

❖ PARSHAT KI SAVO

As Maimonides enumerates the Torah's 613 commandments, 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 are classified as broad directives encompassing all of Judaism. It is therefore surprising, at first glance, that the commandment which appears in this week's Torah portion, Ki Tavo, "You shall walk in His ways," is classified as a positive mitzva, requiring the Jew "to emulate the Holy One, Blessed Be He." "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," Maimonides writes. Indeed, the commandment implies that a Jew is required to emulate G-d to the best of his/her 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 because it contains a unique innovation 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, that his performance of mitzvot must always lead to an improvement of his overall spiritual condition. How are we to accomplish this? By observing the Torah's commandments solely because they are "His ways" -- because of our desire to emulate G-d. For when we do, our spiritual ascent to higher and even higher levels of G-dliness is assured. (From: L'Chaim 5757, #485, Adapted for Maayan Chai from Likutei Sichot, Volume 4)

"You shall take from the first of every fruit of the ground." (26:2)QUESTION: Rashi writes, "A person goes down into his field and when he sees a ripe fig, he would tie a 'gemi' - a blade of grass - to its stem, and declare, 'This is bikurim.' " Why particularly a gemi? **ANSWER:** A farmer works hard plowing his field, tilling the soil, and seeding the ground. When he comes into the field and sees fruit beginning to grow, he may be carried away with his success thinking, "Kochi ve'otzem yadi asah li et hachayil hazeh" - "My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth" (8:17), and forget that the wonders of nature are in reality the works and doing of Hashem. The word "gemi" is an acronym for "Gedolim Ma'asei Hashem" - "Great are the wonders of Hashem." When the farmer sees the toil of his hands reaching fruition and the fruit beginning to cover the ground, he should immediately tie a "gemi" to it - realize that it is the great work of Hashem and praise Him for it.

"I did not give of it to [for the needs of] the dead." (26:14)QUESTION: What is meant by "not giving to the dead"? **ANSWER:** According to Rashi, it means that one did not use "ma'aseir sheini" to purchase shrouds and a casket to bury a dead person. The Ramban raises a difficulty with this because the Torah (14:25-26) states clearly that outside of Jerusalem the ma'aseir sheini may be exchanged only for money to be transported to Jerusalem, where it may be spent only on food. Thus, it is forbidden to expend it on items such as shrouds, so why bother to make such a declaration?

Chabad of Northern Beverly Hills

Rambam (Ma'aseir Sheini 3:10) offers an entirely different explanation: The fruits of ma'aseir sheini or items bought with the exchange money are to be used for human consumption, such as eating or drinking, or if it is oil it may be smeared into the flesh. However, the money of ma'aseir sheini cannot be used for the purchase of garments, utensils, etc.

That which is ingested internally is considered "live": it sustains and enhances the life of a person. Any other expenditure which does not add to the sustenance of the body is considered a "dead" expense. With the above statement, the Jew is proclaiming: "I have followed the precepts of Torah and I did not spend any of my ma'aseir in a 'dead' way; I only bought food and the like."

Homiletically, it can be explained as follows: America is a country of chesed - kindness. The giving of charity is widely practiced and even encouraged by the government tax laws. Torah is the life-source of the Jewish people, and by supporting it one brings life and assures the continuity of our people. Unfortunately, some give their charity to organizations whose goals are contrary to Torah and damaging to the interest of the Torah-observing Jew. Such organizations, instead of bringing life to the Jewish community, endeavor, G-d forbid, to extinguish it.

The Jew who comes to the Beit Hamikdash proudly proclaims that when I gave my charity, "Lo natati mimeno lameit" - I was careful to give it to causes which will enhance and bring life to the Jewish community and not to causes which will produce the reverse. (From: VeDibarta Bam by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky)

❖ ELUL

Monday is Chai Elul, the 18th of Elul. Chai Elul was the date of birth of the Baal Shem Tov -- founder of Chasidut in general, and also of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of Chabad Chasidut. The Rebbe Rayatz described Chai Elul by saying that it introduces chayot -- life energy -- into the service of the month of Elul. The service of Elul includes Torah study, prayer and deeds of kindness as well as teshuva and redemption.

The Baal Shem Tov taught that at each moment, creation is renewed. When G-d created the world from total nothingness, the first moment of existence that He created included within it every moment that would follow. Similarly, at every moment, as G-d totally recreates the world anew, every moment includes all previous and all subsequent moments, just as the first moment of creation included all time.

This concept helps us understand teshuva -- return and repentance. It is explained that in one moment of true repentance a person can compensate for inadequacies in his behavior over many years. Indeed, with one turn of sincere teshuva, one can compensate for all the transgressions committed during one's lifetime and even those committed in previous incarnations.

How is that possible? Because each moment contains within it the totality of time and can thus alter the nature of the events which occurred previously. This concept, although true at all times, receives greater emphasis during the month of Elul. And Chai Elul contributes the dimension of chayot - life energy - to all of this. On this basis, we can understand the uniqueness of Chai Elul. As explained above, Elul is a month of general significance which includes all the service of the Jewish people. Chai Elul emphasizes the chayot -- "life energy" -- of that service, the bond between the Jews and G-d. And the stock-taking which takes place from Chai Elul onwards is of a more essential nature than that which took place from the beginning of Elul. (From: L'Chaim 5754, #332)

Rabbi Yosef Shusterman

THE ALTER REBBE INTERPRETED THE STATEMENT, "WHOEVER SAVES A SINGLE PERSON OF (THE PEOPLE) ISRAEL IS AS THOUGH HE SAVED AN ENTIRE WORLD ":

"ONE MUST PERCEIVE A JEW AS HE STANDS IN THE PRIMORDIAL THOUGHT OF ADAM KADMON. THERE, EACH SOUL STANDS WITH ALL THE GENERATIONS DESTINED TO DESCEND FROM IT UNTIL THE COMING OF MASHIACH, THE RIGHTEOUS REDEEMER. WHEN ONE DOES A FAVOR TO AN INDIVIDUAL, IT IS A FAVOR TO ALL THOSE SOULS UNTIL THE END OF ALL GENERATIONS." (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM ELUL 16)

Do not be dismayed by the hypocrisy of others, nor by your own inconsistencies. Our lives are all journeys through hills and valleys -- no man's spiritual standing is a static affair. But the good each person achieves is eternal, as he connects to the Source of All Good, Who is infinite and everlasting. The failures, on the other hand, are transient and superficial, like shadows of clouds, as stains in a garment to be washed away.

From: "Bringing Heaven Down to Earth"

PARTICIPATE IN WEEKLY CLASSES

Sunday	8:00 AM	Gemara-Tractate Berachot (men)
Monday	8:00 PM	Chumash (men and women)
Tuesday	8:00 PM	Gemara-Tractate Sukkha (men)
Wednesday	8:30 PM	Halacha and Tanya (women)
Thursday	10:00 AM	Chassidus (women)
	8:00 PM	Class for Beverly Hills Highschool Students
Daily	6:45 to 7:15 AM	Chasidus

DAILY MINYONIM

Shacharit: Mon-Fri: 6:00 AM & 7:30 AM
Sunday: 9:00 AM
Mincha/Maariv: 6:55 PM

SHABBAT PARSHAT KI SAVO

September 15, 2000

Candlelighting: 6:42 PM
Friday Mincha: 6:55 PM
Early Minyan 5:45 PM

LATEST TIME FOR SHEMA: 9:44 AM

SHABBAT MORNING

- Tanya 8:45 AM
- Shacharit 9:30 AM followed by Kiddush & Cholent
- Pirkei Avos 5:45 PM
- Mincha 6:30 PM followed by Seuda Shlishit
- Shabbat ends 7:42 PM

Kiddush this week is being sponsored by Dr. & Mrs. Molayem in memory of his mother's Yartzheit.

Yartzheits: Ita Chein -Elul 17, Rivka Molayem - Elul 19.

Happy Birthday to Benyamin Molayem, Raz Godasi.

Happy Anniversary to Rabbi and Mrs. Reuven Mintz, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Levy.

Mazel Tov to the Dauer Family on the engagement of Chanie to Mendy Weunch.

The Shul wishes condolences to the Levieddin family on the loss of their mother Moones. May they know jof no more sorrow.

GOOD SHABBOS!

