

L'Chaim

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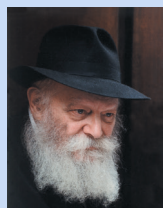
August 29, 2025

The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person

נוסד תוך ימי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson

"Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth" (Psalms 124:8)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

*from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion*

At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he who is worthy of death be put to death, but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death," we read in this week's Torah portion, Shoftim.

But what happens if someone confesses to a capital crime? Is the Jewish court allowed to carry out a death sentence, according to the rule that "the admission of the plaintiff is worth 100 witnesses"?

Maimonides explains that this legal ruling applies only in monetary cases; when it comes to capital crimes, two witnesses are necessary to determine guilt.

Our Sages explain the difference thus:

A person's soul is not his property; it does not belong to him at all, but is only entrusted to him by G-d for safekeeping. For this reason it is not only forbidden to kill (oneself or others) but it is forbidden to cause harm or injury to the body, as well. An admission of guilt is therefore meaningless because it involves something which is not subject to ownership.

Wealth, on the other hand, is actually "owned" by the individual (as much as anything created by G-d, the Master of the world, can said to be "owned" by a human being). The testimony of the person involved may therefore be accepted as the determining factor.

This distinction is also reflected in the various blessings established by our Sages, appropriately called "benedictions of enjoyment."

We recite a blessing before eating or drinking, but not before enjoying our money. That is because the soul, which derives its pleasure and sustenance from the divine sparks in the food or drink we ingest, is not our own; we must therefore recite a blessing before we partake of G-d's goodness. However, we do not need to obtain G-d's permission before we spend our money. (Of course, G-d wants us to utilize our wealth for doing mitzvot, giving charity, etc.)

In truth, every single Jew is a "witness," for his observance of Torah and mitzvot attests to the existence of the Creator. The function of a witness, in both the limited and broader sense, is to uncover something which is hidden. G-d has placed the Jewish people in a physical world ("olam," from the word meaning hidden or concealed) to testify to His absolute sovereignty, and show through their actions how "everything came into being with His word."

When this will take place, the above type of testimony will not be necessary, for we will have entered the Messianic era and G-dliness will be self-evident: "The glory of G-d will be revealed, and all flesh will see that the mouth of G-d has spoken." May it happen immediately.

Adapted from talks of the Rebbe.

A Jewish Approach to Peaceful Sleep

Sleep deprivation has become a pervasive challenge in modern life. Whether we remain awake to manage financial obligations, advance our professional knowledge, or simply because we cannot put down an engaging book, the morning alarm invariably sounds before we have achieved adequate rest.

Even when we do get to sleep at a reasonable hour, numerous factors conspire against quality sleep: unexpected phone calls, crying infants, municipal services operating at inconvenient hours, or teenagers who have yet to return home. These disruptions are all too familiar to anyone seeking restorative rest.

Sleep researchers will rattle off the pros and cons of valerian, melatonin, exercise, hot baths, warm milk, or a solid meal. They'll also tell you that the older you get (particularly over 30), the more likely you are to complain about your sleep. Quality sleep remains frustratingly elusive for many.

While contemporary sleep science focuses primarily on physiological and behavioral approaches, Jewish tradition offers complementary wisdom for achieving peaceful, restorative rest.

The first step toward a good night's sleep is to perform a mitzvah. Actually, the final mitzvah of the day is to recite the "Shema Before Retiring." Many prayer books also contain a short but powerful paragraph in which we extend forgiveness to those who may have wronged us during the day while seeking divine assistance to avoid repeating our own mistakes. When recited with sincerity, this practice can significantly enhance sleep quality by releasing the emotional

burden of daily conflicts.

Perhaps this is why King David, the composer of the Psalms, wrote (4:9): "In peace, at one with all, I will lie down and sleep, for You, O L-rd, will make me dwell alone and in security." When we are truly at one with all, achieving genuine peace with others and releasing the day's accumulated stress, this creates optimal conditions for both falling asleep and remaining asleep.

Studying Torah during the day and at night is also beneficial for better sleep. Proverbs (3:24) teaches us that through wisdom and understanding, "When you lie down, you shall not be afraid; indeed, you shall lie down, and your sleep shall be sweet."

This idea is reinforced a few chapters later in Proverbs (6:20-22), where we are advised to "keep your father's commandment, and forsake not the Torah of your mother," for "when you sleep, it shall keep you."

These verses suggest that engaging in mitzvot and Torah study provides us with spiritual protection, creating a sense of security that facilitates deeper rest.

When we take these Jewish teachings to heart and integrate these practices with our nightly routine, we create conditions for truly restorative sleep. In this manner, we will surely awaken refreshed and ready to tackle another day.

Ultimately, our increase in Torah study and mitzvot will hasten the dawning of the great day and era of the Messianic Redemption, when all those who are asleep—including those who "sleep in the dust"—will awaken and be revived, may it happen now.

SLICE OF LIFE

Beyond Light and Shadow



Israeli artist Roni Pellow

In his Eilat studio, surrounded by vibrant murals in various stages of completion, Roni Pellow steps back from his latest creation—a large-scale work that plays with the intricate dance of light and shadow. "When you look at this piece from up close, you can see either light or shadow, and you might get confused," explains the 51-year-old environmental artist. "Only when you step back a few paces do you see the complete and true picture."

This philosophy of perspective transcends his artwork, extending to his view of Israel's current challenges. "The people of Israel are going through a difficult time, and there are people who currently see only darkness. But let's step back a bit, look at the good days we've had, and try to see the whole picture, and then we'll discover that the dark and the light together create a complete image."

Born to a family of artists in Beer Sheva and raised in Eilat, Pellow inherited his artistic talents from his mother, a highly skilled painter. "I've loved drawing for as long as I can remember. But it wasn't until I was 29 that I decided to change careers and make a living from my drawing skills."

His journey toward religious observance began with his mother's own spiritual awakening. "When I grew up, my mother began to draw closer to Torah observance. Initially, this created alienation between us, but truth penetrates, and faith swept over me and my brother." His mother, who began working at Chabad institutions in the city, prayed extensively for her children, and her prayers were answered. "I worked in my twenties in various entertainment venues, and from that low place, G-d lifted me up."

Pellow gradually began studying sacred texts and viewing the world through a different lens. "I started the entire initial process alone; just me and G-d. I understood that I couldn't continue my empty life and decided to realize my drawing skills."

He vividly remembers his first Shabbat experience. "The disconnection was very difficult. Suddenly I found myself bored and counting the minutes until Shabbat ended. The initial feeling was that my life had been taken away from me. Today, of course, I only want Shabbat to continue on and on."

Early in his spiritual journey, Rabbi Yechiel Kutzer from Chabad in Eilat offered to give Pellow and his friends a lesson on the weekly Torah portion through the lens of Hasidic teaching. "After the first lesson, I came to pay the rabbi for the lesson, and he refused to take payment. I was very surprised. This brought us much closer, until we started studying Hasidic philosophy together."

Wanting to express his gratitude to Rabbi

Kutzer, Pellow decided to paint the portrait of a rabbi whose picture was on a small card in the rabbi's wallet. "I didn't know who this rabbi was. During the painting, people passed by and said to me: 'Wow! You're painting the Lubavitcher Rebbe!' That's how I learned the identity of the rabbi... Since then, I've naturally come to know the Rebbe, to whom I feel very connected."

After brief periods studying in a yeshiva in Safed and another in Ramat Aviv, Pellow established a Jewish home. When asked about his favorite painting, he responds with a parent's perspective: "It's like asking which child you love most... There's no answer to such a question. They're all beloved."

Pellow maintains strict principles in his artistic work. "There are constant requests for paintings that don't align with the world of Judaism, and I pass on them. I never feel a loss from maintaining principles. Livelihood will come from heaven."

He encourages parents to inspire their children to draw. "The Rebbe wrote to former President Ben-Zvi: 'From the day I went to cheder (Jewish elementary school) and even before that, a picture of the future redemption began to form in my imagination—the redemption of the people of Israel from their final exile.' The Rebbe painted the redemption in his imagination—and what are you painting?"

As Pellow continues to create environmental art—focusing on murals, sculpture, and public square installations—his work has earned him recognition as one of Israel's finest artists in his field. But beyond the accolades, his art serves a deeper purpose: helping viewers step back, gain perspective, and see the complete picture—where light and shadow together create a masterpiece of hope and faith.

From Sichat Hashavua

Jewish Revival in Historically Jewish Los Angeles Neighborhood



West Adams, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Los Angeles, was once a thriving Jewish enclave in the 1920s, known for its rich architectural heritage and historic charm.

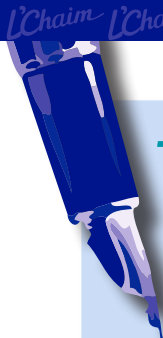
Over the decades, as families moved away, Jewish life in the area gradually faded. Today, West Adams is experiencing a renaissance—young families are moving in, new developments are reshaping the landscape and a renewed Jewish presence is beginning to take root.

To meet the need, Rabbi Michoel and Hindy Zajac have arrived in West Adams with a mission to build a warm, welcoming Chabad center where every Jew feels at home. Through Jewish education, holiday celebrations, life-cycle events and more, they are creating a vibrant and inclusive hub for the local Jewish community—embracing every Jew with open doors and open hearts.

ETHICS CHAPTER SIX

The sages expounded in the language of the Mishnah (blessed is He who chose them and their learning):

Rabbi Meir would say: Whoever studies Torah for Torah's sake alone, merits many things; not only that, but [the creation of] the entire world is worthwhile for him alone. He is called friend, beloved, lover of G-d, lover of humanity, rejoicer of G-d, rejoicer of humanity.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Letters from Elul

Erev Shabbat Kodesh Mevorchim Chodesh Elul, 5740 (1980)

I was pleased to be informed about the forthcoming Annual Dinner, celebrating the first decade of Bais Chana. May G-d grant that the event should be crowned with much hatzlacha [success] in every respect.

There is a special relevance in the fact that this event is taking place in the month of Elul, the last month of the outgoing year, which serves as a preparation for the New -- and better -- Year.

The significance of the month of Elul is alluded to in its very name, which as our Sages point out, is an acrostic of Elul, Ani L'dodi v'dodi Li -- "I turn to my Beloved, and my Beloved turns to me: (Song of Songs 6:3). It is the time of the year when Jews turn to G-d ("my Beloved") with a resurgence of love, and take the initiative to strengthen the bond with our Heavenly Father, through special efforts in Torah, prayer, and acts of loving kindness -- the Three Pillars on which the world at large, and the small world of the individual, rest.

It is also the time when "my Beloved turns to me" and promptly reciprocates and requites this love, and graciously bestows His blessings on all of us, as we are about to enter the New Year on a new dimension of mutual attachment. And since G-d's love knows no bounds, His blessings are boundless in all our needs; both spiritual and material.

In light of the above, I am confident that all friends of Bais Chana will -- in the spirit of Elul -- make a special effort on behalf of this most worthy educational institution, where Jewish daughters are educated and inspired to be worthy of our Jewish Mothers -- Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah, the Founders of the House of Israel, and will proudly fulfill their preeminent role of Akeret HaBayit -- the Foundation of the Jewish home: a home permeated with love of G-d and filled to overflowing with Torah, prayer, and mitzvot, to illuminate also its environs.

May G-d grant that the spirit of Elul will truly be reflected in your own generosity as well as in active personal involvement, to enlarge the circle of friends and supporters of Bais Chana as it enters the next decade of dedicated service to the community and to our people as a whole.

With prayerful wishes for hatzlacha in all above, and wishing each and every one of you, and yours, a kesiva vachasima tova for a good and sweet year,

12 Elul, 5724 (1964)

To the Campers of Camp Gan Israel

G-d bless you all--

I have, of course, followed with particular interest, the reports of your camp life and camp activities. I am pleased to know that you are doing well, and are benefiting physically and spiritually.

As the time approaches when you will soon take leave of your beloved camp and return to your homes and educational institutions, I want to express my hope that the benefit and inspiration which you have received from your camp will be a source of lasting strength to you in the coming year, and that you will share these benefits with others who were not as fortunate as you to spend weeks and months in Camp Gan Israel.

We are now in the significant month of Elul, the month of preparation for the new year. This is the month of opportunity, the month of special Divine grace and mercy. Of this month the Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman -- founder of Chabad Chasidic philosophy] said that this is the time when, as it were, the King is in the Field. Instead of having to seek an audience with the King in His Palace, the King comes out to meet His subjects in the field. At such a time everyone can easily approach the King and present to Him a petition, and the King receives everyone with a gracious smile and fulfills the petition.

I firmly trust that every one of you will take the fullest advantage of this propitious time, to rededicate yourselves to the study of the Torah and the fulfillment of the mitzvot with a growing measure of devotion and diligence.

May you always strive to be a living example to others of what it is to be a son of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, a son of our people Israel and a member of the tribe of Gan Israel.

May G-d bless you with hatzlacha to carry out your good resolutions, in good health and with gladness of heart, and may He bless you and all your near and dear ones with a kesiva vachasima tova.

and then hide himself, whereupon, before he is definitively recognized, "Whoever believes in him and follows him will be content to eat the root of the broom and leaves of plants."

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

In Memory of Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman, Director of the Lubavitch Youth Organization and Founder of the L'Chaim Publication.

From the Archives

Numerous customs are associated with our current month of Elul.

As Elul is a month of preparation for the High Holidays we increase, to the greatest extent possible, our repertoire of mitzvot and good deeds, in the hope that G-d will judge us favorably and seal us for a good and sweet year.

Among the traditional customs of this month are:

- Listening to the shofar being sounded daily. This aids our preparation and helps us in our repentance.
- Saying three extra chapters of Psalms each day (beginning with chapters 1-3 on the first of Elul, 4-6 on the second of Elul, etc.)
- Having our mezuzot and Tefilin checked during this month by a reliable scribe.
- Sending out Rosh Hashana cards to family and friends and wishing a "good and sweet year" when corresponding with or speaking to people.
- Spending time in self-reflection and stock-taking for the previous year.
- Enhancing our interpersonal relationships
- Asking forgiveness from those whom we might have wronged or hurt in the past year.
- Making good resolutions for the coming year.

Our involvement in these traditional actions will keep us sufficiently busy doing only good as we prepare for the coming year. And may we experience the complete revelation of Moshiach even before the new year commences.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה'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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MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba 11:2) explains that Moshiach will reveal himself



IT HAPPENED ONCE

Once there lived a wealthy Jewish butcher in a town on the seaside. In his youth he had been quite poor, and had worked very hard to amass his wealth. Unfortunately, he had never had the opportunity to learn Torah, but he took great pleasure in praying and saying Psalms. He never forgot what it meant to be needy, and he constantly went out of his way to help his fellow Jews.

Every Friday afternoon before Shabbat he would distribute meat and money to all the poor families in the town. His good nature made him a favorite among not only the Jews, but also the gentiles of the town. His reputation even spread to the governor who favored him with an important appointment as the chief customs officer of the port. As such, he would collect taxes on imports and also collect a fee for his services. As one of the benefits of his job, he was also permitted to take any one item from amongst the goods. It was in the capacity of customs collector that he amassed an even greater fortune.

One day a ship arrived in port, and he went to inspect the goods on board. After he performed his duties, the captain approached him saying, "I have some especially good merchandise on board today. Something totally unique, but I am not at liberty to divulge to you the nature of this merchandise unless you want to buy it."

The butcher was very curious and asked what it was, but he always received the same reply: "I will tell you only if you agree to buy it." "How much do you want for it?" he inquired. "Ten thousand gold coins!" was the astonishing answer. "You expect me to make the purchase without knowing what I'm buying?" "That's the stipulation. I assure you, you won't be disappointed."

The butcher was all but hooked, but the captain was enjoying his power over the butcher. He was no longer satisfied with ten thousand; he raised the price to twenty thousand coins, and then forty thousand gold coins!

Finally the butcher agreed. "I will pay your price. Just show me the merchandise!"

"Only after you have brought all the money," the captain answered with a grin, and off went the butcher to fetch the treasure of coins.

Even as he went to collect the coins, the butcher was doubting his sanity. He returned and laid the money on the table. The captain turned on his heel and in a few minutes he returned with the "merchandise" -- Jewish men, women and children in tow -- bound hand and foot.

The evil captain couldn't restrain himself, and broke out into laughter: "Aren't you happy now? What a bargain you got yourself! If you hadn't bought them, they would have been food for sharks -- I certainly have no use for them!"

The butcher took the hapless people with him and left the ship as fast as his feet could carry him, lest the wicked captain have a change of heart. He kept thinking over and over again how G-d had inspired him to spend a fortune on unknown goods in order to save these Jews.

The butcher fed and clothed the former prisoners and treated them with the utmost kindness. One day he noticed a young girl from among them and thought, "This girl would be perfect for my son." The two young people agreed and preparations were made for the wedding.

On the eve of the great affair, the butcher circulated among the guests, offering a drink here, a dainty there, when he saw a young man sitting in a corner weeping. "What is wrong? Everyone is rejoicing, why are you so sad?" The poor boy replied, "The girl who is about to marry your son was betrothed to me before we were abducted by the pirates."

"Why did no one tell me?" the butcher asked. "We are all so grateful to you, that no one dared disturb your happiness," the boy responded.

The butcher thought for a while, and then called his son to him. After recounting the entire story to the groom, he asked, "What do you want to do about it?"

"There is no question. Let the couple be married today as they had planned so many months ago. I will not stand in their way."

And so it was, that the entire village celebrated the marriage that very day. The butcher not only made them the wedding, but furnished them with a house and furnishing and enough money to begin a new life.

The Sages said of this man that with his forty thousand gold coins he purchased a place in the World to Come equaled only to that of the greatest tzadikim.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the Weekly Torah Portion

Judges and officers shall you place at all your gates (Deut. 16:18)

It is explained in our holy books that these "gates" refer to the entrances to the "small city" (the human being in microcosm): the eyes, ears, nostrils and mouth.

When one places "judges and officers" at these "portals," i.e., when one utilizes them properly, the body is thereby transformed into a "G-dly city." This is especially appropriate to consider during the month of Elul (when this Torah portion is read), for it is a time when we take a full accounting of everything that has transpired in the "small city" -- thought, speech and deed -- during the previous year. (*The Rebbe*)

You shall be perfect with the L-rd your G-d (Deut. 18:13)

Just as it is important to safeguard one's physical health, a Jew must take steps to ensure that his soul is whole and that all his spiritual "limbs" are healthy. For just as there are 613 components in the human body -- 248 limbs and 365 sinews -- so too are there 613 parts of the Jewish soul whose state of perfection is dependent on observing the 613 commandments of the Torah. (*Likrat Shabbat*)

In many prayer books, the words "I hereby accept upon myself the positive commandment of 'And you shall love your fellow as yourself'" preface the prayers themselves. One reason for this is that because our prayers are offered instead of sacrifices (which have to be whole and unblemished), so too must the entire "body" of the Jewish people (each one of whom is considered a limb) be whole and complete, united with love for one another, before we approach our Creator. (*The Rebbe*)

You shall appoint a king over yourself (Deut. 17:15)

The inner intent of this commandment is to instill in the Jewish people a sense of nullification before G-d and acceptance of the yoke of heaven. For a Jewish king is completely nullified before G-d; submitting to his sovereignty contains an element of nullification before G-d as well. (*Derech Mitzvotcha*)



7:14 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
5 Elul / August 29
Torah Portion Shoftim
Ethics Ch 6
Shabbat ends 8:13 PM

Dedicated in honor of a dear friend of the
Lubavitch Youth Organization
Dr. Steven Rosenfeld
Wishing you a Kesivo Vachasimo Tovah
A good and Sweet Year