

LAMPLIGHTER

15 Av
Parshas Va'eschanan
Shabbos Nachamu

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah reading, Vaetchanan, contains the Shema, the fundamental prayer in Jewish liturgy. When a person recites the Shema, he is not merely declaring that there is only one G-d. The intent of the Shema is that all existence is one with Him.

Judaism does not believe that the spiritual and the physical can be separated from each other. We do not believe in a G-d who sits in the heavens and allows the world to function however it desires. Instead, the spiritual and the physical are both manifestations of a single unity.

This is what we mean when we say "G-d is one" - that G-d's oneness embraces everything that we see, hear, or become aware of.

These concepts are hinted at by echad, the Hebrew word for one. That word is made up of three letters. The first letter, the alef, stands for the Ein Sof, G-d's infinity. The second, the chet, is equivalent to the number eight, referring to the seven spiritual realms and our material earth. The last letter, the dalet, equivalent to four, alludes to the four directions of this earth. What is inferred is that the alef, G-d's infinite transcendence, permeates the chet, all eight levels of existence, and more particularly, the dalet, the four directions of our world. Wherever we go, there is nothing apart from Him.

On this basis, we can understand why the Shema is the message associated with our people's martyrs. When a martyr gives up his life for his faith, he is making a statement that he refuses to separate the physical from the spiritual. He will not live a life that does not reflect his inner G-dly essence.

If he is forced to sever the connection between the two and live in contradiction to what he believes and knows is right, then he would rather not live. For he cannot conceive of a life that runs contrary to his spiritual core. For him, the oneness of G-d is an actual - not merely a theoretical - reality.

The Shema continues with the command to love G-d. That command raises a question: How can the Torah command us to love? You either feel love or you don't. No one can tell you to feel something that you don't.

That's why the commandment to love G-d follows after the declaration of G-d's oneness. When a person understands the oneness of G-d and appreciates how He is in every element of existence, he will be spurred to feelings of love. For intellect gives birth to emotion and our awareness of G-d prompts us to love Him.

After, the Shema mentions several commandments - to study Torah, wear tefilin, and affix mezuzot on our doorposts. For it is through these deeds - and by extension, the totality of Jewish observance - that the oneness proclaimed in the Shema is made part of our everyday lives.

(From Keeping in Touch by Rabbi E. Touger, published by SIE)

You Can('t) Help Yourself!

By Levi Avtzon

If you look around, I am sure you could spot the life-coach who can't get his own life together; the marriage counsellor whose marriage is either history or well on the way; and the parent who preaches to her children to "stop scratching and biting over blocks of Lego" while she is constantly brawling over pride and money.

It is quite obvious that many of us can help anyone but ourselves.

We have advice for our children on how to handle stress. We advise our co-workers on how to manage their time. We teach our students the value of study. And of course we educate our parents how to be parents...

Yet in our own lives, we are enrolled in an anger management club. Our time management is in serious need of a new CEO. An article longer than 300 words is avoided like the plague. And our own parenthood is a non-issue because we just celebrated our sixteenth birthday.

There are many junctures in our lives when we need objectivity and clarity in order to see our strengths and weaknesses for what they are. Dating, career seeking, child rearing and relationship struggles are just but a sample of stages in our lives when an unbiased view can serve as a potential lifesaver, and where we can be our own worst enemy.

That is why the sages of old have advised and instructed to "Appoint a mentor for yourself!" Find yourself someone who can be your guide, your objective compass—pushing, advising and instructing you on how you can be the real you.

Therapists are nice (and expensive) and there are times when they are needed. But not every issue calls for therapy. There are the times when all we need is someone who knows us, who cares for us, a wise person with a little life experience who can save us from ourselves—by seeing the reality for what it is, rather than what we perceive it to be. And dedicated. The mentor must be dedicated.

Let me share an insight. Shortly before his passing, Moses established "Cities of Refuge." What is a City of Refuge? If a person was guilty of manslaughter, and a family member of the victim was chasing after him to kill him to avenge his next of kin's death, these cities served as a safe zone where the killer could stay and – in the words of the Torah (Deuteronomy 4:42) – "live."

From the fact that Torah says that he should "live" in them, and it's a given that one cannot live without Torah, our Sages ruled that the killer's Torah teacher must accompany his pupil to his city of refuge!

A real mentor follows you to exile. A real mentor is there for you even when you don't think you need him. A real mentor will pull you by the bootstraps out of any rut you fall in.

My dear friends, may we all find such mentors, and may we serve as such mentors to others.

Oh, what a world it will be...

Slice of LIFE

RISING FROM UNDER THE CHAIR

By Elchonon Lesches

His eyes had seen what eyes should never see; his ears had heard what ears should never hear. Selected to live through the horrors of war, he left Hungary immediately after the Allied liberation, travelling to a distant country where he could begin life anew.

It was strange this new country, a country of pastel colours, drenching sunshine, and fun-loving people. He married a Holocaust survivor and began raising a family again. When a group of survivors formed to build a synagogue, he was there, helping to round out their fledgling congregation. But it was not like "the old country." Even the young rabbi sent there by the Lubavitcher Rebbe seemed different than the Hungarian rabbis he had revered. The rabbi was an energetic scholar with a proliferation of seemingly impossible ideas - a Jewish Day School, adult education and, of course, outreach.

He often grumbled to his Hungarian friends as they waited patiently for morning services to start, "A succa on wheels, a menorah in the mall, tefilin in the streets - what will they think of next?" His colleagues commiserated, but pointed out how the congregation had swelled in size, all thanks to their charismatic rabbi. The new worshipers came in all shapes: long hair, earrings, baggy street clothes, but at least they came. And soon the Day School materialized, together with a summer camp and a broad kosher network.

He grudgingly agreed from his seat, the last one on the back bench. It was "his" seat, a hallowed place no one dared violate. Woe to the child who left a candy wrapper on his chair! His voice would resonate throughout the shul as he condemned all parties involved - the child, the parents, and, of course, the candy man. With time, the newer members learned to tolerate and even respect this cantankerous old-timer who had lived through much.

Early one Saturday morning, with the

rabbi's animated class in Chasidic philosophy well under-way, he ambled through the shul until he reached the back row, and stopped at his seat in horror. A book laid there - a picture book! The book was a glossy photo-journal album celebrating 30 years of the Rebbe's leadership. "Disgrace of disgraces!" he blazed angrily. "A picture book in a shul!" He shook the book and threw it violently under the bench.

The class came to sudden standstill; a shocked silence filled the room. The rabbi stood up abruptly, walked to the back row, and began a story: While Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism, languished in jail on trumped up charges, his distraught followers turned to a well-connected opponent of Chasidism, asking for his help in freeing the Rebbe. After some thought, he agreed on condition that the Rebbe would visit three leading scholars within the non-Chasidic world. Rabbi Shneur Zalman readily agreed to this request.

After his release, Rabbi Shneur Zalman visited three great scholars. On one of his visits, he noticed a book lying on the floor, kicked under a chair. It was Noam Elimelech, a chasidic work written by the celebrated Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk. Shaken, Rabbi Shneur Zalman picked up the book, kissed it reverentially, and placed it carefully on the table. His host, the scholar, looked at him disparagingly. "Do you know the author?" he jeered.

"I will tell you the absolute truth," replied Rabbi Shneur Zalman. "Were you to take the author, stuff him under a chair, and sit on the chair, the author would accept his lot humbly! Such is his greatness."

"And I say the same," declared the rabbi. "Were you to place the Rebbe himself under the bench, he would accept it quietly! Such is his greatness." The rabbi returned to his class. From the corner of his eye, he watched as the book was lifted from the floor, dusted quickly, and placed on a nearby bench.

A few months passed. One day, the old timer approached the rabbi. "I'm visiting Israel next week," he said. "I plan to stop in New York and see your Rebbe. I want to judge the Rebbe myself. I want to see if he is as humble as you claim.

You see, I still remember your story." And so he arrived, entering the shul of 770 just in time for the afternoon service. As he waited for the Rebbe to arrive, he thought of the Chasidic masters who graced Hungary in the pre-war years. He recalled their saintliness, their wisdom, their empathy and concern, but the rabbi's remark about absolute humility had caught him by surprise. It seemed paradoxical: a Rebbe who wielded absolute influence across the globe, whose dedicated soldiers were manning congregations worldwide, whose empire was the envy of every other Jewish organization - could still epitomize humility and remain self-effacing.

He watched curiously as the Rebbe entered the quiet hall, wearing the simple caftan and fedora the rabbi back home wore every day. Two, three attendants followed at a respectful distance. The Rebbe came closer, closer, and stopped right in front of the visitor. He bent down ... and picked up a tiny scrap of paper dirtying the synagogue floor. Then the Rebbe straightened up, looked penetratingly at the visitor, and walked to his place for the prayers.

The congregation began praying, but the visitor heard nothing. Shaken to the core, he realized that the Rebbe's humility far exceeded the story related by the rabbi. No one had forced the Rebbe into an unpleasant position; he had voluntarily stooped to the floor in order to tidy a house of worship. The attendants standing nearby, the hundreds of chasidim in attendance, the inestimable workload on the Rebbe's shoulders - all disappeared before a scrap of paper. This was true humility, on a scale that far exceeded anything he had seen in "the old country."

He left fortified, armed with a mission. He knew why the Rebbe had favoured him with a careful look. He would stop carping about irrelevant matters, forever finding fault with the wonderful people who spent their lives inspiring others. Instead, he would join forces with the rabbi, help sponsor his succa on wheels, tefilin in the streets, Jewish Day School, or whatever other innovation that he deemed necessary to revitalized local Jewish life. The Rebbe had taught him to "clean up" his act. And so he did.
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ISSUE 1257

MOSHIACH MATTERS

"I besought G-d at that time, saying...let me go over, I pray You, that I may see the good land" (Deut. 3:23-25). Concerning this verse, the Midrash relates that Moses beseeched G-d with 515 prayers (the numerical equivalent of the word "va'etchanan" - "and I besought") to be allowed to enter the Land of Israel. Even after G-d explicitly told him, "Do not continue to speak to Me any more of this matter," Moses persisted. We learn from this that we must never give begging G-d to allow us back into the land of Israel, with the coming of Moshiach; for we have been promised that we are the last generation of exile and the first generation of Redemption.

(The Rebbe Shabbat Parshat Devarim, 5751)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

16th of Teveth,
5715 [1955]

This is in reply to your letter of January 5, in which you ask my advice concerning the friction that arose with regard to the marriage celebration, planned in March.

Let me at once rectify your error in evaluating the situation, which I ascribe to the fact that you are personally involved right in the midst of it, for it is difficult under such circumstances to evaluate a situation more calmly and objectively, as the person who views it from a distance.

The error consists in overlooking the fact that the marriage ushers in a new life for the young couple and lays the foundations for the happiness of the entire future life, while the external aspects of the celebration connected with the hall, band, or dancing and the like, are matters of a few hours duration and of no lasting consequence, thus entirely disproportionate to the real important things which are fundamental.

Needless to say, the most insignificant thing can be blown up to assume tremendous proportions, as people sometimes make a mountain out of a molehill, with the result that it causes anxiety and heartache as if the thing was really significant. But the fact is that what appears to you as a problem of great consequence is in reality nothing that can have any bearing on the future if approached correctly.

As to the question, who is right and who has to give in, I trust that you can answer it yourself even on a little reflection. Consider the issues: on the one hand you have the local convention to make the wedding festivities in a certain way, of which your family is in favour. If your Chosson [groom] will not conform, and will try to explain why, the explanation may not be accepted, and your family will feel hurt, for a time at any rate.

On the other hand, he believes that if he did conform, he will offend the Almighty going against His will. In addition to the fact that one is always dependent upon G-d's grace, this is something which is of fundamental importance, connected with the very foundations of the entire future.

Even if there were only a remote chance of doubt as to its possible effects, it would be prudent to avoid it.

Suppose a businessman is offered a transaction which has two possibilities: either to earn a penny, or to lose a million dollars. What a reasonable businessman would do in such a case is obvious. Yet here it is only a question of money, where the differences between a penny and a million can be measured. In your case it is not a question of relative proportion, for the issues are: following an external convention, and thereby jeopardizing the spiritual and material happiness of two young lives who are about to join their lives and fate and build a home together. The choice should not be difficult to make.

Whatever justification there may be for your chagrin at not having been told about it earlier, the set up of your problem does not change thereby, inasmuch as your Chosson is not motivated by a personal whim, but something which he considers of fundamental importance, as many tens of thousands of other religious Jews do.

...If it were a valid argument to do what others do, or even what the majority does, Jews who are, and always have been, in the minority would have long ago disappeared from the face of the earth, and even within our people, too, those strictly adhering to our Torah and Mitzvos [commandments], kashrus [kosher dietary laws], etc., are unfortunately in the minority in recent times.

Let me conclude by reiterating what I told you when you were here. The preparations for the wedding and the wedding itself - this is the foundation of your future home among our people. As in any structure, the most important thing is the foundation, for all effort and money poured into a building, into the walls, decorations, interior and exterior, furniture, etc. would be to no avail unless the foundations are strong and lasting, and no chances, however remote, should be permitted to jeopardize the whole structure, especially as it can be so easily avoided.

I trust that you will find the suitable words to explain to your mother the true aspects of the situation, and that from now on there will be no more friction among all concerned, and that you will have only good news to write about.

With prayerful wishes that the wedding take place in a happy and auspicious hour, for a happy future materially and spiritually.

CUSTOMS CORNER

SAID RABBI SHIMON BEN GAMLIEL: THERE WERE NO GREATER FESTIVALS FOR ISRAEL THAN THE 15TH OF AV AND YOM KIPPUR. (TALMUD, TAANIT 26B)

The Talmud goes on to list several joyous events which occurred on the 15th day of the month of Av:

1. The dying of the generation of the Exodus ceased.
2. The tribes of Israel were permitted to intermarry.
3. The tribe of Benjamin was permitted to re-enter the community
4. Hoshea ben Elah opened the roads to Jerusalem.
5. The dead of Betar were allowed to be buried.

For more information on these joyous occurrences please visit Chabad.org

A WORD

from the Director

"There were no greater festivals in Israel than the 15th of Av and Yom Kippur," the Mishna tells us. The 15th of Av corresponds this year to Friday, July 31. What is so special about the 15th of Av that it is singled out together with Yom Kippur from all the other festivals?

A number of special events throughout Jewish history took place on the 15th of Av. They were: 1) The tribe of Benjamin was permitted once again to marry the remainder of the Jewish people; 2) The Generation of the Desert ceased to die; they had previously been condemned to perish in the desert because of the sin of the spies; 3) Hoshea Ben Elah removed the blockades that the rebel Jerobeam had set up to prevent the Jews from going to Jerusalem for the festivals; 4) The cutting of the wood for the Holy Altar was completed; 5) Permission was granted by the Romans to bury the slain of Betar.

These five events in themselves do not seem adequate enough reason to make the 15th of Av a festival greater than any other. There is another, all-encompassing reason.

The five festive events on the fifteenth of Av, are the counterpart to the five tragic events of Tisha B'Av - the day when the two Holy Temples were destroyed, signalling the start of the long exile we are still enduring - tragedies which were the result of the Jews' sins. Tisha B'Av is the nadir of Jewish physical and spiritual life. The 15th of Av transforms the negativity of Tisha B'Av to the greatest good - "there were no greater festivals in Israel than the fifteenth of Av." The ultimate goal of the tragedies of the month of Av is that they should be transformed into a greater good - the supreme festival of the 15th of Av.

But these tragedies are not without purpose. It is specifically after the awesome decline of Tisha B'Av that we can reach the loftiest heights, heights that would otherwise be inaccessible.

The common theme behind all the reasons for the 15th of Av is Ahavat Yisrael, the practice of which eradicates the cause of the exile, and therefore automatically the exile itself.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED



When the sixth Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, reached an age appropriate to marry, he was faced with having to choose between several prospective brides. One of those suggested was the young Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, daughter of Rabbi Avraham Schneerson of Kishinev, the son of Rabbi Yisrael Noach Shneersohn, who was the Rebbe of Nezhin and son of the Tzemech Tzedek, the third Chabad Rebbe.

The prospective bridegroom's father, the Rebbe Rashab [Rabbi Shalom Dovber, fifth Chabad Rebbe], was in favour of this match (which eventually did take place), but his mother, Rebbetzin Rivka, wife of the deceased fourth Chabad Rebbe, had other plans.

The Rebbe Rashab said to his mother, "Let us follow the advice of the Torah, and ask the boy himself what he wants to do." They called in the young Yosef Yitzchak, gave him the names of all the possible matches and told him to make the decision for himself.

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak replied, "When Abraham sought a wife for his son Isaac, he sent his servant Eliezer to his own kinsmen to find a suitable match, saying, 'But you shall go to my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son.' "Evidently, he had decided to marry Nechama Dina.

Now in those days, the custom of Rebbetzin Rivka was to distribute honey cake to everyone in the community on the day before Yom Kippur. Her son, the Rebbe Rashab, would be the first to receive a piece, after which all the Chasidim and townspeople would file past her and be given a piece of cake and her blessings for a good and sweet year.

That year, during which the match between Yosef Yitzchak and Nechama Dina was arranged, the Rebbe Rashab came to his mother as usual for the honey cake before Yom Kippur. On that occasion, however, he asked for her forgiveness, as the match had not been made according to her wishes. Rebbetzin Rivka responded with the following story:

There was once a Jew living in an isolated settlement with few Jewish neighbours, who wanted to spend Yom Kippur in a nearby town in order to be able to pray properly with a minyan. Many such isolated Jewish families would relocate before the High Holidays in order to be able to celebrate together with their brethren. The man informed his wife and family that they would be making the trip into town on the day before Yom Kippur, and asked them to ready themselves for the journey.

When it came time to leave, however, he was the only one ready. The rest of the family had not yet finished packing and making preparations.

He tried to hurry them, as it was Erev Yom Kippur, but it was obvious they would not be leaving for some time. The man therefore suggested that he start out on the journey himself, walking slowly, so that they would later be able to catch up with him. The entire family would meet at a particular tree and continue on their way together.

The father set off alone and soon reached the location where they were supposed to meet. Tired by his long walk (and by the drink of schnapps he had downed that morning), he decided to rest in the inviting shade of the tall tree. Lying down on a comfortable spot not visible from the main road, the man soon fell asleep and dozed for many hours.

Meanwhile, the other family members were hurrying along, trying to reach town before sundown. By the time they reached the tree near which their father

was fast asleep they had quite forgotten about their agreement, and passed him right by.

Towards evening the man woke up from his nap. Seeing the advancing shadows, he realized that he would never be able to reach the town before it got dark, nor would he be able to return home without transgressing the holiest day of the year. He would have to spend Yom Kippur where he was, in the middle of nowhere, under the open sky.

Lifting his eyes to heaven, the man cried out, "Master of the Universe! My children have totally forgotten about me! I hereby forgive them; now You must forgive Your children who have forgotten about You!"

Rebbetzin Rivka finished her story with the following words addressed to her son, the Rebbe Rashab: "May G-d forgive all of us the same way that I have forgiven you."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

I besought the L-rd...let me go over, I pray...(Deut. 3:23-25)

In his reproach to the Jewish nation before his passing, Moses recounted his attempt to sway the Divine decree that he not enter the Land of Israel. Moses' intensive praying taught future generations to persist in prayer. A person should never say, "What purpose is there in my praying further?" Even though G-d had clearly told Moses that he would not bring the Jewish nation into the land, and even though Joshua had already been appointed his successor, still, Moses prayed. This demonstrates to us that a person must never say, "My illness is fatal, my last will is made, and my possessions are distributed. Why shall I continue to pray?" (Yalkut Shmoni - the Midrash Says)

And you shall teach them to your children...(Deut. 6:7)

It is the duty of Jewish educators to remove from the child any vestige of inferiority complex about his Jewishness in a predominantly non-Jewish environment, until he understands that democracy and freedom are not cauldrons of assimilation, but rather the contrary; they offer everyone the privilege to have his place, to enjoy his rights, and to live according to his faith without compromise, the opportunity for the Jew to fulfill his life's destiny. (Sichot Kodesh)

And you shall teach them to your children..."

Some claim that if you tell today's youth the verse from Proverbs: "He who refrains from using his rod hates his son; and who loves his son disciplines him morning by morning," they will run away. This is not true. They will only say that they want to hear this proverb from the mouth of one who conducts himself as King Solomon wished, in all aspects of his life, not only when it comes to disciplining children. They yearn for consistency, sincerity. To suggest that the solution of the problem is to "burn the rod," to eliminate authority and to abolish Jewish education, is an absolute distortion. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

CANDLE LIGHTING



BEGINS:	AUGUST 19, 2016	ENDS:
5:30	MELBOURNE	6:29
5:29	ADELAIDE	6:26
5:11	BRISBANE	6:04
6:24	DARWIN	7:15
5:08	GOLD COAST	6:02
5:34	PERTH	6:30
5:10	SYDNEY	6:07
5:17	CANBERRA	6:14
5:16	LAUNCESTON	6:17
5:32	AUCKLAND	6:30
5:26	WELLINGTON	6:27
5:13	HOBART	6:15
5:07	BYRON BAY	6:01

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS VA'ESCHANAN • SHABBOS NACHAMU • 15 AV • 19 AUGUST

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:30 PM
	MINCHA:	5:35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:05 PM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:39 AM
	MINCHA:	5:25 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:29 PM

WEEKDAYS	SUN-FRI:	8.00 AM/9.15 PM
	SHACHARIS:	5.40 PM
	MINCHA:	6.20 PM
	MAARIV:	