

The Shul
at the Lubavitch Center
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January 23, 2021

Bo

10 Shevat, 5781

Alef, Bet, Gimmel

Reb Mendel Futerfas was a renowned and beloved Chasid who passed away in 1995. Many stories abound of his five years of hard labor in a Siberian prison camp for the "crime" of teaching Jews about Judaism and his two decades as the spiritual mentor of the Lubavitch town in Israel, Kfar Chabad.

Reb Mendel, as this wise yet humble man was known, once related a story that he remembered from when he was a five-year-old schoolboy. One day, one of his classmates forgot to bring his bottle of ink to yeshiva. He asked the boy next to him if he could use some ink. "No," replied the child. "I don't have enough. You should have remembered to bring yours." The reprimanded youngster turned to another child and managed to get some ink from him.

The teacher noticed the exchange but said nothing. A little while later, he asked the boy who had refused to share his ink, if he could show the class the first three letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

The child quickly pointed out the Hebrew letters "alef," "bet," and gimmel."

"Wrong," said the teacher.

The child was utterly confused. "But teacher," he said, "this is what you have been teaching us since we were three years old!"

"No," the teacher repeated. "You are wrong. 'Alef' is: When your friend asks you for ink, you share it with him. 'Bet' is: When your friend asks for ink, you share it with him. 'Gimmel' is: When your friend asks for ink, you share it with him."

The 10th day of the Hebrew month of Shevat is the anniversary of the passing of the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson.

For Jews today, however, the primary significance of Yud Shevat is that it is the day on which the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, accepted the reigns of leadership of the movement.

At the gathering when the Rebbe accepted the mantle of leadership, the Rebbe charged his Chasidim with two responsibilities that were utterly and inseparably intertwined: ahavat Yisrael, love of one's fellow Jew, and preparing the world for the imminent Redemption through Moshiach.

"'Alef' is: When your friend asks you for ink, you share it with him because Moshiach is ready to come now and our part is to add in acts of goodness and kindness. 'Bet' is: When your friend asks for ink, you share it with him because we refine ourselves and prepare ourselves to greet Moshiach through ahavat Yisrael. 'Gimmel' is: When your friend asks for ink, you share it with him because then he will be more receptive to studying with you about Moshiach and the Redemption, and studying about Moshiach and the Redemption is the 'straight path,' to greeting Moshiach."

Each one of us has a part to play in making the Redemption a reality. The anniversary of the Rebbe's acceptance of leadership is a time to renew our commitment to this mission and take the initiative.

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

Pharaoh! Wake Up and Smell the Coffee!

The Medrash in this week's parsha, on the pasuk "Go to Pharaoh..." [Shemos 10:1], states: "Rabbi Yehuda began by saying, 'Fortunate are the people who understand the call of the Teruah blast; Hashem, in the Light of Your Presence they walk.' [Tehillim 89:16] This pasuk from Psalms is obviously associated with Tekiyas Shofar. It is recited on Rosh Hashanna after the completion of blowing the first set of Shofar blasts.

This is a beautiful pasuk, but what on earth does it have to do with "Go to Pharaoh..."? There are many fundamental mitzvos in Parshas Bo—Pesach, Chametz, Tefillin, Bechor. The mitzva of Shofar does not appear in this parsha! What on earth does "Ashrei ha'Am yodei Teruah" have to do with "Bo el Pharaoh?"

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The Chidushei HaRim cites in this connection a very famous Rambam in the third chapter of Hilchos Teshuvah. The Rambam writes there: "Even though blowing shofar is a Divine Decree (with no apparent logic), it carries a tremendous message within it (remez yesh bo): Arise those who slumber from your sleep, wake up from your drowsiness and repent."

A remez is a 'hint' and sometimes a 'hint' can be even more powerful than a long speech. Sometimes even the wink of an eye or the nod of one's head—the slightest gesture—can deliver a far greater impact than a twenty-minute oration. "A hint suffices for the wise."

When the Rambam says that Tekiyas Shofar contains within it a hint (remez), he is saying that Klal Yisrael respond to the remez of Tekiyas Shofar. There are no words that come out of the shofar—it is merely a series of sounds that emerge. But that sound is enough to send a message that I need to wake up from my slumber. This sound can sometimes be more powerful than the most eloquent of drashas.

The first time we hear the shofar—perhaps even in Elul, but certainly on the first day of Rosh Hashanna—we start to tremble. It sends a message. There is no screaming, there is no yelling, there is no fire and brimstone, just that kol shofar—the hint within it. And Klal Yisrael responds.

The Chidushei HaRim explains that Rabbi Yehuda in the Medrash means as follows: Come and see the difference between the Jewish people and Pharaoh. Parshas Bo contains Plagues #8, #9, and #10. Pharaoh has already gone through seven plagues. He has been banged over the head time and time and time again. Wake up and smell the coffee, Pharaoh! Don't you see where this is headed? Why can't you figure it out? Why don't you respond? Are you blind? Are you deaf? Are you dumb? What is it that you do not get? They are going to take your entire country down the drain!

Such is sometimes the nature of people. They can be hit over the head, they can be yelled at, they can be slapped in the face, they can have cold water poured over their head. Everything! And still they do not wake up.

Rabbi Yehudah began and expounded: Fortunate is the nation who knows the Teruah. Klal Yisrael understand the Teruah. They hear one sound and already they intuitively understand the hint contained with it. That one sound already arouses them to repent. Such is the difference between Pharaoh and Klal Yisrael.

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



Rabbi Kaplan is holding a weekly Thursday evening (8:30pm) online shiur on the Shaar HaBitachon section of Chovos Halivavos. Shaar HaBitachon has been effective in giving strength and encouragement to people facing difficult and challenging situations in everyday life. What a perfect topic, presented by a gifted teacher, for these times. This online shiur is open to anyone who would like to attend and can be joined at: <https://cutt.ly/join-shiur>

Yahrzeits This Week:

Ethel Fischer 15 Shevat - Wednesday night / Thursday for husband Yaakov Mordechai ben HaRav Zev Yehudah

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE 322996

Friday, 1/22 — 9 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles — 4:58 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 1/23 — 10 Shevat

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:47 a.m.
Beitzah Gemora Shiur — 4:15 p.m.
Minchah — 4:45 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, 1/24 — 11 Shevat

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:05 p.m.

Monday, 1/25 — 12 Shevat

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:05 p.m.

Tuesday, 1/26 — 13 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:05 p.m.

Wednesday, 1/27 — 14 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:05 p.m.

Thursday — Tu B'Shevat, 1/28 — 15 Shevat

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:05 p.m.

Friday, 1/29 — 16 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles — 5:06 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:05 p.m.