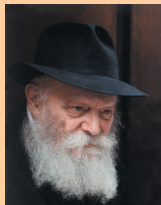


# L'Chaim



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe  
on the Torah portion

In this week's Torah portion, *Shoftim*, we are given the commandment to appoint a king: "You should surely appoint over yourself a king (*melech*)."<sup>1</sup> While in our verse the word "melech" is used for "king," the Torah does sometimes use the word "nassi" for king. (At other times "nassi" means "head of a tribe.")

What are the differences between a melech and a nassi? The differences are similar to those of the brain and the heart.

A king's job is to take care of the needs of the nation, just as the heart serves all of the organs in the entire body.

The nassi is the head of the Jewish people, the brain. The nassi's job is to be an impartial arbiter of Torah law, he directs the entire nation in G-d's ways, just as the brain directs the entire body. The brain, however, also has a function of its own—to think and impartially scrutinize ideas. Yet, it is "nourished" by the heart, just like all other organs.

However, two kings of Israel had both titles, nassi and melech. The first was Moses, our first redeemer. He was a king, as it says, "And there was a king in *Yeshurun* (Israel)," which refers to Moses. He took care of the Jewish nation in the desert, just as a king was meant to. He was also the nassi, head of the Sanhedrin, the primary teacher of Torah to the Jewish people.

The second will be Moshiach, who will be our king and nassi, he will teach us new insights in Torah that will take us to spiritual heights, beyond anything we could imagine.

In Jewish mystical teachings, the cognitive abilities are connected to the brain and the emotions are connected to the heart.

The brain is above the body, it is not intermingled with the organs of the body. This is because, to be impartial when thinking, you need to be separate or above feelings, if you want to come to a true conclusion. Because your feelings will skew your thinking. The same is true about a nassi, he is above the nation, he needs to be able to determine the true Torah law, and he can't let his feelings get in the way.

On the other hand, the heart is inside the body, among other organs, because emotions are connected to your feelings. The same is true about a king, he needs to be among the nation, he needs to be able to feel for them, so he can properly serve them.

Each of us is king and nassi over ourselves. It is very important to know when to be a nassi and when to be a king. When you are studying Torah or you have a question in Jewish law, you need to be the nassi, to follow what is true and right. But when it comes to your welfare and the welfare of your family and friends, you need to be the king. You need to feel for them, and provide for them accordingly. Of course within the parameters of Torah.

May our efforts to lead lives guided by Torah hasten the coming of Moshiach, who will be our king and our nassi!

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, [yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com](http://yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com). Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

## Say What You Mean

"How's the supper, kids?"

"Great, Ma!"

"It would be nice if you told me once in a while!"

"Ma, you know you're a great cook and we love your food. We don't need to tell you!"

"Of course you need to tell me. It's not enough for me to 'know.' I want to be told and to be thanked, as well."

\*\*\*

"You're so caught up in your latest project, you're never around and when I ask you anything you only grunt back. It makes me feel like I'm an insignificant part of your life!"

"What do you mean? You know you're precious to me and the most important thing in my life!"

"Well, you need to tell me that once in a while!"

\*\*\*

You wake up in the morning and there's a refreshing breeze blowing through your window. You hear birds chirping and you feel energized. "Today's going to be a great day. Thank G-d, I'm alive," you think to yourself.

Or maybe you've just woken up and your neck is stiff from the awkward position you fell asleep in over the technical manuals you read each night to stay on the cutting edge of your profession. You're exhausted and not looking forward to putting in another 18 hour day. "But hey," you tell yourself, "at least I'm alive, not like that guy in the office next to

mine who..." Your thoughts trail off and you feel thankful to be starting another day, albeit a draining one.

\*\*\*

Each morning when we awaken, Jewish teachings tell us, we should direct our first thoughts to being thankful to G-d that we are alive.

But reflecting on our good-fortune that we are alive is not enough. We have to verbalize our thanks to G-d by reciting the *Modeh Ani* prayer at the earliest moment that we recognize we are awake. "I thank you, living and eternal King, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great."



"But G-d knows I'm thankful. G-d knows I'm appreciative."

Yes, but...

The Baal Shem Tov taught that every single moment G-d is recreating the world. G-d reinvests the divine spark that invigorates everything within each part of creation. We are not required to constantly thank G-d for all of His goodness.

But we are expected to start each day in the right frame of mind; the rest will come on its own.

Hey, it's nice to hear it once in a while, isn't it?

# SLICE OF LIFE

## Finding My Place

by Channa Megyeri Peckermann



Shalom and Channa Peckermann at their recent wedding

Adapted from a speech at the international Lubavitch Women's Organization convention

I'm from Budapest, Hungary and I was a student this past year at Machon L'Yahadus, a women's yeshiva in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

Both of my parents became Torah observant as teens. My parents had actually both drifted away from religious observance but then became religious again through Chabad, thanks to the Oberlander and the Kovesh family. Today my mother runs the Chabad Nursery, Kindergarten and High School in Budapest. My father is a rabbi and teaches *Tanya* (the basic book of Chabad Chasidic philosophy) every night online. He is a translator from Hebrew and English to Hungarian and a chief editor of a Jewish news site called Neokhon. My parents are my role models and my biggest supporters. I have two amazing brothers, they both go to my mom's schools.

Rabbi Baruch and Batsheva Oberlander were the first emissaries of the Rebbe in Hungary. The Kovesh's have had and still has a big influence on my family, they were with my family from

the beginning of their journey in Chabad and they are like family to us. Mushky Kovesh is my age, and she is like my sister.

My parents let us decide if we wanted to follow in their path. Being in a religious home we did everything, but it took a few years until I decided to own my Judaism.

But how did I end up in Machon L'Yahadus?

When I was a kid my biggest dream was to be a doctor. When I was in High School I took extra classes in biology, Chemistry and Physics. I was preparing for the final exams from 10th grade. In Hungary if you are in medical school, you cannot miss more than three days, so even before starting university I was worried about how I was going to be in medical school and observe the Jewish holidays. Little did I know that G-d had a totally different plan for me.

I took my exams and I got good grades, but I missed the cut-off mark by three points. I am not going to lie—I actually felt relieved, but at that time of my life I didn't know why I was relieved. Only later did I come to understand where my relief came from, I got to know it later.

Because all of my focus had been to get into medical school I wasn't even thinking about going to seminary. Even though all of my friends were telling me to go it was a new idea to me...

Every summer our family goes for a week to the Hungarian countryside. Mád is a resort area that a lot of Jewish people come to. Chabad organizes a Shabbaton there for people to learn about Judaism. Both of my parents give classes there.

During that week we always visit the resting place of Reb Shayele of Keresztir. Last summer when we were there a thought passed through my mind that it would be such a good idea to go to Seminary in the States. My parents were very excited and supportive.

Thanks to Gitty Rosenberg, Rabbi Oberlander's daughter, we found Machon L'Yahadus. The whole process was very smooth and took less than a month. I could see that G-d was helping me with every step I took.

So I came to the United States in September, 2022. Soon after I arrived my brother called to tell me that the required number of points had been lowered on exam to get into the Medical University and I was in.

My decision to study at Machon L'Yahadus didn't waiver. At that time I knew that medical school wasn't the right thing for me and for my future.

When I first stepped into the Machon L'Yahadus school building I met Rabbi Shloma Majeski, the principal. The personalized study schedule he gave me enabled me to maximize my learning. The amount of effort that the teachers and staff put into the school and every student is amazing. Whenever I had a question, Rabbi Majeski, Mrs. Yehudis Cohen and any other teachers I reached out to were available and ready to help, even when I called them at night or on the weekends.

Machon L'Yahadus is not just a school, it's a big family. I feel blessed that I came to Machon L'Yahadus. I met amazing girls all around the world. I know that many of these girls are going to be my friends for life.

Even though I didn't live in the dormitory, I heard from my friends who lived there how special the dorm mother Mrs. Shterna Rodal and the dorm counselors are. I also met a lot of welcoming and amazing Crown Heights families when I was invited for Shabbos meals. And of course, I became even more connected to the Rebbe.

Before Passover I was introduced to my husband Shalom Peckermann. Meeting Shalom was one of the many blessings I experienced this year once I decided to spend a year studying in seminary. We were married this summer in Hungary and finished our *Sheva Brachot* (seven days of celebratory meals) in New York.

If you know any young women who you think would benefit from studying at Machon L'Yahadus, I encourage you to get in touch with the school!

Learn more about Machon L'Yahadus at [womensyeshiva.org](http://womensyeshiva.org), email [info@womensyeshiva.org](mailto:info@womensyeshiva.org), or call 718-552-2422.



## New Emissaries

Rabbi Mordi and Reizel Wolf have arrived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to establish an independent Chabad House at **Swarthmore College**, a private liberal arts school in the suburbs of Philadelphia. Until now, **Tri-Co Chabad**, led by Rabbi Eli and Blumie Gurevitz, was servicing Swarthmore College as well as Bryn Mawr and Haverford. Swarthmore is a private liberal arts school with an estimated 15% Jewish student body and staff.

## Book of Jewish Knowledge

*The Book of Jewish Knowledge* is a multifaceted exploration of the teachings, observances, and history of Judaism. This groundbreaking 496-page volume surveys the full scope of Jewish teaching and Jewish life, while also doing justice to the depth and beauty of Judaism, offering answers to 1200 questions along the way. Published by the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute-JLI.



## Hakhel – Unite!

Words that do not come from the heart may be taken badly. Words that come from the heart, but only from an external level - or from an internal but not innermost level - are well accepted, and they indeed achieve their goal. Explaining the concept of Hakhel, however, must come from the innermost depths of the heart! Such words will certainly achieve their intended results. We must explain and clarify to the extent necessary, regarding the essence of Hakhel, how it was observed in the Holy Temple, how to become inspired to greater awe of G-d all the days of one's life!"  
*(The Rebbe, 13 Tishrei 1981)*



# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Rosh Chodesh Elul, 5736 [1976]

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 17th of Menachem Av etc. I will remember you in prayer for the fulfillment of your heart's desires for good in the matters about which you write.

As I have mentioned it before to you, strengthening *Bitochon* [trust] in G-d, in addition to this being a basic tenet of our Torah, also increases and speeds G-d's blessing in all needs. At the same time, the *Bitochon* minimizes, and indeed dispels, all anxieties and worries.

With regard to matters relating to the community, *Chinuch* [Jewish education], etc., you should discuss them with *Askonim Yirei Shomayim* [G-d fearing lay-leaders], who are familiar with the local situation—as I have also advised you this in the past.

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

With blessing,

In the Days of Elul, 5737 [1977]

Blessing and Greeting:

I duly received your correspondence, and may G-d grant the fulfillment of your heart's desires for good.

Especially as we are now in the month of Elul, the auspiciousness and significance of which is explained by the Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman], Founder of Chabad, in the well-known parable of "the King in the Field."

Briefly, when a king, before entering his city and palace, is in the field, then the

people of the city come out to greet the king, and then everyone who so desires can approach the king, and the king is especially gracious to all and shows them a smiling face.

Similarly the month of Elul is particularly auspicious to approach the King of Kings, the Holy One blessed be He; all that is necessary is to desire it.

Wishing you and yours a *Kesivo vechasimo toivo*, for a good and sweet year,

22nd of Elul, 5737 [1977]

Blessing and Greeting:

Your letter of July 29th reached me with considerable delay.

I trust you know that one of the basic teachings of our Torah, called *Toras Chaim*, because it is the Jew's true guide in life, is to be strong in one's faith in G-d, whose benevolent Providence extends to each and everyone individually. This in itself is a channel to receive G-d's blessings, and reduces to a minimum all anxieties and worries.

At the same time, the Torah teaches also that one must do everything necessary in the natural order of things. Thus, in the matter of health, it is necessary to consult with, and follow, the advice of the doctor who is treating the person.

It is surely unnecessary to emphasize to you at length the need to strengthen adherence to the Will of G-d in the daily life and conduct in accordance with the teachings of the Torah. In addition to this being a must for its own sake, this is also the way to receive additional Divine blessings in all needs, including the matter of health and making other important decisions.

If you think that you need further enlightenment, in addition to the above guideline, you surely can speak with some of Chabad-Lubavitch people in your city.

With prayerful wishes to you and all yours for a *Kesivo vaChasimo Tovo*, for a good and sweet year, and

With blessing,

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

*Sometimes—simply because Elul and the High Holidays occur with yearly dependability—we don't pay enough attention to a very radical concept in Judaism.*

*During the month of Elul a Jew is supposed to stop what he's doing, honestly and objectively assess his spiritual condition, and take whatever steps are necessary to improve it. But how much can an older, set-in-his-ways person really change? Realistically speaking, each of us has his own strengths and weaknesses, things we are willing to do and things that are just not for us. Aside from minor adjustments, aren't we destined to remain basically the same till 120?*

*To this, Judaism responds with a resounding "NO!" You too can change and do teshuva, the Torah tells us, regardless of your experience or maturity. Whatever happened before is past history. No door is closed, no bad habits so ingrained that they cannot be overcome. A Jew always has the potential to draw nearer to G-d, and during the month of Elul, is granted special powers from Above to assist him.*

*This principle, that a Jew is a perpetual "work in progress" and that it's never too late to improve, is the result of the unique nature of the Jewish soul. The Jewish soul is eternal, unlimited by any boundaries. Nothing can stand in the way of a Jew's sincere desire to be close to G-d—neither logic, emotion, environment or inclination. The moment he resolves to change course ever slightly (in the right direction) he becomes invincible.*

*Each day of his life, a Jew has the capacity to revolutionize his existence and imbue it with ever-increasing holiness. It's just easier during Elul, when our hearts are naturally aroused to doing teshuva and spurred on by G-d's greater proximity among us.*

Shmuel Butman

### L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה'י מושקא

The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.



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## MOSHIACH MATTERS

The 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, three more cities of refuge will be

established. But why will additional cities be necessary in the Messianic Era? If peace will reign and violence 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*)



# IT HAPPENED ONCE

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

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

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

The butcher was very curious and asked what it was, but he always received the same reply: "I will tell you only if you agree to buy it."

"How much do you want for it?" he inquired. "Ten thousand gold coins!" was the astonishing answer. "You expect me to make the purchase without knowing what I'm buying?" "That's the stipulation. I assure you, you won't be disappointed."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On the eve of the great affair, the butcher circulated among the guests, offering a drink here, a dainty there, when he saw a young man sitting in a corner weeping.

"What is wrong? Everyone is rejoicing, why are you so sad?" The poor boy replied, "The girl who is about to marry your son was betrothed to me before we were abducted by the pirates."

"Why did no one tell me?" the butcher asked. "We are all so grateful to you, that no

one dared disturb your happiness," the boy responded.

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

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

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

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

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

---

**Justice, justice shall you pursue (Deut. 16:20)**  
 Not only must righteousness be actively pursued, but the path to achieving it must also be virtuous and honorable. This is in contradiction to the commonly held notion that "the end justifies the means." (*Reb Bunim*)

**You shall be perfect with the L-rd your G-d (Deut. 18:13)**  
 It is customary to make the verbal declaration before praying: "I hereby accept upon myself the positive commandment of 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Prayer is considered to be an offering before G-d - an offering of the soul. In the days of the Holy Temple, an animal offered for sacrifice had to be perfect and without defect; in the same way, when a Jew prays, he must also be whole of limb and without blemish. As all Jews are metaphorically part of the same body, if a person rejects his fellow Jew for whatever reason, it is his own self that becomes crippled. (*Ohr HaTorah of the Tzemach Tzedek*)

**For man is like a tree of the field (Deut. 20:19)**  
 Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of Chabad Chasidism, once remarked to a Torah scholar during his first private audience: "The Torah states, 'For man is like a tree of the field.' A tree that does not bear fruit is a barren tree. A person can be fluent in the entire Talmud and still be 'barren,' G-d forbid. A Jew must produce 'fruit.' For what benefit is there in your learning and Divine service if you do not bear 'fruit' - if you do not cause your light to shine upon another Jew?"



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