

LAMPLIGHTER

2 Tishrei
Parshas
Ha'azinu
1314
22 September
5778/2017

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The word "Haazinu," the name of this week's Torah reading, is generally translated as "listen." Literally, it means "give ear." In that vein, our Sages compare Moses' call: "Listen O heavens, and I will speak; earth, hear the words of my mouth," with Isaiah's prophecy: "Hear O heavens..., listen O earth."

They explain that Moses was "close to the heavens and far from the earth." Therefore, he was able to address the heavens at close range. Isaiah, by contrast, despite his lofty spiritual stature, was still "close to the earth and far from the heavens." And thus he used wording that reflected his level.

But questions arise: Why did Moses address the earth as well as the heavens? And why did Isaiah address the heavens as well as the earth? Why did they not confine themselves to speaking to the realm closest to them?

The answer to these questions depends on a fundamental tenet of Judaism: We must relate to both earth and heaven. For material and spiritual reality are meant to be connected, instead of existing on separate planes. Judaism involves drawing down spiritual reality until it meshes with worldly experience (Moses' contribution), and elevating worldly experience until a bond with the spiritual is established (Isaiah's contribution).

Indeed, the two initiatives can be seen as phases in a sequence. By revealing the Torah, Moses endowed every individual with the potential to become "close to the heavens." Isaiah developed the connection further, making it possible for a person to experience being "close to heavens" while "close to the earth" - involved in the mundane details of material life.

In a more particular sense, "the heavens" can be seen as an analogy for the Torah. The Torah is G-d's word, and through its study a person comes "close to the heavens," nearer to spiritual truth. Mitzvot (commandments), by contrast, are often associated with the earth, for their observance involves worldly matters.

In the first stage of a person's spiritual development, he should be "close to heaven," submerged in Torah study. Afterwards, he must realize that deed, not study, is the essential. Each of us must emerge from the protective cocoon of study and become "close to the earth," shouldering our part in the mission of making this world a dwelling for G-d.

Shopping Through Life

By Ari Shishler

You wander through the aisles, selecting products and placing them in your cart. You may have the supermarket mapped out and follow a carefully planned route from the paper products to the freezer section. Or you might run haphazardly back and forth, as you remember what you should have picked up three aisles earlier. Some of us know where we're headed in life, while others go in circles.

Perhaps you're from a small town with nothing more than a one-man convenience store, and are entering a supermarket for the first time. You'd stumble around wide-eyed, ogling at the variety and sheer quantity of products. You may even be tempted to take "one of this" and "one of that" and pile your shopping cart high. You'd soon realize that there's only so much your shopping cart can hold, only so much you can use. Life offers diverse experiences and opportunities, but nobody has it all. Take what you can handle and be successful, rather than trying to get everything.

As you meander through the rows of products, you might not find what you're looking for. Luckily, help is at hand. Look out for people wearing store uniforms and they will readily assist you. Look around and you'll find guides for life, people who know more than you do and can make your journey more pleasant, your goals more accessible.

Every once in awhile you'll encounter friendly, yet persistent, people who want to sell you an "amazing new product" you don't want and most likely don't need. Avoid the candy-coated superficialities of life, regardless of how well they may be marketed. Stay focused on what you really want to achieve.

Any good store will advise you to buy frozen goods last, and common sense says do the same with eggs. Living life to the fullest is about prioritizing, so that the sensitive parts of living don't crack under pressure, and so you can experience special moments while they last.

Once you've selected everything you need, it's time to check out. You can really have whatever you want from the shop, but you have to pay for it. At the till, you may decide you don't really need an item or realize that the advertised price was wrong and the bargain you thought you were getting is really no bargain. No problem, you can discard the unwanted items before you pay.

Do we really want to take all of last year with us? Rosh Hashanah is checkout time for the year. As we line up at the Supernal Till, it's time to reflect on this year's journey. Did we rush through the aisles collecting stuff, or did we stop to greet the friends we met en route? What have we loaded in our life's trolley? Do we really want to take all of last year with us or would we rather get rid of some of the poor choices we've made while we still can?

There's little time left before the New Year, but it's still not too late to run back into the store, and add one or two things to your cart. Another mitzvah or an extra prayer, a smile or a phone call.

It's almost closing time. Time to get your shopping cart in order.

Slice of LIFE

Hospital-bound, She Found a Way to Celebrate Rosh Hashanah

By Jane Falk

It was bad enough that my heartbeat went berserk and I had to be hospitalized. But on Rosh Hashanah? Not only would I miss the synagogue service I so loved, and not have visitors, but how could I possibly adhere to the High Holy Day commandments? Sure, G-d would forgive me – my life was at stake – but I couldn't bear the thought of ushering in the New Year without its glorious rituals.

The hospital had its own rituals, I soon discovered.

"My husband is Jewish, too," said the admissions clerk at the Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley, California, while glancing at my "religious affiliation" on the form I had just filled out.

"Is he a good husband?" I asked, at a loss for the right thing to say.

"Yes! My mother taught me that Jewish men make good husbands, and she was right."

After being admitted, I took the elevator to the 6th floor telemetry unit, where my arrhythmia would be monitored for three days while I began a new medication. I approached the nurses' station with trepidation. I held little hope that my religious requirements would be understood, much less accommodated.

"For religious reasons, I can't take calls starting at sunset, or turn my lights on or off, or buzz for help," I told the head nurse. Could anything sound weirder?

I didn't even ask about lighting candles. Not a good idea with oxygen around.

But she didn't blink. "Just write down the names of people you will permit the desk to update on your condition," she said. "When evening comes, I'll tape your light switch and put up a sign. If you need a nurse, you can just walk out and find one, since you'll be on a portable monitor. No problemo." Evidently, in Berkeley, anybody's ritual goes. Whew!

"What about meals?" I said with a sigh. "I'm strictly kosher."

"I'll send up a dietitian," the nurse said.

And she did. A Jewish dietician spent an hour with me, reviewing available choices, filling out menus and waxing nostalgia about the kosher home of her childhood. The kitchen adhered to our requests, but the packaged main dish never arrived hot. Well, better cold than nothing.

The next issue was to hear the shofar, the hallmark of the holiday. But the hospital rabbi was on vacation, the head chaplain informed me. What? Then I remembered that Yehuda Ferris, the Berkeley Chabad rabbi, had offered to come by. I called him.

"Sure. And get me room numbers of the other Jewish patients so I can blow shofar for them, too," he requested.

But the head chaplain informed me: "Sorry, the HIPAA laws prohibit disclosing religion except to the official hospital chaplains."

I then had a brainstorm; the rabbi could blow it over the loudspeaker like a "Code Blue." (It hadn't occurred to me that using a mic – electricity – was forbidden.) I appealed to the head nurse.

"No way. That's imposing your customs on others," she said.

"But surely you broadcast carols on Christmas," I responded.

"As a matter of fact, we don't. If we did it for Christmas, we'd have to do it for every religion's holidays. Do you have any idea how many different

religions are represented here every day?" she asked.

Foiled by political correctness. The horn would be blown in my room.

Oy, how would my 87-year-old Christian roommate respond? She hadn't uttered a peep when I kept my light on all night, but the shofar was pushing it.

But, surprise, surprise! "I have a Jewish son-in-law; I know all about Rosh Hashanah," my roommate said, looking forward to the event. Sure enough, on the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashanah, Ferris marched into my hospital room. His black fedora was cocked gangster-like to the right, and the tails of his frock coat flapped with every step. His svelte, youthful wife followed behind, pushing the youngest of their 10 children in a stroller.

The news traveled fast. My Kenya-born nurse rushed into the room and brought a Jewish colleague, who was proud to be an insider.

"Tekiyah." Through an imaginative picture window, the bearded rabbi was silhouetted against the rolling hills like a transplanted Chagall. He elongated the pitch-perfect "iy" so that the plaintive cry for attention from Above reverberated inside me.

"Shevarim." The interrupted chords of the second sequence embodied my feelings of humility and brokenness in the face of the Creator. "Teruah." The staccato notes of the third blast were my own heartbeats, now in regular rhythm, both pleading and grateful. My body quivered along with the notes, and tears rolled down my face.

"Tekiya." Everyone in the room, Jew and non-Jew, stood transfixed.

The hospital room had been transformed into a synagogue whose congregation consisted of my Kenyan nurse, my 87-year-old roommate with a Jewish son-in-law, a Jewish nurse with a non-Jewish husband, plus assorted passersby, and it felt holy.

G-d must have smiled, too, for He gave me a very good year.

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield in conjunction with the

Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

Editor: Shlomie Naparstek

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

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

The Lamplighter contains words from sacred writings. Please do not deface or discard.

ISSUE 1314

WEEKLY VIDEO



Please do not scan or access this Barcode on Shabbat or Yom Tov.

Content printed with permission from
Chabad.ORG

The Official homepage for worldwide Chabad-Lubavitch movement that promotes Judaism and provides daily Torah lectures and Jewish insights



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Is There Any Significance to the Number Seven?

I was pleased to receive your letter, in which you write that you have noticed that in the Torah, and in Yiddishkeit [Judaism] in general, the number 7 occupies a special place, and you ask why. You surely know that there are other numbers which are similarly significant and prominent, such as 10, 3 and others.

As a matter of fact, there is hardly any justification in questioning G-d's ways, as to why He has chosen certain numbers for special significance. For, as you will readily understand, G-d's wisdom is beyond human understanding.

The question may be asked, however, after G-d has chosen a certain number of days in which to create the world, namely the number 7, what can we learn from this?

Approaching the question from this point of view, it is possible to say that inasmuch as certain categories of things and creatures were created on separate days, instead of every living being created in one day, each category stands out separately in importance and in the scale of Creation, as also explained in the various commentaries on the Chumash [Pentateuch]. Man, who was created last, on the 6th day of Creation, is the most important creature. But the whole of Creation was crowned with the 7th day, the holy day of Shabbat, which is a source of life and blessing for all the creatures, inasmuch as the Shabbat is the "soul," so to speak, of the whole world.

And, because G-d, in His infinite wisdom, chose to create the world on the basis of this figure of 7 days, there are many matters of Torah and mitzvot which reflect this number 7, such as the 7 weeks of the Counting of the Omer, the 7 years of the Shemittah [Sabbatical year] cycle, the 7 shemittot of Yovel [the Jubilee], etc.

In a similar manner we must approach your question of why a girl becomes bat mitzvah at 12, while a boy becomes bar mitzvah at 13, and why not sooner or later? As you can well understand, duties and obligations must come together with sufficient maturity and understanding of their importance, and why they should be cherished and observed with love and devotion. According to G-d's scheme of Creation, such maturity is attained by a Jewish girl at the age of 12, and by Jewish boys at the age of 13.

Of course, you might ask, G-d surely could have speeded up or slowed down the age of maturity, so that the obligation to fulfill the mitzvot would come sooner or later than the said 12 and 13 years. But in that case, the same question could still be asked whatever the bar mitzvah and bat mitzvah age would have been. Clearly, G-d, who is the Creator, created the best possible order in nature and in human development.

Judging by your thoughtfulness and interest in Jewish matters, I am confident that you are learning with proper devotion and dedication to the Torah, Torat Chaim [Torah of Life]. And the study of the Torah with the proper devotion and dedication means the kind of study that leads to the fulfillment of the mitzvot in everyday life. I hope that you are a good influence on your friends in this direction.

With blessing,

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

I Don't Mind Sin?

Question: I was observant as a child, keeping Shabbat and kosher. But then once, when I was a teenager, a neighbor offered me a meat sandwich. It wasn't kosher, and I knew it. But I was hungry. In a weak moment, I ate the sandwich. And then . . . nothing happened. I was not struck down by lightning, I didn't get sick or collapse, the sky didn't fall. I realized that these laws actually mean nothing. So I stopped keeping Shabbat, and then it was a matter of time before I dropped religion entirely. There's a part of me that would like to be observant again, but doesn't my experience prove that the mitzvahs are irrelevant?

Answer: On the contrary, your experience proves just how detrimental sin can be. The consequence for breaking the Torah's rules is not the sky falling, or being struck down by lightning. The consequence of sin is indifference. When you do bad and feel nothing, that is the greatest punishment there can be.

What happened to you is exactly what the Talmud says: "One sin leads to another." When you do something wrong, a layer of ice forms over your soul. You become less spiritually sensitive, less in touch with G-d, cold and apathetic. The feeling of indifference makes the next transgression easier, leading to a vicious cycle of spiritual degeneration and disconnection.

This is the deeper meaning of the biblical death penalty for sins. The death is an internal one—your soul loses its life-force, your spirit is cut off, your heart goes stone cold. When you eat non-kosher or break Shabbat, something changes inside you. The fact you feel nothing is a reflection of how deep the damage is. Your soul is numb.

But your soul can always be revived. For the Talmud teaches that just as one sin leads to another, so one mitzvah leads to another. If one sin can freeze your spirit, one good deed can bring your soul back to life, melting the ice of indifference and allowing you to feel again. The first step is hard, but the next one is easier.

You have proven the numbing power of breaking the Torah's rules. Now prove the reviving power of keeping them, and do just one mitzvah.

A WORD

from the Director

The Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah actually means "Head of the Year." Just like the head controls the body, our actions on Rosh Hashanah have a tremendous impact on the rest of the year.

As we read in the Rosh Hashanah prayers, each year on this day "all inhabitants of the world pass before G-d like a flock of sheep," and it is decreed in the heavenly court "who shall live, and who shall die ... who shall be impoverished and who shall be enriched; who shall fall and who shall rise."

It is a day of prayer, a time to ask the Almighty to grant us a year of peace, prosperity and blessing. But it is also a joyous day when we proclaim G-d King of the Universe. The Kabbalists teach that the continued existence of the universe depends on G-d's desire for a world, a desire that is renewed when we accept His kingship anew each year on Rosh Hashanah.

May we all use out these awesome days to their fullest potential and receive all the desired blessings from the Almighty, for ourselves and our families; for happiness, prosperity and success.

This year we present our readers with a new feature. Please enjoy the Weekly Video by scanning the QR code.

On behalf of all the staff at Lamplighter Weekly, I would like to wish all of our readers a Shanah Tova U'Metukah!

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED



Just One Blast!

By Hirshel Tzig

This heartwarming yet chilling story was told by Rabbi Baruch Rabinovitch of Munkacs, father of the present Munkacser Rebbe, about his late father-in-law, Rabbi Chaim Elazar Spira (1871-1937), known as the "Minchat Elazar."

For a period of time, Reb Baruch and his wife lived in Warsaw. Later, when the Minchat Elazar became ill, he begged them to come back to Munkacs, in Czechoslovakia, which they did.

Rabbi Baruch had a son named Tzvi Nosson Dovid. Baruch would often recall that his father-in-law loved this boy—the Minchat Elazar's dear grandchild—in an "exaggerated way," in part due to the fact that they had waited a long time to have that first child. He would play with and "spoil" the child, and Tzvi would sit on his grandfather's lap at the Shabbat gatherings.

In the final year of his life, the Minchat Elazar took the shofar on the first day of the month of Elul and tested it to see whether it was in good condition. Tzvi was in the room and was visibly excited by the shofar and its sounds.

He asked his zeide (grandfather) for one more blast, and his zeide gladly obliged. From then on, for the remainder of the month, this became a ritual; the Rebbe blowing the shofar once each day for little Tzvi. On the day before Rosh Hashanah, Tzvi was there, awaiting his daily blast, but he was disappointed.

"Today is the day before Rosh Hashanah," his grandfather explained. "Today we do not blow the shofar. Tomorrow morning, we will blow the shofar in the synagogue."

The child did not comprehend the reasons. He knew no reason. He kicked and screamed, "Just one blast! Just one blast!"

After a while, the grandfather softened at the sound of his favorite grandchild crying, and he took the shofar and blew one blast.

On Rosh Hashanah, the custom in Munkacs was that the Rebbe spoke before blowing the shofar. That year, the Rebbe went up before the ark, opened it and said:

"Master of the Universe, I have to repent. It's written that on the day before Rosh Hashanah one mustn't blow shofar, yet I did."

He began to sob uncontrollably and called out: "Master of the Universe, do you know why I transgressed this custom? It was because my young grandchild lay on the floor begging and crying that I should only blow one blast of the shofar for him. My heart melted, I couldn't bear to watch him cry like that, so I blew once for him, though I shouldn't have."

"Tatte (Father), how can you stand by and see how millions of Your children are down on the floor, and crying out to You, 'Tatte, just one blast! Sound the blast of the great shofar which will herald the final Redemption!?' Even if the time is not right for it yet, even if the time for Moshiach has yet to arrive, Your children cry out to You: how can You stand by idly?!"

Rabbi Baruch cried as he recounted the story, and recalled how at that time the entire crowd cried along with the Rebbe. The sounding of the shofar was delayed, and for a long time. "They could not regain their composure... loud wailing was heard throughout the synagogue..."

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

The greater part of the Torah reading of Haazinu ("Listen In") consists of a 70-line "song" delivered by Moses to the people of Israel on the last day of his earthly life.

Calling heaven and earth as witnesses, Moses exhorts the people, "Remember the days of old / Consider the years of many generations / Ask your father, and he will recount it to you / Your elders, and they will tell you" how G-d "found them in a desert land," made them a people, chose them as His own, and bequeathed them a bountiful land. The song also warns against the pitfalls of plenty—"Yeshurun grew fat and kicked / You have grown fat, thick and rotund / He forsook G-d who made him / And spurned the Rock of his salvation" - and the terrible calamities that would result, which Moses describes as G-d "hiding His face." Yet in the end, he promises, G-d will avenge the blood of His servants, and be reconciled with His people and land.

The Parshah concludes with G-d's instruction to Moses to ascend the summit of Mount Nebo, from which he will behold the Promised Land before dying on the mountain. "For you shall see the land opposite you; but you shall not go there, into the land which I give to the children of Israel."

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 22 - 23 September	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	5:58	6:56
Adelaide	5:54	6:50
Brisbane	5:26	6:19
Darwin	6:25	7:14
Gold Coast	5:24	6:18
Perth	5:55	6:50
Sydney	5:33	6:29
Canberra	5:42	6:38
Launceston	5:50	6:50
Auckland	5:59	6:57
Wellington	5:59	6:59
Hobart	5:49	6:50
Byron Bay	5:24	6:17

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS HA'AZINU • 2 TISHREI • 22 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA:	6.05 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6.35 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.08 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	5.55 PM
FAST OF GEDALIA:	FAST BEGINS:	4.44 AM
	FAST ENDS:	6.45 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	5.35 PM
	MAARIV:	6.25 PM