

Living Jewish



Tell your Children

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson

In the upcoming week falls the 20th of Av, the *yahrzeit* of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, father of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak is regarded as one of the greatest Talmudic and Kabbalistic scholars of his generation. He was considered by the Rebbe Rashab (the fifth Rebbe of Chabad) to be one of his three greatest chassidim.

He was the chief rabbi of Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine, during the bloody Bolshevik revolution and the following Communist oppression. But perhaps the most unique aspect of his character was his unflinching dedication to Judaism and the total lack of fear with which he expressed that commitment. Despite awful harassment and persecution towards religious leaders, he continued to fearlessly strengthen and increase Jewish learning and practice in his city and throughout the Soviet Union.

He would address the public about strengthening Torah and mitzvot even though he knew that there were informers in the audience. In 1939, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was arrested, tortured, and sent to exile in a distant village in Kazakhstan. His spirit, however, continued to shine, even while his body was broken and gave way to his early passing.

To counter the world opinion regarding religious oppression in the Soviet Union, the communists staged a showcase conference of Byelorussia's rabbis, scheduled for the beginning of 1928 in Minsk. It was the government's intention to have thirty-two of the rabbis attending the conference sign a declaration denying the existence of any anti-religious persecution and countering all the allegations. With broken hearts and shaking hands, the rabbis signed the declaration.

In triumph, the government began to plan another conference, this one to be attended by rabbis from the Ukraine. The conference was to be held in Kharkov, then the Ukrainian capital. There was only one obstacle. According to government informers, the rabbi of Yekaterinoslav (later renamed Dnepropetrovsk),



picture reprinted from COLlive

Levi Yitzchak Schneerson (a great-grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek, and an immensely popular and respected figure among the Jews), adamantly refused to sign the fabricated statement.

On the appointed day, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak arrived at the conference. There were several dozen rabbis in the auditorium. Scurrying among them were some unfamiliar characters easily recognizable as GPU agents. Palpable fear and tension were in the air; the participants avoided talking to one another. One by one, they were called to the podium, where they recited the prepared texts and, hanging their heads in shame, returned to their seats.

When it was Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's turn, with confident steps, the rabbi crossed the floor, climbed up to the stage and, in a loud and clear voice, called upon everyone present not to sign the statement, calling it an outright fabrication. "Those who sign this lie will be committing a grave transgression," he concluded his brief speech.

Deep silence descended on the auditorium. To the utter astonishment of all those present, no one came up to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak to demand that he retract his words. The conference lasted for several more days, during which Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was able to repeat his appeal a number of times. His words and his unshakeable conviction were beginning to affect those attending the conference, and their spirits were regaining power.

Seeing their plans threatened, the authorities summoned Rabbi Levi Yitzchak to a meeting with the people's commissar in charge of education in the Ukraine. He attempted to gain the rabbi's sympathy with mildness and friendliness. However, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak explained, patiently and without the slightest sign of fear, that nothing would intimidate him into signing the declaration, which did not contain a single word of truth.

"You persecute religion every way you can," he said. "You destroy synagogues and yeshivot, close down printing houses and ritual baths, deprive us of our legal right to lead Jewish lives. Do you really believe that I can be forced to sign this fabrication?"

At this point, the commissar could no longer restrain himself. "I'll have you know," he yelled, "that we will not tolerate your incitement! You are undermining the foundations of the Soviet regime, and you will pay dearly for this!"

The authorities never did obtain the desired results from the conference. They were fuming with rage, which grew even more intense when they found that someone had smuggled information about these events abroad, triggering a storm of reactions and protests throughout the world. Thousands of Jews inside and outside the Soviet Union held their breath: the solitary battle of one seemingly defenseless Jew against an all-powerful state had an unreal quality.

Continued on page 3

Shabbat Times

| | Candle Lighting | Motzei Shabbat |
|------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Jerusalem | 6:55 | 8:08 |
| Tel Aviv | 7:13 | 8:11 |
| Haifa | 7:06 | 8:11 |
| Beer Sheva | 7:11 | 8:09 |
| New York | 7:45 | 8:47 |

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True Satisfaction

In this week's Torah portion, Eikev, Moses looks back upon the Jewish people's 40 years in the desert and mentions twice the manna they ate.

Both times, Moses seems to imply that eating the manna was somehow distressing: "And He afflicted you and suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna"; "[He] fed you in the wilderness with manna...that He might afflict you."

In fact, the Children of Israel complained bitterly over having to eat it. "But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes." "Our soul loathes this light bread."

Strategy of the Evil Inclination

At first glance their complaint is surprising, as the Torah describes the manna as being delicious - "and its taste was like wafers made with honey." Our Sages comment further that the G-dly manna was unique in that the person eating it experienced whatever flavor he wished. Furthermore, the manna was completely digested, having no waste. How then could such a wonderful food be perceived as "torment"?

However, the Talmud explains that it was precisely these qualities that left the Jews with a sense of hunger. It was hard to get used to this "bread from the heavens" that

had no waste and could taste like anything in the world. The Jews wanted regular bread, "bread from the earth." They longed for food that looked like what it was.

But the truth is that the Jews' resentment was motivated by the Evil Inclination. At first, the Evil Inclination draws a person into small sins, slowly working its way to more serious ones.

So it was with the Children of Israel: They started by complaining about the manna, then progressed to "crying among their families," implying transgressions in the area of family life.

Bread from Heaven and Earth

The dynamics of the Evil Inclination never change, and even today, the Evil Inclination still chafes against "bread from the heavens." Symbolically, "bread from the heavens" stands for Torah and G-dly wisdom, while "bread from the earth" is secular, worldly knowledge.

The Evil Inclination tries to make the Jew dissatisfied with his "bread from the heavens," and attempts to convince him that a steady diet of Torah will leave him hungry. "The Torah is endless," it whispers in his ear. "You can never learn it all; the more you'll learn, the more you'll see how infinite it is. Why not turn your mind to worldly matters? At least you'll get a feeling of fullness and satisfaction."

On an even finer level, the Evil Inclination tries to dissuade a Jew from studying Chassidut, the innermost part of Torah, which is also likened to "bread from the heavens." "Bread from the earth," the revealed part of Torah, is enough, it claims.

Feeling Full

But the truth is the opposite. Because the Jew's essence is spiritual, he can never be satiated by worldly matters.

Only Torah, and the innermost part of it, can make the soul feel full, for it is through Torah that the Jew connects to the Infinite.

Adapted from the teachings of the Rebbe. Shabbos Table, From our Sages and Moshiaich Now! reprinted from www.LchaimWeekly.org - LYO / NYC

The First Born Son

"I [the Rebbe] was born in a Communist country; my father [Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson] served as the Chief Rabbi of Yekaterinoslav. The fact that I was the first born son to my father, and was fluent in Russian led to me being called from time to time to the 'Yevsektzia,' [Jewish section of the Soviet Communist Party] where they would interrogate, pressure, and yell at me."

Growing up in Yekaterinoslav, the Rebbe spent the vast majority of the time in seclusion, learning under the tutelage of his teacher, and later with his father. However, from time to time, the Rebbe would break from his usual schedule, and participate in his father's work.

One area where he would participate was in his father's correspondence. As a well known Rav throughout the region, Rav Levi Yitzchok received letters with halachic inquiries from all over, and did not always have the time to answer them all. He would pass them over to the Rebbe, who would prepare answers which would be sent with his father's approval.

Often, when Rav Levi Yitzchok would seek Rebbetzin Chana's opinion, she would tell him to ask the Rebbe's opinion. She once related, that "my husband didn't just love him as a father to son; he respected him, and took his opinion into account already from childhood."

The Rebbe also participated in communal activities. Each year when Yud-Tes Kislev came around, the Rebbe would collect money, and put together a children's farbrengen in honor of the day. During World War I, when refugees spilled into the city and a typhus epidemic broke out, the Rebbe worked around the clock to help the victims, to the point that he himself contracted the illness.

Reprinted from Derher

From our Sages

Blessed shall you be above all the nations; there shall not be a barren male or female among you (Deut. 7:14)

The Torah considers the Jewish soul the most precious commodity in the world. The proliferation of the Jewish people, therefore, is the highest blessing that can be bestowed upon them.

(Rabbi Shimshon Refael Hirsch)

As a man chastens his son, so does the Lord your G-d chasten you (Deut. 8:5)

A father's heart is heavy when he is forced to strike his son. Similarly, G-d suffers with us when punishment is meted out.

(Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev)

A land whose stones are iron (Deut. 8:9)

Rabbi Abba said: A Torah scholar who is not as tough as iron is no Torah scholar, as it states, "whose stones are iron." Do

not read "avaneha" (stones), but "boneha" (her builders).

This Talmudic homily teaches us an important lesson in how to protect the land of Israel: Although it is certainly necessary to possess "iron" weapons in the literal sense -- an army and ammunition to deter our enemies -- we must always remember that the true "iron" and strength of the Jewish people is their Torah learning and observance of mitzvot.

(the Rebbe)

Then your heart will be lifted up (Deut. 8:14)

Humility is not enumerated among the Torah's 613 commandments. If being humble were considered a mitzva, many Jews would rush to observe it in the most beautiful manner possible, with the end result being pride in just how humble they are!

(the Baal Shem Tov)

Chassidus page

Feeling Proud

Pride is usually a negative trait, but in the service of HaShem, it is praiseworthy. One should be proud of his achievements and aspire to further heights. The Baal Shem Tov taught that Yidden should use their pride for Torah matters and their humility for worldly matters.

The Rebbe often emphasized that the way a Yid gains respect in the eyes of others is by showing unwavering commitment to his standards. There have been people who thought that by bending their standards they would be accepted and well liked, but the outcome was the opposite. When others saw that a Yid felt inferior, they treated him as such.

Reb Mordechai Lieplier, a prominent chassid of the Alter Rebbe, was firm in his observance of mitzvos, thanks to his pride. When his Yetzer Hara would try to incite him to do something wrong, he would stand up tall and shout, "I?! – the chassid of the Alter Rebbe, the wealthy lamdan and maskil (who learns Chassidus in depth), should do a sin?! That is not befitting for me!"

The Rebbe adds that every Yid can have this pride. When a Yid thinks of his great ancestors, recalls that he stood at Har Sinai and was given the Torah, and that the entire world was created for him – he will feel that it is unbefitting for him to lower himself even in the slightest.

The chassid Reb Meir Gurkov records in his memoirs: Living in communist Russia, the children of chassidim were distinct from their neighbors. Their clothes were refined and covered them

properly, and their tzitzis showed from under their clothes, even in the summer heat. Fear of Heaven and eidelkeit (refinement) could be seen on their faces, especially with the peyos that extended down their cheeks.

Even during play, the difference was noticeable. They would not take part in wild activities and stood on the side with dignity. Their derech eretz led the way. In shul, they would stand near their fathers, davening slowly from a siddur. Many were envious because their children were different. They would wonder aloud: "How did these come to behave like this? These kleine yidelach!" When boys were ridiculed for their peyos and tzitzis they were not ashamed, nor did they respond, for they knew the vast difference between them and other children, and looked upon them with pity and sympathy.

After a yechidus with the Rebbe Rashab, Reb Zalman Duchman went out to the courtyard, where the Previous Rebbe asked him what the Rebbe Rashab had told him. Reb Zalman related that he had been instructed to travel to Warsaw. The Previous Rebbe encouraged him at length not to be influenced by his surroundings and to act just as he did when in Lubavitch. "Look at the Chinese," said the Previous Rebbe. "They walk around here in the same way they do in their homeland, because they know that at home everyone dresses as they do..."

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Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson

Continued from page 1:

That same year, the government conducted a census. One question was, "Are you religious or non-religious?" It was known that anyone who admitted his religious affiliation would expose himself to repressive measures. Many ordinary religious Jews saw nothing wrong with registering as nonreligious; after all, they did it solely out of fear of the authorities.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak thought differently. He gathered his followers in a synagogue, and announced that registering as nonreligious would be tantamount to apostasy and a grave transgression. Despite the enormous fear of the authorities, the words of someone like Rabbi Levi Yitzchak could not be ignored, and many people abided by his instructions.

In her memoirs, Rebbetzin Chana [the wife of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak] wrote about the effect that the talk had on one person: "His words had such a remarkable impact, that one individual with a position in a government office, whose wife had already written on the form that he was a nonbeliever, went to the statistics office and asked for the erroneous information to be corrected—that he was, in fact, a believer. Very pleased that he had mustered the courage to do this, the fellow came to thank the Rav for having influenced him so".

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak exhibited courage not only in critical moments or in confrontations with the Soviet regime. In everyday life, full of hardship and danger, his sole concern was for Jews and Judaism. This concern was manifested in many situations: when it was time to circumcise a baby whose parents worked for the government, and performing the circumcision ceremony required heroic effort; when a Jew with no family was on his deathbed; when complex halachic issues arose concerning practical application of Torah laws; when a Jew needed support, either material or spiritual. Anyone who needed help could turn to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, day or night, and he was always there to lend a helping hand through word or deed.

Moshiach Now

Father, Enough Already!

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn, the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, said: "If all Jews would join together, great and small alike, and say, 'Father, enough already. Have mercy on us and send us our Redeemer, then certainly Moshiach would come!'"

A Tzadik's Passing - Descent for the Sake of Ascent

"The death of the righteous is compared to the burning of the House of our Lord." (Talmud Rosh Hashana 18b) The true intention of this epigram is that the tragedy of a Tzadik's passing is also a descent which must bring us closer to the building of the Third Holy Temple.

(the Rebbe, 20th of Av, 5747)

Human Interest

Learning Tanya

For the past three years, Irgun Limud HaTanya shel Heichal Menachem, run by Rabbi Yoel Naparstek, has been operating in Boro Park. Hundreds of young men study Tanya with explanations in Chassidus and take exams on the material covered.

Culminating three years of learning, the organization held a beautiful siyum, attended by dozens who have been influenced by the program. Director Rabbi Asher Friedman addressed the audience, focusing on the organization's goal of awareness of Hashem to penetrate a Yid's consciousness. Learning Tanya has brought incredible light in the lives of so many, he said.

Dayan Shmuel Yehuda Zilber of Kehillas Emunat Yisrael then contrasted the approach of the Alter Rebbe with other forms of Chassidus. The influ-



ence that Chassidus Chagas has varies, since its effect is a result of 'talking' to the *neshama*. The *neshama*'s ability to receive depends on the auspiciousness of the time and the amount of preparation made. Chassidus Chabad however, as taught by the Alter Rebbe, and others as well, speaks to the mind, which in turn influences the animal soul itself.

Last at the podium was an avreich (young man) who completed his third year as part of Irgun Limud HaTanya, and expressed how his studies have brought new light into his service of Hashem. All graduating students then received a special *tshura* containing the Ksav Ha'eidus written by the Alter Rebbe during his imprisonment, as well as an application of Tanya's 26th chapter to the present world situation.

Special thanks was given to the Karnowsky family for their dedication, leiluy nishmas, of their son Shmuel. Irgun Limud HaTanya currently operates in six cities and has seen incredible success. To bring it to your area, email yoel@irgunlimudhatanya.org.

Reprinted from Anash.org

Cooking Tip of the Week

Cauliflower Zucchini Soup. Heat olive oil in a pan. Sauté 5 chopped onions with a little bit of coarse salt. Add 8 cubed zucchini and one bag of bodek cauliflower, continue to sauté till the vegetables are soft. Add water to cover, 3 tbs dried dill, 1 tbs soy sauce and 1 tbs olive oil. Cook for an hour and when cooled process with a stick blender. Enjoy. *Alizah Hochstead, alizahh@hotmail.com*

Halacha Corner – Reciting the Traveler's Prayer

It is important for all those who are traveling together to say *Tefilas Haderech* (the Traveler's Prayer) simultaneously. In case there are not enough *siddurim* available, an option is for one of the travelers to recite *Tefilas Haderech* word by word, and for the others to repeat the words in unison. Some have the practice of one person saying the *tefilah* and being *motzi* (fulfilling the obligation of) all the others in the group.

In order for one person to be *motzi* others, the following conditions have to be met: 1) The one saying the *tefilah* must have in mind to be *motzi* all the others. 2) The listeners have to bear in mind that they are being *yotzei* through the reader. 3) They must hear every word. 4) They may not hear the *tefilah* through a microphone. After the conclusion of the *tefilah* they all should answer *amen*. Even if all the above conditions are met, it is nevertheless not the preferred manner. The right way is for every person to say *Tefilas Haderech* by themselves—but it should be said simultaneously.

Rav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita, Mara D'asra and member of the Badatz of Crown Heights, 1 Minute Halacha, 5775, #377, crownheightsconnect.com

Farbrengen

Question: It took me a while to find a job but I finally found one working in my profession with a good salary. I like the work and my co-workers. The problem is that my boss is always so critical and it really bothers me. What can I do to improve the situation?

Answer: Three people were walking to work when a car splashed them with mud. One person became angry, one person worried and one person stayed calm. Why? Each person chose to think differently about the situation. Perhaps the angry person thought, "The driver should have been more careful." Or, he had a subconscious belief that, "things have to go my way." Whatever the reason, how we think about a situation influences our emotional response.

So too, the language we use to describe a person or event affects how we feel. Extreme language, labels, can lead to negative and unbalanced emotions. It is helpful to remember that people and situations are multidimensional, possessing many different qualities. They are not completely one way or another.

The more balanced our language, i.e., recognizing that the person or situation also has good qualities, the better we feel. In fact, when we focus on a person's good traits, the good comes to the fore, becoming revealed.

There is a common thought pattern described as all or nothing thinking. It is expressed as an expectation that things have to be perfect, that it is not alright to make a mistake. As a result, when people do not act according to our expectations we get upset. When we make a mistake, we are unforgiving of ourselves.

Chassidus explains that because of the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, good and bad became mixed together, intertwined. The Rebbe Rayatz explains, there is no good without bad and no bad without good. People and situations are not black and white—they are a mixture of good and bad. By avoiding all or nothing labels, i.e. he/she is so frustrating, critical, selfish, lazy - and recognizing that people are a mixture of various qualities, the more accepting we will be.

In addition, criticism can be beneficial. As the Rebbe Rashab teaches, "Cherish criticism, for it will place you on the true heights." Examine if there is truth to the criticism. An objective opinion can be helpful. If necessary, improve in areas that need improvement. This may also help the relationship with your boss.

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