The Shul
at the Lubavitch Center
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www.chabadshul.org

August 8, 2026 **Re'eh — Shabbat M'vorchim** **25 Av, 5786**

Virtue, Vice and Vision

Blessings and curses. Stirring stuff from the Bible this week as Moses again cautions his congregation. The great prophet reminds them that living a life of goodness will bring them blessings while ignoring the Divine call must inexorably lead to a cursed existence.

Moses prefaces his admonition with the Hebrew word *Re'eh*, "See." *See, I present before you today a blessing and a curse.* But why "see"? What is there to see? Did he show them anything at all? The Torah does not use flowery language just because it has a nice ring to it and sounds poetic. What was there to behold? Why Re'eh?

One answer is that how we look will, in itself, determine whether our lives will be blessed or cursed. How do we look at others, at ourselves? Our perspective, how we behold and see things, will result in our own lives being blessed or, G-d forbid, the opposite.

The saintly Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev once chanced upon a strong, young man who was brazenly eating on Yom Kippur. The Rabbi suggested that perhaps he was feeling ill. The fellow insisted he was in the best of health. Perhaps he had forgotten that today was the holy day of fasting? "Who doesn't know that today is Yom Kippur?" responded the young man. Perhaps he was never taught that Jews do not eat on this day? "Every child knows that Yom Kippur is a fast day, Rabbi!" Whereupon Rabbi Levi Yitzchak raised his eyes heavenward and said, "Master of the Universe, see how wonderful Your people are! Here is a Jew who, despite everything, refuses to tell a lie!" The Berditchever was always able to look at others with a compassionate, understanding and benevolent eye.

How do we view the good fortune enjoyed by others? Are we happy for them, or do we look at them with begrudging envy? How do we look at ourselves and our own shortcomings? Are we objectively truthful or subjectively slanted? "He is a stingy, rotten good for nothing. Me? I am just careful about how I spend my money." "She is a bore of bores, anti-social. Me? I just happen to enjoy staying at home." "He is as stubborn as an ox! Me? I am a determined person."

Clearly, the manner in which we look at our world and those around us will have a major impact on the way life will treat us. Quite justifiably, Moses says, "See." For how we see things in life will undoubtedly affect life's outcomes.

The sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (1880-1950), once told how when he was a young child he asked his father: "Why does a person have two eyes?" "The right eye," his father replied, "is to be used lovingly, when looking at a fellow Jew; the left eye is to be used discerningly, when looking at sweets or other objects that are not that important in the grand scheme of things."

(When I was in yeshivah, the same building also housed a synagogue where we would often interact with the adult men who would come to the daily minyan. One particular gentleman, may he rest in peace, always seemed to us rather cantankerous, what you might call a grumpy old man. I cannot remember whether he was actually a bit cross-eyed or not, but we referred to him as "left-eyed Sam" because he always seemed to be looking at us students with that proverbial left eye.)

The Parshah that is entitled *Re'eh*, "See," is a perennial reminder to all of us that even our vision can bring virtue or vice. Let us look at the world correctly and invite the blessings of G-d into our lives.

(by Rabbi Yossy Goldman from www.chabad.org)

Restoring Dignity

"…you shall not send him empty-handed; you shall adorn him with gifts…"(15:13,14)

After six years of servitude, the Torah requires that the Jewish slave be set free. Additionally, he should not go out empty-handed. Rather, his master should furnish him with gifts of significant value. What is the rationale behind obligating a person to give a gift? Clearly, this is not his compensation, for the Torah requires that the slave be paid in full up front.

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When Avraham returned from Egypt, the Torah records that he went "according to his travels". Chazal teach that Avraham retraced the path which he had taken during his descent to Egypt, so that he would be able to lodge at the same inns where he stayed on his way down. What is the notion of a person returning to an establishment which he has previously patronized?

If we analyze the modern-day concept of tipping, we can gain some insight to assist in answering the aforementioned questions. Why is it the accepted practice to tip for certain services, while for others it is not? For example, if a person checks in his luggage curbside, he leaves a tip with the porter. However, if he checks his luggage in at the counter, he does not tip the attendant. Similarly, one tips a barber, but not a cashier. The reason is as follows: When someone does a personal service for us, to a certain extent, he has been demeaned. It is for personal service, therefore, that we tip. The tip is the means by which we restore dignity to the person serving us; it shows our appreciation for what he has done for us.

An innkeeper offers round-the-clock personal service to his guests. Avraham Avinu is teaching us that the most effective way to restore the innkeeper's dignity is to continue to patronize his establishment. This is the ultimate show of appreciation. The Torah requires that we give parting gifts to the Jewish slave, since, for six years he has been at our beck and call, giving us the highest level of personal service that one Jew can give another. We are obligated, therefore, to restore his dignity.

It is now apparent why the Torah uses what appears to be a very difficult verb for the giving of a gift. Instead of the more common verb used for giving, "titein", the Torah uses "ha'aneik", which is not found anywhere else in the Torah in that form. Rashi explains that the word comes from the noun "anaka", which means jewelry worn around the neck. When a person wears jewelry, he feels elevated. It gives him a sense of dignity. This is the function of the gift which is given to the Jewish slave. We are attempting to restore the dignity that was lost by his six years of personal service.

(by Rabbi Yochanan Zweig from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

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Yahrzeits This Week:

Rabbi Fred Lewin	25 Av - Friday night / Shabbat	for father	Shmuel ben Yoel

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DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 8/7 — 24 Av
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 8/8 —25 Av
Shacharit 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:40 a.m.
Minchah — 7:40 p.m.
Shiur — after Minchah
Shkiah — 8:11 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 8:55 p.m.

Sunday, 8/9 — 26 Av
Shacharit —8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

Monday, 8/10 — 27 Av
Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

Tuesday, 8/11 — 28 Av
Shacharit— 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

Wednesday, 8/12 — 29 Av
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

Thursday — Rosh Chodesh Elul, 8/13 — 30 Av
Shacharit — 6:40 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

Friday — Rosh Chodesh Elul, 8/14 — 1 Elul
Shacharit — 6:40 a.m.
Shabbat Candles — 7:45 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.