

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

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December 23, 2017

VaYigash

5 Tevet, 5778

Great Escape

Why are Great Escape rooms popping up in cities all over the globe, a sign that there's something universally fun about spending an hour in a room trying to find clues, solve puzzles, and escape?

The answer? Adrenaline. In the days that followed our family outing to a Great Escape room, I kept reliving the thrill I felt as we solved each puzzle.

Every experience is an opportunity to learn a spiritual lesson. I quickly realized The Great Escape Room is a parable for life, at least my life, in the days before the arrival of Moshiach:

Time is of the essence. Solving the room's puzzles in an hour meant focusing only on the clues that mattered. This single-minded focus is also the fastest way to redeem the Jewish people, and all humankind, from this long exile. The Rebbe assured everyone that the Redemption is imminent. Questions like, "what's taking so long?" or, "why is it so difficult?" aren't relevant to our mission: Torah study and performing mitzvot (commandments) are what move the Redemption forward. Period.

Work with collaborators, smile at sideliners. The room contained too many puzzles, problems, and people for anyone to insist on working alone. Once we had the answers, it was hard to remember who did what. And it didn't matter. Everyone's input moved the job along. Well, almost. A few people preferred not to participate.

Spiritually, there are those who sit out, too, each with a reason why the concept of Moshiach doesn't resonate with them. But at least they're in the room, and when it's time to "escape," they'll be thrilled to leave as well.

Trust that there's an answer. We trusted that the creators of The Great Escape Room had a correct answer for each puzzle. The only way to win was to try different tactics until we solved them all. Similarly, trust that G-d's perfect clues for solving the mysteries of the world are in the Torah. Although they can be challenging to decipher, I stick with the clues, trusting that the answers to our puzzling questions will add up seamlessly when Moshiach comes. Knowing that Moshiach is G-d's ultimate answer makes every effort meaningful and worthwhile.

Are we missing a vital clue? Our game monitors told us where not to look for clues (in a certain corner, on the ceiling). They told us exactly how many clues each puzzle needed in order to solve it. We tried different ways to solve one particular puzzle, then realized a clue was missing. But without that clue, we were just guessing; the chances of our solving the puzzle were infinitesimal. In global terms, isn't it time we acknowledge that we need G-d's help in solving the world's problems?

Victory is sweet. I was in charge of the group that solved the first puzzle. We screamed in euphoria when we finally combined the right numbers to open the locked box. This was the feeling I kept replaying in the days that followed - satisfaction, excitement, relief. It was a tiny taste of the joy we will all feel when Moshiach comes, when everything in creation will add up, just like those numbers. And just like those numbers added up for everyone, Moshiach will come for everyone.

The victorious thrill I enjoyed in The Great Escape Room may have been only a tiny taste of the Redemption, but the taste stays with me, adding to my hunger for the real thing.

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

Rabbi Shmuel and Rebbetzin Rochel Kaplan sponsored Kiddush last Shabbat
in memory of Rebbetzin Kaplan's father,
Reb Peretz ben Yehoshua.



Mr. Michael and Mrs. Terry Frank are sponsoring Kiddush this Shabbat
in memory of Michael's father,
Ephraim Mordechai ben Shlomo, whose yahrtzeit is the 9th of Tevet.





The
**Automobile
 Parade**
 is passing
**The Shul at
 The Lubavitch
 Center**
 on its way
 to
**downtown
 Baltimore.**

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!

Yahrzeits This Week:

Eugene Fischer	5 Tevet - Friday night/Shabbat	for mother	Chanah bas Rav Aryeh
Allan Berman	9 Tevet - Tuesday night/Wednesday	for mother	Malka bas Avraham
Michael Frank	9 Tevet - Tuesday night/Wednesday	for father	Ephraim Mordechai ben Shlomo
Toby Epstein	10 Tevet - Wednesday night/Thursday	for father	Asher ben Yaakov
Howard Elbaum	11 Tevet - Thursday night/Friday	for brother	Yaacov Kopel ben Avraham Menachem

SHUL DIRECTORY

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Davening and Shiurim Schedule

Friday, 12/22 — 4 Tevet
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Candles — 4:29 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:30 p.m.

Shabbat, 12/23 — 5 Tevet
 Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
 Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:42 a.m.
 Berachot Gemora Shiur — 3:45 p.m.
 Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 4:15 p.m.
 Ma'ariv — 5:31 p.m.

Sunday, 12/24 — 6 Tevet
 Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

Monday, 12/25 — 7 Tevet
 Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Tuesday, 12/26 — 8 Tevet
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Wednesday, 12/27 — 9 Tevet
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Thursday — Fast of 10th of Tevet, 12/28 — 10 Tevet
 Fast Begins — 5:55 a.m.
 Shacharit & S'lichot — 6:35 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35
 Fast Ends — 5:22 p.m.

Friday, 12/29 — 11 Tevet
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Candles — 4:34 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.