

LAMPLIGHTER

20 Elul
Parshas
Ki Savo
1207
4 September
5775/2015

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

According to Maimonides' enumeration of the Torah's 613 mitzvot, general commandments such as "You shall be holy" or "You shall keep My laws" are not, as a rule, considered mitzvot in their own right. Rather, these injunctions are classified as broad directives encompassing all of Judaism.

It is therefore surprising, at first glance, that the commandment in this week's Torah portion, Ki Savo, "You shall walk in His ways," is classified as a positive mitzva, requiring a Jew "to emulate the Holy One, Blessed Be He." Maimonides writes, "Just as G-d is gracious, so shall you be gracious. Just as G-d is merciful, so shall you be merciful. Just as G-d is pious, so shall you be pious." Indeed, the commandment implies that a Jew is required to emulate G-d to the best of his ability, at all times and in all circumstances.

But why is this commandment different from all other general statements in the Torah, to the point that it is characterized as a separate mitzva? What does the verse "You shall walk in His ways" entail that other similar commandments do not?

To explain:

Maimonides classifies "You shall walk in His ways" as a distinct commandment, as it contains a unique aspect not found in any other general directive in the Torah. This innovation is alluded to in the specific use of the word "walk," which implies an ongoing and perpetual sense of motion.

One of the differences between the soul of a Jew and an angel is that angels are stationary beings, fixed in their spiritual positions, whereas the Jewish soul constantly ascends from one spiritual level to the next. The Jew is constantly in motion, reaching higher and higher spiritual heights by virtue of his actions.

It sometimes happens that a Jew may observe mitzvot, yet he remains on the same spiritual rung as before. His performance of the mitzva did not cause him to progress or ascend any further. The commandment "You shall walk in His ways" comes to teach us that a Jew must never be stagnant, and that his performance of the mitzvot must always lead to an improvement of his overall spiritual condition.

How are we to accomplish this? By observing the Torah's mitzvot solely because they are "His ways" - because of our desire to emulate the Creator. For when we do, our spiritual ascent to higher and higher levels of G-dliness is assured.

Adapted from Volume 4 of Likutei Sichot

G-d in the Fast Lane

By Yossy Goldman

Can one plan to be blessed? Obviously, we believe that when we live life as G-d intended us to, we will find or lives blessed in many ways. Even if we do not always see the results tangibly or immediately, we certainly are aware of many blessings that come with the territory of leading a G-dly life. But there is a verse in our Parshah, which promises us blessings we never even dreamed of.

If you will listen to the voice of G-d...and observe the commandments...All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you... (Deuteronomy 28:2)

What does it mean that blessings will *overtake* you? Rabbi Ovadia Sforno, one of the classic Biblical commentators, suggests that it means you will be blessed even when you made no effort to seek those blessings. It will come out of the blue, an unexpected windfall.

The story is told of the saintly Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev that he once saw a young man running down the street. The Chassidic master stopped him and asked, "Where are you running?" The fellow answered, "To make a living, rabbi." To which the Berditchever responded, "So how do you know that your living lies in that direction and you're running after it? Perhaps your livelihood is to be found in the opposite direction, and you're running away from it?"

Do we ever know for sure? How often do the best laid plans of mice and men come to naught? Haven't we all had the experience of trying our hardest to do a deal, and yet with all the planning and strategizing nothing whatsoever materialized? And on the other hand, there may have been times when we put no work into it at all and suddenly from nowhere we landed the deal of the year? The truth is we don't know where the blessing of our livelihood lies.

And so it is with spiritual blessings. There are times when we make the effort and remain uninspired and there are times when we become inspired effortlessly. According to the Baal Shem Tov, our unconscious soul may hear something on a higher plane and it filters down to our conscious soul and we are touched, moved or inspired.

We live in an era of much confusion. Many are lost, floundering about in spiritual wildernesses. But many are finding themselves too. There have been many who didn't necessarily go looking for G-d but G-d found them. "How did you get inspired?" "To tell you the truth, I'm not really sure. I was minding my own business and I bumped into this Rabbi." Or, "I was sitting next to this fellow on the plane..." Or, "I was just a tourist at the Western Wall but something moved me." Everybody has a story. In some stories we went looking for G-d, in others He came looking for us.

So if you feel the spirit overtaking you, don't speed up. Slow down. Let it catch up with you. May the blessings of G-d overtake you and transform your life.

Slice of LIFE

Words to Hear With Your Heart

By Sarah Karmely

I come from a family of Jews from Mashhad, Iran, although I grew up in Stamford Hill, London, very near the heart of Orthodox Jewry in England. Our family was traditional. We kept strictly kosher and lit candles for Shabbat; my father wore a hat and a yarmulke. But we were totally unfamiliar with the teachings of Chasidism.

When I was 18 years old, I married Benjamin Karmely and moved to Milan, Italy, where I quickly had three children and settled into a rather normal, culturally modern yet traditional Jewish life. For thirteen years, I had everything any woman could want, from one perspective: I had a loving husband who supported us very nicely; three healthy children who were the light of my life; a lovely home, friends, good health...everything.

But something was missing all along - I couldn't have told you what it was, but I knew it was there. There was a hollow core within me, one that I was trying to fill the "as-soon-as" thoughts. You know, as soon as I finish school, everything will be perfect. And then as soon as I get married, and then I will feel complete. And then as soon as we have children, everything will really be perfect. But there I was, with everything - and yet still, something was missing.

Then, as now, Benjamin travelled a good deal for his business. But one day he flew home after a trip to Thailand, and when I picked him up from the airport, I could see, even from a distance, that something was wrong. He was limping, and he looked ill - pale, drawn and obviously in pain. He insisted he was fine, but he couldn't fool me.

Something was very wrong.

By the next morning there was no question - he was in excruciating pain, and his whole body was in a state of spasm. He couldn't walk or move his legs, and even his speech was affected. We saw the doctor and Benjamin was immediately hospitalized, although no one knew what was wrong. Over the next several days he underwent test after test but nothing proved conclusive. All the while, he was getting worse and worse. At times he was partially paralysed, but all the time he was in serious pain. He wasn't even able to get out of bed by

himself. I went to the hospital several times a day to bring the kosher food we regularly ate - which seemed especially important at that point - but as I watched, he continued to deteriorate day by day. The days turned into weeks, and when even the painful bone marrow tests gave no indication of what the problem could be, I started losing home, fast.

The worst day was about a month after he'd been hospitalized. I arrived at the hospital slightly earlier than usual and came upon my usually stoic husband collapsed in tears. Seeing him so distraught removed the last of my own defences. I was terrified. I went to the doctors, demanding they tell me what was wrong, convinced that they knew, and were hiding something from me. They insisted: "We don't know. We have no idea what it could be." And since they didn't know the cause, they had no clear indication of what treatment to begin. "We need more tests," they said, over and over again. How long would this go on? I asked. The doctors shrugged. "We don't know. Maybe in a few months things will improve."

Months more? I was stunned by the bleak prognosis - no, it was more than that. I was depressed, I was frustrated and I felt totally lost. My husband was the strong one, our protector, and the one who always knew what to do. With him so very ill, I was alone and frightened. I didn't know what to do, or where to turn. I went home from the hospital that day, exhausted and depressed, and as I walked in the door, my phone was ringing.

I was my usual weekly call from Rabbi Moshe Lazar, a Chabad rabbi in Milan who'd become a good friend. How was my husband? He wanted to know. I couldn't answer. All I could do was cry.

Rabbi Lazar held out a straw of hope I hadn't thought of before. "Why don't we ask for a bracha (a blessing) from the Rebbe?" he asked. "The Rebbe" was the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, residing in the Crown Heights neighbourhood of Brooklyn, New York. I had never met the Rebbe, but I had heard stories. Everyone had. The Rebbe was said to be a holy, G-dly man able to do many otherworldly things. So, why not? I thought. At this point, I was desperate, and besides, it couldn't hurt.

I gave Rabbi Lazar my husband's name and his mother's name so the proper bracha could be said, and he said he would call New York that very night. I thanked him, and we hung up.

I was grateful, of course, and having at least done something, I felt a small sense of peace. But if I told you now I had confidence in a miracle of some kind that would not be true. Maybe, maybe...

The next morning, looking for some company and moral support for a day I expected to be exhausting, I invited my father-in-law to come with me to the hospital. As we walked in, I remembered the blessing Rabbi Lazar had said he'd request, but decided against mentioning it to my father-in-law. No point in both of us being disappointed. We stepped out of the elevator on the third floor, and I looked down the hall toward the door of my husband's room.

Can you imagine our surprise when we saw my formerly-paralysed husband walking toward us in the hall, without crutches?

Again, all I could do was cry - in fact, we all did. As well as I was able to between sobs, I told the story of Rabbi Lazar's call the night before, the request for a blessing from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and now...look!

There was, of course no medical explanation from the doctors as to what the problem had been, or what had cured it. They simply didn't know. And neither was there ever a clear explanation, in my mind, for all the whys I had accumulated. Why us? Why my husband? Why was he chosen for the affliction - and then for the miracle cure?

We don't presume to know the answers to those questions, Rabbi Lazar said. G-d has His plan. But, he reminded us, there is one thing we do know: Everything that happens to us is for the good. G-d uses His own means and devices - including affliction, healings, or not healing - for our own good.

My husband had already come to that conclusion. When he returned home, he told me about the days and nights he spent in pain, in the hospital, unable to walk, uncertain of his future. "I learned one thing for sure," he said. "There's more to life than just business and pleasure."

That was true, of course. And quite obviously everything did work out "for the best." But neither of us then, at that moment, knew the full impact of Benjamin's illness recovery. G-d still had a few more cards to play. But those were all within His Will, at the moment, yet completely unknown to us.

Published by **The Chabad House of Caulfield** in conjunction with the **Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.**

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ISSUE 1207

MOSHIACH MATTERS

It is well known that the Messianic Era, and especially the time of the Resurrection of the Dead, is the fulfilment and culmination of the creation of the world, for which purpose it was originally created. (*Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, Ch. 36 of Tanya*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

25th of Elul, 5724 [1964]

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter of the 16th of Elul.

I believe I have already written to you before that both in regard to efforts to influence others, and also to help oneself, it is good to consult with G-d fearing friends, especially such as have had experience in such matters.

With regard to your question about free will, the Rambam explains it at length in the laws of Teshuva [Repentance], Chapter 5 and 6. The meaning of free will is simply that a person is quite free to act, speak and think, and always has free choice to do so either to the good, or otherwise.

Thus, it is also emphasized in the Torah, "Behold I have given you etc., - choose life." There is no contradiction between human free choice and Divine Knowledge, for the opposite of free choice is not knowledge but compulsion. In other words, Divine Knowledge in no way affects human freedom, and does not compel.

One of the illustrations which will make it easier to understand this subject is that of a person who is clairvoyant, and could foretell events in the future, or a psychologist who knows a friend very well, and could foretell his reactions, although limited to a short period of time. Clearly, such foreknowledge does not affect the event and actions that come to pass. But G-d is unlimited in time and knowledge, and His Knowledge extends to all times and places, but never effects freedom of man's actions.

Enclosed is a copy of my General message of Rosh Hashanah of this year. In it you will find answers also to some of your questions.

Wishing you a Kesivo veChasimo Toiva [may you be written and sealed for good]

With Blessings,

28th of Elul, 5730 [1970]

After not hearing from you for a long time, I was pleased to receive your letter, though in the meantime I had regards from you through your father when he was here. I was pleased to be brought up to date on your activities, especially in the area of Chinuch [Jewish education].

(As has often been mentioned before, every activity in Chinuch should be carried out with particular enthusiasm, inasmuch as it is like planting a seed, or taking care of a seedling, where every additional effort, however small, will eventually be translated into extraordinary benefits when the said seed or seedling becomes a mature fruit-bearing tree. The same is true of the care taken to shield the seed or seedling from harmful effects.

By the same token, it will be realized that, although Mitzvos [commandments] and good deeds should be done without thought for reward, nevertheless the reward for every activity in Chinuch is greater than the reward for any other Mitzvah, inasmuch as the effects are lasting and cumulative and reproduced from generation to generation.) There is surely no need to elaborate to you on the above.

I will only add that, inasmuch as this is the time of the year to make good resolutions for the whole of the new year coming, especially the Ten Days of Teshuvah, of which our Sages say that this was the period meant in the familiar words of the Prophet, "Search G-d when He may be found, call upon Him when He is near" (Isaiah 55:6) - you will make appropriate resolutions to go from strength to strength in all matters of goodness and holiness, and in all the matters about which you write.

Wishing you a Kesivo VeChasimo Tovah,

With blessing,

CUSTOMS CORNER

LeDavid Hashem Ori

The custom is to recite "LeDavid Hashem Ori" (Psalm 27) once in the morning in the Shacharit prayer and once in the Mincha prayer from (the first day of) Rosh Chodesh Elul until after Hashanah Rabba. LeDavid Hashem Ori should be said after Shacharit (after Shir Shel Yom).

Note that others have different customs as to when and for how long it is recited; the above-mentioned is the Chabad custom.

A WORD

from the Director

More than halfway through the month of Elul, Jews the world over are getting ready for the upcoming High Holidays. As spiritual self-improvement and teshuva (literally "return") are the order of the day, let us take a closer look at what teshuva really entails.

When a Jew who was not raised in a Torah-observant environment and did not receive an authentic Jewish education starts to keep Shabbat, eat only kosher and increase his performance of other mitzvot (commandments), he is commonly referred to as a "Baal teshuva," one who has returned.

Despite his inexperience and lack of practical knowledge, the uncharted territory he is now exploring is not considered new; he is merely "returning" to his true self.

At the same time, a Jew who was raised within the "four cubits of Torah" also prays three times a day that G-d "restore us in complete teshuva before You." Regardless of our level of observance or familiarity with Judaism, all Jews are required to "do teshuva." How can this be?

The answer lies in the fact that Torah and mitzvot are nothing new to the Jewish soul. Judaism simply "fits" us; it is a manifestation of the essential bond that connects each and every Jew to G-d. A Jew can grow up unaware of his Jewishness, completely oblivious to the existence of Torah, yet he still possesses a "pintele Yid," an eternal spark of G-dliness that defines his being.

"Religious" and "secular" are man-made labels that alienate and divide. Whether putting on tefilin for the first time or resolving to do the tiniest good deed, we're all in the same boat, steered by the same "Captain." For each and every mitzva is of inestimable worth, drawing us closer to our true inner selves.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

When Rabbi Yisroel, the Ruzhiner Rebbe, lay close to death, he called his sons and entreated them to follow the true path. He told them that the most important thing was to always keep the Creator uppermost in one's mind to do His Will. The sons listened in absolute silence, and knew that their father was imparting to them the ultimate truths of life.

Rabbi Yisroel continued, saying, "Usually fathers leave their children some kind of legacy, but what can I leave to you? I don't have anything of importance, so I am leaving you parts of myself - to each one something else. But each one of you will not be limited by what I leave to you; you will just have to work harder to achieve what your brothers have received." With that introduction, he proceeded. "To you my firstborn Reb Sholom Yosef, I leave my appearance; to you my son Avraham Yaakov, I leave my brain; to you my son David Moshe my wisdom; and to you my youngest son Mordecha'le, I leave my knowledge of G-d. I leave you all with the teaching that what a man achieves by dint of his own efforts has far more worth than anything that another gives him. When you strive through your own exertion to gain an understanding of the Creator, then you can finally say, "This is my G-d."

A short time later the Ruzhiner Rebbe passed into the Next World. His sons decided to spend the entire year of mourning in the town where their father had spent his last days.

The brothers were in harmony about most issues. They divided their father's estate between them without dispute, but when it came to the question of their father's Tefillin, they could not agree. Each claimed the Tefillin for himself.

The Tefillin were unique, and their father had prized them far above any other possession. They had belonged to his great-grandfather, the Baal Shem Tov, and had been meticulously written by one of the Baal Shem Tov's disciples. Then they passed from father to son, from Rabbi Avraham the "Angel," to his son Rabbi Shalom of Provitch, and down to Rabbi Yisroel of Ruzhin. These Tefillin were as perfect as the day on which they had been written, and although the Ruzhiner Rebbe checked them regularly several times a year, they never needed repair.

Many wondrous stories were told about those Tefillin. Once Reb Yisroel had been imprisoned by the Russian authorities. Fearing that some harm might come to his precious Tefillin in prison, Reb Yisroel left them in the care of a trusted friend. The moment he was released, he hurried to this friend's house to reclaim his Tefillin. He opened them up to check them, and to his horror, the parchments were covered with a thick, green mildew. Panic-stricken, he sent for a scribe who would have perhaps have some way to save them. Imagine his shock when the scribe arrived and examined the Tefillin only to find that they were perfect the mildew had vanished. Reb Yisroel took this miraculous event as a sign that he should never again allow himself to be parted from his precious Tefillin.

The brothers finally came to a solution. They would each write on a piece of paper what they were prepared to relinquish from their legacy in order to possess the Tefillin. Whoever gave the most would receive the Tefillin. Each wrote a note and sealed his paper in an envelope. But at the last moment, they decided to draw lots instead. Reb David Moshe's name was drawn, but he was not in the least surprised. He told his brothers, "In truth, these Tefillin have been mine for many years. A few months before my Bar Mitzva, Father called me into his room and taught me all the laws of Tefillin. When he had finished, he pinched my cheek and said, 'My son, I have hidden for you a pair of Tefillin which are more precious than all the treasures on earth. I myself guard them, and I am keeping them for you.'

"Before my Bar Mitzva, Father called me to his room again, and there, a scribe prepared a pair of Tefillin for me. I wondered to myself, 'How could these be the precious Tefillin which my father had promised me?'

"For many years I wondered, until now, when I understand what Father meant. Finally, the precious, unique Tefillin that our father promised me are mine."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

And it shall be, when you come into the land that the L-rd your G-d is giving you (Deut. 26:1)

The Jews' entrance into the land of Israel is symbolic of the soul's descent into the body and its being forced to live in the physical world. The Midrash teaches that the words "and it shall come to pass" are always used to denote something of great joy. Though the G-dly soul is saddened when it temporarily leaves its place under G-d's throne to dwell in a Jewish body for a certain number of years, it is a joyous occurrence, since the descent is to elevate the corporeal world through doing mitzvot. (*The Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

I have not transgressed any of your commandments neither have I forgotten (Deut. 26:13)

Why were two such similar statements necessary? To teach us that it is possible to fulfil a commandment and at the same time forget it. This happens when one fulfils it without intent - while the mind is focused on other things. (*Sfat Emet*)

Since you did not serve the L-rd your G-d out of joy and gladness of heart...you shall serve your enemies (Deut. 28:47)

From this verse we learn the importance of joyfulness in serving G-d. The implication of the verse is that the severe punishment of serving one's enemies comes only as a result of joy lacking from our G-dly service. It is as if joy in our service awakens joy in G-d Himself and annuls all harsh judgments. (*Rabbi Shneur Zalman*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 24 SEPTEMBER 2015



BEGINS	ENDS
5.43MELBOURNE	6.41
5.41ADELAIDE	6.37
5.18BRISBANE	6.11
6.25DARWIN	7.15
5.16GOLD COAST	6.09
5.44PERTH	6.39
5.21SYDNEY	6.17
5.28CANBERRA	6.25
5.31LAUNCESTON	6.31
5.44AUCKLAND	6.42
5.41WELLINGTON	6.41
5.29HOBART	6.31
5.15BYRON BAY	6.08
6.50SINGAPORE	7.38

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD
PARSHAS KI SAVO • 20 ELUL • 4 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:	9.27 AM
	MINCHA:	5.40 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6.41 PM
	SLICHOS:	12.20 AM
WEEKDAYS:	SLICHOS:	7.35 AM / 8.50 AM
	SHACHARIS: SUN-FRI:	8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	5.50 PM
	MAARIV:	6.40 PM / 9.00 PM