

L'Chaim

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1160: VAYAKHEL

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Living with the **REBBE**



This week's Torah portion, Vayakhel, describes the construction of the Tabernacle in the desert and its furnishings. Among the detailed instructions of how to make the Tabernacle is the following verse (Ex. 25:18):

"They shall make the stakes of the Tabernacle and the pins of the courtyards and their tying ropes."

Rashi explains that the stakes were inserted into the ground to fasten the edges of the curtains, so that they would not flap because of the wind, and the ropes were used for binding them.

There is a moral to be derived from this:

The generations that preceded us can be compared to the builders of the Tabernacle itself. Our own generation, the last one before the coming of Moshiach, can be compared to those who tie the edges of the curtains to the stakes in the ground so they will not flap loosely in the wind.

In the overall stature of Israel's history, our generation is the very "heel" - the lowest part of the body - while our predecessors are like the brains, heart and other "higher" parts of the body. Our task and mission is likewise the "last" or "heel"-labor to complete and finish all that is still required to bring about the Messianic redemption. Ours may be the "lowest" task, merely tying down the very edges of the curtains, some rather incidental and external details. Nonetheless, it is just this work that completes the whole job, and it is specifically what we do that will fasten the Tabernacle so that it may stand firm.

We are indeed the "heel"-generation, time-wise and quality-wise, compared to all those before us. This may raise the question: Is the generation worthy? Why should we merit the coming of Moshiach when our ancestors, who were greater saints and scholars than we are, did not? Nonetheless, the fact is that we are the ones who complete the work. The credit and merit, therefore, is attributed to our generation. Our sages thus said that a meritorious deed is attributed to him who does the last part of it and completes it (Sotah 13b).

Moreover, the edges of the curtains were to be tied to the pegs that were fixed in the ground, the earth. This alludes to the very purpose of the Sanctuary, namely, to bring about an indwelling of the Divine Presence in the Tabernacle which was to be a physical abode established specifically here on earth. This, indeed, is the very task and purpose of our generation. We are to draw the Divine Presence all the way down to the very earthiness of this material world, and this will happen with the coming of Moshiach and the ultimate Redemption. ■

From "Living with Moshiach" adapted by Rabbi J. Immanuel Schochet from the work of the Rebbe, published by Kehot Publication Society

Flight Attendants

When we fly we take for granted that there will be a flight attendant on board. There's a routine to the duties of the flight attendant. If we fly much at all, we tune out their announcements from the moment we enter the plane until the moment we leave - except to say "hello," "goodbye," "I'll have a diet Coke," and "thank you."

When we board, the flight attendant is there to greet us. Often another flight attendant is busy in the galley, checking the coffee, counting out the sodas or packets of pretzels. Then as everyone else is struggling with the overhead luggage or squeezing into seats, the flight attendant is there to direct traffic. If there's an elderly passenger, or a small child, we admire how solicitous the flight attendant is; and if there's an arrogant or aggressive passenger, we admire her patience.

Then comes the opening routine. Halfway through the flight, the food cart. Then during landing: stay in your seats until the plane lands. Thanks, come again.

But if there's ever an emergency - a passenger becomes ill, the plane hits an air pocket, or G-d forbid there's an emergency landing - then we see the real need for the flight attendant and her training. It's more than directing traffic and keeping people calm. That's when a flight attendant earns the old-fashioned title of steward or stewardess - someone responsible for managing a situation, someone who supervises arrangements and keeps things in order.

We often look at a rabbi as a kind

of spiritual steward. When things are going along normally, there's a regularity to what we expect: Conduct the services, give a sermon, sit on committees, teach a class, go to the hospital. Etc.

And of course the rabbi has to manage the Bar Mitzva or wedding - the needs of special passengers or moment in our journey through life.

But if G-d forbid there's a crisis or emergency, a serious illness or worse, some financial or family crisis, then we expect the rabbi to be there to manage us through the event, to get the oxygen mask on, get us to the emergency exit, down the chute and onto safe ground. We may come out bruised, but we came out - thanks to the rabbi.

But there's another flight attendant in our lives. It's us. Or rather, it's our soul in the moments of prayer. The daily moments of prayer are routine. We know the drill, as the saying goes. We can find the parallels to store your luggage (get rid of the mental and emotional baggage), put your seat belt on and your seat back up (prepare yourself - take prayer seriously - before a "spiritual take-off"), the food cart (take a break from the concentration to appreciate how prayer penetrates into the physical), wait your turn and be polite getting on and getting off (that's an easy analogy).

And when a life crisis occurs, what do we do? Turn to prayer for guidance. Prayer is our oxygen mask and emergency exit and chute to safety. We may come out a bit scratched and dazed and shocked, but we come out, leaning, even if we don't want to admit it, on the flight attendant within - our prayers to the Pilot of our lives. ■

MEZUZAH DID YOU KNOW???



The Art of Mezuzah – Part II, The Parchment

The skin used for the parchment is first soaked for a few hours in water and cleaned. Then the scribe places it in a barrel of lime where it remains between one and three weeks. By Jewish Law it must remain in the lime until most of the hair is easily removed.

The skin is then passed between the rollers of a depilatory machine which scrapes away the last traces of hair.

The skin is now stretched on a frame. The lime must be cleaned from the parchment otherwise it might harm the parchment or render it transparent, which would be unsuitable for the writing of a mezuzah or tefillin.

Drying the skin requires great care, in order that the parchment should have the delicate texture required. The skin is stretched taut on the frame and allowed to dry under a gentle indirect heat; shaded sunlight is the ideal. The tension of the skin during the drying process alters the arrangement of its fibers. This stage is crucial in the transition from animal hide to parchment. ■

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

The last public address of the Rebbe was on the Shabbat of parshat Vayakhel, 25 Adar 1. The Rebbe emphasized the clear and important message that this week's Torah portion contains.

The Rebbe explained: "The message of Vayakhel applies to the Jewish people and alludes to their being gathered together to form a single collective entity in the spirit of the commandment, "Love your fellow as yourself." This is possible, because all Jews share a single essence; all are "truly a part of G-d from above."

"In simple terms, this command means that when a person sees another Jew, he should try to unite with him, for in truth they share a common, fundamental essence - a G-dly soul. This command to unite applies, not only to the Jews in one's immediate community, but to all Jews, even those far removed, indeed, even those in a distant corner of the world. Needless to say, the manner in which these feelings of unity are expressed will differ in terms of the practical means of expression available, but the feelings of oneness are universal in nature.

"Even when the distance is also spiritual in nature, i.e., when another Jew does not share one's level of Jewish observance, one should focus on the connection shared and not on the differences.

"This is the message of Vayakhel, that one seek to unite with every member of the Jewish people. This approach, the thrust to unite with one's fellow Jews, will lead to the ultimate fulfillment of Vayakhel, the ingathering of the Jewish people to the Holy Land."

Surely these points can guide us through these final moments of exile until we experience the long-awaited redemption. ■

The Rebbe Writes

Erev Rosh Chodesh Adar 1, 5733 [1973]

It has been often noted that the time element in any event of Jewish life, especially one connected with Torah and Chinuch [Jewish education], has a special relevance and message. This rule also applies to the fact that we are in a leap year, containing two months of Adar.

The underlying reason for periodic "leap years" in our Jewish calendar is that our calendar is determined by the lunar year, which is about 11 days shorter than the solar year. But inasmuch as the Torah requires us to observe our festivals in their due season - Pesach [Passover] in the spring, Succot in the autumn, etc. - a periodic adjustment is necessary to make up the deficiency between the lunar and solar years.

Herein also lies an important lesson. For not only does the extra month fully make up the deficiency, but it usually provides also an advance "on account" of the following year.

The lesson is two-fold: A person must, from time to time, take stock of his accomplishments in the past, with a view to ascertain what he has omitted to do.

The first principle to remember is, therefore, that it is never too late to make good past deficiencies. Secondly, it is not enough to make up a deficiency; it is also necessary to make an extra effort as an advance on account of the future, and continue from strength to strength.

If this is true in all human affairs, how much more so in matters of Torah and mitzvot [commandments] and, especially, in the area of Chinuch - the vital link in the preservation of our eternal Torah and heritage and the continuity of our people.

Moreover, in the present day and age it is quite obvious that Torah-true Chinuch is the only way to ensure that our children, boys and girls, will remain ours, and that they will grow up and flourish like the proverbial tree planted by water, with deep strong roots that can withstand all wind and storms, and will not fail to bear good fruits and the fruits of fruits to all generations to come.

In the spirit of the above, may each and all of us take a "leap" in our advancement of Torah and mitzvot as well as in our endeavors to strengthen true Yiddishkeit [Judaism] in general, and Torah-true Chinuch in particular, to the fullest extent of our capacity to meet the challenge of our present critical times.

With blessings for hatzlacha [success] and good tidings



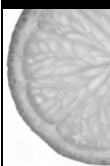
10th of Adar 1, 5733 [1973]

Rabbi Hodakov has conveyed to me your telephone messages, and I will again remember you in prayer for the fulfillment of your heart's desires for good in all the matter which you mentioned over the telephone.

May G-d grant that you should have good news to report, especially now as we are in the auspicious month of Adar. Which also reminds us that we are in a leap year, with an added month to make up for the deficiency between the lunar year, on which our Hebrew calendar is based, and the solar year, which determines the four seasons, since our festivals must occur in their due season. This is also a meaningful lesson that a Jew can, and must always strive to, make up for any past deficiencies.

It is also significant that the added month is the one of Adar, which is a month of increased joy for Jews since that first Purim, when, as Megillas Esther [the book of Esther] tells us, "for the Jews there was light, joy, gladness, and honor."

These words, by the way, are included in the Havdalah [the prayer at the end of Shabbat] which we make at the beginning of each week, to which are immediately added the words, "so be it for us." May G-d grant that it should be so also for you and yours in the midst of all our people. ■



SLICE OF LIFE

Adding Years to Life

by Refoel Jaworowski

The rabbis of the Chicago Mitzvah Campaign visit Jewish patients in a number of Chicagoland hospitals on a weekly basis. In addition, they are always on-call in cases of emergency. Such was the occasion one late Thursday evening. Rabbi Aron Wolf, CMC's founder, received a call from the chaplain's office of a local hospital. "The family of a Jewish patient are asking for a rabbi to come and say some prayers," he was told. "The patient had a stroke and the doctors are saying she doesn't have much time left."

Rabbi Wolf quickly made his way to the hospital and found the patient to be unresponsive, the last vestiges of her life apparently lingering by sole virtue of the unremitting work of a life support machine. Her family looked on as she lay in her bed at death's door, having gathered together to be with her during her last moments. The atmosphere in the room was somber.

After reciting some appropriate prayers, Rabbi Wolf spoke with the head of the family and heard the doctor's prognosis. The doctor had said that the patient was in a vegetative state and without any hope of recovery whatsoever. In view of this opinion and of the doctor's resultant recommendation, the family was now preparing to remove life support from the patient.

Rabbi Wolf sat at length with the family and discussed the situation from the perspective of Jewish teachings. They talked about the infinite value of the gift of human life, which derives from G-d as the ultimate source and only provider of this gift. Rabbi Wolf drew the family's attention to the inherent fallibility of human knowledge and judgment. He encouraged the family not to intervene by removing the life support machine, but to at least give the patient a little more time. "Have faith in G-d and leave the decision to Him," he advised. Although they were reluctant at first,

the family agreed to leave the patient on her life support machine, and to reconsider the circumstances a few days later.

The next day, Friday, Rabbi Wolf returned to the hospital to make his regular weekly visits to the Jewish patients. He passed by the room of the patient he had met the night before. Imagine his complete astonishment and joy upon beholding the surreal spectacle of the patient sitting up in her bed, casually enjoying her lunch!

Rabbi Wolf spoke with the patient, sharing her profound gratitude and relief. Together they expressed prayerful thanks to G-d for restoring to her the gift of life. And what was the response from the medical establishment to this miraculous turn of events? "Yes," a nurse wryly conceded to Rabbi Wolf, "She had quite a turnaround last night, didn't she?"

The miraculous turnaround that the patient experienced gave the family a new awareness and appreciation for G-d, the giver of life, and the wisdom of His Torah.

A different time, Rabbi Wolf received an urgent call from a case manager at the Chicago Department of Aging. The case manager was focused on an 84-year-old Jewish client, "LC," whose unmanageable circumstances were becoming concerning.

Rabbi Wolf immediately arranged to visit LC in her apartment. Upon his arrival he found LC sitting in her living room in pitch darkness. After exchanging cordial greetings Rabbi Wolf turned a light on, whereupon he observed that LC's disposition was agitated and her mind disconcerted. As the visit continued her disorientation became increasingly evident in the rapid rate and confused content of her speech; moreover, she practiced a bizarre routine of hurriedly encircling the apartment at 30-second intervals as she talked.

From the total lack of food in the apartment Rabbi Wolf realized that LC was probably severely malnourished. Clearly, she was in a poor state of physical and mental health. The rabbi asked LC about her medications, but failed to receive a lucid response. He glanced at the containers and noticed that she had duplicate bottles of high blood pressure medication.

Rabbi Wolf immediately suspected that LC's deteriorating condition might be due in large part to her taking double doses of this medication. He thought of admitting her to a hospital psych ward and sought advice from SR, a contact in a nearby hospital, on how to proceed. Under the circumstances it was certainly no easy task, but the rabbi invoked his rabbinical authority to convince LC to voluntarily admit herself.

That night Rabbi Wolf drove LC to the hospital and helped her through the admission process and the initial testing procedures. The results of the blood tests taken that night showed that the level of electrolytes in her blood was in a terrible state; the doctor remarked that had she not been admitted at that time she very well may not have survived the night.

LC spent 10 days in the hospital, straightening out her medication and recuperating. Although she managed to recover much of her health, it was agreed that she could no longer live alone and would need to live in a nursing home. Rabbi Wolf helped identify a suitable nursing home and also shouldered the responsibility of facilitating her admission and transition into her new environment. He even arranged for moving her belongings and cleaning out her old apartment!

Now two months later, LC is happy and secure in her new setting, and has been enjoying the social scene with her fellow residents at the nursing home. A music enthusiast and accomplished piano player, she enjoys enthralling her newfound friends by playing "golden oldies" for them on the piano. **■ The Chicago Mitzvah Campaign was developed to provide help and support to members of the entire Chicago Jewish community. CMC offers their services when people need them most, at times of frailty, illness, infirmity and loss. Their programs assist individuals with information, social support and material aid, and avail them of spiritual counsel, Jewish traditions and observances.**

Moshiach Matters

The inner challenge of the exile is not only to generate love for no reason (which annuls the cause of the exile - baseless hatred), but rather to reveal the great love and unity there is amongst the Jewish people even when they are in a state of being scattered among the nations. **■**

(Sefer HaSichot 5749, Vol. 1, p. 138)

What's In A Name?

PESACH means "to pass over." It is the Hebrew name of the Passover holiday when the houses of the Israelites were "passed over" by the angel of death. It is also the name of the special offering brought on the holiday. A similar name is PESACHYA, which means "the Pesach of G-d."


PIRCHIYA means blossom or flower.

News

New Mikva In Canberra, Australia, a new mikva recently opened. Under the auspices of Chabad of Canberra, Mikvah Chaya Mushka is the first ever mikva in Australia's capital city.

New Center Chabad of Yale recently received approval of the New Haven (Connecticut) Board of Zoning to turn the 8,500 sq. ft. Palmer House into a new center. It is expected to open in 2012.

New Torah A new Torah scroll was completed in Johannesburg, South Africa. While the Torah scroll was being written by a local scribe, it took an 8 month journey through Jewish communities in southern Africa before being completed and brought to the Savoy Chabad House. **■**

Important Times – Scottsdale, AZ February 25 – March 4	Brought to you by: Chabad-Lubavitch in Cyberspace www.chabad.org	Re-printed by: Chabad of Scottsdale (480) 998-1410 chabadofscottsdale.org
<i>Shacharis</i> 7:00am Sunday 8:00am Monday/Thursday 6:45am	Copyright © 2010 Lubavitch Youth Organization www.lchaimweekly.org	 The Jewish Learning Center of Scottsdale 480.443.5362
<i>Minchah/Maariv</i> 6:00pm Shabbos 5:50pm	Light Candles 6:03pm Shabbat Ends 6:59pm	
<i>Shabbat</i> Chassidus Club 8:15am Kabbalah of Cholent 9:05am Shacharis 9:30am		

It Once Happened

The wealthy chasid had stopped at the home of the mother of Reb Yisrael, the Ruzhiner Rebbe, before continuing his journey to visit Reb Yisrael in prison. "I would like to give his regards from his family, and especially from you, his mother," said the man.

The woman was visibly touched, and answered, "If you ask my son to give you a sign that he received my regards, I would be very happy."

The chasid arrived at the prison and was permitted a visit with Reb Yisrael, during which they discussed many hidden secrets of the Torah.

The conversation was so congenial that the chasid chanced a delicate question. "I would like to ask you something, but only if you won't be insulted or hurt by the question." Reb Yisrael agreed.

"The story is told of the Baal Shem Tov's visit to the city of Be'er where he was slighted by the rabbi who refused to greet him. The rabbi resisted all entreaties by the chasidim, saying that he did not consider the Baal Shem Tov knowledgeable in Torah despite the many miracles he performed. The chasidim laughed at this accusation. 'Why, our rebbe is a genius of the revealed Torah.' The rabbi thought for a moment, and said, 'Very well, then. I will test him on a part of the Talmud, and if I feel he knows it well, even I may ask him for advice.'

"The Baal Shem Tov agreed to be tested. The rabbi gave him a page to study in the Talmud, but then was called away on an urgent matter. When he returned, he tested the Baal Shem Tov, who replied satisfactorily, but the rabbi was suspicious. He thought that in his absence the Baal Shem Tov might have reviewed the text with someone more scholarly. He demanded another test.

"Again the Baal Shem Tov submitted to the test, and this time the rabbi was satisfied. The advice he sought was in regard to his salary; he needed more money. The Baal Shem Tov at once requested the raise on the rabbi's behalf and it was given."

The wealthy chasid stopped in his narrative for a minute. "From this story we see the greatness of the Baal Shem Tov. He was not insulted by the rabbi's tests, on the contrary, he was eager to do him some favor. But, in your case, it struck me as very different. I have heard that when you visited Lemberg, the rabbi's son insulted you. He died soon after, and you are in prison. Could you perhaps explain the difference to me?"

The Ruzhiner Rebbe replied: "When I travelled to Lemberg I passed through many villages and towns, and through all my travels I was accorded the greatest respect. By the time I reached Lemberg a great crowd of people awaited me.

"When the son of the rabbi of Lemberg saw that I was given such a great honor, he was angered, since he felt it belittled his father. He told the owners of the hotel where I was staying to prohibit me from forming a minyan to pray. So that even though it was Shavuot, and I had brought my own Torah scroll, I was unable to pray with a minyan. Nevertheless, I refused to take offense.

"Before my departure, my chasidim implored me to go to visit the rabbi. I lit my pipe and went to his home, but as I approached, the rabbi's son stopped me, saying, 'How dare you come to my father while smoking!' My chasidim tried to defend me, but the son was furious. He must have brought the tragedy on himself.

"As for my imprisonment, I will explain it to you, and this will be a sign to my mother. Before my wife became pregnant with my youngest son, I learned that a unique soul was to descend to earth. I had waited over eight hundred years to come down and would have a special mission. However, Heaven had decreed that the tzadik who would father this soul would have to spend some time in jail. I went to my mother to ask her advice. She answered me directly, 'What does a father not do for his children?' And that is why I am here."

The chasid returned to Reb Yisrael's mother and recounted the conversation.

Shortly after Reb Meir of Premishlan helped Reb Yisrael escape. He hired a smuggler to bring Reb Yisrael over the Russian-Austrian border, promising him, "When you get to the river, you must take our rabbi on your shoulders. If you succeed, I guarantee you a place in the world-to-come."

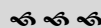
Reb Yisrael eventually settled in the town of Sadigura. ■

Thoughts that Count**And he made the altar of incense of acacia wood (Ex. 37:25)**

A Chasid once came to Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism, and asked him, "Is it possible that the real intent behind the incense was only to dispel the smell of the animal sacrifices?" Rabbi Shneur Zalman told him that this was not so. "Whenever a person offered a sacrifice in the Temple," he explained, "the first thing he had to do was regret his sins and return to G-d with a whole heart. Then and only then were his sins atoned for. Sometimes, however, it happened that a person didn't repent completely, and there was still a trace of sin in the air. The purpose of the incense was to dispel its foul odor." (Shmuot VeSipurim)

**Moses gathered together all the Congregation of the Children of Israel and said to them: "These are the things which G-d has commanded that you should do" (Ex. 35:1)**

Every Jew approaches a mitzva (commandment) with his own thoughts and intentions, according to his intellect and understanding. Yet the physical performance of the mitzva is carried out in the same manner by all. Moses was able to assemble all the Jews in true unity because the performance of mitzvot is common to all Jews, irrespective of other differences. (Rebbe of Tshortkov)



Earring, nose ring, finger ring and bracelet (35:22) These items were donated for the Sanctuary to teach us an important lesson in raising our children: Earring - We must listen carefully to the Torah's dictates on child rearing, and must always hear what our children are saying to make sure they are receiving a good education; Nose ring - We must "smell out" our children's friends, to make sure that they are positive and not negative influences; Finger ring - We must point, so to speak, with our finger, the right path to follow, and explain the dangers of straying from that path; Bracelet - We must use our arms, that is, all of our strengths and resources, to ensure that every Jewish child receives a strong Jewish education. (The Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe)