

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road
Baltimore, MD 21209

www.chabadshul.org



August 7, 2021

Re'eh

29 Av, 5781

Protection Money

Ever heard a little kid bargaining with G-d? "G-d, if I pass this test/get a Barbie doll/don't get into trouble, I'll brush my teeth every night/walk around the block sixteen times without stepping on a crack/hold my breath and count to 100..."

Ridiculous? Small-minded? Immature? Well, are our desires any more mature, our deals any more intelligent? So you promised to stay in *shul* for the entire service/read a Jewish book/say something nice to your mother-in-law. Are you any more likely to be guaranteed a positive answer to your hopes and aspirations?

There is one "bribe" that G-d doesn't refuse: charity.

We'll read in the Torah this week that we have the responsibility and privilege to support the poor. It is traditional to increase our charitable donations especially at this time of year (Elul, the lead-in month before the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur). However, isn't this just a particularly blatant attempt to bribe G-d? Does it really work? Why *tzedakah* (charity) more than any other mitzvah?

A wealthy Jew had been a long time financial supporter of the famous Rebbe Zushe. He used to provide the Rebbe's household running expenses and was content to receive regular blessings and advice in return. Once he showed up in Annapoli, Reb Zushe's hometown, only to find Reb Zushe's wife home alone.

"Where is the Rebbe?"

"He's gone to visit his Rebbe."

"My Rebbe has a Rebbe?"

The rich man was no fool. "If my Rebbe has a Rebbe, why am I wasting time with the disciple? I've been doing so well by receiving the blessings of Reb Zushe, imagine the jackpot that awaits me were I to transfer my support to his Rebbe..."

He abandoned Reb Zushe and became a follower of Rabbi DovBer of Mezritch, Reb Zushe's Rebbe.

A few months later, after a series of calamitous business failures, he was back in Annapoli, totally bankrupt.

"I accept that my business failure is punishment for deserting you," he cried to Reb Zushe, "but why? What was wrong with my logic?"

"There was nothing wrong with your logic per se," Reb Zushe answered, "just in the application. Till now, when you gave tzedakah without assessing the worthiness of the recipient, G-d responded in kind, looking after you, irrespective of whether you truly deserved it. Once you started cost-benefit analyzing where you could get the best value for the money, G-d had a good look at how deserving you are, and you obviously came up short."

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I submit that this is why it is traditional to increase in charitable giving at this time of the year and that is why we always read this *parshah* the week Elul begins. We're committing to change, to improve. We pray that G-d accepts us favorably, but who among us can be truly comfortable with the year that was? Ill decisions made, promises broken and wrong forks taken on the road of life. Our only hope is that G-d takes us back, warts and all, without examining too closely whether we deserve it. And, to set an example to G-d, we too hand out help with an open hand to all, until, please G-d, this year we will all receive the greatest gift of all: the final redemption.

By Elisha Greenbaum on Chabad.org



**Kiddush this Shabbos is sponsored by
Mr. and Mrs. Shmuel and Esther Lyss
in honor of their daughter Tova Leba**

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Rabbi Kaplan is holding a weekly Thursday evening (after Ma'ariv) online shiur on the topic "Igeret HaTeshuva." This online shiur is open to anyone who would like to attend and can be joined at: <https://cutt.ly/join-shiur>. In addition to being online, this shiur will also be available "in person."

Shabbos, August 7

Shacharit 9 AM
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema 9:42 AM
Mincha 7:45 PM
Maariv 8:53 PM

Sunday August 8 -- Rosh Chodesh Elul

Shacharit 8 AM
Mincha-Maariv 7:50 PM

Monday, August 9 -- Rosh Chodesh Elul

Shacharit 6:40 AM
Mincha-Maariv 7:50 PM

Tuesday August 10

Shacharit 7 AM
Mincha-Maariv 7:50 PM

Wednesday August 11

Shacharit 7AM
Mincha-Maariv 7:50 PM

Thursday August 12

Shacharit 6:50 AM
Mincha-Maariv 7:50 PM

Friday August 13

Shacharit 7 AM
Mincha 7 PM
Candles 7:46 PM

SHUL DIRECTORY

Rabbi: Shmuel Kaplan . . rabbikaplan@chabadmd.com

Treasurer: Michael Frank . . . shul.chabad@gmail.com

Security: Jay Bernstein . . jaybernsteinesq@gmail.com

Kiddush: Reuven Frank.....rfrank82@gmail.com

Bulletin: Howard Kaplan.....hkaplon@towson.edu

Website: Shoshana Zakar.....sue.zakar@gmail.com

Gabbaim:

Yehudah Buchwalter . . . judahbuchwalter@verizon.net

Allan Genut.....agenut@gmail.com

Ephraim Siff

Mikvah Mei Menachem.....410-415-5113

Aleph Learning Institute . Mrs. Rochel Kaplan, Director

www.alephlearninginstitute.org / email: alephjli@gmail.com