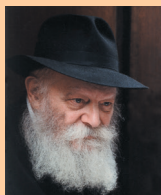


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

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

This week's Torah portion, Shoftim, speaks about the cities of refuge a person would flee to if he accidentally killed someone. There, the unintentional killer would dwell, protected from the wrath of the victim's relatives, until the High Priest who served in the Holy Temple passed away.

But not only unintentional killers sought refuge in these cities; even someone who committed murder intentionally was expected to flee there as well. The court would then convene and issue its ruling. The cities of refuge offered protection, if only temporarily in some cases, to anyone who had caused a loss of life.

After the destruction of the Holy Temple and the dispersion of the Jewish people, the cities of refuge ceased to exist in the physical sense. Yet the Torah is eternal, and its lessons apply in every generation. In our times, therefore, the concept of "cities of refuge" finds expression in the spiritual dimension.

Our Sages taught that "the words of Torah absorb." In other words, the Torah itself is the refuge in which all may seek asylum. In the spiritual sense, "killing" symbolizes the act of committing a sin, causing a spiritual death to the G-dly soul, for the Torah's 613 mitzvot are the "ropes" that bind the soul to G-d. Transgressing the Torah's commandments damages those ties and threatens to cut the soul off from its G-dly source.

We learn from this week's Torah portion that it is never too late to repent, no matter how grave a transgression has been committed. Even the person who deliberately sinned can do teshuva (repentance) and seek protection in the refuge of Torah.

In one sense, nowadays we have a distinct advantage over our ancestors who lived during the times of the Holy Temple. In those days, repentance alone was not enough to atone for a sin. The unintentional killer had to remain exiled in the city of refuge until the death of the High Priest, and the intentional murderer (as defined by the Torah) received capital punishment. Yet after the destruction of the Temple, teshuva alone can atone for even the gravest sin.

Years ago, when Jewish courts had ultimate authority, a judge could only rule on what he himself had seen. G-d, however, can look into the heart of man and judge whether or not his repentance is sincere.

In the same way, the month of Elul, during which we take account of our actions of the previous year, is a "city of refuge" in time, offering us the same opportunity to clear the slate and merit a good and sweet year to come.

Adapted from the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

The Invisible Walls We Build

Most people think freedom means having more choices, more time, or fewer obligations. But some of the greatest limitations in life are not external at all.

They are the invisible boundaries we carry within ourselves, habits we no longer question, assumptions about who we are, fears that quietly influence our decisions, and routines that become so familiar we mistake them for reality.

Long before modern psychology explored the idea of limiting beliefs, the founder of Chabad Chasidism, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, known as the Alter Rebbe offered a profound perspective.

When talking about the daily mitzvah we have to remember our exodus from Egypt, he explains that the Hebrew name Mitzrayim (Egypt) shares a connection with the word meitzarim, constraints, limitations, or narrow places.

The journey out of Egypt was not only the story of an ancient nation escaping slavery. It represents an ongoing human experience: the lifelong journey of moving beyond the inner limitations that prevent us from revealing who we are truly capable of becoming.

Personal growth is not always about adding something new. Often, it begins by recognizing what has been holding us back and finding the courage to move beyond it.

Every stage of life presents its own invisible walls. A student may believe they are defined by grades or social acceptance. A professional may feel trapped by a path chosen years earlier. A parent may lose sight of personal dreams beneath daily responsibilities. Even success can become its own limitation when we become afraid to change what has worked until now.

The challenge is not simply that these boundaries exist. The greater challenge is that they become so familiar that we stop noticing them.

Real transformation begins by rediscovering who we truly are beneath

the noise of life, reconnecting with the soul and inner goodness that has always been there.

Growth starts with asking simple but powerful questions: Is this choice coming from my deepest values, or from old habits? Am I being guided by my true purpose, or simply by what feels safe and familiar?

These questions may not bring immediate answers, but they create space for meaningful change, allowing the soul within us to shine and the person we are meant to become to emerge.

Yet the Alter Rebbe's insight goes even deeper. True freedom does not mean escaping the world or avoiding life's challenges. It means revealing a deeper dimension within them.

We do not become free by running away from our responsibilities. We become free by approaching them with greater clarity, purpose, and awareness. The goal is not to live somewhere else, but to live differently.

Transformation is usually not dramatic. It happens in quiet moments: speaking honestly instead of staying silent, trying something unfamiliar, admitting we do not have everything figured out, listening to a perspective that challenges our own, or letting go of an outdated definition of ourselves.

Each of these moments expands the boundaries of what we believe is possible.

This is why the journey out of "Egypt" is never truly complete. Every achievement creates new opportunities for growth, and every comfort zone invites us to ask whether we have mistaken familiarity for freedom.

The walls that shape our lives are not always built by circumstance. Often, they are built by habit.

While we cannot control every challenge we encounter, we always have the ability to examine the boundaries we have accepted, and discover that many of them were never as permanent as they appeared.

SLICE OF LIFE

A Kentucky Calling: Chabad of the Bluegrass, Lexington, KY

With Rabbi Shlomo and Soshi Litvin



Rabbi Shlomo Litvin with United States Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky

I knew from a very young age that I wanted to be a shliach, carrying out the Rebbe's mission, just like my father.

Even though my parents opened a cheder when I was 8 years old, I was the only one of my peers who wore a yarmulka day in, day out, who kept strict kashrus, chalav yisroel, and Shabbos.

I remember waking up one night to a furious pounding at the door. It was 2:00 in the morning, but I couldn't help tiptoeing downstairs and peeking curiously through the banister at the uncanny scene below me. The visitor was poor Mrs. Hertz*, who'd recently been widowed from her husband of over 50 years.

She was dressed in pajamas and slippers, her eyes wide with fear and confusion. "My Samuel* didn't come home from shul tonight!" she wailed wildly, "Where is he? Where is Samuel?!" My parents gave each other a quick glance, and my mother took Mrs. Hertz's hand gently, coaxing her to the couch. She brewed a quick cup of tea, while my father sat across from her, speaking in a calm, even, gentle tone.

He talked about Mr. Hertz in the present,

speaking about how much he loved him. As Mrs. Hertz's face relaxed into smiles, my father gradually progressed to the past tense, describing how he missed Mr. Hertz. As he spoke, Mrs. Hertz followed this journey of loving her husband in the present... to missing him. The crazed look in her eyes mellowed into soft grief, and by the time her daughter came to collect her, she was back to herself.

My father sat still for some moments longer after she'd left, reflecting. He faced a large portrait of the Rebbe hanging on the wall opposite. To me, it seemed he had enacted a true miracle, drawing from the Rebbe's strength to guide the widow through her mental hardship.

I sat on the stairs, deep in contemplation, when my father found me there at 6:00 AM and sent me back to bed, I snuggled into my pillow with a newfound determination: I would grow up to be a shliach, just like my Tatty

"I wouldn't recommend opening a Chabad house on campus," the university president told us, steepling his fingers as he leaned across his desk. "There really isn't a big enough Jewish population to justify one."

"How many Jewish students would you say you have?" we asked.

"Nine," he answered confidently.

"We hosted a Rosh Hashanah party," the president explained. "It was well advertised, but only nine students came. I'm sorry, but it seems there just aren't that many Jewish students here."

At our welcome barbecue, over 100 students came, and we realized our new house was barely big enough. A few weeks later, at our Purim party, the attendees spilled into the yard and even onto the roof! By the next year, we had already moved to a bigger space, although we quickly outgrew that one too. Baruch Hashem, Chabad of Lexington was growing by leaps and bounds.

For a few years, I hosted a radio show in Lexington, speaking about Judaism, current events, and the Rebbe. One morning, a caller told me she lived in our former home.

"I just got the strangest package," she explained

on air. "Inside were thirty palm branches! When I looked at the label, I saw it was addressed to you."

I thanked her and immediately called my father. "Missing anything?" I asked.

"Actually, yes! I ordered lulavim for our community, but they still haven't arrived, even though the website says they were delivered."

"Well, I think I found them!" I laughed. "They were shipped to the wrong Rabbi Litvin!"

Baruch Hashem, this woman called my radio show, so Louisville had lulavim for Sukkos!

One morning, I read a bill proposing that county coroners with an unclaimed body could cremate instead of providing a burial. I immediately called the senator who authored the bill and explained the problem it would pose for Jewish people without friends or family. He listened patiently, then asked, "So what do you propose we do instead?"

I paused. Cremation was far less expensive than burial. "Whenever there is a Jew who passes away without friends or family, Chabad will pay for the burial," I answered.

"If you're sure about it, I'll include it in the bill."

The bill passed unanimously and was written so other states could easily adopt it.

After it became law, I called every county coroner and explained how it would work. They all agreed to contact Chabad so every meis mitzvah would receive kevuras Yisrael. One coroner asked, "Do you own a funeral home?"

"Not at all! I just want to make sure every Jew receives a proper burial."

"Even though you don't know them?"

"Especially if I don't know them. The Lubavitcher Rebbe taught that every Jew is a brother or sister, even one we've never met."

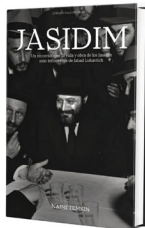
"And you're going to pay for the burial?"

"Yes."

"Unbelievable," he said. "Absolutely incredible."

From DollarDaily.com / *Names changed to protect privacy

'Jasidim' Book in Spanish Brings Legendary Chassidim to Life



A new book in Spanish is being welcomed as a major addition to Spanish-language Chassidic literature.

JASIDIM – was authored by Rabbi Nachman Temkin and explores the rich lives, mesiras nefesh, and inner world of some of Chabad's most legendary Chassidim from the past 100 years.

Feedback since the book's release has been tremendous, with the vast and growing Spanish-speaking Jewish community, spanning Latin America and beyond, embracing the book with great enthusiasm.

Ethics: Chapter 6

One who learns a single chapter, a single law, a single verse, a single word, or even a single letter from a fellow, must treat him with respect. For so we find with David, king of Israel, who did not learn anything from Achitofel except for two things alone, yet he called him his "master," his "guide" and his "intimate," as is stated (Psalms 55:14), "And you are a man of my worth, my guide and intimate friend."



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

14th of Elul, 5727 [1967]

Greeting and Blessing:

I duly received your correspondence, and may G-d grant that you should have good news to report in regard to the contents of your letters.

No doubt you remember the Alter Rebbe's [Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chasidism] explanation of the significance of the month of Elul, in terms of the following analogy: There are times when a king leaves his palace and goes out to meet his subjects in the field, when everyone, regardless of his state and station, can approach the king, and the king receives everyone graciously and fulfills their petitions. The days of Elul are such a period when the King of Kings is, as it were, "in the field." This is, therefore, the proper time to strengthen the adherence to the commandments of the King, and to receive a greater measure of the King's blessings.

Wishing you and yours a Kesivo vaChasimo Tovo [may you be written and sealed for good],

With blessing,

P.S. With regard to the question of Moshiach which you raise in your letter - I refer you to the Rambam, Hilchos Melochim, Chaps. 11-12 [Maimonides, Laws of Kings].

Enclosed is a copy of the general Rosh Hashono message, which you will surely put to good advantage.

9th of Elul, 5718 [1958]

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter of August 14th, containing the good news that you are pleased with the outcome of the court case so far, and, what is even more important, with the progress that you and your wife have been making towards complete recovery.

You do not mention anything about your business and your public work, which I take it as an indication that all is well in those departments.

Now that we have entered the month of Elul, when we say twice daily in our prayers Psalm 27, "G-d is my light and my salvation," etc., I trust that you will become increasingly aware that this is so in your case.

Wishing you and yours a Kesivo Vachasimo

Toivo,
With blessing,

20th of Elul, 5720 [1960]

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your two letters of August 22nd and 26th.

With regard to the question of the Rabbi who has left, and you ask my opinion about the candidacy of Rabbi [...], generally speaking, it seems that he is a suitable candidate. As for particulars, it depends what his duties would be, but surely everything could be arranged with the help of Anash.

With regard to the question of the merger between the two Shuls [synagogues], I do not think that this is a good idea. For one thing, there is the question of Nusach [prayer rite], and for another, this is the time when the number of Shuls should be increased rather than decreased. Furthermore, you write that the other congregation is "small-minded," etc., which seems to indicate that there would be room for friction, etc.

On the question of arranging an affair in behalf of the activities of Lubavitch, I do not see why people want to postpone it until Purim inasmuch as time is of the essence and the activities demand support and expansion all the time. Therefore, it seems to me that the sooner the affair is arranged, the better it would be. Even if it has to be connected with a festival day, surely Chanukah comes earlier, and, being for eight days, it offers an opportunity to select the most suitable day of the week for this purpose.

In this connection I might again recall to your mind the story of the fundraiser, who, on receiving a check to cover a pledge, rebuked the donor. When the surprised donor asked him why he deserved the rebuke, the fundraiser answered, "had you brought it earlier, I could have had another pledge from you since then."

As for your daughter's training to become a Hebrew teacher, you do not write how well this fits in with her studies at present. But the very fact that you ask my opinion on the advisability of her training for a Hebrew teacher at this time, suggests that it can be arranged so that her present studies would not be affected, and if so, it would be advisable.

To conclude on a word of thanks, I recently had the opportunity to view the film of the Lag B'Omer parade in London which you were kind enough to send me. It gave me much pleasure, and thank you very much.

Hoping to hear good news from you, and wishing you again a Kesivo vachasimo, toivo, including, of course, a greater improvement in your business affairs,

With blessing,

complained, 'Alm-ghty G-d: How can I possibly stand 600,000 men and 600,000 youths at the entrance to the Tent which is a plot of land that is only big enough to yield two seah of grain?' And G-d replied: '...So, too, in time to come, will I do the same in Zion: All the world's population from Adam until the Resurrection will come and complain about the shortage of space, and I will broaden it for them.' "

(To Live and Live Again by Rabbi Nissan Dovid Dubov)

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

"There is a time and season for everything," King Solomon taught in the book of Ecclesiastes. According to Jewish tradition, there are various times throughout the day, week, month and year that are most appropriate for reflection and personal accounting: Each evening before retiring is the time to consider one's actions throughout the day. Every Thursday night one should reflect on the week that has passed. On the eve of every new (Jewish) month, one reviews the month and in the last month of the Jewish year one evaluates the entire year.

We have just entered that final month, Elul.

Elul is the time when we look over our deeds of the previous year and make a reckoning and appraisal of our personal growth and development.

There are many customs associated with the month of Elul. During Elul it is customary to have one's mezuzot and tefilin checked by an expert scribe (sofer). One is also enjoined to be more careful in the area of the Jewish dietary laws (kashrut).

From the very beginning of the month we greet friends and sign letters with the wish that we should be "written and sealed for good" and that we should have a "good and sweet year."

In addition, we add Psalm 27 to our daily prayers as well as increasing our recitation of Psalms in general.

With all of this, it is good to keep in mind the analogy of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism, that during the month of Elul "the King is in the field." This means that although at any time of year G-d is surely approachable by each and every one of us, He is even closer to us in the month of Elul.

As we are merely at the beginning of the month, let's not waste a moment. Let's get to work so that we will all truly have a good and sweet year, with the ultimate good of 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

Chairman
Director
Publishing Director
Program Director
Secretary
Administrator
Layout
Associate Editor
Chairman Editorial Comm.
Rebbe photo

Rabbi Dovid Raskin ז"ל
Rabbi Shmuel Butman ז"ל
Rabbi Yosef Y. Butman
Rabbi Kasriel Kastel
Rabbi Moshe P. Goldman ז"ל
Rabbi Shlomo Friedman
Rivky Laufer
David Y. B. Kaufmann ז"ל
Rabbi Nissen Mangel
S. Roumani

L'Chaim contains words from sacred literature. Please do not deface or discard.
All contents © 2026 by L.Y.O. ISSN 1050 0480

L'Chaim Subscriptions

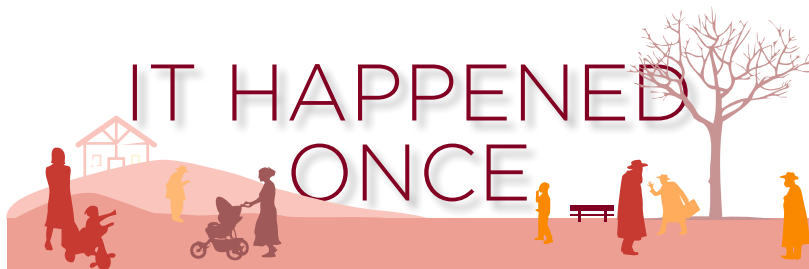
For a one year regular or gift subscription, send \$55, payable to LYO (\$60 elsewhere) to: L'Chaim, 1408 President St, Bklyn., NY, 11213
Please call our office before sending in any subscriptions.

Learn about Moshiach

Visit www.moshiach.com or call (718) 953 6100

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Concerning how those who will rise at the time of the Resurrection of the Dead will fit on the earth, the Midrash teaches: "When G-d told Moses to convene the Jewish people at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, Moses



IT HAPPENED ONCE

For the Melave Malka meal (Saturday night meal to escort the Shabbat queen), Rabbi Hillel of Paritch would always eat chicken that had been freshly slaughtered, salted and prepared that night.

One Shabbat, he was a guest in the home of the chief rabbi, Rav Yosef Tumarkin, in Kremenzug. There were two shochems (ritual slaughterers) in town, one from Lithuania and one from Poland. Rabbi Hillel would only eat the chickens slaughtered by the Polish chasid.

Immediately after Shabbat, the Rebbetzin arranged for a chicken to be prepared. Unfortunately, the Polish shochem had already left for the slaughterhouse, which was located out of town.

The Rebbetzin was in a dilemma. She knew that Rabbi Hillel was known to eat only meat slaughtered by the Polish shochem. On the other hand, she did not want to return home empty-handed. "My husband," she rationalized, "is the local Rav. If he relies on the other shochem, on this one occasion, it will have to do for Rabbi Hillel as well." Quickly, she ordered the chicken from the Lithuanian shochem and soon the table was set for the Melave Malka meal.

When the chicken was served, Rabbi Hillel sniffed it slightly and set his portion aside, without touching it. The Rav realized that something must be amiss with the chicken and quickly turned to his wife. "Was there a halachic question about the chicken's kashrus?" he inquired.

"Not at all," she assured him. Taking her husband aside, she explained what had happened. "Evidently, Rabbi Hillel has his way of knowing that this chicken was not slaughtered by his usual shochem."

The Rav then turned to his guest, telling him what had happened and asking him to explain his reluctance to use meat slaughtered by the Lithuanian shochem. "If, in fact, he is not reliable, why, then, I should not be eating chickens slaughtered by him either."

"He is a skilled shochem," replied Rabbi Hillel. "However, I once overheard him speaking disrespectfully about a Torah scholar. Therefore, I do not eat from the meat he has slaughtered."

The Rav knew the offended scholar. "How can the shochem atone for his folly? The man whom he shamed has since passed away."

"He should gather ten people to accompany him to the cemetery and beg forgiveness at his grave. After this, there will be no further questions about his slaughtering and I too will rely on him."

From My Father's Shabbos Table by Rabbi Yehudah Chitrick



Looking out the window, Reb Zusya of Hanipoli once saw a wedding procession passing by his house. He immediately went out, and danced in the street with great joy before the bride and groom. When he came back inside his home, his family told him that they believed it was not dignified for him to dance out there in the street for just someone's wedding.

"Let me tell you a story," said Reb Zusya. "When I was young, I was a student of Reb Yechiel Michel, the Magid of Zlotchov. One time he scolded me very harshly. He later came over to clear up any hard feelings, and said: 'Reb Zusya, forgive me for my harsh words.'"

"'Rebbe,' I answered, 'I forgive you.'"

"Before I went to sleep he came again, and said: 'Reb Zusya, forgive me!'"

"'Rebbe, I forgive you,' I reassured him."

"That night, when I lay down to sleep, but was still awake, my rebbe's father, Reb Yitzchok of Drohovitch, came to me from the World Above, and said: 'I left only one son after me in the World Below, one precious son. Do you want to destroy him because he insulted you?'"

"'Reb Yitzchok!' I protested. 'I have already forgiven your son with all my heart and soul! What else must I do?'"

"'This is not yet a perfect forgiveness,' he said. 'If you come along with me, I will show you how to forgive.'"

"I followed him, until we came to the local mikva. There he told me to immerse myself in it three times, and to say each time that I forgave his son. Coming out of the mikva, I saw a light so bright radiating from Reb Yitzchak's face that I could not look at him. When I asked him where it came from, he told me that all his life he had been careful to observe the three things to which the Talmudic sage Rabbi Nechunya ben HaKanah attributed his long life: 'I never gained honor at the expense of the degradation of my fellow; I never went to sleep without forgiving everyone for the day's vexations; and I have been generous with my money.'"

Reb Yitzchok added that, through joy, these three things that he had attained could also be achieved. "Therefore," concluded Reb Zusya to his family, "when I saw the wedding procession passing by our house, I hurried out in order to participate in the joy of the mitzva."



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*)

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*)

And this is the case of the slayer...whoever unwittingly kills his neighbor...he shall flee to one of those cities, and live (Deut. 19:4,5)

The Torah designates six cities of refuge to which a person who has inadvertently killed someone can flee and atone for his deed. When Moshiach comes and the borders of Israel are expanded to include the territory of the Kiny, Kenizi and Kadmoni, three more cities of refuge will be established. But why will additional cities be necessary in the Messianic Era? If peace will reign supreme, and violence between men will disappear from the face of the earth, what purpose will these cities of refuge serve? Although no new acts of violence will occur, the cities of refuge will allow those Jews who accidentally killed someone throughout the centuries of exile to seek atonement and be worthy of the Messianic Era. (*The Rebbe, Rosh Chodesh Elul 5746*)

For these nations...hearken to soothsayers and to diviners. But as for you, the L-rd your G-d has not permitted you to do so (Deut. 18:14)

Heavenly bodies have no power over the Jew; whatever is foretold by stargazers will be nullified, for "Israel is not under the influence of the stars." (*Sforno*)

Dedicated in honor of
Jimmy and Lidia Resnick

Dear Friends of the Lubavitch Youth Organization
With sincere wishes for a Kesivah VaChasimah Tovah—
may you be blessed with a good and sweet New Year.



7:37 PM Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
Elul 1/ August 14
Torah Portion *Shoftim*
Ethics: Ch 6
Shabbat ends 8:37 PM