

# LAMPLIGHTER

6 Tamuz  
Parshas  
Chukas  
**1302**  
30 June  
5777/2017

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## Family Feud

by Elisha Greenbaum

Sitting on the plane this Wednesday, all I wanted to do was read or sleep, but the chatty gentleman in the aisle seat had other plans.

He launched into an interminable description of the week-long trip he was taking back to Melbourne to visit his aged mother for her 80th birthday. He described her current nursing home in great detail and then told me the age and family circumstances of each of her children and grandchildren.

I feigned polite interest as he droned on, but I must confess I only started paying real attention to his ramblings when he began describing the complex choreography that his extended family had engineered to ensure that he and his younger sister would never see each other during his visit, or even be in their mother's house together at the same time.

They aren't talking, you see. They've hated each other for years. The spouses have also bought into the fight over time, and their respective children have never met. The fight erupted decades ago over something quite minor and escalated into full blown war.

What a tragedy for the family, I thought to myself. An old mother forced to sit through two separate parties, probably never having the satisfaction of seeing all her descendants at peace. The other siblings forced to take sides, and imagine the toll those years of bile and anger must be taking on the protagonists themselves.

But as he wound his way through the byways of his family history, I began to realize that his mother and siblings were far from blameless. It seemed from the way he told the story that they had inadvertently fanned the fires of resentment by faithfully reporting each nasty gibe or comment back to its target. In his words; "I can trust my brothers to tell me everything that that (expletive deleted) is saying about me."

I wondered at the time why anyone would feel duty bound to pass on information that they know is just going to inflame an already unhappy situation. Why would you repeat every piece of malicious gossip you hear? If you know you're not helping the situation, surely you are always better off saying nothing than saying too much.

We parted ways at the airport, with me still stuck pondering his family dilemmas. I was still wondering why so many families fall out of love and degenerate into petty infighting, when, the very next day, I came across a fascinating story about the first Chabad rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi and his famed contemporary, Rabbi Boruch of Mezhibuzh.

Rabbi Boruch was a great iconoclast, a fiery character inclined to

absolutism who was engaged in a number of running battles with various rabbinic leaders throughout his time in public office. Rabbi Boruch was not a man to compromise or back down on what he believed to be the truth, and consequently, he was frequently embroiled in conflict.

Rabbi Boruch once complained to Rabbi Shneur Zalman that a number of false allegations against him (Rabbi Boruch) had recently been circulated by his enemies, and although Rabbi Shneur Zalman had been aware of these slurs, he had failed to inform him.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman admitted that he had indeed heard the aspersions, but rather than apologize for not having passed on the details, he defended his right to silence.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman reminded Rabbi Boruch about the incident of the snakes, found in this week's parshah. The Israelites complained about G-d and Moses, and in consequence G-d sent a plague of snakes to attack them (Chukat 21:6). Unlike other occasions where G-d

discusses the proposed punishment with Moshe in advance, this time Moshe was unaware of the reason they were being attacked until the Israelites themselves approached him; We have sinned, for we spoke against G-d and you. Pray to G-d to remove the snakes! (21:7).

Of course Moshe, as the kind and ever-forgiving leader, prayed for them and the plague was averted, yet we have to wonder why did G-d hide the cause of the plague from him in the first place?

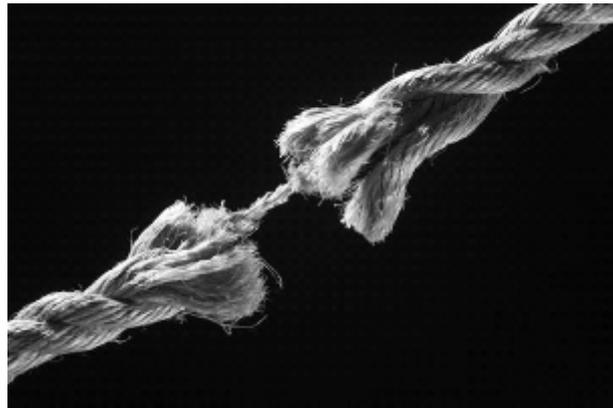
Obviously, concluded Rabbi Shneur Zalman, not only is there no mitzvah to let people know the harsh things that others are saying about them, but we learn that you really shouldn't repeat that type of gossip.

I've personally seen too many instances where well-meaning people

have caused small arguments to develop into huge fights by playing the role of so-called honest broker. More often than not people would have worked out their own issues if left alone long enough to cool off. It's the people who "feel it their duty" to pass on tattle, who are often the cause of the never-ending disputes.

I'm so tired of hearing about family fights where the people in the middle are surrounded by those on the outside alternatively egging them on or enabling them. How about resolving not to contribute to the mess? If you're unfortunate enough to hear some juicy gossip, sit on it and don't pass it on; it won't help and will probably hurt.

Spare a thought for the poor mothers sitting alone and crying over the breakdown of their once happy families. Have pity on the rabbis and psychologists who have to sit through the stories and, most importantly, keep your conscience clean by resolving to never pass on damaging news.



### CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES FOR SHABBOS 30 JUNE - 1 JULY 7 TAMMUZ

City	In	Out	City	In	Out	City	In	Out	City	In	Out
Melbourne	4:53	5:55	Brisbane	4:46	5:42	Gold Coast	4:44	5:40	Sydney	4:39	5:38
Adelaide	4:56	5:56	Darwin	6:14	7:07	Perth	5:05	6:03	Canberra	4:43	5:43
Byron bay	4:41	5:38	Auckland	4:57	5:58	Wellington	4:43	5:48	Hobart	4:28	5:34

# Slice of LIFE

## Zeida

by Chani Hadad

There's a smug smile on my face, a smile wholly at odds with the somber setting and the assembly of mourners. It is the first anniversary of my grandfather's death, and his descendants have gathered, as tradition dictates, to feast and to speak lovingly of the man who was husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. The air in my aunt's home is tangibly wistful; a corresponding sadness is mirrored in the eyes of the guests and is echoed in their voices.

We speak of the void Zeida left. No one in the room today would sit dignified at the head of the table with a decidedly undignified twinkle in his blue eyes. No one would offer a fresh batch of witticisms, delivered in a quiet voice and chased by a dry chuckle. No one would cup an ear with one hand to listen intently to the littlest of speakers. My grandfather would have. How odd that an absence could be so obviously present!

Yet I, alone, remain untouched by sorrow. I hug my complacency to me. It's not as if I didn't love him—I still do—but I cannot be overwhelmed by a sadness that does not affect me.

I glance at the grieving faces that I love most in the world. They don't know, I think. That's why they grieve. If not for terrifying circumstances of my own, I would be like them.

Whenever I think hard about the funeral, as I do now, my teeth begin to chatter. My teeth had been chattering that morning as I stood on the sidewalk and watched the procession of cars drive off to the cemetery. My swelling belly and I would remain behind. My teeth were chattering, but not from the winter cold; they were chattering because I was in a state of shock, which had set in during my father's hesped (eulogy) for Zeida.

The steady drone of weeping, which had begun even before the first speaker strode to the front of the funeral parlor, intensified when my father took the podium. The only son of the only grandfather I had ever known spoke with respect and affection—and great restraint. Then in a sudden rush of passion, my father cried brokenly: "Daddy, please,

intecede before the Heavenly Throne for a refuah shleimah for my granddaughter Blimi!"

At first I was stunned. I had been to other funerals and never had I heard a request for a refuah shleimah, a full recovery. The seeming impropriety of it worried me. Then the niggling reality, which had been hammering far back in my mind, broke through to the front. My goodness! She must really be sick! My Blimi is really sick! And then my teeth began to chatter.

After the funeral procession trailed slowly away, I walked the three blocks to the hospital, which had become my second home only two days earlier. My sister-in-law Tiffany had come to sit with the small, inert body in intensive care so that my husband and I could attend the funeral. Nothing's changed, she informed me.

A quick glance at the monitors overhead and the draining tubes snaking from her chest confirmed that my four-year-old daughter was no less near death than she had been when she was rushed to the emergency room in respiratory distress. The rare bacteria attacking her blood and lungs waged war against a daily arsenal of antibiotics. X-rays took tallies of the skirmish six times a day, and so far the bacteria were winning. Throughout the feverish battles my daughter slept on blessedly in an induced coma.

When I had first sighted her diapered body spread-eagled on the hospital bed, outfitted only with a ventilator, catheters, and tubes, she seemed like a doll—or perhaps worse, an empty shell.

I was bemused and uneasy with this strange and sudden drama in my life. Before her pneumonia struck, I was absorbed with my grandfather's ill health, dreading the fatal turn it seemed certain to take. In lighter moments I worried, needlessly, whether my toddler son would rejoice in the birth of a brother or a sister. Now my life revolved around simple red numbers on a monitor.

For some weeks I had been thinking about the inevitable week to come when my father would sit shivah. I would come every day, offering to cook and field phone calls. Yet three days into the actual shivah I still hadn't shown my face in my grandmother's home, where the family was sitting. Thoughts of the questions I would face intimidated me. I didn't have any good news to impart, so I stayed away.

On the third day of shivah, my daughter's unchanging condition changed. Her little lung collapsed and she needed immediate surgery.

She was awakened shortly before the operation. Still on paralytic drugs, she remained motionless, but her soft round eyes sought mine unhappily. Helplessly I held her limp hand in mine and wiped away the tears that squeezed from the outer corners of her eyes and trailed relentlessly to her ears.

"She'll be put under again as soon as she's wheeled into the operating room," I was informed. The comment was meant to reassure me, but I did not relax my grip on her hand. They wouldn't let me into the operating room. My baby girl would be conscious and afraid, and alone, without me there.

I walked alongside the gurney, her hand in mine. Her brown eyes locked with my own in mutual terror. With every step I grew more agitated at the thought of leaving her alone. Too soon the solid doors of the operating room loomed ahead. "That's it," I was crisply told, and Blimi was whisked away.

I felt panic rise in me as the swinging doors closed behind her, but then, curiously, a blanketing calm settled upon me. For the first time in the five days since she had been hospitalized, I was at peace.

Though the doors to the operating room were closed and windowless, I could clearly see behind them. And there, beside my daughter's bed, his hand where mine had just lain, stood Zeida. His black homburg hat and suit looked incongruous among the team of scurrying surgeons and nurses dressed in scrubs. His quiet posture reassured me, as I am sure it did Blimi. By the relaxed pulse of a mother's intuition, I knew I was not wishfully envisioning him. At this, her most vulnerable moment yet, my daughter was not alone. Neither was I.

It is impossible to concentrate. In the quiet of my aunt's house, someone else who had been close to my grandfather is saying something nice about him, but my attention is fixed elsewhere. I stare at the patterned plate before me. Did we remember to tell the caterer that we wanted dishes? The dinner is tomorrow night, and I want everything to be perfect. After all, not many people are blessed with a special opportunity to thank G-d personally with a seudat hoda'ah (thanksgiving feast).

Heart surgery, tracheotomy, and reconstructive surgery of the throat had followed Blimi's lung surgery of the previous year. She was one in a million to contract the disease, we were told, and one in a million to have survived. I wryly wonder if the joy at her wedding will equal the joy sure to be felt at tomorrow's meal.

At my left, a relative jostles me, whispering, "It's just not the same anymore without—" She bows her head. "I really miss him."

I nod in agreement, but inside I'm singing. I want to miss him. I try to miss him. But how do you miss someone who's always there?

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# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

## Rebbe, Convince My Son to Go to College

I received your letter, in which you write your ideas about your son's future, and you ask me to use my influence with him to urge him to go to college.

I am sure you will agree with me that in the case of everyone without exception, the first basic condition for happiness in life is peace of mind and the least amount of inner conflict. This has always been a fundamental principle, and it is even more so in our present generation, with its world-shattering events, confusions, conflicting ideas and ideologies. Nothing speaks more forcefully about the existing state of mind of present-day youth than the unheard-of rebellion against society in the form of juvenile delinquency and demoralization of character, all of which is a symptom of our confused age.

Therefore, the first and best thing one can do to help one's child is to endeavor to spare him the inner conflicts and to help him cultivate good religious and moral principles, so that he would not fall prey to human influences. This is especially important at the critical age of youth, when one's character and world outlook are being formed and stabilized.

With this brief introduction, I return to what you consider such a problem, namely your attempt to persuade your son to go to college and his reluctance to do so. I am sure his motives are of his purest nature, desiring to dedicate a certain period of time to the exclusive study of the Torah. At his age, to try to force him give up something which he rightly considers in his best interests, something that is good and holy which he desires very much, would certainly upset him and inevitably endanger his peace of mind. Even if he should not show outward signs of resentment, he might well develop such a feeling subconsciously, which is sometimes even worse. It is also doubtful whether such attempts to make him change his mind would be successful.

But would his attendance in college be in his best interests? You think that a college education would give him a greater security economically. Actually, only a small percentage of college graduates directly derive their incomes from their college degree. In the final analysis, however, one cannot make calculations and plans about the future without taking G-d into account. For after all, G-d is not only the Creator of the world, Whose direct Providence extends to every individual and detail, and success or failure is from Him; but He is also the Giver of the Torah, and it would be obviously illogical and impossible that when a Jewish boy dedicates a few years to the exclusive study of G-d's Torah, it would lessen his chance for happiness in life.

To be Continued...

## QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

### Is The Torah Timeless?

**Question:** I wonder about how the Orthodox view the fluidity of the Torah and the teachings of the past. Clearly there are aspects of the Torah that have been outdated since it was written, such as stoning etc. What relevance do such passages have to us today?

**Answer:** The Torah cannot be read like any other book. It is G-d's wisdom, and thus has infinite levels of depth. There is no word in the Torah that is outdated; as G-d is above time, so is His wisdom. It is just that different levels become more relevant at different times. While some laws of the Torah are no longer applied literally, their mystical and deeper meanings are still as relevant today as ever.

Let's take the example you gave -- stoning.

Today the Jewish court does not stone people for sinning. But the message behind stoning still applies. Even today we are "stoned" by our wrongdoings. The Kabbalists (Jewish mystics) teach that when we sin our heart turns hard and cold like stone. By engaging in evil acts we become desensitized to what's good and right. After repeating a sin a few times, we start to justify it. Soon we feel that it isn't bad at all. When we are criticised for it, we respond with righteous indignation, having convinced ourselves that we are actually acting morally. This is all because we are metaphorically stoned -- we are cold and impervious to the voice of our own soul.

On Rosh Hashanah, the sound of the Shofar pierces a hole in the stone blocking our heart, and the layers of indifference start to melt away.

That is the mystical view of the law of stoning in the Torah, and it explains a lot of the evil in the world today.

This is just an example. Every law, story and idea the Torah teaches can be taken literally but also has layers of meaning beyond the surface. It is an exhilarating and inspiring journey to discover how those lessons speak to us today.

## A WORD

from the Director

*At the end of this upcoming week, on Thursday, the 12th of Tammuz (July 6), we celebrate the birthday of the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn. This day, and the one that follows, is also the anniversary of the release of the Previous Rebbe from Bolshevik imprisonment.*

*The Previous Rebbe's redemption from prison is related to the ultimate Redemption through Moshiach and the personal redemption of every single Jew.*

*How can this be so? The Previous Rebbe was the leader of the Jewish people of his generation. The great commentator, Rashi, explains: "The leader includes the entire people." Therefore, the redemption of the leader of the generation affects the entire generation.*

*The Previous Rebbe himself emphasized this point in a letter that he wrote to his Chasidim on the first anniversary of his release:*

*"It was not myself, alone, that the Holy One, blessed be He, redeemed on Yud-Beis Tammuz, but also those who love the Torah and mitzvot, and so to all those who bear the name 'Jew.'"*

*Our Sages have taught that on a person's birthday his mazal - luck, or strength - is stronger than at other times. This is true even after the person's passing. In addition, Judaism also teaches that the spiritual influences and energy which were present on a specific date in Jewish history repeat themselves and return on that same date throughout the ages.*

*Thus, on the 12th of Tammuz, the birthday and anniversary of deliverance of the Previous Rebbe, all of these additional spiritual powers are in place. Let us hook into them and use this auspicious day for Torah study, additional good deeds and charity, and a special, heartfelt request from each of us to the Alm-ghty to bring the Final Redemption immediately.*

J. I. Gutnick

# Here's my *Story*

Personal Encounters  
With The Rebbe. Culled From JEM's  
'My Encounter' Project

by Rivka Chaya Tillim



I don't remember how old I was, maybe thirteen years old, when I caught a very bad case of bronchitis. There was a danger of pneumonia and my parents and grandparents were terrified. I guess in Europe, if someone coughed, it meant tuberculosis or

worse, and they were beside themselves.

I did have a terrible cough and it took a very long time for it to get better. I don't remember this part so clearly, but I do remember we went from one doctor to another and I was given one antibiotic after another. Nothing seemed to work.

All the coughing made me hoarse – first a little, then very, very hoarse. It became harder and harder for me to speak, until one day I stopped speaking altogether.

We went to all kinds of doctors who had all kinds of theories, but the bottom line was that I could not talk and they could not help. Sometimes when I think back, I wonder: Perhaps it was psychological?

And then my parents took me to the Rebbe. We went in as a family, with my parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, squeezing into the room until you couldn't fit a pin in! Everybody received a blessing and then the Rebbe said, "All of you please go out, I want to speak to her alone."

I was astonished and stunned that everybody had to go out and that I was going to have a private audience with the Rebbe. I remember being in such awe of him.

As soon as everyone left I remember feeling completely comfortable and calm, as if I was there with my own grandfather. And he spoke with me as if we were on the same level.

He asked me what I like to do, how old I am, what I do in my spare time. I remember the conversation, answering him in a whisper.

He went on to ask me what I want to do someday. I replied, "I love little children and I hope to be a mother and teach young children." The Rebbe responded that was a very good goal and that is what I should do.

As the conversation progressed, my voice became stronger. I can't say I spoke normally, but I did start talking with more force. I was mesmerized by his presence and it was as if he compelled me to talk.

The only way I can describe it is: He spoke and I answered. I can't explain it in any other way. Then he asked me what I wanted to do now. I said, "When I get to a certain age, I'd like to be a Bnos leader." Bnos was a program in Bais Yaakov schools where on Shabbos, older girls mentored younger girls. They would explain the Torah portion to them and give out snacks.

He said, "That's a very good thing and that's what you should do." He gave me a blessing and I remember backing out.

My parents, who were waiting outside, asked me how it went and I answered them. Everybody went absolutely wild! I was talking!

My brother Yoel would later tell the story:

I was home during their meeting with the Rebbe. Before my parents even returned from their audience I received a call from someone who said to me: "Your sister is talking!"

She had not been talking for I don't know how many months, and it was a terrible situation. So I asked the person who called: "How do you know?"

He replied, "She met with the Rebbe and she came out talking!"

"How do you know?" I persisted.

"Everybody is talking about it!"

I was waiting to find out if it was really true, waiting for my sister to walk in. When she finally arrived home I asked her, "Can you talk now?" "Yes," she said, "I'm talking."

It was shocking, absolutely shocking to hear her talk after all that time. Thank G-d, she recuperated...

Slowly I got better and went back to school. I remember when they asked for volunteers to be a Bnos leader I raised my hand. I had been waiting for that moment to happen and said to myself, "I can fulfill the mission given to me by the Rebbe to become a Bnos leader!"

I can tell you that the Rebbe affected my life in many ways. I happened to be a very good student and had been encouraged to go to college "to make something of myself." But I always had a feeling that wasn't for me.

I wanted to go to a teacher's seminary, but my parents were very against it. They said, "What do you need it for? Get an office job and make some money!" My reply was, "Remember, the Rebbe told me that I should teach young children..."

I went to a seminary half the day and worked the other half, paying my tuition from my own earnings and following through with the Rebbe's directive. It wasn't easy to get a job afterward, but thank G-d I was successful. I feel this is because I had the Rebbe's blessing and vision in front of me. He somehow looked into me; he saw who I was, what I needed and what I really wanted. He had a profound influence on me because he gave me the strength to fulfill my mission in life.

That's the real miracle of my story: More than a mute girl who started to speak, the real blessing of the story is that I became who I was meant to be.

Rivka Chaya Tillim grew up in the Boro Park section of Brooklyn. She currently lives in Monsey and is the mother of eleven children. She, her father, and her brother were interviewed in April, 2011.

## PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

*Moses is taught the laws of the red heifer, whose ashes purify a person who has been contaminated by contact with a dead body.*

*After forty years of journeying through the desert, the people of Israel arrive in the wilderness of Zin. Miriam dies, and the people thirst for water. G-d tells Moses to speak to a rock and command it to give water. Moses gets angry at the rebellious Israelites and strikes the stone. Water issues forth, but Moses is told by G-d that neither he nor Aaron will enter the Promised Land.*

*Aaron dies at Hor Hahar and is succeeded in the high priesthood by his son Elazar. Venomous snakes attack the Israelite camp after yet another eruption of discontent in which the people "speak against G-d and Moses"; G-d tells Moses to place a brass serpent upon a high pole, and all who will gaze heavenward will be healed. The people sing a song in honor of the miraculous well that provided them water in the desert.*

*Moses leads the people in battles against the Emorite kings Sichon and Og (who seek to prevent Israel's passage through their territory) and conquers their lands, which lie east of the Jordan.*

### CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

**PARSHAS CHUKAS • 6 TAMUZ • 30 JUNE**

<b>FRIDAY NIGHT:</b>	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4.53 PM
	MINCHA:	5.00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5.25 PM
<b>SHABBOS DAY:</b>	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.58 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	4.50 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	5.55 PM
<b>WEEKDAYS:</b>	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	5.00 PM
	MAARIV:	5.45 PM