



L'Chaim

The Yeshiva Centre – Chabad NSW Headquarters
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Living with the Rebbe



The first portion of the Five Books of Moses, Bereishit, gives us an account of the creation of the world, and concludes with the words, "And G-d finished on the seventh day the work which He had made." How does this verse fit in with the prohibition against labor on the Sabbath? If G-d completed the creation of the world on the seventh day, does it not imply that some labor was done on that day too?

Rashi solves our problem by explaining that G-d's clock is more precise than our own. Human beings, who cannot measure time as accurately as G-d Himself, must cease from work several minutes before nightfall to make sure we do not violate Shabbat. G-d, however, knows exactly when "the seventh day" begins, and He went on creating the world right up until the last moment. To us, whose vision is not so perfect, it would have appeared as if G-d ceased to work on Shabbat itself.

Every letter, word and sentence in the Torah is precise, and included in order to teach us something positive. What then are we to conclude from the fact that G-d continued His labor right up until the very last possible instant, something which we must be careful not to do?

We are taught by our Sages that "G-d created nothing superfluous in His world," including the creation of time itself. Every organism, every object, and every minute has been created with a Divine purpose in mind, and must be fully utilized and not squandered. Even one second can make a difference.

Every person in the world is created with his own individual talents and abilities, and each of us is given the right circumstances in which we may use them to the fullest. At this time in history, the end of the sixth millennium since the creation of the world, we stand at the threshold of the Messianic Era. We can counter the claims of a person who says that his actions hold no importance, as our exile is almost over and that only a few minutes remain. How can an insignificant individual possibly add to the accumulated good deeds of the generations who went before us, including our forefathers, Moses, the Prophets and the Sages of the Talmud, who were spiritually superior to us in every way? he may ask. The Torah, however, teaches us that the opposite is true. Every minute we are allotted is precious, and indeed, the whole of creation may hinge on a single second. Even a tiny good deed can tip the balance and bring Moshiach now, the culmination of the entire creation.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Stay Hydrated

When it's hot and humid outside, it's easy to remember to "drink plenty of fluids." Whether you're just enjoying the nice weather or exercising outside rather than indoors, high temperatures are usually enough of a reminder to us to stay hydrated.

But it's just as important to hydrate yourself when the weather is cooler. First, of course, you want to keep up your exercise routine - stay healthier, be more efficient, and all the other things you've heard a million times. So if you're going to exercise, you need to drink plenty of water.

Even if you're not an exercise fanatic, though, it's important to drink lots of water in the winter. In fact, some studies indicate that the risk of dehydration increases in cold weather - because our bodies don't signal to us we need more water. (In short, sweating starts a chain reaction that triggers the thirst center.)

Since human beings are 70% water, it makes sense to keep ourselves hydrated.

Of course, there's a spiritual side to hydration as well. In the well-known metaphor, Torah is compared to water. Torah study is the "well of living water." When Isaiah cries, "those who are thirsty, let them come and drink," our Sage explain this as a metaphor, meaning, those who are thirsty for knowledge of G-d, for Torah, let them come and drink - let them study.

As water sustains our physical life, so Torah sustains our spiritual lives. Like water, Torah penetrates every aspect of our beings; like water, Torah flows downward, from Heaven to the Jewish people.

If so, then how do we become spiritually dehydrated? For one thing, we lose some water through the normal processes of life. There's a cycle. Spiritually there's a cycle as well. What we studied today, for instance, will fade from our awareness as life's demands intrude. Living uses up our store of water - by analogy, we can become so involved in practical matters - good, productive practical matters, but things focused on this world nevertheless, that we "sweat away" our store of Jewish knowledge. So we need to set aside time to study. Just as when exercising we need to take a water break, so during our day-to-day living we need to take a "Torah break."

One more thing: The winter cold desensitizes us, numbs us to our need for water. So, too, there are factors in our spiritual environment that numb us, desensitize us to our need for Torah. Intellectual (or seemingly intellectual) distractions, for instance. Or a dismissive doubt, a superficial approach to the complexities of Torah and faith, or a "freezing out" of Torah's relevance. These attitudes and thought processes dehydrate us - we get spiritual headaches and our spiritual heart - our passion for and pride in our Judaism - becomes erratic.

In the winter months, just as, maybe even more so, in the summer months, it's important to have set times for Torah study, to hydrate ourselves spiritually as well as physically.

Aliyot Summary

General Overview: In the Torah's opening reading, Bereishit, G-d creates the world in six days and rests on the seventh. Adam and Eve eat from the Tree of Knowledge and are expelled from the Garden of Eden. Cain slays Abel and is punished accordingly. Enumeration of the ten generations between Adam and Noah, the birth of Noah, and the degeneration of mankind.

First Aliyah: This section recounts the story of creation in six days. On the first day G-d made darkness and light. On the second day He formed the heavens, dividing the "upper waters" from the "lower waters." On the third day He set the boundaries of land and sea and called forth trees and greenery from the earth. On the fourth day He fixed the position of the sun, moon and stars. Fish, birds and reptiles were created on the fifth day; land-animals, and then the human being, Adam, on the sixth. G-d ceased work on the seventh day, and sanctified it as a day of rest.

Second Aliyah: This section discusses the events of the sixth day of creation in greater detail. After Adam was formed from the earth, G-d placed him in a garden just east of Eden. G-d permitted Adam to eat from any tree in the garden, with the exception of the Tree of Knowledge. Adam named all the animals and birds, and G-d decided that Adam needed a mate.

Third Aliyah: G-d caused Adam to fall into a deep slumber and formed a woman, Eve, from one of his sides. Adam was delighted with his new mate. The serpent, at the time the wisest of all animals, sweet-talked Eve into eating from the fruit of the forbidden

Tree of Knowledge. Eve shared the fruit with Adam, and imbued with a new sense of knowledge and awareness, they were ashamed of their nakedness and clothed themselves. The fallout was quick to come: G-d cursed the serpent, Eve, and Adam too, with various maledictions.

Fourth Aliyah: Adam and Eve were then expelled from the idyllic Garden of Eden. Eve gave birth to two sons, Cain and Abel. When Abel's offering to G-d was accepted, while Cain's was rejected, Cain murdered his brother in a jealous rage. G-d punished Cain, designating him to be a lifelong wanderer, but postponing his ultimate punishment for seven generations.

Fifth Aliyah: The sixth generation descendent of Cain was Lemech, who fathered several children -- seventh generation descendents of Cain.

Sixth Aliyah: Lemech accidentally killed his great-great-great-great-grandfather Cain in a hunting accident; the blood of Abel was finally avenged. Adam and Eve gave birth to a third son, Seth. This section then chronicles the first seven generations of mankind, from Adam to the righteous Enoch.

Seventh Aliyah: The next three generations are chronicled in this section -- concluding with Noah, the tenth generation from Adam. At this point in time, the wickedness and immorality of the people on earth reached such proportions that G-d regretted creating man. G-d gave the world 120 years to clean up their act or be destroyed. Noah, on the other hand, was an exception. He was righteous and found favor in G-d's eyes.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN AND SPIRITUAL LEADER



This week is Shabbat Bereishit, when the very first chapter of the Torah is read in the synagogue. "In the beginning G-d created the heaven and the earth." When you think about it, G-d's decision to start the Torah off with these words is surprising. The Torah is not a book of history; its narratives contain huge gaps in chronology, tons of details on some subjects and not even a mention of others. Rather, the Torah is a practical guide for the Jew to apply in his daily life. Why, then, is it so important for us to know that G-d created the world?

As Rashi, the foremost Torah commentator explains, the knowledge that G-d created the world establishes that it is He alone Who sets the rules. G-d is the sole Authority, the only Arbitrator of what is moral and what is not. G-d created the Land of Israel, allowed other nations to live there for a specified time, then willfully took it from them and gave it to the Jewish people. It's G-d's world, so to speak, and He can certainly do with it whatever He wants.

In fact, G-d's creation of the world is the starting point from which all else follows. It is what distinguishes objective, G-d-derived morality from man-made codes of behavior. Because G-d is the Creator, only He can determine what is just. Take killing, for example. In contrast to modern sentiment, the Torah says that under certain circumstances, putting someone to death is the moral thing to do, but suicide and euthanasia are wrong. Why? Because when it boils right down to it, the Torah's laws transcend any human legislation.

As we read in this week's Torah portion, man was created "in G-d's image" - the same G-d Who determines right from wrong. But after all, He did write the definitive book on the subject...

Pinchus Feldman

Rabbi Pinchus Feldman OAM

Smile its Friday

A community was asked about the qualities of their former rabbi. "He can be compared to Moses, King David, and even an angel," came the response. The new community eagerly accepted the rabbi as their spiritual leader but quickly realized he was incapable of anything. They wrote a letter to the other community, complaining as to why they deceived them. To which they received a reply, "We were not deceiving you. Just like Moses -- this rabbi can't speak. He knows not a word of English - like King David. And just as an angel -- a mentsh he is not."

The Shabbat Circle by Yehudis Engel

It was a Thursday afternoon in February. I had just removed the fish from the freezer in preparation for cooking it for Shabbat. Just then, I received a special phone call. The man on the other end of the line introduced himself as David L. and began to relate his story.

Approximately eight years ago, David was returning from a business trip in New York to his home in Ottawa, Canada. His flight was delayed, and it soon became apparent that he would not have time to fly home before Shabbat. David called his wife, told her of his predicament, and asked her to try to make some kind of arrangements for him.

David's wife contacted Rabbi Yehoshua Botnick, the Lubavitcher Rebbe's emissary in Ottawa, who got David in touch with my late husband, Rabbi Eliyohu Engel (of blessed memory) who was an emissary in Jersey City. My husband welcomed David most graciously and made sure he felt at home and comfortable the entire Shabbat.

Ever since that Shabbat, David had intended to contact Rabbi Engel to express how much he appreciated the last-minute hospitality, the warm welcome, and the words of Torah they had shared.

Time passed and he never got around to making the phone call. Then, one Thursday, he decided that he absolutely must reconnect with Rabbi Engel. To his dismay, he was unable to locate him. Determined to accomplish his mission, he turned to Rabbi Botnick for assistance.

Rabbi Botnick made several calls and was informed that, unfortunately, Rabbi Engel had passed away. Rabbi Botnick gave David my phone number. David then called on that Thursday to express

how much the Shabbat eight years earlier had meant to him, and how sorry he was not to have had the opportunity to thank my husband directly.

David told me that in appreciation he wanted to send an entire prepared Shabbat meal to my home for the whole family. At this point in our conversation, there was a loud crash in the living room. A moment later, my daughter appeared, frantically looking for the phone number for Hatzolah (the local volunteer ambulance corps). Her husband had fainted and fallen to the floor. He was soon rushed to the hospital and diagnosed as suffering from dehydration.

My daughter and son-in-law remained in the hospital until midnight. I was left at home with their five young children in my care, which effectively eliminated the possibility of cooking for Shabbat.

I was awestruck at the amazing turn of events. A number of years earlier, my husband had provided hospitality to David when he was in a difficult situation. Now, this former guest was providing my family with Shabbat meals when I was in a dire predicament. An emissary sows the seeds, unaware of the fruits they will bear.

But the story does not end here. This past summer, my granddaughter Esther was a counselor in the Chabad day camp in Ottawa. I had planned on giving her a copy of the above story that I had written up and published in The Jewish Press. In the end, though, I didn't get a chance to give the copy to Esther.

When my daughter Shternie told me that she was planning on

visiting Ottawa to see her daughter after stopping in Montreal, I asked her to take the story, as well as a number of other articles written about my husband. She could give these to David when she would be in Ottawa.

While in Montreal, Shternie visited an uncle of mine who, upon hearing about the stories, asked if she would leave them with him so he could read them. Shternie obliged and left the envelope full of stories with him. I emailed the stories to Shternie and urged her to find David when she would be in Ottawa and to give them to him. While in Ottawa, Shternie tried to reach David but was told that he was out-of-town. Before leaving, Shternie brought the stories to Esther and explained to her that she should make sure to contact David and to give him the stories. "I know exactly who he is," Esther said excitedly. "His son is a camper in the Chabad camp and I have eaten at his home with his family every Shabbat since coming to Ottawa!" Throughout all of those Shabbat meals, David did not know that he was hosting Eliyohu Engel's grand-daughter and she didn't know that he was the protagonist in the story that I had attempted to send with her at the beginning of the summer.

Esther eagerly brought the articles to David as soon as he returned home. "He is such a busy man that you literally never see him sit down," Esther later told me. "But when I brought him the stories he sat down and read each one from beginning to end. Then he shared with me that every Friday night he relives that special Shabbat he spent with Zaidy in New Jersey."

Thoughts that Count

And G-d created the great sea-monsters (Gen. 1:21)

As Rashi notes, these were "the Leviathan (livyatan) and its mate." As explained by Chasidut, the Hebrew word "livyatan" means connection or joining. It refers to the very highest spiritual level, at which a person's attachment to G-d is constant and uninterrupted. Nonetheless, even on this superior level, every individual still needs a "mate," a good friend and supporter to help him in his service of G-d. (*Likutei Sichot*)

And G-d saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good (Gen. 1:31)

Our Sages commented: "'Good' - refers to the good inclination; 'very good' refers to the evil inclination." The phenomenon of teshuva, repentance, could not exist without the creation of an evil inclination. Teshuva enables man to attain an even higher spiritual level and completeness than before he sinned; thus, G-d declared the creation "very good" only after Adam was created with this potential. (*Sefer HaSichot 5749, Vol. 1*)

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Moshiaich

"And the spirit of G-d hovered [above the waters]." Our Sages tell us that this is actually referring to the soul of Moshiaich. The Hebrew words in the verse - v'ruach Elokim m'rachefet - have the same numerical value as the words "This is the spirit of Melech HaMoshiach" - zeh haya rucho shel Melech HaMoshiach. (*From Discover Moshiaich*)

It Happened Once

Reuven was in a desperate situation. Five years had passed since he had been able to pay the annual fee for the rental of his farm. Somehow the baron was so busy that he had overlooked Reuven's little farm these past years. But the respite came to an abrupt end one cold snowy winter day, when a large fine carriage drawn by four splendid horses stopped before Reuven's tumble-down shack. The driver opened the door, and out stepped a huge man in an immense white fur coat with high shining leather boots and a long curled moustache... the baron himself.

The baron strode angrily through the snow, down the path to Reuven's door, and gave it two mighty blows with his fist. When Reuven opened up, he grabbed him by the front of his shirt, pulled him outside, shot a steely look at him as though he was some sort of insect, pushed his forefinger repeatedly into poor Reuven's chest and bellowed: "If I don't have all the rent in one week, every penny, you and your family are sleeping in the snow!!!"

The baron stormed back down the path, and as Reuven watched the carriage fade into the horizon, he knew that he was in big trouble. His only hope was to travel to his Rebbe, the Baal Shem Tov.

Reuven set out immediately in his wagon, and early the next morning he was in Mezibuzh waiting in line to see the great Rebbe. When he entered the Baal Shem Tov's room, Reuven began weeping. He described to the Baal Shem Tov his impoverished situation and then told about the baron's visit the previous night. "My family, my wife and five children, will be thrown into street, they'll die of cold and hunger. Please, help me!"

The Baal Shem Tov looked in his desk drawer and then took out an envelope which he handed to Reuven. Then the Baal Shem Tov assured him that he had nothing to worry about, and gave him instructions:

"Give this to the baron as soon as possible, but do not open it up!"

Reuven was overjoyed. He thanked the Baal Shem Tov profusely, ran outside, jumped into his wagon and was soon on his way to the baron's castle. It was a ten hour trip, and after a few hours of travelling alone in the beautiful Polish countryside, he began wondering. What could the Baal Shem Tov possibly have written that would calm the baron? And in what language? Could it be that the Baal Shem Tov also had such a convincing command of Polish? Reuven pushed these foolish thoughts from his mind, and prided himself for ignoring his silly urges.

"I must have faith in the Rebbe," he said to himself. "The Baal Shem Tov never makes mistakes."

But a few hours later, Reuven was still battling with himself. He had taken his mind off it a hundred times now, but his curiosity was conquering him. "What possible harm could it make to just peek inside the envelope?"

After ten hours, the baron's castle loomed in the distance. He got out of his carriage and walked toward the massive castle door. Just before knocking on the door, a horrible thought popped into Reuven's mind:

"What if the Baal Shem Tov made a mistake and gave me the wrong envelope! What if it's empty!"

The envelope wasn't sealed so Reuven just lifted the flap and took a "peek." Ahh, there was a paper inside. Just another slightly more intrusive "peek" to see what was written on the letter...

"Oy!" he moaned to himself, the paper was blank. Suddenly the door opened and the baron himself was standing before him.

"Brought me the rent, Jew? Well, that was quick wasn't it! Let's have a look!" And with that, the baron snatched the envelope from Reuven's hand and took out the "letter."

After several minutes of silence, the baron looked up from the letter and said in a very friendly tone. "All right, Jew. I'll forget about the debt. But from now on I want the rent on time, once a month. Do you understand? And don't expect me to forgive your debt next time." With that, the baron slammed the door shut.

Reuven ran to his wagon and headed straight back to the Baal Shem Tov. What a miracle! The next day he was standing in the Baal Shem Tov's room full of gratitude.

"Tell me exactly what happened," said the Baal Shem Tov.

"It was incredible! The baron actually wiped off the entire debt and let me go! I'm a free man. Rebbe, you saved my life and the life of my family."

But the Baal Shem Tov looked displeased. "He erased the entire debt? That's all? Tell me, did you open the letter?"

Reuven stammered sheepishly, "I just took a small peek, just to see that there was no mistake."

"Oy," exclaimed the Baal Shem Tov, "Why did you look? Where was your self-control, your trust, your faith? If you would have left the letter alone, the baron would have given you the entire farm as a gift, forever!"

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Candle Lighting Times Friday 23 October 2008

City	In	Out
Sydney	6:58pm	7:56pm
Brisbane	5:43pm	6:38pm
Surfers Par	5:42pm	6:37pm
Melbourne	7:21pm	8:21pm

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Lesser ben Benim

28 Tishrei

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In answer to the Beatles song "will you still love me when I'm 64"

The answer is a resounding yes!

Wishing a Happy Birthday to Rabbi Pinchus Feldman OAM and a year full of Mazal and Brocha from an appreciative and thankful community