

**The Shul**  
at the Lubavitch Center  
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August 27, 2016

Eikev — Shabbat M'vorchim

23 Av, 5776

### Stuck in the Mud!

The Baal Shem Tov instilled in his followers many important life lessons. But two of the most basic principles were: whoever and whatever one encounters, the encounter provides a lesson in how to serve G-d, and that everyone deserves respect, for it is possible to learn from anyone.

One day, between winter and spring, when the roads were slushy mud and the temperature was well below freezing, the students of the Baal Shem Tov were in the synagogue immersed in their studies.

Suddenly there was a knock at the door, disturbing their concentration and devotion. One of the students opened the door. There stood a poor Polish peasant, from the look on his face, clearly in need of help.

"My wagon is stuck in the mud," the peasant said, pointing to the road.

The wagon was laden with barrels and boxes - obviously the peasant's livelihood. All four wheels were trapped, muck over half their spokes. And the poor peasant was clearly not strong enough to lift the wagon by himself. Aside from his slight build, his gray beard and wrinkled skin showed he was as old as the students were young.

"Please," the peasant said, "you are young and strong. Please help me get my wagon out of the mud."

The students looked at each other and the excuses started flying:

We don't have time. We can't interrupt our studies. We're not strong enough. We don't know how.

On and on and on. We can't this. We can't that. We can't. We can't.

With each passing excuse the peasant grew angrier and angrier. Finally, he got fed up. He shouted: "You CAN! But you WILL NOT."

At last some of the students, embarrassed, went to pull the wagon out of the mud and help the peasant on his way.

When the Baal Shem Tov heard of the incident, he reprimanded his students.

First, he told them, you failed to show the proper respect. Even if the man wasn't old, even if he wasn't poor, the fact that he was in need and asked for your help, Torah requires you preserve his dignity while giving him aid. How much more so one who is old and poor. Jew or non-Jew, it does not matter. [As Rabbi Akiva says, "Beloved is man, for he was created in the image of G-d" (Ethics 3:14).]

Further, the students were told, this peasant has taught you a valuable lesson. Each of us has a Divine mission, a spiritual task only we can accomplish. At times that task may seem overwhelming. We will be spiritually stuck in the mud. We may feel the G-dly task is inter-rupting something important. We will find excuses why we can't do it.

We should know that the ability to accomplish a task is G-d given. This even applies to a mundane task, work that must be done on a physical level, as part of the job of transforming the world, making it a place of goodness and kindness and a dwelling for G-dliness. Each of us is given what we need to do what is asked of it.

But the decision to do it (or not) is our choice. The desire to do it must come from within. The will to do it - that is ours.

So, when it comes to doing a mitzva (commandment) or an act of kindness or goodness - don't be stuck in the mud.

*(from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)*

## A Mother's Love

"V'hayah / It shall be that if you forget Hashem, your Elokim, and go after the gods of others, and worship them and prostrate yourself to them—I testify against you today that you will surely perish. Like the nations that Hashem causes to perish before you, so will you perish because you will not have listened to the voice of Hashem, your Elokim." (8:19-20)

R' Zvi Elimelech Shapira z"l (1783-1841; chassidic rebbe, popularly known as the "Bnei Yissaschar") asks: Midrash Rabbah teaches that the word "v'hayah" always introduces something joyous, as opposed to "va'yehi," which is used to introduce something sorrowful. Why then does our seemingly depressing verse begin with "v'hayah"?

He explains: The Gemara (Chagigah 15a) relates that the sage Elisha ben Avuyah (a contemporary of Rabbi Akiva) became a heretic. Later, he heard a bat kol / Heavenly voice proclaim, "All wayward sons return except for that one," a reference to himself. He said, "In that case, there is no hope for me, and I can do as I please." [Until here from the Gemara] In fact, the Bnei Yissaschar writes in the name of R' Yaakov Yitzchak Horowitz z"l (1745- 1815; chassidic rebbe known as the "Seer of Lublin"), Elisha should have understood that Heaven was challenging him with this proclamation. Had he responded, "If I indeed have no place in the World-to-Come, I can now serve G-d completely altruistically with no hope of reward," then his repentance would have been accepted.

In this light, the Bnei Yissaschar concludes, we can understand our verse. Hashem warns of the fate that awaits us if we stray after false gods. We will, G-d forbid, "surely perish." There will be no hope. But, if we ignore this message of despair and repent, then "v'hayah," it will be a joyous occasion, "because [we] will not have listened to the voice of Hashem" when He said all hope for us was lost. (Agra D'pirka #1)

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at [www.torah.org](http://www.torah.org))



On behalf of all the entire Shul I want express our appreciation to **Wes Wilson** and **Shaul Allan** for continuing to do a host of fixing jobs around the Shul. We'd like to express our heartfelt appreciation to **Menachem Berry** for the many hours of work he put into organizing and shelving the Shul's seforim.

*Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan*

### Yahrzeits This Week:

Rabbi Fred Lewin      25 Av - Sunday night/Monday      for father      Shmuel ben Yoel

The following is a list of sefarim missing from the shul:

- (a) Ain Yaakov volume 2 ; (b) Shaarei Halacha U'minhag volume 3 ; (c) Downstairs Mishna Berura volume 5 ;
- (d) Downstairs Shas: missing Pesachim and Shekalim (one volume) ;
- (e) Artscroll Gemaras: missing Brachos, Pesachim 3, Taanis, Megilla, Kedushin 1, Bava Kama 3 ;
- (f) Feldheim Chovos Halevavos volume 1 ; (g) Mishnayos Yaven Umayvin Zeraim Aleph ;
- (h) Lessons in Tanya volume 4 (full size version) .

If you have any of these, please return to Rabbi Kaplan or Menachem Berry

### Davening and Shiurim Schedule

#### Friday 8/26 — 22 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

#### Shabbat, 8/27 — 23 Av

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.  
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:47 a.m.  
Berachot Gemora Shiur — 6:15 p.m.  
Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 7:15 p.m.  
Ma'ariv — 8:29 p.m.

#### Sunday, 8/28 — 24 Av

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
Shulchan Aruch Shiur — 8:45 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:20 p.m.

#### Monday, 8/29 — 25 Av

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:20 p.m.

#### Tuesday, 8/30 — 26 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:20 p.m.

#### Wednesday, 8/31 — 27 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:20 p.m.

#### Thursday, 9/1 — 28 Av

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:20 p.m.  
Tanya Shiur — 9:00 p.m.

#### Friday, 9/2 — 29 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m.  
Candles — 7:16 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.