

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)

L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

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

Throughout the thousands of years of Jewish history, countless men, women and children have willingly given up their lives rather than deny their Jewishness. Not only scholars and learned Jews went to the auto-da-fe, with the "Shema" on their lips; simple and untutored Jews also chose to die sanctifying G-d's name without hesitation.

This irrational willingness to give up one's life for the sake of G-d seems odd in light of the dictum which states that "nothing can stand in the way of repentance." With the sword at their throats, who could have faulted our ancestors had they agreed to bow down to whatever idol worship was being forced upon them? Why didn't they save their lives by uttering some meaningless phrase or performing some other seemingly insignificant gesture demanded by their tormentors? Could they not have later fully repented and returned to G-d?

This question may be answered by understanding the special nature of the Jewish soul and the relationship it enjoys with G-d. That inner spark of Jewishness, described in Chasidut as "an actual part of G-d above," exists on a plane above time and space. It cannot bear to be severed from its Source for even a moment; the threat of separation from G-d is always utter and absolute. The willingness to give up one's life rather than lose that connection is a consequence of the soul's very nature.

This concept is well illustrated in this week's Torah portion, Bamidbar, in which G-d commands that a census be taken of the Jews. Rashi, the great Torah commentator, notes that because of the great love G-d has for His people, "He counts them at every moment."

This comment must be interpreted beyond its literal meaning, for since the exodus from Egypt, there have only been nine censuses of our people. The tenth census will be taken after the Final Redemption. What then, does it mean that G-d counts the Jews "at every moment"?

The act of counting reduces the objects being counted to their common denominator; both great and small are counted as one. The common denominator among all Jews, without regard for educational status, societal standing or wealth, is the Jewish soul, which exists in every Jew to the same extent and renders all Jews equal.

G-d unceasingly "counts" His children and holds each of them dear, all the time. This love is so overwhelming that the Jew cannot endure being cut off from it for even a moment, even with the knowledge that his later repentance has the power to restore the relationship to what it had been. It is G-d's perpetual "counting" of His children which reveals the innate power of the Jewish soul.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Keep Your Balance

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

What is the definition of a well-balanced individual? One who has a chip on both shoulders!

In Exodus we read the Ten Commandments. The great revelation at Sinai saw Moses come down the mountain bearing the tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments engraved on them. As we know, the two tablets were divided into two columns—the one side was devoted to our responsibilities to G-d, such as faith and Shabbat, while the other side dealt with our interpersonal duties, e.g., no murder, adultery and thievery.

The message that so many seem to forget is that both these areas are sacred, both come directly from G-d, and both form the core of Torah law and what being Jewish is all about. We may not take the liberty of emphasizing one tablet over the other. A healthy, all-around Jew lives a balanced, wholesome life.

A good Jew is a well-balanced Jew. If you are "religious" towards G-d but not fair with people, you can become a fanatical fundamentalist blowing up people in the name of G-d! The same G-d who motivates and inspires us to be G-dly and adhere to a religious code also expects us to be a mentsch.

But neither can we neglect the right side of the tablets. A good Jew cannot simply be a democrat, a humanitarian. Otherwise, why did G-d need Jews altogether? To be good, moral, ethical and decent is the duty of every human

being on the planet. A good Jew must be a good person—and also fulfill our specific Jewish responsibilities, the mitzvahs that are uniquely Jewish.

I recently came across an interesting statistic on the Ten Commandments. The right-hand tablet, bearing the duties to G-d, consists of 146 words. The left-hand tablet, listing our human responsibilities, has only 26 words. Yet tradition has it that both tablets were filled with writing. There were no big, blank spaces. So how did 26 words equal the space of 146 words?

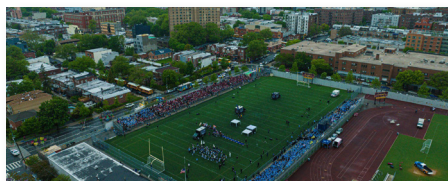
Well, anybody who uses a computer or word processor knows the answer. You simply adjust the font size. The 26 words on the left, reflecting our moral and ethical human responsibilities, were simply a bigger size than the 146 words on the right, reflecting our G-dly, religious responsibilities. So we must never underestimate the importance of the human-relations side of the Ten Commandments.

Then again, just so we don't start limping, the very same G-d who said we should be nice also said we should have faith, keep Shabbat (yes, it is one of the Big Ten), kosher, mikvah, and the rest of it.

As we read the Ten Commandments this week, let us resolve to keep our Jewish balance, not to limp or become "one-armed bandits." Please G-d, we will live full, wholesome, rich and well-balanced Jewish lives. Amen.

SLICE OF LIFE

Lag BaOmer Celebrations Around the World A Celebration of Light, Joy and Unity



Large Lag BaOmer gathering in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, NY

Lag BaOmer, the 33rd day of the Omer count—this year, May 16, 2025—was celebrated, as it always is, as a festive day on the Jewish calendar that honors Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, author of the Zohar. It was celebrated by communities around the world, with outings, bonfires, parades and other joyous events.

Beginning in the 1950s, the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe encouraged Jewish children to join together in grand Lag BaOmer parades as a show of Jewish unity and pride. Beginning with the large parade which is traditionally held in front of the Lubavitch world headquarters in Brooklyn, New York and spreading throughout the world, this year's global celebrations attracted tens of thousands of children from all walks of life.

In accordance with the Rebbe's general instruction that any gathering of Jews should be connected with Judaism and Torah, the children recited the 12 Pesukim; 12 Torah passages selected by the Rebbe as containing the most fundamental ideas in Judaism, before the parades began. The floats displayed Jewish themes, and the parades were followed by festivities for the entire family.

The following are some of the great celebrations which took place this year around the world.

UKRAINIAN CHILDREN PARADE IN HONOR OF LAG BAOMER

Amid hopeful signs of peace negotiations, cautious optimism swept through Ukraine's Jew-



Jewish children marching proudly in Ukraine

ish communities. Lag B'Omer was celebrated across the country with traditional bonfires and vibrant parades organized by city rabbis and Chabad emissaries. Preparations began right after Pesach, with JRNU (Chabad's Ukraine network) distributing truckloads of supplies to emissaries—branded water bottles, snacks, balloons, banners, and educational materials.

In Chernivtsi, two parades were held, one at the famed Ruzhiner synagogue. Another community visited Mezhibuzh, the resting place of the Baal Shem Tov. In Zhytomyr, families came together in a large regional parade led by students of the Ohr Avner school.

In Kharkiv, still under threat of shelling, celebrations took place at the historic Tomchei Temimim yeshiva site. A highlight occurred in Odessa, where hundreds of children, including 123 from local orphanages run by Chief Rabbi Avraham Wolff, marched in a moving parade. In Vinnytsia, children marched on donkeys specially brought for the occasion.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA UNITES FOR LARGEST-EVER LAG B'OMER PARADE



Communities coming together for a Lag BaOmer celebration in Northern California

Over 500 people joined together in a joyous display of Jewish pride, unity, and celebration at the Northern California Lag B'Omer Parade. The event, co-sponsored by Chabad Houses across Northern California, drew families and children from far and wide, including the Cheder in Pleasanton and the Sacramento Jewish Academy.

From the moment the parade began, the streets pulsed with energy. One unforgettable moment was when all the Shluchim and Rabbanim stood together and sang "Hinei Ma Tov U'manayim"—a stirring scene of brotherhood and unity that brought smiles and deep joy to many faces.

A very large crowd marched proudly, waving flags and singing with joy, transforming the city's landscape into a scene of Jewish pride.

JEWISH PRIDE IN THE STREETS OF BERLIN, GERMANY



The Lag BaOmer marching band in the streets of Berlin

The Lag BaOmer Parade in Berlin filled the iconic Kudamm with a beautiful wave of joy, unity, and pride.

Hundreds of people joined this magnificent parade, marching with happiness and strength, radiating the true spirit of the Jewish people—a powerful message of identity, resilience, and unwavering love.

"This is our answer to darkness—more light, more joy, more unity," organizers said. "This is the message of the Rebbe—joy and love. Together, we celebrated the power of community and the eternal values of tolerance and togetherness. This is the spirit of our people. This is the heartbeat of our future."

JOYOUS, SPIRITUAL, RECORD LAG BAOMER IN ISRAEL



Parents and children gathered in Jerusalem for Lag BaOmer parade and events organized by Chabad of Rechavia.

From the hills of Meron to the streets of cities and villages throughout Israel, more participants than ever before enjoyed Lag BaOmer festivities in Israel this year, thanks to a new nationwide program launched by the Chabad-Lubavitch Youth Organization in Israel.

One of the parades took place in Jerusalem, where over a thousand children and their parents marched in a colorful Lag Ba'omer parade which marched along King George Street in Jerusalem. The street, which has seen intense protests over the past six years, took a pause for this special and emotional procession, led successfully by Chabad emissary to the Rehavia neighborhood, Rabbi Yisrael Goldberg.

Shavuot Holiday - Save the Date!

Each year on the festival of Shavuot we relive the giving of the Torah to the Jewish people by G-d at Mount Sinai by hearing the Ten Commandments read in the synagogue from a Torah scroll. It is a special mitzva for every man, woman and child to be in the synagogue on Shavuot to hear the Torah reading. This year, the Torah reading that tells of the giving of the Torah will be read on Monday, June 2, in synagogues around the world.

Many Chabad-Lubavitch Centers sponsor "ice cream" parties for children and (in keeping with the ancient tradition of eating dairy products on Shavuot) for the young and the young at heart. To find out about the closest Shavuot Torah reading near you call your local Chabad-Lubavitch Center. For a complete directory of Chabad Centers visit: www.chabad.org

Additional Names for Shavuot

Shavuot is also the celebration of the wheat harvest and the ripening of the first fruits, "Yom Habiкурim" or the "Day of the First Fruits" and "Chag HaKatzir," the "Harvest Festival." In the Talmud, Shavuot is also called "Atzeret," which means "The Stoppage," a reference to the prohibition against work on this holiday. In the holiday prayer service, we refer to it as "Zeman Matan Torateinu," the "Time of the Giving of Our Torah."

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.

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Once during his travels, Rabbi Aaron of Karlin arrived at the town of Zarowitz close to the Shabbat. He saw a small cottage situated on the edge of the town and he knocked on the door hoping to find some hospitality there. A small woman opened the door and listened to his request to remain there for the Shabbat. "You are welcome to stay," she replied simply, and she ushered him into the house.

As soon as he set his foot inside the door, Rabbi Aaron felt himself enveloped by an overwhelming sense of holiness, and he knew that there must be something unique about the occupants of this house. Reb Aaron prepared himself for the Shabbat and was about to go out the door to the shul when he met Reb Yitzchak, the owner of the house, just returning from his workday. The man was dressed in simple peasant garb, and there was nothing to distinguish him from any other worker. He greeted his guest warmly, but his features disguised any emotion.

Rabbi Aaron was accustomed to celebrate the Shabbat with enthusiastic singing and prayers, and he followed his usual rituals. His host, however, rushed quickly through the prayers, hurriedly said kiddush and then sat down to eat his simple meal. But even in this plain food, Rabbi Aaron could detect an undeniable holiness, although he couldn't figure out what it stemmed from. He studied the man and woman, but there was nothing special about anything they said or did that would set them apart from any of ten thousand other poor Jews.

When the Shabbat ended Rabbi Aaron thanked his host and hostess and continued on his journey, the mystery unsolved.

The following week the wife of Reb Yitzchak turned up in the Study Hall of the nearby city of Premislan and spoke to the members of the local burial society requesting that they come with her. "Please come with me to Zarowitz now, for my husband is dying and he has asked that you be with him in his last moments."

The men immediately followed her to her home, but when they entered the house, her husband wasn't even there. "What is this, some kind of joke? Have you brought us all this way for nothing?"

"No, of course not, gentlemen," she replied. "My husband is on his way and will be here shortly." And sure enough, her husband walked through the door, holding a bunch of straw. This, he spread on the floor and then simply lay down upon it. Then he began speaking to the burial society officials: "My friends, it is now time for me to leave this world. I have lived as a nistor [a hidden saint] all my life, but the time has come for me to reveal myself. The moment that I die, go with all speed to Premislan and bring back as many scribes as you can gather. Have them bring pens and paper, for here they will copy over my secret writings. This must be done while I am still lying here on the ground, before I am buried. Watch me, and when you see a change in my face, all writing must cease at once."

Reb Yitzhak finished speaking, closed his eyes, and for a moment his face burned like a fire. Then, his lips which had been moving in silent prayer became still, and he was gone.


Scores of scribes were hurriedly brought to the cottage where the tzadik lay. Each one was given a leaf of paper to copy and they raced against time to complete their holy task. The officials' eyes were fixed on the face of the tzadik, looking for any change. Suddenly, the face lost all of its color and the box which contained his writings mysteriously closed by itself. The scratching of pens stopped abruptly, and preparations were quickly begun to ready Reb Yitzchak for burial.

When Rabbi Aaron heard of the death of the tzadik and the circumstances

which surrounded it, his heart was filled with bitter regret. What wondrous Torah secrets he might have learned from the deceased! He went to pay his respects to the widow and perhaps to glean some bit of knowledge about the tzadik's life from her.

"Well, there's nothing I can really tell you," she said. "I'm sorry, but my husband wouldn't permit it." Rabbi Aaron was bitterly disappointed. He wished her comfort, among all the mourners of Zion, and turned to leave. But just as he reached the door, the widow called out to him, "Wait, there's one small thing I can show you. Do you see those candlesticks there on the shelf? Well, from the day I married until the day my husband died, those candlesticks burned constantly all by themselves."

Rabbi Aaron left the cottage deep in reflection. The wondrous accomplishments of the hidden tzadik would remain one of G-d's many secrets, perhaps to be divulged only by Moshiach, himself.



THOUGHTS

THAT COUNT

On the weekly Torah Portion

Take the sum of all the congregation of the Children of Israel (Num. 1:2)

Jewish law teaches that once something has been counted it can never be nullified, even if it is only one out of a thousand. G-d likewise counted the Jewish people, so that although they are far outnumbered by the nations of the world, they can never be nullified. (*Chidushei Harim*)

From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel (Num. 1:3)

At the age of twenty a person become responsible for his sins and accountable to the celestial court. At that time the Jew's true struggle and ongoing war with the Evil Inclination just begins. (*The Admor of Gur*)

You shall number them according to their armies, you and Aaron (Num. 1:3)

When a census is taken it is generally unnecessary that the poll takers be of high rank or official status. Counting people does not require great skill or intelligence. Yet when G-d wanted His children to be numbered He insisted that Moses, Aaron and the heads of the tribes carry out the task themselves, to teach us how highly G-d esteems the Jews. (*Sichot Kodesh*)

The tribe of Zebulun (Num. 2:7)

Every other tribe is mentioned in this section of the Torah with the preface "and." Why is Zebulun different? Zebulun's job was to engage in commerce, in order to support the tribe of Issachar, whose members were primarily involved in the study of Torah. By omitting the word "and" before Zebulun the Torah teaches that this tribe was in no way subservient or of secondary importance to their brothers. One who supports Torah learning is significant in his own right. (*Baal Haturim*)



8:01 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
3 Sivan / May 30
 Torah Portion Bamidbar
 Ethics Ch 6
 Shabbat ends 9:09 PM

Dedicated in honor of our dear parents
Misha and Olga Rovner
 And our dear children
Jacob and Jordanna Rovner
 By Anna and Serge Rovner