

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

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January 13, 2018

Vaera — Shabbat M'vorchim

26 Tevet, 5778

Super Bowl Mysticism

In 1997, I watched the Super Bowl with a group of students at Tel-Aviv University. As the Packers advanced on the Patriots, I racked my brain to think of some words of Torah I could present at half-time to inspire the students and turn the affair into a holy gathering.

The ending horn sounded. After some refreshments, I opened my remarks by saying that the most important thing on a football team is unity and a support system. The many individuals have to make sacrifices for the good of the whole team. As an ex-offensive tackle, I can attest to that strongly! Similarly, Chasidut demands of us the same kind of self-sacrifice and humility, even for a Jew you have never met before, and tells us that ahavat Yisrael (love for every Jew) is the basis of the whole Torah.

Here is another parallel. Chasidut teaches us about diminishing our bodily needs as a way to get closer to our spiritual potential. In football too, you sometimes have to "give up your body" to break the wedge or throw a down-field block, which is a kind of self-sacrifice for the cause.

There is also an idea in football that in order to advance the ball, you may have to take a step back or go on an end-around in order to run a long distance just to get back to cross the line of scrimmage where you started, and hopefully gain some yardage. Chasidic doctrine explains that the soul has to make a descent into a body in order to accomplish an ascent after 120 years in this world. Although you may take one step back by failing a test in Judaism, you can then go two steps forward. We should always be in the process of moving even if it temporarily knocks us down, rather than just remaining at the same level.

Finally there is the idea in football (and in all sports) of a comeback, the "cardiac kids" who never give up or ever think that all hope is lost. Chasidut tells us that a Jew is never lost no matter how far away from the Torah "team" he or she seems to be. The soul-spark inside always remains pure and holy, and is never disconnected from its source.

This also applies for any level of teshuva (return); it is never too late.

All the times I've watched football I could never really understand why it captivated me so totally. Now, after putting together a parallel between football and Chasidut that the kids at Tel-Aviv University could understand and relate to, it all comes together.

I realize that we have to learn to see how all aspects of our lives are interconnected, and how G-d is part of every one of these aspects, even the most mundane. We need to integrate, harmoniously and in a practical manner, the spiritual and physical in our lives. Moshiach NOW!

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

Articles of Faith

"Behold, the hand of Hashem is on your livestock that are in the field . . ." (9:3)

Why is the plague described as coming from the hand of Hashem? Likewise, what is meant by the "hand" in the verses (Shmot 14:31), "Yisrael saw the great hand that Hashem inflicted upon Egypt," and (Devarim 2:15), "Even the hand of Hashem was upon them"?

R' Shlomo Zalman Ehrenreich z"l Hy"d (1863-1944; rabbi of Simleu, Romania) writes: The Gemara (Berachot 4b) asks, "Why is there no verse beginning with the letter 'nun' in Ashrei?" Because it alludes to the downfall of the "enemies of Yisrael" [a euphemism the Gemara uses to avoid saying "the downfall of Yisrael"], as we read (Amos 5:2), "Naflah / She has fallen and will no longer rise – maiden of Yisrael." Thus, writes R' Ehrenreich, the letter "nun" alludes to downfall. "Nun" is the 14th letter of the Aleph-Bet. Fourteen is represented by the letters yud-dalet, which also spell the Hebrew word "Yad" / "hand," specifically, the "hand" of Hashem which cause the downfall of Egypt. (Tiyul Ba'pardes: Chelek Ha'remez, ot zayin)

A Torah Tour of the Holy Land

"Whoever never saw Herod's building [i.e., the Bet Hamikdash] as never seen a beautiful building in his life. How was it built? Rabbah says, 'With green marble and white marble.' Some say, 'With blue, green and white marble.' Herod wanted to coat the surfaces with gold, but the Sages told him, 'This way is nicer, for it is reminiscent of the waves of the sea.'" (Bava Batra 4a)

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What is the significance of the fact that the patterns on the stones of the Bet Hamikdash looked like the waves of the sea?

R' Shmuel Eliezer Eidels z"l (Maharsha; 1555-1631) explains: The Gemara (Chullin 89a) teaches that the reason for wearing Techeilet / strings dyed a certain shade of blue in our Tzitzit, rather than some other color, is that Techeilet is reminiscent of the color of the sea, which is reminiscent of the color of the heavens, which reminds a person of the Heavenly "throne." This, writes Maharsha, reminds us of the unity of all of Creation—the lower worlds (represented by the sea), the upper worlds (represented by the heavens), and the spiritual worlds (represented by Hashem's throne). Sinning breaks the connection between the physical and spiritual worlds, and wearing Tzitzit reminds us not to sin, as the Torah states (Bamidbar 15:39), "It shall constitute Tzitzit for you, that you may see it and remember all the commandments of Hashem and perform them; and not explore after your heart and after your eyes, after which you stray."

Perhaps, writes Maharsha, the Sages in Herod's time saw the wave pattern on the Temple's walls as serving the same purpose. (Chiddushei Aggadot: Bava Batra 4a and Chullin 89a)

R' Avigdor Miller z"l (1908-2001) offers another explanation: Just as waves seem to want to rise higher, so the Jewish People, when they visit the Bet Hamikdash, aspire to rise higher. (Quoted in Lekket Perushei Aggadah: B.B. 4a)

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

<p>We happily wish Mazel Tov to Mr. Chaim and Mrs. Estie Kahn on the Birth of a Grandson, born to their children Aharon and Shaindee Kahn. Mazel Tov also to the grandparents Benzion and Shoshana Schmell. The Shalom Zachor will take place at the home of the Schmells at 6611 Shelrick Place beginning after 8:00 p.m.</p>	
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Kol Hanaarim this Friday evening at 7:45 p.m. in The Shul. Cholent is provided by O'Fishel Catering!

Yahrzeits This Week:
Avraham Rosenblum 28 Tevet - Sunday night / Monday for mother Ita Bluma bas Moshe

SHUL DIRECTORY

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Davening and Shiurim Schedule

<p>Friday, 1/12 — 25 Tevet Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Candles — 4:47 p.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:50 p.m.</p> <p>Shabbat, 1/13 — 26 Tevet Shacharit — 9:00 a.m. Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:48 a.m. Berachot Gemora Shiur — 4:05 p.m. Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 4:35 p.m. Ma'ariv — 5:49 p.m.</p> <p>Sunday, 1/14 — 27 Tevet Shacharit — 8:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:50 p.m.</p> <p>Monday, 1/15 — 28 Tevet Shacharit — 6:50 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.</p>	<p>Tuesday, 1/16 — 29 Tevet Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.</p> <p>Wednesday — Rosh Chodesh Shevat, 1/17 — 1 Shevat Shacharit — 6:40 a.m. Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.</p> <p>Thursday, 1/18 — 2 Shevat Shacharit — 6:50 a.m. Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.</p> <p>Friday, 1/19 — 3 Shevat Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Candles — 4:54 p.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:55 p.m.</p>
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