



**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

TORAH WEEKLY

T"01

17 - 23 September, 2017
26 Elul 5777 -
3 Tishrei, 5778

Torah:

Deuteronomy 32:1 - 52

Haftarah:

Hosea 14:2 - 10;
Micah: 7:18-20

Rosh Hashanah

Day 1 (Thursday):

Genesis 21:1-34
Numbers 29:1-6
Haforah:
Samuel I 1:1 - 2:10

Day 2 (Friday):

Genesis 22:1-24
Numbers 29:1-6
Haforah:
Jeremiah 31:1-19

■ **SUKKOT**

We have pop-up Sukkot for the Rabbi to take into prison, it is not to late to make arrangements.

■ **CALENDARS**

We have Jewish Calendars, if you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask your Rabbi / Chaplain to contact us.

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THE HEART OF THE MATTER

This week's Parsha of Ha'azinu contains only 32 verses, which is the numerical equivalent of the Hebrew word for heart. Our sages explain that this poetic song delivered to the Jewish people by Moshe and Yehoshua is the "heart" of the book of Deuteronomy. Just as the heart gives life and vitality to all the limbs of the body, so too, this mystical poem gives vitality to the rest of the book, and indeed, the rest of the Torah.

Moshe explained to the people that what he was about to tell them would be an encapsulated prophecy for all that which would happen to them for the rest of time. The good, the sad, and the ugly. In fact, we are taught that the portion of Ha'azinu, in one way or another contains a reference to everything. As in, everything...

The Ramban, the famous Nachmanides, once had a student named Avner who left the ways of Torah and Judaism and assimilated into Spanish society. Being a great scholar in his own right, he quickly rose to the highest ranks of the king's court. Once, on Yom Kippur, he summoned his former teacher to appear before him.

The Ramban felt that perhaps, just maybe, the great holiness of the day would increase his chances of making a positive impact on

his wayward former student. With hope in his heart and a prayer on his lips, he made his way to the king's palace.

When he entered Avner's chambers, the young man immediately took a knife, and in front of the Ramban's face, slaughtered, prepared, cooked and ate a large fatty pig. All the while he watched the expressions on the face of his former teacher.

He then began a sophisticated debate with the Ramban about how many transgressions he had just committed. He brought up biblical and scholarly proofs for all of his statements and easily followed the counter-arguments the Ramban presented to him.

"If your knowledge is so great," the Ramban asked, "why did you give up on Torah?"

"Because of you," Avner replied.

"And how is that?" asked a surprised Ramban.

"Once during one of your classes, you said that everything that will ever come to be is alluded to in the Song Haazinu. I had heard broad and brave statements from you before, but that was the last straw. I could not accept it as truth and I decided I wanted no part of a religion whose sages speak so foolishly."

"I am sorry that you felt that way," replied the Rabman, "but I maintain that my statement was indeed true."

"Prove it to me!"

responded Avner. "Show me where my name is alluded to in Ha'azinu!"

After a moment's thought, the Ramban answered: "It is written: 'I said: 'I will scatter them; I will obliterate their memory from among mankind...'" The third letter of each of the five Hebrew words of the verse spells out "Rav Avner..."

Avner was shocked. He was at a loss of words, as he realized how wrong he had been and how reckless his decision to abandon his faith had been.

Overcome with emotion, Avner begged the Ramban to advise him of how he could possibly repent for all of his hateful resentment and spiteful abandonment of God's will.

"One thing I do not understand." Avner asked after some time. "Why is it that a sinner like myself is referred to in Torah as 'Rav,' an indication of some measure of respect?"

"Every Jew," explained the Ramban, "has an Godly soul which can never be diminished, and thereby forever has the potential to turn his life around and put himself whole-heartedly into the service of God. No matter how a person erred, or how far he may have fallen, he can always and forever turn his heart back to God and His eternal will."

We all have an individual destiny. The Torah, the "blueprints into which G-d looked when creating the wor-

ld,” helps us reveal that destiny. The Parsha of Haazinu includes this very Torah in its entirety, but in capsulized form and thus serves as a prophecy for our people as a whole and for every individual.

By Rabbi Nissan Friedman

CHANAH'S PRAYER

Some people see the human being as a lonely creature in an indifferent, and even hostile, universe. They need to look deeper, for the two are essentially one: The soul of man is G-dly, and the soul of the universe is G-d. Only in their outward expression does a conflict appear—or even that which may resemble indifference. But within is a love affair, an eternal, inseparable embrace. It is a drama King Solomon entitled “The Song of Songs,” for it is what lies at the core of every song, every human expression and all the cosmos: the longing to reunite, to be one, to create a harmony in the outer world that matches the perfect union that lies beneath.

This, too, is the work of prayer: We have our concerns. G-d seems so distant from them. There is a vast chasm between our world and His. But then He says, “Speak to me about what bothers you. Tell me with all your heart what you desire, and I will listen. For what is important to you is important to me. Speak to me. I wish to dwell within your world.”

The chasm merges and seals. Outer and inner, higher and lower, spiritual and physical, holy and mundane, heaven and earth, kiss and become one.

There is a condition, however, to this healing of lovers' hearts: that first we must find the inner sanctity that lies behind our own desires and strife. For there is nothing of this world that does not contain a divine spark, no movement of the soul without G-dly purpose.

Only once we have made this peace within ourselves, between our inner souls and our outer desires, between the sanctuary of our hearts and the words of our lips, only then can we create this cosmic peace between the Essence of All Being and our busy, material world.

This is why prayer is called throughout the Psalms “an outpouring of the soul.” That which lies within pours outward, with no dam to obstruct it, no mud to taint it, nothing to change it along the way. The entire world may be ripping apart at the seams, but the beseecher's heart and mouth are at peace as one. And then that peace spreads outward into all things.

There are many things we learn from the prayer of Chanah (recounted in I Samuel, chapter 1, and read as the haftorah for the first day of Rosh Hashanah). We learn that our lips must move in prayer, that we must be able to hear our own prayer but no one else should. We learn that prayer is to be said standing. But most important, we learn how to pour out our soul.

Eli thought Chanah was drunk with wine. He was the high priest, the holiest member of the Jewish nation.

The divine spirit rested upon him, and he was able to see within the hearts of men and women. Yet, he saw Chana as a drunkard—drunk with a worldly desire, a desire for a child so that she would no longer suffer the shame and ridicule afforded her by Peninah.

But Chanah answered, “No, it is not wine, but my soul, that pours out to G-d. For my desire for a child has purpose and meaning beyond the pursuits and follies of man. My child, the precious jewel of my heart's desire—I have already given him to G-d.”

So it is with our prayers: we pray for material things, but it is not the material, but the spiritual within them, that our soul desires.

The mission of every human being is to bring the many things of this chaotic world into harmony with their inner purpose and the oneness that underlies them. To do this, each of us must have those things related to our mission: our family, our health, our homes, our income. We pray for these things from our innermost heart; our soul pours out for them—because our soul knows that without them, she cannot fulfill her mission in this world.

And G-d listens. Because He wishes to dwell within our mundane world.

By Rabbi Tzvi Freeman

May you and your loved ones be blessed with a “Shana Tova”. A good sweet and happy new year.

In Jewish History

Wednesday, 29 Elul, 5777 - September 20, 2017
Tzemach Tzeddek Born (1789)

The third Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn of Lubavitch (1789-1866), was born on the 29th of Elul. Orphaned from his mother at age 3, he was raised by his maternal grandfather, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. Rabbi Menachem Mendel assumed the leadership of Chabad in 1827, upon the passing of his father-in-law and uncle, Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch.

Extremely active in communal affairs, he established and funded Jewish farming colonies which provided a livelihood for thousands of families. He also stood at the forefront of the battle against the “Enlightenment Movement” which, with the support of the Czarist regime, sought to destroy traditional Jewish life -- a battle which earned him no less than 22 (!) imprisonments and arrests.

In the course of his lifetime, Rabbi Menachem Mendel penned more than 48,000 pages of Chassidic teachings and Halachic exegesis. He is known as the “Tzemach Tzeddek” (“a sprouting of righteousness”) after his work of Halachic responsa by that name.