



Reb Moshe looked around his barren house, but his search was in vain, for there was nothing of value left to pawn. His formerly elegant surroundings were bereft of their fine furniture, crystal chandeliers and French tapestries.

It was almost impossible to believe, but Reb Moshe and family were now paupers. Even their fine tailored clothing had been sold, and each remained with only one suit of clothes. Reb Moshe and his family took one last look at their beloved house, then turned to go out the door for the last time. The only possession they took was a small bundle of personal items of no special monetary value. They stood on their front steps with no particular place to go.

Reb Moshe was a Chasid of the great Tzadik, Reb Yitzchak Meir of Ger, and so he went to the Rebbe for advice. Although he was now penniless, Reb Moshe still had a plan in mind. In a distant country he had very wealthy relatives who would certainly help him out of his difficult straits. They would surely lend him enough money to begin his business again.

When Reb Moshe entered the Rebbe’s room, he poured out his broken heart, and then offered his solution. “I will travel to my relatives and ask them to help me. With a loan, which I will certainly be able to repay, I will be able to start my business again and save my family from this unbearable situation.”

But, to his great surprise, the Rebbe shook his head, no. Reb Moshe thought that perhaps the Rebbe didn’t agree with the idea of his traveling, so he suggested an alternate plan: “Maybe I should just write to them and explain my situation. After all, they are close relatives, and they are easily able to send me enough money to get started.” But the Rebbe nodded again, “No, I am not in agreement with that suggestion.”

There was nothing to do but leave, and Reb Moshe departed with a heavy heart. He had no idea where to find his salvation. Still, he took his Rebbe’s advice to heart and sought any kind of work to sustain his family, all to no avail.

At his wits’ end, Reb Moshe returned to Ger, hoping the Rebbe would perhaps see things differently. But, no, the Rebbe still didn’t countenance approaching the wealthy relatives. Now, things had become even more difficult. Even bread was a luxury he could not afford. His wife berated him, saying, “How can you watch your own flesh and blood suffer? Go to your relatives and get help for us!”

The man traveled to Ger one more time and stood before the Rebbe, pleading, but the Rebbe answered him, “I cannot change my opinion, regardless of how you ask and what you say.”

Finally Reb Moshe could no longer restrain himself; he wrote a lengthy letter to his relatives. As he expected, he soon received a reply from them and a generous sum of money to help him get back on his feet. Little by little he rebuilt his business connections. He bought new merchandise, he leased a new property, and his life began to resemble his former life of prosperity.

But just when he thought things were going on an even keel, Reb Moshe fell ill. What began as a simple cold progressed to the point that he was bedridden and doctors pronounced his situation very dangerous. His one desire was to travel to Ger. But that was impossible: he was too weak to be moved. Instead he dispatched a close friend to go to Rebbe and speak for him.

The friend was ushered into the Rebbe’s study, where he informed the Rebbe of Reb Moshe’s precarious state. The Rebbe was very pensive, but then spoke.

“Sometimes a person will find himself in a situation which he feels is unbearable. He may be ill, he may lose his fortune, any of the hundreds of calamities large or small that afflict the human race. But know that everything G-d does is ultimately only for his good. Every soul must have its correction in this world to enable it to proceed to its higher level in the World of Truth. And so, even when things seem bad to the eyes of man, they are contrived Above only for his benefit.

“There are times when, for a particular reason, the Heavenly Court decrees a sentence of death upon someone. But when an advocate intervenes on his behalf, the Heavenly

Court is moved to lighten its verdict and to make the tikun (correction) to the person’s soul in another way, through a different type of atonement. Since, ‘a pauper is considered [in some respects] as one who is dead,’ poverty is sometimes substituted for death by the Heavenly Court.

“This is what happened to Reb Moshe. When he came to me for advice as to whether to accept help from his relatives, I could not agree, for I felt that it was not ‘bashert’ for him to do so. When he asked me repeatedly for my agreement, I kept refusing, for my strong inner vision told me that he should not accept this help. But in the end, he was unable to restrain himself from accepting the money from his relatives. When he cast off from himself the burden of poverty, he removed from him self the substitute sentence, and his vital force was cut off.”

The friend left Ger quickly, hoping to return to Reb Moshe while the Rebbe’s words could still be of help. But when he arrived home, his friend had departed from this world.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

And these are the ordinances which you shall set before them (Exodus 21:1)

“Before them” in every sense of the word: the Jewish people must be made to realize that My commandments are of primary concern and importance. (Rabbi Bunim of Pshischa)

His master shall bore his ear through with an awl (martze’a) (Exodus 21:6)

Why a “martze’a?” Because its numerical equivalent is 400 -- the same number of years the Jewish people were originally supposed to be enslaved in Egypt. When G-d took the Jews out of Egypt, He declared, “The Children of Israel shall be servants unto Me.” Subsequently, anyone who willingly chooses to serve a human master rather than G-d deserves to have his ear bored through...(Daat Chachamim)

Keep far away from falsehood (Exodus 23:7)

A liar is more despicable than either a robber or a thief. The robber steals only at night, for he worries about being discovered. The thief steals by night and by day, but only from individuals, as he is afraid to confront a larger group. The liar, however, lies by night and by day, and spreads his falsehoods and gossip about everyone. (The Magid of Kelem)

And you shall serve the L-rd your G-d (Exodus 23:25)

According to Maimonides, we learn the positive mitzva of praying to G-d from this verse; “service” refers to “the service of the heart,” i.e., prayer. As is known, during the exile our prayers must take the place of the sacrifices that were offered in the Holy Temple. However, when the Temple stood, only kohanim (priests) were allowed to actually bring the sacrifices; Levites and Israelites were prohibited from doing so. Thus the exile has a certain advantage over the time when the Holy Temple was in existence, for nowadays, every Jew can fulfill the role of the greatest kohen just by calling upon his Father in heaven. (Peninei Geula)

5:10 PM Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
26 Shevat / February 13
Torah Portion Mishpatim
Blessing of the new month of Adar
Shabbat ends **6:11 PM**



בס"ד
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26 Shevat, 5786
February 13, 2026

The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person

נוסד תר"י בשם השלשים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
“Our help is in the name of the L-rd, Who made heaven and earth” (Psalms 124:8)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

The Torah portion this week is Mishpatim - statutes. Included amongst the many mitzvot (commandments) found in the portion is one which discusses how to behave toward an enemy in distress. “When you see the donkey of your enemy lying under its burden, you might want to refrain from helping it, but you must make every effort to help him [unload it].” (23:5)

The Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chasidic movement, translated and explained this commandment in a unique way which makes it relevant to each one of us. It is important to note that the Hebrew word for donkey - chamor is similar to the word for materiality - chomer.

When you see a donkey - when you carefully examine your materiality, your body, you will see...

your enemy - for your materiality hates your Divine soul since it is the Divine soul which longs for G-dliness and spirituality. Furthermore, you will see that it is...

lying under its burden - it is overwhelmed and overloaded with the command placed upon it by G-d, namely, that it should become refined through the study of Torah and performance of mitzvot. But, the body, like a donkey, is lazy and stubborn to fulfill these commands. It may then occur to you that...

you might want to refrain from helping it - to enable it to fulfill its mission. And instead, you might follow the path of mortification of the flesh to break down the body’s crass materiality.

Hundreds of years ago, it was indeed considered proper to subordinate the body through afflicting it with ascetic practices, but the Baal Shem Tov rejected this path. He saw the body not as an obstacle to the spirit, something intrinsically evil and ungodly, but as a potential vehicle for the spiritual, a means for the soul to attain heights otherwise inaccessible.

The light of Torah will not reside fully in this method. Rather...

You must make every effort to help it - purify the body, refine it, but not to break it.

Thus the “enemy” is transformed into an ally, an instrument through which to perform mitzvot. In great measure the mitzvot employ gross physical matter to fulfill G-d’s will, e.g. leather for tefilin thongs, wool for tzitzit, etc. We must care for our physical selves in order to fulfill G-d’s commandments. Indeed, it is a commandment to watch over the health of one’s body.

Adapted from Hayom Yom, compiled by the Rebbe from teachings of the previous Rebbes

The Thin Margin

We like to think of ourselves as solid, immovable objects. We build routines, plan for next year, and move through the world with a sense of permanence. But every so often, the universe sends a reminder: we aren’t solid at all. We are delicate. We are a collection of systems held in a balance so precise it’s almost frightening. When we finally step back to reflect, we realize just how thin the margin for error actually is.

In the world of sports, this is true whether you’re looking at a golf ball lipping the cup, a baseball landing just foul, or a tennis serve hitting the tape. We pay to watch athletes live on that razor’s edge. We expect them to dramatize the significance of those critical, unforeseen moments because that’s where the drama lives.

But we rarely think of our own “ordinary” lives that way. We acknowledge that certain professions - firefighters, surgeons, police officers - must master the decisive moment. Yet, we assume our roles are shielded from that kind of volatility. However, there are always events that alter the outcome and tip the balance. We just don’t always notice them until the scale has already moved.

Most of the time, we indulge in the luxury of routine. We expect a predictable cycle of ups and downs to keep us motivated, but we treat time as if it’s an infinite resource.

But then, the balance shifts.

Think about the physical reality

of a “sugar low.” Maybe you’re observing a fast day on the Jewish calendar, or maybe you just got caught in a nightmare airport layover with no kosher food in sight. You feel the symptoms creep in: lightheadedness, a touch of nausea, an edgy irritability that makes every minor inconvenience feel like a crisis. But then, you eat a few cookies or drink a cup of orange juice, and the transformation is instantaneous. Your body gets the nourishment it was screaming for, and suddenly, you’re back.

It doesn’t take a catastrophe to unbalance us. It can be a slight fever, an annoying blister on your heel, or even a passing whiff of smoke that triggers a cough. These tiny, “insignificant” things set us off. They tip the scales and remind us, once we’ve recovered our equilibrium, just how finely tuned and fragile we truly are.

Judaism takes this observation and scales it up to a cosmic level. It informs us that this fragility isn’t limited to our physical bodies. Our minds, our souls, and even the environment—the very earth itself—exist in a state of delicate stasis. Further, Judaism teaches us that there is no “off-season.” Every single moment is the critical moment. The game is always on, the inches are always in play, and the margin for error remains razor-thin. Everything in existence is suspended in the balance, waiting for our next move, our next plan, or our next signal.

A man wearing a light blue baseball cap, glasses, and a grey t-shirt is shown from the side, looking up at a large, weathered stone tablet. He is using both hands to touch or feel the surface of the tablet, which appears to have some inscriptions or markings. The background shows a stone wall.

“My father ran a pharmacy in Budapest until he was taken to the camps,” Dr. Sabo continues. “When he arrived on the platform at Auschwitz, he made a

“Today, I am a firm believer in G-d,” he says. “Every morning I say Modeh Ani, wash my hands, and make sure to wear tzitzit when I am on reserve duty, believing that they protect me.”

Adapted from Sichat Shavua Magazine

The Rebbe Writes

MOSHIACH
MATTERS

The appointment of Melech HaMoshiach has in reality already occurred, as we say in the verse (Psalms 89:21), "I have found My

With due respect,

(The Rebbe, 25 Shevat, 5751-1991)

“A WORD
FROM THE DIRECTOR

This explains the fundamental importance of the portion of Shekalim over the other three special portions. It is connected with charity, which is constant, and applies in all places and situations.

Samuel Beaman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA
לזכרון חי'ה י מושקא

The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.



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A Call To Action

(The Rebbe, 25 Shevat, 5751-1991)