

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

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October 28, 2017

Lech Lecha

8 Cheshvan, 5778

Leaf Collecting

Many folks from the East Coast to the Rocky Mountains have been going on nature walks, drives through the mountains, or strolls in parks these past few weeks to enjoy the change of colors and scenery that autumn affords. Kids in particular enjoy collecting the fallen autumn leaves.

Sometimes it's for a school project (having to identify which leaves came from which trees?), an art project, or a personal project (trying to find leaves in as many different colors and shapes as possible?).

Do you remember one of those "nature/art projects" that many of us did as kids? You took leaves and put them under a sheet of paper. With the edge of a crayon you rubbed the paper over the leaf and were able to recognize not only the shape of the leaf but even its main stem and veins. You couldn't rub it too lightly or too firmly, though, or it wouldn't work.

Jewish life is like one big leaf collecting project if you consider that mitzvot are very much like leaves. They come in all different colors and shapes and sizes and textures. And, as Jewish teachings explain, just as no two faces are exactly the same neither are there two temperaments or opinions that are exactly the same.

Thus, individuals are attracted to different mitzvot (commandments). But, despite one's propensity for a certain shaped or colored leaf, if the teacher said you had to collect ten different leaves you had to collect TEN different leaves.

Similarly, though we might enjoy doing one mitzva over another mitzva, or five mitzvot rather than 13 mitzvot, when the Teacher says to collect 13, you gotta collect 13.

Similar to the way we execute the art project, we should be neither too firm nor too light in doing these mitzvot, but should follow the rules and tread the middle path; if we don't then the project won't work. It's not a punishment either, it just won't work.

Often people ask, "But isn't the main part of the mitzva the intent? After all, G-d desires the heart!"

Intent and sincerity are a major part of the mitzva but not the main thing. The actual doing of the mitzva, and doing it according to the rules, is the major part.

If you do it wrong, you won't get punished, it just won't come out right. Like the art project with the leaf which doesn't work if you rub too hard or too soft (or not at all), there won't be an image on the paper. And with the mitzva, if it's not done right there won't be an image on your soul, or on the environment, or on the world. That's not a punishment, it's simply a fact. Too little or too much, too light or too hard, too hot or too cold. If you don't do it right it just won't work.

But, there's always next time to try again.

Keep on collecting those leaves and those mitzvot. Enjoy them. Appreciate them. Have favorites that you especially treasure and look for at every opportunity. Eagerly anticipate the times of year when certain mitzvot are more readily available or easily discernible than at other times.

Take a stroll, or a walk or a drive through the glorious colors and scents and textures of mitzvot every single day of your life.

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

Leaving the Garbage Behind

And God said to Avram, go for yourself from your land, from your relatives, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you. (Gen. 12:1)

The Torah portion begins with Avraham's first trial: to give up his entire past and follow God's lead to a new land: God said to Avram, "Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you." When a person leaves his hometown, he first leaves his father's house, then his neighborhood (his relatives), and then his country. Why does the verse list these in the opposite order?

(continued on the other side)

When a person makes a physical departure, he first leaves his father's house, then his relatives, and then his country. However, the verse is alluding to Avraham's departure in a spiritual sense. "Leaving your hometown" means changing your old ways and leaving behind your bad habits. Therefore, the order in the verse is reversed, starting with the easier things. The culture of a person's country is not so deeply ingrained, and so it can be uprooted relatively easily. More difficult is to get rid of bad habits a person acquired amongst his social circle and friends. Finally, to shake off bad traits acquired at home is very challenging.(1)

The Sfas Emes quotes the Zohar, which states that God called out "Go for yourself," in every generation, but Avraham was the only one to respond to God's call. God still calls out "go for yourself" today, and we need to respond. We must distance ourselves from bad habits and serve God even though it may require inconvenience or hardship.

(from <http://www.aish.com>)

We extend our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to **Rebbetzin Rachel Kaplan** on the loss of her mother, **Mrs. Chaya Hecht** last week.

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים



Thank you to everyone who purchased aliyot for Simchat Torah.
Also thank you to all who contributed towards Chosson Bereshit for the Rav and to all who contributed toward the two kidushim on Simchat Torah.
Your generosity is greatly appreciated !

We happily wish Mazel Tov to **Eliyahu and Leana Schwartz** on the **Brit of their Son – Yitzchok ben Eliyahu Yaakov** this past Sunday. Mazel Tov also to all of the brothers and sisters and the entire Schwartz Family.

Yahrzeits The Next Three Weeks:

Laurie Margolies 8 Cheshvan - Friday night/Shabat for mother Sheindel bas Avraham

SHUL DIRECTORY

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Davening and Shiurim Schedule

Friday, 10/27 – 7 Cheshvan
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Candles — 5:52 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:55 p.m.

Shabbat, 10/28 – 8 Cheshvan
Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 10:08 a.m.
Berachot Gemora Shiur — 4:40 p.m.
Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 5:40 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 6:53 p.m.

Sunday, 10/29 – 9 Cheshvan
Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:45 p.m.

Monday, 10/30 – 10 Cheshvan
Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:45 p.m.

Tuesday, 10/31 – 11 Cheshvan
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:45 p.m.

Wednesday, 11/1 – 12 Cheshvan
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:45 p.m.

Thursday, 11/2 – 13 Cheshvan
Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:45 p.m.

Friday, 11/3 – 14 Cheshvan
Shacharit — 7:00
Candles — 5:44 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:45 p.m.