



While the Holy Temple stood, G-d gave the Jews a way to purify themselves from even the grossest impurity, and that was through sprinkling upon them the ashes of a red heifer. But finding such a cow was no easy matter. First of all, it had to be completely red, with not even the slightest admixture of another color.

Secondly, it had to be a cow which had never borne a yoke on its neck, that is, a cow which had not yet been used for any work. Such a heifer was rare, and, therefore, every valuable, and the Sages would go to great lengths to procure one.

So, when the Sages heard that a red heifer was owned by a certain gentile, they travelled to see him and to examine the heifer. Upon close examination, they saw that the cow was completely kosher and they offered to buy it. "We would like to buy this cow from you and we will gladly meet your price. How much do you want?"

The gentile was very agreeable and answered, "If you pay what I'm asking, I will sell it to you." The man realized that this was his chance to make a good profit. He said, "I'm asking three, no, four gold coins."

Although the price was high, the Sages didn't haggle. They agreed at once, saying only that they had to return home for the rest of the money.

When they left, the gentile began to think: Why did the Jews want this particular cow? What was so special about it? And if something was so special about this cow, perhaps he should have asked a higher price. He thought and thought, until he remembered that the Jews needed a red calf for their Temple. He decided to renegotiate when they came back.

The rabbis returned shortly, expecting to make the purchase and return home, but the gentile refused to sell the animal! He demanded a much higher price--a thousand gold coins! The rabbis were shocked, but acquiesced and returned home to get the enormous sum of money required.

The gentile, however, wasn't satisfied. Now he decided to have one up on them. He would put a yoke on the cow's back--why, they would never know and he would get the money anyway! What he didn't know was that there were two signs distinguishing a cow that has never worked from a cow which has borne a yoke: there are two hairs on a cow's neck that stand up straight before a yoke is placed upon it and a cow's eyes look straight ahead. Afterward, its eyes tend to cross and look to the side.

The Sages returned, money in hand, ready to bring the precious heifer back to Jerusalem with them. They examined it for a final time, but they couldn't believe their eyes! The telltale hairs on the heifer's back were now flat and crooked. They checked the heifer's eyes, and they were crossed and gazed to the side. They understood that they'd been duped. The cow that had been priceless in value was now worthless.

Meanwhile, the gentile, never suspecting a problem, was impatiently waiting to receive his money. His mouth dropped open when he heard the words: "We have no use for your cow now, since by putting a yoke in it, you have made it invalid for use in our Holy Temple. We will have to look further for a red heifer." With those words, the rabbis turned and sadly made their way

back to Jerusalem without the coveted cow?

The gentile was shocked by what had occurred. He had thought to play a joke on the Jews, but he had never dreamed that he would be the one to suffer. His opinion of the Jewish Sages changed to one of respect and admiration. How had these holy men been able to discern any difference in the heifer? The man suffered from his great disappointment to such an extent that his health suffered and he was never the same again.

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

On the Ethics of our Fathers

**"All Israel have a share in the World to Come" (Intro to Ethics of the Fathers)**

In Hebrew, the verse literally says, "All Israel, they have a share in the World to Come." The plural is used to indicate that it is only because of their brotherhood and unity that the Jewish people is deserving of reward. According to Maimonides, a person who is otherwise totally scrupulous in religious observance but separates himself from the Jewish community is not worthy of a portion of the World to Come. (\*Blossoms\*, Rabbi Yisroel Rubin)

**"Moses received the Torah from Sinai" (Ethics, 1:1).**

Why doesn't the verse say, "Moses received the Torah from G-d"?


Just as the Jews received the Torah at Sinai with awe and reverence, so too must all Torah study be approached with the same respect. Furthermore, the Torah in its entirety was revealed at Sinai, including those commandments which G-d had previously given the Jewish people. All mitzvot are done solely by virtue of their being given at Sinai. (\*Biurim L'Pirkei Avot\*)

**"And passed it on to Joshua" (Ethics, 1:1).**

Just as Moses passed on to Joshua the complete body of Torah knowledge, so too must we impart the entire Torah to future generations. Because all Jews inherit the Torah from Moses, as it states, "The Torah that Moses commanded us is the heritage of the congregation of Jacob," we must likewise emulate his actions as well. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe, shlita)

**"Whoever engages in excessive talk brings on sin" (Ethics, 1:17).**

Rabbi Abraham Yaakov Sadigorer used to say: "The train was invented to teach us that every minute in life is important; a person may miss the train if he arrives even one minute late. The telegraph was invented to teach us that our every word is precious, numbered and accounted for. And from the telephone we learn that everything that is said is also heard..." (\*Fun Unser Alten Otzar\*)



**8:05 Candle Lighting Time**  
NY Metro Area  
**22 Tammuz / July 18**  
Torah Portion Pinchas  
Ethics Ch 1  
Shabbat ends 9:11 PM

# L'Chaim

בס"ד  
**1882**  
22 Tammuz, 5785  
July 18, 2025

**The Weekly Publication for Every Jewish Person**  
נוסד תור 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)

## Lions Wearing Tefillin

By Rabbi Eli Friedman

The name Operation Rising Lion in Hebrew is Mivtza Am K'lavi - "Operation Nation Like a Lioness." The phrase is from the Torah, Bamidbar 23:24.

The evil prophet Bilaam has been retained to lay a curse upon the Jewish People, but G-d has compelled him to bless them instead. And so he sings the praises of Israel, blessing them and explaining to the king why battling the Israelites is futile. And this is one of those lines:

"Behold, (Israel is) a people that rises like a lioness, leaps up like a lion." You can see the full verse written out in Hebrew in the Prime Minister's Kotel prayer note for the Operation's success.

Rashi illuminates the verse, explaining the message Bilaam is conveying to Balak.

"When they (Israel) rise from their sleep in the morning, they show themselves strong as a lioness and as a lion to 'snatch at' the Divine precepts, to perform them immediately — to clothe themselves with the Tallit, to read the Shema, and to lay Tefillin."

Balak wanted a military advantage over Israel. He hired Bilaam to curse and demoralize Israel. He wanted a military victory, and Bilaam advised him to give up because the Jewish People wake up and put on their Tallit and Tefillin and recite the Shema.

One needs no further elaboration to understand that we here in America must not sit with folded hands while Israel engages her enemies militarily. While the IDF

does what it does, we can do our part. When Israel rises with Tallit and Tefillin and Shema, the war is already won; there's no need for our enemies to engage. It's in the name of the operation! When they start up with rising lions, they've already lost.

So drape that Tallit over your shoulders and strap on your Tefillin. It's war, and spiritually speaking, every Jew is on the front lines. If you don't already have the recitation of the Shema as a twice-daily habit, now is a perfect, crucial time to start.

Join the operation! It's time for the lions to rise like never before.

When the Jewish People wandered the desert, they were led by the holy ark containing the Ten Commandments. In fact, the holy ark traveled three days ahead of them, blazing and clearing the path forward. And thus, whenever they hit the road, Moses would pray for G-d's presence to keep pace with them, not to leave them behind, but to keep the distance of three days and not more.

Take this to heart: G-d is (at least) three days ahead of us. The path Israel has taken, is taking, and will always take - G-d stays way ahead of us.

Trust the process. Strengthen your faith, strong as a lion, snatch every Mitzvah that comes your way, and do your lioness best to support the effort. May G-d bless Israel, bless our fighters, bless His lions, discourage our enemies, and bless this beautiful world with peace.



# SLICE OF LIFE

Sacred Brushstrokes: The Spiritual Journey of a Jewish Artist



Yossi Biton is a world renowned Israeli artist known for his contemporary Jewish art

In his quiet studio in Israel, Yossi Biton pauses to study his latest creation—a luminous depiction of Jerusalem's ancient walls that has consumed six months of his life. As his brush glides across the canvas, each stroke feels less like artistic technique and more like prayer, an offering of the soul captured in pigment and passion.

"I'm deeply connected to the figure of Bezalel, who built the Tabernacle," says the 68-year-old artist, whose works now grace homes throughout Israel and across the world. Born in the mystical city of Safed, Biton's path to becoming a celebrated Jewish artist followed an unexpected route that wove together art, spirituality, and a profound journey of return.

The ancient city of Safed was far more than just his birthplace. "It's not just my hometown and a spiritual center, but the source of my artistic inspiration," Biton reflects thoughtfully. "I absorbed the connection to art from the great artists who lived there. I would go with a friend to the Artists' Quarter in the city, which was nothing more than a large alley. From a

young age, I was drawn to painting. I would observe the painters at work and learned a great deal from them."

Despite this early fascination with art, Biton's journey toward religious observance came later in life. "I grew up in a warm, traditional family. My parents, precious and innocent people, sent us to the nearest school, a public school. There, we didn't receive knowledge about Judaism." At home, his family maintained a limited set of traditions: "We experienced Judaism in the form of Kiddush on Friday night and holiday meals, but not much beyond that."

His artistic curiosity led him to Europe, where he met accomplished artists and expanded his technical skills. Upon returning to Israel, however, he experienced a profound realization: "I understood that I actually knew nothing about my own religion." After attending a seminar with the outreach organization "Arachim," Biton discovered a world that had been hidden from him. "I decided to make a significant change in my life. Several family members had become close to Chabad, which pushed me further toward the world of teshuva (return to religious observance)."

This spiritual awakening guided him to Yeshivat Or Sameach, where he devoted himself entirely to Torah study for many years, temporarily setting aside his artistic talents. The turning point came unexpectedly: "I had a friend in the yeshiva to whom I owed a debt of gratitude. When he got married, I thought about a special gift and painted the 'Baba Sali' for him." This painting reignited his artistic career, though he continued his religious studies in parallel.

After years of learning, Biton began teaching at a Talmud Torah (religious elementary school), where his artistic abilities found new expression. "I invested heavily in the parent communication sheets. The parents were impressed. I decorated the building's walls." Two years after finishing his work there, the principal enthusiastically told him they were still using his illustrations.

It wasn't until his late forties, about twenty

years ago, that Biton made the decisive step to make painting his primary occupation. "At first it was for my livelihood, and over time it became part of my heart. I invest my soul in the creations. It's difficult for me to part with each one of them."

When Biton paints sacred subjects like the Tabernacle and its vessels, he enters a state of complete immersion. "I breathe and truly live the creation. I get excited each time anew at the thought that I'm painting the future redemption that we so desire. That's how I felt when I painted the pilgrimage to Jerusalem."

One of his most profound artistic experiences came when painting the Lubavitcher Rebbe. "When I sat in front of the canvas and began painting the Rebbe, I felt awe. It was a deep experience of connection to a great soul. With each brush stroke, I thought about the values the Rebbe represents: unconditional love for fellow Jews, infinite dedication, and the ability to see the great potential hidden in each person. I invested many weeks in this creation."

In our age of artificial intelligence, Biton remains confident about the future of authentic Jewish art. "The whole world is excited about artificial intelligence, but I'm convinced it has no chance of replacing authentic Jewish painting. The reason is simple: it lacks the Jewish soul that we, the painters, infuse into our paintings. It can copy, duplicate, but not create an authentic and pure Jewish creation."

As he continues to create vibrant visions of Jerusalem, the Tabernacle, and scenes of redemption, Biton offers encouragement to those who might possess artistic talent: "Do you have a talent for painting? Don't belittle it. You've received a gift from the Creator—invest in it and use this wonderful gift for good things."

His paintings, infused with spirituality and tradition, serve as windows to a world both ancient and timeless—one where art and faith create a tapestry as rich and vibrant as the history of the Jewish people themselves.

Adapted from Sichat HaShavua

## The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

By the Grace of G-d  
10th of Shevat, 5747  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To All Participants in the Annual  
Banquet of Chabad of The Valley  
Encino, Ca.

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to be informed that this year's annual event will take place on the 25th of the current month of Shevat.

The time element is noteworthy, since this month is associated with the Yahrzeit anniversary of my father-in-law the Rebbe of saintly memory (on the 10th of Shevat, the date of this letter).

Chabad of the Valley, like all Chabad-Lubavitch institutions in this country, is part of the great heritage of the Baal HaHilulo since he transplanted the Chabad Headquarters on the American continent nearly half a century ago.

If one were to pinpoint two of the most characteristic features of the Baal HaHilulo, these would be his Ahavas Yisroel — his boundless love for all Jews, and his Mesiras Nefesh — self-sacrificing dedication to the preservation of our Jewish people in these most turbulent and critical times.

Day-in, day-out, his utmost efforts and energies were focused on helping Jews, wherever they lived, near and far — near and far not only geographically but also spiritually: Those who were "near" — to bring them nearer still to HaShem and His Torah and Mitzvos; and those who were "far" Jewishly—to bring them ever closer to their Jewish roots, Jewish identity, and Torah-true Jewish experience.

For those who have the Zechus to have a worthy share in his ongoing institutions and programs, the Yahrzeit is a time of self reappraisal in terms of above mentioned two characteristics, which are

indeed innate in every Jewish soul, but which have to be actualized and nurtured through consistent application in actual practice.

Suffice it to reflect on the happy circumstance that Jews in this blessed country can carry on his work without having to face anything remotely resembling the difficulties and perils which he had to face from time to time and from place to place.

With prayerful wishes to each and all of you in all above, and

With esteem and blessing,



By the Grace of G-d  
8th of Adar I, 5719  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

...Finally, to refer to your statement that your attitude to Yiddishkeit is based on your faith in a certain person, let me say that in truth this is by no means the whole story.

To illustrate: If a spark sets off a powder-keg, the resulting explosion in all its force cannot be attributed to the spark "exclusively" for the spark was no more than the immediate cause setting off the reaction.

The energy released was already contained in the powder-keg. Similarly, every Jew already contains a Divine soul and all the potential energy, except that it is sometimes inactive, or that it is only active in a very limited way.

When it comes in contact with a person, or with an event or experience which sets in motion a chain reaction releasing the potential energy already contained in the Divine soul, the reaction is indeed deep-rooted and by no means dependent on the external cause.

I send you my prayerful wishes for growing faith in G-d, Whose Divine Providence extends to everyone individually, and that you strengthen your bonds with the Source of all life and all good, that is G-d, through the daily observance of the Torah and Mitzvoth, which will give you peace of mind, true happiness and success in all your undertakings.

With blessing,

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

We must anticipate that G-d will hasten the redemption by some strategy

or other, whether by virtue of the tremendous anguish we have suffered, or by some other means. Perhaps this is the hidden meaning of "...in its time, I will hasten it" - that is, G-d will hasten the period of "in its time" itself.

(From "Shem Olam" by the Chofetz Chaim.)

## 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

This past Sunday, on the 17th of Tammuz, we commemorated the beginning of the destruction of the holy city of Jerusalem. For, it was on the 17th of Tammuz that the fortified walls surrounding Jerusalem were breached and began to crack and crumble.

The famous Song of Songs by King Solomon is a song of devotion and commitment between the Jewish people and G-d. One of the verses in it reads, "Here he is standing behind our wall, looking out the window, peering through the lattice." This verse describes how close G-d is to the Jewish people.

On this verse, the Rebbe explained: "In our generation we see and feel that Moshiach is 'standing behind our wall.' Even more so, the wall is not solid, for it already has windows and lattices. Moshiach is looking out the window and peering through the lattice. He is looking out and waiting; when will we finish the last few things that we have to do here in exile?"

"If we do not see Moshiach, it is because it is our wall concealing and hiding Moshiach from us."

The cracking and crumbling of a wall, like the wall surrounding Jerusalem, however, need not be totally negative, especially when the wall is specifically the one concealing Moshiach. A few years ago, the Rebbe discussed the above verse once again and added: "The Righteous Moshiach is on the other side of the wall, a wall which is already cracked and crumbling. And through the windows and lattices thus created, he is looking and peering out at us. It is understood that a glance from Moshiach gives one the personal strength necessary to complete the preparations required of him to be ready to welcome Moshiach."

May the wall, lattice, curtain, or whatever it may be surrounding Moshiach, continue to crack and crumble until we very soon merit the complete revelation of Moshiach to the entire world.

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.

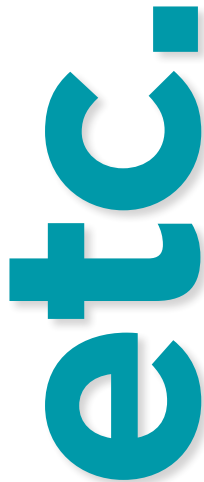


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### Where the Savannah Meets the City ... Chabad Flourishes



In the heart of Kenya, where the savannah meets the city and wildlife roams just beyond the backyard, Jewish life is flourishing.

Rabbi Levi and Chaya Mushka Notik recently arrived in Nairobi to serve a diverse and dynamic Jewish population: approximately 500 families in Nairobi, additional communities across the country and thousands of Jewish tourists who visit Kenya each year.

Since their arrival, the Notiks have established a welcoming Chabad House that offers Shabbat meals, Torah classes, children's programming and holiday celebrations. They've distributed hundreds of mezuzahs, many individuals have acquired tefillin, and a strong Jewish community presence continues to expand throughout the region.

### ETHICS CHAPTER ONE

He would also say: If I am not for myself, who is for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?

Shammai would say: Make your Torah study a permanent fixture of your life. Say little and do much. And receive every man with a pleasant countenance.