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for Every Jewish Person

נוסף תוך ימי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson

"Jerusalem has mountains around it, and the L-rd is around His people from now and to eternity" (Psalms 125:2)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

*from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion*

According to Maimonides' enumeration of the Torah's 613 mitzvot (commandments), general commandments such as "You shall be holy" or "You shall keep My laws" are not, as a rule, considered mitzvot. Rather, these injunctions are classified as broad directives encompassing all of Judaism.

It is therefore surprising, at first glance, that the commandment in this week's Torah portion, Ki Tavo, "You shall walk in His ways," is classified as a positive mitzva, requiring a Jew to emulate the Holy One, Blessed Be He." Maimonides writes, "Just as G-d is gracious, so shall you be gracious. Just as G-d is merciful, so shall you be merciful. Just as G-d is pious, so shall you be pious." Indeed, the commandment implies that a Jew is required to emulate G-d to the best of his ability, always and in all circumstances.

But why is this commandment different from all other general statements in the Torah, to the point that it is characterized as a separate mitzva? What does the verse "You shall walk in His ways" mean that other similar commandments do not?

To explain:

Maimonides classifies "You shall walk in His ways" as a distinct commandment, as it contains a unique aspect not found in any other general directive in the Torah. This innovation is alluded to in the specific use of the word "walk," which implies an ongoing and perpetual sense of motion.

One of the differences between the soul of a Jew and an angel is that angels are stationary beings, fixed in their spiritual positions, whereas the Jewish soul constantly ascends from one spiritual level to the next. The Jew is constantly in motion, reaching higher spiritual heights by virtue of his actions.

It sometimes happens that a Jew may observe mitzvot, yet he remains on the same spiritual rung as before. His performance of the mitzva did not cause him to progress or ascend any further. The commandment "You shall walk in His ways" comes to teach us that a Jew must never be stagnant, and that his observance of the mitzvot must always lead to an improvement of his overall spiritual condition.

How are we to accomplish this? By observing the Torah's mitzvot solely because they are "His ways" - because of our desire to emulate the Creator. For when we do, our spiritual ascent to higher levels of G-dliness is assured.

Adapted from Volume 4 of Likutei Sichot

Two Ways to Be Grateful

A familiar Jewish story tells of two people who bring their disagreement to a rabbi. After hearing the first person, the rabbi says, "You are right." The second presents the opposite argument, and the rabbi tells him, "You are right, too." The rebbetzin objects: "They cannot both be right." The rabbi smiles and answers, "You are also right."

Behind the humor lies a characteristically Jewish approach to disagreement. The Talmud teaches, Eilu v'eilu divrei Elokim chayim—"These and those are the words of the living G-d." This does not mean that every opinion becomes Jewish law. A decision must ultimately be made. It means that two opposing viewpoints can each reveal part of a larger truth.

An example appears at the beginning of Ki Tavo, in the Torah's discussion of bikkurim. In ancient Israel, farmers brought the first fruits of their harvest to the Temple in Jerusalem. The ritual was an expression of gratitude for the land, the harvest and the blessings that made both possible.

The ancient rabbis disagreed about when this practice began. The Torah states: "When you enter the land...and possess it and settle in it." The Jerusalem Talmud emphasizes "possess it and settle in it," concluding that the first fruits were brought only after the land had been conquered and divided under Joshua—a process that took fourteen years. The Midrash focuses instead on "when you enter the land," suggesting that the obligation began immediately upon arrival.

At first, this appears to be a

technical debate about timing. But it also offers two different ways of understanding gratitude.

The Midrash represents gratitude in its most immediate form. It is the spontaneous appreciation we feel before we have had time to analyze anything: the awareness that waking up to another day is itself remarkable. Jewish tradition gives this instinct a voice in Modeh Ani, the short statement of thanks said upon awakening. In modern terms, it is the pause before reaching for the phone—the moment when we simply notice that life has been given to us again.

The Jerusalem Talmud represents a more reflective gratitude, one that comes only after we have "settled" into our lives and considered them carefully. We think about the people who have stood beside us, the opportunities that opened unexpected doors, the difficulties that helped us grow and the many circumstances we could never have arranged on our own.

Each approach contributes something important. Spontaneous gratitude has emotional force, but it can remain vague. Reflective gratitude is specific and grounded, but it may lack the freshness of that first response.

The richest form of gratitude combines them. We begin with wonder and then give that wonder depth. One opens the heart; the other changes how we see our lives. Together they transform gratitude from a passing feeling into a thoughtful and enduring way of living and meeting the world.

SLICE OF LIFE

Rabbi Sholom Ber Eber, 78, Documented the Rebbe for Posterity



Rabbi Sholom Ber Eber receives a dollar for charity from the Rebbe. The thousands of hours with the Rebbe he recorded fuel decades of inspiration

There are those who stand in the spotlight, and those who help that light reach others. Rabbi Sholom Ber Eber, who passed away on June 29 (14 Tammuz) at the age of 78, belonged to the latter category.

Type “the Rebbe” into any search engine today, anywhere in the world, and hundreds of videos of the Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson—will surface nearly instantly.

There are videos of Chassidic gatherings, public prayers and the hours-long lines during “Sunday Dollars,” when visitors passed the Rebbe to receive a dollar for charity and a blessing. The encounter lasted seconds but became a powerful memory preserved for posterity.

Years before livestreams or digital archives existed, it was Eber, working in a small storefront in Brooklyn, N.Y., who meticulously preserved thousands of hours of that footage. His work still fuels the inspiration millions draw from the Rebbe today, 32 years after his passing.

FROM TEL AVIV TO CROWN HEIGHTS

Born in 1947, Sholom Dov Ber grew up in Tel Aviv among a small circle of Russian Lubavitcher Chassidim. His grandfather, Rabbi Eliyahu Eber, served as a mashpia in Nevel, White Russia. His great-uncle, Rabbi Yehudah (Yuda) Eber, worked in the underground Chabad yeshivah system in the Soviet Union before being murdered with his family in Riga, Latvia, in 1941.

Sholom Ber’s father, Rabbi Nissen Eber, grew up in

Nevel amid the Russian Revolution and immigrated to the Land of Israel just before the Holocaust, where he taught for years.

“It was as a boy in that environment in Tel Aviv, where my father absorbed much of the Chassidic character that went on to define who he was,” said his son, Rabbi Yossi Eber, co-director of Chabad of West Pasco. “His humility, his generosity, and his sense of urgency were all ingrained deeply in him from those formative years.”

As a 19-year-old yeshivah student in 1967, Eber traveled from Israel to study at 770 Eastern Parkway in Crown Heights. He married Esther Gurwitz and settled nearby, buying the Ess & Bentch Luncheonette directly across from 770.

Rabbi Chaim Boruch Halberstam, who had run the restaurant before selling it to Eber, recalled his generosity.

“The profits from the first customer each day, he always gave away to charity,” Halberstam said. “It didn’t matter if it was a modest purchase or a major one.”

PRESERVING FOR POSTERITY

Halberstam had already begun recording the Rebbe’s farbrengens and broadcasting them live, allowing communities around the world to hear the Rebbe in real time. He also photographed and filmed events at 770 and sold copies on cassette and VHS tape.

Halberstam called the operation “World Lubavitch Communications Center” (WLCC), with the tagline “spreading Judaism via all means of audio and visual communications.”

By 1982, Halberstam asked the Rebbe if he should open a storefront devoted to preserving and distributing recordings. The Rebbe directed him to find a location near 770.

“As soon as I finished reading the Rebbe’s answer, I walked out of 770 and bumped into Sholom,” Halberstam recalled.

Eber had recently leased a storefront down the block. Halberstam described his plan and the Rebbe’s guidance.

“When he said he had the empty space, I told him a place for my work has been found,” Halberstam said. “Sholom was enthusiastic, and that is how we became partners.”

Together, the two men recorded the Rebbe, duplicated thousands of audio and video tapes, and cataloged footage so it could reach people far from Crown Heights. The partnership lasted decades and touched countless people around the globe.

When the Rebbe began distributing dollars for charity each Sunday in 1986, Eber and Halberstam

arranged for photographers to capture the thousands of encounters, allowing visitors to purchase photos or videos afterward.

“Sholom was never comfortable standing in front of the Rebbe with a camera,” Halberstam said. “But behind the scenes, he was running everything.”

While Halberstam handled the cameras, Eber managed the sale and copying of recordings, preparation of materials, and whatever else the day required.

“Whenever I arrived at the store in the morning, Sholom was already there, deep in the middle of his work,” Halberstam recalled. “He worked tirelessly to make sure the Rebbe’s words reached as many people as possible.”

Eber also spent years tracking down recordings from the Rebbe’s earliest years, gathering and restoring tapes and films scattered among private collections.

“My father understood that every word, every image and every encounter with the Rebbe was a priceless part of history that deserved to be preserved for generations,” says Rabbi Yossi Eber. “Today, recordings from those early years have become invaluable treasures.”

Eber also helped produce Maaseh Rav, a collection of stories shared by the Rebbe during farbrengens, and K’tanim U’Pnanim, bringing meaningful encounters and lesser-known moments from WLCC’s archives into homes and schools around the world.

‘TOMORROW WAS NOT PART OF HIS LEXICON’

In 1992, as the Rebbe’s health declined and public appearances became less predictable, Eber helped develop the beeper system that alerted holders whenever the Rebbe appeared in public.

When Eber noticed the Rebbe needed larger print for parts of the prayers, he arranged to have those pages printed on large paper himself.

Despite his many responsibilities, those who knew Eber describe his warm smile, genuine interest in every individual and generosity.

“My father insisted on helping new immigrants get started when they came to the United States. He gave jobs to yeshivah students who needed it, and gave free photos of the Rebbe to those who couldn’t afford them,” said Rabbi Nissi Eber, who with his wife Chaya directs the Chabad Jewish Center of FiDi in Manhattan. “He was always offering encouragement to those around him.”

“Sholom was a man who saw a need and got it done,” Halberstam said. “He never sat idle. If something needed to be done, it was today. Tomorrow was not part of his lexicon.”

By Mendel Braun / Chabad.org

New Toronto Mikvah Named After R’ Berel Zaltzman



A new youth center, library, and mikvah opened this summer in East Thornhill, Toronto, serving the Russian-speaking Jewish community under the auspices of the JRCC. The Kholodenko, Murad & Ressin JRCC was inaugurated with a special dedication and mezuzah affixing ceremony.

The center is directed by Shliach Rabbi Mendel Zaltzman, who works alongside his father, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Zaltzman, founder of the JRCC.

The dedication came just days after the shloshim of Rabbi Zaltzman’s father, the famed Shliach and cantor Rabbi Chaim Dovber (Berel) Zaltzman. The mikvah was named in memory of Rabbi Berel Zaltzman a”h, who exhibited lifelong mesirus nefesh for mikvaos and strengthening Yiddishkeit.

A Call to Action

Be “Charitable” on Shabbat

Charity should be given every day. But how is this accomplished on Shabbat, when it is forbidden to handle money? Instead of money, we can give food and drink to guests, speak well of another person, offer an encouraging word, or pay someone a compliment.

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Translated and adapted

Chai (18) Elul, 5737 [1977]

To the Sons and Daughters of Our People Israel,
Everywhere -

These are the concluding days of Elul, the month of soul-searching and honest self-appraisal with respect to the outgoing year. These days are also devoted to preparation for the New Year - may it bring all the good to all our people Israel.

It is obvious that this effort should, first, be applied to ensure that the outgoing year should be a complete one - namely, that it be both complete (not lacking) and perfect.

The ability to achieve this perfection is given by means of Teshuva Shleima (complete return to G-d), particularly in the last twelve days of the year, each day corresponding to a month of the outgoing year - to make good any past deficiency as well as insufficiency.

It is also self-evident that the resolutions which one makes for the coming year should likewise be perfect, which is to say that one should not be content to strive only for the most necessary and minimal, but for the highest and fullest measure, in all areas of human activity - in thought, speech and deed.

Understandably also, the degree and quality of perfection which is required of a person grows together with the person. For, as a person rises in stature, a correspondingly superior perfection is expected, since the level of perfection appropriate to his previous state is no longer sufficient for his higher state. Thus, from time to time, as a person grows older and wiser, the quality of perfection in all his activities must rise in a corresponding measure.

It has often been pointed out that man's mission in life includes also "elevating" the environment in which he lives, in accordance with the Divine intent in the entire Creation and in all its particulars, by infusing holiness and G-dliness into all the aspects of the physical world within his reach - in the so-called "Four Kingdoms" - domem, tzome'ach, chai, and medabber (inorganic matter, vegetable, animal, and man).

Significantly, this finds expression in the special Mitzvos (commandments) which are connected with the beginning of the year, in the festivals of the month of Tishrei:

The Mitzvah of the Succah, the Jew's house of dwelling during the seven days of Succos, where the walls of the Succah represent the "inorganic kingdom";

The Mitzvah of the "Four Kinds" - Esrog, Lulav, myrtle and willow - which come from the vegetable kingdom;

The Mitzvah of Shofar on Rosh Hashanah, the Shofar being a horn of an animal;

And all of these things (by virtue of being Divine commandments) are elevated through the medabber, the “speaking” (human) being - the person carrying out the said (and all other) Mitzvos, whereby he elevates also himself and mankind -

Both in the realm of doing as well as of not doing - the latter as represented in the Mitzvah of the fast on Yom Kippur.

Thus, through infusing holiness into all four kingdoms of the physical world and making them into “vessels” (and instruments) of G-dliness in carrying out G-d’s command - a Jew elevates them to their true perfection.

It also follows that just as in regard to his personal perfection, which is expected to rise in harmony with his rising state, so also in regard to the four kingdoms he is expected (and given the ability) to raise, from time to time, the state of perfection to which he elevates them (as explained above) - both quantitatively and qualitatively - in the manner of doing the Mitzvos (where there can be grades of performance, such as acceptable post facto; good to begin with; according to unanimous opinion; with hiddur [excellence], etc.) and their inner content.

Taking into account the assurance that G-d does not require of a human being anything beyond his capacity, it is certain that everyone, man or woman, can achieve utmost perfection in all aforesaid endeavors, "in one instant," since the person so resolved receives aid from G-d, for Whom there are no limitations.

May G-d grant that the efforts to achieve utmost perfection in the outgoing year, and the good resolutions to achieve perfection in all the above-mentioned matters, each day of the coming year, should bring down upon everyone G-d's blessings in all needs, material and spiritual, also in complete measure,

And - very soon indeed - the complete blessing,
the true and complete Redemption through our
Righteous Moshiach.

way, if the disciple heard the sound of the shofar heralding Moshiach, he could be immediately awakened from sleep. When the pre-marriage contract was written for Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev's niece, he told them to write: "The wedding will take place, G-d willing, with good mazal, in the holy city of Jerusalem. And if, G-d forbid, Moshiach has not arrived by then, the wedding will take place in Berditchev."

“A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

In Memory of Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman, Director of the Lubavitch Youth Organization and Founder of the L'chaim Publication.

From the Archives

This coming Monday is Chai (the 18th of) Elul, the birthday of both the Baal Shem Tov (founder of the Chasidic movement) in 5458 (1698) and the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism in 5505-1745. In the same way that the Chasidic movement revitalized Jewish life and introduced a new path in the service of G-d, so too does Chai Elul (“chai” - from the Hebrew word meaning “life”) introduce an element of liveliness and vitality into our Divine service in the month of Elul, whose main theme of which is repentance.

A fundamental of Chasidut is the joyful service of G-d. As surprising as it may seem, Chasidic philosophy teaches that even the mitzva of teshuva (repentance) should be approached with happiness rather than trepidation. If all of the Torah's mitzvot should be fulfilled with joy, how much more so the mitzva of teshuva, which is so great it has the power to perfect all other commandments!

At first glance, the pairing of teshuva with joy appears unrealistic. Repentance is serious business: conducting an honest assessment of one's past behavior, feeling remorse for one's misdeeds, and begging G-d for forgiveness for transgressing His will. How are we to do this out of a sense of joy?

The answer is that joy, as defined by Chasidut, is not the opposite of seriousness. Joy does not mean frivolity, a life without responsibilities or mindless revelry. Rather, joy itself is serious business, a deep feeling that comes when a Jew contemplates the enormous privilege he has to have been born Jewish, to be able to study G-d's Torah and to fulfill His commandments. When a Jew appreciates that he is never alone and that G-d is always with him, his joy becomes the impetus to draw even closer to the Infinite.

With Rosh Hashana approaching, what could make us happier than the knowledge that teshuva during Elul is easier than at any other time of year? For the gates of repentance are always open, and G-d always gives us the opportunity to return to Him.

Shmuel Belman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA
לזכרון חי'ה י מושקא

*The name of our publication has special meaning.
It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
(obm), wife of the Rebbe.*



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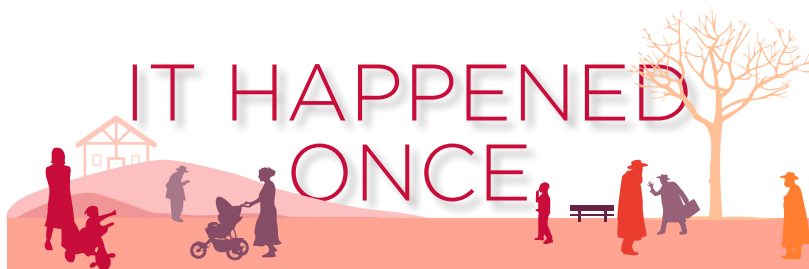
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MOSHIACH MATTERS

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk was so strong in his faith in Moshiach that he literally awaited him every day and night. Every evening, before he went to bed, he set one of his disciples near him. In that



The year before the birth of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidic philosophy, the Baal Shem Tov knew that a new soul was soon to descend to this world. But who would be privileged to host it he did not know, so he searched for it in the heavenly palaces.

What a soul is in its pristine state Above - this the Baal Shem Tov knew. How a soul descends into this world and is garbed in materiality - this he also knew. How fares a new soul - this he dearly would love to know.

He knew that this new soul was due to descend to this world during that year; he did not know where, or in whom.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman's father, the saintly Reb Baruch, was one of the Baal Shem Tov's circle of hidden tzadikim (righteous individuals). But no one knew of Reb Baruch's righteousness - no one, that is, apart from his wife Rebbetzin Rivka.

When a year had passed since their marriage and they had not been blessed with a child, Reb Baruch and his wife set out during the month of Elul to visit the Baal Shem Tov to ask for his blessing. The Baal Shem Tov blessed them and promised them that in the forthcoming year, 5505 (1745), they would be granted a healthy son.

The fact that this child was connected to the new soul that was destined to descend that year was hidden even from the Baal Shem Tov.

On Rosh Hashana of that year, the disciples of the Baal Shem Tov observed a marked difference from his accustomed mode of divine service. His abounding joy could be perceived in his manner of prayer, in the especially cordial tone with which he blessed them, in the Torah teachings at the meal thereafter, in the next day's sounding of the shofar, and in the additional prayer service.

The conclusion of Yom Kippur that year found the Baal Shem Tov in a distinctive state of holy elation, which remained with him until after Simchat Torah. His disciples understood that something wonderful must have transpired that holiday month, something that had brought him such joy that he had departed from his accustomed mode of divine service during the Days of Awe, for joy was now its dominant theme. But eager as they were to discover the reason for this joy, they were left disappointed.

Before Reb Baruch and his wife left Medzibozh, they called on the Baal Shem Tov to receive his farewell blessings. Rebbetzin Rivka, bestirred by spiritual emotion, told the tzadik that when the Almighty fulfilled his blessing and granted her a healthy son, she would dedicate him to the study of Torah and to divine service in the spirit of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov.

Seeing their state of spiritual arousal, the Baal Shem Tov gave them his blessing, and they left town with glad hearts.

On Wednesday morning, the eighteenth of Elul, the Baal Shem Tov returned from his immersion in the mikva (ritual bath) in extraordinarily buoyant spirits. His disciples were mystified, but none of them ventured to breathe a question. Moreover, the tzadik personally led the prayers to the jovial rhythms of the festival melodies. And when he surprised them by omitting the penitential prayers, they realized that this must be a uniquely festive day.

He then invited them to share his visible joy at a festive meal, where he said: "On Wednesday, 'the day on which the luminaries were suspended in the heavens,' on the Wednesday of the week whose Haftora opens with the words, 'Arise and shine,' on this day a new soul has come down, which will light up the world through the revealed levels of the Torah and through Chasidut. It will endure self-sacrifice for the sake of the spiritual path of Chasidut and will succeed in its mission until the coming of Moshiach."

When the Baal Shem Tov received Reb Baruch on Yom Kippur that year, he warned him that he should tell no one that he had had a son, nor should he tell anyone of the child's name. Later, when Reb Baruch was about to leave for home, the Baal Shem Tov gave him detailed instructions as to how the child should be attended to and how he should be taken out to the fields. He warned him solemnly, moreover, that the child should be kept out of public view, and in particular, out of the view of the local gossips.

And three times a day, the Baal Shem Tov remembered the newborn child in his prayers.

On the child's third birthday, Rebbetzin Rivka and her sister-in-law arrived in Medzibozh for the child's third birthday, when it is customary to give the first haircut. As soon as the Baal Shem Tov had given the child his first training in leaving his peyot (side-curls) uncut and had given him his blessing, he urged them to leave immediately and not to discuss between themselves where they had been. Finally, he wished them a good year and a safe journey home.

The little boy kept on asking who this man was who had cut his hair and left him with peyot, and who had blessed him.

"That was a grandfather," replied his mother. Thus, Rabbi Shneur Zalman referred to the Baal Shem Tov in the future, as his spiritual grandfather.

From Likutei Dibburim by the Previous Rebbe



You shall go to the place the Eternal your G-d will choose to cause His name to dwell there. (Deut. 26:2)

A Jew must know that when he goes from one place to another, he is not going on his own but is directed from Above. And the intention and purpose of this is "to cause His Name to dwell there" - that is, to make G-d known in the place to which he was Divinely led. (*The Baal Shem Tov*)

Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field (Deut. 28:3)

A city has certain advantages over rural life, among them the pleasure of others' company and the availability of places of Torah and learning. Rural life also has its advantages, such as a more relaxed life style, fresher air, and warmer relationships between neighbors. G-d's blessing is that we should be equally blessed in both locales. (*Chatam Sofer*)

And G-d shall make you plentiful for good, in the fruit of your body (Deut. 28:11)

The Torah promises length of days and good years - even beyond what is truly deserved - in the merit of children who are raised and educated according to Torah. (*Torat Moshe*)

Dedicated in honor of our dear parents
Misha and Olga Rovner

And our dear children
Jacob and Jordanna Rovner

By Anna and Serge Rovner



7:16 PM Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
Elul 15 / August 28
Torah Portion Ki Tavo
Ethics: Chapters 3 & 4
Shabbat ends 8:15 PM