

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center
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17 Kislev 5777

Vayishlach

December 17, 2016

Old Age, Old Wine By Shimon Posner

Antique sells. Even faux-antique sells. “Antiqued” furniture is scuffed and dinged at the end of the assembly line. Brand-new pewter pitchers are being coated with green stuff called patina. Multi-million-dollar homes are built to “have character.” If you have no antique, buy some. The more old and worn-looking, the better: the elegance of aged has come of age. Old is good.

Except for old people. No one boasts of having their own senior citizen. Or of being one.

And no one is guiltier of this than the old people themselves. They dress to look twenty-something. They (try to) carry on a conversation like Generation X. They even operate on themselves to erase the signs of the life they have lived. When it comes to people, the Fountain of Youth reigns. And—we add for good measure—can you make that fountain spring from an ancient-looking, rustic grotto?

For good reason, for good reason is youth pursued.

Youth is beautiful. Young means glamorous, vibrant, fun, exciting. Youth dissipates with age.

The appeal of maturity is its subtlety: understated, dependable, grounded. Maturity, and a taste for maturity, must be acquired.

Put wine in a jar, and it turns to vinegar. Left in the cask, wine develops full flavor. In the cask it is still alive, it breathes, it grows. It acquires something it did not have the day before.

Old people can, if they so choose, turn to grouches. A grouch is the result of someone who stops growing, acquiring, developing. It can happen in a young person too: We call them brats.

“*Ba bayamim*,” the Parshah several weeks ago describes Abraham, “come of his days.” Each day was full, was lived to its fullest. He took on the next day with new vigor. “Old, and with full days,” this Parshah describes his son, when he too was no longer young.

Some people wait to die. Some live a life that ends with death. They determine their day by their food, golf, shopping and social climbing. The Talmud calls them dead: “Even in their lifetimes, they are called dead.”

How sad to hear a son eulogize his mother for her brisket. How sad the daughter who holds onto her father’s memory by holding onto the condo in Boca Raton because “he loved the water.” *This* is what they have left? Recipes and beach balls?

Is this what our grandchildren can know about their grandparents? Is this legacy?

You cannot live towards legacy, any more than you can live towards happiness. They will evade you.

You can live with a today that is giving, building: ensuring something precious is made in this world. A girl with leukemia is cured. A boy with Hodgkin’s is comforted. You babysit for his mother so she can go out for a few hours. You learn some Torah. You teach some Torah.

You help others learn and live and celebrate and have something to give to their children. You sweep the floor of the synagogue, you straighten up the chairs, you order more books, you update the synagogue website.

By themselves, none of these things are worth writing home about. Together, accumulated over a lifetime, they leave a legacy.

The soul breathes, much as wine does.

The body turns to vinegar if the soul does not breathe. Capturing youth is canning wine, at best.

Living life, letting the soul breathe, is creating a precious antique the grandchildren will showcase.

DAVENING SCHEDULE

Friday	December 16	16 Kislev	Shacharit7:00 a.m. Candles4:27 p.m. Mincha4:25 p.m.
Shabbat	December 17	17 Kislev	Shacharit9:00 a.m. Sof Z'man Kriat Shema9:39 a.m. Gemara Shiur3:45 p.m. Mincha & Seuda Shilishit ..4:15 p.m. Maariv5:30 p.m.
Sunday	December 18	18 Kislev	Shacharit8:00 a.m. Mincha/Maariv4:30 p.m.
Monday	December 19	19 Kislev	Shacharit6:50 a.m. <i>Yud-Tes Kislev*</i> Maariv8:15 p.m.
Tuesday	December 20	20 Kislev	Shacharit7:00 a.m. Maariv8:15 p.m.
Wednesday	December 21	21 Kislev	Shacharit7:00 a.m. Maariv8:15 p.m.
Thursday	December 22	22 Kislev	Shacharit6:50 a.m. Maariv8:15 p.m.
Friday	December 23	23 Kislev	Shacharit7:00 a.m. Candles4:30 p.m. Mincha4:30 p.m.

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***Yud-Tes Kislev:** On the 19th of Kislev of the year 5559 from creation (1798), Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi -- a leading disciple of Rabbi DovBer of Mezeritch (see previous entry) and the founder of Chabad Chassidism -- was released from his imprisonment in the Peter-Paul fortress in Petersburg, where he was held for 53 days on charges that his teachings threatened the imperial authority of the Czar. More than a personal liberation, this was a watershed event in the history of Chassidism heralding a new era in the revelation of the "inner soul" of Torah, and is celebrated to this day as "The Rosh Hashanah of Chassidism."



Kiddush this week is sponsored by Steven, Howard and Marsha Kaplon, in thanks to Hashem for the successful efforts of Howard's doctors.



The Rav's next "**Hashkafa Q&A Shiur for Men**" will take place **THIS** Friday night (Vayishlach, **December 16th**) at 8:00PM at the home of Rabbi & Mrs. Larry Ziffer, 2530 Farringdon Road. Questions can be submitted in advance to rabbikaplan@chabadmd.com or anonymously in the shul mailbox.



Father/Son Learning

Weekly Father/Son learning Friday nights with chulent from O'Fishel. Time: 7:45 - 8:15, followed by a story. If anyone has any questions, please see Rabbi Eli Itzkowitz