

**The Shul**  
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August 6, 2016

Matot-Masei

2 Av, 5776

### Golf for Life

Items that always seems to be available at garage and yard sales throughout the summer, or at any other time of year, are golf clubs. Whether the avid adolescent golfer is away at college or beyond, or Dad never really took to the new pastime, or Mom has perfected her stroke and game to the point where she needs better clubs, golf clubs can easily be purchased for the neophyte golfer.

In keeping with the Baal Shem Tov's teaching that we can learn something to enhance our lives spiritually from everything we see and hear, even if you've only tried your skill with clubs and balls at the local mini-golf, there's a lot that can be learned from this mellow sport.

"Hold the club firmly with both hands," a seasoned golf expert will tell any newcomer to the game. Applied to Jewish living, this means that our approach to Torah and mitzvot (commandments) has to be firm, not wishy-washy or laissez faire. In addition, Torah teaches that "the right hand brings closer and the left hand pushes away." This means that our "hands-on" approach to Judaism has to include bringing that which is beneficial and positive into our lives while pushing away that which can be harmful or negative to Jewish living.

In real golf (as opposed to miniature golf, where people sometimes skip a hole if there is a long wait and then come back to it) you must complete all 18 holes as established by the course. Similarly, a set course has been established for us by the Torah, beginning with our daily routine and encompassing our entire lives.

When we get up in the morning, we train ourselves that our first conscious thought is to thank G-d for giving us another day of life. Throughout the day we have a sequence of activities and mitzvot that we fulfill up until the time we go to bed, following the declaration that we forgive all those who might have knowingly or unknowingly wronged us, after which we entrust our soul to G-d's safe-keeping. Just as our day is ordered and sequential, so is our week, month, year, and entire the Jewish life-cycle.

To truly hone our living skills (unlike when we putter around on a mini-golf course, where we can dodge the rules) we must follow the established progression of the Torah. And though the mitzvot are "written in stone" (at least the Ten Commandments, to be exact), Judaism allows for, acknowledges and even encourages individual expression and personal preferences within the established guidelines.

Any golfer worth his tee will inform you that one of the main guidelines of the game is to keep your eye on the ball. In the big golf game of life, the ball is the goal. As long as we keep our eyes on the goal and know where we're going, it's hard to get off track.

Jewish teachings have always explained that our goal is the Geula (Redemption), at which time the Goel (Redeemer, i.e. Moshiach) will lead the Jewish people out of gola (exile). No one knows which tiny mitzva-tap on the ball of exile will gently drop us into the final hole (numbered 18 perhaps for "chai-life," for after the Redemption we will experience life as G-d truly intended it to be). It might be your kind word, or his extra charity, or her heartfelt prayer, or my Shabbat candles. If each one of us tries our best, then certainly, very soon, we will get the ultimate hole in one.

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

### Close Enough?

And you shall not defile the land where you reside, in which I dwell, for I am HASHEM Who dwells among the Children of Israel. (Bamidbar 26: 34)

...in which I dwell: You should not cause Me to dwell amidst its uncleanness. (Rashi)

...for I am HASHEM Who dwells among the Children of Israel: Even when they are unclean, the Divine Presence resides with them. (Rashi)

We are treated here to "good news" and "bad news". The "good news" as spelled out in the verse is that HASHEM dwells in the in our land, in the Land of Israel. Furthermore, we find out that HASHEM dwells in the midst of the Children of Israel "even when they are unclean" as Rashi spells out. Not only is that "good news" but it is "great news"! There is no way to rid ourselves of the Divine Presence. Hope beats eternal! Now we can march forth with nothing but confidence and good cheer.

*(continued on the other side)*

After all, King David had said, "As for me, being close to G-d is my good ..." (Tehillim 73:28) Therefore we are already living in a state of success in proximity to Divinity. Just as in real estate the three most important ingredients that factor into the value of a property are "location, location, location", so too it is in spiritual terms. What raises a person's esteem and true value in this world and the next is "closeness to HASHEM".

I know a person who rented a summer apartment with a window looking directly out onto the plaza of the Kossel. The view was stunning beyond words. It is impossible to imagine the value of that piece of property, on so many levels. Why then does King David say that that's what's good for him, his being close to HASHEM? Is it not also what's good for everyone else also?

Why is "my good" my being close to HASHEM? And what's the "bad news" associated with knowing that HASHEM is amongst his people even when they are unworthy?

There's a Mishne in Pirke Avos that says, "Let your house be a meeting place for sages ..." (Avos 1:4) Rabeinu Yona confirms the notion that one's home should be a place where the wise congregate. However, we confront a practical difficulty when trying to implement the overt meaning of the Mishne. There will always be more homes than sages to fill them up. Can each and every home be expected to host the Torah Shiur or the parlor meeting? How can everyone share a mandate that their house should be a meeting place for sages? How are all of us to fulfill this universal maxim?

When we look carefully at the words of the Mishne the answer appears. It states, "Yehi Beis'cha ... Let your house be ..." Your home should be the type of environment that the sages would feel as comfortable entering as you would be hosting them. Imagine that the Chofetz Chaim or the Steipler is coming over, not to visit for a day or a week but to move in. How much of an adjustment would that be? What would we have to hide or hinder to host comfortably? How ashamed would we be to wildly misbehave in their presence?! The pursuit of that standard may be the source of the common practice amongst Jews world-wide to hang pictures of Gedolim on the walls, if only to remind us of the company we keep.

Therefore the "good news" is that HASHEM is in our midst and the "bad news" that HASHEM is in our midst. We can forget about HASHEM but we are reminded that HASHEM never forgets about us. HASHEM can be so close to me, but am I to HASHEM close enough?

(by Rabbi Label Lam from Project Genesis at [www.torah.org](http://www.torah.org))

#### Yahrzeits This Week:

Bluma Lewin      2 Av - Friday night / Shabbat      for mother      Anyah Dansah bas Yosef

We extend our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to **Lawrance and Jeffrey London** on the loss of their sister, **Sora Rivka Steger**.

Shiva will be at 6605 Wickfield Road through Tuesday morning, August 9.

Shacharit – Friday at 7:00 a.m. Sunday at 8:00 a.m. Monday & Tuesday at 7:15 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv – Friday at 4:00 p.m. Sunday & Monday at 7:45 p.m.

Ma'ariv – Motzaei Shabbat at 9:03 p.m.

**המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים**

#### Davening and Shiurim Schedule

##### Friday — Rosh Chodesh Av, 8/5 — 1 Av

Shacharit — 6:40 a.m.

Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

##### Shabbat, 8/6 — 2 Av

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.

Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:39 a.m.

Berachot Gemora Shiur — 6:45 p.m.

Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 7:45 p.m.

Ma'ariv — 8:57 p.m.

##### Sunday, 8/7 — 3 Av

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.

Shulchan Aruch Shiur — 8:45 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

##### Monday, 8/8 — 4 Av

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.

Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

##### Tuesday, 8/9 — 5 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

##### Wednesday, 8/10 — 6 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

##### Thursday, 8/11 — 7 Av

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.

Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

Tanya Shiur — 9:00 p.m.

##### Friday, 8/12 — 8 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Parshat HaShavua Shiur — 7:45 a.m.

Candles — 7:46 p.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.