

# LAMPLIGHTER

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah reading begins: Zos Chukas HaTorah, "This is the statute of the Torah", establishing a connection between the type of mitzvos called chukim and the entire Torah. The root for the word, chukim, chok, means "engrave." Engraving involves strenuous labour. This is the first key to our commitment to the Torah. In order to make the Divine potential each of us possesses grow and blossom, an investment of hard work must be made.

A further lesson from the word chukim can be learned by a comparison between writing and engraving. When one writes, the surface upon which one writes and the ink which one uses remain two separate entities. When, by contrast, letters are engraved in stone, the writing and the stone form a single entity; they are inseparable.

This points to the importance of internalizing the Torah, making its teachings part of one's own being. There is an advantage to compelling oneself to observe the Torah even when doing so runs contrary to one's nature. But the deepest commitment to G-d's service involves remaking one's nature to reflect His will.

Chukim thus teach that a person and the Torah should not be separate entities, but rather a single whole. This approach leads to true growth, for one proceeds beyond the limited vistas of his own perception, and enters the unlimited horizons to which the Torah introduces him.

The above leads to a third interpretation of chukim: that the term refers to the dimensions of Torah which surpass our understanding. As a person develops his commitment to the Torah, he grows to the awareness that its every facet, even those which appear to be within the grasp of mortal intellect, is in fact unbounded. For the Torah is G-d's wisdom, and "just as it is impossible for a created being to comprehend his Creator, so too, it is impossible to comprehend His attributes." "He is the Knower... and He is the Knowledge itself. All is one."

## A Life, A Legacy, A Vision



This Gimmel Tammuz (1st of July) marks the 20th anniversary of the passing of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Jews everywhere continue to be inspired by the Rebbe's teaching and guidance. In 1994, there were 2200 emissaries of the Rebbe worldwide. Since then, the number has surged to more than 5000. Over one million children attended Chabad activities in the past year. From Cyprus to Cyberspace, his legacy and influence is everywhere.

For the Rebbe, nothing was ordinary. Everything that he touched took on new light, new life, new depth, new meaning. The presence of G-d was palpable. An ordinary day became a holiday. A routine mitzvah became precious. Every occurrence was a stage in the fulfillment of the Divine plan. Every occasion - good or seemingly bad - was a challenge to help us better serve the Almighty.

For the Rebbe, no one was ordinary. A regular person became unique. A typical encounter became a life-changing event. No one was dispensable and everyone counted. All were welcome and all were embraced. There were no divisions between observant and non-observant, wealthy and destitute, or child and adult. Labels simply never existed.

For the Rebbe, there was just one objective: A world devoid of hate and greed, a world free of suffering and strife, a world suffused with the wisdom and goodness of its Creator. No less. No matter how dark the world may seem or feel, light is just a single action away. The Rebbe saw this and imparted to us this vision. If we open our eyes to this reality, we can bring redemption to the world. Today.

The third of Tammuz is a day of self-introspection. It is a time to reflect upon the Rebbe's revolutionary vision, implementing its message into our own lives. Lamplighter presents twenty-six stories, divided by subject, that, in a small way, offer us the "glasses" to transcend our mundane perspective on life, and experience the kinder, G-dly world envisioned by the Rebbe.

# The Rebbe: A Brief Biography



By Chabad.org Staff

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory (1902-1994), the seventh leader in the Chabad-Lubavitch dynasty, is considered to have been the most phenomenal Jewish personality of modern times. To hundreds of thousands of followers and millions of sympathizers and admirers around the world, he was -- and still is, despite his passing -- "the Rebbe," undoubtedly, the one individual more than any other singularly responsible for stirring the conscience and spiritual awakening of world Jewry.

The Rebbe was born in 1902, on the 11th day of Nissan, in Nikolayev, Russia, to the renowned kabbalist, talmudic scholar and leader Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson. Rebbetzin Chana (1880-1964) was known for her erudition, kindness and extraordinary accessibility. Her courage and ingenuity became legend when during her husband's exile by the Soviets to a remote village in Asian Russia she laboured to make inks from herbs she gathered in the fields -- so that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak could continue writing his commentary on kabbalah and other Torah-subjects. The Rebbe was named after his great-grandfather, the third Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, with whom he later shared many characteristics.

**To Save a Life:** There is a story told about the Rebbe's early life that seems to be almost symbolic of everything that was to follow. When he was nine years old, the young Menachem Mendel courageously dove into the Black Sea and saved the life of a little boy who had rowed out to sea and lost control of his small craft. That sense of "other lives in danger" seems to have dominated his consciousness; of Jews drowning in assimilation, ignorance or alienation--and no one hearing their cries for help: Jews on campus, in isolated communities, under repressive regimes. From early childhood he displayed a prodigious mental acuity. By the time he reached his Bar Mitzvah, the Rebbe was considered an *illuy*, a Torah prodigy. He spent his teen years immersed in the study of Torah.

**Marriage in Warsaw:** In 1929 Rabbi Menachem Mendel married the sixth Rebbe's daughter, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, in Warsaw. (The Rebbetzin, born in 1901, was chosen by her father, the sixth Rebbe, to accompany him in his forced exile to Kostroma in 1927. For sixty years she was the Rebbe's life partner; she passed away on 22 Sh'vat in 1988.) He later studied in the University of Berlin and then at the Sorbonne in Paris. It may have been in these years that his formidable knowledge of mathematics and the sciences began to blossom.

**Arrival in the U.S.A.:** On Monday, Sivan 28, 5701 (June 23, 1941) the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin arrived in the United States, having been miraculously rescued, by the grace of Almighty G-d, from the European holocaust. The Rebbe's arrival marked the launching of sweeping new efforts in bolstering and disseminating Torah and Judaism in general, and Chassidic teachings in particular, through the establishment of three central Lubavitch organizations under the Rebbe's leadership: Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch ("Central Organization For Jewish Education"), Kehot Publication Society, and Machne Israel, a social services agency. Shortly

after his arrival, per his father-in-law's urging, the Rebbe began publishing his notations to various Chassidic and kabbalistic treatises, as well as a wide range of response on Torah subjects. With publication of these works his genius was soon recognized by scholars throughout the world.

**Leadership:** After the passing of his father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, in 1950, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson reluctantly ascended to the leadership of the Lubavitch movement, whose headquarters was at 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, New York. Soon Lubavitch institutions and activities took on new dimensions. The outreaching philosophy of Chabad-Lubavitch was translated into ever greater action, as Lubavitch centres and Chabad Houses were opened in dozens of cities and university campuses around the world.

**Passing:** On Monday afternoon (March 2, 1992), while praying at the gravesite of his father-in-law and predecessor, the Rebbe suffered a stroke that paralysed his right side and, most devastatingly, robbed him of the ability to speak.

Two years and three months later, the Rebbe passed away in the early morning hours of the 3rd of the Hebrew month of Tammuz, in the year 5754 from creation (June, 12 1994), orphaning a generation.

**Uniqueness:** With the Rebbe's teachings propelling it them and his example serving as a beacon to emulate, Lubavitch has rapidly grown to be a worldwide presence, and all its various activities are stamped with his vision. Small wonder then, that many ask, "What is it about his leadership that was -- and, in so many ways, still is -- so unique? Why do leading personalities of the day maintain such profound respect and admiration for him?"

**Past, Present and Future:** Many leaders recognize the need of the moment and respond with courage and

directions. This is their forte -- and an admirable one. Others, though their strength may not lie in "instant response" to current problems, are blessed with the ability of perceptive foresight -- knowing what tomorrow will bring and how to best prepare. Still other leaders excel in yet a third distinct area, possessing a keen sense of history and tradition; their advice and leadership is moulded by a great sensitivity to the past.

But one who possessed all three qualities was truly unique, standing alone in leadership. Such was the Lubavitcher Rebbe -- the inspiration and driving force behind the success of Lubavitch today. Radiating a keen sense of urgency, he demanded much from his followers, and even more from himself. The Rebbe led, above all else, by example.

**Initiation, Not Reaction:** He was a rare blend of prophetic visionary and pragmatic leader, synthesizing deep insight into the present needs of the Jewish people with a breadth of vision for its future. In a sense, he charted the course of Jewish history -- initiating, in addition to reacting to, current events. The Rebbe was guided by inspired insight and foresight in combination with encyclopaedic scholarship, and all his pronouncements and undertakings were, first and foremost, rooted in our

Holy Torah. Time and again, what was clear to him at the outset became obvious to other leaders with hindsight, decades later.

**Everyone's Unique Role:** From the moment the Rebbe arrived in America in 1941, his brilliance at addressing himself to the following ideal became apparent: He would not acknowledge division or separation. Every Jew -- indeed every human being -- has a unique role to play in the greater scheme of things and is an integral part of the tapestry of G-d's creation.

For nearly five of the most critical decades in recent history, the Rebbe's goal to reach out to every corner of the world with love and concern has unfolded dramatically. No sector of the community has been excluded -- young and old; men and women; leader and layman; scholar and labourer; student and teacher; children, and even infants.

He had an uncanny ability to meet everyone at their own level -- he advised Heads of State on matters of national and international importance, explored with professionals the complexities in their own fields of expertise, and spoke to small children with warm words and a fatherly smile.

**"Actualize Your Potential!"** With extraordinary insight, he perceived the wealth of potential in each person. His



inspiration, now accessible through his writings and videos, boosts the individual's self-perception, ignites his awareness of that hidden wealth and motivates a desire to fulfil his potential. In the same way, many a community has been transformed by the Rebbe's message, and been given -- directly or indirectly -- a new sense of purpose and confidence. In each case the same strong, if subtle, message is imparted: "You are Divinely gifted with enormous strength and energy -- actualize it!"

## *Ad Matai? How much longer can we wait for the redemption?*

A free translation of an excerpt of a talk delivered by the Rebbe on Shevat 15, 5739 (February 12, 1979).

...Many Jews are dejected, exhausted by the difficulty of exile. And their discontent is justified-ad matai (how long must we wait)?!...

There is a well-known analogy which chassidim repeat in the name of the Maggid, Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch, that compares exile to a father who conceals himself from his son. Certainly, the father desires to be together with his son; the purpose of the concealment is only to awaken within the son a desire and yearning to find his father. After all, when the son is constantly in the presence of his father,

his desire to be with his father is not revealed, for "continuous pleasure is not pleasure."

There arises a situation, however, when the son ceases searching for the Father ... He claims that "the signs [of our redemption] we have not seen ... and there is none among us who know how long [the exile will last]."<sup>1</sup> He, therefore, concludes that G-d must have forsaken him; he loses hope and discontinues his search for G-d. When the Father sees that the son is no longer seeking Him ... then the exile truly begins

When the Father sees that the son is no longer seeking Him ... then the exile truly begins. For as long as the son is searching for the Father, as long as the search for redemption occupies the son, this constitutes a preparation, a beginning and a spark of the redemption. But when the son stops searching, then we have the fulfilment of the verse,<sup>2</sup> "I will conceal, indeed I will conceal, My face on that day." The Baal Shem Tov explains that the verse thus implies the concealment itself is concealed, for the son is unaware that the Father is hiding.

Practically speaking: The son doesn't think about G-d; he thinks about worldly matters. True, he does everything in a kosher manner, as dictated by the Code of Jewish Law; he even studies Torah properly. But he has stopped thinking about the Giver of the Torah or about conducting business honestly, because he has forgotten that G-d alone is the one who "gives you the strength to amass wealth."

And<sup>3</sup> when criticized, the son responds, "Why do you complain to me? ... The complaint should be directed to G-d ... How long can we sit in exile? ..."

Indeed, it is true that the father must conceal himself from his son in order to awaken within him a yearning for his father... But what should the son do when the father places him in an incredible darkness? ... And especially if the son is on such a low level, as it says, "If our ancestors were like angels, we are like humans; and if our ancestors were like humans, then we are like donkeys-and not even like the donkey of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair."<sup>4</sup> And then He demands of us that we should constantly search ... Sunday we must search ... Monday we must search ...

And when we search through the holy books for an explanation, we find that the Talmud explicitly says, "All the designated times [for Moshiach's arrival] have already passed, and now [his arrival] is contingent only on



teshuvah (repentance)."<sup>5</sup> And it is a clear halachah that through thinking a single thought of teshuvah one becomes a tzaddik (righteous person)-and there is no Jew who hasn't thought penitential thoughts, not once, but many times!

So, how can one register a complaint against a mortal of flesh and blood who is finite and limited-this is how he was created by G-d; it is not his fault!-how can one criticize him for not constantly thinking about the redemption ... it is not possible ... G-d Himself says, "I ask only commensurate to one's capabilities," but He has not given us the strength ...

Therefore we must increase in light-and not just any light, but specifically the light of simchah (joyousness). Since simchah "breaks all boundaries and limitations," it breaks through the person's limitations, the limitations of this world, and the limitations imposed by this dreadful darkness ...

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Psalms 74:9.
2. Deuteronomy 31:18.
3. The Rebbe was weeping inconsolably while speaking these next few paragraphs.
4. The Talmud relates that Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair, a Mishnaic sage, owned a donkey that refused to feed from fodder that wasn't properly tithed.
5. Talmud, Sanhedrin 97b.

## A Leader Who Leads

By Rabbi Yossi Paltiel

Gimmel Tammuz, the third day of the Hebrew month of Tammuz, is a day of reflection for all those whose lives have been touched by the Rebbe. Upon contemplating the Rebbe - the depth and breadth of his knowledge, his inventiveness, his piety, etc. - what shines above all else is that he is a Rebbe, a leader. He is an individual whose entire existence is defined by his service to others: his people and ultimately the whole world.

We live in an age where leadership has no essential meaning. Leaders are people who have been chosen by us, who do as we say and advocate for us based on our vision.

We shun the traditional notion of a leader - of one person knowing better than everybody else and dictating his

"superior" wisdom to the populace, imposing his will and his ideas on the people.

Part of our aversion to this kind of leader is from our inherent distrust. It also stems from our belief that there are no real leaders who are in fact head and shoulders above everybody else, yet are truly concerned for the population, putting others before themselves.

For this reason we actually celebrate the failures and frailties of our leaders. It keeps things "honest."

Yet in truth, we thirst for true leadership, for people who stand for something and have real principles, people who are not afraid to go against the tide, to challenge popular beliefs and to actually create new trends. We yearn for leaders who inspire us to re-

evaluate what is considered "normal" and "acceptable" and "mainstream."

When we contemplate the Rebbe, we experience true leadership.

Leadership: The kind of leadership for which we Westerners have an inherent ambivalence. We are threatened by it. We question if this kind of leader takes away our freedom.

But then we discover that what the Rebbe says, we feel. What the Rebbe asserts, we agree with. What the Rebbe states is right and principled and true, we embrace. And we can't get enough of it for it is truly refreshing.

The Rebbe doesn't compromise our free will; he helps us exercise it. And whenever he senses us falling back into the circular whirlpool of modern equivocation he is right there to keep us

going on the linear course that is truly in our best interest.

It has been said that what makes the Rebbe unique is that rather than get us to believe in him, he believes in us and he makes us believe in ourselves.

Above all else, the Rebbe and his leadership represent deed. We live in a world of action. Thus, we must define spirituality with actions. In this world, all good intentions and deep spiritual experiences must be translated into practical action. An inspiration that doesn't manifest itself in deed is far less significant and real than an uninspired deed.

Every person is aware of the special corner in his soul that is his point of spirituality - kindness and righteousness. Some of us visit there more frequently than others. Many of us are unsettled by this dimension in ourselves that seems to lurk beneath the surface of our everyday lives. But we all must give this spark of innate spirituality expression through deed.

Some charity, a prayer, a mitzva (commandment) - these are concrete physical acts that give expression to our spiritual selves. They are also the ultimate tests of the integrity of our spirituality.

Our spirituality does not require massive acts to prove that it is authentic. The little things, simple deeds, are also appreciated. Do one mitzva if that is all you can offer at this moment. For one good deed will eventually inspire many more good deeds.

Ultimately, all our deeds will add up to a great many acts of goodness and kindness that will collectively transform the world to a good, kind and principled reality - a Messianic World!

The vision and direction of the Rebbe moves forward. Let us follow the Rebbe's lead and move forward until the coming of Moshiach.

## Inreach

By Tzvi Freeman

There are many myths about Chabad. Like the one that Chabad invented Jewish outreach. Don't believe a word of it. Chabad never did outreach. The term is antithetical to everything that Chabad and the Rebbe stand for.

Take the case of the rabbi who wrote to the Rebbe boasting that he was involved in outreach. He used the Hebrew term, kiruv rechokim, which translates as "bringing close those who are distant." The poor rabbi must have really regretted that letter. The Rebbe wrote back, indignantly:

You call them "distant"?! What gives you the right to say that you are close and they are far? You must approach each one of them as though you are the King's servant sent with a message to His most precious child!

Others who spoke with the Rebbe on the subject have similarly groped and fallen. One Chabad supporter told the Rebbe about a shabbaton he had sponsored for over forty couples who "had no Jewish background."

"No what?" the Rebbe responded, as though in shock.

"No Jewish background," was the hesitant response.

"Tell them that they have a background! Their background is that they are children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!" the Rebbe replied.

So I don't believe that the Rebbe preached outreach, and Chabad, from what I've seen, doesn't practice it. Sure, the word gets used, but there are days I think we should ban it. We don't need any more distinctions between Jews. We certainly don't need to divide ourselves between those who are on the

"inside" and those who are on the "outside". In Chabad, there is one Jewish people, all of us in the same inside of the same boat.

So what do we practice? What is a Chabad House? What is the Mitzvah Campaign? What are all these beards and black hats, sheitls and long skirts doing in the most bizarre places, if not outreach?

Quite simply, we are patching up the boat.

In the Rebbe's words:

A Jew may say to you, "Why can't you leave me alone? Why can't you just go and do your thing and let me do mine? What does it bother you if I drill this little hole in my little boat?"

You must answer him, "There is only one boat and we are all in it together."

That is and always was the theme behind the mitzvah campaign. Again, in the Rebbe's words:

The soul of the mitzvah campaign is Ahavat Yisrael -- Love of the Jewish People. And the meaning of that love is that we are all one.

That's why there was never a campaign that was only meant for "them out there." Every campaign encompassed and embraced the entire Jewish people. When there was a tefillin campaign, not only did we run out on the streets to roll up sleeves and apply the "Jewish blood pressure test" -- we took our own tefillin to a scribe to be checked, as well. When the Rebbe initiated the mezuzah campaign, he made sure to discover a cranny of his own office that could use a new mezuzah, as well. When he started a campaign to have a charity box in every Jewish home, he started personally handing out dimes and dollars to children and grownups to give charity.

So if a Chabad House is not an outreach centre, what is it?

Chabad is an idea. An idea that is valid no matter where you are and who you think you are. It wasn't invented yesterday and it's not going away tomorrow. It is the idea that every person has to use his own mind to awaken his heart and connect with his G-dly soul. A Chabad House is a place that facilitates that. For anybody who wants to make that connection.

So why are we "out there"? Why do we make such a big deal of traveling to the furthest reaches of the world, as long as another Jew might be found there? Aren't there enough Jews to take care of in Brooklyn and Jerusalem?

Because this is the mandate given us in our time, to "spread the wellsprings to the outside." As the Rebbe pointed out, not that the water from the wellsprings should spread to the outside. That would be outreach. The wellsprings themselves should be outside. The "outside" should become wellsprings. Every single one of us, without distinction.

There's a Jew somewhere in the world who imagines he's "out there." He doesn't find in himself -- if he ever stops to look for it -- any connection left with his people. Maybe he's far away on the globe, maybe further in ways of life, ways of thinking.

We come to him and tell him, "Really, you are on the inside. Really, you never left. The fact that you find yourself so 'out there' -- you were guided to this place, this mindset, so that even here you would find the Torah and even here you will delight in its living water. Until you yourself will become a wellspring to this part of the world."

In Chabad, every reach reaches deeper within.

# Turning Disappointment into Food for the Hungry

By Dovid Zaklikowski

When Shirley Chisholm was elected in 1968 to represent New York's 12th District, which included her own neighbourhood of Crown Heights, she made headlines as the first African-American woman elected to Congress. However, she soon found her congressional career stunted at its start by race-related politics. Bowing to political pressures from southern politicians, the House's leadership assigned Chisholm to the Agriculture Committee, a place where it was assumed that she could have little influence.

At the time, some in the New York media questioned the appointment and expressed doubt as to Chisholm's ability to affect the legislative agenda.

The less-than-open-arms welcome caused Chisholm, who died in 2005, an understandable amount of frustration, according to Anna V. Jefferson, a former state senator from New York's 22nd District.

She was interested in taking care of the issues in the inner city. That committee had no power "She was trying to help poor people," explained Jefferson. "She was interested in taking care of the issues in the inner city. That committee had no power" to do that.

But a phone call from the Rebbe's secretariat - a simple "the Lubavitcher Rebbe wants to see you" - changed her attitude, says David Luchins, who was a senior advisor to the late U.S. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) and chairs the political science department at Touro College.

According to Luchins, a 20-year veteran of Moynihan's staff who in 1983 heard the story first-hand from

Chisholm at a party celebrating her retirement from Congress, the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory, told the congresswoman, "I know you're very upset."

Chisholm, who lived a block away from the Rebbe and had met him once before when she was running for Congress and searching for endorsements, told the Rebbe, "I am upset. I'm insulted. What should I do?"

The Rebbe, who had declined to endorse Chisholm's candidacy and that of her predecessors because of his policy of non-involvement in political campaigns, turned the situation around.

"What a blessing G-d has given you!" the Rebbe told Chisholm, urging her to take advantage of the Divine Providence that put her in a position to do something about food supplies. "This country has so much surplus food, and there are so many hungry people. You can use this gift that G-d gave you to feed hungry people. Find a creative way to do it."

Tasked with this charge, Chisholm happened to meet U.S. Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kansas) on her first day in Washington. The farm-state politician - and later Senate Majority Leader and presidential candidate - was looking for help in shoring up the economic plight of Midwestern farmers who were losing money on their crops.

"Americans started purchasing [produce] from Cuba," explained Jefferson, who was a close associate of Chisholm's. "So as a result of the imports, the farmers were poor."

According to Luchins, Dole told Chisholm: "Our farmers have all this extra food, we don't know what to do with it." Chisholm thought, "One

second. The Rabbi!"

During the next few years, and for the duration of the 1970s, Chisholm worked to expand the national Food Stamp Program, which allowed poor Americans to buy subsidized food. Finally, in 1973, the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act mandated that Food Stamps be made available in every jurisdiction in the United States.

It was in the creation of the WIC program, however, that Chisholm really made her mark. The 1969 White House Conference on Food Nutrition and Health recommended targeted food supplements for high-risk pregnant women and their infants. Chisholm, in the House, and Dole, in the Senate, championed the idea and got Congress to approve a two-year pilot project that would be administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The USDA, though, fought the measure. It finally took a federal lawsuit to get the USDA to relent, and today more than 8 million people receive WIC benefits each month, according to U.S. government figures.

Chisholm "was responsible for the food program," said Vernell Alburary, former president of the Shirley Chisholm Institute for Children. "She was a strong, determined individual."

But Chisholm herself gave ultimate credit to the Rebbe, said Luchins.

She "said at her retirement party, 'I owe this because a Rabbi who is an optimist taught me that what you may think is a challenge is a gift from G-d,'" said Luchins in an interview he gave to Jewish Educational Media. "'And if poor babies,' I heard her say this, 'If poor babies have milk, and poor children have food, it's because this Rabbi in Crown Heights had vision.'"



# A WORD

*from the Director*

So much has been written and said about the Lubavitcher Rebbe whose 20th Yahrzeit is on the third of Tammuz, Tuesday first of July this year.

The output on the Rebbe is voluminous. The essays and countless accounts of personal encounters and meetings with the Rebbe are insightful and inspiring. The variety of perspectives on his leadership, both general and particular, are of themselves testament to an individual whose larger-than-life being has fired the passion and the imagination of a breathtakingly diverse range of individuals.

Invariably, those who have attempted to describe the Rebbe have done so through the appeal of the Rebbe's universal messages. Predictably perhaps, the theme of his love-love for his fellow Jews, love for his fellow human beings-recur in just about every essay written about this world leader.

Those who had encounters with the Rebbe, whether at "Sunday dollars" or through correspondence with him about personal matters, were struck by the Rebbe's unconditional embrace of his fellow human beings. Those who have followed the growth of Chabad-Lubavitch in its outreach have seen how the lofty ideas of love have been translated into acts of tangible, meaningful impact.

And those of us who've been privileged to experience the Rebbe close up, know that it is the compelling love of the Rebbe that explains why Chabad-Lubavitch could do the impossible when it came to finding and helping a Jew in need.

The Rebbe's love of his fellow Jew could not have been more evident than when talking about Eretz Yisrael. His passion and determination in ensuring the security and safety of its citizens saw him in close contact with Israel's political and religious leaders, strenuously advocating its security needs through a determined resolve in mandating its borders and insisting that decisions be predicated on security concerns rather than political considerations.

In 2005, NYU's Skirball Department of Judaic Studies sponsored a conference on the Lubavitcher Rebbe,



with some 25 presenters exploring different themes on the Rebbe's scholarship. At the end of it all, most confessed that the two day conference had barely touched upon the surface of their subject.

Twenty years later and we still have not begun to scratch the surface. But the endeavour is inspiring. As we mark the 3rd of Tammuz, we recognize, at the very least, that the Rebbe has given us his life to contemplate and a lifetime to be inspired.

The publication of The Lamplighter over the past twenty years has always tried to reflect the ethos of the Rebbe throughout his life - of touching and lighting up the souls of Jews with Torah Judaism. To this end, both here in Australia and throughout the world, in the past twelve months alone, hundreds of young Chabad couples have left their home cities for distant shores, establishing Chabad Houses in every corner of the globe to serve the needs of Jews wherever they are to be found.

During the years, I often travel to cities in Asia, Europe and the Americas. It is always inspiring to find Chabad emissaries even in the most remote of towns, sacrificing family, comforts and lifestyle in fulfilment of their mission. I am not unique in this experience, as fellow travellers have recalled stories of incredible devotion and real mesiras nefesh of the Rebbe's Shluchim whom they have chanced upon.

This phenomenon is the very practical expression of the oft quoted aspiration of the Rebbe; he saw his mandate as a Rebbe not in creating followers, but rather in creating leaders.

Due to the Rebbes foresight, the world can be thankful to him for the thousands of community leaders throughout the world dedicated to the welfare of their fellow brothers and sisters wherever they be found.

In our own home town of Melbourne, Chabad Houses and Shluchim are dedicated to enriching the Jewish lives of our community. From the heartland of Jewish Melbourne, the Chabad House of Caulfield continues to connect with thousands of Jewish families through the weekly publication of its flagship newsletter The Lamplighter. We, as all Chabad Houses, look forward to continuing to serve the needs of our community through our Shule, educational programmes, Festival celebrations, public lectures and extensive outreach programmes.

May the Rebbe's inspiration and legacy continue to motivate and encourage each and every one of us to help make the world a better place and bring about the ultimate Geulah. We pray for the day when we be united once again in our holy land of Israel in true peace and tranquillity.

*J. I. Gutnick*

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# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

*Adapted and excerpted from a transcript of a dialogue between the Rebbe, and Hillel directors and their students, 1961*

This year has special significance, being the 200th anniversary of the histalkus of the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of general Chasidism.

The word histalkus does not mean death in the sense of coming to an end, but rather an elevation from one level to another on a higher plane. When one has accomplished his mission in life, he is elevated to a higher plane. The significance of this for us is that everyone can now lift himself to a higher level by studying the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and taking an example from his life.

From the very beginning, one of the first things the Baal Shem Tov did was to teach small children simple things such as blessings and to explain to them how they could be near to G-d - that G-d was very real for them and close to them and not far-removed in some "seventh heaven." He worked not only with teenagers but even with six- and seven-year-old children, making them understand how G-d watches over them all the time - not only Sunday, Monday or Tuesday, but all the days of their lives, and that by obeying G-d's will they would be assured of a happy and harmonious lives, materially and spiritually.

The epoch of the Baal Shem Tov came after the Chmielnetzki pogroms, which left the Jews in a state of dejection and despair. It was the aim of the Baal Shem Tov to encourage the Jews and to show them how they could meet the problems of their day while living a life of Torah and mitzvos [commandments].

What is the view of Chasidus concerning an after-life?

As was explained earlier, death is not a cessation of life, but rather, one's spiritual life takes on a new dimension or is, as we said, elevated to a higher plane. This is logical and follows also from the principles of science that are considered to be the "absolute truth." In science, the principle of the conservation of matter states that nothing physical can be annihilated. This table or a piece of iron can be cut up, burned, etc., but in no case could the matter of the table or the iron be destroyed. It only takes on a different form.

So, likewise, on the spiritual level, our spiritual being - the soul - can never be destroyed. It only changes its form, or is elevated to a different plane.

Is the after-life of a soul personal or impersonal?

In conjunction with what was said before, the soul takes on a new and higher form. In this, the term after-life is inappropriate. Rather, it is a continuation of life. Until 120 years, life is experienced

at one level, and at 121, 122 and 123, etc., it is carried on at another level, and thus we go higher and higher in the realm of the spirit.

What is the role that the Baal Shem Tov played in the Chasidic movement?

We can understand what the Baal Shem Tov did by the simile of the relationship of an electric powerhouse with a lamp that is connected to it by a wire. In order to light the lamp, one must find the right switch, or push the correct button. The soul of every Jew is a part of and connected with G-d Alm-ghty, but in order to enjoy the great benefits of it, the correct switch must be found for the proper button to be pushed. It was the Baal Shem Tov's mission to explain and proclaim that every Jew without exception is connected with "the powerhouse," and every one of us has a switch in our innermost that will be found if searched for.

So too, every one of us in our own work in strengthening Judaism, must try to find the switch in the soul of every Jew. One can never know what will make the connection, perhaps one word. But by this, you open up the well or inner fountain of his soul.

What is the function of a Rebbe?

As was said earlier, to find the switch in every Jew and help him become connected with the powerhouse.

How does the power of the Rebbe extend in natural law? Does the Rebbe have preference in regard to prayer? Can the Rebbe perform miracles?

This world is not separate from the higher worlds but is simply another stop, the last one in a chain of worlds. Everything that influences this world comes from the higher ones. A miracle is something that happens that you could not have calculated. When a Jew connects his Divine spark with G-d through prayer, Torah and mitzvos, he can affect things in this physical world that are beyond calculation. This power is not a prerogative of one Jew but of every Jew.

Now I want to ask you a question and at the same time perform a miracle. Everything has a purpose. What was the purpose of our coming together? Certainly it was not merely to ask questions and review answers bad or good. Rather, it was to achieve something positive. All of us are young - myself included - and have tens of years ahead of us. Since six million of our people have been lost to us by Hitler-yimach shmo [may his name be erased], we have a special task to accomplish the work that they would have done. Everyone counts. No Jew is expendable. In your normal day-to-day life you must use your strength to add to your side of the good, and by this you will gain a life of happiness and harmony, as I believe, this can be done only through a life of Torah and mitzvos. The obligation lies upon every Jew and G-d has given us the power to carry this through successfully. And now the miracle is that each one of us, myself included, tomorrow should add to his finite life more Torah and mitzvos. We can all do this, myself included, and this indeed will be a miracle.

## CANDLE LIGHTING: 27 JUNE 2014

BEGINS	ENDS
4:51 .....MELBOURNE .....	5:53
4:55 .....ADELAIDE .....	5:55
4:45 .....BRISBANE .....	5:41
6:13 .....DARWIN .....	7:06
4:42 .....GOLD COAST .....	5:39
5:03 .....PERTH .....	6:02
4:37 .....SYDNEY .....	5:36
4:42 .....CANBERRA .....	5:42
4:32 .....LAUNCESTON .....	5:36
4:55 .....AUCKLAND .....	5:56
4:42 .....WELLINGTON .....	5:46
4:26 .....HOBART .....	5:32
4:40 .....BYRON BAY .....	5:37
6:55 .....SINGAPORE .....	7:39

## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

### PARSHAS CHUKAT 29 SIVAN • 27 JUNE 2014

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4:51 PM
	MINCHA:	5:00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:30 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:59 AM
	MINCHA:	4:50 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	5:53 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:00 PM
	MAARIV:	5:50 PM