

The Shul
at the Lubavitch Center
6701 Old Pimlico Road
Baltimore, MD 21209
410-486-2666
www.chabadshul.org



August 29, 2020

Ki-Tetze

9 Elul, 5780

Filling Space

How many college students can fit into a tiny car or phone booth? How many absolute essentials can a woman place in her evening bag? How many items can a man stuff into his suit pocket and still have the jacket lay properly? How many grapes can a youngster pack into his mouth before they come tumbling out?

Sand patted down by a child in a pail, and patted down yet again to make room for more; a suitcase so full that you have to sit on it to close it; another few characters in an "sms" - taking out spaces, abbreviating words, using symbols - until the message is almost unintelligible; this is the last bite, we promise ourselves as we dig once again into the chocolate mud cake, though we're already stuffed to the gills.

People seem to be obsessed with cramming as many things as possible into a minimal amount of space. From closet organizers to pocket organizers, we want to make full use of space, both tangible and intangible.

There are times in the Jewish calendar when we are given a specific amount of "spiritual space" and encouraged to fill it up.

The month of Elul in which we currently find ourselves is just such a time. Elul is the round-up time for the previous year. It is the "inventory" season, "year-end accounting" time and the moment when each person writes and reads to himself his own "State of the Union" address.

In addition to Elul being a once-over concerning the past, it is a focus on the future, an opportunity to plan ahead armed with the wisdom gained from experience. Elul gives us the chance to concentrate on how we will do things differently in the upcoming year.

But there is a third aspect to Elul, as well. While we're remembering the past and considering the future, we are still living in the present. And in this present, Jewish teachings invite us to use the entire month of Elul to fill up our spiritual space with as many mitzvot as we can. We are encouraged to add more mitzvot to our repertoire of mitzvot and to enhance the manner in which we are already perform various mitzvot.

In Elul, we are urged specifically to give extra charity; to spend more time connecting with G-d through prayer; to have our mezuzot and tefilin checked by an expert scribe (and to put mezuzot on those doorways which might yet need them); to observe the laws of kashrut more carefully; to bless our friends, neighbors and relatives with a good, sweet year.

Using the spiritual space we're given during Elul to its fullest capacity can only be to our benefit for the coming year.

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

Looking Down the Road

In this week's reading, Rashi, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, tells us to what extent the Torah demands an elevated standard of conduct. He warns us that even if we follow the letter of the law, but try to push the envelope — doing what we can get away with rather than what is truly correct — it will not work out well.

Our reading begins with the law of a soldier who is attracted to a beautiful captive among the conquered. The law required that he not act like those in other armies. He could not touch her. Rather, he could bring her home to eventually become his wife.

Yet even then, she was first required to dress in a plain fashion, and not do her hair or nails. There was a time when women would dress attractively and wear makeup in order to draw a soldier to her. Instead, the captive woman wore simple clothes and mourned her separation from her parents — for a month. The Torah required that he see her at her worst — and only then was he permitted to marry her if he still wishes to.

(continued on the other side)

Yet Rashi goes further, noting the connection between the early parts of our reading. After the laws of the captive woman, the reading proceeds to laws of inheritance between the children of a favored vs. disfavored wife. And then, following that, we have the laws of a rebellious child who refuses to listen to his parents. What, indeed, is the link between these disparate laws?

Rashi answers: taking a captive as a wife leads to marriage with an unfavored, even hated spouse. This is not someone he will love and wish to be with for the rest of his life; he will tire of her. And this will lead in turn to him having a rebellious son.

This is not a guarantee. The Sages argue about whether the law of a rebellious son was ever implemented. Some say that it simply never happened that a son and his parents acted precisely as described, in order to implement this law. There is, to my knowledge, no similar argument about the law of the captured woman, implying that it did in fact occur.

Rather, Rashi is teaching us something that we can apply to many other areas of law, even today when we do not have a Jewish army, take captives during war, marry them, or practice polygamy (which the Sages forbade long before modern law, because only a person with the purest of conduct and motivations can do that correctly).

Rashi is telling us that following “the letter of the law” without its spirit is not enough. We must look down the road and ask, are my actions leading me in the right direction? Am I headed towards more holy and godly conduct, or, Heaven forbid, in the opposite direction? This is true even when following the minimum standards set in the law.

This is what our Sages described as being “degraded with the Torah’s permission.” It is not enough to follow the very basics of the law, one must pursue a higher and more holy standard, and always ensure we are going in the right direction. And when better to correct our course, than with the approach of the Days of Judgment?

(by Rabbi Yaakov Menken from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

This Week in Jewish History

Completion of Beit Yosef (1542): In 1522, Rabbi Yosef Caro started writing the Beit Yosef, his famous commentary on the Arba Turim, Yaakov Ben Asher’s comprehensive Halachic code. He started writing this commentary in Adrianople, Turkey, and continued for the next twenty years, during which time he relocated to Safed, Israel. He completed the monumental work on the 11th of Elul. It took another ten years for the writings to be published.

(from www.chabad.org)

SHUL DIRECTORY

Rabbi: Shmuel Kaplan . rabbikaplan@chabadmd.com
Treasurer: Michael Frank . . . shul.chabad@gmail.com
Security: Jay Bernstein . . . jaybernsteinesq@gmail.com
Kiddush: Reuven Frank rfrank82@gmail.com
Bulletin: Howard Kaplon hkaplon@towson.edu
Website: Shoshana Zakar sue.zakar@gmail.com

Gabbaim:
 Yehudah Buchwalter . . . judahbuchwalter@verizon.net
 Allan Genut agenut@gmail.com
 Ephraim Siff
Mikvah Mei Menachem 410-415-5113
Aleph Learning Institute . Mrs. Rochel Kaplan, Director
www.alephlearninginstitute.org / email: alephjli@gmail.com

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday 8/28 — 8 Elul
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Candles — 7:23 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma’ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 8/29 — 9 Elul
 Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
 Sof Z’man Kriat Shema — 9:47 a.m.
 Beitzah Gemora Shiur — 6:10 p.m.
 Minchah — 7:10 p.m.
 Ma’ariv — 8:23 p.m.

Sunday, 8/30 — 10 Elul
 Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma’ariv — 7:20 p.m.

Monday, 8/31 — 11 Elul
 Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma’ariv — 7:20 p.m.

Tuesday, 9/1 — 12 Elul
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma’ariv — 7:20 p.m.

Wednesday, 9/2 — 13 Elul
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma’ariv — 7:20 p.m.

Thursday, 8/3 — 14 Elul
 Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma’ariv — 7:20 p.m.

Friday, 9/4 — 15 Elul
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Candles — 7:13 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma’ariv — 7:00 p.m.