



# L'Chaim

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## Living with the Rebbe



There is a saying of the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, quoted in the name of his father, the Rebbe Rashab:

"The first Torah portion, Bereishit (Genesis), is a joyful Torah portion, for in it, G-d created the world and all of its inhabitants.

"Noah, however, relates the Great Flood. The week in which it is read is therefore a sad one, but it ends on a happy note with the birth of our forefather Abraham.

"Yet the week which is truly the happiest is the one in which the Torah portion of Lech Lecha is read. For each and every day of the week we live with Abraham."

Why is Lech Lecha, this week's Torah reading, considered the most joyful of the three?

Bereishit contains the narrative of Creation. This portion relates G-d's actions, and describes how He created the world in six days. The portion tells us what G-d did, but it does not relate the deeds of the creations themselves.

Noah, by contrast, deals primarily with the actions of mankind. In this Torah portion we learn about the Great Flood, about the behavior of the people of Noah's generation, and about the deeds of the righteous Noah himself.

Thus each of the first two Torah portions concerns itself with an entirely different sphere. Bereishit revolves around G-d and G-dly matters, whereas Noah concentrates on the more mundane affairs of mankind. In neither of these Torah portions is the connection between G-d and man, the higher spheres and the lower spheres, expressed.

How do Jews create that connection? By carrying out the will of G-d and performing His mitzvot (commandments).

When Jews observe the Torah's commandments they draw closer to G-d, binding themselves to Him with an everlasting bond. When G-d gave His holy Torah to the Jewish people, He thereby gave them the means to forge a connection between the "higher worlds" - G-d - and the "lower worlds" - human beings.

The preparation for the giving of the Torah began with Lech Lecha, when G-d gave Abraham the commandment to "go out" of his native land, and Abraham obeyed. Ignoring his own personal wishes and his natural proclivities and inclinations, Abraham set off to fulfill the will of G-d to establish a "dwelling place" for Him in the physical world.

Thus began the wondrous connection with G-d that continues and is strengthened with every mitzva we perform.

This is why Lech Lecha is the most joyful of the Torah's first three portions. The first speaks solely of the higher worlds; the second, only about the lower. It isn't until the third portion, Lech Lecha, that the true connection to G-d first commences.

*Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Volume 15*

## Too Many Keys

Let's see. You've got a key to your house. A key to your car. A key to your wife's car. A key to your office. A key to your briefcase. A key to the filing cabinet, one for each of the three suitcases, a spare key to someone else's house.

That doesn't include the dozen or so keys that unlock you have no idea what, sitting in a kitchen drawer or in a container in the workshop or somewhere else.

What do we need so many keys for, anyway? Well, there are lots of parts of our lives we need access to, and we need keys to open them up. If we want to get into our house, we need a key - to the front door and back door, at least. We can't start our car without a key.

Yeah, but why do we need keys to begin with? That answer's obvious, right? We have to lock things up and lock things out to protect ourselves. If we couldn't lock our cars, they might get stolen. If we couldn't lock our houses, we might get robbed (G-d forbid). If we couldn't lock our offices, our competitors might learn our secrets.

But even if don't have to worry about theft, we need locks for more than protection. We need them for privacy. We lock the door to our house so that guests first need our permission to enter. We control who comes into our spaces - our family space, our work space, our private space - by locking everyone out.

We have the key that lets someone into our lives. So giving someone a key is more than a sign of trust. It's the ultimate act of trust.

The thing is, we have to know which keys are still useful, and who to give them to.

The same is true of our spiritual lives. We have many "spaces" and each has its own door. There's the "space" for tzedeka (charity), the "space" for prayer, the "space" for Torah study, etc. And each one has its key.

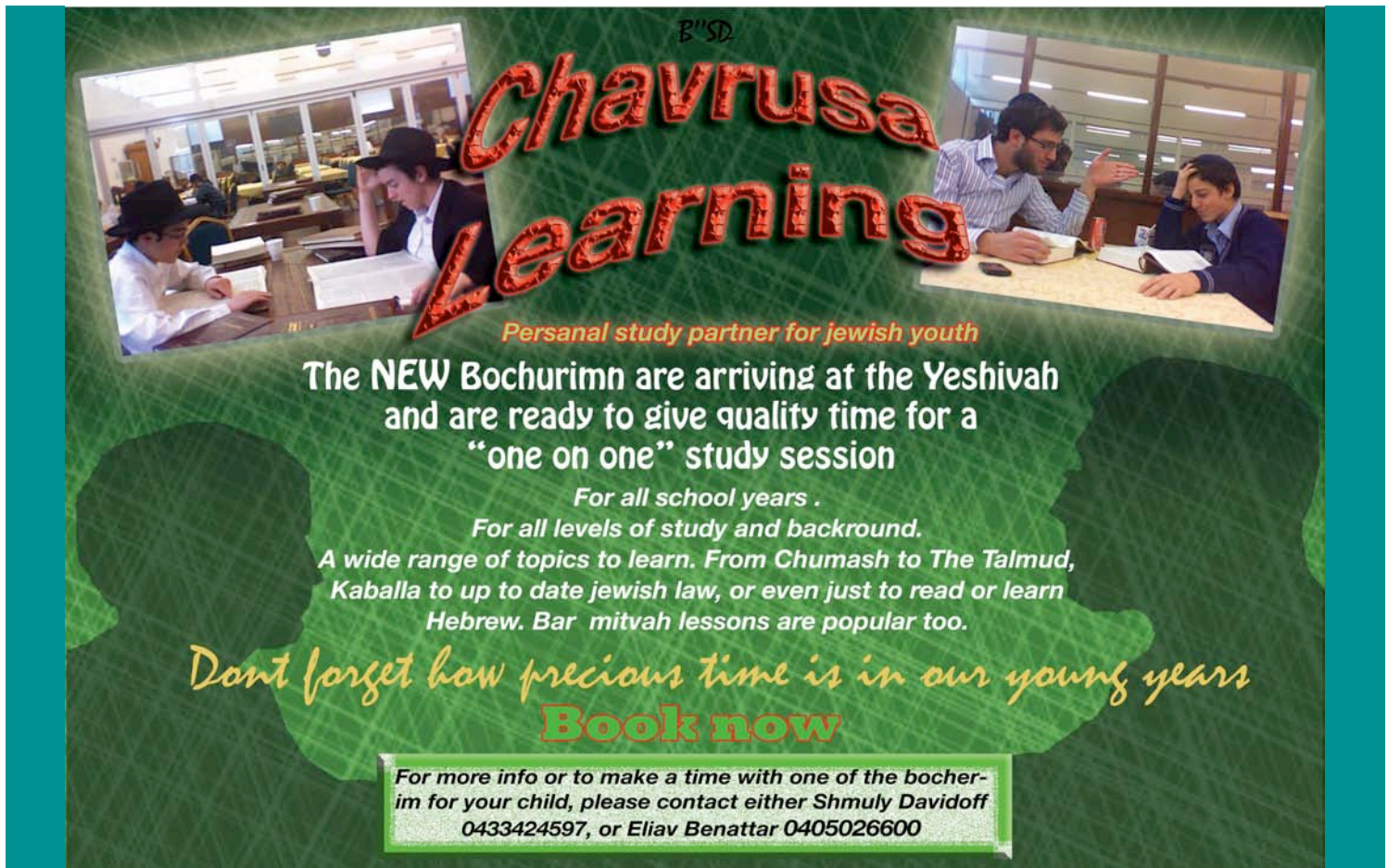
But sometimes we change the locks. The amount of tzedeka we were able to give last year - our "space" for tzedeka - has changed, has grown. But if we try to use the same old "key," we won't open the right door. The same applies to prayer, to Torah study, to any other mitzva (commandment).

But how do we know when we're using the wrong key? How do we know if we have "too many keys" - keys that are useless duplicates, keys to doors we no longer need, keys to spaces we've grown out of?

Sometimes we can tell by trial and error. Sometimes, though, we need someone else to tell us: this "key" isn't good any more. Sometimes we need someone to give us a new key, the key to our new spiritual office, our new spiritual house.

That's the someone we trust with the master key - the key to our spiritual door. And that, in part, is why Jewish teachings encourage us - "acquire for yourself a Rav," why the Lubavitcher Rebbe has urged everyone to have a "mashpia" - a friend or mentor or guide, someone you trust, who's close to you, who has your best interest at heart, and can give you sound spiritual advise.

Someone who knows which key you should use, and if you're trying to open the right doors, if, in a sense, you have too few keys, too many keys - or just the right amount of keys to the right doors.



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## Parsha in a nutshell

G-d speaks to Abram, commanding him to "Go from your land, from your birthplace and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you." There, G-d says, he will be made into a great nation. Abram and his wife Sarai, accompanied by his nephew Lot, journey to the Land of Canaan, where Abram builds an altar and continues to spread the message of a One G-d.

A famine forces the first Jew to depart for Egypt, where beautiful Sarai is taken to Pharaoh's palace; Abram escapes death because they present themselves as brother and sister. A plague prevents the Egyptian king from touching her and convinces him to return her to Abram and compensate the brother-revealed-as-husband with gold, silver and cattle.

Back in the Land of Canaan, Lot separates from Abram and settles in the evil city of Sodom, where he falls captive when the mighty armies of Chedorlaomer and his three allies conquer the five cities of the Sodom Valley. Abram sets out with a small band to rescue his nephew, defeats the four kings, and is blessed by Malki-Zedek the king of Salem (Jerusalem).

G-d seals the Covenant Between the Parts with Abram, in which the exile and persecution (Galut) of the people of Israel is foretold and the Holy Land is bequeathed to them as their eternal heritage.

Still childless ten years after their arrival in the Land, Sarai tells Abram to marry her maidservant Hagar. Hagar conceives, becomes insolent toward her mistress, and then flees when Sarai treats her harshly; an angel convinces her to return and tells her that her son will father a populous nation. Ishmael is born in Abram's 86th year.

Thirteen years later, G-d changes Abram's name to Abraham ("father of multitudes") and Sarai's to Sarah ("princess"), and promises that a son will be born to them; from this child, whom they should call Isaac ("will laugh"), will stem the great nation with which G-d will establish His special bond. Abraham is commanded to circumcise himself and his descendents as a "sign of the covenant between Me and you."

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN AND SPIRITUAL LEADER



This past Wednesday was the seventh day of the new month of Cheshvan. In the times of the Holy Temple, the Jewish people traveled to Jerusalem for the festivals of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot, the seventh of Cheshvan marked the end of the pilgrimage season surrounding the festival of Sukkot, according to our Sages. During Sukkot, the entire Jewish people were in Jerusalem. For the Jews living on the Euphrates River, the furthest reaches of the Holy Land, their journey home took fifteen days and thus, was concluded on the seventh of Cheshvan. It was beginning on the seventh of Cheshvan that the prayer for rain commenced, once all of the pilgrims were comfortably home again.

This fact, of the delay of the prayers for rain until the last pilgrims reached their homes, is relevant to the concept of Jewish unity.

During the pilgrimage festivals, the essential unity of the Jewish people is expressed. However, that unity applies to the essential oneness that binds our people together, while transcending our individuality. The unity expressed by the seventh of Cheshvan relates to Jews as individuals. Jewish unity remains even after each Jew returns to his own home and his individual lifestyle.

The seventh of Cheshvan is the final stage of Jewish unity that was begun during the month of Elul (the days of preparation for Rosh Hashana) and enhanced throughout all of the days of month of Tishrei. May we continue to work on and enhance Jewish unity in every way possible until the ultimate revelation of total Jewish unity and the unity of G-d and the entire world with the coming of Moshiach, NOW!

*Pinchus Feldman*  
Rabbi Pinchus Feldman OAM

## Smile its Friday

Max Levy goes to his doctor complaining of aches and pains all over his body. After a thorough examination, the doctor gives him a clean bill of health. "Max, you're in excellent shape for an 85 year old man. But I'm not a magician - I can't make you any younger", says the doctor. "Who asked you to make me younger?" says Max. "Just make sure I get older!"

## by Diana Bloom

I want to share with you how my experience at Chabad of Binghamton impacted my path as a Jewish woman, a Jewish wife and a Jewish mother. A path that my family and I walk, cherish, and reflect on in our daily lives.

I grew up in Rockville, Long Island, and when I was old enough to attend religious school we joined a Reform synagogue. My mother cared about her Judaism to the extent that she wanted it to be passed on. As a child of survivors, much of her Judaism was in relation to the Holocaust. She felt the overall sadness of being a Jew and not much of the joy.

Living in Irish Catholic Rockville Centre, my Judaism was very much about being unlike the other kids, about all the things my family didn't do that everyone else did and the things we did to a degree, that no one else did. I grew up in a Judaism of negation, not relevance. I, like so many Jewish kids, was living a Judaism with little wisdom, comprehension, or knowledge.

In high school, I had some opportunities to discover that I didn't know what I thought I knew about Judaism. I wanted to know what other Jews knew, I felt I had been cheated somehow in my religious education.

I became curious enough to want to be a Judaic Studies major in college. I chose Binghamton for its reputation, its Judaic Studies program, for the percentage of Jewish students that attended, and for the price. I did not choose Binghamton for the Chabad House. I had never heard of Chabad House.

The fascinating thing about Chabad House is that it is exactly for people like me even though people like me don't know what Chabad House is until we are lucky enough to find it on campus.

Despite growing up with a Jewish identity and feeling a responsibility toward the Jewish people, Judaism as a living idea plays an insignificant role in the day-to-day existence of most Jewish college students. It is only with Chabad that most Jewish students strengthen the Judaism they inherit from their parents and grandparents.

Chabad sees Judaism as a relevant, compelling, joyful blessing and they create the programming, experiences and events

that show us how to do that in our own lives. Chabad shows us at whatever level we want to take it on, how to be Jewish.

There is a crucial window of time when we are at college, a delicate place of searching, struggling and deciding, a place where our parents can not reach us or teach us and Chabad is where we, in our fragile Jewish state, can go and be sustained.

Many of my friends at Binghamton who drew strength from Rabbi and Rivky Slonim at Chabad House were kids who had grown up at Jewish Day schools, gone to Orthodox synagogues, did all of the observant things one imagines a Jew would do, and they were no less fragile than me. Chabad is the anchor, that keeps them fastened to Judaism, at a time that they could quite simply drift away.

How does Chabad do it? With boundless optimism, with love, with intellect and with delight. Chabad shows us how Judaism can enrich rather than burden our lives. Chabad is the one place where everyone is expected to be different, believe differently, have different traditions or no traditions, some knowledge or no knowledge.

Chabad is where, whatever your place, that is the right place to be. Which is why no one drags their feet to Chabad House on Friday night. How many of us can say that about our own current place of worship? My friends and I would get dressed and bundle up for the longish and usually cold walk to Chabad House. For many of us it was our first stop of the night that would later be followed by house parties or bar hopping. I had never in my life had so much pleasure in being Jewish.

My mother was wary of any involvement I had with Chabad; she was concerned that I might become observant with all of the negative connotations that held for her, based on her upbringing. To her relief, by the time I graduated, I was engaged to a nice Reform Jewish boy.

But my connection to Chabad remained. Throughout my post Binghamton years, I had some tough decisions to make. At each of those moments, I would tell my husband, "I want to call Rivky and see what she says."

My husband would give me a look of concern, only to be pleasantly surprised that Rivky's advice very much mirrored his own.

All of the ways in which Chabad at Binghamton impacted my life pales in comparison with what happened next. In March of 2004, I gave birth to our twins.

Everything that had laid dormant in the basement of my subconscious awoke in me. I realized in that moment that I wasn't just supposed to have Jewish children, I needed to raise Jewish children. Not because of the Holocaust or because my parents said so, but because I wanted them to have a framework for their lives, meaning, relevance, joy, and respect for humanity.

I wanted what many parents want for their children, the difference is I knew how to do it. I felt competent and skilled. It had been modeled for me at Chabad. I learned it from the Slonims, not just Rabbi and Rivky but their children as well. Chabad laid the foundation that enabled me to eventually build the structure of my present Jewish life. Chabad gave me the blueprint.

When our children Eliana and Gil were born, we made the kitchen kosher. We switch everything over for Passover, and we build a suka in the back yard every year. We still don't keep Shabbat, we eat out at restaurants, our kids will go to public school, but they relish being Jewish, they relate to their world as Jews, they tell the passing of the seasons by the holidays, they bake challah with me every week, they look forward to our Friday night dinners and lighting the candles, they recite the Shema every night before they go to bed. And guess what? Whenever my mother witnesses any of these moments and I glance over at her, she has tears in her eyes.

*From a speech at the dedication ceremony of the new Chabad of Binghamton Jewish Student Center.*

## What's New

### New Emissaries

Rabbi Tzvi and Noa Rivkin recently arrived in the Indian Silicone Valley, as emissaries of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to Bangalore, India. Although there are only 50 Jewish families in Bangalore, the city attracts businessmen from all over the world due to its fast developing high-tech companies.

A new Chabad House on campus has been opened by Chabad-Lubavitch of Western Monmouth County, New Jersey. The new Chabad Jewish Center will serve the students of Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, and the neighboring community. Rabbi Shmaya and Rochi Galperin moved to the area recently to open the new student center.

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# Moshiach m a t t e r s

It is written: "If you will chance upon a bird's nest...send away the mother bird..." The explanation in the Tikunim is that in order to awaken mercy we must beseech the Holy One, blessed be He: "Just as all birds have mercy on their offspring, shouldn't You have mercy on Your children?" At that time the Holy One says 'For My sake I will do it.' "  
*(Kesser Shem Tov 415)*

# It Happened Once

When the Baal Shem Tov lived in the town of Medzhibozh, there lived there, too, a poverty-stricken Torah scholar whose entire life was devoted to studying the Torah. Unfortunately, he was not blessed with wealth, in fact, he and his family existed only through the tzedaka (charity) of his fellow townspeople.

His wife was equally devoted to his learning, and she never complained about their poverty. However, when their children reached marriageable age, she went to her husband and said, "Thanks to G-d, we have always managed to live, but now, we must marry off our children. So, I am asking you, my husband, how will we manage to gather the money?"

Her husband listened thoughtfully, but he had no answer for her. His wife, however, had a plan in mind.

"My husband, I know you have not attached yourself to the holy Baal Shem Tov, who lives in this town, but many people have benefitted from his wisdom and the miracles he brings about. So, I am asking you to go to him and tell him of our problem. He will surely advise you well."

The scholar followed his wife's advice and went to the Baal Shem Tov. The Baal Shem Tov listened and then replied: "If you wish to be helped, you must go to the town of K. and inquire there into the whereabouts of a certain Jew. Do not give up until you find him, for only then will you be freed from your burdens."

The man immediately set out for the town which was located quite a distance away. When he finally arrived, he was directed to the town's guest house where he rested and received food. As soon as he regained some strength, he began to question the locals about the person he was instructed to locate. He asked the manager of the guest house, but to no avail; then he went to the shul and asked there, but he was told that no one had ever heard of such a person. The rumor spread through the city that a learned stranger was inquiring after such and such a person.

Just as he had almost despaired of ever finding the man and was about to return to Medzhibozh, a man came to him and said: "Why are you searching for a wicked man

who has been dead these 60 years?" And then, he went on to elaborate all the terrible deeds this person had done during his vile lifetime. It seemed that, while alive, this person had neglected no evil.

The scholar went home with a heavy soul. Here he had rushed to follow the instructions of the holy Baal Shem Tov and had gone to K. to find a certain individual who would help him out of his troubles, just to discover that the man was deceased; and not only was he deceased, but he was a known evil-doer. The scholar was anxious to visit the Baal Shem Tov and discover the reason for his seemingly fruitless journey.

The scholar related to the Baal Shem Tov the difficulties of the journey; how he had arrived at the communal guest house, inquired after the individual in question, and how he had finally received the evil tidings about him. He continued telling the Baal Shem Tov all the terrible things he had heard about the individual he had sought.

The Baal Shem Tov listened and then began to speak. "I know you to be a fine, G-d-fearing person. I am sure that you believe in the teachings of the Kabbala which explain that souls return to cleanse themselves of transgressions committed in a previous lifetime. I want you to understand that you have been given the opportunity to purify your holy soul by returning to this world as a righteous scholar. For your soul, my friend, occupied the man of that outrageous sinner who lived sixty years ago in the town of K.

"You have been granted a great gift by the Al-mighty, for by your righteous life, you have achieved a great tikun [correction]."

The scholar was dumb-struck by this news. His first thought was that his poverty must certainly have been decreed against him to atone for his previous riotous way of living. He returned to his wife and related to her the entire episode. From that time on they strengthened their faith in G-d Who helped them out of their troubles. He became one of the Baal Shem Tov's closest disciples and devoted his entire life to the study of Torah and the practice of mitzvot (commandments).



## Candle Lighting Times Friday 7 November 2008

City	In	Out
Sydney	7:11pm	8:10pm
Brisbane	5:53pm	6:49pm
Surfers Par	5:52pm	6:48pm
Melbourne	7:43pm	8:45pm

## Customs

### What is Kiddush Levana?

Kiddush Levana, literally "Sanctification of the Moon," is a short prayer service recited each month upon sighting the new moon. It is customary to recite Kiddush Levana together with as many people as possible, but preferably with at least one other person. The prayers may be recited only until the conclusion of the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month after the rebirth of the moon. According to Kabala, they should not be recited before the seventh day after the rebirth of the moon. The prayers should be recited under the open skies, but may not be recited when the moon is covered with clouds. It is preferably to recite Kiddush Levana on Saturday night, while one is still in festive clothing.

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