to get them.

"At midnight, when the guards' shift changed, one of us would sneak into the kitchen through the window, while the others would stand guard.

"That night, all five of us crept stealthily towards the kitchen. Being small, I was chosen to crawl in. I approached the large garbage bin and

began to sift through its contents. I could hear the loud grumbling of my hungry stomach. I had given up my ration that day, and I was famished!

"I saw small pieces of food, and stuffed them into my mouth. At last, I found one potato peel with a perfect shape. Then I continued searching. A second perfect potato peel! Suddenly, glancing up at the window, I saw Sarale waving frantically.

"Though my head told me not to, I intently continued looking for at least one more peel. Suddenly, I heard a voice thunder, 'Halt!' I looked up to see a tall Nazi official pointing his gun at my chest. On both sides of him were my four friends, pure terror written across their stricken faces.

"'You'll be punished,' he declared with great relish. 'Tomorrow, at noon, all five of you will be hung - in front of the camp, so everyone will learn the punishment for stealing. You know others will be punished if you don't report on time.'

"The darkness seemed even thicker as we trudged back to our barrack. We secretly lit our menorah, reminiscing about previous Chanukas in better times. The flame burned very quickly, but it long enough to infuse hope into our deflated souls.

"Then Sarale came up with a plan. She suggested that we ask Shaina for help. Shaina was a 15-year-old Jewish girl who knew six languages. The Nazis, may their names be blotted out, used Shaina as their interpreter. They gave her a radio and put her in charge of reporting to the Nazi officials any news of the enemy's strategies. She lived in her own little shack in the woods and received a full piece of bread every day.

"'She'll never risk herself to help us!' I said.

"'Let's try anyway,' Sarale reasoned.

"We crept out of the barracks again, this time in the direction of the woods. Rachele spotted light in the distance. We followed the light and soon saw a girl in front of a menorah quietly singing Ma'oz Tzur!

"We stood there, entranced; we no longer thought of death, but rather of Mattithias and his sons, marching to victory. Suddenly, Shaina turned around. 'Have you come to spy on me? To tell the Nazis what you see me doing?' she spluttered. 'Do you think that I don't know that you five will be hung tomorrow? You'd better get out of my sight or you'll be in more trouble!'

"'Shaina, we need your help!' I stammered.

"'I said get out of my sight!' Shaina screamed. We ran back to our barrack in fear.

"That night, the fear of dying hovered over us. We resented Shaina deeply. Even if she couldn't help, how could she threaten us in our despair? Where was her Jewish heart?

"The next day, the entire camp was assembled. The Nazi was about to raise our nooses when somebody screamed, 'Stop!'

"He turned around, startled. There stood Shaina, motioning to him frantically and waving her radio wildly in the air. He approached her, grimacing. A few minutes later, he untied us, and with a last kick, sent us back to work, muttering all the while. Miraculously, we had been spared.

"A few days later we were liberated, but we never got a chance to thank Shaina for saving our lives. She had taken such a risk to save us. After the war, no one could trace her. And now I see her face on your wall! Look how G-d runs the world! I thought I was helping a total stranger, but in fact, you are the daughter of the woman who saved my life! You have given me a chance, in a small way, to return the great kindness I owe your mother."

"Now I understand!" cried Mrs Spitzer. "During my pregnancy, I dreamt of my mother. With a smile, she kept repeating: 'Finif neshamos far finif neshamos - five souls for five souls.'

"'Mamme, I don't understand!' But she just repeated, 'Finif neshamos far finif neshamos.'

"Now I understand! In the Heavenly court it must have been decided that in the merit of the five neshamos that my mother saved during the war, I would finally be blessed to have her grandchildren - my five beautiful neshamos." ■

Moshiach Matters


The Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the Chasidic movement, possessed a special love and affinity for Chanuka more than any other holiday. This is because the Chanuka candles represent the innate gift of the Jewish soul for spreading light and illuminating the whole world. The Baal Shem Tov's message spread by the Jewish soul stresses both that G-d creates nature anew at every moment and at the same time permeates it with supernatural power. Because of its ability to unite the natural with the supernatural, the light of the Chanuka candles will eventually bring about the true and complete redemption. ■

(www.inner.org)

What's In A Name?

Menucha means "peace, rest." The special type of rest or peace which comes from celebrating the Sabbath is called "Shabbat Menucha."

Moshe is from the Hebrew meaning "drawn out of the water." In Egyptian it means "son, child." The greatest prophet and leader of our people was Moshe Rabeinu ("Moses our teacher"). He led us out of Egypt, and through him we received the Torah. He was our greatest advocate, and told G-d that if He were to wipe out the Jewish people (after the sin of the golden calf) then Moshe wanted his name wiped out of the Torah.

Important Times <i>Shacharis</i> 6:45am Sunday 8:00am Friday 7:00am <i>Minchab/Maariv</i> 5:15pm Shabbos 4:50pm <i>Shabbat</i> Shabbos Mevarchim Tehillim Minyan 8:00am Shacharis 9:30am Light Candles 5:01pm Shabbat Ends 5:59pm	Brought to you by: Chabad-Lubavitch in Cyberspace www.chabad.org Copyright © 2010 Lubavitch Youth Organization www.lchaimweekly.org	Re-printed by: Chabad of Scottsdale (480) 998-1410 chabadofscottsdale.org  The Jewish Learning Center of Scottsdale 480.443.5362
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It Once Happened For the Chasidim of Rabbi Mordechai of Chernobyl, Chanuka was a special time. Regardless of the distance, thousands would come from all over the country for the privilege of watching the Rebbe kindle the menorah.

One year, on the eve of the first night of Chanuka, the Rebbe's shamash (attendant) announced that there would be a small deviation from tradition. Instead of kindling the Chanuka lights in the menorah he had inherited from his saintly father, Rabbi Nachum, the Rebbe would be using a different one. He offered no reason. "All I know is that the Rebbe told me to take it out of storage and get it ready," the shamash said. "I don't know where it is from, only that it is exceptionally beautiful."

That evening, when the sun went down, Rabbi Mordechai strode into the huge synagogue to fulfill the mitzva (commandment). Everyone was already waiting eagerly. Thousands of eyes followed the tzadik's every movement.

Indeed, the menorah that had been set up was not the Rebbe's usual one. And although the shamash had described it as "exceptionally beautiful," this was truly an understatement. The Rebbe recited the blessing and lit the wick, then stared into the tiny flame for a long time. It was obvious that the Rebbe's thoughts were far away, even though he was physically present.

A few minutes later the Rebbe shook his head slightly, as if returning to the world around him. Then, without even looking up, he started speaking:

"Many years ago I visited the village of Cherbin," the Rebbe began. "The Chasidim there greeted me very warmly, and I was invited to stay in the home of a certain Reb Meir. This Reb Meir, who had once been a follower of my late father, was the wealthiest man in town. He was a true Chasid in all of his 248 limbs and 365 sinews. His love for the Torah and his desire to perform mitzvot in the most beautiful manner possible knew no bounds.

"Towards the end of my stay in Cherbin Reb Meir led me into his treasury to show me his riches. There, in one corner of the room, was the most extraordinary silver menorah I had ever seen. Reb Meir told me that he had paid a fortune for it, and planned on using it the very next Chanuka. I picked it up to admire its workmanship and artistry.

"Reb Meir, I said to him suddenly, looking him in the eye. 'Would you give me this menorah as a gift?' My question momentarily startled him, and he was silent for a minute. But after considering my request he immediately agreed. 'Yes,' he said. 'I would give all my wealth to the Rebbe.'

"When I got back to Chernobyl I instructed my family to put the menorah in storage. When Chanuka arrived I did not ask for it, but continued to use the menorah I had inherited from my father. My family was somewhat surprised by this, for why had I brought the other one if I wasn't planning on using it? But as time passed, everyone forgot that the other one even existed.

"This year, however, I decided to change my custom, and now I will tell you why:

"A few days ago, Reb Meir of Cherbin passed away. When he ascended to the heavenly court, it seemed obvious that his rightful place was in Gan Eden [the Garden of Eden]. Thousands of angels testified to all the good deeds Reb Meir had performed throughout his life. One after the other they described his love of Torah and his exceptional performance of mitzvot.

"Reb Meir was about to pass through the gates of Gan Eden when all of a sudden, an angel without any eyes stood up and cried out, 'I object!' Pandemonium broke out. The blind angel was given permission to speak, and proceeded to tell the story of the silver menorah Reb Meir had once purchased at great expense.

"What you don't know," the angel explained, "is that this menorah was bought from a poor Jew in Cherbin who was forced to sell it because his wife and children were starving. This menorah had been in his family for 13 generations, and was almost as dear to him as his life. For years he refused to sell it. Reb Meir was well aware of the poor man's circumstances. The otherwise generous and charitable Reb Meir had such an intense desire to own the beautiful menorah that he deliberately exploited the poor man and offered financial assistance only through the purchase of the menorah."

"The heavenly court decided to review the case. In the end it was ruled that Reb Meir should go to Gan Eden, but not directly. To atone for the anguish he had caused, he would first have to wander around through the celestial spheres accompanied by the blind angel.

"Many years ago, when I visited Reb Meir's house and he showed me the menorah, I knew what was going to happen. I took it from him so that when the proper time came, I would be able to help him make amends. Tonight, when I lit the first candle of Chanuka in that menorah, it corrected Reb Meir's spiritual defect and allowed him to enter Gan Eden. It also restored the gift of sight to the blind angel..." □

And he woke up...and behold, it was a dream (Gen. 41:7)

There are two kinds of dreamers: those who know that they are only dreaming but enjoy the dream anyway, and those who do not realize that they are dreaming and mistake it for reality. The first type of person is able to distinguish between truth and falsehood, and realizes that his dream is deceptive. But the second kind cannot make this distinction, and holds his delusion to be true. (From a letter of the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe)

And they brought him hurriedly out of the dungeon (Gen: 41:14) For 12 years Joseph languished in the dungeon without anyone lifting a finger to help him. Yet when the time came for him to be freed, he was brought out "hurriedly," in great haste. One moment he was a lowly prisoner, the next, a free man elegantly attired and brought before the king. From this we learn that when the right time comes for G-d to take us out of exile, He will not wait even a split second longer than necessary. At that precise moment Moshiach will come to redeem us (Chofetz Chaim)

And Pharaoh said...Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom there is the spirit of G-d? (Gen. 41:38) Joseph's suggestion that Egypt's grain be stored away for future consumption was surely a good one, but why was Pharaoh so convinced that he possessed "the spirit of G-d"? When relating his dream to Joseph, Pharaoh had deliberately changed certain details. Yet when Joseph interpreted the dream, he described the events as Pharaoh had really seen them. From this Pharaoh understood that Joseph was no ordinary wise man. (Marganita Dvei Meir)

And he sought to weep, and he entered his room and he wept there...and he restrained himself (Gen. 43:30-31) The soul "weeps" because it does not want to be in a body; it abhors its fleshly confinement and longs to be reunited with G-d. Nonetheless, it "restrains" itself and overcomes its inclination, recognizing that G-d wants the body and soul to work in tandem to observe His commandments. (Ohr HaTorah)