



LOUGHTON SHUL
MORE THAN A SHUL

INSPIRE

EIKEV - NACHAMU 18AV - 8 AUGUST

BREAD, BUCKS, AND MAKING A LIVING

Man does not live by bread alone. A famous line (it even figured prominently in an ad for a burger chain some years ago), but what does it mean? The verse comes from this week's Torah reading, and is a reference to the miraculous manna, which fell from heaven daily during the Jewish people's sojourn in the wilderness. The conclusion of the verse is that "rather, by the utterance of G-d's mouth does man live." Thus, it is reminding us about the true source of human sustenance. Contrary to popular belief, it is neither our earthly toil, nor the sweat of our brow, nor all those conferences, meetings and sales seminars that ensure our success. The reality is that it is G-d who sustains us and looks after us, in the very same way as our ancestors trekking through the desert were totally dependent on Him for their daily bread. Wealth is a G-dly gift. At the end of the day, it is not our business acumen alone that provides our daily bread, but the blessings from Above which endow our efforts with success. Ask anyone in sales how often their best-laid plans and pitches have come to naught, and then, out of the blue, a big order comes in with little or no effort. Of course, it's not the rule, and we must be prepared to put in effort if we are to succeed. But when it does happen, it reminds us that there are higher forces, beyond our control, at work. But there's another meaning to this verse as well. Man does not live by bread alone. The human spirit is such that we crave more than bread. Human beings are never satisfied with money or materialism alone. Money is important, but we cannot live by money exclusively. What about job satisfaction? I know a number of individuals in our community who willingly gave up lucrative positions for less rewarding ones, because they found their work unstimulating. They were making lots of cash, but there was no emotional reward. I also know people who have it all financially, but who are nonetheless unhappy people. They are very successful—and very miserable. The successes we achieve do not guarantee our happiness. After we've bought the house of our dreams, and our fantasy sports car, and the latest mobile phones, laptops and DVDs, we tire of them all. For satisfaction to be lasting, it must be more than material; it must be spiritual. We need more than bread and money; we need stimulation and a sense of meaningful achievement. We need to know that our lives have purpose, and that somehow we have made a difference. We want to be assured that our work is productive and will have lasting value. They tell the story of a prisoner in a Russian labor camp whose job it was to turn a heavy wheel attached to a wall. For twenty-five years the prisoner worked at his backbreaking labour. He assumed that this wheel must be attached to a mill on the other side of the wall; perhaps he was milling grain, or pumping water that irrigated many fields. In his mind's eye he saw the plentiful crops and the sacks of milled grain feeding thousands of people. After twenty-five years of hard labor, when he was about to be released, the prisoner asked to be shown the apparatus behind the prison wall. There was nothing there! The wheel was just a wheel—all his "work" had served no useful purpose. The man collapsed in a dead faint, absolutely devastated. His life's work had been in vain. We have a deep-seated need to know that our life's work is purposeful, physically and spiritually. When we understand that every good deed is attached to a complex spiritual apparatus, that our every action meshes with a systematic structure of cosmic significance, then our lives become endowed with a deeper sense of meaning and purpose. We desperately need to know that, in some way, our work is helping others—that we are making a contribution to society beyond our own selfish needs. Then, we live. Then we are happy. Man does not live by bread alone. We simply cannot

Question:

Here's the scenario. I walk into an electronics store and ask the sales staff for advice on which digital camera is best for my needs. The guy spends half an hour explaining the pros and cons of all the different models. I say thanks and walk out of the store, then go online and order the exact camera he recommended, but at a much cheaper price. Am I being dishonest?

Answer: "Thou shalt not steal" does not only apply to outright thievery. The Torah warns against "stealing people's minds," which means misleading them through words or actions in order to gain some personal benefit. Say you're getting married, and you send an invitation to an acquaintance who you know won't attend the wedding. If your true motive is just to earn a gift in return, and you don't really want the person to come to the wedding, then that's stealing their mind for selfish gain. But if you are extending the invitation to honor them, or so they don't feel insulted, then that's fine. In such a case you are not taking, you are giving. It all depends on your intent. The Talmud prohibits asking a shopkeeper the price of an item that you have no intention of buying. You are stealing his mind, by making him think he has a customer. It would seem that the same applies to your camera-shopping expedition. The salesguy invested half an hour in you, thinking he had a buyer. If you never intended to purchase the camera in that store, you stole his mind, as he gave you his time for nothing.

Now, you could argue that your case is different from the Talmudic one. The guy who served you doesn't own the store; he is just in sales. It makes no difference to him if he made the sale or not; his job is to answer customers' questions. Okay, but perhaps he gets a commission on each sale, so he wouldn't have bothered wasting his time on you if he knew there was no chance of sealing the deal. And even if not, are you not stealing from the shop owner, who pays his sales team to serve genuine customers? You might say that you would be more than happy to purchase the camera from the store, if they would match the online price. So you weren't deceiving, just comparative shopping. That may indeed be the case. Only you and G-d know. In most questions of right and wrong, actions count more than intentions. But when it comes to stealing minds, the action is always defensible. Your intentions should be, too.

SHUL TIMES

Shabbat Times

Candle Lighting

8:20pm

Shabbat Ends 9:43pm

Friday

7pm with Rabbi Yanky

Kabbalat Shabbat on

zoom

Artscroll

980

1197

Living Torah

904

1228

PARSHA SUMMARY

In the Parshah of Eikev ("Because"), Moses continues his closing address to the children of Israel, promising them that if they will fulfill the commandments (mitzvot) of the Torah, they will prosper in the Land they are about to conquer and settle in keeping with G-d's promise to their forefathers. Moses also rebukes them for their failings in their first generation as a people, recalling their worship of the Golden Calf, the rebellion of Korach, the sin of the spies, their angering of G-d at Taveirah, Massah and Kivrot Hataavah ("The Graves of Lust"). "You have been rebellious against G-d," he says to them, "since the day I knew you." But he also speaks of G-d's forgiveness of their sins, and the Second Tablets which G-d inscribed and gave to them following their repentance. Their forty years in the desert, says Moses to the people, during which G-d sustained them with daily manna from heaven, was to teach them "that man does not live on bread alone, but by the utterance of G-d's mouth does man live." Moses describes the land they are about to enter as "flowing with milk and honey," blessed with the "seven kinds" (wheat, barley, grapevines, figs, pomegranates, olive oil and dates), and as the place that is the focus of G-d's providence of His world. He commands them to destroy the idols of the land's former masters, and to beware lest they become haughty and begin to believe that "my power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth." A key passage in our Parshah is the second chapter of the Shema, which repeats the fundamental mitzvot enumerated in the Shema's first chapter, and describes the rewards of fulfilling G-d's commandments and the adverse results (famine and exile) of their neglect. It is also the source of the precept of prayer, and includes a reference to the resurrection of the dead in the messianic age.

HAFTORAH SUMMARY

This week's haftorah is the second of a series of seven "haftorot of Consolation." These seven haftarot commence on the Shabbat following Tisha b'Av and continue until Rosh Hashanah. The exiled Jewish people express their concern that G-d has abandoned them. G-d reassures them that it is not so, comparing His love and mercy for His people to that of a mother for her children, and even greater than that, too. The prophet Isaiah then touchingly describes the ingathering of the exiles which will occur with the Messiah's arrival and returning to the initial subject matter of this haftorah, that of the Jewish people's complaint of being abandoned by G-d, he reminds them of their rebellious behavior that brought about the exile and suffering. He concludes with encouraging words, reminding us of what had happened to our ancestors, Abraham and Sarah. Just as they were blessed with a child when they had all but given up hope, so too, G-d will send us the Messiah.

WISHING ALL THOSE WITH YARTZEIT THIS WEEK CHAIM ARUCHIM

**Gee Audrey Brother Shlomo Lev ben Zev Avraham HaCohen 19 Av
Lesser Beatrice Father Mordechai Yitzchak 19 Av
Kashket Bernard Mother Devorah bas Moshe 21 Av
Segal Carol Father Chaim Ben Kalman 25 Av**

JEWISH HUMOUR

Moishe and Miriam are shopping in their local grocery store. Moishe picks up a carton of fresh baked cookies and puts it in their cart. "What do you think you're doing?" asks Miriam. "They're on sale, only \$8 for 24 cookies," Moishe replies. "Put them back, we can't afford them," Miriam demands. Moishe complies and they carry on shopping. A few aisles later, Miriam picks up a \$16 jar of face cream and puts it in the basket. "What do you think you're doing?" asks Moishe. "It's my face cream. It makes me look beautiful," replies Miriam. Moishe snorts: "So does a carton of 24 cookies, and it's only half the price." On the PA system: "Cleanup on aisle 25. We have a husband down."

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK

You're standing in front of 2 identical doors. One leads to heaven, one leads to hell. There is an angel and a devil. They are identical, but the angel always tells the truth, the devil always lies. How do you find out which door leads to heaven?

**Answer to last week's Riddle.
A Heart**

STORY TIME

In the town of Anipoli, there were two rabbis. One, was the great Chasidic master Reb Zusha. The other was the town rabbi, who was no supporter of the nascent Chasidic movement. Reb Zusha was beloved by all for his humility and cheerful attitude. The rabbi, however, was not so popular with the townspeople. Although a man of great learning, he was always concerned that he was not being accorded enough respect. His quest for honor led him down a slippery slope to anger and resentment. One winter night, the rabbi's thoughts turned to the wedding he had attended the week before. The father of the bride, Reb Moshe, was a wealthy philanthropist. The entire town had been invited to join in the family's simcha (happy occasion). As the rabbi of Anipoli, this rabbi expected to receive great respect. But in the end, he had received nothing but insults. No place at the head table had been reserved for him and he was served leftover food! To top it all off, he was not invited to lead the Grace After Meals! Who had been given all of these honors? Reb Zusha! The rabbi recalled Reb Zusha, in his tattered clothes, sitting at the head table. Reb Zusha sat in front of a plate piled high with delicious foods. When the meal was over, Reb Zusha was honored with leading the Grace After Meals. "What is his secret?" wondered the rabbi. "He has nothing, and is always happy. I seemingly have everything, and I am always angry! Though the hour was late and the night bitterly cold, the rabbi decided he had to have his answer. He bundled himself up and started trudging through the snow-covered streets. Eventually, the rabbi arrived at Reb Zusha's broken-down hovel. Reb Zusha warmly welcomed the rabbi inside. The rabbi got straight to the point. "How is it that you are always so happy and content," the rabbi asked, "while I am always resentful and angry?" "It's nothing very mystical," Reb Zusha replied. "Let me explain with an example. Do you remember the wedding of Reb Moshe's daughter?" Reb Zusha asked. "Of course I do," the rabbi replied in a huff. "Do you remember what happened when the special messenger arrived at your door with your personally delivered invitation?" Reb Zusha continued. How could Reb Zusha possibly know what had happened, the rabbi wondered. "You demanded to see the guest list," Reb Zusha said. "When you saw that you were fourteenth on the list, you became so angry you almost crumpled up the paper in your hands. Is this correct?" "But I am the rabbi of Anipoli," the rabbi protested. "I deserve to be shown honor." "True," replied Reb Zusha, "but did you happen to notice that the people ahead of you were Reb Moshe's relatives? Your name actually headed the list of those people outside of the family circle. But because you were looking out for your honor, you didn't see this. You became so angry at Reb Moshe that you hatched a plan." The rabbi remembered. He had decided that the family did not deserve the honor of having him attend the wedding ceremony. He would teach them by arriving in the middle of the meal. "By the time you arrived, the hall was packed," said Reb Zusha. "The whole town had been invited and there weren't any empty seats. Reb Moshe finally spotted you. What happened next?" "Reb Moshe escorted me to the head table," the rabbi replied. "But..." "What's the 'but' for?" prodded Reb Zusha gently. "There wasn't any room for me at the head table," the rabbi complained. "They had to squeeze me in. It was insulting. Don't they know who I am? And what about the waiters? Explain their rude behavior," challenged the rabbi. "It was a wedding," said Reb Zusha. "There were so many people. True, the waiters didn't see you, but someone else did. Isn't that right?" The rabbi nodded his head in agreement. As soon as his host, Reb Moshe, had noticed that he was sitting with an empty plate, the wealthy philanthropist himself immediately went to the kitchen to get the rabbi some food. Reb Moshe returned and apologized profusely. All that was left was a small piece of chicken and a few vegetables. The rabbi refused the plate that his host offered and told Reb Moshe exactly what he thought. Reb Moshe apologized once more, and then went back to his seat. "For the rest of the evening," Reb Zusha said, "you radiated such negativity that no one dared to approach you. Is it any wonder that you were not asked to lead the Grace After Meals?" "Now what happened to Reb Zusha," continued Reb Zusha, who always referred to himself in the third person. "When Reb Zusha opened his door he couldn't believe his eyes. To think that Reb Moshe, one of the pillars of the town, should invite Reb Zusha to share in his simcha - and send a messenger to personally deliver the invitation! Such honor! Such kindness!" Reb Zusha was so overcome with joy for the family," Reb Zusha said, "that when the happy day finally arrived he rushed to the hall two hours before the wedding to see if he could help with the preparations. Reb Zusha thought he might be asked to set up, but what happened? Reb Moshe asked him to officiate. at the chupa!" After the ceremony, Reb Zusha entered the hall and saw that it was packed. He would be happy to stand in a corner and eat his meal there if there was no room for him at any table. Suddenly, Reb Moshe took him by the arm and personally escorted him to a fine seat at the head table. "Waiters came and began heaping food on Reb Zusha's plate. Reb Zusha was so overcome by all this kindness that he just had to get up and thank his host. He blessed the bride and groom with all his heart, and was about to go back to his seat when Reb Moshe stopped him." Reb Moshe then said such kind words to Reb Zusha. "Reb Zusha, you're so filled with simcha for us, will you please honor me by leading us in the Grace After Meals?" Reb Zusha went home happy that night. But you, my honored rabbi, went home angry. The reason is simple. You expected everything, and got nothing. I expected nothing, was happy with nothing, and got it all."

FOOD 4 THE SOUL

Sometimes you feel that you are good, but G-d is not being good to you. So how does G-d feel? Just as you do—that He showers you with all the love you can receive, but when will you return that love to Him? G-d is your mirror. Let the love flow