

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

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Bamidbar — Shabbat M'vorchim — Shavuot

29 Iyar, 5780

Such a Little Thing

It's like a particle of dust in your eye, or a speck of coal in a diamond. Sometimes even the tiniest thing make big problems.

Which is why, when you think about it, it's not at all surprising that the ego can wreak havoc. Of course, you and I know that it's not our egos making the problems. We only have little egos, just big enough to encourage us to be goal oriented, take pride in our work, not be someone's doormat. But the other guy - our neighbor, spouse, boss, co-worker - now he/she has a real ego problem!

This Shabbat afternoon, in Ethics of the Fathers (5:21) we read: "Whoever causes the many to have merit, no sin shall come through him; but one who causes the many to sin shall not be granted the opportunity to repent. Moses was himself meritorious and caused the many to attain merit, therefore, the merit of the many are attributed to him... . Jeraboam ben Nevat himself sinned and caused the many to sin, therefore the sins of the many are attributed to him."

Our Sages have taught: "G-d disqualifies no one, but welcomes all; the gates of repentance are open at all times; whoever wants to enter may enter."

Yet, so great a travesty is it when one leads others to sin that "one who causes the many to sin shall not be granted the opportunity to repent." There was, however, one exception - the very same Jeraboam ben Nevat mentioned above!

The prophet Achiya prophesied to Jeraboam that he would eventually be the king of ten of the tribes of Israel. Upon King Solomon's death, Jeraboam successfully led a revolt against the king's successor. Eventually, to distance his kingdom from the other two tribes, Jerusalem and the Holy Temple, Jeraboam set up altars and encouraged idol worship. Thus, "Jeraboam ben Nevat himself sinned and caused the many to sin."

For various reasons which we won't go into now, G-d chose to give Jeraboam the chance to rectify his sins. But this unique opportunity was not all that G-d was offering. "Repent," G-d urged Jeraboam. "And then I, and you and the son of Jesse [King David] will walk together in the Garden of Eden." (Talmud, Sanhedrin) G-d was offering Jeraboam that He would bring Moshiach if the wicked king would only repent!

And here's where the ego comes in. For, though Jeraboam should have been overwhelmed with gratitude to G-d for giving him this unprecedented opportunity to repent, though he had led millions of Jews astray, he asked one very simple but very egotistical question. "Who will go first? I or the son of Jesse?"

Hadn't Jeraboam just been told by G-d that he would go first? Hadn't he, for that matter, just been given the most amazing opportunity to repent? And, in addition, to walk together with G-d and King David in the Garden of Eden?

From Jeraboam's query we see that he didn't have a problem with repenting per se, nor with belief in G-d versus idols. His problem was his ego. Jeraboam was demanding assurance. "Who will go first? I or the son of Jesse?"

So G-d told Jeraboam, "the son of Jesse will go first."

And Jeraboam replied, "Then I will not repent."

Jeraboam had it all! He had the unheard-of opportunity to repent. He had the opportunity to bring his entire generation to repentance. He had the opportunity to walk together with G-d and King David in the Garden of Eden.

But he could not put aside his ego long enough to accept G-d's offer.

"Who will go first? I or the son of Jesse?"

Jeraboam was the proverbial "other guy" with the ego problem. But, of course, you and I would never have let our egos get in the way. Let's not let our egos get in the way of accepting G-d's magnanimous offers that He presents to us each day. Like the chance to be genuinely happy for someone else; to hold one's tongue; to smile instead of responding; to do any of dozens of good deeds and mitzvot (commandments) that come our way each day. And then, very soon, you and I will walk together to greet Moshiach, may it happen now!

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

A Unique Encounter

The Torah teaches that at Sinai, God did not reveal Himself to a single individual. Rather, He spoke to the entire Jewish nation.

Rabbi Moshe Maimonides, the famed Jewish scholar of over 800 years ago, calls this event the foundation, the pillar “upon which our faith revolves.”

Why is this not circular reasoning? Because this event is not something taken on faith, itself. Every Jew today knows that at least until recent generations, his or her forebears believed that this event actually happened — Maimonides says “the best of all witnesses testified” about it.

He points out, further, that there has been no similar event in history, and that the Bible itself tells us that this will never happen again [cf. Deut. 32].

When we look around us today, we see billions of adherents of religions based upon Judaism. It is self-evident that the best way to start such a religion is to create the tale that God Returned, spoke to a new group of believers, and explained His new rules. Maimonides teaches that this has not been done, because it cannot be done — because the Jewish Encounter with God is truly unique in human history.

(from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day) - On June 7, 1967 / Iyar 28, 5727, Israeli troops crashed through the defenses set up by Arab troops and recaptured those parts of the holy city of Jerusalem which had previously been in Arab possession. Yom Yerushalayim commemorates this significant day.

Yahrzeits This Week:

Joseph Zakar	4 Sivan - Tuesday night / Wednesday	for father	Emanuel ben Shabsi
Binyomin Gutman	7 Sivan - Friday night / Shabbat–Shavuot	for brother	Dovid ben Avraham

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DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday — Yom Yerushalayim, 5/22 — 28 Iyar

Shacharit — 7:00
 Candles — 8:02 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma’ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 5/23 — 29 Iyar

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
 Sof Z’man Kriat Shema — 9:22 a.m.
 Beitzah Gemora Shiur — 6:50 p.m.
 Minchah — 7:50 p.m.
 Ma’ariv — 9:05 p.m.

Sunday — Rosh Chodesh Sivan, 5/24 — 1 Sivan

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma’ariv — 8:10 p.m.

Monday — Memorial Day, 5/25 — 2 Sivan

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
 Mincha / Ma’ariv — 8:10 p.m.

Tuesday, 5/26 — 3 Sivan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Mincha / Ma’ariv — 8:10 p.m.

Wednesday, 5/27 — 4 Sivan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Mincha / Ma’ariv — 8:10 p.m.

Thursday — Erev Shavuot, 5/28 — 5 Sivan

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Candles — 8:07 p.m.
 Mincha — 8:05 p.m.
 Ma’ariv — 9:13 p.m.
 Tikun Leyl Shavuot — 12:00 to 5:00 a.m.

Friday — Shavuot, 5/29 — 6 Sivan

Shacharit — 5:03 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.
 Sof Z’man Kriat Shema — 9:21 a.m.
 Candles — 8:08 p.m.
 Mincha / Ma’ariv — 8:08 p.m.

Shabbat — Shavuot, 5/30 — 7 Sivan

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
 Sof Z’man Kriat Shema — 9:20 a.m.
 Yiskor — after 10:45 a.m.
 Beitzah Gemora Shiur — 6:50 p.m.
 Minchah — 7:50 p.m.
 Ma’ariv — 9:11 p.m.

Daven at Home