

The Shul
at the Lubavitch Center
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September 2, 2017

Ki-Tetze

11 Elul, 5777

Walking With Lions

Last year at this time, I visited a lion park in South African with my family. Having grown up in Africa, I've always loved wildlife and been fascinated by animals, especially the king-the lion.

This time, the park was offering a new feature -"walking with the lions." Essentially, guests are offered the opportunity to enter the lion park and walk alongside the lions in their natural habitat for an hour or so. And these are not baby cubs, they're fully grown beasts!

It seemed pretty dangerous, but we decided to give it a go.

We walked with the lions, watching them live their life in their own environment. We watched them eat their dinner and climb on trees. For over an hour we watched them, and we were even able to pat them.

Honestly, I was terrified. Despite my guide's assurance that he had pepper spray and a stick in case something went wrong, I highly doubted a bit of pepper spray would be enough to save us from the rage of this powerful king of all animals if anything went wrong!

Thank G-d we emerged safe and sound and it was a beautiful and thrilling experience.

Jewish mystical teachings discuss the three "main" organs that animals and humans both have: brain ("mo-ach" in Hebrew), heart ("lev") and liver ("kaved"). Taking the first letter of each word spells "melech" - king.

A human being walks on two legs, his/her head is above the heart. When the brain rules the heart, he is a king (or queen). An animal, however, walks on all fours so its brain and heart are on the same level. A lion is ruled by its instincts.

Our guide explained that there was no danger because these lions grew up in captivity. They are tame. They have never attacked. They are used to human beings. But the truth is that a lion can never be fully tamed because it naturally follows its instincts. Even if a lion would live its whole life amongst humans, you can never fully trust it not to kill because that is its natural instinct. That's just what lions do.

That is the key difference between a human being and a lion. Even though we all, at times, follow our hearts and make mistakes, we have the ability to use our brain to rule over our hearts. We have the ability to truly tame our inner animal.

We currently find ourselves in the month of Elul, the month before the high holidays. During this month, we reflect on our actions over the past year. It is a time to do teshuva -repentance. A time to reflect on our relationship with G-d, and return to Him if we have become distanced. This is the time to make sure our minds rule our hearts, so we can be melech, a king.

(by Rabbi Uriel Vigler from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

Yefas Toar: Captivating Beauty

The Mitzvah:

The Jewish soldier who sees a beautiful gentile woman in war, and who desires to take this captive as a wife, is permitted to bring her into his home. But before making her into his wife, she must first cut her hair, clip her nails and don her clothing of captivity while bewailing her father and mother for one month (Deuteronomy 21:10-14).

A beautiful symbolical interpretation of this mitzvah, which is of universal relevance, is expounded by the Ohr HaChaim in his Torah commentary.

The going out to war is a reference to birth. Leaving the heavenly realm to descend into this world, a person readies himself to engage in warfare. His life is to be an on-going conflict wrestling with the Yetzer Hara, evil inclination. He is only strong if he is victorious – "Who is the strong one? One who subdues his inclinations" (Avos 4:1).

But this is not a typical or a conventional battle. It is an ongoing, never-ending assault. It is a relentless struggle against a ruthless antagonist who threatens to overwhelm the person. A person cannot afford to hesitate – even momentarily – or let go his guard fearful that the Yetzer Hara, evil inclination may get the better of him. It is a battle to the death. And the stakes are great.

(continued on the other side)

Every person has a spiritual component, as symbolized by the Yefas Toar, "the beautiful woman". She makes or breaks the man. She is the love of his life insofar as spiritual pursuits are what make everything in life worthwhile. Intrinsically beautiful, the Yefas Toar is nevertheless held "captive" by the evil inclination.

But the soldier succeeds in capturing the Yefas Toar. He demonstrates a willingness to take whatever steps are necessary to "free" this spiritual spark. He wants to rescue this beautiful captive, win her over and incorporate this spiritual component into his divine worship.

Fighting the powerful influence of the evil inclination, he longs to bring her into his house.

However before her 100% integration, all alien ideologies must be eliminated. And for her beauty to shine, all the foreign external trappings must be discarded. This is alluded to in the instructions to cut her hair and clip her nails – a reference to the extraneous components of the human body.

There is therefore a call for Teshuvah, Repentance. The waiting time of a "month" before the soldier is allowed to take her as a wife is an allusion to Elul, the month designated for repentance and returning to G-d just before Rosh Hashanah. During that time the Yefas Toar is to mourn about her father and mother. This is the remorse felt for the spiritual component having departed from her "Heavenly Father" and from the mother- symbol of the "Congregation of Israel".

May each one of us succeed in rescuing our "captive" spiritual side and use the wonderful month of Elul to be victorious over our Yetzer Hara and achieve complete atonement by coming closer to our Master.

(by Osher Chaim Levene from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)



Sponsorship is available for two flower displays on the Bima during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Please consider sponsoring the flowers in honor or in memory of someone. Please email Allan Genut at agenut@gmail.com to make arrangements

General Information, Membership Information, High Holiday Seating Form, Yizkor Form and Israel Bonds Letter are now available on the shul website at www.chabadshul.org. There will be a few printed versions available in the vestibule of the Shul.

Yahrzeits This Week:

Marvin Pazornick 17 Elul - Thursday night / Friday for mother Zelda Pazornick

SHUL DIRECTORY

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Davening and Shiurim Schedule

Friday, 9/1 — 10 Elul
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 9/2 — 11 Elul
 Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
 Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:49 a.m.
 Berachot Gemara Shiur — 6:05 p.m.
 Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 7:05 p.m.
 Ma'ariv — 8:19 p.m.

Sunday, 9/3 — 12 Elul
 Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.

Monday — Labor Day, 9/4 — 13 Elul
 Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.

Tuesday, 9/5 — 14 Elul
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.

Wednesday, 9/6 — 15 Elul
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.

Thursday, 9/7 — 16 Elul
 Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:10 p.m.

Friday, 9/8 — 17 Elul
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Candles — 7:07 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.