

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

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Baltimore, MD 21209

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www.chabadshul.org



November 16, 2019

VaYera

18 Cheshvan, 5780

Alternate Route

If you're not certain of how to get to a certain location, do you use an "old-fashioned" paper map (ala AAA)? Or perhaps you first look up the directions on-line using Google Maps or Mapquest. What about once you're in the car? Do you prefer Waze over Google Maps?

When using most GPS systems, there will often be a suggested alternate routes based on real-time traffic. Do you take the alternate route or do you stick with the plan?

How about when you're going somewhere - near or far - that you've been to a million times at least. Surely you've found short-cuts; a right turn here, then a sharp left down a street that doesn't have a traffic light, under the overpass, just past the fork in the road and there you are.

However, there seem to be times when the obsession with finding the alternate route becomes so overpowering that we end up even further from our destination.

The Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chasidic movement, encouraged people to learn from everything they see or hear. It's possible, then, to find meaning in short cuts and the long, well-traveled path.

It seems that, sometimes we Jews have a problem with which "path" to follow. We get involved in "alternate" routes to fulfillment, spirituality, relationships, etc. The infrequently traveled regular route is a path of involvement in Judaism, Torah learning, mitzva observance. When we return to our true roots (routes?) it might seem a little alien at first. But in the end, we see how it is, in fact, the correct and primary path.

While on the subject of paths, let's make a U-turn and discuss the saying of Rabbi Yehuda in the Mishna (Pirkei Avot 2:1): Which is the straight path that a man should choose for himself? That which brings distinction to himself and brings him distinction from man.

It seems strange that we should be told that the "straight path" is the one bringing us distinction. That may be good in politics, but for the rest of us? In fact it could be said that Rabbi Yehudah is providing us with his personal formula for balancing one's own need for spiritual growth with a concern with our fellow man. Either extreme - to be too involved in our own needs or to be so caught up in our neighbor's condition that we forget our own improvement - are equally far from the straight path, the perfect mix.

Short-cuts on trips are fine. But for the more important journey of life, make sure to be following the correct path.

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

Angel Food Cakes

Our Parashah begins with three angels visiting Avraham. The Torah records that Avraham offered them bread, but, in the end, the dough became Tamei / ritually impure and could not be served (see Bava Metzia 67a).

It therefore is surprising that we read in the Pesach Haggadah (in the poem "Va'amartem Zevach Pesach"): "He [Avraham] served the shining ones [i.e., the angels] Matzah cakes." As noted, there were no Matzah cakes in the menu that Avraham served!

R' Ben Zion Neshet shlita (one of the senior rabbis in Tel Aviv, Israel) explains: We read in Tehilim (78:25), as interpreted by the Gemara (Yoma 75b), that the Mahn that Bnei Yisrael ate in the desert was the "food of angels." Of course, angels do not eat "food." Rather, explains R' Moshe ben Nachman z"l (Ramban; 1194-1270), Mahn is a physical manifestation of Divine "light." In the desert, Bnei Yisrael were sustained by Hashem's light, to which He gave a physical form. Conversely, R' Neshet continues, when the Torah speaks of Avraham "feeding" the angels, it means that his performance of the Mitzvah of welcoming guests was on such a high level that he sanctified the physical world, which resulted in spiritual light that sustained the angels.

The Gemara (Kiddushin 38a) relates that the Matzah cakes that Bnei Yisrael baked when they left Egypt tasted like Mahn. How so? Because their faith in Hashem was so great—they even were willing to follow Him into the desolate wilderness (see Yirmiyahu 2:2) — that they elevated their food to the level of Divine light, like the Mahn.

(continued on the other side)

Based on this, we can understand the Haggadah as follows, R' Neshet concludes: The poem is not saying that Avraham fed the angels Matzah cakes. Rather, in the same way that Avraham was able to feed the angels, by elevating his physical act until it was Divine light, so his descendants in the desert elevated their Matzah cakes to a similar level on which they tasted like Mahn. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Shir Tziyon p.116)

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

Community Information of Interest

November 16: Two Parties and a State: Israel and the Jewish People 1980-1983. Lecture by Rabbi Dovid Katz. "Boys will be Boys" – the Bombing of the Iraqi Nuclear Reactor and the "Fallout". This lecture will begin at 8:00 p.m. and be held at the Congregation Shomrei Emunah.

November 20: Celebrate Bnei Olam's 10 year anniversary and 100 babies born in Baltimore at a spectacular evening, Wednesday, November 20th at 7:30 p.m. It will be held at the newly renovated and spacious Pikesville DoubleTree to accommodate a larger crowd. Enjoy a lavish and savory dinner buffet featuring innovative and delicious dishes. Hear the personal account of Hillel and Loni Goldman as they recall their journey from challenges to joy. This year there will be a separate room for men only as well as separate seating available during the program. This event is free and open to the public. No RSVP is necessary.



As the days get shorter, and it is dark both on the way to Shul in the morning and going home after Ma'ariv; please wear reflective clothing, bands, belts, vests, etc. when walking to and from Shul.

Mr. Marvin and Mrs. Sara Itzkowitz
are sponsoring a Kiddush after davening this Shabbat
in memory of the **tenth yahrzeit** of
Sara's mother, **Mrs. Toby Rimler – Toyba bas Dov, A"H.**
on 20 Cheshvan – November 18, 2019



Yahrzeits This Week:

Sara Itzkowitz 20 Cheshvan - Sunday night / Monday for mother Toba bas R' Dov Rimler

SHUL DIRECTORY

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DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 11/15 – 17 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Candles — 4:33 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

Shabbat, 11/16– 18 Cheshvan

Shacharit – 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:19 a.m.
Beitzah Gemora Shiur — 3:50 p.m.
Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 4:20 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 5:34 p.m.

Sunday, 11/17 – 19 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

Monday, 11/18 – 20 Cheshvan

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

Tuesday, 11/19 – 21 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Wednesday, 11/20 – 22 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.

Thursday, 11/21 – 23 Cheshvan

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

Friday, 11/22 – 24 Cheshvan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Candles — 4:29 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:30 p.m.