

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road
Baltimore, MD 21209

www.chabadshul.org



April 10, 2021

Shemini — Shabbat M'vorchim

28 Nisan, 5781

Jewish Nesting Dolls

Why is it that in difficult times, that suddenly we remember not only that we are Jews, but that there is an all-Powerful G-d who really controls the world?

Take, for example, the past tragedy in Israel, when Ehud and Ruth Fogel and three of their pure, precious children - including their three-month-old daughter Hadas - were brutally murdered by bloodthirsty terrorists on Shabbat.

Jews the world over - no matter what their day-to-day association with Israel, the Jewish people and Judaism - cried Jewish tears. Twenty thousand students in the Amit school system in Israel dedicated their studies to the Fogels during the week after the slaying. An international call for Jewish women to light Shabbat candles and have in mind the Fogels on the Shabbat eve following their deaths was answered by tens of thousands of women and girls.

Why? Why did people who never met the Fogels, who had never heard of their settlement in Itamar or Ariel where they lived before Itamar or Gush Katif from where they were "disengaged" in the summer of 2005 cry, study, light, do?

The answer to the "why" is really quite simple, and maybe because of its simplicity it is often overlooked. In an age when self-help books continually top the best-sellers charts, when our society approaches the ancient Greeks' idolization of the human mind and ability to reason, it is sometimes hard to accept the seemingly intangible, non-intellectual explanation of "the Jewish soul." But, "current events" throughout Jewish history, have always led us back to the unmistakable fact that within every Jew is the magnificent treasure of the Jewish soul.

So, why does it so often take a tragedy - sometimes personal, sometimes global - or sometimes, thank G-d, a happy event or victorious occasion, to bring out the Jewish soul? And then again, why often is this personal discovery only momentary, fleeting, and the soul soon relegated to its hidden space?

Imagine a set of nesting dolls: those little wooden Russian peasant figurines or their variation we've all seen or played with. No matter what our age, we delight in opening the doll, only to find a slightly smaller one inside, which we expectantly open. Then, we find a slightly smaller one, and a slightly smaller one inside that, on and on until, at last, we find the tiniest doll which does not open. That minute doll, if you will, is the essence of the Jew, the "yiddische neshama" - the Jewish soul. And the Jewish soul, though not a physical entity, is just as real as the smallest nesting doll.

The tiny figurine can be covered and enclosed by layers and layers of bigger dolls. But bigger doesn't necessarily mean better, for we all know the tremendous disappointment of opening all the dolls just to find that the smallest one is missing.

The Jewish soul, the "piece of G-d" which He invests in each one of us, can never be lost. Though initially covered by bigger, more elaborate, seemingly better layers, part of our life-long job is to work at uncovering our soul, allowing its presence to be felt, thereby enriching our lives.

Sometimes the uncovering of the soul happens through hard-work, sometimes, quite by accident. Some-times, someone else tries to help us, or G-d, Himself, eases the way. But, just as it is within our power to nest it once again within larger figures, we also have the ability to keep it uncovered.

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

"Moshe said, 'This is the thing that Hashem has commanded you to do; then the glory of Hashem will appear to you'." (9:6)

The Midrash Torat Kohanim interprets: "Moshe said to Bnei Yisrael, 'Remove that certain Yetzer Ha'ra from your hearts and be unified in your desire to serve G-d. Just as He is One, so your service should be uniquely for Him. If you do this, then the glory of Hashem will appear to you'." [Until here from the Midrash]

(continued on the other side)

What is "that certain Yetzer Ha'ra"? R' Yitzchak Hershkowitz shlita (Israel) explains, citing several Chassidic works: When Bnei Yisrael heard that Hashem would reveal Himself to them on that day (i.e., the day of the dedication of the Mishkan), their hearts burned with impatient anticipation. That was the Yetzer Ha'ra to which Moshe referred, for it meant that their service of Hashem was motivated by a desire to attain lofty spiritual levels, not a desire to simply do G-d's will. Moshe said, "If you want the glory of Hashem to appear to you, then you must serve G-d only because, 'This is the thing that Hashem has commanded you to do'." (Ha'mal'ach p.86)

A related thought:

R' Zvi Elimelech Shapira z"l (the Bnei Yissaschar; died 1841) writes about the commandment not to ascend to the Mizbei'ach / altar on steps: In my opinion, this Mitzvah hints that a person should not seek lofty spiritual levels such as Ruach Ha'kodesh or the revelation of Eliyahu Ha'navi. If he is honored by Heaven with such attainments, he should thank Hashem, for He is good. However, one's only intention should be to serve Hashem out of love and awe, and with simplicity, as a son serves his father and mother. If, G-d forbid, a person thinks he is worthy of lofty levels, his "account book" will be opened in Heaven, and his shame will be revealed. Therefore, a person should be content to do what he is commanded. (Derech Pikudecha: Mitzvat Lo Ta'aseh 41:11)

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz 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:

Daniel Schechter	29 Nisan - Saturday night / Sunday	for father	Moshe ben Yehuda Tzvi
Judy Elbaum	30 Nisan - Sunday night / Monday	for father	Shlomo Yankov ben Mordechai Zvi
Brocha Siff	3 Iyar - Wednesday night / Thursday	for father	Rav Aaron ben Rav Gedaliyahu



With gratitude to HaKadosh Baruch Hu,
we would like to invite you to the vort of our beloved children

Meir Simcha & Sherry

Sunday, April 11 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.
at 2328 Sweet Meadow Road, Baltimore, MD.
Mr. & Mrs. Zev and Michal Goldenberg
Rabbi & Mrs. Boruch and Simmy Yellen

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday 4/9 — 27 Nisan

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

Shabbat, 4/10 — 28 Nisan

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:50 a.m.
Berachot Gemora Shiur — 6:10 p.m.
Minchah — 7:10 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 8:21 p.m.

Sunday, 4/11— 29 Nisan

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Mincha / Ma'ariv — 7:25 p.m.

Monday — Rosh Chodesh Iyar, 4/12 — 30 Nisan

Shacharit — 6:40 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:25 p.m.

Tuesday — Rosh Chodesh Iyar, 4/13 — 1 Iyar

Shacharit — 6:40 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:25 p.m.

Wednesday, 4/14 — 2 Iyar

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:25 p.m.

Thursday, 4/15 — 3 Iyar

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:25

Friday, 4/16 — 4 Iyar

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles — 7:27 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.