

# Living Jewish

**חב"ד**  
כל הלב לכל אחד  
צעירי אגודת חב"ד

## Tell your Children

### Teshuva Time

Chabad Lubavitch UK was founded in 1959 under the direction of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The very first Chabad House in Stamford Hill had a small number of shlichim comprised of the late Rabbi Nachum Sudak, zl"v, and a number of dedicated chasidim. It wasn't long before a second Chabad House opened in Manchester, the second largest Jewish community after London.

Rabbi Yitzchak Sufrin, affectionately known as "Iki", was given the job of running the Small Communities Division. There was an abundance of small Jewish communities spread out throughout the UK. They were either remnants of previously large communities whose members had moved to the bigger cities or Jews who shunned the hustle and bustle of big cities, preferring to 'get away from it all.' Rabbi Sufrin lived with the philosophy of 'have car, will travel.'

In those days of yore the world was so different. There were no mobile phones, no Internet, no Waze. Every meeting, every invitation, every shabbaton, required careful studying of the maps and meticulous coordination. There was no one to warn you of traffic jams ahead or detours, nor were there even signs indicating the next gas station. If Rabbi Sufrin would have had a minute to spare, which he didn't, he could have made a fortune producing a travel guide to Jewish England. Despite all the difficulties involved, he was remarkably successful in his work.

One day two religious Jews from Stamford Hill went to the home of Rabbi Sufrin and related that one of their brothers had left the fold. He had abandoned all of his Jewish heritage and was living far away in some small village with a non-Jewish wife and their children. Despite all their best efforts, they had been unable to reignite their brother's neshama.

"Perhaps the good Rabbi would be prepared to go and visit him," they ventured. "You are well known for your ability to reach people through your loving kindness, in a way that few can do. As a shaliach (emissary) of the Rebbe you will surely succeed."



Yehoshua Wiseman - yehoshuawiseman.com

Rabbi Sufrin rose to the challenge with out a moment's hesitation. His only problem was that he had no idea where the said village was, even with his vast topographical experience. Nevertheless after some research and checking the maps, he found both the village and the man's address. He estimated that it would be a three hour drive in each direction. After leaving London, there would be no highways or major roads but only minor roads on which to drive.

After considerable effort the Rabbi finally reached the village as dusk was falling. Finding the exact address was a different story; only with the help of the local villagers did he manage to locate it, a large house standing at the end of a deserted country lane. As he drove closer he became aware that the place was not lit up, and an eerie silence loomed. He drew a long deep breath, exited the car and slowly approached the main doors of the house, with a prayer on his lips for success with his mission.

He rang the bell and while waiting for someone to open for him, he noticed that there was no mezuzah on the door post. After what seemed like an eternity the door opened very slightly with a heavy chain across, making it impossible for anyone to get their foot inside. "Who are you? What do you want?" a man's voice bellowed.

"My name is Rabbi Sufrin and...." The door was promptly slammed in the face of the Rabbi before he could say another word. The voice bellowed out from the other side of the door: "I DON'T WANT ANY D\*\*\* JEWS ON MY PROPERTY! GET OUT BEFORE I CALL THE POLICE."

Rabbi Sufrin beat a hasty retreat. After taking stock of the situation he went back again. "What do you want now?!" bellowed the voice angrier than before.

"It's an emergency," said the Rabbi.

"What do you mean an emergency?"

"I desperately need to relieve myself after a long drive."

"Oh, so why didn't you say so?" The man opened the door like a true English gentleman and kindly showed the way to the bathroom. Rabbi Sufrin removed his hat and jacket and went inside. When he came out, he found the man waiting for him with a towel and a pitcher to wash his hands. "You will need these to make the blessing, won't you," said the man matter of factly.

Rabbi Sufrin put his hat and jacket back on and slowly and deliberately washed his hands. With full concentration he then recited the blessing *Asher Yatzar* loud and clear. Whilst the Rabbi was making the blessing, the man covered his head with his handkerchief and at the end said "Amen", and promptly burst into tears.

*Continued on page 3*

### Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	6:15	7:25
Tel Aviv	6:32	7:27
Haifa	6:24	7:27
Beer Sheva	6:31	7:26
New York	6:53	7:50

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## Together “Uniquely” as One

This week we read two Torah portions, Nitzavim and Vayelech. The Torah portion Nitzavim is always read on the Shabbat before Rosh Hashana. It begins with Moses' address to the Jewish people, "You are standing today, all of you, before the L-rd your G-d..."

This invocation is both general and specific. It mentions the individual classes of Jews, from the heads of the tribes to the drawers of water. And it gathers them all into the collective phrase, "all of you."

## Unity and Unique Contribution

This is in itself something of a contradiction. The verse begins by speaking to Israel as a unity - "You are standing...all of you" - without making any distinctions. But immediately afterwards, it proceeds to detail the different classes of Jews.

Why, in any case, did it need to do so, when the phrase "all of You" already encompasses them all?

This was done in order to make a fundamental point: that on the one hand, there must be unity among Jews; and, at the same time, each has his unique contri-

bution to make, his own individual mission.

But if there have to be distinctions among Jews, especially ones as extreme as that between "your heads" and "the drawer of your water," how can there be true unity among them?

## Standing Today

The verse supplies its own answer: "You are standing today, all of you, before the L-rd your G-d."

It is when Jews stand before G-d, in the full recognition that He is the author of their powers and the foundation of their being, that they are one.

This can be explained by a simple analogy. When people from a group or community unite for a specific purpose, economic, intellectual or whatever, they share their money or labor or ideas towards a given end and for a specified time.

Outside this partnership they remain separate individuals, each with his own private world.

Yet, the community of Israel is a partnership "before the L-rd your G-d" and its purpose is that you should "enter into the covenant of the L-rd your G-d, and into His oath..."

This partnership encompasses the whole person - not just his labor or his ideas - each according to his capacity. And it is a partnership in perpetuity, as eternal as the Torah. This is true unity.

## Each Person's Mission

Moreover, the effort of each Jew playing his unique part in the covenant is implicit to the work of the whole community.

The unity of Israel is created not by every Jew being the same, but by his own unique role in fulfilling the directives of "the L-rd your G-d."

Israel is one before G-d when, and only when, each Jew fulfills the mission which is his alone.

*Adapted from the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe ; Shabbos Table, and From our Sages reprinted from [www.LchaimWeekly.org](http://www.LchaimWeekly.org) - LYO / NYC*

## From our Sages

*Gather the people together, men, and women, and children... (Deut. 31:12)*

According to the Minchat Chinuch, the mitzva of Hakhel (the commandment for all Jews to assemble in Jerusalem on Sukkot following the Sabbatical year, to hear the king recite the Book of Deuteronomy) is incumbent on every Jew from birth. A child's Jewish education must likewise commence from birth.

*(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

*And the L-rd your G-d will circumcise your heart (Deut. 30:6)*

Elsewhere it states (Deut. 10:16), "And you shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart," i.e., that the individual Jew must perform the "circumcision" himself. The first stage of the "circumcision," i.e., removing the "obstruction" that separates the Jew from G-d, must be initiated by the individual. The second stage of completely transforming the heart to good, can only be done with G-d's help.

*(The Kotzker Rebbe)*

*But the word is very near to you... (Deut. 30:14)*

This teaches that it is in every Jew's power to bring the Torah closer to him. It is only dependent on our will, that we observe it with our "mouth" and "heart."

*(Sefat Emet)*

*But I will assuredly hide My face on that day (Deut. 31:18)*

A person can only hide if the other person is unaware of his presence. It's not hiding if we know that someone is concealing himself in a certain spot, even if he is well hidden from view. This knowledge gives us a better grasp of the exile in which the Jews find themselves. We, having been forewarned, can better deal with the darkness because we know that G-d can be found even as He hides His face.

*(the Baal Shem Tov)*

*That you may live and multiply, and G-d may bless you (Deut. 30:16)*

This refers to the three things for which everyone prays: life itself, children, and physical sustenance.

*(Degel Machane Efraim)*

## The Value of Tehillim

Once, in the time of the holy Baal Shem Tov, it was decreed in Heaven that a certain Jewish settlement should be destroyed. The Baal Shem Tov called upon his friends, the hidden tzaddikim, Reb Mordechai and Reb Kehos, to join him to form a beis din (Jewish court) and find a way to nullify the decree.

The beis din convened, and the neshama of the Baal Shem Tov ascended to the heavenly worlds. There he saw that the decree had already been sealed and could not be annulled. However, as he passed through the heavenly spheres while descending back to the physical world, he saw a magnificent light created by the words of Tehillim that were being recited by a simple villager. This Yid would complete the entire book of Tehillim five times every day, but since he was quite ignorant, he sometimes said Tehillim in unclean places. Nevertheless, HaShem valued his Tehillim so much, that a privileged share in Olam HaBa (the World to Come) awaited him.

The Baal Shem Tov immediately traveled to see this man and asked him, "would you be willing to sacrifice your share in Olam HaBa in order to save an entire Jewish community?"

The simple Yid responded, "If I have a share in Olam HaBa, I am ready to forfeit it for such a cause."

And the decree was annulled.



# Chassidus page

## Doing Teshuva

Teshuva is great, for it hastens the geulah. As the Navi Yeshayahu says, Uva l'Tzion goel, ul'shavei pesha b'Yaakov – "A redeemer will come to Tzion, and to those among Yaakov who return from sin."

The Sages underline the connection between those two statements: Why will the redeemer come? Because the Yidden will do teshuva.

The Alter Rebbe points out that the essence of teshuvah is simply the regret and the firm decision to leave one's negative ways. All other tikunim (spiritual rectifications) are to improve one's ruchniyus'dike (spiritual) state.

### Just Do It!

A Yid once told the tzaddik, Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin, "Rebbe, I have committed sins and I want to do teshuva." When the tzaddik asked him why he didn't do teshuva, the man responded that he didn't know how. "Well, how did you know how to do the sin?" asked the tzaddik.

"I just did it," the man replied. Advised the tzaddik: "So do the same now. Just do teshuva and the accounting will follow."

The mashpia Rashbatz used to teach Tanya in Tomchei Temimim (Chabad Yeshiva) in Lubavitch. When he arrived at the words of the Alter Rebbe, "It is certain that he will ultimately repent, whether in this gilgul (incarnation) or another, for no one banished from Him will remain banished," he would break into tears.

"Kinderlach!" he would exclaim, "You must do teshuva. Eventually you will be forced to do so, so what are you waiting for?"

### Tears of Teshuva

The holy brothers Reb Elimelech and Reb Zusha had a third brother, an innkeeper in a distant town.

The students of Reb Elimelech were curious: what kind of a man was this third brother? They decided to pay him a visit, and found him selling whiskey all day long to the local goyim. They noticed nothing special about him, except that from time to time he would take out a little notebook and write something in it.

Later, when everyone was asleep, they heard him crying bitterly. They looked inside and saw that he was reading from his little notebook and striking himself on the chest.

When they asked what he was doing, he replied simply that whenever he thought he had done a sin or had even thought of a sin, he marked it down, and did not go to sleep that night until he had done a complete teshuva. When his tears had completely erased the writing in the notebook, he knew that the sin had been erased in Heaven above.

*Doing Teshuva and The Value of Tehillim reprinted from The Weekly Farbrengen by Merkaz Anash, on-line at [TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com](http://TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com)*

## Teshuva Time

*Continued from page 1:*

Between sobs he said it was the first Hebrew word he had said in 35 years. He invited the rabbi into the dining room and brought out two bottles of water, plastic cups and a small bottle of whisky. The two men spoke well into the night. Finally they exchanged telephone numbers and promised to keep in touch.

Rabbi Sufrin made several subsequent visits to this man's home and then invited him and his family to spend a Shabbat with him in Stamford Hill. His family declined the offer and so the man went by himself. Over a period of a year or two, he made several trips to Stamford Hill to Rabbi Sufrin's home and the London Chabad House where he studied with the warm and friendly teachers there. He finally decided to return to practicing Judaism as he was once wont to do. He proposed to his family that they join him in his new lifestyle. They politely and kindly turned down his offer saying it was simply not for them. A divorce was then inevitable and the man relocated to Stamford Hill where he remarried and established a fine Jewish home.

Author's note: the blessing *Asher Yatzar* contains 45 words, the Gematria of which spells Adam – man. Our Sages teach that all of the blessings have the ability to protect us and ensure our good health. How much more this particular blessing which was written to praise Hashem for His marvelous creation, the human body. This blessing when recited with proper concentration, protects us from all spiritual and physical ills. When one answers *Amen* to it with true intention it is as if he made the blessing.

By Yaakov Cass

For quite some years I was privileged to organize visits to the small communities for Rabbi Sufrin and many a time would join him. He told me this story on one of our wonderful return journeys, in the wee hours of the early morning.

Rabbi Cass is a Lubavitcher chossid living in Jerusalem. Until recently he was a senior official in the Israel Ministry of Health.

## Moshiach Now

### Even While Sleeping...

Before Reb Simcha Bunim of Pshis'cha went to sleep, he would always place his tallis and tefillin next to his bed. One of his close students asked about this practice and he explained:

"Since we await the coming of Moshiach at any moment, it's possible that while I'm resting, the good news of his arrival will suddenly be heard. I want to be ready to go immediately with him to Eretz HaKodesh and not have to remain in this bitter exile for one extra moment.

"I don't mind disowning all my assets, but my tallis and tefillin I must take. So I make sure to keep them close by."

## Human Interest

### Rebbe's Teaching Saves Politician

When a Lubavitcher professor was faced with a challenge, he remembered the lesson taught by the Rebbe and brought it to good use. Israeli Knesset Member Rabbi Moshe Gafni of the Litvishe Degel Hatorah party was recently hospitalized for about three weeks in the Mayanei Hayeshua Hospital in Bnei Brak after suffering a heart attack.

The doctor who treated Rabbi Gafni was Professor Eliyahu Sorkin, a proud Lubavitcher, and a world famous professional who treated many gedolei Yisroel over the past years. During one of the procedures, Professor Sorkin identified a blockage in the heart that would prevent the catheterization from taking place.



Knowing of the Rebbe's instructions in many similar situations, the professor approached the family members of the Knesset Member and suggested that they check the mezuzahs in the house. The family listened to his advice, and immediately brought the mezuzos to a sofer. Indeed, a mistake was found in one of the mezuzos, in the words על לבבכם – "on your hearts..."

Not knowing that MK Gafni was hospitalized, and seeing the family's reaction to his find, the sofer asked the family members if they had any sort of medical problem. They answered in the affirmative, and switched the mezuzah for one that was kosher l'mhadrin. Only a short while later, MK Gafni's treatment was able to continue, and he was soon released home from the hospital. *By Anash.org reporter*

### Cooking Tip of the Week

**Chocolate Peanut Butter Mousse:** This recipe is gluten free, vegan and easy to make. Put in your food processor one 330 gram package of soft tofu, 4 tbs of natural peanut butter, 6 tbs of maple syrup and 1/4 cup cocoa powder. Blend till smooth, put in 5 dessert cups and refrigerate.

*Alizah Hochstead,  
alizahh@hotmail.com*

### Halacha Corner – Slichos

This Motzoei Shabbos we start saying Slichos. Slichos should not be started before Chatzos (midnight). Under extreme circumstances, if necessary, there are those who permit Slichos to be said after the first third of the night. One should seek competent Rabbinical guidance before undertaking to schedule a Slichos minyan before Chatzos. It is proper to stand during the whole Slichos. One who finds it difficult to stand for the duration of Slichos should stand at least for Keil Melech Yosheiv and the 13 Middos HaRachamim as well as the Vidui.

If there was a minyan present during Slichos and towards the end of Slichos some left and there was less than a minyan remaining, Kaddish is still said at the end of Slichos. It is a grave sin to walk out of a minyan if there are exactly 10 people present.

*Rabbi Eliezer Wenger OBM, reprinted from www.shmais.com*

## Farbrengen

**Question:** Last year on Rosh HaShana I really believed that this year would be a great year. I said Tehillim practically the whole Rosh HaShana and davened with such focus. On Sukkos I sat in the sukkah knowing that we were in for a great year. And then Corona hit and the economy sunk. Now as we get close to Rosh HaShana I feel like what's the point. It feels like what I do doesn't affect things.

**Answer:** When the bank account is negative, Corona is spreading and our lives are in upheaval, it is hard to see anything else. Difficulties are painful and they grab our attention.

Chassidus explains that this world is referred to as klipas noga, a mixture of good and bad. Through our performance of Torah and mitzvos we separate the good from the bad, revealing G-dliness in the world. So too, it is our choice whether to focus on the good or the bad in our lives. Although the bad grabs our attention, our job is to train ourselves to see the good. When we focus on the good, the good becomes more prominent; it becomes what we notice. There is much good in our lives for which to be thankful.

So too, this can be applied to our fellow. Nobody is perfect. We have our good points and we have areas where we can improve. Yet, when we focus on the good points in others we reveal their good. And, we must not forget about ourselves: rather than acting as our biggest critic we can be our best friend. True, we don't want to turn a blind eye to where we need to grow – however, we also need to see our positive attributes.

As we train ourselves to see the good in our lives, we may even become aware of a deeper truth. As the Alter Rebbe writes in Tanya (Iggeret HaKodesh, end of Epistle 11) "...everything is absolutely good, except that it is not apprehended as such by man. When one believes this truly, everything becomes good even on a revealed level." When a father disciplines his son, a wise son knows that the father's inner intent is good. So too, even though something appears bad, the inner intent is good.

The yetzer hara wants us to "throw in the towel" and knows where we are most vulnerable. Yet, the inner intent of the challenges is to enable us to reveal our deepest potentials. We have tremendous spiritual resources of faith, love and awe of G-d. Sometimes we just need a push to uncover those treasures.

*Aharon Schmidt - marriage, family & individual coaching. Video and telephone sessions available. For an appointment contact: coachingandcounseling1@gmail.com*



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