

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a dense forest. Sunlight rays, known as crepuscular rays, are streaming down from the top of the frame, filtering through the mist and the canopy of tall, thin trees. The ground is covered in lush green ferns and other forest floor vegetation. The overall atmosphere is serene and spiritual.

NO BETTER LIFE

*A practical guide to drawing deeper joy
and fulfillment from Torah living*

RABBI LEVI LEBOVITS

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and fulfillment from Torah living*

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The Vaad Project



A Community Initiative of Yeshiva Toras Chaim, Denver

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Leadership & Learning – Our Legacy

Rabbi Yitzchok Wasserman
Rosh Yeshiva

Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan
Rosh Yeshiva

י"ז אלול תשפ"ד
September 20, 2024

In these short pages, Rabbi Lebovits has presented a multifaceted plan for helping people move toward experiencing life as the Torah intended us to. The satisfaction and empowerment to be gained from following this guidance will help bring readers towards the strength, fulfillment and simcha needed to rise above the world's challenges and thrive as ovdei Hashem. Rabbi Lebovits is to be congratulated on this major accomplishment.

יצחק ווסרמן

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ישראל מאיר קגן

ישראל מאיר קגן

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THE YEAR WE REALLY WANT

What does a “good life” mean to you?

When you dip that chunk of apple in the honey dish and ask for a shana tova u’mesukah (sweet new year), what do you yearn for?

Presumably the answer is similar for most of us. Health. Success. Happiness. Shalom bayis. Nachas. Peace. Plenty.

In other words, a year where everything works out exactly the way we want it to.

Especially as we emerge from a year like 5784/2024.

Last Elul season, none of us imagined the amount of tears we would shed, the bruises on our hearts, the fear we’d come to know, before this next Rosh Hashanah.

We want life to be better in 5785. And this year, more than ever, we’re desperate for Hashem to make things different.

But what if He already has?

What if He’s fashioned us a blueprint for a life even better than our neat, dreamy picture?

A life where things are good, where we’re good, even when our plans don’t work out perfectly.

A life where our circumstances loosen their grip on our happiness. And where the physical world loosens its chokehold on our actions and choices.

A life where we’re equipped to rise above the challenges and revel in the closeness to Hashem they bring.

A life where pleasure, deep and fulfilling, flows to us from

Torah, mitzvos and spiritual growth. Where we're warmed, energized, and utterly sated through our work of connecting with Hashem. And where even our shallower earthly pleasures deepen and sweeten because of the G-dly dimension we've discovered in them.

This isn't a life we can easily hop into. It's one that can develop gradually as we learn, work, and shift our perspective. The 11 sections in this guidebook work together to place us at the beginning of the path toward this life. So that, at the very least, when we pray for "chaim tovim" this year, we understand the most important elements to ask for.

Hope. Optimism. Vigor. A transformed relationship with Hashem. It's my prayer that this guidebook will spark and fan these powerful forces inside us. That we'll gain the clarity to see what truly makes life meaningful and fulfilling. And the strength to internalize our new perspective – and experience the most beautiful year of our lives.

Levi Lebovits

Elul 5784

THE BEST LIFE POSSIBLE

It's ironic, isn't it?

We live in a world of mind-boggling plenty. Our lives are bursting with comforts, conveniences and pleasures. We should be the strongest, happiest, most fulfilled generation in history.

But we're not. We might even struggle more than generations past. Because when we don't have the things we want, and when challenges come our way, we're left floundering. Our *simchas hachaim* crumbles.

So many of us today are in pain, real pain. And nothing the world has to offer is giving us that happy, fulfilled life we crave.

There's only one thing that truly can give that life to us – and it doesn't depend on our circumstances changing.

It's the Torah's formula for the best life possible – no strings attached.

Which sounds wonderful. But also a little strange.

Since when is Torah here to help us “live our best life?” Torah is our rulebook for a moral, G-dly life. It exists to help us *do* our best and *be* our best, not *feel* our best.

Sure, following the Torah will earn us life in the World to Come. But we're discussing life in this world – where it almost feels like the opposite applies: *work hard and restrict yourself down here so you can enjoy a great eternity Up There.*

That's not actually how Hashem intended things to be.

Torah growth definitely calls for hard work and self-control. But that doesn't mean a Torah life shouldn't be enjoyable. Invigorating. Satisfying physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Take a quick glance at the Mishna in Pirkei Avos (6:7) that states, “Torah is great for it provides life to those who do it *in both this world and the Next.*”

Torah isn't just about the next world. It also enables “those who do it” to live their earthly life to its fullest.

Remember the story of Yaakov and Eisav's fight in their moth-

er's womb? Rashi (Bereishis 25:22) describes these skirmishes as "a fight over inheriting two worlds."

Has that ever sparked the question for you – why did Yaakov and Eisav need to fight over inheriting two worlds? Why couldn't Eisav peacefully take this world and Yaakov happily earmark the Next?

Because Yaakov knew: being a Jew doesn't just mean a beautiful portion in the World to Come. It means inheriting the best possible experience of this world as well.

The Klausenberger Rebbe, who had lost 11 children during the Holocaust, was once speaking with an older Jew who had abandoned his faith. The fellow challenged him:

"You, Rabbi, who has dedicated his life to fulfilling Hashem's will, will certainly merit the World to Come. But I, who live a life of freedom and can do whatever I want, certainly have the best life down here!"

The Rebbe's answer?

No one can know what will be in the World to Come, because none of us understand Hashem's detailed calculations.

But only those who live a life of Torah know what it means to live the best life in this world!

Exercise: We've always known Torah to be the crucial framework of our lives. But its unmatched ability to infuse us with life itself? Have we explored that before?

Take a minute to think about the following question: what do Torah and mitzvos actually mean to you right now? Not what it's supposed to mean, or what you theoretically know it means. What's your actual experience? What is Torah in your life?

Good work! Keep your answer in mind as you move through the next 10 steps so you can measure if and how it changes.

CHOOSE *THAT* LIFE

It's not like we've never heard Torah framed as our lifesource. We've likely heard the famous parable of the wily fox who tried to convince some fish that life on land was better. The fish quickly learned that leaving the water (Torah) meant death. So it's clear that on some metaphysical level, Torah keeps us Jews alive.

But the Klausenberger Rebbe wasn't talking about metaphysics when he answered that disconnected Jew. He referred very clearly to life in this world.

So what did he mean by life, exactly? And what do we mean when we use the term "life" here?

Well, life is... life, isn't it? Existence. Being alive.

Absolutely. But it must mean more than that, or we'd struggle to define one of the Torah's most famous pesukim: "Behold: I have placed before you life and death, blessing and curse, and you shall choose life..." (Devarim 30:19)

What's Hashem asking of us in this charge to "choose life?" How exactly do we choose to exist?

A glance at the Ibn Ezra here gives us new insight. He explains the posuk's intention with the following words: "Hachaim heim l'ahava." "Life is for love."

What does that mean?

Life, for us, is all about what we love. What we find exciting, meaningful. What we aspire to. What we're passionate about. Where we find fulfillment.

Which makes perfect sense. Hashem wired human beings to constantly crave nourishment – the filling of our physical, mental and emotional needs. When we receive that nourishment, we're alive. When we're starved of it – even the less basic components – we feel "dead."

We know we're physically nourished when our bodies feel strong and vibrant. And we know we're getting mental-emotional nourishment when we're feeling fulfilled. Excited.

Driven. Grateful. When we're looking forward to something. When we're determined about something.

Ordinary humans need to depend on the ordinary human world for emotional nourishment. It can be drawn from physical pleasure, or from pursuing interests and hobbies. It can come through feel-good emotional connection, or via the ego through competition, power and success.

Sounds relatable?

Of course it does. We're humans, after all. But we aren't ordinary. We're Hashem's precious chosen nation. And for us, He created an alternate life-source. One that also offers fulfillment, stimulation, pleasure and joy – in a purer, stronger form.

The Torah.

"U'vacharta bachayim." My children, you can choose to nourish yourselves only from earthly sources. But remember – you have the opportunity to nourish yourselves from Torah. Choose *that* life.

Every morning in Shacharis we recite the words, "Baruch Hu Elokeinu shebaranu lichvodo... v'nassan lanu Toras emes **v'chayei olam nata b'socheinu.**" – "Blessed is Hashem our G-d Who created us for His glory and gave us the true Torah and **implanted within us an eternal life.**"

Typically, we assume we're thanking Hashem for our ticket to the eternal World to Come. Now, though, we've realized there's "chayei olam" to be had in this world as well.

Nourishment via the physical world offers us "chayei sha'ah," immediate gratification. Like food. It truly nourishes us. It keeps our bodies running and speedily feeds our need for enjoyment.

But – it's temporary. The fact that you ate last night won't help you much in the morning. The pleasure you drew from the flavors on your dinner plate won't help you next time you crave a tasty bite.

Torah's nourishment, on the other hand, offers us "chayei olam" – long-lasting, eternal benefit.

A tiny example, to open our minds a crack:

Torah also offers pleasure through food. Its medium? The requirement to say a bracha before eating.

Chazal teach that when we say a thoughtful bracha, our food takes on an added layer of flavor: that of “Ta’amu u’reu ki tov Hashem” (“Taste and see that Hashem is good”). The joy of tangibly experiencing Hashem’s goodness.

Have you ever bit into a juicy summer fruit, bursting with brightness in both color and taste, and genuinely been touched by Hashem’s kindness in packaging that sweet little gift just for you?

Have you ever lifted a forkful of salad and marveled at the G-d-engineered plethora of colors, textures, tastes and health-boosters coexisting in the bite you’re about to enjoy?

When our meals come along with thoughts like these, we get to relish more than the taste. Alongside it, we get to relish Hashem’s goodness. His kindness. His personal love for us.

Thoughts like these don’t just disappear. They embed themselves in our minds, tinging our experiences with more positivity, more security, more connection to G-d – forever.

Torah isn’t just a to-do list. Like the world around us, it’s an endless trove of opportunities to fill life with pleasure and satisfaction.

And unlike the world around us, the pleasure and satisfaction it offers reach the deepest parts of us – and touch us forever.

Exercise: Can you remember times in your life when you gave up a chayei sha’ah pleasure – and then felt immensely fulfilled by the chayei olam one that replaced it?

Maybe, when you shut your phone for an evening, you were rewarded with tangibly deeper closeness to your spouse or children. Or maybe you did something less dramatic, like pushing yourself to learn for just 10 minutes after your seder ended, or you bit back an exciting piece of lashon hora, and you felt quietly proud and accomplished the rest of the day.

Try to think of two personal examples. Then jot them down here:

1. _____

2. _____

JUMPING IN ANYWAY

These ideas are beautiful, really – but not too practical.

Has this thought occurred to you?

Intellectually, we've always known chayei sha'ah pleasures don't last. That they can leave us depressed, endlessly craving more. Even get us in trouble. While chayei olam offers lasting benefits that leave us feeling deeply satisfied.

But we're human. Chayei sha'ah is where we're at. We feel pretty dependent on our pleasures and comforts. Sure, we might feel capable of choosing chayei olam here and there. But to totally switch over our entire lifestyle, wants, and needs? How can we do that? Where would we even start?

Let's look at Shacharis as an example. We know we need to daven Shacharis. We also know that, theoretically, prayer can be an electrifying, uplifting experience of connection to Hashem. Those with the right background and understanding look forward to it.

But us regular people? We're tired. We have busy days ahead of us. The davening is long and repetitive. All we want to do is zoom through and get home to breakfast.

How can we choose Torah's nourishment when our human senses, so dependent on earthly pleasure and comfort, are dragging us the other way?

We can tap into the same secret our ancestors used 3000 years ago at Har Sinai.

We can say na'aseh v'nishma.

When Hashem offered the Torah to the other nations, along with the boundless goodness it carried, they all asked for a sampler. And quickly decided Torah wasn't for them. It just didn't match their human idea of a great acquisition.

Torah nourishment, Torah goodness, Torah pleasure, doesn't resonate with the human mind. A person simply can't understand or appreciate it – until he's put himself in it. Until he's done the work to experience it.

Like marriage.

As a single, you didn't really know what marriage would be like – though you might have heard warnings about hard work, self-sacrifice, ironclad commitment, Mars and Venus, etc. You also didn't know all that much about the seemingly wonderful person you'd agreed to marry. You didn't know what surprises their non-edited version held for you.

But you got married. You jumped in anyway. You committed to pushing through the obstacles and giving this relationship your utmost dedication and loyalty. And only after time spent in it, only after engaging in the work of marriage, did you start to sense the benefits that a relationship with less commitment could never give you.

Torah living is similar. The nations of the world looked at the work and commitment required by the Torah, and said – that sounds hard. Why would we want to deal with all the heavy stuff when we don't see the benefits it brings?

What set the Jews apart? Their willingness to realize they didn't have the capability to appreciate Torah just yet – but to trust that it was there.

So they said “na’aseh v’nishma.” We’ll take the leap, we’ll throw ourselves into the experience – and wait patiently for Torah’s true glory to reveal itself.

Torah pleasure – especially when it requires giving up on worldly pleasure – feels totally incomprehensible.

But we can say na’aseh v’nishma. We can jump in anyway. We can sit for a bit in the new realm we’ve chosen and wait – knowing that eventually, we’ll be endlessly glad we did.

Exercise: Think of a mitzvah on the agenda for today (Davening? Bentching? Torah study? A specific act of kindness?) that you don't feel powerfully motivated and excited about doing. Write it down here.

Flex your na’aseh muscle by jumping in and doing your very

best to fulfill it fully – with kavana (intent), with geshmak, with a smile, etc. – even though you don't feel like it.

Afterwards, reflect: how did it feel to overcome your negative emotions and get it done, even though you weren't super motivated? Come back and jot down your reflections here:

HE HAS YOUR BACK

One problem: saying “na’aseh v’nishma” isn’t exactly easy.

Klal Yisrael didn’t earn heavenly crowns and eternal praise for doing something simple.

And though our own na’aseh v’nishma opportunities feel a little less dramatic, jumping from the physical comforts and pleasures we know to the spiritual goodness we can’t fathom demands a huge amount of willpower.

How can we build that willpower? Where can we fill up on the courage needed to look at a lifestyle, a situation, a choice, that really doesn’t appeal to us – and jump in anyway?

The Gemara (Shabbos 88a-b) tells of a Tzeduki (Sadducee) who was once watching the great Sage Rava as he studied Torah. So intensely was Rava toiling that his legs started to crush his fingers – to the point of drawing blood.

Noticing this, the Tzeduki cried, “What an impulsive nation you are, putting your mouths before your ears in accepting the Torah!” *Look how crushing, how superhuman, the Torah’s demands are. And you people leapt into them without considering what you were doing to yourselves!*

How did Rava respond?

He quoted a posuk with the words, “Tumas yesharim tanchem.” “The temimus, the earnest trust, of the upright ones guides them.”

What does this mean?

Rashi (ibid.) shares a simple, beautiful answer.

We, the Jewish people, love and trust Hashem. We trust He won’t ever give us a burden too difficult to bear. We trust He only wants what’s best for us.

With this love and trust in mind, we follow Him. Even when the path He sets for us doesn’t look attractive. Even as our human minds splutter, fret and doubt.

Fully developing a deep trust in Hashem’s goodness requires its own guidebook – actually, its own lifelong work. But none

of us are total strangers to a sense of Hashem's love and protection. We've all experienced it at some point in life – probably more than once.

It's this sense of love we need to tap into when we're trying to make *na'aseh v'nishma* choices. We need to hold onto it and say, "This Torah life doesn't look like it has all that much pleasure to offer me. But I know You only want what's best for me. I know this choice will ultimately prove to benefit me."

How do we tap into this sense of love and trust? By pulling up memories of past experiences where we clearly felt Hashem supporting us. Were they personal situations? Family or community ones? Nationwide stories you witnessed or lived through?

Hold these memories in your mind for a few moments – it's like spiritual exercise. You'll strengthen your muscles of *temimus*, of whole-hearted trust in Hashem's desire to give you the best.

And one day, you'll sense enough strength in that muscle to take a *na'aseh v'nishma* leap.

Exercise: Take a minute now to do some thinking. Try to pull up memories of three different times you deeply felt Hashem had your back.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Now, spend five to ten seconds holding each one in your mind. Remember how it felt to realize Hashem was taking care of you. Just with those thoughts, you'll strengthen your *temimus* muscles.

EXPERIENCE THE EXPERIENCE

But what about people who've already taken the leap – but aren't living in total joy and peace of mind?

What about all those people who've immersed themselves in Torah – pushed themselves to learn more, daven better, work harder – and still feel distant, depleted, discouraged?

What if you yourself are one of those people? *I've already taken the plunge. I work hard at my Yiddishkeit day in and day out. So where is this unfathomable peace and joy you keep talking about?*

There's na'aseh. And it's crucial. If you're doing it, even to some extent, wonderful!

But there's also nishma.

When we hear things like "Torah is sweeter than honey" or "A life of Torah is the best life," we assume they happen automatically to a privileged few. If you get to a certain lofty level, you'll suddenly start connecting electrically with Torah and mitzvos.

But that's not actually true. Is Rav Wolbe's words, "ein m'meila ba'Torah." Nothing happens automatically in Torah growth.

Just plugging away, doing the right thing, won't take us to the heights of joy and connection available to us. We need to actively pursue them.

That's where nishma comes in. We can't just do. We also have to "listen" to what we're doing.

What does that mean?

If one person blinds another, halacha instructs him to pay the value of the victim's eye. If someone causes another to go deaf, he needs to pay the entire value of the victim.

Rabbeinu Yonah mentions this in Shaarei Teshuvah (2:12) to help illustrate the massive power of listening. Genuine listening, he states, affects us humans more deeply than sight. When someone can't hear, can't listen, he's cut off from a basic, essential means to life.

We tend to think of listening as a passive thing. It's the channel that lets outside information into our brains.

In the Torah's view, though, shemiyah, listening, takes on a much more active form. It's a tool we can wield to actually experience an experience.

Some experiences don't need much help. It takes very little work to enjoy a perfectly charred piece of steak. Sure, a dip into bearnaise sauce might take it up a notch. But the baseline experience is straightforward enough on its own. You're half-experiencing it just thinking about it!

The thing about spirituality is that, unlike physicality, it isn't tangible. At baseline, we don't experience anything.

Sure, the Siyum Hashas or Rosh Hashanah in Uman might uplift us into an experience.

But this morning's Shacharis? This morning's tefillin? The bracha you made on your breakfast afterwards? Did they uplift you? Did they fill you with joy? Probably not.

That's not to say they can't. Every mitzvah holds a powerful spiritual experience.

We just don't feel it.

There's a way to fix that – shemiyah. "Listening" to what we're doing. Focusing on it, into it. Reflecting on it.

Moving back to this morning's Shacharis. You said all the words. Perhaps you were careful to have kavana in many of them. But chances are, it didn't feel special. It just was.

You absolutely had a spiritual experience. You stood in front of Hashem, the Almighty King of Kings, and talked to Him. And because you were taking a na'aseh plunge, you made sure to have kavana. You got to share your needs, anything and everything.

What was missing? You didn't listen to the experience. You didn't dwell on the reality of it. You didn't reflect about it afterwards. You just closed your siddur and left.

What if you *had* done those things? What if you *had* listened to the experience? What might your Shacharis have felt like then?

If you dwelled on the fact that you'd just spoken to the infinitely powerful King of the universe, you might have felt a sense of awe.

If you dwelled on the fact that this incomparably huge and powerful King was listening carefully to every word you had to say, you might have tangibly felt His love. And felt happier, more optimistic, throughout the rest of the day.

Shemiya is the gateway to a living Yiddishkeit – not just in tefillah, but in every area of avodah. It takes our actions and turns them into experiences.

Next time you hand a few dollars to a collector – or give your neighbor's kid a ride – or bite back some lashon hora – or light your Shabbos candles, don't move on so fast.

Take a minute to take na'aseh into nishma. Listen to what you just experienced.

The change might not be dramatic at first. But it will be real.

Exercise: After completing your na'aseh mitzvah, take 15 seconds for nishma. Let's say you chose to bentch with kavana. Now, close your bentcher, sit for 15 more seconds, and "listen" to what you came up with.

Were you able to tap into a deeper sense of gratitude to Hashem for feeding you? Did you feel a burst of gratitude for Eretz Yisrael during the bracha of "Nodeh Lecha"? Did the paragraph of "Racheim" move you to genuinely plead for mercy and salvation – perhaps for the first time?

Whatever touched you during bentching, or during the performance of the mitzvah you chose, summarize in the lines below.

Then, spend 15 seconds now reflecting on them – *experiencing* them.

BREAD, SALT AND SATISFACTION

We've learned about "na'aseh:" jumping into Torah-focused choices even if we can't picture what's in it for us.

We've learned about "nishma:" listening back at our na'aseh actions so we can tap into the spiritual experience we've gone through – even if we didn't feel it the first time around.

Now, we're ready for the next level of our journey – exploring mishna 6:4 in Pirkei Avos.

This mishna probably tops the list of "Mishnayos 2024 Jews find hard to swallow."

"Such is the way of Torah: eat bread with salt, drink water in small measure, sleep on the ground, live a life of pain, and toil in Torah. If you do so, you will be fortunate in this world, and it will be good for you in the World to Come."

These words make many of us feel very uncomfortable, even alienated. They sound so bleak, so punishing.

We don't want to make ourselves suffer. Can't we be comfortable, even enjoy ourselves a little, and still live a beautiful life of Torah? Or is destroying our earthly experience really where Torah life is at?

So, first, three important notes.

Note 1: The mishna itself answers our last question with a definitive no. "Ashrecha b'olam hazeh." It specifically refers to better living in this world, not just the Next.

Note 2: It's okay to feel turned off here, or totally lost as to how bread with salt constitutes "better living in this world." That's what our "na'aseh mindset" is for.

The mishna itself adds the words, "if you do this," reminding us that we can't possibly appreciate its suggestions by theorizing about them. First, we need to do. Only then will we understand.

Note 3: Our goal here isn't to take the actual actions described in the mishna. It's to develop the attitudes behind them. So if a gluten issue or a bad back puts the mishna's literal meaning

off-limits for you, don't worry. Actual bread with salt and bed-less sleeping aren't on our agenda.

These notes in mind, let's explore the first attitude, or mind-set. It's a reflection of the Torah's overall approach to the pleasures of olam hazeh: "Eat bread with salt and water in small measure."

The Torah doesn't generally promote asceticism. What it does promote is keeping our pleasure and satisfaction meaningful. Here's how it uses the bread and salt metaphor to teach us more about this:

As we mentioned a few sections back, food offers us different types of pleasure. There's our taste buds' physical enjoyment. And then there's a soul-level pleasure – that of "Ta'amu ure'u ki tov Hashem." Physically experiencing Hashem's goodness, love and care.

Now, these two pleasures aren't mutually exclusive – not totally. Not if we're careful. Not if we keep a certain crucial truth in mind.

Rav Yerucham Levovitz cautions us that the sweetness of this world can easily consume us. It has great potential to connect us to Hashem's goodness – but also to bury us in physicality until Hashem fades from our minds.

That's where pas b'melach comes in. It's not about actually eating bread and salt. It's about looking at our food *as if* it were bread and salt.

Which means what? Approaching it more calmly. Toning down our enthusiasm for pure physicality. Remembering that as delicious as it looks, it's just food – just a means to an end.

When we keep our attitude toward food a little calmer, we keep our heads clearer. And we leave more room to experience the food as an agent for spiritual connection.

In Parshas Noach, when the dove flew back to the teivah (ark) with her olive leaf, Rashi (Bereishis 8:11) reveals that she delivered a message as well:

"Let my food be bitter as an olive by the hand of Hashem, and not sweet as honey by the hand of flesh and blood."

What did the dove mean?

There's a feeling of satisfaction that comes from the awareness of being directly sustained by Hashem that the most delicious meal in the world can't give us on its own. The problem is, the more we focus on our physical taste buds' experience, the less mental space we'll have to enjoy spiritual delicacies like Hashem's direct care.

So, instructs the mishna, start looking at your food like pas b'melach. Partake in this world in a way that allows you to stay as spiritually connected as possible.

That way, we'll be free to access the full experience – the food's delicious taste, and the edible G-dly love it represents.

Exercise: Can you take a drink or a bite to eat now? If not, save this exercise for the next time you do. Choose something tasty but familiar, like a coffee made just the way you like it.

Take a sip or bite. Aside from the pleasure of the taste, can you experience a different kind of pleasure – one that touches your heart instead of your taste buds? If yes, describe the thought or feeling here:

SPIRITUALLY COZY

So, we've talked about "bread and salt" – making room in our diets for spiritual pleasure.

What about the mishna's next line, "Sleep on the ground"? What mindset or tool does the mishna seek to teach us here?

When we imagine our ideal life, comfortable beds don't even feature in our dreams. They're givens, facts of life.

Switching from cushy mattresses, warm comforters, and puffy pillows to the hard, cold ground seems, well, crazy, even as a metaphor.

But – let's remind ourselves – the mishna promised "ashrecha b'olam hazeh." That this teaching would enhance our quality of life. So let's explore the possibilities here.

First, because we know we won't be able to appreciate the ideas here until we do them, let's attempt a shortcut version of na'aseh.

When's the last time you slept outdoors? Were you camping? Were you sleeping in the succah?

Do you remember what it was like? What you felt like emotionally?

One thing a lot of us feel out in the succah is vulnerable. Exposed. At the mercy of the world around us. So really, at Hashem's mercy.

We humans do not like feeling vulnerable. We like feeling self-sufficient. We like feeling safe, in control.

Beyond our natural feelings, the Western world has instilled us with a certain false macho-ness that doesn't have roots in Torah. We hate expressing signs of weakness. We despise asking for help or showing neediness.

It's great to be self-sufficient. But if we can't also open up to others, acknowledge we need them, we stunt our relationships.

Just like Hashem gave us pleasure receptors like taste buds as a pathway to connect with Him, He made us deficient and

needy for the same reason. But if we close off our ability to feel reliant on Him – because, look, we can take care of ourselves just fine – we won’t be able to feel that love, that trust, that safety, that true reliance on Hashem creates.

It’s true in human relationships, and it’s true in our relationship with Hashem: our connection is only as deep, as vibrant, as we open ourselves up to receive from the other.

Out in the succah, you might not have been super comfortable. But you were certainly much more acutely aware of Hashem’s protection, and your desperate need of it, than the average night in your cozy bedroom. You might even have fallen asleep with your mind on Him – and woke up tangibly grateful to Him. Whew!

Today’s world sends us so many pressures. Tzaros. Worries. We know how difficult life can feel without a solid source of strength to lean on. How we wish we could enjoy the faith and trust of the great tzaddikim in the stories!

Comes this mishna and gently tells us – here’s a way to start building that sense of trust before challenge strikes.

If we want to make Hashem’s guiding hand, His unconditional love, His unwavering faithfulness, a rock-solid presence in our lives, we need to do some work. Part of which includes making ourselves vulnerable to Him.

The Torah’s version of “the best life possible” works no matter the circumstances we’re in. It helps us tangibly feel that Hashem is with us, supporting us and keeping us strong no matter what.

The starting point on our journey to such a state? “Sleeping on the ground.” Constantly strengthening our awareness of our vulnerability, our total dependance on Him.

That’s how we let Him in to become the Rock of our lives.

Exercise: We don’t need to pitch a tent outside to experience “sleeping on the ground.” Instead. Think of an area in your life where you need Hashem’s help. Maybe it’s a spiritual

challenge you're having trouble working on. Maybe it's a behavior you just can't get your child to stop, or even a stalled project at work where you're waiting for a breakthrough. Jot it down here.

We're used to davening to Hashem for help. Doing so doesn't necessarily make us feel vulnerable. To get to a place of tangible vulnerability, where you're really opening yourself up to your dependance on Hashem, try speaking out loud the words, "I need YOU."

The first time, it might feel a bit uncomfortable. Stick with it. After a few tries, how do you feel? Are you a bit more in touch with your reliance on Hashem?

THE GAIN OF PAIN

Now we come to the most difficult line in the mishna: “Live a life of pain.”

Live a life of pain? What would we gain by doing *that*?

Remember, we’re receiving advice here to help make our lives great in *this* world, not just the Next. Isn’t pain the complete opposite of great living?

How did pain earn its place on our mishna’s list?

First, a quick disclaimer: the content in this section has been designed to address pain on the levels of “discomfort,” “struggle,” and “challenge” – like the pain described in the mishna of “Lefum tzara agra” (“Reward is commensurate with pains taken”). Pain born of personal tragedy or serious trauma requires a deeper, more nuanced discussion beyond the scope of this content.

We’re here to talk about the struggles that appear in most people’s lives. Social struggles. Parnassah hardship. Marriage ups-and-downs. Child-raising issues. Spiritual challenges.

Not that we’re excited about these either. Our natural reaction includes pitying ourselves, wishing the challenges away and begging Hashem for relief. But the mishna, it seems, is pushing us to embrace them.

Why? Who would voluntarily choose a life full of struggle?

Funnily enough, if we ourselves understood our nature well enough, we just might.

The world of today – and our very own yetzer hara – has sold us on a massive, all-pervasive myth: the easier, more comfortable, and more “fun” our life is, the happier we’ll be.

It’s not an easy myth to disprove. That’s because man exists on many different levels. To keep things simple, we’ll divide these levels into a lower self and a higher one.

Our lower part craves ease. It’s magnetically drawn to the tangible, immediate pleasures of the world, which provide instant satisfaction.

It's the part that eagerly buys into the world's big myth.

Our higher existence, the more mature part of our personality, also enjoys pleasure. But it seeks a deeper version: self-actualization. Creation. Progress. Impact.

Unlike its lower friend, our higher part *wants* to toil and sweat. It knows we feel most alive, most fulfilled, most impassioned and empowered and satisfied, when we're engaged in productive, meaningful work.

Comfort and ease just can't give us what work and struggle can.

"Adam l'amal yulad" – "Man was born to toil (Iyov 5:7)." The posuk isn't sighing over our sad reality. It's simply pointing out the truth about our deeper human nature. Work fulfills us far more than comfort. Life is found in the struggle, the challenge, the process. That's where our higher selves feel most alive.

"One who has a hundred wants two hundred. One who has two hundred wants four hundred." We tend to see this line in the Midrash Koheles (3:10) as a negative message – those humans, you just can't satisfy them.

But Rav Yerucham Levovitz turns it around to display a window into our higher human nature. Yes, we aren't easily satisfied – because we're driven to grow. When we accomplish a bit, we grow an appetite for more. When we achieve more, our drive just increases.

We hate sitting at status quo. When we aren't growing, producing and developing, we get restless and depressed. Our true self is most fully expressed when we're in the thick of an uphill battle.

Living as we do in our modern, comfort-padded world – where underfloor heaters save our toes from even one second's discomfort, where painkillers abound to wipe away the smallest ache, where we no longer have to get out of our seats to adjust our perfectly controlled AC because it's connected to an app on our phone – we're scared of pain. Hard work. Discomfort.

In a way, our mishna's words speak more powerfully now than ever. "Live a life of pain." Don't be so scared of a little exertion,

a little challenge.

It isn't something b'dieved, something we should wish away. It's an integral part of our lives. It's something we should taste. Lean into. Allow ourselves to be stretched and shaped by.

The more we can follow the mishna's advice – the more we can embrace the work, push out of our comfort zones, and engage meaningfully with the pain life sends us – the closer we'll come to true happiness.

It's this advice that helps us break free of the myth that a little more comfort will make us happy – and allows us to move in the direction of true fulfillment.

Exercise: Think about the last time you had to work hard and intensely at something. Rushing around making a simcha? Putting your all into a grueling project at work?

Now think about the last time you took some time to relax.

When did you feel more alive – not better or more at peace, but more *alive*: when you were working through that intense process, or relaxing? Take a minute to think before making your choice.

BEYOND US

Now comes the final step of Chazal's formula for a great life: "UvaTorah atta amel." Toiling in Torah.

Hm. Well, we know toiling in Torah is an important part of our lives. But how exactly is it the key to the best life possible?

In the beginning of Parshas Bechukosai (Vayikra 26:3), Rashi explains that the words "Im bechukosai teileichu," "If you will follow My statutes," refer to toiling in Torah.

If the posuk refers to the entire Torah, why does it use the word "chukosai?" Chukim are one type of mitzvah – those beyond our comprehension. Is the entire Torah filled with chukim? Aren't there "mishpatim" (laws) and "eidiyos" (testimonies) as well?

Torah is Hashem's wisdom. It stems from an infinite Source. We humans are finite. We shouldn't be able to comprehend it at all.

Matan Torah – where human beings were granted the ability to grasp the Torah on some level – was a miracle. But ultimately, Torah will always remain above our comprehension.

In that way, all parts of Torah fit the label "chukim."

And this is where toiling in Torah comes in.

In Daas Chochma U'mussar (1:8), Rav Yerucham Levovitz defines "toiling in Torah" as exerting ourselves until we're completely spent, no energy left.

Because understanding Torah begins after our human limitations end.

In the story we mentioned of Rava and the Sadducee, Rava was learning so intensely, his legs were crushing his fingers. He quite literally embodied the fact that Torah wisdom only comes when we push ourselves beyond our limits.

Torah offers us an outlook from Above. The outlook that opens the door to the healthiest, most rewarding, most fulfilling life possible.

Because real-deal pleasure isn't immediate gratification. It's

relishing in Hashem's kindness.

Real-deal protection isn't fortresses and defense systems and armies. It's the sense that Hashem is protecting us, doing only what's best for us.

Real-deal happy living doesn't come from comfort. It comes from working, developing and progressing.

But we need to do something before we can experience the full extent of the "real deal."

We need to push ourselves beyond our limits – beyond our human perspective – to consider a wisdom, a lifestyle, a set of choices, that doesn't appeal to us at first glance.

Which is why toiling in Torah brings us to the best life possible.

It isn't easy to internalize that our human perspective is too small and limited to understand every truth and answer every question. That if we want a more expansive experience of life, we need to expand our minds to let in truths that don't naturally fit their narrow grasp.

But the ability to do this – to say, "I don't understand this, I don't naturally like it, but I know the Torah's wisdom is greater than my perspective, so I'm going to try it on anyway," – is the key to achieving a life of chayei olam.

Exercise: Three of the hardest words for us humans to say are "I don't know." To us, they highlight a lack or limitation on our part. In order to succeed in ameilus baTorah, we need to replace our sense of lack with a sense of magnitude, of discovery – there's so much more wisdom out there waiting for us!

So. Next time we're studying Torah, and we encounter a chance to say "I don't know," instead of feeling small or frustrated, let's say it with excitement, focusing on the vast wisdom and truth to be found outside the limits of our minds.

DIGGING FOR HAPPINESS

The best life possible, a life of *chayei olam* on earth, doesn't come easily. As we've just discovered, we need to be willing to stretch our minds – to “toil in Torah” – until we're able to hold ideas bigger and higher than our natural human perspective.

Let's explore two more fundamental areas in our lives where an expanded Torah outlook changes everything.

The first area? The way we look for happiness.

From childhood, normal human living trains us to think happiness comes from what we have – or what we get, if we don't have it yet.

Fancy toys and presents make us happy. Sweet candies make us happy. Good grades make us happy. Good friends, and lots of them, make us happy.

It's not like all those things become ours effortlessly. We need to put in hard work to earn many of them.

But ultimately, we're happy because we have them.

That's why we spend our lives chasing things. New stuff. New experiences. New pleasures. New levels of status. New accomplishments. Because when happiness is about what you have, we can't be happy without them.

Often, our chases really do bring us happiness. But they also bring us lots of heartache. It's impossible to simply sit and enjoy what we've gotten, because – what about *that*? And that other thing? And that missing detail?

Back to the chase, the hunger for more.

The world's ideas about finding happiness – chasing our dreams, running after thrills – don't make for the best life possible. They actually make for a life of torment.

The best life possible is one where our desires and dreams don't control us. Where we're free to create our own happiness.

The world likes to frame Torah as a restrictor. The truth? As Chazal teach (Pirkei Avos 6:2), “The only free person is he who

engages in Torah.”

Torah sets us free to control our experience of life, instead of letting it control us. It gives us the tools to generate happiness with zero external dependance.

“Who is wealthy?” Chazal ask. “One who rejoices in his portion (Avos 4:1).” We’ve all heard this mishna, and we think we’re clear on what it means: you might not be rich, but if you’re happy with what you have, you’ll be okay with it.

A look at the Gemara (Shabbos 25b) shifts our perspective a bit. There, the mishna’s idea appears in slightly different words:

“Who is wealthy? One who takes pleasure in his wealth.”

Chazal aren’t just recommending good behavior here. They’re opening our eyes to a new definition of wealth. It isn’t the number in our bank account, or a tally of our assets. It’s our state of mind.

If we can take pleasure in what we have, appreciate the possibilities it offers us, we’re rich. If we can’t, then no matter how much we have – we’re poor.

In Nedarim (41a), the Gemara shares that poverty isn’t determined by a person’s assets, but by his “da’as” – his ability to attach meaning to something, no matter how insignificant. No matter what they own, a person with da’as, with the trait of finding meaning in everything, *has everything*.

A billionaire aristocrat without da’as could inherit a 100-bedroom mansion and feel the bite of poverty because he can’t fit 200 guests in it.

At the same time, an old pair of pensioners *with* da’as could make themselves wealthy by figuring out how to fit all 13 grandchildren into their 2-bedroom apartment for a night.

Someone once asked one of today’s great masters of avodah if he felt the need to take his children on exotic trips to satisfy their desire for excitement. His answer? “It’s enough to take them to the local grocery store.” There, too, they’ll find plenty of fascinating things to observe and enjoy.

So how do we activate our da'as? How do we turn grocery stores into field trips on our own?

Also... what if we have bigger problems than bored children or a squishy apartment?

Can we still control our experience of life and generate our own happiness when things are genuinely hard and painful? Can the Torah set us free here too?

In Pirkei Avos, we follow five students of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai as they "go out and discern the proper path one should cling to and the evil path one should distance himself from."

One student, Rabi Eliezer, returns with the following answers: "Ayin tova," a good eye, and "ayin ra'ah," an evil eye (Avos 2:13-14).

Lots of us feel like rolling our eyes when we hear the words "ayin tovah." That's because we think it demands that we be happy and cheerful about everything in our lives, even the really painful parts.

Which doesn't just feel impossible. It also feels terribly dismissive and invalidating.

According to Rav Yerucham Levovitz, that's not what ayin tovah asks of us. It simply instructs us to keep our eyes open for "diamonds in the rough."

Yes, rough exists. Nobody's asking us to gloss it over. Reality can be extremely challenging. We're allowed to experience it that way.

And at the same time, to look deeper and find the diamonds in the difficulty. Because searching for diamonds always enriches us more than harping on the rough.

Things, comforts, pleasures, ease – they can't guarantee us the best life. The best life only comes when we stop waiting for the world to send us happiness, and start learning to create it simply by taking stock of the possibilities around us.

Even if we need to dig through dark layers of dirt to find them. This learning process isn't quick. It's a long, slow journey filled

with practice. But once we master it, we earn the prize most of this world would give anything to gain.

Happiness.

Exercise: Think of a difficult situation you're currently dealing with. A relationship struggle? A child-raising one? A financial one?

Without invalidating the very real pain you're experiencing, try to dig for diamonds in the rough. What are two positive things you can appreciate about this situation?

1. _____
2. _____

ALWAYS A GOOD PLACE

Another perfect example stretching our human minds through Torah brings us to life at its best?

Bitachon.

Typically, we understand bitachon to mean trusting that everything that happens to us is Hashem's will – and calculated to serve our very best interests.

This awareness in itself is an expansion of our human perspective – so kudos to us! And, as we can all testify to some level, it greatly enhances life. Living in a world where everything is random and purposeless would open us up to terrible hopelessness and depression. Instead, with bitachon, we know everything happens for our good. Everything makes sense as part of Hashem's master plan. We feel loved, taken care of, and surrounded by meaning.

But what if we're missing a layer? What if bitachon could do even more to enhance our lives – if we just expanded our understanding a bit further?

At the start of Sha'ar Habitachon, the Chovos Halevavos states that bitachon is the most essential trait we need to serve Hashem.

Why bitachon? What makes it more crucial to avodas Hashem than all other middos and attributes?

Because bitachon goes a step further than our definition above. Bitachon tells us that every situation, every moment, offers an opportunity to serve Hashem.

"B'tach b'Hashem va'asei tov." Trust in Hashem and do good, Dovid Hamelech writes in Tehillim (37:3). Wouldn't it seem more natural to switch the order there? "Do good, and trust in Hashem that everything will work out"?

Not quite, explains the Ramban. Before actually doing good, we need to have bitachon that doing good is possible.

When we encounter a challenge – whether it's short-term crazy-making, like a child keeping you up at night or the AC

breaking on a 100-degree Shabbos, or whether it's deeply painful, G-d forbid – we tend to see it as something to get through. We hunch our shoulders, do our best to cope, and wait for the light at the end of the tunnel to come closer.

In these situations, bitachon doesn't simply offer us the comfort that somehow, our suffering is good for us. It gently reminds us that we have an active role here. There's something we can do, right now, to serve Hashem. To develop ourselves. To become greater. To turn the pain into something productive, even positive.

These aren't unfortunate rocks in our path of life. They *are* the path – the one Hashem has designed to bring us toward our best selves.

That irritating trait of your parent, spouse, child or friend isn't just there to give you yissurim (earthly suffering). Hashem lovingly and deliberately placed it in your life to help you become more patient, more tolerant, more accepting.

Hashem didn't just give you that stressful salary cut to make life difficult and get you in trouble when you question Him. He's pulling you back to Him through personal introspection and sincere, meaningful tefillah.

So of course bitachon is critical for those who want to serve Hashem. It opens the door for them to find avodah everywhere.

Western culture has taught us to constantly chase completion – and rest. Work hard for 40 years – so you can retire. Go through the process so you can earn the trophy at the end. Do it, check it off, pat yourself on the back, put it behind you.

Which means that at first glance, the fact that our work is never done, that no matter how great a person becomes, he still has room to grow, might overwhelm us. *Doesn't constantly bumping into a need to grow sound exhausting?*

Here's where we get to work on breaking open our minds to let in the Torah's perspective.

Let's look at the alternative – constantly chasing calm and relaxation. If we live that way, then when life gets chaotic, we

can't be happy.

Bitachon offers us a life where everything always goes right – because as long as we can find an opportunity to grow, we're in a good place. And since every moment, every circumstance, offers room for growth, we're constantly being gifted the chance to be productive.

What a life! Endlessly creative. Consistently stimulating. And deeply fulfilling.

Exercise: Call back the difficult situation you thought of for last section's exercise.

Once again, without judging yourself, or invalidating the pain this situation is causing you, think theoretically: what are two opportunities for growth you can find in this challenge?

1. _____

2. _____

Having thought of those opportunities, how do you feel? Is it possible that you feel a tiny bit less stuck or frustrated? A tiny bit more empowered? If your answer is yes, or even maybe, try to describe the feeling here:

NO BETTER LIFE: THE TAKEAWAY

We started this journey with a question: what does a shana tova umesuka mean to us?

We're pleading, perhaps with more intensity than ever, for a good year, a good life. But what does that entail? What do we need to make it happen?

After trekking through this guidebook, we've realized something. We don't need a life where every dreamed-of detail falls picture-perfectly into place.

We need a life where, no matter what circumstances we encounter, we're able to rise above them. Maintain our simcha and inner peace. Draw nourishment and joy from our connection to Hashem.

We've also discovered something else: that Torah is fully equipped to offer us this life. That Torah living doesn't just secure us a wonderful eternity – it offers us the best life possible in this world too.

Not that we can achieve this life without effort. Since the Torah's version of "the good life" is so vastly different than our world's dreams and ideas, entering it means summoning the strength to take a "na'aseh" leap – once, again, another time, once more – until, with the help of our "nishma" mindset, we can break through our human perspective and touch the incomparable joy of Torah living.

We can shift from yearning for physical pleasure to finding ample satisfaction in Hashem's love and kindness.

From craving physical safety and security to placing our complete trust in Hashem as our Safeguard and Protector.

From depending on comfort and wishing for a life of ease and relaxation to embracing an invigorating lifestyle of constant growth and development.

From needing everything to match our understanding to being an open vessel for Hashem's unimaginable wisdom.

From relying on our "haves" and circumstances for happiness to understanding how to draw it from any and every situation.

From feeling downed and trapped by our challenges to greeting them with empowerment and curiosity as opportunities to grow.

Yes, these mindset shifts will take years of work to fully adopt. But we've started the process. We've taken tiny tastes of them. And with Hashem's help, as we move forward with na'aseh v'nishma, we'll merit more tastes, deeper ones – until our lives have completely transformed. Until Torah and mitzvos provide all the satisfaction, all the nourishment we need.

And we know with deep conviction that there exists no better life.

GLOSSARY

Shalom bayis: harmony in the home

Nachas: pride in one's children

Simchas hachaim: joie de vivre; sense of joy in life

Uvacharta bachayim: from a verse in the Torah; "choose life."

Shacharis: morning prayers

Na'aseh v'nishma: "We will do and [then] we will hear;" the phrase the Jewish people used to accept the Torah at Mt. Sinai

Davening: prayer (*Yiddish*)

Bentching: Grace After Meals

Geshmak: enjoyment

Klal Yisrael: the Jewish people

Siyum Hashas: a celebration marking the completion of the entire Talmud

Kavana: intent

Yiddishkeit: Judaism

Tefillah: prayer (*Hebrew*)

Avodah: work in the service of G-d

Bentcher: a booklet containing the text of the Grace After Meals

Nodeh Licha: the first two words of the second paragraph in the Grace After Meals; often used to reference the entire second paragraph

Racheim: the first word of the fourth paragraph of Grace After Meals; often used to reference the entire second paragraph

Olam hazeh: this world

Ta'amu ure'u ki tov Hashem: a verse from Psalms that means "Taste and see that G-d is good."

Pas b'melech: Bread in salt

Tzaros: suffering or difficulties

Tzaddikim: righteous people

Yetzer hara: evil inclination

Posuk: verse in Scripture

B'dieved: inideal

Ameilus baTorah: toiling in Torah

Chazal: an acronym for "Chachameinu Zichronam L'vracha," "our Sages of blessed memory."

DEDICATIONS

In honor of
**Rabbi Goldbaum and Mr. Hoffman,
the staff, teachers and Board of
Directors of Hillel Academy.**

Zvi and Shoshana Gelt

For

Daniel Eliyahu Meir Ben Yonatan,
may he go from strength to strength.

Jonathan Maram

GOLD

L'ilui nishmas

R' Binyomin ben Chaim a"h

Dovi and Mindi Jacobs

Your cousins from LA

SILVER

In memory of our dear husband and uncle,

**Abe Herzberg,
Avraham ben Tzvi, a"h**

**Mrs. Anne Herzberg
and the Lebovits family**

In honor of this Elul guide and, be"H,
the impact it will have worldwide.

Moshe Daniel

Mazel tov on your latest publication,
Rabbi! We look forward to using this
Elul guide this year and in years to
come to help us grow in our connection
to Hashem. With the thousands of
copies you're producing this year, the
impact you're having on Klal Yisrael
is tremendous. We wish you much
hatzlacha with it.

We are grateful for your friendship and
look forward to continuing growing
together in 5785!

Sincerely,

**The Vaadkas (Alan, Darren, Gerardo,
Jake, Michael, Scott)**

In memory of Joyce's parents,

Joseph and Shirley Goldwasser,
יוסף בן משה ושרה בת יהודה ע"ה

Avraham and Joyce Litzman

In honor of

Chava bas Sarah,

my constant source of inspiration.

Adam Moskowitz

L'zecher nishmas

R' Yisroel Moshe ben Yosef Chaim zt"l

and

R' Meir ben Yisroel zt"l

Mishpachas Rosenbaum



NO BETTER LIFE



216.333.4927

With gratitude to my Rabbi, my teacher
and my friend. You are an Or L' Am
Yisrael. Thank you for inspiring us all to
learn, to grow, and to strengthen our
relationship with Hashem.

Marc, Melanie, Ellie and Ben

In memory of

Irving and Edith Gershater, a"h,

and in honor of our children and grand-
children.

Rick and Linda Gershater

L'ilui nishmas

Devora Nissa bas Baruch Ber a"h

Eddie Goykhman



לע"נ דוד בן זוהרה ע"ה

In honor of

Rabbi Lebovits

– after the horrific events of 10/7, his Elul guide will provide so many Jews a helpful path to navigate this past year, but also provide a positive outlook for a new beginning as we enter the High Holidays.

With Love and Gratitude,

Casey and Brett Perry (and the boys)

Wishing you much continued success in
illuminating the lives of Jews everywhere!



Alex Polotsky, MD

Medical Director

Reproductive Endocrinologist

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May the teachings of the VAAD along with
the study of Torah around the world merit
the coming of the Mashiach.

Ron and Karen Rubin

L'ilui nishmas

R' Boruch Taub,

Boruch Yosef Yechezkel ben Chaim a"h

His Mishpacha

L'zecher nishmas

R' Benzion ben Ahron a"h

Mishpachas Heyman

In honor of my parents,

Abraham N. Lieberman and Belle Lieberman,

may they rest in peace.

David Lieberman

We gratefully acknowledge Hashem for all the kindness and blessings He bestows upon us. May we continue to merit the spreading of wisdom and joy which teachings like this bring. And please may our studies and prayers merit Hashem's love, caring and protection for all Klal Yisroel.

The Margulies Family

In honor of

Rabbi Lebovits

and our appreciation for all that he does.

Rick and Rae Negreann

To my Friend and Mentor:

Rabbi Lebovits

Wishing continued success,

Harvey & Jenna Pacht

To my parents,

Gita Faygel bat Israel Yitzchak and Ephraim ben Shmuel,

of blessed memory, and in gratitude to **Rabbi Lebovits'**
dedication to sharing Torah knowledge filled with wisdom
and insight.

Trudy Robinson

In honor of the

Chayalim of Tzahal

who put their lives on the line to serve as Hashem's
shiluchim to help protect Am Yisroel.

The Vann Family

T H E V A A D P R O J E C T

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