



The Weekly DAF

Parshat Ki Tavo

18th Elul 5770/ 28th August 2010

The Month of Elul- Rabbi Berel Wein

The serious month of the Jewish calendar is upon us. All months are serious but Elul is just more so. It has no special holidays or commemorative days within it but it certainly serves as the transitional month between the seasons of summer and autumn - of school vacations, trips, camp and the solemnity of the High Holy Days of the beginning of Tishrei.

As such it always occupied a special place in Jewish tradition. It became a time of very intensive Torah in the schools, seminaries and yeshivot of higher Jewish education. Great Chasidic mentors who greeted and advised thousands during the remainder of the year went into private seclusion in Elul, receiving no visitors. Great communal rabbis took leave of their communal and congregational positions for a period of time during Elul to refresh themselves in the atmosphere of Torah learning and piety in the yeshivot of their time and place.

An atmosphere of anticipation, introspection and a search for one's better self was created by the advent of the month of Elul. In our world of 24/7 with its constant pressures of work, finance, family and just getting around to where we wish to go – looking for a parking space in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem is a special form of penance imposed upon us for our misdeeds – almost precludes the desired atmosphere of Elul from reaching us.

Nevertheless it is unthinkable that we should approach the High Holy Days without some measure of preparation and introspection. After all, in the long view of matters, it is me and who I really am that determines the value of one's life and accomplishments. So Elul should be exploited to the extent that we can do so and not simply ignored or dissipated.

One of the great aspects of Elul is that it dwells upon the future. Months that contain within them days of commemorations and holidays always possess a necessary emphasis on the history of past events. Elul possesses no such commemorative days. It encourages us to look forward to creating a better future for ourselves, our families and communities. It emphasizes that the misdeeds and sad events of the past should be considered as having ended and disappeared and now we can only look forward to better times and more positive behaviour in the new year that now appears over our horizon.

The emphasis on introspection that I previously described as being part of the Elul package – and introspection always concentrates on dealing with past events and behaviour – is tempered and balanced by Elul's demand to look forward and deal with the future in a hopeful and positive fashion. The ability to balance the past and the future in our lives is always a difficult task.

Dwelling on the past often induces unrealistic and distorted nostalgia which again always cripples our ability to deal with our current lives and our future. Once again, dealing only with the future and ignoring the events and lessons of the past can only lead to frustrations and disappointments when our rosy predictions and seeming certainties turn out to be wrong, useless and even dangerous.

Elul sets the right tone. It emphasizes our future while still demanding that a measure of introspection allows one to learn from the past year gone by - and to create a better emotional and psychological frame of mind and soul.

Elul is marked by the sounding of the shofar in the morning synagogue prayer services and by the recitation of selichot in the Sephardic and Near Eastern Jewish communities. These customs are meant to internalize within us the opportunities that the month of Elul offers for our spiritual restoration and growth.

There are no easy or even proven methods to help this process along within ourselves. Every individual must find his or her way alone. Judaism generally is not a one size fits all faith when it comes to spiritual growth. While we are all bound to perform the commandments of the Torah in their entirety, no explicit guide to finding spirituality in one's life is granted to us.

Elul is a time to search deep into one's own self for the personal road that we all seek - to become closer to the Creator and to leave a legacy of decency and Jewish commitment to those that will follow us. Elul is truly a special month for all of us.

Events for the Week

- Shabbat After Kiddush Shiur
- Sunday@9am Exploring the RH Machzor
- Tuesday@7:30pm Tamar's Ladies Shiur
- Thursday@10am Seniors Shiur

Shabbat Times

Mincha Friday	5:25
Candle Lighting	5:18
Shacharit	9:00
Tanach Shiur	4:00
Mincha	4:50
Shekiah	5:34
Havdalah	6:11

Shabbat shalom.

A Jerusalem Post Editorial

Is Jewishness a function of religion, culture or nationality? According to the High Court, it is all of them at once.

In a fascinating legal decision that touches on the very core of Jewish/Israeli identity, the country's supreme legal authority ruled last week that a woman who converted to Christianity and immigrated to Germany could not regain her Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return, even though two Orthodox rabbinical courts – in London and in Tel Aviv – had determined that she was Jewish.

However, in their precedent-making decision, the three justices – Neal Hendel, Elyakim Rubinstein and Hanan Meltzer – gave the woman the option of regaining citizenship if she could prove to the Interior Ministry her renewed commitment to the Jewish people.

Precisely how she would accomplish this “return” was left unclear, but it suggests a radically new conception of repatriation through personal transformation akin to the Jewish concept of tshuva – “repentance” and/or “return.”

H.Z., born in Israel in 1950 to parents who survived the Holocaust, married a Catholic in a ceremony that took place in Jaffa in 1975. H.Z. had to declare that she had been baptized into the Catholic faith to marry. She was registered accordingly in the Religious Affairs Ministry's records. In 1977, H.Z. and her husband moved to Germany, and in 1985, due to tax issues, H.Z. asked that her Israeli citizenship be revoked, noting in official documentation, “I am living as a Christian now anyway.”

In 1992, however, H.Z. asked German authorities to have her name removed from the registrar of the Christian community. And after sustaining severe injuries in a car accident, being abandoned by her husband and losing her mother, H.Z. asked the Interior Ministry to reinstate her Israeli citizenship, claiming her conversion to Christianity was faked. Her request was rejected despite her kosher stamp of approval from two rabbinical courts.

In their carefully argued unanimous decision, the High Court justices established from a diverse array of sources that Israeli citizenship is tied to a highly complex and exclusionary construction made up of religious, national and cultural considerations.

Prime minister David Ben-Gurion, noted the justices, in a 1950 speech to the Knesset during the passage of the Law of Return, which granted automatic Israeli citizenship to any “Jew,” declared that “no other law better expresses the uniqueness of the State of Israel. This law fuses history, culture and religion; past, present and future; aspirations dreams and realities.”

The justices also cited historical studies which showed that Jewish communities throughout the ages sanctioned those members who voluntarily left the fold. These converts to other religions were still considered Jews in the strictly religious sense for the purpose, say, of marriage and divorce – just as H.Z. was still considered Jewish by London's and Tel Aviv's rabbinical courts. Nevertheless, communities throughout the ages regularly ostracized these people, the justices noted, suggesting that in modern Israel the refusal to reinstate citizenship was a legitimate response to H.Z.'s behavior.

Legal precedents were mentioned as well. There was the 1962 High Court ruling on Oswald Rufeisan, a Jew who became a Carmelite monk, whose request for Israeli citizenship was rejected despite his self-professed connection to the Jewish people.

In addition, the justices showed how the Knesset's 1970 amendment to the Law of Return – which stipulated that a Jew was someone who was either “born to a Jewish mother” or “who converted” and had “no other religion” – was obviously inspired by Jewish tradition.

And they noted that Aharon Barak, former president of the Supreme Court, basing himself on solely secular criteria, acknowledged in 1987 that a Jew who believed Jesus was a savior had removed himself from the Jewish collective and was, therefore, to be denied Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return.

But the truly earth-breaking innovation presented by the justices in H.Z.'s case was the application of the Jewish concept of tshuva to the Law of Return.

H.Z. might have cut herself off from the Jewish people when she embraced Christianity. But the way back is not blocked, the justices made clear. H.Z., rightly, still has a chance to regain her lost Israeli citizenship through the Jewish process of repentance.

We would like to wish the following members a long life for their Yartzeits this upcoming week:

Anne Sher	Mother of Aaron Sher
Maurice Stoch	Father of Jack Stoch
Roy Cohen	Brother of Trevor Cohen
Theodore Aaron Jacob Sher	Father of Howard Sher
Phyllis Shapkaitz	Mother of Renee Rosenfeld
Mervyn Gerszt	Brother of Rayna Sandler
Lucy Naar	Mother of David Naar
Philip Cowan	Father of David Cowan SC
Queenie Gild	Mother of Steven Gild
Molly Silverman	Mother of Mervyn Silverman
Jessie Klibansky	Mother of Anne Cornofsky
Esther Klagsburn	Mother of Walter Cowan
Antoinette Marcus	Mother in Law of Nadine Marcus
Ralph Cohen	Father of Jeffrey Cohen
Ruben Lazarus	Father of Richard Lazarus
Sarah Turner	Mother of Estelle Behrens

MazelTov Bar & Bat Mitzvah: Dylan and Jessica Friedman

Jessica is a fun loving, sensitive young lady who has a passion for art and gymnastics. Jess tends to cartwheel around the house these days whilst thinking about her latest dress she will be designing. Above all else Jess enjoys spending time with her family but even more so with her friends. The telephone generally find its way into her room and remains there for many hours each day.

Dylan is a very enthusiastic swimmer and Play Station player. He enjoys good game of tennis and soccer.

Although Dylan does not cook at all, he certainly enjoys the eating part.

Dylan loves spending time with his friends and being outdoors. He enjoys his bar mitzvah lessons with Chazan and Rabbi Krebs and looks forward to sharing some of these lessons this Shabbat.

Jess along with Dylan are excited about sharing their bnei mitzvah with so many amazing people.

Don't be alone this Jewish New Year...come
 join our family
 For Dinners &/or Lunches throughout
 the Chagim
 Call Tamar 0406-048-413 or Rabbi Krebs
 0406-048-415




Hey Kids
 Come Explore Shabbat

Friday Night
3 September
@ 5:45 pm






Special Community Function

Evening of Jewish Music Melave Malka

Saturday Night 4th September 2010 at 8pm

Venue: Pelerman Centre, Masada, St.Ives Cost:\$10

*Bookings: Kehillat Masada - 9988 4417
 North Shore Synagogue - 9416 3710*




Chazzan Zvi Teichtahl **Chazzan Ian Glass**

*A night of light enjoyable music.
 Please join us after the function
 for a Combined Special Selichot service
 which is traditionally held at Midnight on
 Saturday before Rosh Hashana. This is a
 great way to prepare for the New Year!*