

The Shul
at the Lubavitch Center
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December 9, 2017

VaYeshev

21 Kislev, 5778

Reliving Chanukah

Once upon a time, taking along a video recorder on vacation almost meant bringing a luggage carrier just to shlepp the equipment with you. Over the years, they got smaller and smaller, until today almost every phone has an excellent video camera built in. Now it's easier than ever to preserve those memories and once-in-a-lifetime experiences that will be saved in your mind, your heart and your come back to haunt you in social media. Months or years later, you can watch the clips and remember the good times.

While we have ways to keep memories alive, is it actually possible to relive an experience?

Haven't we all wished, at one time or another, that we could capture a moment and actually relive it at a future date?

"These days are remembered and experienced." A basic Jewish teaching is that not only is a holiday or holy day a commemoration of an event that took place many years ago, but the actual event is re-experienced yearly on the anniversary of its happening.

The upcoming festival of Chanukah is no exception. The same "spiritual energy" that was present at that time is in the world once again. This means that we can tap into those forces and make them "work" for us in our lives today. We can actually relive the miracles and lessons of Chanukah.

What Chanukah energy are we able to remember and experience?

One of the Chanukah miracles was that a small band of Jews who were devoted heart, body and soul to G-d and to the Torah were able to vanquish the strongest army of the day. On Chanukah we experience this same devotion and enthusiasm about Jewish life and living. We can devote ourselves heart, body and soul to a special mitzva we have long wanted to do, and we will successfully integrate that mitzva into our lives.

The second miracle of Chanukah was when a small amount of oil kept the rededicated Temple menorah lit for a wondrous eight days until more oil could be produced. There was, in fact, other oil readily available. However, it had been tampered with by the Greeks and though permissible to use, the Jewish victors would not accept compromises for the rededication of the Temple. They wanted no traces of corruption or decay.

We relive this Chanukah miracle when we refuse to compromise our Judaism, even under extenuating circumstances. The Maccabees' resolve to use only pure oil gives us the strength to enhance our Jewish living by being uncompromising in our performance of mitzvot, whether it's putting a few coins in a charity box daily, befriending a lonely person, affixing mezuzot to our doorposts, speaking only kindly of others, or setting aside time for Jewish learning.

As one of the Chanukah blessings states, G-d performed miracles for us "in those days at this time." On Chanukah we can expect that G-d will perform miracles for us in our days at this time, culminating in the ultimate miracle—the peace, plentitude, health and Divine wisdom for the entire world that will be experienced in the Messianic Era.

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

"Yaakov Loved Yosef More Than All His Brothers"

When studying the story of Yosef and his brothers, it is worthwhile to remember the famous "Din Torah" that took place in the Yeshiva in Volozhin, the mother of all Lithuanian Yeshivas. There was a dispute between two great Rosh Yeshivas who were on the faculty — Rav Chaim Soloveitchik and the Netziv — Rav Naftalit Tzvi Yehudah Berlin. One of the judges on the Rabbinical panel who were convened to hear the Din Torah was the Vilna Magid.

The Vilna Magid commented to the other Judges that the Din Torah coincided with Parshas VaYeshev. The other Dayanim did not understand what the Vilna Magid meant because it was not Parshas VaYeshev, it was a totally different parsha that week! The Vilna Magid explained: In the Book of Bereshis, up until Parshas VaYeshev, all disputes involved a "good guy" and a "bad guy". There was the dispute between Adam and the Snake, between Yitzchak and Yishmael, and between Yaakov and Eisav. All of these were "no brainers" in terms of which side to pick in the argument. However, in Parshas VaYeshev — regarding the argument between Yosef and his brothers — we have great difficulty deciding who is right and who is wrong. Both sides were righteous individuals. Both sides had rationales for doing what they were doing. Therefore, it is not so easy to rule who is right and who is wrong. This is exactly the same situation in the dispute here in Volozhin between the Netziv and Rav Chaim, he noted.

(continued on the other side)

It is important to bear this perspective in mind when we engage in any type of discussion of the “foibles” of the Tribes of G-d in these last few parshiyos of the book of Bereshis.

The pasuk says that the brothers saw that Yaakov Avinu loved Yosef more than them and they began to hate him. I saw an interesting psychological insight from Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski, based on an interesting reading of the pasuk.

Many times, we have feelings we are not proud of. These are feelings that are base, petty, or otherwise stem from the non-glorious side of our personalities. The brothers sensed they were jealous of Yosef but they could not just come out and say “We hate Yosef because our father likes him better.” It was not Yosef’s fault that his father liked him better.

People have this uncanny ability to rationalize their behavior and try to elevate their very base and ignoble emotions; rationalizing them into something other than what they really are, in order that they may be proud of themselves. Therefore, the brothers concluded “it does not bother me that Yaakov loves Yosef more than ME”, what bothers me is that “Yaakov loved Yosef more than ALL HIS BROTHERS (kol Echav)”. Each brother was championing the rights of the underdog — his siblings who were being discriminated against because Yaakov loved Yosef more than THEM. “Personally, I am a ‘Baal Midos’ [person of high character] so I can handle this. I do not harbor petty jealousy, but I need to champion the rights of my downtrodden brothers.”

(by Rabbi Yissocher Frand from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

“The Rav’s Friday Night Hashkafa Q&A Shiur for Men”

will take place this Friday night (VaYeshev, December 8th) at 8:00 p.m. and will be held at the home of Dr. & Mrs. Moshe Silver, 2317 Farringdon Road.

Kol Hanaarim this Friday evening at 7:45 p.m. in The Shul. Chulent is provided by O’Fishe! Catering! Thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Gertner for sponsoring the dessert treats!

We extend our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to **Nancy Feierstein** on the loss of her mother, **Mildred Shapiro**.

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

Yahrzeits This Week:

Ethel Fischer 26 Kislev - Wednesday night/Thursday for father Avrohom ben Moshe

Davening and Shiurim Schedule

Friday, 12/8 — 20 Kislev

Shacharit — 7:00
Candles — 4:25 p.m.
Mincha / Ma’ariv — 4:25 p.m.

Shabbat, 12/9 — 21 Kislev

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z’man Kriat Shema — 9:34 a.m.
Berachot Gemora Shiur — 3:45 p.m.
Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 4:15 p.m.
Ma’ariv — 5:27 p.m.

Sunday, 12/10 — 22 Kislev

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma’ariv — 4:25 p.m.

Monday, 12/11 — 23 Kislev

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Ma’ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Tuesday, 12/12 — 24 Kislev

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Ma’ariv — 8:15 p.m.
First Chanukah Candle — at night

Wednesday, 12/13 — 25 Kislev

Shacharit — 6:45 a.m.
Ma’ariv — 8:15 p.m.
Second Chanukah Candle — at night

Thursday, 12/14 — 26 Kislev

Shacharit — 6:45 a.m.
Ma’ariv — 8:15 p.m.
Third Chanukah Candle — at night

Friday, 12/15 — 27 Kislev

Shacharit — 6:45a.m.
Fourth Chanukah Candle — 4:24 p.m.
Candles — 4:26 p.m.
Mincha / Ma’ariv — 4:30 p.m.