Parshat Ki Teitzei

Elul 9. 5783

August 26, 2023

Issue 307

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# **The Year of Building** By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

It was early in the year 1992, just one day before the Lubavitcher Rebbe was to suffer a debilitating stroke. Thousands of people were standing in line to receive the Rebbe's blessing and a dollar (to encourage the giving of charity).

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Pevzner was also in that line with some twenty of his donors waiting to give the Rebbe the keys to the huge multi-milliondollar campus that he had just completed in Paris, France.

Three years earlier, in 1989, the Rebbe publicly declared that year to be Shanat HaBinyan - 'the Year of Building.' Immediately hundreds of Chabad institutions throughout the world began building. But very few, if any, were on as large a scale as Rabbi Pevzner's.

Rabbi Pevzner decided to build a campus of buildings in addition to the older school and dorm buildings he already had. He asked for the Rebbe's blessing, received it, and weeks later had tens of wealthy donors interested in his dream. Now he could accept many more pupils as well.

The project was immense. Almost more than Rabbi Pevzner had bargained for. There were many crises and difficulties and the Rebbe had to be consulted (he gave large donations as well as answers) countless times.

And after three years of working day and night with almost no rest, it was finished. A miracle!

Now the line progressed and finally their turn came. They were standing before the Rebbe! They were all beaming with joy as Rabbi Pevzner stepped forward, handed the Rebbe the cluster of keys to all the buildings and proudly announced,

"Rebbe, thank G-d, the campus is finished. It took us three very difficult years. If it wasn't for the Rebbe's blessings and advice we could not have done it. But now, with G-d's help, it is finished, and here are the keys."

The Rebbe took the keys and, with a smiling face said, "Begin immediately to build a new building."

They all were astounded! After three years of constant work, they thought they had done enough. But the Rebbe was never wrong.

He gave to each of them a dollar (in addition to the hundred dollars he had sent earlier to all the big donors), blessed them all with success and a good trip back, and they returned to France.

But they were completely confused. If they hadn't been acquainted with the Rebbe's greatness and seemingly infinite knowledge of both Torah and secular matters, they wouldn't have taken what he said seriously.

What did they need another building for? The plan was to move the students into the new buildings and the empty old buildings could be used if many more pupils came, which was highly unlikely. The new buildings were more than enough! But even more unlikely were the chances of getting more land from the city - in fact it was virtually impossible. The land they acquired was already a miracle.

But Rabbi Pevzner, as a 'shliach' (emissary) of the Rebbe, didn't think in normal terms anymore; he was used to miracles.

He went to city hall, and immediately was able to get an audience with the Minister of Housing. As soon as he entered his office, he got straight to the point; he needed more land to build another, even larger building.

He expected a reply like, "More land! Why Rabbi, you haven't even begun using what you have. Or, 'Maybe you would like me to give you all of Paris'?"

But instead, the minister stood and cordially requested that Rabbi Pevzner take him for a tour of the new campus that he had just finished building.

Arrangements were made, and shortly afterwards the Rabbi was able to spend significant time showing and explaining to him the various buildings. Eventually, while they were walking, he stirred up his courage and asked the minister if he was a religious man.

The minister said 'yes,' whereupon Rabbi Pevzner began to tell him about the Lubavitcher Rebbe, ending with the words, "The Rebbe wants us to build a new building. That is, an additional new building. And the Rebbe has never been wrong."

The minister stopped suddenly. He faced Rabbi Pevzner, looked at him very seriously and said, "I have heard of your Rebbe and I understood that he is a very wise man. But now I know that he is also a prophet!"

Rabbi Pevzner was surprised. Perhaps the minister was being sarcastic? But then the man continued.

"Rabbi, you must not tell anyone what I am about to tell you now. The mayor is going to take all your old buildings. You will be left only with these new ones. He is just waiting till after the elections because he doesn't want to make enemies, but it has already been decided. Your old school buildings are to be destroyed, and the land will be taken from you and converted into a new shopping mall. And then it will be impossible for you to get new land or accept more students.

"There is no way that your Rebbe could have known this. It is sheer prophesy! Rabbi, as I said, I am a religious man and know a miracle when I see it. You come tomorrow to my office and I will give you the land you request, and then you must build as much as possible and as soon as possible. Before the elections."

In the end, the miracle came in a different way.

The mayor lost the elections and it seemed a miracle wasn't necessary. Until, just a few days afterwards a fire broke out and destroyed the old buildings totally!

But with the new additional building Rabbi Pevzner built at the request of the Rebbe, he was able to accept more students and in a short time it too was overflowing with new pupils that seemed to have come from nowhere!!

The Rebbe foresaw all this over two years before it happened!

Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.

# **Once Happened** The Blind Chazzan with The "Grating" Voice

As heard from Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach

I once visited Amsterdam and prayed in a certain shul (synagogue) on Shabbat morning. I heard the chazzan (cantor) davening very loud, skipping words, and singing in a grating voice that was completely off tune.

I was upset, as I assumed that this chazzan probably paid his way to receiving the honor of serving as chazzan. Maybe the shul let him have his way and serve as chazzan, only because he gave a few dollars to the shul's coffers.

I was so infuriated that the davening was sold to the highest bidder, that I went into a side room and preferred to daven alone. However, I returned to hear kriat haTorah (the reading of the Torah). As I went over to kiss the Torah, I saw that the chazzan was walking, holding the Torah, and two people were supporting his arms.

I asked someone why he needed help. The person told me that this chazzan used to be the one who led the davening in the great shul in Lemberg, Poland, prior to WWII. This man used to lead a choir of 40 children in Lemberg. When the war broke out, this chazzan and the 40 children in his choir were taken together to Auschwitz, where he remained with them until the children were murdered in the gas chambers.

This chazzan of Lemberg was kept alive, and was forced to entertain the Nazis with his powerful and melodious voice. He was tortured, blinded and his vocal chords suffered damage. After the war, he settled in Amsterdam. When the people in the shul realized who he was, they begged him to serve as chazzan.

He kept refusing, saying that his vocal chords were damaged, and besides, he was too broken and dispirited to lead the davening. He finally acquiesced, and this Shabbat – when I was visiting the shul – was the first time the chazzan agreed to lead the Tefillot (prayers).

I felt deeply ashamed. I saw scars all over his face. My entire perspective took a paradigm shift. I went over to kiss the Torah, and besides for kissing the Torah, I decided to kiss the chazzan's hand as well.

He turned to the people who was with him and he says, "Who kissed my hand?" They said, Shlomo Carlebach. He stopped and he says, "Shloimele... I like your melodies"

I stayed an extra week and I took long walks with him, but you know what happened after that? Four weeks later I was told the blind chazan has a new position – He's the chazan in Gan Eden.

Transcribed from a recording of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach.

	<b>GRAPHICS</b> Shabbat Times – Parshat Ki Teitzei		
	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	6:36	7:49	8:28
Tel Aviv	6:52	7:51	8:26
Haifa	6:44	7:51	8:28
Be'er Sheva	6:54	7:51	8:27

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# **A Walking Miracle** By Arele Karnevsky

When I was a baby, my family discovered that my legs were bow-legged (curved). My mother took me to a specialist. He said not to worry, for I would eventually grow out of it.

#### I didn't.

My mother was very concerned about my medical situation. She brought me to the Hospital for Joint Diseases to see what they could do for me. They told my mother that I would have to wear braces on my legs to straighten them. We kept visiting the hospital for regular check-ups.

Once, my mother asked the specialist how long he thought I would need to wear braces. The doctor estimated that I would need them for at least a year. He suggested that I come back in three weeks, when Xrays would be taken of the leg to determine how much longer I would need the braces.

As it turned out, the day of my scheduled X-ray appointment was the day of my brother's birthday. It was customary that the Sunday before one's birthday, one would pass before the Lubavitcher Rebbe to receive a blessing and dollar from him. My mother, my older brother and I all went before the Rebbe for dollars the Sunday before my brother's birthday and my appointment.

My mother introduced the two of us to the Rebbe and told him in Yiddish that my brother's birthday was that Thursday. The Rebbe handed my older brother two dollars, instructing him to give it to charity on the day of his birthday.

Then it was my turn to pass before the Rebbe. After that it was my mother's turn. She thought about saying something to the Rebbe about the X-rays that were to be taken on Thursday, but was too overwhelmed in the presence of the Rebbe to say anything. She decided to say nothing, instead asking my father to write a letter to the Rebbe. When her turn came the Rebbe handed her a dollar and she started to leave. But then the Rebbe handed her another dollar saying, "This is for Thursday!"

My father gave in a letter with a request for the Rebbe's blessing before the Thursday's appointment. Later, my parents received a phone call from the Rebbe's secretary. He told them that the Rebbe instructed them to check their tefillin and mezuzot and to report back to the Rebbe what the sofer (scribe) had found. My father immediately removed all the mezuzot from the doorposts and took them and his tefillin to the sofer, this time a different sofer than the one he usually used.

Slice of

The sofer checked both the tefillin and the mezuzot and found three mistakes: two mistakes in the mezuzot and one in the tefillin. All the mistakes were found in the legs of each of the problematic letters.

One had a hole in the foot of the letter and the ink was coming through the other side of the parchment. This indicated that the mezuzah was invalid from the moment it was originally written. It was now as obvious to us as a ringing bell that the Rebbe's advice to check tefillin and mezuzot was Divinely Inspired. The other two letters were found to have cracks in them.

The invalid mezuzot were replaced, in fact, my grandmother went out and bought ten of the bestquality mezuzot from Israel as a gift for the family. That Thursday I went to the hospital. My entire family was very excited about what might happen. Even my father, who was not always able to accompany me to my regular hospital check-ups, came along to see what miracles lay in store.

The doctors took me into the X-ray room and took the required X-rays of my legs. The doctor soon came out of the room completely shocked, his eyes wide in disbelief.

"How long has your son been wearing these legbraces?" he asked.

"Oh, about a few months," my parents answered. "I looked at your son's previous X-rays," the doctor continued. "They show your son's legs to be curved. For some inexplicable reason, the new X-rays show his legs to be totally straight, just perfect! Usually a case such as your son's would need surgery or possible years of wearing these leg-braces. Your son is completely healed."

The leg-braces are still in my house. They are there to remind my family and me of the great miracle. I am forever grateful to the Rebbe for his blessing.



A teacher's mistake once caused a national catastrophe.

Torah Compilations

Ki Teitzei

This week's Parsha of Ki Teitzei gives us the Mitzvah, 'תמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים לא תשכח', 'Wipe out all remembrance of the Amalekites from under the heavens – never forget'.

A nice commentary I read from The Chief Rabbi of England and the Commonwealth, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis says, that in the days of King David, as is recorded in the first book of Kings, he asked Yoav, the Chief of Staff of his army, to fight against the Amalekites. And it took Yoav six months in order to be victorious. At the end of those six months, he came back to King David and triumphantly he declared, "I have killed all the males of Amalek".

King David said to Yoav, "are you not aware of the Mitzvah in the Torah where Hashem commands us to wipe out the entire people of Amalek – they are the ultimate evil that can ever be on the face of the earth, their very presence will plague good people for the rest of time".

And Yoav said, "but the Torah only talks about the males". King David says, "where?"

As is recorded in the Gemarah, Mesechet Bava Batra, Yoav pointed to the verse in our Parsha, יגר תמחה את זכר'. King David said, "not 'זָכָר', meaning 'males', rather 'זָכָר', the 'remembrance' of them all".

And Yoav was so angry, he took out his sword and he had to be restrained from actually killing his teacher.

The fact that the Talmud reveals the story to us is a message all about the quality of education. Of course, we must have as many schools as possible, and we must populate them with as many pupils as possible. But together with that, we should never compromise on the standard of Jewish education.

When a teacher or a parent makes a mistake, I don't think it's going to cause a national calamity, but nonetheless, we have a responsibility to always get it right.

So let's try to always get it right and let's pray with all our hearts, for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra Kadisha members worldwide, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, loving and sweet Shabbat.



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HAFTORA: Yeshayahu 54:1- 10 (רני עקרה) (this is the fifth of seven Haftorot, [the Seven Haftorot of Consolation] that precede Rosh Hashanah).

This week we study Chapter 2 of Pirkei Avot

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 74 MITZVOT ASEH: 27 MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 47 NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 110 NUMBER OF WORDS: 1582 NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5856

Laws & Customs: Month of Elul (Up to Erev Rosh Hashanah) The Jewish For the year 5783 Weekly According to Shulchan Aruch Harav, Mishna Berurah and Nittei Gavriel **Based on Rabbi Shmuel Lesches's Halachah Sheets** Reviewed by Reb Elimelech Rabinowicz "שליט"א, Rav of Tzeirei Kehal Chassidim, Shaarei Chessed

**Compiled by Yossi Fraenkel in memory of his grandparents** 

ר' ראובו בו הרב משה אליעזר הלוי ע"ה וחיה ברכה בת ר' נפתלי משה ע"ה רבינוביז ר' יוסף בן ר' אורי ע"ה ומלכה בת ר' יצחק צבי הלוי ע"ה פרנקל

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# **WONTH OF ELUL**

On Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul, people give extra Tzedakah.

It is a Yerushalmi Minhag to go to Kivrei Tzadikim on Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul, there are some who specially go to Mearat Hamachpela and Kever Rachel.

On Rosh Chodesh Elul, Moshe Rabbeinu ascended Har Sinai to receive the second set of Luchot. He returned with them on Yom Kippur, with Hashem having granted complete forgiveness for the sin of the golden calf. These forty days are an especially auspicious time for Teshuvah.

The Arizal taught that the thirteen attributes of Divine Mercy are revealed in the month of Elul, assisting in one's efforts to do Teshuvah. The Baal Hatanya explained this idea with the famous parable of Melech B'Sadeh - the King in the field. The month of Elul is thus known as the Chodesh Horachamim (month of mercy), and the gates of mercy are open to all who wish to come close to Hashem through Teshuvah, Tefillah and Torah. These ideas should be publicized as much as possible.

Elul is the month of preparation to usher in a new year replete with good and blessing, both physically and spiritually.

The word Elul is an acronym for a number of Pesukim alluding to the ideas of Torah. Tefillah. Tzedakah, Teshuvah and Geulah. The month of Elul is an appropriate time to increase in all of these matters.

One should increase learning, particularly those topics applicable to the month of Elul.

One should also increase in Ahavat Yisrael and Gemilat-Chessed.

Elul is the "month of reckoning". During this month, one should make an accurate assessment of all one's thoughts, words and deeds, and reflect on all the experiences that occurred during the course of the year. One should improve and strengthen one's qualities, and at the same time, regret and correct one's deficiencies - both the errors and wrongs that were committed, as well as those things which were not performed as well as they could have been. One should resolve for the future to fulfil Mitzvot in the best possible manner; to be more diligent with regards to Torah and Tefillah; and to correct one's negative Middot as well as acquire positive Middot.

During the month of Elul, according to the Sephardic communities, Selichot is recited daily. (The Ashkenazi communities start Selichot this year, Motzei Shabbat Parshat Nitzavim - Vayelech, September 9<sup>th</sup>. )

During Elul, one should be enthused with much Simcha, in recognition of the special closeness that Hashem shows us - "The King is in the field".

Even though Elul is a time to arouse others to Teshuvah, this should be done in a pleasant and humble way, and not by G-d forbid saying harsh things about others.

#### L'DAVID HASHEM ORI

We begin reciting L'David Hashem Ori on Rosh Chodesh. Chabad and some other Chassidim start on the first day whilst everyone else starts on the second day. During Shacharit, some recite it after Aleinu and some, including Chabad, recite it after Shir Shel Yom (or after Borchi Nafshi on Rosh Chodesh). Chabad and some others recite it during Mincha before Aleinu. Some communities recite L'David Hashem Ori at Mincha after Aleinu, and some only after Ma'ariv. When davening Mincha with a Minyan who says it after Ma'ariv, one must still recite Aleinu together with them. If one needs to defer L'David Hashem Ori as a result, he should recite it after Aleinu and before Al Tirah.

#### SHOFAR

Shofar is blown during the month of Elul, most have the custom to begin on Sunday, the second day of Rosh Chodesh and some on the first day. The purpose of hearing the Shofar is to arouse feelings of Teshuvah.

Some have the custom to blow Shofar also after Mincha or Maariv. Those who blow Shofar after Maariv, should do so also on Motzei Shabbat

Some have the custom to blow just Tekiah-Shevarim-Teruah-Tekiah and others, including Chabad, blow ten sounds. [Tekiah-Shevarim-Teruah-Tekiah: Tekiah-Shevarim-Tekiah; Tekiah-Teruah-Tekiah.]

If one was unable to hear the Shofar with a Minyan, he should still endeavor to hear the Shofar.

During Elul, one does not need to repeat the sounds, if the Shofar was Passul (e.g. it had a crack or hole). Similarly, one does not need to repeat any sounds blown incorrectly (e.g. the Tekiah was too short). If the Ba'al-Tokeah chooses to fix his mistake, he certainly does not need to redo the entire section, as he would, were it Rosh Hashana.

### **OTHER CUSTOMS OF ELUL**

There is a tradition to recite 10 extra chapters of Tehillim each day of Elul, which will equal the completion of Tehillim twice (300 chapters numerically equivalent to כפר – atonement). Chabad have the custom to only recite three extra chapters of Tehillim each day. Ideally, these should be recited immediately after the Tehillim that is normally said at the end of Shacharit.

If one neglected to recite these chapters of Tehillim on the appropriate day, he should do so at the earliest opportunity.

Beginning on the first day of Rosh Chodesh, most, including Chabad, have the custom to wish (both in person as well as in writing):

"Ketivah V'Chatima Tovah L'Shana Tova U'Metukah". [The Lubavitcher Rebbe included these wishes at the end of his letters. From Rosh Chodesh onwards, he would write only "Ketivah V'Chatima Tovah", and would begin adding "L'Shana Tova U'Metukah" from around the 18<sup>th</sup> of Elul onwards.]

Although the basic requirement is to check Mezuzot and Tefillin twice every seven years, some have the custom of checking them every Elul.

## **PATES IN ELUL**

2 Elul – Shabbat Parshat Shoftim. The first chapter of Pirkei Avot is recited.

9 Elul – Shabbat Parshat Ki Teitzei. When reading the last Passuk of the Parsha, the word Zeicher is read twice, first with a Tzeirei (Zeicher), and then again with a Segol (Zecher).

The second chapter of Pirkei Avot is recited.

15 Elul – Being thirty days before Sukkot, one begins learning its Halachot. This thirty-day period should also be utilized to ensure that the Chag needs of the poor are met, as well as planning Sukkot festivities.

16 Elul – Shabbat Parshat Ki Tavo. The third and fourth chapter of Pirkei Avot is recited by all. The opening Mishna ("Kol Yisrael") and concluding Mishna ("Rabbi Chananya") are recited only once.

18 Elul – The birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and the Baal Hatanya. On this day, the Chabad Rebbeim would wish one a "Chag Sameach".

The last 12 days of Elul (18-29 Elul) correspond to the 12 months of the year. On each of these days, one should make a reckoning of the corresponding month, and make all necessary corrections.

# **23**<sup>RD</sup> ELUL "SHABBAT MEVARCHIM"

Shabbat Parshat Nitzavim - Vayelech. We don't bentch the new month before Musaf. however Av Harachamim is recited. The Baal Shem Tov explains that Hashem Himself bentches the month of Tishrei, and with this power, we bentch the other months of the year.

Many make a kiddush after davening, in honor of "Shabbat Mevarchim".

Tzidkatecha is recited.

One learns the final two chapters of Pirkei Avot after Mincha. The opening Mishna ("Kol Yisrael") and concluding Mishna ("Rabbi Chananya") are recited only once.

Vi'hi Noam and V'atah Kaddosh are omitted on Motzei Shabbat.

#### SELICHOT

Due to the very varied customs on Selichot, we advise everyone to make themselves familiar with their own particular customs.

