

The Shul
at the Lubavitch Center
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November 18, 2017

Toldot — Shabbat M'vorchim

29 Cheshvan, 5778

The Art of Self-Deception

We usually find deceit reprehensible. After all, most of the time we have to take a person's word, at least at first. Sure, for some things we'll investigate before accepting his say-so. We'll check out a doctor's credentials, for instance, or compare insurance policies. But even then at some point we trust what we're being told.

Some professions seem to thrive on deceit and so we distrust them unless proven otherwise. Enough said.

In truth, a lot of the time we know when someone is pretending. We have a gut instinct that something's wrong. We have misgivings, doubts, uncertainties. The deal is too good to be true. Or there's something we're not being told. But we put aside our suspicions. We reason away our reservations. Such a nice young man wouldn't lead us astray. She sounds so knowledgeable she must know what she's talking about.

But then when the seller, the advisor, the friend betrays our trust, we rail against the deceit. And the argument often comes down to: he knew and I didn't. He took advantage of me, because he had inside information.

And yet most of the time - the vast majority of the time - we recognize that a deal too good to be true is just that. We had a sense we were being set up. We should have known.

We allow ourselves to be fooled, to be duped, conned and tricked even though we knew better, because we deceive ourselves.

That's an unpleasant truth. As much blame as the deceiver deserves, we have opened the door and invited him in. And ironically, it's our mind - our logic and our reason - that proves our undoing. Our pride and joy - our intellect - betrays us.

We deceive ourselves about our limits and our capabilities. At the moment of greatest conceit, of greatest satisfaction, of greatest accomplishment - we stumble over ourselves. Our egos - our self - our animal soul - our yetzer hara betrays us.

The yetzer hara - the evil inclination - is called a "wise fool." Wise, because it knows its craft. It knows well our weaknesses, how to confuse and deceive. A fool, because it focuses on diverting us from Torah and mitzvot (commandments), because it thinks the Jewish soul, our very essence, can be severed from its Source.

But we've also known the satisfaction of deceiving the deceiver, of turning the tables. What irony and justice in the reversal!

Yes, we all have a yetzer hara, and so we all possess the tools of the liar, the skills of the swindler and the weapons of the fraud. But unlike so many things about which we deceive ourselves, these we can control. These we can redirect.

How? By using the technique of deceit to do a mitzva. I'm not going to keep kosher, I'm just not going to eat a cheeseburger today. I'm not going to get religious, I'm just going to put on tefilin today. I'm not going to keep all the laws of Shabbat, I'm just going to light candles or hear the blessing over the wine Friday night. I'm not some holy person. I'm just going to give a dollar to tzedaka (charity). I'm not changing, I'm just going to do this one mitzva.

And this next mitzva. And this next. Let's be the "gamblers." Let's be the con artist. Let's "deceive" ourselves and trick our yetzer hara. It's a great deal. Too good not to be true.

(by Rabbi Dr. Dovid YB Kaufmann obm from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

Community Information of Interest

November 18: Hubris and Atonement: The State of Israel and the Jewish People 1972-75. Lecture by Rabbi Dovid Katz. *None are as Blind as Those who Would not See – Buildup to the Yom Kippur War.*
This lecture will begin at 8:00 p.m. and be held at the Congregation Shomrei Emunah.

November 18: Nshei Newcomers Night. 8:00 p.m. at Ohr Hamizrach 6813 Park Heights Avenue. This event is open to all the women in the community admission is \$10 but it is free to Newcomers and half price to those who bring a Newcomer. The event features demonstrations, light milchig fare, a Chinese auction and Divrei Chizuk with Rebbetzin Rochel Naiman. We hope everyone will attend to Welcome the Newcomers and enjoy the event.



We happily wish Mazel Tov to
Rabbi Eli and Chana Solomon
on the **Birth of their daughter, Shterna Sara.**

Kiddush this Shabbat is being sponsored by
the Frank and Friedman families,
on the occasion of the
yahrtzeit of Victor Friedman, Avigdor Shaul ben Paltiel,
whose yahrtzeit is 3 Kislev.



Kol Hanaarim this Friday evening at 7:45 p.m. in The Shul. Chulent is provided by O'Fishel Catering! If anyone is interested in sponsoring cookies and drinks, or have any other questions, please see Rabbi Itzkowitz.

Yahrzeits The Next Three Weeks:

Aaron Margolies	2 Kislev - Sunday night / Monday	for mother	Shoshana bat Moshe ha-Levi
Terry Frank	3 Kislev - Monday night / Tuesday	for father	Avigdor Shaul ben Paltiel
Sally Friedman	3 Kislev - Monday night / Tuesday	for husband	Avigdor Shaul ben Paltiel

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Davening and Shiurim Schedule

Friday, 11/17 — 28 Cheshvan
Shacharit — 7:00
Candles — 4:31 p.m.
Mincha / Ma'ariv — 4:30 p.m.

Shabbat, 11/18 — 29 Cheshvan
Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:20 a.m.
Berachot Gemora Shiur — Cancelled this week
Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 4:20 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 5:32 p.m.

Sunday — Rosh Chodesh Kislev, 11/19 — 1 Kislev
Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:30 p.m.

Monday, 11/20 — 2 Kislev
Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Tuesday, 11/21 — 3 Kislev
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Wednesday, 11/22 — 4 Kislev
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Thursday — Thanksgiving, 11/23 — 5 Kislev
Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:30 p.m.

Friday, 11/24 — 6 Kislev
Shacharit — 7:00
Candles — 4:27 p.m.
Mincha / Ma'ariv — 4:30 p.m.