

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road
Baltimore, MD 21209

www.chabadshul.org



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Emor

19 Iyar, 5781

The Kohen Gene

Ever looked around a synagogue and noticed the incredible array of people from different races wandering the aisles? Hard to believe we've got anything in common, let alone common ancestry and religion.

In the late '90s, a study came out attempting to prove that kohanim (priests), no matter their facial or racial makeup, all descend from a common paternal ancestor. The geneticists involved collected DNA samples from hundreds of kohanim, and searched for common markers on the Y-chromosome. Incredibly, they found that over 98% of men with a family tradition of priesthood showed evidence of descent from the same great-great-great grandfather.¹

Ashkenazim, Sephardim, Yemenites and Italians can trace their backgrounds back to the Jews of the Exodus! find it fascinating that Moses' older brother, the biblical High Priest Aaron the kohen, lived some 3,300 years ago but bequeathed his genetic signature to these men. Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Yemenite and Italian kohanim can actually trace their backgrounds back to the Jews of the Exodus. And if modern science has given us the tools to prove common ancestry, isn't the next obvious step to dedicate ourselves to our common purpose—G-d's Torah and mitzvot?

The Fidelity Gene

Recently, I came across a statistic that absolutely floored me. According to one Australian laboratory, nearly one-quarter of the DNA tests performed demonstrate the assumed father not to be the real biological parent. One quarter!

Contrast this sorry record with that of Jews throughout history. What would happen if a kohen's wife committed adultery? The resulting illegitimate child would be an assumed kohen. He'd join his "father" on the dais and recite the Priestly Blessing; he'd get dibs on the first aliyah. He'd hand down a tradition of priesthood to his own sons. . . . But in reality he's no kohen, and his DNA and that of his future male descendents would not bear those crucial markers.

But almost 100% of all men with family tradition of priesthood do descend from kohanim. Generation after generation of Jewish women were faithful to their husbands and their tradition. What a proud record of fidelity. Geneticists describe these results as "the highest record of paternity-certainty ever recorded," and there is no reason to assume that their sisters married to Levites and Israelites were any less faithful to their spouses and religion.

Geneticists describe these results as "the highest record of paternity-certainty ever recorded" This devotion to our spouses and our G-d has always been the way of the Jew. Even during our slavery in Egypt, subject to the capricious demands of an evil nation, our women distinguished themselves. The Book of Leviticus² records the only example of illegitimacy, the product of the rape of a Jewess by an Egyptian overseer. The Torah hints that this woman's flirtatious manner may have precipitated the dreadful occurrence, but the crime was committed by the Egyptian.

This sad exception only demonstrates how refreshingly modest and chaste were all other Jews. The very worst and most unfortunate incident of all the time they were in slavery was not a case of adultery, G-d forbid, but abuse. It is to the credit of our ancestors that, no matter the temptations, irrespective of the dangers, they fought to stay faithful, and almost without exception they succeeded. This proud heritage they vouchsafed to us.

Jewish marriages throughout history are a model for all humanity, and the oaths and bonds that unite us with our partners and Creator will remain firm and unwavering for now and eternity.

(by Dovi Scheiner from www.chabad.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>

Mitzvah Vigilante

The Torah tells us in this week's parsha, "u'shmartem es mitzvosai, v'aseesem osum — watch the mitzvos and do them" (Vayikra 22:31). What does watch mitzvos mean. If one does a mitzvah he is surely doing more than watching them. Watching mitzvos seems quite passive. Observant Jew is a term used for those who actually perform the and adhere to the laws, and the curious word observant, perhaps, indeed comes from the Hebrew word u'shmartem. But doesn't Hashem want us to be more than just watchers. If He tells us to do mitzvos, then surely we watch them! Why the double, if not redundant, expression? This past Thursday evening I went to be Menachem Avel (in the vernacular – pay a shiva call) a friend, Rabbi Zissel Zelman, who was sitting shiva for his father. He is a Chicago native whose father, Rabbi Zelman, grew up in Chicago way before Torah Judaism had flourished there. Reb Zissel related that as a young man, his father would pass the newsstand every Saturday night after shul to pick up a paper. As he did not carry money with him, he had made an arrangement with the vendors to return on Sunday morning to pay the vendor.

Rabbi Zelman was not interested in the sports pages nor was he interested in the headlines. In fact he was not interested in the paper altogether. Rabbi Zelman bought the paper for his mother. She also was not interested in the sports or the news. She was interested in the dead. Every Saturday night she would comb through the paper looking for announcements of tombstone unveilings that were to take place on Sunday at the Jewish Cemeteries. An unveiling is a time when people are charitable, and the elderly Mrs. Zelman would go to the cemeteries and raise funds from the gathered for Yeshivos in Europe in Israel. She would eventually turn the coins into bills and send the money overseas. A plaque hangs today in the Slobodka Yeshiva in Israel commemorating her efforts.

Perhaps the Torah is telling us more than just doing mitzvos. It is telling us to watch for mitzvos. Be on guard. There are hundreds of opportunities to find mitzvos and to do them. But we must be observant and vigilant. There are hundreds of mitzvos that pass by our very eyes. Scores of Good Mornings.

Hundreds of packages we can help lift, as well as spirits. There are hundreds of hearts we can help heal as well as small acts of charity we can fulfill. Perhaps the Torah is telling us more than watch the mitzvos that come our way. Perhaps it may be telling us to be on the lookout for those that are out there waiting for us to observe them!

(by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

Dr. Avi and Dr. Aryela Rosenberg
are sponsoring a Kiddush after davening this Shabbat
in commemoration of the **yahrzeit** of Aryela's father
R'Avraham Zev ben R'Dovid HaLevi Lerner,
whose yahrzeit is 21 Iyar.
May his Neshama have an Aliyah.



Yahrzeits This Week:

Jeffrey London	23 Iyar - Tuesday night / Wednesday	for mother	Esther bas Moshe
Larry London	23 Iyar - Tuesday night / Wednesday	for mother	Esther bas Moshe

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday — Lag B'Omer, 4/30 — 18 Iyar

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles — 7:41 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 5/1 — 19 Iyar

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:33 a.m.
Berachot Gemora Shiur — 6:30 p.m.
Minchah — 7:30 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 8:44 p.m.

Sunday, 5/2— 20 Iyar

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Mincha / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

Monday, 5/3 — 21 Iyar

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

Tuesday, 5/4 — 22 Iyar

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

Wednesday, 5/5 — 23 Iyar

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50 p.m.

Thursday, 5/6 — 24 Iyar

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:50

Friday, 5/7 — 25 Iyar

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles — 7:48 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.