

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

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July 8, 2017

Balak

14 Tamuz, 5777

Golf for Life

Items that always seem 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) 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 safekeeping. 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 explain that our goal is the Geula (Redemption), at which time Moshiach will lead the Jewish people out of exile. No one knows which tiny mitzva-tap on the ball of exile will gently drop us into the final hole (perhaps numbered 18 for "chai-life," for with the Redemption we will experience life as G-d truly intended it to be). It might be your kind word, his extra charity, her heartfelt prayer, or my Shabbat candles. If we all try our best, very soon, we will get the ultimate hole in one.

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

The Apter Rav: How Do You Spell Ahavas Yisrael?

The Apter Rav was known by the title of his Sefer ('Ohev Yisrael') because he was very meticulous in the mitzvah of loving a fellow Jew. He was known to have said that in every single parsha there is a hint to the mitzvah to love a fellow Jew. He was once asked where this mitzvah is hinted at in Parshas Balak. He responded that Parshas Balak is an easy parsha in which to find this allusion for the very name BaLaK is an acronym for the commandment V'ahavta L'reacha Kamocha.

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The Chassidim questioned the Apter Rav asking that "V'ahavta" begins with a Vov and Balak begins with a Beis and furthermore, Kamocha begins with a Chaf and Balak ends with a Kuf! (Two of the three letters do not match, even though they make the same sound.) The Rebbe then chastised his disciples: "If you are so particular about 'the letter of the law,' you will never come to Ahavas Yisrael (loving a fellow Jew)."

This is very true. In order to achieve Ahasvas Yisrael, a person must be a little flexible. Certainly, the Rebbe knew how to spell v'Ahavta L'Reacha Kamocha, but he wanted to make the point of needing flexibility when dealing with other people.

We have told this story previously. I would now like to add the following related incident: The Apter Rav was once accosted by a group of Maskilim ("Enlightened" Jews who were hostile to Chassidism in general and Chassidic Rebbes in particular). They got into a heated and disrespectful discussion with him. At one point in the discussion, one of the Maskilim took out a cigarette. The Apter Rav reached into his pocket, pulled out a match box and asked, "Can I give you a light?"

At that point, the Maskil, who pulled out the cigarette said to his companions, "Enough already. This is not the type of person we should be harassing." This was an example of Ahavas Yisrael in action. He could have had fundamental and vehement disagreements with them, but when a Jew needs a favor, you do him a favor. It so disarmed them, that they ceased the harassment. A person cannot have a hostile discussion with a person who is so willing to help his sworn adversary.

(by Rabbi Yissocher Frand from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)



We happily wish Mazel Tov to
Mr. Ephraim and Mrs. Bracha Siff and Family
on the **Birth of their Son.**

All are invited to the shalom zachor tonight at Bais Medrash of Ranchleigh
(Rabbi Naiman's shul) at 6618 Deancroft Road after 9:00 p.m.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to **Rabbi Larry Ziffer**
on the loss of his father, **Philip Ziffer.**

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

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Davening and Shiurim Schedule

Friday, 7/7 — 13 Tamuz
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 7/8 — 14 Tamuz
Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:27 a.m.
Berachot Gemara Shiur — 7:05 p.m.
Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 8:05 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 9:19 p.m.

Sunday, 7/9 — 15 Tamuz
Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Monday, 7/10 — 16 Tamuz
Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Tuesday — Shiva Asar b'Tamuz , 7/11 — 17 Tamuz
Fast Begins — 4:01 a.m.
Shacharit — 6:35 a.m.
Mincha/Ma'ariv — 8:05 p.m.
Fast Ends — 9:07 p.m.

Wednesday, 7/12 — 18 Tamuz
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Thursday, 7/13 — 19 Tamuz
Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Friday, 7/14 — 20 Tamuz
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Candles — 8:14 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.