

THE CHABAD WEEKLY

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Chabad of North Beverly Hills, 409 Foothill Rd. Beverly Hills, 90210

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The Torah portion of Ki Tavo is always read close to Chai (the Eighteenth) of Elul, the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov - founder of Chasidut in general and Rabbi Shneur Zalman - founder of Chabad Chasidut in particular. In fact, Ki Tavo and Chai Elul share the common theme of ahavat Yisrael, loving our fellow Jew.

Ahavat Yisrael is a fundamental precept of Chasidut, as revealed by the Baal Shem Tov. It is also the "heart" of Chabad Chasidut, as we see from Rabbi Shneur Zalman's treatment of the subject in chapter 32 in Tanya (32, lamed-beit in Hebrew letter equivalent, spells lev - heart.)

Ahavat Yisrael is also stressed in the beginning of this week's Torah portion: "And it shall come to pass when you come into the land...and take possession of it and dwell therein...you shall take the first of all the fruit of the soil [bikurim]...and you shall come to the priest...and rejoice in every good thing which the L-rd your G-d has given you."

Comments Rashi: "This teaches that the Jews were not required to bring the bikurim until they conquered and divided the land." Until all of the Land of Israel was possessed by the entire Jewish people, those who had already received their portion of land were not required to bring the bikurim offering.

A question is asked: If the apportionment of land was gradual, and those who received their portion were permitted to immediately cultivate it, why did they have to wait until everyone had received his portion? Why couldn't they offer their first fruits as soon as they were able?

The answer is that the mitzva of first fruits must be observed with joy and gratitude, rejoicing in the land of Israel and its produce, as it states, "And rejoice in every good thing which the L-rd your G-d has given you." As long as even one Jew remained who had not yet received his portion of land, the happiness of all Jews was incomplete. For how can any Jew take pleasure in G-d's generosity, knowing that his fellow Jew cannot participate? In truth, a Jew is truly joyous only when all his brethren are equally blessed.

Consequently, until their happiness was complete, the Jews could not offer their first fruits, as bringing them is an expression of perfect joyousness. All Jews are interconnected with one another; they thus had to wait until every single member of the Jewish nation had received his allotment to be able to rejoice fully.

This is the epitome of true ahavat Yisrael. The love Jews have for each other is so all-encompassing that the happiness of one Jew is dependent on the happiness of another. If even one Jew is lacking, it impacts the entire Jewish people.

May our efforts to love every single Jew without distinction bring the Final Redemption, and with it, the opportunity to again observe bikurim in the literal sense. (Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Volume 9, L'Chaim 5759 #583)

"It shall come to pass, when you come into the land which the L-rd your G-d is giving you." (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. (Lubavitcher Rebbe) – ascent.org.il

CHAI ELUL STORY

Baruch and his wife, Rivka, were followers of Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the Chasidic movement. When they had been married for a year and were still not blessed with a child, they went to see the Baal Shem Tov during the month of Elul to ask for his blessing.

At his birthday celebration on the 18th of Elul, the Baal Shem Tov blessed Baruch and Rivka, saying that within the year they would have a son. The young couple remained with the Baal Shem Tov in Miedzibosz for the High Holidays. Before departing for home they were privileged to have an audience with the Baal Shem Tov once again. When the Baal Shem Tov repeated his blessing, Rivka fervently promised that she would consecrate her son to the dissemination of Torah and the Chasidic way of life as taught by the Baal Shem Tov.

Rivka was quite a learned woman and decided to intensify her Torah studies. She asked Devora Leah, her learned sister-in-law for guidance as to prayer and study during her anticipated pregnancy.

Six months later, Baruch went to Miedzibosz again to inform the Baal Shem Tov that his wife was pregnant. The Baal Shem Tov wished him "mazel tov" and gave him certain instructions to convey to his wife. Baruch left for home in a blissful frame of mind.

On the 18th day of Elul that year, the Baal Shem Tov displayed an extraordinary elation. He personally led the prayers, which he chanted joyously. It was clear that the Baal Shem Tov was observing the day in an even more festive manner than was customary for his birthday. During the repast which followed the prayers, the Baal Shem Tov told his disciples:

"Today, a new soul descended to earth, a soul which will illuminate the world with the revealed and esoteric teachings of the Torah, and will successfully disseminate the Chasidic way with selfless dedication, preparing the way for the arrival of Moshiach."

On the 25th day of Elul the Baal Shem Tov arranged a feast. Three days later, on Shabbat, he again gave a discourse and was in an extremely elated frame of mind. All of this represented a mystery to his disciples.

What the Baal Shem Tov's disciples witnessed in those days was nothing less than their Rebbe celebrating the birth of Baruch and Rivka's first child, Shneur Zalman, his circumcision, and the critical third day after the circumcision. Moreover, the various discourses which the Baal Shem Tov delivered on those occasions were connected with the newborn's destiny.

For Yom Kippur that year, Baruch came to the Baal Shem Tov. He had been cautioned not to tell anybody about the birth of his son. Again, before leaving for home, he received from the Baal Shem

Tov a set of instructions concerning the child, and the careful watch which was to be kept over him at all times.

The following year Baruch came, as usual, to the Baal Shem Tov for the High Holidays. The Baal Shem Tov inquired about the little boy in great detail, and repeated his admonition to take special care of the child.

After Sukot, when Baruch was ready to leave for home, the Baal Shem Tov again counseled him to shelter the boy, and not to boast about his cleverness nor even to repeat ingenious comments Shneur Zalman might make.

Another year passed. Once again Baruch made his annual pilgrimage to Miedzibosz. Baruch reported to the Baal Shem Tov that, upon returning home from Miedzibosz after Sukot the previous year, his had wife told him that there was a noticeable change in Shneur Zalman. His speech and vocabulary, which were already extraordinary, had considerably improved. They had discovered that the young child had an amazing memory, and whatever he heard once, he never forgot. The Baal Shem Tov gave Baruch further instructions concerning the child. Baruch requested permission to bring Shneur Zalman to the Baal Shem Tov on his third birthday for the traditional first haircut and the Baal Shem Tov agreed. He told Baruch that Shneur Zalman should be brought by his mother and his aunt Devora Leah, on the 18th of Elul, after the morning prayers.

Arriving home, Baruch found that his son had made further strides during his absence from home. Little Shneur Zalman could now recite many Psalms by heart, and his memory and mental grasp were astonishing.

As prearranged, Rivka and Devora Leah brought Shneur Zalman on his third birthday, to the Baal Shem Tov. The Baal Shem Tov cut off a few locks of hair, leaving peyot (side locks) according to custom, and he blessed him.

All the way home, little Shneur Zalman kept asking his mother who the elderly Jew was who had cut his hair. "That was Zaide," was her reply. Little did he then know that some day he would come to regard the Baal Shem Tov as his "grandfather" in a very real sense, namely, as the Rebbe of his Rebbe, the Maggid of Miezericz. However, the Baal Shem Tov, for reasons best known to himself, kept himself out of direct contact with Shneur Zalman. He did not permit Baruch to take his son with him on subsequent visits to Miedzibosz and he enjoined Shneur Zalman's teacher from telling him anything about the Baal Shem Tov until he was 15 years old. "Shneur Zalman is not destined to be my disciple," the Baal Shem Tov said. "He belongs to my successor." (Adapted from Shneur Zalman of Liadi, Kehot Publication Society, Lchaim #534)

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.)

The first creation was Time. It began and it will end and then it will be no more. Each breath, each tick, each beat of the heart comes only once. None will ever repeat itself precisely. Every instant of life is a raw but precious stone, beckoning, saying, "Unleash my potential, unlock my secret, do with me something to reveal my purpose of being! For I am here only this one time, and then never again." And so that is our primary mission: To elevate time and make it holy.

-From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe; rendered by Tzvi Freeman.

PARTICIPATE IN WEEKLY CLASSES

<u>Sunday</u>	8:00 AM	Gemara-Tractate Rosh Hashana (men)
<u>Monday</u>	8:00 PM	Chumash (men and women)
<u>Tuesday</u>	8:00 PM	Gemara-Tractate Sukka (men)
<u>Wednesday</u>	8:30 PM	Halacha and Tanya (women)
<u>Thursday</u>	10:00 AM	Chassidus (women)
	8:00 PM	Class for Beverly Hills Highschool Students
<u>Daily</u>	6:45 to 7:15 AM	Chasidus
	Between Mincha and Maariv	Halacha

There will be no class on Monday August 26.

DAILY MINYONIM

**Shacharis: Mon -Fri: 6:00 AM & 7:30 AM
Sunday: 9:00 AM**

Mincha/Maariv: 7:25 PM

Monday Elul 18 (Aug. 26) is Chai Elul: the birthdays of the Baal Shem Tov – founder of the Chassidic movement and the Alter Rebbe (Rabbi Shneur Zalman) – founder of Chabad Chassidus.

SHABBOS PARSHAS KI TAVO

Aug. 23, 2002 – Elul 15, 5762

**Candlelighting (Los Angeles): 7:12PM
Friday Mincha: 7:25 PM
Early Minyan: 6:00 PM**

LATEST TIME FOR SHEMA: 9:38 AM

SHABBAT MORNING

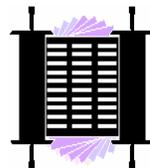
- Tanya 8:45 AM
- Shacharit 9:30 AM followed by Kiddush & Cholent
- Pirkei Avos 6:15 PM
- Mincha 7:00 PM followed by Seuda Shlishit
- Shabbat ends 8:12 PM

Yartzeits: Ita Chein – Elul 17, Rivka Molayem – Elul 18.

Happy Birthday to Raz Godasi, Benyamin Molayem, Ethel Perles, Ayala Sulami and Gabriela Beroukhim.

Happy Anniversary to Rabbi and Mrs. Reuven Mintz, Samuel and Helen Levy, Rabbi and Mrs. Yosi Mayberg.

Mazel Tov to the Rav-Noy family on the engagement of Ariel to Miriam Stempel of Far Rockaway, New York.



A Sefer Torah is being written in memory of the fathers of Rabbi & Mrs. Shusterman. Anyone who is interested in participating should contact Mendel Shusterman at (310) 497-2643

GOOD SHABBOS!