

The Shul
at the Lubavitch Center
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May 28, 2016

Behar

20 Iyar, 5776

Identity Theft

Have you ever been the victim of identity theft? It's a new kind of fraud. Well, actually, not so new, as thieves probably forged signatures soon after banks first issued checks; in fact, stealing someone's identity - pretending to be someone else - probably predates banks. We know that before photo id's, merchants, diplomats - anyone involved in commerce, contracts or treaties who had to deal with an agent - had to rely on the word of the other person - on his self-identification.

Recently, identity theft has become a widespread problem. Credit cards (and debit cards) are easy to use, convenient, and make bookkeeping simple.

But the use of credit cards, especially over the internet, has also made it easier for someone to steal your identity. You log on to what appears to be a real website and purchase something. When you enter your credit card or bank account number - even though you have a secure connection and anti-spyware software - it gets recorded by the bogus site. You think you've bought airline tickets, for instance, but you've just given your credit card or bank account to an identity thief.

And all of a sudden, charges start appearing out of nowhere. By the time you catch on and contact your bank and credit card company, hundreds, maybe thousands of dollars have been spent - in your name. Often, the bank gets its money back, you get your money back, and only the merchant loses. But your credit may never recover.

The lesson: guard your identity - and those things that identify you - carefully.

And there's an obvious spiritual lesson here, too. Too often we allow our environment - our acquaintances, our jobs, our interests - to steal our Jewish identity. We become so absorbed in the externals that we forget what's important. Or, worse, the outside interests begin to penetrate our consciousness and take over. We identify with a political party, a sports team, a job so much that that's how we see ourselves. Our Jewish identity gets relegated to an indulgence, and we become guided by the irrelevant.

Jewish teachings tell us that we were redeemed from Egypt because they kept their identity - their Jewish names, the Jewish way of dress, and Hebrew, their language. Be like us, the Egyptians demanded. Stop looking like a Jew, stop thinking and speaking like a Jew, stop identifying yourself as a Jew. The Egyptians knew that once a Jew's external identity different not from an Egyptians, soon the internal identity would become identical as well. He would stop acting like a Jew and then he would stop being a Jew.

Just as we need to take precautions to protect our credit cards and bank account from identity theft, so we have to protect our Jewishness from identity theft. Setting aside regular times to learn Torah is one way. Working on our Hebrew - getting comfortable with the prayer book - is another. And knowing and using our Jewish names may be one of the simplest, and most powerful, ways.

And of course we should help others protect their Jewish identities in the same way. Since all Jews are responsible one for another, the theft of one Jewish identity steals a little from us all.

(from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

I Do, Therefore I Am

"When you make a sale to your fellow..." (25:14)

Based upon the sequence of the verses, the Talmud teaches how severe is the impact of violating the prohibition of buying and selling the produce of Shevi'is, the Sabbatical year. Due to a loss of income, the violator will be forced to sell off his moveable objects, and if he persists with this violation, he will be forced to sell his ancestral land. The consequences of his actions escalate in severity until he is forced to sell himself into the service of a temple of idol worship. The Talmud notes that the reason why the consequences become more severe is that the deeper entrenched the violator becomes in the prohibition, the less likely that he will feel remorse for his transgression. This follows the Talmudic dictum that "once a person has repeated an offense, he views it as a permissible act". Why is this universal truth delivered within the context of the laws of Shevi'is?

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In order to answer the aforementioned question, we must first examine the motivations of a person who violates the laws of Shevi'is. If Hashem promises abundance to those who abide by the Shevi'is laws, what drives a person to transgress them?

The Torah tells us that "adam le'amal yulad" – "man was created to work"; man's fulfillment comes through his efforts and as such, he defines himself by those actions through which he seeks fulfillment. In a perfect situation man receives this fulfillment through his efforts in the service of Hashem. However, very often man seeks fulfillment through his own work product. If a person defines himself through his work, allowing the land to rest is an undesirable option. Since a person who violates the Shevi'is laws views his actions as the source of his fulfillment and the definition of who he is, violating the Shevi'is can only be palatable if he can rationalize that what he is doing is permissible. If he cannot rationalize his actions as permissible, he will be defining himself as a transgressor. Therefore, the laws of Shevi'is are the ideal setting for teaching the dictum that the repeat offender views his act as permissible.

(by Rabbi Yochanan Zweig from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

Bikur Cholim of Baltimore will be hosting its third annual "**Biker Cholim Event**" a men's bike a thon on **Sunday, July 17th, 2016** with the start/finish line at Beth Tfiloh. **3 route options- 10, 25, or 50 miles (25 & 50 miles- brand new routes!!)**. **Family Fun and BBQ lunch following the ride.** To register and/or join a team, or details about our father/son special pricing, and incentive prizes, log on to www.bikercholim.org or email bike4bikur@gmail.com for additional information. Free cycling jersey included if registered by May 26th!

Mr. Jay and Mrs. Dina Bernstein
are sponsoring a Kiddush after davening this Shabbat
in honor of the **upcoming marriage** of their daughter
Atara,
to
Benny Herskovitz
of Teaneck, New Jersey.



Yahrzeits This Week:

Jeffrey London	23 Iyar - Monday night/Tuesday	for mother	Esther bas Moshe
Lawrence London	23 Iyar - Monday night/Tuesday	for mother	Esther bas Moshe

SHUL DIRECTORY

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Davening and Shiurim Schedule

<p>Friday, 5/27 — 19 Iyar Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Shabbat, 5/28 — 20 Iyar Shacharit — 8:40 a.m. Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:21 a.m. Berachot Gemora Shiur — 6:55 p.m. Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 7:55 p.m. Ma'ariv — 9:09 p.m.</p> <p>Sunday, 5/29 — 21 Iyar Shacharit — 8:00 a.m. Shulchan Aruch Shiur — 8:45 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:10 p.m.</p> <p>Monday — Memorial Day, 5/30 — 22 Iyar Shacharit — 8:00 a.m. Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 8:45 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:10 p.m.</p>	<p>Tuesday, 5/31 — 23 Iyar Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:10 p.m.</p> <p>Wednesday, 6/1 — 24 Iyar Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:10 p.m.</p> <p>Thursday, 6/2 — 25 Iyar Shacharit — 6:50 a.m. Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:10 p.m. Tanya Shiur — 9:00 p.m.</p> <p>Friday, 6/3 — 26 Iyar Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m. Candles — 8:11 p.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.</p>
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