

LAMPLIGHTER

10 Elul
Parshas Ki Teitzei

1155

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Teitzei, we read about the concept of divorce. In order for a Jewish couple to terminate their marriage, the husband must "write her a get (bill of divorce), and give it in her hand," i.e., the actual document must leave the husband's domain and be given over into the wife's.

Allegorically speaking, the Jewish people and G-d are likened to husband and wife, the "marriage" having taken place when the Torah was given at Mount Sinai.

Years later, when the Jewish people sinned, G-d "sent her from his house," i.e., banished them from the land of Israel, handing them, in effect, a "bill of divorce."

Yet how can we say that G-d "divorced" the Jews, when one of the principal requirements in the dissolution of a marriage is that the get leave the husband's domain and be given over into the wife's?

Is not the entire world G-d's domain, as it states, "The earth is filled with His glory"? Indeed, how can there be any domain that is separate from G-d?

The answer is that while G-d is certainly everywhere, His Presence in the world can be either revealed or hidden. When the Holy Temple stood in Jerusalem the Divine Presence was clearly manifest; ten open miracles perpetually proclaimed G-d's existence. It was a period in which the love between G-d and the Jewish people was open and apparent; His Presence in the world was palpable and easily perceived. During the exile, however, G-d "conceals" Himself, as it were, with the resultant perception of estrangement and disconnection from G-d.

In truth, however, this perception is only an illusion, brought about by our misdeeds. When Israel sinned, G-d responded by "withdrawing," causing them to feel as if they had entered another domain, and thus validating the "bill of divorce." We must therefore bear in mind that the entire concept of the existence of "another domain" is fallacious; the "divorce" between G-d and the Jewish people is also an illusion. The Jewish people's alienation from G-d is only imaginary, the consequence of the darkness of exile.

Very soon, when Moshiach ushers in the era of Redemption, G-d's eternal love for His people will again be openly demonstrated, and the imaginary "divorce" between the Jews and G-d will have been annulled.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot of the Rebbe, Vol. 9

How Much Does It Cost Me?

By Yossy Goldman

What do we cherish? What do we truly value? What do we make time for?

There is a rather curious juxtaposition of ideas in our Parshah this week. The Torah cautions us against allowing Ammonite and Moabite men to convert and join the Jewish people. The reasons? Firstly, *because they did not greet you with bread and water on the road when you were leaving Egypt*. And secondly, *because they hired Balaam . . . to curse you*.

Such a diverse set of crimes lumped together in one verse. In the same breath we are told to shun them because they didn't play the good hosts when we were a tired and hungry nation trudging through the desert from Egypt, and because they hired the heathen prophet Balaam to destroy us. How can we possibly compare these two reasons? The first is simply a lack of hospitality, while the second is nothing short of attempted genocide!

The answer is that the two are indeed interrelated. One reinforces the other, and one proves the sinfulness of the other. If it was only a matter of not showing us any generosity during our journey, we could possibly justify it by their own poverty. Perhaps Ammon and Moab were in an economic depression. Maybe they were broke, and therefore were not in a position to offer hospitality. If they didn't have enough for themselves, how can we expect them to have fed others?

But when we see that they hired Balaam the prophet to curse the Jewish people, then we know that money was not the problem. Do you think Balaam came cheap? Balaam was a very expensive consultant. "A houseful of gold and silver" was his asking price. If you found money for him, you could have found a few shekels to give some bread and water to tired, hungry travellers. The fact that they were prepared to pay such exorbitant fees to Balaam proves the enormity of their crime.

Ammon and Moab may be extinct, but their legacy lives on.

One of the root causes of the Middle East quagmire is the Palestinian problem. So many live in squalor in refugee camps. It is truly a *rachmanut*, a terrible pity and a crying shame. But why have these people not been accommodated by their Middle East brethren over all these years? Israel has taken in Jewish refugees from Arab lands - from Syria, Yemen, Iran and Iraq. More recently, they have absorbed many Ethiopian and Russian Jews. Israel is a small country with limited resources, yet no Jew is refused entry. Everyone is welcomed.

So tiny Israel can do it, and the combined land and wealth of the Arab world cannot? Saudi Arabia builds palaces and engages in all sorts of royal excess. Have you been to the Dubai airport? Billions are being spent on flippant luxuries, but to help their poor Palestinian brothers and sisters, nobody is home!

Sadly, we have a problem in our own community too. How often is a Jew approached for a worthy cause, and he pleads poverty, but the very next day he blows a fortune at a casino? We are too busy to come to a lecture at the *shul*, but to kill a night playing poker-we have plenty of time.

I am reminded of the fellow who asked me if he really needed to put up *mezuzahs* on all his doorways inside his house. When I answered that he did, he gave a huge *krechitz*. "Oh Rabbi, but I just built a new house with eighteen rooms. Do you realize how much the *mezuzahs* are going to cost?!"

We are now in the month of Elul, a time for introspection, coming right before Rosh Hashanah, our Judgment Day. Let us reflect on how we spend our money and our time, and let us try our best to be consistent and honourable to G-d and our fellow men and women.

Slice of LIFE

Sparks Into Flames

Vicky Blitshtein's speech at the 2013 CTeen Shabbaton

Hello, my name is Vicky Blitshtein. I'm 17 and live in Plano, Texas. I'm here today to tell you about my journey through Chabad, CTeen, and Judaism.

Growing up, I was never super religious. My parents were born and raised in Russia where they didn't have much access to their religion. Therefore I never knew much about Judaism.

I went to Chabad of Dallas as a child, and when I was seven, my parents found out about Camp Gan Israel in Plano (a suburb of Dallas). They registered me for camp. Walking into Chabad of Plano, where the camp was held, I didn't know what to expect. But I never imagined how those first few steps through the doors of Chabad of Plano would lead me here today and change my life forever.

Every day and year in "Gan Izzy" Plano was a new adventure, whether it was exciting activities, fun trips, learning about Judaism in general, mitzvos like tzedaka (charity), tzniut (modesty), etc., or the absolutely incredible new group of counsellors from New York who flew in every year. Though I only spent six weeks out of the year with them, they became some of my absolute best friends. I loved it!

When I turned 13, I was old enough to be a junior counsellor. With growing trust from the rabbis and rebbetzins I took on more duties at Chabad. On Thursday evenings, you could find me with the rebbetzins cooking Shabbat dinners; Saturday mornings I was helping run kids' programs during Shabbat services; Saturday nights I was working on Hebrew school and Mitzvah Club

activities. Sunday mornings I was busy with my "class" of the rabbis' and rebbetzins' 15 children ranging between ages 6 months to 9 years old.

I became known as the "official" Chabad baby-sitter, summer and winter camp counsellor, childhood learning and programming volunteer and leader, and Sunday school teacher. I spend countless hours at Chabad but it never feels like work.

I get asked a lot, "Vicky why do you spend so much time at Chabad?" I never have a definite answer; it's always just "I don't know - I love it!" But when writing this speech, I realized why I love it so much. I'm helping people; that's what I love to do. Knowing that I am helping people learn and grow in their Judaism means so much to me. Spreading the learning and growth to each individual who I may not even know, and impacting them in such a way, is so much more rewarding than anything else I could be doing in my free time. Which again is why I am here...

Growing like wild fire, the Chabad Teen Network is spreading Judaism and friendship to Jewish teens across the world. It is unifying us not only as a common generation, but THE generation - the next generation of Jews who hold the power to change the world.

In Plano we have a CTeen group of about 20 teens which started when I entered high school. We have many meaningful Shabbat dinners, Sunday programs and community service work. With each program that passes, both our faith and friendships grow stronger and stronger.

Since the 9th grade, I have wanted to come to this Shabbaton, but it wasn't easy convincing my parents who thought I was "too young." Five weeks ago, one of my dearest camp counsellors and friends, Itty Barber, sent me a message about how I could win a trip to New York for this year's CTeen Shabbaton. I was extremely excited. I cleared it with my parents,

who were, surprisingly, very willing to let me come.

It was the middle of week six of the contest giveaways when Itty messaged me. I got everyone at school involved as well as my friends and family. I came in third place. But I wasn't ready to give up so quickly.

Week seven's mission was to get friends on the CTeen Facebook Wall. This time, my sister Stephanie gave it a shot and won!

Before week 8 we all got word that six more tickets were donated. I was eager to get going! Sunday I tried and lost by one. But that didn't stop me! Tuesday I wrote on every white board at my school. Even my teachers encouraged everyone to post on my behalf. Tuesday night at 9 p.m. I was the happiest person in the world!! I had won and would be spending my birthday weekend, at the CTeen Shabbaton, in New York!

Announcing that I had won, CTeens' Facebook picture of the day was "Never Give Up" with the explanation: "You tried once, came in 3rd place. You tried again, and came in 2nd. You never gave up until you reached your goal. Thank you Vicky for showing us what it means, 'If you try hard you will succeed.' (Megilla, 6b)" Though no one at CTeen knew me, they saw the work I had put into what I wanted and where it got me. This achievement, of others seeing how hard I tried for a goal, was one of the proudest moments of my life. That moment sparked yet another flame within me, a flame we can all feel through accomplishments in CTeen and the greater community.

I would like to pass on my tiny inner sparks that have grown into achievements, and let them ignite your flames. Even if it is something small - any little change you can make in your Jewish communities - I highly encourage you to do it. Be the change you want to see in the world. Become the outstanding leaders I know you can become!

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ISSUE 1155

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Tzemach Tzedek, Rabbi Menachem Mendel (the third Chabad Rebbe), once said that Moshiach will delight in the company of unscholarly, self-sacrificing Jews. A unique chamber will be set aside for them, and they will be envied by the greatest intellectuals. The beauty of sincerity.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d
15th of Elul, 5741 [September 14, 1981]
Brooklyn, N. Y.
Mr. ----
Johannesburg
South Africa

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter of the 12th of Aug., and many thanks for the good news it contained, particularly that you started an already very well attended Minyan [prayer quorum] at the Torah Academy in your neighbourhood.

I trust that the Minyan will be not only a place for prayer, but also a place for Torah study, especially in view of the emphasis which our Sages place on the combination of prayer and Torah, in their commentary on the verse, "G-d loves the gates of Zion" (Tehillim [Psalms] 87:2).

It is well to bear in mind that the essential function of a Shul [synagogue] is that it should serve as a "Lighthouse" to illuminate the life of the worshippers and their homes, as well as the whole environment.

May G-d grant that you and all who are participating in this work should go from strength to strength in the said direction, with joy and gladness of heart.

At this time, with the approach of Rosh Hashono, I send you and all yours my prayerful wishes for a good and happy year, materially and spiritually.

With blessing,
M. Schneerson

By the Grace of G-d
13 Nissan, 5720 [April 10, 1960]
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

...As for the question of distracting thoughts during prayer, one general advice is to contemplate before the prayer on matters which relate to the greatness and kindness of the Al-mighty, and His benevolent Divine Providence, and the like. Reflecting on these matters will bring about a general inspiration which will be conducive to a better understanding and appreciation of the meaning of the prayers.

The above is a general advice, since no person remains in the same spiritual level, and it is therefore difficult to give particular suggestions. However, it would also be well for you to discuss with your *Mashpia* or similar good friend, your particular frame of mind, so as to receive some special advice within the general framework of the above suggestion.

(Excerpt from a letter)

CUSTOMS CORNER

Cross-Dressing

Clothing

If there is a garment which is only worn by women, a man may not wear it. The same is true in the reverse.

- A unisex garment which is worn either by men or women is permitted to be worn by those of either gender.
- If it is a type of garment that has different styles for men and women -- for example, a button-down shirt - a man may wear only the style that is for men, and similarly for a woman.
- It is forbidden to even wear one garment of the opposite gender.

Other Beautifications

Men may not shave their armpits, legs or any body part which is normally shaved by women and not by men. The Tzemach Tzedek is of the opinion that it is therefore forbidden for a man to shave his beard, even with an acid cream, as this is considered the way of women (who remove facial hair if they have any).

Since women generally try to appear young and often dye their hair to keep it from going grey or white, it is forbidden for a man to do so. Exceptions are made if the man needs to find a match or a job.

A WORD

from the Director

Throughout the ages it has been customary to give more tzedaka (charity) during Elul than at any other season of the year. And there's a very good reason why:

The month of Elul is a time when we return to G-d in teshuva. When we genuinely repent of our misdeeds, G-d forgives us our transgressions.

The mitzva of tzedaka has the power to hasten the atonement of sins. After we have already done teshuva, we increase the amount of tzedaka we give to "speed up" the process. This principle applies throughout the year, but it is especially pertinent during Elul, the period of introspection and preparation for Rosh Hashana.

Rosh Hashana is the Day of Judgment for all humankind. As every person truly wishes to be found worthy, we increase our performance of good deeds during Elul, the final month of the year.

However, good deeds alone are not enough to ensure that we will be exonerated. Human beings are tiny and insignificant in comparison to G-d. Realistically speaking, how valuable can the sum total of all our good deeds be, no matter how numerous, when it is G-d Who sustains us and gives us the opportunity to do them?

In truth, in order to be acquitted on the Day of Judgment, we need to be the recipient of G-d's "tzedaka"! For it isn't by virtue of our actions that we are found worthy on Rosh Hashana; it is only because of G-d's kindness and mercy that He judges us for good.

A basic principle in Judaism is that G-d behaves towards us according to our actions, measure for measure. When we share our wealth with our fellow person, both material and spiritual, G-d responds in kind by granting us an abundance of blessings.

When we give more tzedaka during Elul, G-d responds with "tzedaka" on Rosh Hashana. The scale of judgment is tipped in our favor, and He inscribes us in the Book of Life for a good and sweet year.

In the merit of our good deeds - and especially the mitzva of tzedaka - each and every one of us will be found deserving, and G-d will inscribe us together with all the righteous.

J. I. Guttentag

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

"Here I Am"

Once in the village of Bober, a group of Chasidim gathered to discuss matters of the spirit and tell inspiring stories late into the night. One of those in attendance offered the following tale:

"I'm going to tell you how I came to be born into this world. My mother was married to a man for ten years, but they were not blessed with children. As is sometimes done, they divorced, in the hope that children would be born from another marriage. After the divorce my mother remarried, but after another ten years of marriage with her second husband, she still had not had children.

"Her second husband was bitterly disappointed and wanted to divorce her, hoping to remarry, and have children with a different wife. My mother, however, refused to accept the divorce, since she knew that the likelihood of her remarrying after this was remote.

"In spite of the law which clearly allows childlessness as a basis for divorce, my mother insisted that they go to a Jewish court.

"The great rabbi who was asked to head the trio of rabbinical judges at this court-hearing was the illustrious Chasid and legal expert, Rabbi Hillel of Paritch. After hearing the particulars of the case, he agreed to head the court, but only on the condition that the court sit in Lubavitch, in the presence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel (known as the Tzemach Tzedek).

"To everyone's great surprise, the Rebbe agreed to this request, and the court met in Lubavitch. The day of the proceeding arrived and both sides presented their arguments. The judges listened carefully and then went to confer amongst themselves.

"Finally, Reb Hillel, the chief judge, spoke: 'It is the opinion of this court that G-d should grant this couple healthy children. In this way, the matter will be resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned.'

"When he heard this verdict, the Tzemach Tzedek smiled broadly. He was heard to say in a quiet voice, 'Indeed, they should have children.'

"And so," concluded the Chasid, "here I am!"

Simple Love

Word had spread that Rebbe Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov was gravely ill and that his hours, perhaps minutes, were numbered. His family and disciples crowded around his bed, waiting in trepidation, hoping to hear some last words from his holy lips which would remain with them and guide them in their lives.

As they gazed at his face, they reflected on its expression of profound concentration and assumed that their master was meditating on some sublime spiritual thoughts. How could they have assumed that he would spend his last moments in this world communicating with them?! But just then his eyes opened and traversed the room, focusing on each person there. They saw that his eyes finally fixed on one particular unfamiliar individual who had been standing off in a corner of the room. They pushed him forward so that the Rebbe could see him more easily. Everyone was anxious to see what the Tzadik wanted with this man.

"Reb Shmuel," the Rebbe was heard to murmur, "what is it that you have come to ask me?"

"Rebbe," the man said, "it's about the wool I bought... what should I do about it?"

"Don't worry, Reb Shmuel," the Rebbe whispered. "Just keep it until next winter. Then the prices will rise and you will make a nice profit."

Then, before the eyes of all his family and Chasidim, the Rebbe closed his eyes and his soul departed from his body.

The heartbroken mourners couldn't stop talking about the Rebbe's last words. What could the Tzadik have meant by those cryptic words he uttered to the complete stranger who captured his attention in his final moments on earth. The stranger certainly must have been one of the 36 hidden saints in whose merit the world stands. Why, he disappeared as mysteriously as he had appeared! And who could explain the mystical concepts behind the words "Wool," "next winter," and "nice profit"? Each Chasid had his own interpretation of the Rebbe's words.

After a few days, Rabbi David, Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech's son, heard about the speculation. He called some of the senior Chasidim to him and offered the explanation of his father's last words:

"There is no mystery at all about my father's words; there is only the true expression of his profound love for each and every Jew. You never noticed Reb Shmuel, but he used to come often to my father to ask for his advice and blessing on his business decisions. Not too long ago, he purchased a large lot of wool. After he invested almost all his money in the wool, as well as large borrowed sums, prices took a sharp decline. He was worried sick about the possible loss of all of his assets and how he would cover all the debt he incurred borrowing to make the purchase.

"He decided to come to my father at once to ask his advice in this matter, but he had no idea that my father was ill. When he came, he saw a large crowd going into my father's room, and he just followed the others. But, when Father saw him, he realized that Reb Shmuel had probably come to ask his advice on some matter of concern, and so, he inquired what he needed. For my father, the need of a fellow Jew was his highest priority, and so, even in his last moments, he sought to assure the worried man that all would be well.

[Adapted from *Ichaimweekly.org* # 1284]

Thoughts THAT COUNT

For a hanged person is a curse to G-d (21:23)

This is a degradation of the Divine King in whose image man is created, and the Israelites are G-d's children. This is analogous to a case of two identical twin brothers. One became king, while the other was arrested for robbery and hanged. Whoever saw him, would say, "The king is hanging!" (*Talmud, Sanhedrin 46b; Rashi*)

Do not take the mother bird together with the young (22:6)

One who says (in prayer), "Your mercy extends to a bird's nest..." should be silenced... Since this reduces the mitzvot to humane laws, when in truth they are divine decrees. (*Talmud, Berachot 33b*)

And you forget a sheaf in the field... (24:19)

Certain opportunities and potentials are so lofty that they cannot be accessed by the conscious self; they can only come about "by mistake." An example of this is the mitzvah of shikchah, which can only be fulfilled by forgetting. (*The Chassidic Masters*)

Thus if a person drops a sela, and a poor man finds it and is sustained by it, then he [who lost the coin] will be blessed on its account. (*Rashi; Sifri*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 5 SEPTEMBER 2014

BEGINS	ENDS
5:43MELBOURNE	6:42
5:41ADELAIDE	6:37
5:18BRISBANE	6:11
6:25DARWIN	7:14
5:16GOLD COAST	6:09
5:44PERTH	6:39
5:21SYDNEY	6:17
5:28CANBERRA	6:25
5:32LAUNCESTON	6:32
5:45AUCKLAND	6:42
5:41WELLINGTON	6:41
5:30HOBART	6:31
5:15BYRON BAY	6:08
6:50SINGAPORE	7:38



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS KI TEITZEI
10 ELUL • 5 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:43 PM
	MINCHA:	5:50 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:20 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:25 AM
	MINCHA:	5:40 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:42 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	SUN-FRI: 9:15 AM
	MON-FRI:	8:00 AM
	MINCHA:	5:50 PM
	MAARIV:	6:40 PM