

# SHABBOS LIGHTS



FROM THE TALKS AND  
WRITINGS OF THE  
LUBAVITCHER REBBE

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ב"ה. ערב שבת קודש פרשת מטות-מסעי, ר"ח מנחם-אב תשפ"א  
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## Lightpoints WEISS EDITION

Insight and commentary on the Torah  
from the Rebbe's teachings

אִישׁ כִּי יִדַּר נֶדֶר לֹא יַחַל דְּבָרָו (במדבר ל, ג)  
**If a man makes a vow, he shall not  
violate his word.** (Bamidbar 30:3)

## No Ordinary Matter

The Torah expresses the prohibition of violating one's vows with the words לא יחל דברו. Rashi explains that the Hebrew word יחל is akin to the word יתלל, and should be understood to mean "he shall not desecrate his word." This means, Rashi continues, "One shall not treat his words mundanely." Meaning that the law of vows is more than simply an obligation to stand by one's verbal commitments: it is a recognition of the inherent sanctity in one's words, and hence a duty to honor them.

The Hebrew word דבריו, "his words," used by Rashi in the phrase "one shall not treat his words mundanely," can also be translated as "his matters." The phrase would thus mean "one shall not treat his matters mundanely." This too mirrors the above ideal, for the sanctity the Torah attributes to our vows illustrates the potential we have to infuse all our "matters" with holiness and G-dly purpose. The weight that the Torah ascribes to our ordinary words reminds us of the capacity for holiness innate in every aspect of our lives, and our personal duty to reveal it.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 13, p. 108

## LifePoints

Insight and advice from the  
Rebbe's correspondence

## The Artist's Mission

*A letter from the Lubavitcher Rebbe on the spiritual power of art.*

After considerable delay, I received your letter in which you ask about the passage, "You shall not make a graven image or any likeness," etc. You also asked whether there is a qualitative difference between painting and music.

Questions of practical halachah that arise from this passage, along with all the details that interest you, would best be presented to a rabbi in your area.

I will only add one important point, and that is that artists have vast opportunities to fully utilize their skills without violating the laws of the Torah, which is a Torah of life, meaning that the Torah is a guide for life, in the most literal sense, how to live a worthwhile life in every respect.

In fact, since art has the capacity to increase our passion and deepen our grasp of the world in general, it can especially help us understand the inner meaning of the words of the Sweet Singer of Israel, "how great are Your works, O G-d." and "how numerous are Your works, O G-d." Thus, through art, one can gain admiration, respect, and awe of the Creator.

My father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe, spoke several times of the deep impressions his holy father [Rebbe Rashab] formed when he observed fine art. To the extent that though he treasured every moment, as is well known, nevertheless, when he visited Paris, he dedicated several hours to visiting the Louvre, especially its art galleries. He later shared with his son, my revered father-in-law, Chassidic concepts that sprung up in his mind while observing the art.

It is my hope that the fact that you quote the above-mentioned passage, which is in the beginning of the Ten Commandments—the foundation of the entire Torah, which include the contemporary halachic rulings of the Oral Torah—demonstrates that you organize your life in a manner that aligns with these rulings, and that you do so authentically and sincerely. This final point, especially so, since it is the task of an artist to absorb and transmit the true inner depth of the scene they are painting to the extent that even amateur observers are able to sense the soul of the image.

May it be G-d's will that you exert positive influence in this matter upon others in your environment, influencing them in an appropriate manner and through appropriate means. And most importantly, through being a living example.

—Igras Kodosh 26, pp. 111-112

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