Assembly Notes

PARSHAS KI SAVO and CHAI ELUL 5784

Assembly Theme: Gratitude

There is so much more available today than there ever was. Just compare what we have today with what was the norm fifty or a hundred years ago. To name just a few areas: food of all types and plenty of it in the shops; health care and life expectancy; travel and communication; books and search engines when you need knowledge.

Yet, so many people find it difficult to be HAPPY! So many people seem to feel that they don't have enough. They forget the important rule in life: don't let the things that you wantmake you forget the things that you have!

The Sedra begins with the Mitzvah of Bikkurim, bringing the first fruits in Eretz Yisroel to the Bais Hamikdash and thanking Hashem for what He has granted us.

Some people had vast fields and enormous amounts of land and fruit. Others had just enough to live on. But everyone equally had to make the journey to Yerushalayim to thank Hashem. The Torah wants us to train ourselves to feel and to show our gratitude for the biggest blessings as well as for the things that may seem trivial.

That is why the first word that we say when waking up is Modeh (Thank you!), and we say 100 Brochos every day, for all the blessings that we enjoy. Taking anything for granted is ingratitude and it is a sin. The gift of the Brochos that we say is that it trains us to appreciate the wonderful life that Hashem gives to us.

How can we teach ourselves to appreciate everything? The best way is through focusing our mind and remembering how Hashem is continuously creating the world (and us). Nothing could exist if Hashem did not renew the Creation every second. This will help us to appreciate everything, always remembering that Hashem is with us constantly.

In this way we will be better and happier people. We will always be grateful. It's ok to want to have more, because then you can do more to serve Hashem. But the first and foremost thing is to appreciate what you have.

The Sedra KI Savo is always read near the 18th day of Elul (Chai Elul, which is the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov (5458 - 1698), the founder of the Chassidic movement; and also the birthday of the Alter Rebbe (5605 - 1745), the founder of Chabad.

The teachings of Chassidus and Chabad teach us how to understand and how to feel how Hashem is with us. Sometimes there are difficult situations, like this year with the war in Israel; but Hashem is with us and He will ensure that good will emerge from all of this and IYH Moshiach will be here very soon.

STORY OF THE REBBE

A Lubavitcher in Manchester told me the following story. His cousin is observant, not Chabad, but he knows that the Rebbe is the Nossi (the Tzadik who leads the generation). He and his wife were married for about ten years and had no children. He went to the Ohel to ask the Rebbe for a Brocho that Hashem should bless them with a child. He told his cousin that he is confident that the Brocho will be fulfilled and that they would be blessed with a child in nine months time, which is Yud Aleph Nissan. The next year a child was indeed born, on Yud Nissan! He then flew to New York for a few hours, just to go to the Ohel to thank the Rebbe for his Brocho.

May we all always remember the countless blessings that we have, and always remember to be thankful for them.

גוט שבת!