

The Shul
at the Lubavitch Center
6701 Old Pimlico Road
Baltimore, MD 21209
410-486-2666
www.chabadshul.org



January 2, 2021

VaYechi

18 Tevet, 5781

One for All and All for...

Can you imagine listening to the Vienna BOY Choir, or reading about the adventures of the ONE Musketeer? Or what if computer hardware and software weren't compatible? So many examples abound of teamwork, cooperation and compatibility that we take many of them for granted.

It shouldn't seem unusual, then, to expect the similar modes of behavior from our fellow Jews. When we're around our brethren, whether at a social or religious function, it's easy to notice the dissimilarities, to get carried away with the differences. He's so tall, she's so skinny. He's dressed rather conservatively, everything she's wearing is designer. She's a lawyer and he's a doctor. He does this mitzva, she doesn't do that one. The list can go on forever.

But once we get past the non-essential components of a person and uncover who he really "is," we come to realize that being Jewish is an integral part of his or her life. We share a common past and a common destiny that binds us together.

Teamwork and cooperation among Jews can produce astonishing results. There is a Chasidic aphorism which declares: "What a Chasidic farbrengen (a gathering permeated with love of one's fellow Jew) can accomplish, even the angel Michael cannot accomplish." Now, the angel Michael is responsible for bestowing upon us the blessings of children, health and wealth. That's a pretty impressive resume! But the aforementioned dictum is teaching us that together, united, we have the power to do even more than what the angel Michael is empowered by G-d to do.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism, explained this concept with an analogy: Children are naturally possessive of their own belongings. They defend their own property from other children or hoard their possessions in a display of poor character traits. They do not care about others and worry only about themselves and their own things. This greatly distresses their parents and so, their parents put much effort into training the children to share, to be kind and generous, and to have other positive traits and form good habits. Time passes and the parents watch their children and see that they care for others and are not as concerned about their own "stuff" or "space." This gives the parents tremendous pleasure and now they are more likely to grant requests that the children may have.

This is how G-d reacts to us when He sees that we are united and cooperative, and behave in a respectful and dignified manner toward one another. When we act lovingly toward each other, G-d is more likely to grant our requests for health, wealth and children, and our prayers for peace for Israel and the entire world.

In an orchestra, there are dozens of musicians playing tens of different instruments. Each musician has his own personality, temperament, goals. Every instrument has a shape, sound, quality of its own. Somehow, all of these disparities unite to bring music to our ears. If even one instrument is out of tune, or one musician out of synch, the discord is obvious and irritating to the listener. How much more so when we're talking about an entire people.

We Jews often, maybe even always, have differences of opinion. Certainly we look, talk, act and think differently. But the important thing to remember is that we cannot let our numerous differences cause disharmony, dissonance and discord. After all, where would we be without teamwork? The cry of "One for One, and One for One" wouldn't have made the Three Musketeers very famous.

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

Old News Is Good News

As an introduction to the Torah's narration of the blessings Yaakov gives Yosef's two sons, the pasuk says, "Now Israel's eyes were heavy with age, he could not see; so he brought them near him and he kissed them and hugged them." [Bereishis 48:10] Prior to blessing Ephraim and Menashe, Yaakov tells Yosef "I did not imagine seeing your face, and here G-d has shown me even your offspring." [Bereishis 48:11]

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Now let us ask, when did it first happen that Yaakov Avinu found out that Yosef was alive finally saw him after their long separation? It happened at the end of Parshas Vayigash — 17 years prior to the Torah's narration in Chapter 48 where Yaakov takes ill and Yosef brings in his two sons to their grandfather to receive his blessing. What is going on now that suddenly, 17 years later, Yaakov is commenting to Yosef that he never expected to see him again and G-d was so good to him that he showed him even Yosef's children!? This is old news! Why is he saying it now?

The answer is that to most people, something that happened 17 years ago is old news. We tend to forget it. Man's nature is that despite the magnitude of an event, as time goes on, it tends to become less and less memorable. We forget how amazed we were. We forget how grateful we were to the Almighty at the time for His kindness to us.

Do we remember our wedding and how grateful we were at that moment that we got married? Do we remember the first time our wife had a baby, how thrilled we were when we had our first child? Do we remember how thrilled we were that we had the merit to march our children down to the Chuppah? Yes, we remember – but it becomes 'Old News'. Perhaps on an anniversary, these events come to mind, but the excitement of the moment certainly fades with time.

The pasuk is trying to teach us that to Yaakov Avinu, in spite of the fact that this happened 17 years ago, nevertheless, every single day he was in a constant state of giving gratitude to the Almighty for His Kindness to him. It was constantly on his mind.

(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>



We happily wish Mazel Tov to **Avi and Elana Blumenthal** on the **birth and bris** of their son **Yisrael Shalom**.
Mazel Tov to the entire Blumenthal Family.

Yahrzeits This Week:

Moshe Rosenfeld 24 Tevet - Thursday night / Friday for father Esriel ben Moshe

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday — New Years Day, 1/1 — 17 Tevet

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles — 4:36 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:40 p.m.

Shabbat, 1/2 — 18 Tevet

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:46 a.m.
Beitzah Gemora Shiur — 3:55 p.m.
Minchah — 4:25 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 5:41 p.m.

Sunday, 1/3 — 19 Tevet

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:50 p.m.

Monday, 1/4 — 20 Tevet

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:50 p.m.

Tuesday, 1/5 — 21 Tevet

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:50 p.m.

Wednesday, 1/6 — 22 Tevet

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:50 p.m.

Thursday, 1/7 — 23 Tevet

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:50 p.m.

Friday, 1/8 — 24 Tevet

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles — 4:43 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:45 p.m.