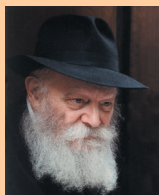


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

The Torah portion of Shemini opens with a description of the eighth and final day of the consecration of the Sanctuary, the day when the Divine Presence first rested therein. The name of the portion--Shemini--means "eighth" and alludes to the special significance held by the number eight. Eight symbolizes that which is above the laws of nature and the boundaries of our physical world. It stands for that aspect of G-dliness which exists even beyond the realm of our human powers of description.

One would think that the contents of so lofty a section of the Torah would deal with correspondingly lofty subject matter--philosophy, belief in G-d, metaphysics--but we find that Shemini delineates the laws between kosher and non-kosher animals. Why such a mundane a subject for a Torah portion which is supposed to express so high a level of holiness?

In many instances, a fine line exists between that which is kosher and that which is forbidden. A kosher animal whose windpipe and esophagus are only partially severed when slaughtered is not fit for consumption. A difference of only a fraction of a centimeter can determine whether or not the flesh of the animal is kosher or not, as Jewish law prescribes that both windpipe and trachea be more than half severed with one movement of the knife.

In our own lives, we also occasionally must make decisions which are as fine as a hair's breadth. Choosing between good and evil when the choices are obvious and blatant is much easier than making a decision between two extremely fine points. For such decision making, extra help from Above is necessary.

The Evil Inclination sometimes disguises itself in a "robe of holiness." It discourages a person from performing a mitzva through guile and doubt, presenting all sorts of seemingly plausible and erudite excuses. A person may become confused when the two paths of action before him both seem to have merit. The Evil Inclination can even make a sin appear to be an actual mitzva.

How are we to overcome the wiles and cunning of the Evil Inclination? How can we be sure that the decisions we make are the right ones? By learning the lesson which is taught in Shemini.

Man alone, bound as he is by the laws of nature and the limitations of the human intellect, cannot always overcome his Evil Inclination. But when a person gives himself over to G-d, Who is not bound by any natural law and is infinite, and asks His help to "distinguish between the unclean and the clean," one can indeed conquer the Evil Inclination and avoid falling into its net.

A Jew's connection to G-d is so strong that it cannot be split asunder by any power on earth. When a Jew does a mitzva--mitzva comes from the Hebrew word for binding together and connecting--he ties himself to G-d with a supernatural strength. Armed with this power, we can see through the mask of the Evil Inclination when we are presented with even the finest points of contention.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Education: Shaping Life

By Rabbi Simon Jacobson

A child's character education should take priority over his academic education. All educational efforts are basically meaningless unless built on the solid foundation of good character — The Rebbe

A couple visited a rabbi to seek advice about how to educate their twelve-year-old son. The rabbi answered them: "You have come to me twelve years too late. A human being is like a tree. If you make a scratch on the branch of a full-grown tree, you affect only that branch. But if you make even a minuscule scratch on a seed, the tree will never grow straight, if it grows at all."

What is the real meaning of education?

If there is one single factor within our control that can directly determine who we are as people, it is education. There is only one way to produce healthy and wholesome adults, people who will lead selfless and meaningful lives, and that is to educate our children.

Education is not just learning the skills to make a living; it is learning to understand life itself. Life is the recognition of G-d and the mission that He, G-d has charged us with — refining ourselves and sanctifying our world.

Imparting information is but a small and rather simple component of education. A true education — an education for life — consists of teaching children that they have an uncompromising responsibility to G-d to live morally and ethically, which will sustain them individually and create a better world for their children and for generations to come.

How should we educate?

The question of how to educate is really the same as asking, How should we communicate? How should we do business? How should we live?

The answer is always the same: through love. Without love, education is at best incomplete and at worst, destructive. Love means sensitivity — not to your ideas and your standards, but to your student's and, most important, to G-d's. Once young people grow familiar with an existence that is greater than themselves and acquire an aptitude and intellectual taste for the spiritual, they become attuned to their purpose in life. They become children who relate to their parents with respect and affection. Children who will not take property that doesn't belong to them.

Children who reach out to help other people, and are generous with their time and love.

How should this generation be educated?

Because a child is impressionable, he will be impressed by whatever is around him. Today, there are more obstacles than ever — television, crime, the lure of drugs — to a proper education. And after fighting through all these distractions, there is precious little time and energy left to cultivate our children's souls. It is not enough to pat your daughter and son on the head and send them off to school; education is an around-the-clock duty. We must be as vigilant as when the child was a newborn — always on the alert, always ready to serve the child's spiritual needs.

Without the acceptance that morality is derived from G-d, morality — and, therefore, education — is guided by nothing more than human whim and conscience. History has shown us that a society can be extremely well educated and yet, if not guided by G-d's precepts, it may be steeped in immorality and evil.

So a system of morally sound education is one of the primary responsibilities of society. While there must be a certain group of people whose primary responsibility is to implement education, each member of society must take an active role. For parents of young children especially, the responsibility is clear. Think how disturbed we would be to learn about a parent who had a sick child, but refused to take the child to a doctor. If that is the case for the child's body, shouldn't we feel the same concern for a child's mind, for his soul?

ACTION

Ensure that your child receives a moral education. Enroll your son or daughter in a school that puts emphasis on character development and morality, based on the principles that this country is founded on: In G-d we Trust.

As adults we should not project unto our children our own skepticism and doubts. Remember, it is children who can best relate to the simplicity and magic the essence of G-d

We must look at our children and tell ourselves again and again: Here is a fertile soul, an open heart and mind, that I have been given by G-d to nurture and teach. This child's life will affect many others, and I must teach him as best as I can.

SLICE OF LIFE

Buried as a Jew: Fulfilling French Author Paul-Loup Sulitzer's Final Wish on Mauritius



*Paul-Loup Sulitzer on the cover of his final book, *Entretiens spirituels, or Spiritual Conversations*.*

When his health began to decline, Paul-Loup Sulitzer turned to his local Chabad rabbi. The famed French intellectual, financier and author had grown close to the rabbi following his retirement to Mauritius, a remote island in the Indian Ocean off the coast of South Africa. Sulitzer's request was an age-old one: "Please bury me as a Jew," he asked Rabbi Laima Barber, director of Chabad-Lubavitch of Mauritius. Barber assured his friend he would do so.

Sulitzer was born in Boulogne-Billancourt, just outside of Paris, in 1946, the son of a Romanian Jewish immigrant who fought with the French Resistance during World War II. At the age of 16 he dropped out of school, spent six months working on a kibbutz in Israel, and then returned to France to begin a career as a teenage entrepreneur. Selling gadgets and keychains in the 1960s, he quickly became one of France's youngest millionaires. He parlayed that success to set up a successful financial consultancy, ultimately achieving acclaim as one of France's premier popular authors, publishing some 35 books over two decades. In his waning years, as he battled health challenges, Sulitzer retired from the public spotlight and retreated to the island of Mauritius, where he formed a warm relationship with Barber.

"From the moment I met him, he struck me as extraordinarily smart—almost larger than life," Barber—who together with his wife, Mushkie, has served the Jewish community of Mauritius since 2011—told Chabad.org. "Every time he came to

shul, people gravitated toward him; they wanted to learn from him. We put on tefillin together frequently and had many deep conversations."

On Feb. 6, 2025, Sulitzer passed away at the age of 78. Early the next morning, a Friday, Barber got in touch with the French embassy on the island to work out details of the author's burial. After working through the various bureaucratic red tape, the rabbi figured he'd be able to lay Sulitzer to his eternal rest within a few days. "But then, on Saturday night, I got a call from France—from Paul-Loup's friend and lawyer, Jean-Luc. He told me there was an emergency: a relative had arranged for him to be cremated on Monday at noon."

"We cannot allow that to happen," Barber responded.

The Importance of a Jewish Burial

The importance of a proper burial in Jewish law and tradition cannot be underestimated. "For dust you are, and to dust you will return," G-d told Adam, the first human being. Chabad.org's extensive section on Death and Mourning quotes King Solomon, who said: "And the earth returns to the land as it was, and the spirit returns to G-d, who gave it." The article explains that "the next stage in the continuing saga of a human life is that the body should return to the earth, the source of all physical life, and be reunited with it, just as the soul returns to its Divine root."

Taking part in the proper burial of a Jewish person is considered a mitzvah of the highest order. The Talmud (Nazir 7:1) teaches that even the High Priest, who was prohibited from attending his own family's funerals, was required to take it upon himself to personally bury a met mitzvah, an abandoned Jewish body that had no one to attend to its proper burial.

Unable to contact the relative, Barber and the French lawyer decided to call Sulitzer's youngest daughter, who they hoped could overturn the decision. "Once things are already set in motion, changing them becomes a whole ordeal," the rabbi explains, "but I told Jean-Luc, 'I'm not afraid of the challenge. I know what Paul-Loup wanted.'"

Barber reached the daughter, who agreed that her father wanted a Jewish burial. Then, the rabbi informed the funeral home that there was an objection. Legally, he explains, "They could not proceed with the cremation unless there was confirmation. We told them we would obtain an injunction from a French court."

On Monday, the trio—the rabbi, the lawyer and Sulitzer's daughter—presented their case before a French judge, Barber submitting a letter detailing the importance of burial in the Jewish tradition, his relationship with Sulitzer and the stated wishes of the

deceased.

Twenty-four hours later, the verdict arrived: Sulitzer, the judge ruled, would have wanted a Jewish burial in Mauritius. On appeal, the ruling was upheld.

"For a French judge to recognize the significance of Jewish burial and rule that it was necessary was incredible," Barber says.

On Sunday, February 16, ten days after his passing, Paul-Loup Sulitzer was buried in the Jewish cemetery in St. Martin, Mauritius.

The cemetery was founded in 1943 by a group of 1,500 Jews whom the British denied entry to British-mandate Palestine as they attempted to flee the Holocaust. British authorities sent them to languish in difficult conditions in Mauritius, where 128 of them succumbed to tropical diseases and food scarcity. "They built this cemetery to bury their dead, and it is maintained and in use by the community to this day," says Barber, who has presided over three funerals there.

From those early struggles, a beautiful Jewish community has grown. While a census claimed there were only 43 Jewish people in the country in 2011—the same year the Barbers arrived—the rabbi states that there are actually hundreds. Additionally, millions of tourists visit the tropical island paradise every year, and Chabad of Mauritius caters to the needs of Jewish travelers and the local community, hosting regular prayer services and Torah classes, a kosher delivery service and supervision of kosher food options in local supermarkets—all the amenities a Jewish community needs to thrive.

As Barber prepared for Sulitzer's funeral, he got to work gathering a minyan—the requisite ten Jewish men for Kaddish to be said at the service—and asked a regular visitor to the island, a French Jew named Chalom G., to join. On his way to the funeral, Chalom called the rabbi and asked whose funeral he would be attending: "Paul-Loup Sulitzer," came the reply.

After the service, Chalom G. related to Barber what had happened next. He'd called his mother in France, and when he told her whose funeral he was heading to, she began to cry. "When we first arrived in Paris, Paul-Loup helped us settle in and introduced us to the local community rabbi," she told her son. That decades-old connection had been crucial to their family's Jewish growth. "Paul-Loup was even at your brit milah," his mother added.

Years later, here was Chalom returning the kindness, helping ensure that Sulitzer, a Jew "formed ... of dust from the earth" was returned, as a Jew, to the dust of the earth.

From Chabad.org



New Florida Atlantic University President Inaugurates Office With Mezuzah

In a powerful statement against the rising tide of antisemitism on college campuses across the United States, Adam Hasner—the new president of Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in Boca Raton—marked his inauguration by affixing a mezuzah to his office doorpost.

Hasner, who was unanimously elected by the board of trustees on Feb. 10 and officially took office on March 10, was guided by Rabbi Boruch Shmuel Liberow, who co-directs Chabad-Lubavitch at FAU alongside his wife, Rivka.

"We host Shabbat and holiday services and meals, classes, coaching for students, social events, and we launched a Leadership Training program based on the Rebbe's model of leadership," he explains. Beyond serving students, the center operates the Boca Chesed House, providing accommodations for families of patients at Boca Raton Regional Hospital.

CUSTOMS

What are some customs following a brit?

Most of the many customs of the brit mila are rooted in the mystical teachings of the Kabala. When the actual brit is completed the guests all bless the child, saying "Just as he entered into the covenant, so may he be introduced to the study of the Torah, to the chupah and to good deeds." Also, it is customary to make an advance payment on the tuition fees for the child's Jewish education.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Translation of a letter from the Rebbe

The highlight of the month of Nisan -- the month of Geula [Redemption] -- is the festival of Passover, which is denoted in our sacred liturgy as z'man cheiruseinu, "Festival of our Liberation."

In the plain sense, cheiruseinu means "our liberation," i.e. the collective liberation of all the individuals belonging to our people. However, as we can see from a similar text, z'man simchaseinu -- "Festival of Our Rejoicing" -- the Alter Rebbe [the first Chabad Rebbe] interprets the plural form (also) in a dual sense: the rejoicing of the Jews and the rejoicing of G-d. Accordingly, the term "our liberation" may also be understood in a dual sense: the liberation of the Jews from Egyptian bondage as well as the liberation, as it were, of the Shechina [Divine Presence], as this is indicated in the Hoshana prayer: "You saved the people and G-d..." and in the words "v'hotzeisi eschem" ("I will liberate you") which, according to tradition, may be read also "v'hotzeisi itchem" ("I will be liberated with you").

This means that Jewish liberation, individually and collectively, is two-fold: the Jew's liberation and the liberation, as it were, of the Shechina, of the G-dliness that is in every Jew -- the Divine soul, which is a spark of G-dliness itself.

The said liberation is reflected in, indeed achieved through, the Jew's daily conduct in a manner of true freedom and expansiveness (true because it is rooted in Toras Emes, the Law of Truth), in both aspects of his life.

To elucidate the above:

The events and concepts of Yetzias Mitzrayim [the Exodus from Egypt] and z'man cheiruseinu present many didactic aspects of moral instruction for the Jewish people as a whole and for every Jew individually, at all times and in all places, as in the case of all matters of Torah, the source of eternal values and instructions.

The moral lesson of Yetzias Mitzrayim, which we are commanded to remember every day, is that every Jew must constantly strive to

free himself from mitzrayim [bondage], from all restraints and inhibitions that limit the fullest Jewish expression and development, for he could be better and finer were it not for various impediments.

Obviously, the first thing is to free oneself from the evil practices of Mitzrayim, in the area of "turn away from evil" (the don't mitzvot) and from hindrances in the area of "do good" (the do mitzvot) in the actual conduct of the everyday life.

At the same time, there is in every "do mitzva" which one fulfills, and every "don't mitzva" which one heeds, the al-pi-din [according to the law] and lifnim meshuras hadin [going beyond the letter of the law], which is also an imperative of our eternal Torah. And since all matters of Torah and mitzvot, good and holiness, derive from, and were commanded by G-d, the Infinite, they are also infinite.

Hence, however satisfactory one's level of Yiddishkeit [Judaism], Torah and mitzvot, it could be -- and therefore must be -- better and higher, in accordance with the principle that "all things of holiness should be on the ascendancy" (maalin b'kodesh).

If one makes no effort and does not strive hard, to advance to a higher level, beyond his habitual routine which becomes second nature (teva, fixed form, imprint) -- he has not yet achieved true freedom.

This then, is one of the basic teachings of Yetzias Mitzrayim, z'man cheiruseinu: the liberation from Egypt was a double one: the physical liberation of the Jews from Egyptian bondage, coupled with the liberation of their Jewish soul, as it is written, "Draw and take unto yourselves" -- "draw back from idolatry"; reject it completely.

And although both were achieved with a "high hand" -- including inner freedom, yet, upon their departure from Egypt, the Jews immediately began their steady rise, each day rising to a higher spiritual level and true freedom, until they attained the highest level of freedom with the receiving of the Torah, as our Sages observe: charus al haluchos [engraved on the tablets] -- [to be read] cheirus al haluchos [freedom through the tablets].

May G-d grant that just as at the time of the Exodus from Egypt, "the children of Israel went out with a high hand" -- with self-esteem and free spirit, so may also today, every Jew everywhere order his daily life in complete freedom, with dignity and joy.

And may we very soon merit to welcome our righteous Moshiach, with the true and complete Redemption.

However, the world is ready and prepared!

When a Jew goes about his Divine service properly, rising beyond all limitations and constraints, yet doing so in a way that [his service] can be enfolded in the vestments of nature, he will see how the world, nature, and non-Jews, are indeed aiding him in his service.

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

On the second night of Passover, we began to perform the daily mitzva of Sefirat HaOmer - counting the Omer. Every day between Passover and Shavuot we pronounce a blessing on this mitzva. Then we say, "Today is the first day of the counting of the Omer;" "Today is the third day..." "Today is the seventeenth day..." etc.

What is the purpose of counting time? Honestly speaking, time will remain the same whether we count it or not. We count the days, and say a blessing each time, to show the preciousness and value of time. Each minute, every hour, our whole day, should be permeated with this realization. And if, in fact, we are successful at reminding ourselves how valuable time is, certainly we will want to fill that time up with non-trivial pursuits. We will fill our time with the performance of good deeds, mitzvot, and Torah study.

Sefirat HaOmer teaches us that we must not say, "I'll do it tomorrow," or "Next week I'll have more time." It's the famous tragic story of the man who always said, "I'll do it tomorrow." Well, that "tomorrow" never came. Every day we count the Omer, every day we say a blessing on this mitzva, every day we must fill our time with the mitzvot that need to be attended to on that day, and in doing so, we will certainly hasten the Redemption and bring Moshiach, NOW!

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.



Published by
Lubavitch Youth Organization
1408 President St, Brooklyn, NY, 11213
phone 718 778 6000

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MOSHIACH MATTERS

One might think that in order to succeed in bringing the Redemption, one must take into consideration the reaction of the world at large.



IT HAPPENED ONCE

Once, in a small village there lived a wealthy man who was an extremely generous host. Every guest who had the good fortune of staying in his home received not only the finest food to eat, the fluffiest, most comfortable bed in which to sleep, but the poorer guests also were sent away with a handsome donation to smooth their difficult lot.

He was entirely praiseworthy in his devotion to the mitzva of receiving guests, except for only one thing: he continuously congratulated himself and sought praise for his deeds.

When the Baal Shem Tov became apprised of this man's good deeds, and their unfortunate accompanying pride, he saw that all of these mitzvot were rendered useless by his boastfulness. The Besht dispatched his disciple, Reb Zev Kitzes to bring about a change in the man's behavior.

One day Reb Zev turned up at the door of the wealthy man and sought lodging. Of course, he was greeted with the greatest of generosity, but at every turn the wealthy benefactor asked, "Aren't I the best host you have ever encountered?" or "Have you ever been treated to anything like this?" To each inquiry Rev Zev replied: "We'll see."

When evening came and everyone went to sleep, the host bedded down together with his guests, as was his custom. When he was fast asleep, Rev Zev touched his finger and the man had a strange dream. In his dream, the king arrived at his house to visit him.

He served the king a glass of tea, and suddenly the king passed out and died. The host was arrested and imprisoned, but then a fire broke out in the jail and he managed to escape. He ran and ran until he arrived in a far-away village where he worked as a water carrier. The work was hard and he could eke out the barest survival, since there was an abundance of water in the area and no one required his services.

One day, as he was carrying the heavy pails of water, he stumbled and fell, breaking both of his legs. As he lay on the ground weeping, he recalled that once he had been a wealthy man.

Reb Zev released his finger and the man woke in his own bed, weeping, but now from the realization that it had been only a dream. Reb Zev told him that the Baal Shem Tov had allowed him to experience this dream in order that he repent from his pride.

The man asked if he could return with Reb Zev to the Besht to learn how to truly extinguish his pride. The two traveled together to the Besht and when the wealthy man returned to his home he was a changed man, as generous as ever, but humble and modest.



There lived a man named Shopvol in the city of Anipoli. This man was a simple craftsman, but he prayed in the shul every day, rain or shine, and never missed a day. If there was a minyan, he joined it, but if not, he still came to shul and prayed in his accustomed place.

Once the Baal Shem Tov was traveling through the area and spend a night in Anipoli. As he was sitting by the window smoking his pipe in the early morning, he spied a man rushing through the street, although it was bitterly cold.

The Besht called his host and asked who the man was and where he was going, to which he replied that the man was named Shopvol and he was hurrying off to pray in the shul as usual. The Besht was curious to meet him and asked that he be asked to come. The host replied, "He probably will refuse to come. He's a simple craftsman with little understanding."

That answer notwithstanding, the Besht sent one of his disciples to go to the man and ask that he bring him four pairs of socks. When the man arrived, the Besht asked, "How much are these socks?"

"They are a gulden and a half each pair," was the reply. "Perhaps you would sell them for a gulden?" the Besht asked. "If I were, I would have said it up front," the man replied.

The Besht paid the full amount and continued speaking to the man, inquiring about his life and his work. "How do you go about making the socks?" he asked.

"When I have finished making fifty pairs," said the man, "I soak them in warm water and

then wring them out and lay them flat to dry. Then I wait for the merchants to come and buy them. They always come to me, and I hardly ever go out, except to go to shul to pray. It was only out of my respect for you that I agreed to bring these socks to you."

The Baal Shem Tov enjoyed the man's simplicity and honesty and he wanted to investigate more deeply into his soul. He asked, "What do you do when your children are ready for marriage and you have to make a wedding?"

"I have never had a problem, for G-d always provides, a bit from here and a bit from there also comes in, and I have always, thank G-d, managed."

Then the Besht asked, "Do you ever say Psalms?"

"The ones I know by heart, I say while I work," the man answered.

After the man left, the Besht turned to his host and said, "A man like this is the very foundation of the synagogue. He will remain so until the coming of Moshiach."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah Portion

And it came to pass on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel (Lev. 9:1)

Every day, Aaron, his sons, and the elders came to learn Torah from Moses without having to be called. Why, on this day, did Moses have to call them? Proverbs states, "The heart knows the bitterness of the soul." The Talmud explains that a person may have a premonition about something without being consciously aware of it. Aaron and the elders felt, in their hearts, that on that day--the eighth day of the consecration of the Tabernacle--a terrible calamity would befall the Jewish nation. Indeed, later that day, Aaron's two sons were killed. Moses therefore found it necessary to seek them out and urge them to come.

(Rabbi Shlomo Kluger)

They brought what Moses commanded before the Tabernacle of Meeting, and all the congregation drew near and stood before G-d (Lev. 9:5)

According to the Kabbalist Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, the commandment to love one's fellow Jew must be accepted before beginning to pray. Only when "the congregation drew near" to each other in love and unity, did the Jewish people "stand before G-d" in prayer and supplication. ((Chesed L'Avraham))

Among the cud-chewing, hooved animals, these are the ones that you may not eat: the camel...the hyrax...the hare...the pig. (Lev. 11:4-7)

The Torah lists four animals that have only one of the two kosher signs and are therefore non-kosher--camel, hyrax, hare and pig. Each animal symbolizes one of the four nations which enslaved the Jews in exile. We are now in the last of these four exiles, corresponding to the pig--chazir in Hebrew. The word "chazir" means "return." After this fourth and final exile the glory of the Jewish people will "return" to the way it was intended. (Vayikra Raba)



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