
SPECIAL DAYS IN IYAR

Volume 33, Issue 2

Nissan 30/May 1/Sunday
First Day Rosh Chodesh

Iyar 1/May 2/Monday
Second Day Rosh Chodesh
Plague of Blood. (Seder Olam, 3)

Foundation laid for **Second Beis HaMikdash**, 3391 [537 BCE]. (Ezra 3:8)

Iyar 2/May 3/Tuesday
Birthday of our holy Master and Teacher **R. Shmuel**, "**The Rebbe MaHaRaSh**", fourth Chabad Rebbe, on Tiferes SheB'Tiferes of the Omer, 5594 [1834]. "...His life and work is best summarized by his saying, "The world says if you can't go under an obstacle, you have to go over it, and I say —go over it in the first place." The simple meaning of this is that in Torah and Mitzvos we have to "go over in the



first place": not make calculations; and when that's not enough, and you have to go above measure and limit, you go "over" —the Rebbe MaHaRaSh said "go over in the first place", in a way that's above calculations and limitations." [Sichah, Tishrei 13, 5739]

Shlomoh HaMelech began building the First Beis HaMikdash, 2928 [833 BCE].

BEIS IYAR -

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE REBBE MAHARASH

After the fire in Lubavitch in 5594 (1834), though the Tzemach Tzedek's house wasn't burnt, he decided to purchase a large lot and build a house and Beis Medrash. Count Lubomirsky ordered his manager to provide all the wood, and had the beams brought to the site and provided the labor free of charge.

The Tzemach Tzedek wanted to move in before Shavuot and the Rebbetzin wanted to give birth there. When her labor began, she went to the new home. There were no furnishings there, just the Pesach dishes. They brought straw and she lay it on the large wooden Shmura flour sifter.

The Tzemach Tzedek hurried to his new home and remained until the birth. He asked his children to say Tehillim. He asked the midwife to immerse in the Mikvah before the birth and to receive the child in a special white cloth he provided. *(Continued on page 9)*

Yartzeit of **R. Shmuel Shmelke of Nikolsburg**, student of the Mezeritcher Magid, author of Divrei Shmuel, and Nazir Hashem, 5538 [1778].

" . . . [The Alter Rebbe presented his Hilchos Tzitzis and Hilchos Pesach] to those two golden illuminators, the laudable brothers, the famous Geonim of highest holiness, pillars of the world, our Master R. Shmelke, and his brother, our Master R. Pinchas . . . they praised it and extolled it very, very much [and encouraged him to finish the Shulchan Aruch]." [Introduction of the author's sons to the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch]

Yartzeit of **R. Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk**, author of Pri HaAretz, a leading student of the Mezeritcher Magid, 5548 [1788].

From 1773 until 1777 he was the leader of the Chasidim of Russia and Lithuania. After the Magid's passing, the Alter Rebbe accepted R. Mendel, his former colleague, as his Rebbe. In 1777 R. Mendel moved to Eretz Yisroel (the Alter Rebbe had wanted to go with him) and insisted that the Alter Rebbe become leader of the Chasidim.

The Frierdiker Rebbe initiated the writing of the **Sefer Torah for receiving Moshiach**, 5702 [1942].

Iyar 3/May 4/Wednesday

Yartzeit of **R. Yehudah Leib Pistiner of Kolomei**, student of the Ba'al Shem Tov, 5505 [1745].

Iyar 4/May 5/Thursday

Yartzeit of **R. Yosef Teumim**, author of Pri Megadim, on the Shulchan Aruch, 5552 [1792].

Iyar 5/May 6/Friday

". . . The Early Authorities established, when the Beis HaMikdash stood, to teach publicly the laws of any holiday thirty days before, that is . . . from Iyar 5 and on, to study the laws of Shavuos . . . Because all who live in Eretz Yisrael must bring three Korbanos on the

holiday, and every Korban must be clean of blemish and other disqualifications. The Chachamim enacted teaching the laws to remind the people of the holiday, so they wouldn't forget to prepare animals fit for the Korban, within thirty days . . .". [Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim: 429:1]

Iyar 6/May 7/Shabbos

Yartzeit of **R. Levi b. Gershon (RaLBaG)**, philosopher, astronomer, and commentator on Chumash, 5104 [1344].

Yartzeit of **R. Leibish of Mezeritch**, student of the Ba'al Shem Tov, 5535 [1775].

Iyar 7/May 8/Sunday

"Day Of Yerushalayim Wall Dedication", once a holiday (Megilas Taanis, 2). Nechemiah dedicated new walls around Yerushalayim, 3426 [335 BCE]. (Nechemiah, 12:27)

Years later the Jewish defenders of Yerushalayim surrendered these walls to the Romans on this day in 3830 [70 CE]. (Josephus, The Jewish Wars, 5:7)

Iyar 8/May 9/Monday

Jewish community of Speyer was massacred in the First Crusade, 4856 [1096], commemorated in the Kinah "Mi Yitein Roshi Mayim" that we say on Tisha B'Av.

Iyar 10/May 11/Wednesday

The **Aron HaBris** was captured by the Plishtim. Yartzeits of Chofni and Pinchas, who died in the war, and of their father Eli, the Kohen Gadol and Pinchas' wife who died upon hearing the news of the Aron. (Shmuel I, 4) (Megilas Taanis)

Yartzeit of **R. Yitzchak Alfasi (RiF)**, codifier of the Gemara, author of Sefer HaHalachos, 4863 [1103].

" . . . the RiF, the Rambam, and the RoSh, are the pillars of Jewish Law, which all of Israel bases itself on." [Introduction of the Beis Yosef to the Tur]

Yartzeit of **R. Meir Margolis of Lemberg**, author of responsa Meir Nesivim, student of the Ba'al Shem Tov, 5550 [1790].

Iyar 12/May 13/Friday

Yartzeit of **R. Yeshaya of Yanov**, student of the Mezeritcher Magid, compiler of Tzava'os HaRiVaSh, [one of the first collections of the Ba'al Shem Tov's teachings] 5554 [1794]. In 1796 it was burned in the streets of Vilna. The Alter Rebbe wrote a letter to the Chasidim of Vilna about this [printed in Beis Rebbe, chapter 12] and wrote a letter [Tanya, Igeres HaKodesh, chapter 25] defending its ideas.

" . . . The compilers did not know how to determine the exact phraseology . . . for the Ba'al Shem Tov, of blessed memory, would say Divrei Torah in Yiddish, not in Hebrew . . . but the intent is absolutely true." [Tanya, Igeres HaKodesh, 26] He also compiled Or Torah, of the Mezeritcher Magid.

Iyar 13/May 14/Shabbos

Yartzeit of **R. Nesanel Weil of Prague**, author of Korban Nesanel, commentary on the RoSh, 5529 [1769].

Yartzeit of **R. Yisroel Aryeh Leib Schneersohn**, of blessed memory, brother of the Rebbe, 5712 [1952]. He is buried in Tzefas.

Iyar 14/May 15/Sunday **Pesach Sheini**

We don't say Tachnun. We eat Matzah today to commemorate Pesach Sheini.

Pesach Sheni was given for the Jews who couldn't bring the Pesach Sacrifice on the 14th of Nisan because they were impure. Hashem gave them a second chance to make it up by bringing the korbos a

month later, on the 14th of Iyar. That night they would eat the korbos with matzah and maror, the same way it was eaten a month earlier on Pesach.

The last day the Jews ate the Matzos they took out of Mitzrayim, which had in them the taste of the Mon, 2448 [1313 BCE] (Rashi, Shemos 16:35) and thus, another reason for the custom of eating Matzah. [Siddur of R. Yaakov Emden]

"The theme of Pesach Sheni is that it's never too late. It's always possible to put things right. Even if one was impure or far away, and even when the impurity was deliberate, nonetheless, he can correct it". [HaYom Yom, Iyar 14]

Second imprisonment of the **Friediker Rebbe**, in Lubavitch, 5662 [1902].

Yartzeit of **R. Meir Ba'al HaNes**, 3881 [121] is observed in Teveria.

Iyar 15/May 16/Monday

Hashem promised the Jewish people that they will receive Mon from Heaven.

Iyar 16/May 17/Tuesday

First day the **Mon** fell in the desert; first evening the quail fell to supply The Bnei Yisroel with meat, 2448 [1313 BCE]. That year this day fell out on a Sunday. (Shemos 16:1 Rashi)

Moshe Rabeinu composed the first Brachah of Birkas HaMazon, 2448 [1313 BCE]. (Berachos 48b)

Yartzeit of **R. Meir (MaHaRaM) of Lublin**, commentator on Gemara, 5376 [1616].

Iyar 17/May 18/Wednesday **Erev Lag BaOmer**

No Tachnun at Minchah

Yartzeit of **R. Yechezkel Landau of Prague**, author of Noda BiYehudah, 5553 [1793].

Yartzeit of **R. Moshe Chaim Efraim of Sadlikov**, grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov, author of Degel Machaneh Efraim, 5560 [1800].

Iyar 18/May 19/Thursday

Lag BaOmer

We don't say Tachnun.

The students of **R. Akiva** stopped dying.

Yartzeit of **R. Shimon Bar Yochai**.

" . . . There's a custom to eat carob, because R. Shimon Bar Yochai, hiding from the Romans in a cave for thirteen years, survived on carobs from a tree outside the cave." [Sichah, Rosh Chodesh Iyar, 5742]

" . . . By the Mittlerer Rebbe Lag BaOmer was one of the special Yom Tovs. They would go out to the fields . . .at that time they would see many miracles, mostly about [having] children. The whole year they would look forward for Lag BaOmer...". [HaYom Yom, Iyar 18]

Yartzeit of **R. Moshe Iserles, (the ReMA)**, author of the Mapah, on the Shulchan Aruch, the definitive authority of Ashkenazic Halachic practice, 5333 [1573].

" . . . We follow the Shulchan Aruch, wherever the ReMA doesn't disagree". [Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch]

" . . . The Gaon and Kabbalist, R. Moshe Iserles of Cracow, in his Sefer Toras HaOlah, explains in detail all aspects of the Beis HaMikdash below and in the higher worlds, and in the powers of man. The early Chasidim, those of great intellect, would study the Sefer Toras HaOlah as one of the Sefarim of Divine comprehension and service." [Likutei Diburim, p. 973]

Tenaim of **Rebbetzin Sheina**, youngest daughter of the Frierdiker with **R. Menachem Mendel Horenstein**, grandson of the Rebbe MaHaRaSh, 5692 [1932].

Iyar 19/May 20/Friday

Yartzeit of **R. Meir of Rotenburg**, teacher of the RoSh, outstanding Talmudic authority of his generation, author of commentary on the Gemara, and responsa. He died in the fortress of Eisenheim, 5053 [1293]. Held for ransom, he refused to be redeemed, saying it would put every rabbi in Europe in danger of being kidnapped.

Yartzeit of **R. Menachem Mendel of Rymanov**, student of R. Elimelech of Lyzensk, 5575 [1815].

Iyar 20/May 21/Shabbos

Yartzeit of **R. Mordechai of Czernobyl**, 5598 [1838].

Iyar 21/May 22/Sunday

The Frierdikerfounded **Kfar Chabad**, in Eretz Yisrael, 5709 [1949].

Iyar 22/May 23/Monday

In the year of Yetziyas Mitzrayim this date was the first Shabbos the Yidden kept in the Midbar, they did not collect the Mon on Shabbos, but collected two portions on Friday.

Iyar 23/May 24/Tuesday

Jews of Worms were massacred by Crusaders, 4856 [1096], commemorated in the Kinah "Mi Yitein Roshi Mayim" that we say on Tisha B'Av.

Iyar 26/May 27/Friday

Yartzeit of **R. Saadiah Gaon**, head of the Yeshivah of Sura, Talmudist and philosopher, author of Emunot VeDeiot, first philosophical presentation of Judaism, 4702 [942].

Yartzeit of **R. Moshe Chaim Luzatto**, Kabbalist, author of Mesilas Yesharim, Choker UMekubal, KeLaCh Pischei Chochmoh, and other Kabbalistic works cited in the Chasidus of the Tzemach Tzedek, 5507 [1747].

Yartzeit of **R. Yitzchok Aizik HaLevi Epstein of Homel**, author of Chanah Ariel, and Shnei HaMeoros, one of the greatest students of the Alter Rebbe, Chassid of the Mittlerer Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek, 5617 [1857].

Iyar 27/May 28

Shabbos Mevarchim Sivan

The only Shabbos Mevarchim on which we DO say "Av HaRachamim": it was written in response to the destruction of Jewish communities during the First Crusade, throughout Sivan of 1096.

Once a holiday, "The Day The Crowns Were Removed From Yehudah And Yerushalayim", a day of Greek idol worship, eradicated by the Chashmonaim. (Megilas Taanis, 2)

Yartzeit of **R. Shlomoh Zalman of Kopust**, grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek, son of R. Yehudah Leib, author of Magen Avos, 5660 [1900]. After his father's passing in 1867, he became Rebbe in Kopust.

Iyar 28/May 29/Sunday

Yerushalayim was liberated, including Har HaBayis and the Kosel HaMaaravi, in the Six Day War, 5728 [1967].

The **RaMBaM** celebrated this day as a Yom Tov: he found the Sefer Torah written by Ezra HaSofer and saw that it exactly paralleled the Parshah divisions he had copied for the Mishneh Torah, from the Sefer Torah in Egypt.

Yartzeit of **R. Yitzchok of Corbeil**, author of Sefer Mitzvos Katan (SeMaK), 5040 [1280].

Iyar 29/May 30/Monday

Yartzeit of Shmuel HaNavi 2882 [878 BCE]. (Megilas Ta'anis)

Sivan 1/May 31/Tuesday

Rosh Chodesh Sivan

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It's Been Over 30 Years... Where Are We?!?

Living the Redemption

By Rabbi Shimon Raichik OB" M

Last year the 28th of Nissan was the 30th Anniversary of the Rebbe's iconic statement: "I have done all that I can; now it's up to you to do all that you can to bring Moshiach (the geula)."

The Rebbe explained this statement later in more detail that this means to learn Inyanei Geula and Moshiach in the Torah (Rambam, Medrash, Chassidus etc). By learning, internalizing and integrating those Torah sources we will come to live with the geula and Moshiach and as a result add in learning the Torah and doing mitzvos.

When we learn in the Rambam and in Chassidus about the changes that Moshiach will bring, this brings changes in the way that we live now. But how do we practically apply this in our lives?

This mandate to bring the geula began at the very onset of the Rebbe's Nesius on Yud Shevat 5711-1951 when the Rebbe explained that our (the seventh generation's) purpose is to make a dwelling place for Hashem in this physical world. Over the years the campaign intensified until on the 28th of Nissan 5751-1991 the Rebbe brought this mandate to the stage of living with Moshiach.

So what have we accomplished over the last thirty years?

Some treat the Rebbe's mandate like a check off list. We check off davening, tzedaka, Chitas, Rambam, some Chassidus, some learning with the children, an hour of Mivtzoyim and an inyan in Inyanei Geila and

Moshiach to top it off. Then we ask, what else haven't we done?

Whatever a person focuses on, he or she will feel. By focusing our efforts on LIVING with Moshiach we understand that the goal is all about change not only action. There is also a mindset and a feeling that goes along with it.

Living with Moshiach as an actual part of our lives as real and immediate was seen many times in the Rebbe's pronouncements about the geula. The Rebbe would say that Moshiach should be here even before we daven Mincha or Maariv or before the end of the Fabrengen. How was this possible? Because the Rebbe could see Moshiach in the doorway waiting to enter. Our eyes weren't open enough to see, so the Rebbe advised us to learn and thereby also come to see that we are in the era of Moshiach and to act accordingly.

There is a story about the talmidim of the Ba'al Shem Tov who would wait for the Ba'al Shem Tov to finish davening. On one particular day the Ba'al Shem Tov's ascension into the higher worlds was extended and the talmidim became hungry. They decided to venture off for a few minutes to taste something and quickly return. A short while later when they returned they were surprised to see that the Ba'al Shem Tov had completed davening and was already folding his tallis.

When the talmidim asked what happened the Ba'al Shem Tov answered using the analogy of a bird's

nest that was high on top of a wall. A person wanted to capture the beautiful bird in the nest and asked to stack one person on top of the other so that he could climb on the top to reach the nest. Meanwhile the people on the bottom grew tired and bored so they left and the entire stack of people came tumbling to the ground. The same thing said the Ba'al Shem Tov happened when you left during davening. It was only because of your zechusim that my tefillah was able to ascend on High. Once you left I could not reach the level that I was seeking.

This was also the Rebbe's message on the 28th of Nissan. The Rebbe was telling us that everything that can be done to bring Moshiach depends on what we do.

A person might say that they can follow instructions and do the things required to bring the geula but not necessarily live or feel him or herself personally going out of galus in the present moment. For this there are two responses, the first is an analogy. What would it be like if the homeless were shown a way to get out of a tent city but instead of leaving, because they were so used to their way of life and they didn't 'feel' like leaving it was real, they didn't want to leave. They decided instead to improve the tent city or petition the government for increased spending on tent cities and more safe needles for their drug habits. The same applies for our situation in galus. Hashem has no home and we have no home as long as we are in galus, as it says "Woe is to the Father who drove his children away from His table (home), and woe is to the children who were driven from their Father's table.

By the Rebbe statement we understand that we are without a home as long as the galus continues and it depends on us to not be comfortable in this homeless state but to do everything we can bring to bring

the geula. By learning about the geula from a Torah perspective we can see what we are missing and it creates the desire to do whatever is required to get out of the galus. Then we do every positive act at every moment available to materialize the geula and Moshiach.

How do we get ourselves to feel and live the geula? By being all in with our entire will. It says that the Korban Pesach was roasted entirely, it's head intestines and feet. So too, for real changes to occur, we need to become 'fully roasted' with love for Hashem, the Torah and every Jew. It's not enough to understand only intellectually or act without enthusiasm; it's an entire package that includes everything; our will, our intellect, our emotions and our actions. As soon as we reveal the **Aleph** of Hashem Echod in the world through our actions, we transform the world from gola (galus, spelled without an aleph) to geula (spelled with an aleph).

By acting this way, by doing all we can, we will merit the fulfillment of the complete and final geula with the arrival of Moshiach today!

* * *

**Pesach Sheni -
The Power to Demand IS in Each of Us!**

It's already [more than] 30 years from Chof Ches Nissan. The Rebbe gave us the mandate to bring Moshiach!

Many look around and say "who me? Knowing all my faults, do I have the power? Who am I to demand? This is our evil inclination putting us down, talking negatively to us, telling us that we have too many faults. It can put us in a depressive state, thinking we'll never accomplish that which we set out to do. The Rebbe sees the true inner power of the neshama of each Yid. He shows us that we have it within us, and gives us the power, to do everything to fulfill the desire of Hashem of creation, to make a dwelling

place with the coming of Moshiach. We have the power to break through the walls of golus and demand Moshiach. Pesach Sheni teaches us that despite any personal faults or impurities, we each have the power to demand within us.

A year after leaving Egypt, the Jewish people brought the Pesach offering in the desert. Some Jews had become ritually unclean and couldn't bring the Pesach offering. They complained to Moshe and Aaron: "Why should we be deprived of bringing the offering of the Lord among the children of Israel?" What was their question? They knew they were impure and therefore couldn't bring it?! So what did they want? Hashem saw the heart of these people, their sincerity saying even though we are impure, please don't deprive us of this.

Hashem answered: "If any person of you or your future generations shall be impure or on a distant journey, he shall still make the Pesach offering on the fourteenth day of the second month (Iyar)."

A Jew who couldn't offer the Pesach sacrifice was given a second chance a month later. The essence of Pesach Sheni is thus (in the words of the Lubavitcher Rebbe): "It's never too late. It's always possible to put things right. Even if one was impure or far away, and even when the impurity was deliberate, nonetheless, he can correct it."

Pesach is the only festival for which such a second chance is given. Pesach Sheni is the only Mitzvah given in response to the demands of Jews. This is because the festival of Pesach is inextricably bound up with the Exodus from Egypt, the birth of the Jewish nation. Without the Pesach offering, the Exodus would not have been whole. Without the Exodus, there could be no Jewish existence. A Jew who could not bring the Pesach offering could not feel whole.

A Jew may think himself unworthy of making such demands of G-d, and that his demands would not be accepted anyway. Pesach Sheni teaches otherwise. Jews demanded, their demand was accepted, and Pesach Sheni was granted.

Because we are in exile and the Holy Temple doesn't stand, we are very much in the same position. Because of those same things, we can't offer the sacrifices or perform the Temple services G-d commanded us.

Pesach Sheni poses these questions:

How can any Jew feel whole when the Temple services are prohibited to us? How can any Jew feel whole when somewhere there are Jews who still live in daily terror? How can any Jew feel whole when we are in the middle of a second Holocaust, a spiritual holocaust of assimilation and intermarriage.

How can the Jewish people feel whole when there is still war, cruelty, bloodshed, deceit and poverty in the world, and innocent people and children are made to suffer?

We are taught that all this will be healed by the revelation of G-dliness which will follow the revelation of Moshiach. Pesach Sheni teaches us that we have the power to demand that which we need to carry out G-d's Mitzvos.

Thus, it is the duty of every Jew to cry out and demand, Why should we be deprived? Why should we be deprived of serving G-d in the manner that He Himself commanded? Why should a human being be deprived of the opportunity to live out his or her lifetime in grateful fulfillment of his physical and spiritual needs? End the darkness. Fulfill Your promises now. We've waited long enough.

WE WANT MOSHIACH NOW

BEIS IYAR THE BIRTHDAY OF THE REBBE MAHARASH

(Continued from page 1)

On Iyar 2, Tiferes SheB'Tiferes, one hundred years after the Ba'al Shem Tov's revelation, the Rebbe Maharash was born.

On the eighth day, the Tzemach Tzedek asked that Shachris be early. By ten in the morning the family gathered, with R' Chaim Avraham, the Alter Rebbe's son.

In the early afternoon the Tzemach Tzedek was still in his room. R' Chaim Avraham sighed, "The Rebbe is certainly involved with finer guests than us."

A half hour passed. The Tzemach Tzedek came out holding a hanker-chief. His eyes were red from tears; he was very serious. "The Bris will be today," he announced. He waited for a moment and returned to his room.

R' Chaim Avraham rested his head in his hands, deep in thought. The Tzemach Tzedek's children discussed Torah. The Rebbetzin wanted someone to ask the Tzemach Tzedek about the delay, but R' Chaim Avraham held the messenger back.

After three, the Tzemach Tzedek came out again and joyously told his guests to eat - the Bris would yet be. He returned to his room. At four he returned to the guests and told them not to daven Minchah yet, the Bris would be very soon. He returned to his room, left, and went to the Rebbetzin's room to discuss the child's name with her. He announced that the baby should be prepared for the Bris.

The Tzemach Tzedek was the Sandek. The baby cried and the Tzemach Tzedek took his left hand from under the pillow and patted him on the head, the baby

stopped crying. Immediately after the brochos of the Bris the Tzemach Tzedek said to start Minchah. The chazzan was the Mittlerer Rebbe's son, R' Menachem Nachum, the Tzemach Tzedek's brother-in-law. The Seudah was after Minchah.

During the meal, R' Yehudah Leib asked the Tzemach Tzedek the source of the name Shmuel. "Perhaps," he asked "for Shmuel Hanavi?"

The Tzemach Tzedek said it was for a water carrier in Polotzk, and a Chacham is greater than a Navi.

(Sefer HaToldos, Rebbe Maharash, Chapter 1)

The following is an excerpt from the Rebbe's Reshimos of 17 MarCheshvan 5693 (1932), in which he records the previous Rebbe's accounts of the Rebbe Maharash, and his wife, Rebbetzin Rivkah.

"The Rebbe Maharash greatly honored his wife, the Rebbetzin Rivkah, and she showed him tremendous respect in return. For example, she never sat while he was standing.

The Rebbe Maharash would give money to his attendant, Reb Yosef Mordechai, for the household expenses, for the Rebbetzin Rivkah did not tend to these matters. Whatever money was needed to buy wood, straw and so on, he would give to him and not to her.

He had her pay the salary for the children's teachers, but he did the accounting.

Every six months, before the holidays (of Tishrei

and Pesach), he would buy back her jewelry that she had mortgaged (to finance her projects of providing dowries for poor brides, supporting Torah scholars, and the like). There must have been some reason she financed these projects in this way, since she had enough money of her own to use for these purposes.

The Rebbe Maharash used to go himself and test the children who learned in the classrooms surrounding the central courtyard in Lubavitch.

The Tzemach Tzedek used to call his sons (and likewise his daughter Devorah Leah) into his study to consult with them on various matters. The Rebbe Maharash did not do this.

It was the custom of all the Rebbes, from the Alter Rebbe on, to speak to their Rebbetzins after Minchah on the day before Rosh Hashanah, on their way to daven in the synagogue, to bless them and request their blessings. (By the way, the custom of reciting Psalms before the evening prayer of Rosh Hashanah is also very longstanding.)

On the day before his last Rosh Hashanah in this world (1882), the Rebbe Maharash went to see his wife, the Rebbetzin Rivkah. After they spoke about the current outbreak of pogroms, he said to her: "My father (the Tzemach Tzedek) told me that the Divine decree has been broken, and that there will be no more physical pogroms. But there could still be spiritual decimation. Take care of the children."

The Rebbetzin understood from this that he was telling her that he would soon pass away. She began to cry, saying that he would surely recover and they would together be able to care for their children.

He answered: "I have taken the severity of the decree upon myself (to expiate through my death). We will indeed be together, but from different worlds. I will ascend thirty-one spiritual steps, while you will ascend thirty-one physical steps. Don't forget, my father assured you a long life.

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We Come To You

My grandmother (Rebbetzom Rivkah) told me all this in 1908. I didn't understand what these "thirty-one physical steps" were until her passing, which occurred thirty-one years after this incident.

When the Rebbe Maharash would travel, he would first go to the train station at Rudnia (which was the closest to Lubavitch). He would stay there a few minutes or a quarter of an hour, and visit his niece Fruma Zuckerman. If necessary, the train would wait for him.

Once, when he was visiting his niece, he asked for a cup of tea. He sent his coachman to the train station to tell the conductor he would not be traveling that day. He sent also a rider back to Lubavitch to tell the household not to worry, that he changed his mind and decided to embark on his journey the next day. So the train went ahead without him, and lo and behold, near Vitebsk there was an accident.

This incident did not become widely known, however, since we did not talk much about these kinds of stories out of fear of the government.

On one occasion the Rebbe Maharash traveled out of Russia via Dvinsk, to the border town of Birballen. From Dvinsk, he was accompanied by a scholarly chassid by the name of Reb Yaakov Rashal. Reb Yaakov intended to get off the train when the Rebbe Maharash went to sleep that night, so he didn't bring his tallis and tefillin with him. But the Rebbe told him: "Come with me as far as the border." The Rebbe's gabbaim, Reb Levik and Reb Pinye Leib, came too.

The Rebbe Maharash used to daven very early. He called Reb Yaakov Rashal into his compartment at 7:00 am. When he came in, the Rebbe was sitting

with his eyes closed, smiling. Reb Yaakov stood, waiting. When the train reached the next station, a young, intelligent-looking man got on. The Rebbe's compartment had six seats in it, and this young man sat down on one of them.

The Rebbe then opened his eyes and said to the young man: "What do you need to carry a dangerous item for? What's in your pocket? Show me!"

When the young man heard this, he turned white. He took a revolver out of his pocket. The Rebbe took it from him and threw it out the window.

He then said to Reb Yaakov Rashal: "You haven't davened yet. Take my tefillin and use them." And he added: "but be careful not to think any stray thoughts. This applies until one's last day." Reb Yaakov went out with the tefillin and davened.

When he later came back the Rebbe Maharash asked the young man if he would perhaps like to daven. The latter began to wail. The Rebbe patted him on the shoulder and said: "Someone who acts wickedly not of his own accord is not considered evil." Reb Yaakov found a tallis and tefillin for him.

When Reb Yaakov came again into the Rebbe's compartment, the Rebbe said to him: "King David said: 'If [G-d] will say thus, here am I.'" But one should in any case strive to be buried among Jews. Daven, and you can get off at the next station." The young man had already gotten off before this.

The Rebbe then delivered a short Chassidic discourse.

It became known later that the Maskilim had planned to assassinate the Rebbe Maharash, who fought them fiercely.

As for Reb Yaakov Rashal, in the years following the Rebbe Maharash's passing, he followed (Rabbi Chaim Shneur Zalman of) Liadi, and later on (after the Rebbe Rashab began to assume various aspects of the leadership), he visited both Lubavitch and Liadi. Nonetheless, he was always considered a loyal Lubavitcher chassid. He had ups and downs in his business career, which took him as far as S. Petersburg. When he passed away, it was only through great effort that people succeeded in burying him in a Jewish cemetery.

Translated and adapted from Reshima 131 by Rabbi Moshe Wisniewsky

* * *

The Poritz of Batchkeckov in Vitebsk was a good hearted person and he provided the Jews on his estates with a livelihood. The poor Jews as well as the Rav, Chazan, Schochet and Melamdim were exempt from taxes. He provided free pasture for the poor.

As he became older and weaker he gave over the governing of his lands to his manager, an anti-semitic. A new priest arrived, also an anti-semitic. Jews could no longer earn a livelihood and the poor had to pay taxes. Most of the Jews were Chasidim of the Rebbe Maharash. They went to Lubavitch regularly and received the Rebbe's brochos, but no one wanted to tell the Rebbe about the Poritz's manager.

A chosid, Reb Shmuel, still dealt with the Poritz himself. He had a good name as a trustworthy businessman and was learned. He gave Tzedakah with a generous hand. In Yechidus, the Rebbe Maharash asked him about the Jews in his vicinity. Reb Shmuel said things were worsening from day to day. The Rebbe said Dr. Berteson told him that the poritz was very ill. Why didn't any of the Chassidim tell him?

He thought and said, "Go home, tell the poritz this: I know he is critically ill and the doctors have given up hope. Let him help the Jews in his cities, villages, inns and estates, and Hashem Yisborach will give him one month of healthy life for each Jewish family."

R' Shmuel wanted to see the poritz but it seemed impossible. One summer day the doctors said that the poritz should be driven about in the fresh air. The poritz lay down (he couldn't sit up) for the ride. R' Shmuel saw, and it hurt him to see how ill the old poritz was. The poritz asked R' Shmuel to ride with him.

R' Shmuel told him the message from the Rebbe. He asked R' Shmuel to make a census of the Jews in the city and outlying areas. The list should be kept secret. In the city there were one hundred and sixty families and tens of families in the outlying areas. The poritz agreed to the terms that the Rebbe had outlined. The poritz returned to good health, and the Jews regained their livelihood.

In the poritz's garden grew Lulavim and Hadasim. In 1881 he sent some to the Rebbe Maharash for Sukkos.

In 1894 R' Shmuel told the story to the Friediker Rebbe. He said the poritz is very old now and for fourteen years has been healthy, never sick or weak. Last week he felt poorly, and told me I must go to the grave of the Rebbe Maharash and tell him the poritz feels weak and according to his census he still has one year and seven months to live and the Rebbe should fulfill his promise.

Sefer Hasichos 5703, Acharon Shel Pesach

Pesach Sheni

You've missed the Boat... Now what?!?

When you've missed the boat there's nothing you can do but wave to the passengers. If the train has already left the station, you might as well sit down and wait for the next one to arrive. There are many things in life that depend on being in the right place at the right time; and if you're late, you've missed that opportunity forever.

Likewise, the Torah tells us that there are specific times for doing specific mitzvot. There is a proper time to put on tefilin, a proper time to light Shabbat candles, a proper time to eat matza, and a proper time to sit in the sukka.

The Torah's narrative about Pesach Sheini - the "Second Passover" (always on 14 Iyar), thus expresses a very radical concept in Judaism.

In the first year in the Midbar, Hashem commanded us to offer the Passover sacrifice, on the 14th of Nissan. One of the requirements, however, was that a Jew had to be in a state of ritual purity. As a result, not everyone was permitted to bring an offering, and the Jews who were excluded felt terrible. "Why should we be left out?!" they demanded of Moshe. They were so eager to observe the mitzvah, that Hashem relented, granting them another opportunity to bring an offering one month later, on the 14th of Iyar.

This story reveals the unfathomable depths of the Jewish soul and the infinite power of teshuva, repentance. It teaches us that every Jew is so intimately connected to Hashem that when he makes a sincere and heartfelt demand, it "forces" Hashem, as it were, to open up new channels through which to send us His

abundant blessings.

As the Frierdiker Rebbe explained, the lesson of Pesach Sheini is that it is never too late to correct the past and return to Hashem. It also emphasizes the power of a Jew's initiative. When a Jew cries out from the depths of his soul and with a genuine desire to fulfill Hashem's will, Hashem listens to his plea and grants his request.

There is an additional message of Pesach Sheini. What, in fact, was the cause of the ritual impurity which excluded some Jews from participating in the sacrifice? The Torah states: "There were people who were defiled by contact with the dead and were unable to offer the Passover sacrifice on that day." According to one opinion in the Talmud, these Jews were involved in the mitzva of burying a dead person found on the roadside who had no known relatives to do so. Even a kohen (Priest) and even a Kohen Gadol (High Priest) - neither of whom is normally permitted to come in contact with the dead - is obligated to defile himself by burying the dead person.

This concept applies on a spiritual plane, as well. When we encounter another person who is spiritually "lifeless" we are obligated to get involved with him, even if it takes us away from our own spiritual pursuits.

Ultimately, Pesach Sheini teaches us that we must never despair or give up on ourselves, on others, and especially in bombarding Hashem with our demand that He send us Moshiach immediately.

Lag B'Omer: R' Akiva and R' Shimon bar Yochai

How are R' Akiva and R' Shimon bar Yochai connected with Lag B'Omer?

Rabbi Akiva

Rabbi Akiva was the son of Yosef, a convert. Born into poverty after the destruction of the Second Beis Hamikdash, he tended flocks for Kalba Savua, who was as rich and cultured as Akiva was poor and ignorant.

Kalba Savua's daughter Rachel heard of Akiva, who was known for his fine and gentle character. She said she would marry him if he would go to study in the Yeshiva. He agreed.

Kalba Savua disowned his daughter. Rachel, who had known only comfort and luxury, moved into Akiva's hut.

Akiva promised her, "One day I will buy you a golden brooch with Yerushalayim carved into it." That promise, made by the illiterate shepherd, was fulfilled years later by the Sage whose knowledge laid the foundation for the whole Mishkan.

He also kept his promise to learn Torah, but he was overcome by doubt. Once, he came to a spring. In the pool beneath the spring, he noticed that where the water splashed onto the stone, was a round smooth hole.

"Who cut the hole in the stone?" he asked. "The water made the hole by trickling onto it year after year. Torah is like water. If my brain is like stone, if the Torah trickles down on me, some of it must eventually penetrate..."

At Yavneh, Akiva entered even greater poverty. Rachel, barely able to support herself, sent him the money she obtained by selling her long hair.

Twenty-four years later, Rabbi Akiva returned home with twenty-four thousand disciples. People lined the street to honor him. Rachel pushed her way through to approach him. His attendants leaped forward to prevent her, but Rabbi Akiva restrained them, "All you have learned from me and everything I know, belongs to her."

Rabbi Shimon

R' Shimon was wanted by the Romans for the crime of criticizing the Emperor, punishable by death. R' Shimon fled with his son, R' Elazar, to a cave in the desert near Teveriah. They studied there for thirteen years, until Eliyahu HaNavi came to tell them the Emperor was dead.

The Torah they studied was the basis of Kabbalah.

During the Omer period, several thousand of R' Akiva's disciples perished in a plague visited upon them because of their failure to treat each other with complete respect. The plague continued until the thirty-third day of the Omer. Therefore, during the Omer, Jews mourn, avoiding music, marriage and festivities, among other restrictions. On the thirty-third day, the restraints are lifted, and we celebrate.

Lag B'Omer is also the Yartzeit of R' Shimon bar Yochai.

Before he died, R' Shimon commanded that the anniversary of his death be a day of rejoicing, to

commemorate the day he was reunited with his Creator.

On Lag B'Omer, thousands of Jews go to R' Shimon's grave at Miron, to celebrate.

We tell children about R' Akiva and R' Shimon to bring them to a love and mastery of Torah.

A child could respond: "Am I smart enough to be like R' Akiva, or even one of his students? If my father were like R' Akiva, maybe I could learn something from him."

On the other hand, the father says, "I'm too old. Besides, R' Shimon lived in a cave for thirteen years, but I have to make a living. I don't have time to learn Torah."

R' Akiva and R' Shimon provided the answer.

R' Akiva's father was a convert to Judaism. He was poor. He was ignorant. He couldn't give his son a Jewish education. It was up to the son to start from scratch.

Thus, it is up to every Jew to break with past weaknesses and limitations and forge a new path.

R' Akiva was forty before he could read or write. But it is never too late to start learning. We all want to see a miracle. But R' Akiva was inspired by nature, not by a miracle. He saw a stone with a hole in it, carved and smoothed by a trickle of water. From this he learned the power to achieve any goal through diligent and continuous application.

Most of us don't have enough time to devote to learning. The Sages said of R' Shimon that "the Torah was his livelihood," because he devoted the same time and energy to the Torah that a businessman

would devote to his business.

This teaches us that even if we have only a short time each day to devote to Torah study, during that time we have to devote the same energy, attention and concentration to our learning as we would to our business. During that time, nothing exists outside of Torah: no telephone, no disturbances, no responsibilities and no distractions. That time has to become for us like the cave of R' Shimon bar Yochai, in which nothing else matters but the Torah.

In this way, may we become worthy of the legacy left to us by R' Akiva and R' Shimon, and thus hasten the revelation of Moshiach speedily in our days.

A Lesson in Unity

Only after true Achdus and unity could the B'nei Yisrael receive the Torah. But people are different. Each has his/her own way. How can we experience true unity?

The answer is provided by Lag B'Omer.

The historic significance of Lag B'Omer dates back to the time of the Mishnah. Rabbi Akiva's students were struck by a plague, and 24,000 died between Pesach and Shavuos. The plague stopped on Lag B'Omer, which came to be celebrated as a day of life and brotherhood.

The Talmud says that the students were punished because they didn't respect each other. How are we to understand this? Lack of respect is inappropriate and unbecoming for any students, especially Torah scholars. It would certainly be out of character for students of Rabbi Akiva, who taught "Loving of another Jew is the basis of the whole Torah."

There must be more to this. Certainly the students of Rabbi Akiva must have respected each other.

Indeed, it was their love and concern that created the problem.

The dynamic, broad, and creative force of Rabbi Akiva's teachings raised a diverse group of students that represented the full spectrum of Yiddishkeit.

They were all dedicated students of Rabbi Akiva, but they were not a monolithic group. Rabbi Akiva allowed each student to develop his own approach to serving Hashem.

There was room in Rabbi Akiva's Torah for diversity of opinion and ideology in a Halachic framework. Within Torah, there are many valid ways of serving Hashem. One Jew may emphasize love of Hashem, the other fear of Hashem. One person serves Hashem through joy, the other through study and meditation.

Rabbi Akiva taught his students to believe in their convictions. He exemplified absolute devotion to his beliefs, as he said when he was martyred by the Romans, "All my life I wanted to serve Hashem fully and make this sacrifice...".

Rabbi Akiva's students emulated his dedication. But they had become so obsessed by their own ways, they had no tolerance for a different perspective. Each student felt his way was the only one.

They believed strongly in Ahavas Yisroel. They loved their fellow to the extent that they couldn't rest until their friends shared their perspective. They tried to change their opinions so that they too could see the truth they perceived.

This misplaced idealism was their undoing. They didn't understand that Rabbi Akiva's dedication was

tempered by a peaceful tolerance and respect for another's view.

The Talmud says Rabbi Akiva was able to enter the Heavenly paradise of Torah study in peace, and then also to exit in peace.

Lag B'Omer celebrates the triumph of brotherly love and unity over death and division. "Unity" doesn't mean a unity of clones who think alike. Ahavas Yisroel means not merely to love and show kindness to another person, but to respect his unique opinion and attitude in serving Hashem.

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai had to run away from his family and hide out from the Romans with his son for 13 years.

The Gemoroh teaches us that one of the first things that Rabbi Shimon did upon leaving the cave, was to help a community. There was a road in the city that ran through an unmarked cemetery. The Kohanim were not able to use that road, and they had to travel a long distance around it. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai came and marked the places under which were graves, and that way the Kohanim were able to use this road.

This teaches us the level of Ahavas Yisroel that we should have. Even if we are only helping a minority (the Kohanim) and even if we are only making things easier for them and it is not a life-threatening situation, still we should and must go out of our way to help others. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was one of the students of Rabbi Akiva and he made it his life's work to correct the imbalance that existed among Rabbi Akiva's students. *From Sichos of the Rebbe - Lag B'Omer*

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By the Grace of G-d
Rosh Chodesh Nissan,
5742. Brooklyn, N.Y.

t
Boston, Mass. 02167

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter of the 17th of Adar, in which you write about the way the Chabad House in your city is conducted, and mentioned some of the Chabad people you like and others with whom you are not impressed, etc.

Judging by your writing, I assume you know of the saying of our Sages that one should not be hasty in judgment, and if a judgment is made, it should be made on the scale of merit. If you will talk to those whom you like, they will surely help you to dispel any suspicions in regard to those with whom you are not satisfied.

I would also strongly recommend that you study carefully Chapter Lev (32) of the Tanya, which is also available in English translation.

Wishing you a Kosher, joyous and inspiring Pesach, and

With blessing

M. Schneerson

We are currently in the days of sefirah, mourning the loss of the 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva. The biggest lesson we learned from them is the importance of Ahavas Yisroel.

We present a letter of the Rebbe stressing the importance of not being judgmental.



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Directives of the Rebbe for Iyar - המעשה הוא העיקר

Beis Iyar

We should make a farbrengen in honor of the birthday of the Rebbe Maharash. We should learn the Torah/Chassidus of the Rebbe Maharash making sure to bring in the quality of “Lechatchilah Ariber” going above and beyond in all aspects of Torah and Mitzvos in our daily life.

Pesach Sheini

We should publicize to all, the guidance and power that was given to us, and utilize the strength that this day gives us; to correct that which is missing and to add. We should make a farbrengen of Simchah in honor of this day. To emphasize the power given to this day of correcting the negative and strengthening the positive.

Lag B’Omer

Prepare for Lag B’Omer; do this by making parades or rallies, especially for children, and the theme should be “Yachad kol yaldei yisroel” - All Jewish children should be united together. Many times the Rebbe stressed the importance of preparing for Lag B’Omer in a public way.

Iyar 5782 Calendar - Shnas HaShemittah

Rosh Chodesh Day One
Nissan 30/May 1/Sunday

Rosh Chodesh Day Two
Iyar 1/May 2/Monday

Kedoshim
Iyar 6/May 7
Light Candles Friday May 6: **7:23**
Shabbos Ends: **8:26**
Pirkei Avos Chapter 2

Emor
Iyar 13/May 14
Light Candles Friday May 13: **7:29**
Shabbos Ends: **8:32**
Pirkei Avos Chapter 3

Pesach Sheni
Iyar 14/May 15/Sunday
No Tachnun is said
Remember to eat Matzah

Lag B'Omer
Iyar 18/May 19/Thursday
No Tachnun is said

Behar
Iyar 20/May 21
Light Candles Friday May 20: **7:34**
Shabbos Ends: **8:37**
Pirkei Avos Chapter 4

Bechukotai
Shabbos Chazzak
Shabbos Mivorchim Sivan
Iyar 27/May 28
Light Candles Friday May 27: **7:39**
Shabbos Ends: **8:42**
Pirkei Avos Chapter 5

Molad of Sivan
Monday, May 30
6:04 pm + 2 Chalakim

Rosh Chodesh Sivan
Sivan 1/May 31/Tuesday