

# LAMPLIGHTER

20 Elul  
Ki Tavo

1051

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Ki Tavo, opens with the commandment of bikurim - first fruits. "You shall put it in a basket...and the priest will take the basket out of your hand."

Closer study of the Torah's laws of bikurim reveals that the presentation of the basket (usually made out of wicker) to the kohen (priest) was an integral part of the mitzva (commandment) itself.

Interestingly, while the fruits that were brought were only the choicest (and only selected from the seven varieties with which the land of Israel is praised), the basket that was used for them was made of a common material.

This seeming contradiction in the mitzva of bikurim contains an allusion to the descent of the soul from the higher spheres and its incarnation in a physical body down below.

The fruits of the bikurim are symbolic of the soul; the basket is the corporeal body. Handing the basket to the priest represents the purpose for which the soul made this drastic descent.

In general, the first fruits are symbolic of the Jewish people; more specifically, of the G-dly soul as it exists Above, completely transcendent of the physical world.

G-d's plan, however, is for this rarefied soul to become clothed in a body, a coarse and lowly "vessel" which contains it, as it were.

This vessel makes it difficult for the soul to express its connection with G-d, even to the point of obscuring its true mission in the world. Again, just as in the mitzva of bikurim, the holy and superior "fruit" is contained and even constrained within the confines of a simple and unpretentious "basket."

Chasidut provides the reason for this, explaining that the descent of the soul into a physical body is a "descent for the purpose of ascent": It is precisely through its sojourn on the physical plane, having to confront the difficulties of this world and overcome them, that the essence of the soul is revealed and a higher level of spirituality attained - much higher than could ever be reached without experiencing this descent in the first place.

In principle, "fruits" alone are not enough; the objective of the soul's descent is "fruits within a basket."

The soul's ascent is accomplished through the performance of practical mitzvot, which can only be done with the help of the "vessel" - the physical body. For in truth, the soul was already filled with love and awe of G-d before it came into the material world; the only change it experiences upon finding itself in a body is that it can now do physical mitzvot, something that was previously impossible. Thus the soul is rendered capable of elevating the physical world and turning it into holiness - the very intent of all of creation.

*Adapted from Likutei Sichot of the Rebbe, Volume 29*

## Get Back into Class!

*By Levi Avtzon*

You enjoyed preschool, you persevered through elementary school, you survived high school, and you even pulled yourself through college. Finally, you were done with study, and the time had come for you to enter the "real world" (wherever that is...).

When you walked out of the school building for the last time, and entered cloud nine where there are no classes, no strict teachers and no "How will algebra help me in my life?", you might have made a silent commitment to free yourself from the bondage of study for all eternity.

A recent study corroborates that this is what many of us do. It turns out that 1 in 4 Americans don't finish reading even one book in the course of a year! We're not only talking about scientific and religious tomes, but even novels and fun non-fiction books are sitting lonely in the storehouses of bankrupt publishers.

Tell me, isn't this a tragedy?

Jews have been called for centuries the People of the Book, and this was meant to be a compliment... We studied, we learned, we inquired, and we grew-all with the power of the Book.

Yes, of course there are many important things that need doing... Family obligations, working, and maintaining social ties all take up a lot of time. We try to be engaged, contributing members of our communities, and make the world a better place. But are we doing everything we need to do?

This week's Torah reading is titled Ki Tavo, "When you will settle." The message here is that there are times when we must settle, when we must come home, when we must forget about the world - the "real world" - and care about our own inner world.1

It is not selfish to learn. It is a need. Just like one needs to eat, sleep, exercise (oy!), and spend time with family, so too there is a need to learn, to open our minds to new ideas, explore new horizons.

And, of course, when we say study, we primarily mean Torah study. Either in the good old-fashioned book form, or through the web, which is a treasure chest waiting to cater to your every Torah-academic whim.

Yes, I know you swore that you would never step foot into a class again, so with the power of the rabbinate bestowed upon me, I hereby annul your vow.

That said, get back into class.

# Slice of LIFE

## I WANT A CHILD!!!!

After seventeen years of marriage Rabbi Yossi Mutzkin and his wife Sari had no children.

They were observant Jews, helped others, gave charity, did everything they could to be good people, were active in the Montreal community where they lived. But there was one thing they really wanted and prayed for constantly; the most precious gift of all, a child.

G-d is almighty, for Him to send a child is certainly no problem. The world is filled with billions of them! But not for the Mutzkins.

But they did not fall into despair, rather they kept hoping and praying for the best, did more good deeds and were happy to be able to serve their Creator.

In fact Sari Mutzkin was far more concerned with the problems of others than her own. For instance every day she led the class she taught with a few Psalms for the frightening situation in Israel and for other tragedies that only Psalms can help.

One day after the Psalms session, one of her pupils, a girl from a non-observant family, requested with tears in her eyes that the class add a prayer for her grandmother who had undergone a serious operation several months ago and never regained consciousness. Now she was in intensive care and the doctors had given up hope.

The class prayed and Mrs. Mutzkin even promised the girl that she would go to visit her home to see if she could help.

That very evening she kept her promise. The girl's mother was very grateful when Mrs. Mutzkin entered. She shook her hand with tears in her eyes and said.

"My daughter told me that you taught her how we are now entering the Jewish month of Iyar (the month after Passover) whose initials stand for 'I am G-d your doctor', right? And that now is a good time for healing.

"You don't know how depressed we were till we heard those words..... Do you really think that this month my mother will be better?"

Mrs. Mutzkin held back her own tears and answered "With G-d's help anything can happen".

That evening at home she had an idea. The

Lubavitcher Rebbe used to pass out one-dollar bills (to encourage people to give charity) every Sunday morning to tens of thousands of Jews and she had a lot of these dollars. She would give one to the girl for her grandmother!!

She searched through her collection of dollars until she found one that she had received in the month of Iyar (21st of Iyar to be exact) over fifteen years ago. The next day in school she gave the girl the dollar together with a picture of the Rebbe and said.

"Give this money to your mother and tell her to put it under your grandmother's pillow and whisper in her ear 'It's a gift from the Lubavitcher Rebbe'."

Then she added without knowing why, "I'm sure that by the 21st of Iyar she will be well."

As soon as it came out of her mouth she regretted it. Where did she get the brazenness to make such a prophesy?! How could she have promised such a thing? She was ashamed of herself.

But the girl's mother took it seriously. That evening she visited her unconscious mother, did what Mrs. Mutzkin said, gave her mother a kiss on the forehead and went home.

The next afternoon when the relatives were standing around the bed, the grandmother opened her eyes for the first time since the operation, lifted her head a bit, looked around at the amazed faces and asked

"Where is the money?"

Everyone there almost fainted. The doctors were called in and they couldn't explain it. But the girl's mother began to understand.

As if that wasn't enough, she recovered so miraculously that she got released from the hospital in a bit over two weeks - on the 21st of Iyar!!

That was enough to make the girl's mother decide to take her Judaism more seriously....or rather more joyously.

But that isn't the end of the story.

Mrs. Mutzkin wrote a letter to the Rebbe (about his dollar) and received the following unique answer.

"Trust only in G-d, He is the miraculous healer of all flesh. May your medical treatment be a success with good news and joy."

At first Sari didn't understand what

connection it had to her letter, but suddenly it dawned on her. The Rebbe was writing to her about her own problem! He was advising her to trust in G-d but take treatments for having children.

There was no mistaking that this was the intention of the letter, but it was not exactly what she wanted to hear. Oy! 'treatments'!

She had undergone tens of expensive, time consuming, promising and exasperating treatments with only traumatic disappointments. She and her husband had decided years ago - no more depressing 'treatments'!

But against all odds they decided to forget all that and try once again. Maybe now, with the Rebbe's answer it would be different.

They found a good doctor, one of the best, who agreed to give it a try with a new method, despite Sari's records and tests.

But after a few treatments he invited her and her husband into his office, closed the door, sat them down and told them that his personal advice was that they should save their time, money and nerves and just adopt a child. It was hopeless.

Sari went home and wrote again to the Rebbe, and received the following prophetic answer.

"Thank you for the news of the birth of your son and his brit mila (circumcision). Remember the importance of ignoring pessimism and always being in joy. Especially after seeing such great miracles."

The next morning, full of certainty, they returned to the doctor and joyously announced that Sari wanted to continue; they were sure of a miracle.

But there was none.

In fact, after a few more treatments the doctor again invited them to his office, pulled out the results and sadly announced that, as he had suspected, there was no progress. He tried a few words of consolation and bade them good luck.

But they did not lose spirit. The Rebbe's words stood before their eyes; "joy even in the face of pessimism."

Late that night their phone rang ominously; it was the doctor. "I have something more to say." He said. "There was one last test that hadn't returned from the laboratory and I was certain that it would be like all the others but...."

"I was wrong! Mrs. Mutzkin you have received a gift from G-d!"

Nine months later she gave birth to a boy and at the Brit they named him Menachem Mendel after the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

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ISSUE 1051

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Moshiach signifies the separation of the good from the evil. This is why he will come "only in a generation which is altogether meritorious or altogether sinful"; i.e., at a time in which there will be no mixture of good and evil. So long as Moshiach has not come, there is a mixture of good and evil in all the worlds: there is no good without evil and no evil without good.

*(Short Maamarim of the Alter Rebbe, p. 403)*



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

13th of Elul, 5731 [1971]  
To the Administration of Chabad House  
Buffalo, N.Y.

I was gratified to be informed about the forthcoming dedication of a Sefer Torah [Torah Scroll] in the Chabad House, which will take place on the auspicious day of the 18th of Elul, the birthday of the founder of general Chassidus, the Baal Shem Tov, and the birthday also of the founder of Chabad Chassidus, the Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi], author of the Tanya and Shulchan Aruch.

Needless to say, the observance of this double birthday has the central purpose that their way of life, work and teachings should continue to illuminate the daily life of each and every one of us. Both the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe, who expanded the Chassidic teachings in a systematic way, brought the Chassidic experience to Jews of all backgrounds, made the embodiment of the three loves, love of G-d, love of the Torah and love of Israel, the cornerstone of their system, with emphasis on the fact that the said three loves are completely interlocked and integrated.

This system and way of life quickly began to spread and gain many followers, in an ever-growing measure in quantity and quality, from generation to generation to the present day, which has clearly demonstrated how viable and vital it has been for the Jewish people, for the individual as well as for Klal Yisroel [the entire Jewish people].

I have used the expression "illuminated" advisedly, since this does not necessarily mean the creation of new things, but to illuminate existing things which have not been fully appreciated, or which have been altogether overlooked.

Thus, the primary contribution of Chassidus is that it illuminates the Torah and Mitzvos [commandments], and their inner aspects, Pnimius HaTorah, and shows each and every one of us the way to bring them within our personal daily experience.

The above is particularly important in relation to the young generation, who are still at the threshold of independent life and have untapped resources of energy and dedication to face any challenge, to accept the truth and nothing but the whole truth, rejecting all compromise - in their search for the genuine article.

As for the teacher and mentor, while he must do his best to help those whom he teaches and guides to make the utmost progress, he also reckons with the capacity of the students. However, since it is the task of each and every Jew to follow the Torah way of life, with dedication and inspiration, as illuminated by the teachings of Chassidus - it is clear that this task, which has been given to every Jew as a duty and privilege by G-d, the Creator and Master of the world, is within the capacity of each and every one, since G-d does not expect the impossible.

May G-d grant that the dedication of the Sefer Torah in the Chabad House should symbolize the dedication of the Sefer Torah in each and every Jewish home in the community, and strengthen adherence of the Torah and Mitzvos in the daily life, not only on special occasions or special days, but in accordance with the well-known commandment in the Shema - "And you shall teach them diligently to your children and speak them when you sit in the house or when you walk in the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up."

I send my prayerful wishes to each and every one who is associated with the work of the Chabad House, for Hatzlocho [success] in all above, and in a growing measure and, with the approach of the New Year, to be blessed with a Kesivo vachasimo Tova [to be inscribed and sealed for good], for a good and pleasant year materially and spiritually.

## CUSTOMS CORNER

### Selichot

The series of *Selichot* ("supplication") prayers recited in preparation for the "Days of Awe" of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur begin this Saturday night, after midnight (after the Ashkenazic custom. The Sephardic community begins on the 1st of Elul). On subsequent days, the custom is to recite the Selichot in the early morning hours, before the morning prayers, each morning up to and including Elul 29, the eve of Rosh Hashanah.

### Rosh Hashana

#### Apple & Honey

In the evening meal, we eat apple dipped in honey, the head of a fish, pomegranates, *tzimmes* (sweet carrots) and other foods signifying a sweet and successful year

#### Shofar

In the course of the morning and *musaf* service, the *shofar* (ram's horn) is sounded one hundred times, in various combinations of *tekiah* (a long blast), *shevarim* (a trio of broken sobs) and *teruah* (a staccato of short notes), in fulfillment of the primary mitzvah of Rosh Hashanah. The shofar serves to trumpet our coronation of G-d as King of the Universe, as a call to repentance, and to evoke the memory of the Binding of Isaac.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*The bikurim were a unique expression of thanks to G-d, showing an awareness that the blessings which we receive emanate from Him. To emphasize our gratitude for these blessings, we are enjoined to give the first and the best produce as an offering to G-d. Furthermore, we make a public statement of thanks before G-d in the Holy Temple.*

*The concept of expressing thanks to G-d is one of the fundamental principles of Jewish life. We begin each day with an expression of thanks when we say the prayer, *Modeh Ani*, in which we gratefully acknowledge G-d's return of our souls. This first act upon awakening is the foundation for all of our subsequent conduct which includes many blessings and expressions of thanks.*

*The importance of thanking G-d is further emphasized by the Baal Shem Tov's teaching that the creation of the world is renewed every moment. This reflects the unbounded nature of G-d's kindness. The comprehension of this idea should arouse our unbounded and deep-felt gratitude, for we realize how everything is dependent on G-d's kindness at every moment.*

*All facets of our lives are bikurim to be offered to G-d. Thus, we should not think that our commitment to G-d involves only "Jewish things." Instead, every aspect of our conduct should be permeated with holiness and should be carried out as befits a person who is in the presence of G-d.*

*All of our thoughts, words, or acts are bikurim, a first fruit offering to G-d. They should therefore be the best we have to offer.*

*By living our lives in a manner of bikurim, not only do we thankfully acknowledge G-d's kindness, we also cause everything in our lives to be sanctified and holy.*

*J. I. Guterlich*

## IT HAPPENED

Once...

## THE PRICE OF SPILT MILK

In the early years of the Chassidic movement, non-Jewish landowners would frequently imprison their Jewish tenants for failing to pay their debts. The Baal Shem Tov showed great concern for these poor families, and with boundless determination, he travelled from town to town, encouraging fellow Jews to contribute towards this great *mitzvah* of *pidyon shvuim* -- "ransoming captives."

Once, after a week of continuous efforts, the Baal Shem Tov succeeded in collecting the sum necessary to redeem a family imprisoned by a particularly stubborn landowner who had refused to release the family until he received every penny owed to him. It was not until Friday afternoon that the Baal Shem Tov was able to amass the entire sum and thus, the members of the family were set free only a few short hours before Shabbat.

"Stay with me for Shabbat," the Baal Shem Tov offered. "You will not be able to make it back to your town in time for candle lighting." Needless to say, the poor family was more than willing to accept the invitation. At the Shabbat meal, the Baal Shem Tov turned to the man he had ransomed. "So, what news have you heard today?"

The man looked up in wonder. "But Rebbe, what news could have reached the pit in which we were imprisoned?"

"Then tell us something of your past," encouraged the Baal Shem Tov.

"I can't seem to think of anything worthy of telling about my life, but I have just recalled a strange experience I had while in prison.

"All week long, we would hear pitiful moans and wails coming from a corner in the pit where we were held prisoner. Each Friday afternoon, however, the crying would cease, only to be replaced by shrieking laughter that pierced our ears.

"This went on for weeks. My family and I were terrified to approach the nook where the noise came from, and we just huddled together in our corner.

"This week, however, the crying was louder than usual, as was the deafening laughter which took its place. Knowing that we were to be freed shortly, I picked up enough courage to shout in the direction from which the voiced emerged, 'Who are you?'

"A voice responded from the far end of the pit. 'We are unholy spirits whose existence depends on flaws in the behaviour of a *tzadik*. He refrains from eating all week long, breaking his fast only on Friday. He prepares a mug of milk in the morning, setting it aside to drink when he concludes his morning prayers.

"All week long, we are overwhelmed by the power of his righteousness. This is why we wail. Every Friday, however, we cause one of his household members to accidentally spill the milk and rouse the anger of the holy man. It is from this display of anger that we derive our power and existence.

"This week, he was determined, more than ever, not to succumb to the folly of anger. Realizing that his expression of anger could negate all the spiritual achievements he had attained during the week, he resolved to prevent himself from being provoked. He decided to lock the closet in which he put the milk and to give no one the key.

"That is why we were so upset this week," the voice explained. "We did not know how we would be able to rouse his wrath. However, we were not prepared to give up so easily. This morning, one of us appeared as a woodcutter, knocked on the *tzadik's* door, and offered his wife a bundle of wood at a bargain price.

"Her purse was in the same closet as the milk and she requested the key from her husband. Anxious not to keep the woodcutter waiting, she knocked over the milk jug. Sure enough, the *tzadik* exploded in rage and thus, we had much to celebrate today."

The crowd of people at the Baal Shem Tov's table listened in amazement to this strange story. Suddenly, one of his disciples fell down in a faint. He was known to fast the entire week.

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

And it shall be, when you come into the land...and you shall take of all the fruit of the earth...and put it in a basket... and you shall go to the priest (Deut. 26:1-3)

Fourteen years elapsed after the Jewish people entered the land of Israel until they were able to bring their first fruits to Jerusalem. Seven years had been spent conquering the entire land from its inhabitants; seven more years had been spent dividing the land among the 12 tribes. Our generation, which will very soon enter the promised land with the coming of Moshiach, will not need to wait to bring our first fruits to the Holy Temple. Not only will there be no need to conquer and distribute the land, but the fruits themselves will grow so rapidly that their harvesting will take place simultaneously with their planting. (*The Rebbe, Shabbat Parshat Ve'etchanan, 5751*)

Blessed you shall be in the city (Deut. 28:3)

According to the Midrash, "the city" means "in the merit of the mitzvot you do among society," implying the obligation to ensure that one's surroundings are also imbued with Torah and mitzvot. (*Divrei Shaarei Chaim*)

## CANDLE LIGHTING: 7 SEPTEMBER 2012

BEGINS		ENDS
5:46	MELBOURNE	6:43
5:43	ADELAIDE	6:39
5:19	BRISBANE	6:12
6:25	DARWIN	7:14
5:17	GOLD COAST	6:11
5:46	PERTH	6:41
5:23	SYDNEY	6:19
5:31	CANBERRA	6:27
5:35	LAUNCESTON	6:35
5:47	AUCKLAND	6:44
5:44	WELLINGTON	6:44
5:33	HOBART	6:34
5:16	BYRON BAY	6:10



## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS KI TAVO  
21 ELUL • 8 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:46 PM
	MINCHA:	5:55 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:25 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:23 AM
	MINCHA:	5:45 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:43 PM
	SELICHOS:	12:20 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SELICHOS:	8:40 AM
	SHACHARIS MON-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:55 PM
	MAARIV:	6:40 PM