

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

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April 22, 2017

Shemini - Shabbat M'vorchim

26 Nisan, 5777

Harnessing Chaos

In his famous talk of 28 Nissan, 1991, the Rebbe explained that the way to bring Moshiach is by harnessing the great lights of the world of chaos, and channeling them into the perfected vessels of the world of rectification. On a practical level this means that when we invest our energies into bringing the Moshiach, our plan of action must stem from new and creative thinking, from a place outside the framework of conventional wisdom. Our actions, as well, must follow this pattern. The Rebbe urged us to probe the yet "uncharted" areas of our minds, of the Land of Israel and of the world, and to channel the immense energies in those places into compelling, rectified action to bring the Moshiach.

The pinnacle of Moshiach's work is when he will unite all of humanity to serve G-d "with one shoulder." When working toward the final redemption, we must also turn our energies into lovingly bringing all the nations of the world to rectified service of G-d.

The prophets and sages describe Moshiach as a leper. When discussing leprosy, (tzara'at), the Torah says (Leviticus 13:2): "When a person has on his flesh" The word used for "person" is adam. The Kabbalist Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (known as the "Arizal") explains that adam is the most lofty synonym for "person," and refers to an all-inclusive soul. Even Moses is generally referred to in the Torah as "ish" ("man"), which has a more individual connotation. If Moses himself is considered ish, the Arizal concludes, then the only possible candidate for the higher title "adam" is Moshiach, the quintessential all-inclusive soul. But why is the Moshiach a leper?

Tzara'at ("leprosy") is a disease of the skin in which the affected area of the skin turns pure white. The numerical value of the Hebrew word Moshiach is 358, equal to the value of or "lavan," "white skin." Just as the color white includes all the colors of the spectrum, the Moshiach with his white, leprous skin includes all the skin colors of the world.

There are four basic colors of skin; white, red, yellow and black. These skin colors correspond in turn to the four letters of G-d's Name, Havayah and to their corresponding powers of the soul.

White Skin: Service of G-d with the Faculty of wisdom. The inner essence of wisdom is self-nullification; negating one's "self" in total nullification to G-d. When one's mind is not preoccupied with ego, it is clear and open to become a conduit of Divine wisdom. Thus, the special talent of people with white skin is to serve G-d by nullifying their ego and connecting to the Divine.

Red Skin: Service of G-d with the Faculty of understanding. Understanding is the cognitive force that absorbs wisdom and articulates it into fine detail. Once having attained this mature understanding, the soul swells with delight at its achievement. Thus, the inner essence of understanding is joy. The special talent of people with red skin is to serve G-d with joy; particularly joy that stems from having nurtured the insights of wisdom into full and mature understanding.

Yellow Skin: Service of G-d with the attributes of the heart. The inner powers of these attributes are love, awe, beauty, confidence, sincerity and truth. The special talent of people with yellow skin is to serve G-d with the full array of their emotions and actions in a perfected and rectified manner.

Black Skin: Service of G-d with the Faculty of royalty. Corresponding to the world of Action, the inner essence of royalty is humbleness. This quality guarantees that one's actions in life are motivated by the highest standards of justice and righteousness, unconcerned with personal gain or advantage. The special talent of people with black skin is their exceptional sense of holy service of G-d, with no thought of personal benefit.

The purpose of the Moshiach is to unite the Jewish People as one loving family whose every action is inspired by the Torah. The Jewish People will then have the tools with which to unite the entire world to serve G-d as one family, all the peoples of the world - each with their unique talents and qualities.

(by Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburg from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

Controlling Kindness

The Talmud teaches that each locale has a proclivity toward certain character traits or behaviors. Babylonia is noted for its high incidence of flattery, and as a source for this, the Talmud cites a verse found in the vision of the prophet Zecharia in which two winged women transport a measuring utensil to Babylonia. The Talmud interprets this to be an allusion to their bringing the trait of flattery to Babylonia. Rashi explains the inference to flattery in this verse in the following manner: The Torah describes the women as having the wings of a "chasida" – stork. The Talmud explains that a chasida is so named because the stork performs acts of "chesed" – kindness for its friends. How does performing acts of kindness for its friends transform the stork into the symbol of flattery?

To begin answering the aforementioned question, we must first address another difficulty raised by the commentaries. The Ramban teaches that since the birds which we are prohibited to eat exhibit negative character traits, consumption of them would infuse a person with these traits. In light of this, it is difficult to reconcile the Ramban's teaching with the Talmud's explanation of the name "chasida". Why would the Torah name an unclean bird with a positive trait? The Talmud is teaching us that what person does for his friends should be done out of commitment and obligation to the relationship. Viewing all that we do for friends as acts of kindness is a negative trait. Therefore, the chasida is being defined by a negative trait, not a positive one.

What motivates a person to view that which he does for his friends as acts of kindness? The Hebrew word for "friend" is "chaver", which is a derivation of the word "chibur" – "to be joined with". The closer a relationship is, the greater the loss of independence; commitment to a relationship is accompanied by obligations. A person must make himself available to accommodate his friend's needs. When a person views that which he does for his friend as a kindness, he maintains a distance within the relationship, not allowing for a commitment that would require obligation. He seeks to maintain his independence, for this allows him to have a relationship on his terms. What he is doing in essence is retaining his control over the relationship.

The act of flattery is essentially the same as the behavior exhibited by the chasida. When a person resorts to flattery within a relationship, he is giving his friend a false sense of reality. This is a manipulative act, giving the flatterer control over the relationship. Again, the relationship is being dictated on his terms. This explains a statement made by the Talmud: The punishment of the flatterer is that he will fall into the hands of the one who he flattered. Since he attempted to control, the quid-pro-quo is that he will eventually be controlled.

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

Yahrzeits This Week:

Daniel Schechter	29 Nisan - Monday night/Tuesday	for father	Moshe ben Yehuda Tzvi
Judy Elbaum	30 Nisan - Tuesday night/Wednesday	for father	Shlomo Yankov ben Mordechai Zvi

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Davening and Shiurim Schedule

Friday, 4/21 – 25 Nisan
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 4/22 – 26 Nisan
 Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
 Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:40 a.m.
 Berachot Gemara Shiur — 6:20 p.m.
 Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 7:20 p.m.
 Ma'ariv — 8:34 p.m.

Sunday, 4/23 – 27 Nisan
 Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:40 p.m.

Monday, 4/24 – 28 Nisan
 Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:40 p.m.

Tuesday, 4/25— 29 Nisan
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:40 p.m.

Wednesday – Rosh Chodesh Iyar, 4/26 – 30 Nisan
 Shacharit — 6:40 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:40 p.m.

Thursday – Rosh Chodesh Iyar, 4/27 – 1 Iyar
 Shacharit — 6:40 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:70 p.m.

Friday, 4/28 – 2 Iyar
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Candles — 7:39 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.