

LAMPLIGHTER

17 Elul
Parshas Ki Savo
Shabbos Chai Elul
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The Torah portion of Ki Savo begins by saying: "When you come to the land that G-d your L-rd is giving you as a heritage, occupying and settling it, you shall take of the first fruits...and go to the site that G-d will choose as the place for the indwelling of His name." Rashi comments: "This teaches us that [the Jewish people] were not obligated to bring the first fruits until they conquered and divided the land."

Offering the first fruits served for the Jewish people as a gesture of thanks to G-d for leading them into the Land of Israel and allowing them to enjoy its bounty. It thus indicated that they were not ingrates.

The above is also related to Chai Elul, (the eighteenth day of Elul), which occurred this past week. For it is the birthday of two great luminaries—the Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chassidic Movement, and Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the founder of the Chabad-Lubavitch segment within that movement. Among the fundamental principles they taught are the obligation to love one's fellow Jew and the concept of the intrinsic unity of the Jewish people which are alluded to at the beginning of this week's Torah portion, the week in which Chai Elul occurs.

How are love and unity among Jews best achieved? When two or more people unite, then no matter how strong their bond may be it is not absolute unity, since they are intrinsically disparate entities; their union is but an extension to their essential being. We thus understand that the unity of the Jewish people, which is an absolutely true and essential unity stems from the fact that all Jews, by virtue of the common Source of their souls, are truly one.

Nevertheless, the true unity of the Jewish people finds expression specifically when Jews, existing as distinct and separate individuals, are even then, truly united as one. Indeed, if the unity of the Jewish people were not to find expression among Jews who exist as distinct individuals, this would prove that their unity does not stem from the essence of their being, for an individual's essence must be found in all his particular and detailed aspects.

This, then, was the deeper reason as to why the Jewish people were not obligated to bring their offerings of the first fruits until they had conquered and divided the land—for it served as an indication of the true and absolute love and unity that existed among them, to the extent that no individual could be truly joyful so long as there existed one fellow Jew who did not yet have a portion in Israel.

And as to ourselves, by truly loving our fellow Jews, we can once again merit to "come to the land" of Israel - through our Righteous Moshiach, speedily in our days.

Time Travel

By Shlomo Chaim Kesselman

The physical world we live in imposes many limitations on us, the most basic of them being time. Whether we like it or not, we're stuck in the present. Even with all the advances in science and technology, the past and the future remain elusive as ever. For better or for worse, what's done is done and there's nothing we can do to change that.

Chassidus teaches that there is one exception - Teshuvah (repentance). Teshuvah has the power to turn back the clock and transform the past, to the extent that aveiros (sins) are treated as mitzvos.

How is that possible, you may ask, time machines are exclusive to children's fantasies and science fiction? The truth is though, if we truly understand what Teshuvah is, it is perfectly understandable how it can alter the past.

Teshuvah is not simply repentance. The word Teshuvah in truth means to return, to revert to the way things were and are meant to be. And that is achieved by tapping into the essence of the soul, the place where the Jew and G-d are forever one. An essential connection with G-d, a bond so infinitely strong it can never be severed. Every Jew, no matter how many sins or misdeeds he/she committed, has a part of him/her that remains pure and uncontaminated. That place, found in the deepest recesses of the soul, is eternally bound with G-d. Teshuvah means to return to that place, and experience the connection. To become cognizant that we are one with G-d, and thereby strengthen our commitment to Him.

Since this connection with G-d is an infinite one, it follows, that if revealed, we can accomplish infinite things. Therefore through doing, Teshuvah we can even rectify the past. Time travel is only impossible because we are limited beings with limited capabilities. If, however, we reveal our infinite bond with G-d, we become capable of the infinite. Through experiencing sincere feelings of regret and remorse, our past wrongdoings become transformed into good deeds, and our aveiros (sins) become mitzvos

Therefore, as we approach the High holidays, let us all do Teshuvah. Let us repent joyfully, not out of fear of punishment or hope for reward, for that is immature. Let us do real Teshuvah, recognize how each and every one of us is in truth one with G-d, and no matter how we've tainted ourselves, that connection remains strong as ever. It needs only to be revealed and cultivated.

When we realize that we are in truth one with G-d, we will surely do Teshuvah correctly. When our asking G-d to forgive us is born from a feeling of closeness to G-d, and a sincere desire to deepen that connection, G-d will surely forgive us. The past, present and future will all become transformed and we will surely have a sweet new year

Slice of LIFE

Twelve Years Later

A visit to the Chernobyl reactor and the nearby abandoned town of Pripyat highlighted a fact-finding mission by Chabad's Children of Chernobyl's Director Yossie Raichik and Medical Liaison Jay Litvin that included visits to area families and to cancer hospitals in the Zhitomer and Chernigov Oblasts of Ukraine, two contaminated regions close to the reactor.

During their visit to the abandoned city of Pripyat, located only 3 kilometers from Chernobyl, they discovered a macabre memorial to the deadly potential of nuclear energy gone awry.

Empty streets and apartment buildings; decaying playgrounds and overgrown entry-ways; fading signs hung over the city's once bustling restaurants, cultural center and TV repair shop; and the vacant plaza in front of the statuesque Communist Party headquarters stand as decaying symbols of Chernobyl's deadly effects.

Tours of regional hospitals revealed decrepit operating rooms with cracked and broken surgical tables. Medicines are in short supply and patients are required to purchase what little is available.

"Skyrocketing rates of disease were verified by all medical personnel," said Raichik, "but even worse were the near barbaric health care facilities and the paucity of medical supplies and medicines available to treat these children.

"Dr. Gissa Goldjena, head of the cancer hospital in Chernigov, told me that chemotherapy was available, but rarely given," reported

Jay Litvin. "She explained that chemotherapy is very expensive and few people can afford the medicines on their average salary of \$40 per month. When I asked what happens to these people, she lifted her hands in a gesture of futility and told me that they are sent home to die."

According to Dr. Goldjena, cancer patients are not told of their diagnosis. "In this part of Ukraine it is like being given a death sentence," she said. "What's the point?"

Hospital patients need to purchase not only medicines, but also all food and medical supplies, including bandages and syringes. Many go without medical care because they cannot pay.

In the Zhitomer oblast, Raichik and Litvin visited an oncology center that will soon receive a mammography machine donated by Chabad's Children of Chernobyl.

"The rate of breast cancer in these regions is about five times higher than before 1986, the year the reactor exploded," said Raichik. "These hospitals have no way to screen for breast cancer and even their standard x-ray equipment is over 30 years old."

The increased susceptibility of Jewish women to breast cancer further prompted the organization to provide a means for early detection and more accurate diagnosis.

During visits to families in Kiev and Chernigov, Raichik and Litvin encountered poverty, sickness, desperation, and despair.

"Family life seems to have crumbled," said Litvin. "Of the families we visited, only one had a father living in the home. Many women care for both their children and their elderly parents on an average income of \$40-\$50 per month. They live in tiny, bare apartments."

The mothers told the CCOC representatives that they worried for the health of their children following Chernobyl, and that doctors did not provide the required treatment.

"We are told that our children need good and plentiful food, vitamins and medicines, but we can barely find them or afford them," said Leena K., a 37 year old Kiev mother

whose daughter was leaving Israel the next day while she stayed to care for her 73 year old invalid father who lay in the next room.

Against this background of radiation, poverty, sickness, and despair, Litvin and Raichik joined twenty-one children and their families at the Kiev airport on Thursday morning, July 15. Among them was a boy who was in utero at the time of the Chernobyl disaster and now, at the age of thirteen, weighs only 60 pounds and has grown to the height of an average eight-year-old. Another had recently undergone lymphatic surgery, and third had barely recovered from fouled emergency room care of his latest asthma attack.

One mother had been in Chernobyl teaching in the local school at the time of the disaster. She was pregnant with the daughter she was now sending to Israel. Another family had been vacationing in the lush forests surrounding Chernobyl. One boy had been an infant in Gomel, a city in Belarus that took the worst of the fallout and now has the highest rate of thyroid cancer in the world. And many younger children were being sent to Israel to escape the contamination that continues to poison food and water throughout northern Ukraine and southern Belarus.

"As the plane took off from Kiev, headed towards Israel, I offered prayers of thanks," said Raichik. "While the problems suffered by the people of Ukraine are nearly impossible to fathom, we were able to bring another 21 children to safety and to offer them hope for a healthy and productive future. I was happy for the ones we were saving; worried for the thousands left behind."

This 44th flight brought the total number of children evacuated by Chabad to Israel to 1,794. Once in Israel the children live on special campuses in Kfar Chabad where they are provided medical care, nutrition, and education.

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Editors: Shlomo Chaim Kesselman and Mendel Bacher

P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Greetings and blessings,

...I will conclude with subjects of contemporary relevance which I wrote to another person: At the farbrengen of Chai Elul [the anniversary of the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov - founder of general Chasidism and Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi - founder of Chabad Chasidim], my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe Shlita, related that the early chassidim would say: "Chai Elul injects vitality into the Divine service of 'I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine.'" (The first letters of the words of that verse combine to form the name Elul.)

It is possible to explain that a living person and a person who is not alive both possess all 248 limbs. The difference is that a living person also possesses a soul that enables the body to grow from childhood to maturity and enables him to move from place to place.

Our Rabbis (Tanya, ch. 38) explain that the intent of the mitzvos [commandments] - to cling to G-d - resembles the soul for the body of the mitzvos. This comes through generating or uncovering one's love and fear of G-d. This comes through the study of pnimiyus haTorah [the inner teachings of the Torah] in general, and in particular through the study of Chasidus, as explained in several sources.

Through the intent of clinging to G-d, one comes to the greatest growth and movement possible. Indeed, this alone represents true movement, as is well known with regard to the concept of "one who progresses" and "those who stand." [1] This progress comes about when a limited created being clings to the Creator who is unlimited, as it is written: "And you who cling to G-d, your L-rd, are living...."

This is the interpretation of the adage that Chai Elul, the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov, the day when his teachings were revealed, and the birthday of the Alter Rebbe, injects vitality into the Divine service of "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine," i.e., enabling the created beings to cling to the Creator.

On a deeper level, it is possible to explain as follows: Even a limb that is not alive has flesh, sinews, and bones. All of these serve as analogies within our Divine service. The bones refer to the Divine service of the mind, the flesh, to that of the heart and the sinews, to the connection between the two, as explained in Likkutei Torah, Parshas Pinchas, the second discourse entitled Tzav... Korboni Lachmi. Nevertheless, as they exist in their own right, they do not represent true vitality. That is achieved only through the preface of kabbalas ol, the acceptance of G-d's yoke. In particular, this refers to the kabbalas ol of Rosh Hashana. See the discourse published for Rosh Hashana this year with regard to the concepts of individual life-energy, general life-energy, vitality that exists to grant life to others, and essential vitality.

Even a limb that is not alive has flesh, sinews, and bones. All of these serve as analogies within our Divine service.

With wishes for a kesiva vachasima tova [may you be inscribed and sealed for good],

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

Is It Right to Be Upbeat on Rosh Hashanah?

Question: I always associated going to synagogue on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur with heaviness, guilt and a somber atmosphere. I guess that's what I grew up with. But last year I came to your services and found them to be happy, light, musical and joyous. I enjoyed the experience, but I'm wondering, is it fitting to be so upbeat on days when we are seeking forgiveness for our sins? Sorry for being so direct, but is what you are doing authentic, or just about feeling good?

Answer: There is a curious discussion in Jewish law about bees' legs:

What happens if a bee's leg falls off and gets stuck in a vat of honey? Bees are not kosher, and detached bees' legs can't always be extracted from honey. Does that mean that the whole vat is non-kosher?

One opinion says no. The honey is kosher and you can eat it, bee legs and all. Because one of the fascinating properties of honey is that foreign bits that fall into it eventually become honey too. The bee legs dissolve and lose their distinct identity, so there is nothing non-kosher left, just honey.

What is unique about honey as it's described in Jewish literature is that it doesn't overpower with brute force, like fire which violently consumes whatever it touches. Honey overpowers with sweetness. The sweetness of honey is so intense that everything it touches is overwhelmed and succumbs to its sweet embrace.

This power of honey represents a deeper approach to the High Holidays. Yes, these are somber times, and there is a real need to return to G-d. But the introspection and good resolutions that these days inspire need not come from a place of guilt. We don't repent out of fear of fire and brimstone. Rather, when we experience the sweetness of Divine love, when we feel how close G-d is to us and what a blessing it is to be a Jew, our joy can melt away whatever is evil and purify us from our less than kosher ways.

This is why we start the High Holidays by dipping challah and apple in honey. Only a Judaism that is infused with sweetness and joy has the power to dissolve negativity, cynicism and indifference, and make us all kosher again. Sadness and heaviness will not cleanse our soul. But the experience of sweetness will.

So don't just dip your apple in honey, immerse yourself in joyful Judaism. It's the bee's knees.

I take this opportunity to wish you a year of overwhelming sweetness; may all bee legs in all their forms melt away.

(Sources: Shem Mishmuel 5681; Tosfos Avodah Zara 69a, Hahu.)

Note: In an actual case where insect parts are found in food, an authority on Jewish law should be consulted as the law is complex

A WORD

from the Director

This Shabbat is Chai (the 18th of) Elul, the birthday of both the Baal Shem Tov (founder of the Chasidic movement) in 5458-1698 and the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism in 5505-1745. In the same way that the Chasidic movement revitalized Jewish life and introduced a new path in the service of G-d, so too does Chai Elul ("chai" - from the Hebrew word meaning "life") introduce an element of liveliness and vitality into our Divine service in the month of Elul, the main theme of which is repentance.

A basic fundamental of Chasidut is the joyful service of G-d. As surprising as it may seem, Chasidic philosophy teaches that even the mitzva of teshuva (repentance) should be approached with happiness rather than trepidation. If all of the Torah's mitzvot should be fulfilled with joy, how much more so the mitzva of teshuva, which is so great it has the power to perfect all other commandments!

At first glance, the pairing of teshuva with joy appears unrealistic. Repentance is serious business: conducting an honest assessment of one's past behavior, feeling remorse for one's misdeeds, and begging G-d for forgiveness for transgressing His will. How are we to do this out of a sense of joy?

The answer is that joy, as defined by Chasidut, is not the opposite of seriousness. Joy does not mean frivolity, a life without responsibilities or mindless revelry. Rather, joy itself is serious business, a deep feeling created when a Jew contemplates the enormous merit he has to have been born Jewish, to be able to study G-d's Torah and to fulfill His commandments. When a Jew appreciates that he is never alone and that G-d is always with him, his joy becomes the impetus to draw even closer to the Infinite.

With Rosh Hashana approaching, what could make us happier than the knowledge that doing teshuva during Elul is easier than at any other time of year? For the gates of repentance are always open, and G-d always gives us the opportunity to return to Him.

J. I. Gutnick

Here's my Story

Personal Encounters
With The Rebbe. Culled From JEM's
'My Encounter' Project

Humility

In 1977, when I graduated from the New York College of Podiatric Medicine, after doing a residency at Maimonides Hospital, I opened an office in Crown Heights. Part of the reason I chose Crown Heights was that, although not being Chabad Lubavitch myself, I had a very nice feeling toward the Chabad community.

Of course, before I opened up my office in Crown Heights, I wrote to the Rebbe to ask for a blessing. And an answer came back that the Rebbe would give me a blessing on one condition – that the halachic authority of Crown Heights would rule that I was not violating Jewish law concerning unfair competition, meaning that my opening a practice would not put someone else out of business and deprive him of a livelihood. The Rebbe was very strict about this issue – that one person wouldn't harm another in this way.

I did what he asked, and then he gave me a blessing.

I started working in Crown Heights, and then one day a call came into my office that there was a woman who wanted me to make a house call. I did not usually make house calls, as the streets could be dangerous for a doctor carrying his medical bag, but I took the call to find out the woman's problem and why she couldn't come into the office.

It turned out she was an elderly woman who had recently fractured her hip, so I asked her, "What is your name?" And she said, "My name is Mrs. Schneerson, and I live on President Street."

So five minutes later, as I was leaving the office with my medical bag my secretary said to me, "I thought you didn't make house calls?" I replied, "If I practiced in London and Queen Elizabeth called, I would also make a house call, even if she lived in a bad neighborhood." Now, I wasn't a hundred percent certain that it was the Rebbetzin who asked for the house call – it could have been someone else with the same name, but as soon as I walked in the door, I knew she had to be the Rebbetzin. It was the only Lubavitch house that I had ever visited which didn't have a single picture of the Rebbe.

After that, I used to go and see her every couple of months to take care of her feet. This went on for many years. And I remember her always very gracious, lively and friendly whenever I came there.

Shortly after that, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner, the Rebbe's secretary, called me and asked if I would make a house call to the Rebbe. By that time, I didn't have an office in Crown Heights anymore, but of course I went.

The first time I treated the Rebbe, he wanted to pay me. To me it was a big honor, and I didn't want to take any money. But he said to me, "That's not the way this works. I'm giving you a check for your services and I expect you to cash this check."

When I left, I said to Rabbi Groner, "I really don't want to cash the Rebbe's check; I feel it's not proper." But Rabbi Groner said, "If you don't cash the Rebbe's check, the Rebbe will never allow you to come here again. He is very insistent, whenever anyone does a professional service for him, that he pay the person. He doesn't accept no for an answer."

So I made a copy of the check, but I cashed it. On subsequent visits I

told him that his insurance will pay for everything. And he accepted that.

The Rebbe was in his late 80s and early 90s during the years I took care of him. He typically called me in before a Jewish holiday because that's when he'd have to stand on his feet for hours on end.

I remember one particular instance just before Passover. A few days before the holiday, the secretary asked me to come take care of the Rebbe. The Rebbe was very busy in the office for Passover, and they asked if I could come to his house late at night.

I came to his house. And when I got there, the person who opened the door said that the Rebbe was resting. I said, "Fine. Don't worry about it, I'll go home. I'll come back tomorrow."

He said, "Wait one moment..." When he returned, he told me that the Rebbe wanted me to stay: "You made the trip here. He doesn't want to waste your time."

I said, "I don't mind coming back tomorrow."

"The Rebbe insists that you stay."

Five minutes later, the Rebbe hobbled down. I could see he was very, very tired. He had been up maybe for twenty-four hours or more, dealing with all kinds of issues. But he woke up and limped down.

I said to the Rebbe, "You know, I can come back tomorrow." But he insisted. "No. You made a long trip here. I want you to take care of me now."

I felt bad and, to this day when I remember it, I feel uncomfortable because I put him out of his way when he had been resting. I could've come back, but he didn't want to waste my time.

My time, he didn't want to waste! But who was I? A young doctor. And he was the world's greatest rabbi. And yet he was so humble not to impact my schedule by making me come back. And that has impressed me to this very day.

I can sum it up this way:

My specialty is pain management of the lower extremity of the foot and wound care. I lecture all over on this subject, and I've published many papers on it, so I get VIPs coming to me from all over the country for care, for some very serious, painful problems. Some of my patients are quite famous. But not one of them is as famous as the Rebbe was – he was known throughout the world. And yet, he was the most humble person that I ever met – I have never met anyone as humble.

Dr. Elliot Udell is a doctor of podiatric medicine specializing in foot and ankle pain management as well as in wound management. He was interviewed in his home in January, 2009.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Moses instructs the people of Israel: When you enter the land that G-d is giving to you as your eternal heritage, and you settle it and cultivate it, bring the first-ripened fruits (bikkurim) of your orchard to the Holy Temple, and declare your gratitude for all that G-d has done for you.

Our Parshah also includes the laws of the tithes given to the Levites and to the poor, and detailed instructions on how to proclaim the blessings and the curses on Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival—as discussed in the beginning of the Parshah of Re'eh. Moses reminds the people that they are G-d's chosen people, and that they, in turn, have chosen G-d.

The latter part of Ki Tavo consists of the Tochachah ("Rebuke"). After listing the blessings with which G-d will reward the people when they follow the laws of the Torah, Moses gives a long, harsh account of the bad things—illness, famine, poverty and exile—that shall befall them if they abandon G-d's commandments.

Moses concludes by telling the people that only today, forty years after their birth as a people, have they attained "a heart to know, eyes to see and ears to hear."

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 8 - 9 September	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	5:47	6:44
Adelaide	5:44	6:40
Brisbane	5:20	6:13
Darwin	6:25	7:14
Gold Coast	5:18	6:11
Perth	5:46	6:41
Sydney	5:24	6:20
Canberra	5:31	6:28
Launceston	5:36	6:36
Auckland	5:48	6:45
Wellington	5:45	6:45
Hobart	5:34	6:35
Byron Bay	5:17	6:10

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS KI SAVO SHABBOS CHAI ELUL • 17 ELUL • 8 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:47 PM
	MINCHA:	5:55 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:25 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:22 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	5:45 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:44 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	5:55 PM
	MAARIV:	6:40 PM