

THE CHABAD WEEKLY

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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. (Adapted from Maayan Chai from Likutei Sichot, Volume 4, From: L'Chaim 5757 #486) - lchaimweekly.org

"Because you would not serve the Lrd your G-d with joy and with gladness of heart... therefore, you will serve your enemies." (Deut. 29:47) We see from this that joy is such an important part of the Jew's service of G-d that the harshest punishment of "you will serve your enemies" is not meted out for a deficiency in the service itself, but for worshipping G-d without joy and vitality. When the Jew is happy, G-d is happy, as it were, and even the harshest decrees are annulled -- analogous to an earthly king granting amnesty to his prisoners when he is in a cheerful mood. (*The Lubavitcher Rebbe*) - ascnet.org.il

PIRKEI AVOS

Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa said: "Whenever a person's fear of sin comes before his wisdom, his wisdom will endure; but when a person's wisdom comes before his fear of sin, his wisdom will not endure." (Avos 3:9)

QUESTION: Instead of "Anyone whose fear of sin comes before his wisdom," it should have said "Kal hamakdim" - "Whoever puts his fear of sin before his wisdom"?

ANSWER: This Mishnah is conveying a very important lesson to parents and educators. Some take the attitude that they do not want to force performance of mitzvot upon their very young children. They reason, "Let them first study and when they will grow up, they will make decisions for themselves whether they want to be religious or not."

This approach is erroneous. If one wants his child to love Torah, first and foremost, it is important to establish a strong foundation of fear of Hashem. From a very early age, children should be trained to perform mitzvot and inculcated with the knowledge that Hashem is the Master of the world. The Gemara (Shabbat 156b) relates that the mother of Rabbi Nachman bar Yitzchak was told by an astrologer that her son would be a thief. She never allowed him to uncover his head and would say to him, "Cover your head, so that the fear of Heaven should be upon you," and he grew up to be a great sage.

The Mishnah is thus teaching, "Anyone whose fear of sin comes before his wisdom" - i.e. if already as a tender child, before reaching the level of wisdom and ability to learn, the fear of heaven is instilled in him - he will love Torah when he is taught it, and the Torah he learns will become a permanent component of his personality. In contrast, when a child starts his learning without a commitment to fear of sin and learns Torah just as another subject, his interest in Torah is likely to fade. (From: VeDibarata Bam br Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky)

This Monday 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 "shidduch" between teshuva and 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. - lchaimweekly.org

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 16 el ul).

When my father reads "The Rebuke", I don't hear curses

— Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch (son of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi)

PARTICIPATE IN DAILY CLASSES

<u>Sunday</u>	8:00 AM	Gemara-Tractate Rosh Hashana (men)
<u>Monday</u>	8:30 PM	Chumash (men and women)
<u>Tuesday</u>	8:00 PM	Gemara-Tractate Makos (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	Chassidus
	Between Mincha and Maariv	Halacha

***SHABBOS PARSHAS KI TAVO
September 12, 2003***

Candlelighting:(Los Angeles) 6:46 PM
Friday Mincha: 7:00 PM
Early Minyan: 5:45 PM

LATEST TIME FOR SHEMA: 9:42 AM

SHABBAT MORNING

- **Tanya 8:45 AM**
- **Shacharit 9:30 AM followed by
Kiddush & Cholent**
- **Pirkei Avos 5:50 PM**
- **Mincha 6:35 PM followed by
Seuda Shlishit**
- **Shabbat ends 7:46 PM**

There will be no class next week on Monday, Sept. 15 and Wednesday, Sept. 17.

DAILY MINYONIM:

Shacharit: Mon-Fri 6:00 AM and 7:30 AM

Sunday 9:00 AM

Mincha/Maariv: 7:00 PM

Monday Elul 18 (Sept. 15) 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.

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

Happy Birthday to Raz Godasi, Benyamin Molayem, Joshua Bekhor, 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 Rabbi and Mrs. Dovid Sulami on the birth of their new baby girl.

Mesibos Shabbos will be at the Hezghian's home at 5:45PM.

GOOD SHABBOS!