

# The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road  
Baltimore, MD 21209

[www.chabadshul.org](http://www.chabadshul.org)



January 15, 2022

Beshalach — Shabbat Shira

13 Shevat, 5782

## Trees and Roots

In many parts of the world, we're not thinking about warm weather just yet. But with the approach of Tu B'Shevat, the New Year for Trees, some might just have the itch to get out the gardening catalogues or start thinking about nature.

We can learn a lot from the great outdoors - from every flower, shrub, plant, even each weed! So let's take a moment to examine just one of G-d's beautiful creations - trees.

Probably the most important part of the tree is its roots. A tree's nourishment and stability are derived through its roots. Trees with strong roots and root systems are able to survive strong winds, droughts, or a scorching sun.

On the other hand, trees that have bountiful, beautiful branches covered with glossy, green leaves are a magnificent sight to behold in spring, summer or fall. But without strong, deep roots, drastic changes in weather can be devastating.

In the Mishna, our Sages speak about this phenomenon. Though they weren't necessarily horticulturists they did have keen insight into the human condition.

Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya said, "Any person whose wisdom exceeds his deeds, to what is he likened? To a tree whose branches are many, but whose roots are few, and the wind comes and plucks it up and overturns it on its face ... But anyone whose deeds exceed his wisdom, to what is he likened? To a tree whose branches are few, but whose roots are many, so that even if all the winds in the world come and blow on it, they cannot budge it from its place."

In the case of a tree, it is the roots that bring the entire tree - the trunk, branches, leaves and fruit - its nourishment. Rabbi Elazar is telling us that our deeds, our actual physical mitzvot, are what nourish us and keep our entire being healthy, strong, and able to survive even the most tempestuous storms of life. This concept, that action is the most essential thing, is actually one of the most important concepts in Judaism.

Contemplating the deed, understanding the deed, studying the deed, does not exempt one from doing the deed. You can meditate on and study for days all the laws and commentaries related to putting a mezuzah on your door or making your kitchen kosher. But until you have done the action, you have not given nourishment to your roots that ultimately nourish the total person.

Rabbi Elazar was very exacting in the way he expressed himself. He spoke about one whose deeds exceed his wisdom. This means that our deeds, our mitzvot, have to be greater in number than our Jewish knowledge, in order for our "trees" to be healthy and firmly established.

One might object, "But if I do mitzvot and I don't understand them, I feel like a fake. What do I gain from doing something I don't understand, or saying words I don't comprehend?"

In answer, let's get back to the total tree, including its fruits. When you're hungry and you eat an apple, do you understand exactly how that fruit nourishes your body, how it is broken down by acids and enzymes, goes through your digestive system, into your blood stream, and finally nourishes each and every organ in your body? Probably not. Were you not to eat that apple until you understood exactly how it nourishes you, it would take years of study of biology, nutrition, physiology, medicine, etc. And in the meantime, you'd be a lot more than a little bit hungry!

Basically, Rabbi Elazar is telling us, "Just eat! Even if you don't understand how it nourishes you or what you're eating, *ess mein kind* - eat, my child."

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

**Community Information of Interest**

**January 15: Two Last Years before Oslo: Israel and the Jewish People 1988-1992. Lecture by Rabbi Dovid Katz.** *Religion and the State: The World of the Yeshivas and the World of the Chasidim 1988-1992.* This lecture will begin at 8:00 p.m. and be held at the Congregation Shomrei Emunah. Also this lecture will be available on Rabbi Katz's YouTube site Moitze Shabbat – January 22, 2022.



**Introducing Yitzchok's Toy Box:** A therapy toy and equipment gemach l'zecher nishmas Yitzchok Sheffield A"H. Parents can borrow items for short term use, or try therapy equipment and toys for their child before buying them. Contact: 443-879-3169 or [yitzchokstoybox@gmail.com](mailto:yitzchokstoybox@gmail.com) with a recommendation from a PT, OT, or speech therapist.

The Shul is looking to hire a (young) woman to assume responsibility to structure and supervise the children's groups. If you are interested or know of someone, please contact the Rav.



Kol Hanaarim– Father and Son Learning – every Friday evening during the winter at 7:45 to 8:30 p.m. in The Shul. Chulent and other refreshments are served. Each session is 'topped off' at the end with a fascinating story. For any questions, please see Rabbi Itzkowitz.

**Yahrzeits This Week:**

Ethel Fischer 15 Shevat - Sunday night / Monday for husband Yaakov Mordechai Ben HaRav Zev Yehudah  
David Feierstein 17 Shevat - Tuesday night / Wednesday for father Chaim Mordechai ben Rav Naftoli Hertzl

**SHUL DIRECTORY**

**Rabbi:** Shmuel Kaplan . . . rabbikaplan@chabadmd.com  
**Treasurer:** Michael Frank . . . shul.chabad@gmail.com  
**Kiddush:** Reuven Frank . . . . . rfrank82@gmail.com  
**Bulletin:** Howard Kaplon . . . . . hkaplontowson.edu  
**Website:** Shoshana Zakar . . . . . sue.zakar@gmail.com

**Gabbaim:**  
Yehudah Buchwalter . . . judahbuchwalter@verizon.net  
Allan Genut . . . . . agenut@gmail.com  
Ephraim Siff  
**Mikvah Mei Menachem** . . . . . 410-415-5113  
**Aleph Learning Institute** . Mrs. Rochel Kaplan, Director  
[www.alephlearninginstitute.org](http://www.alephlearninginstitute.org) / email: [alephjli@gmail.com](mailto:alephjli@gmail.com)

**DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE**

**Friday, 1/14 – 12 Shevat**

Shacharit – 7:00 a.m.  
Shabbat Candles – 4:48 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv – 4:50 p.m.

**Shabbat, 1/15 – 13 Shevat**

Shacharit –9:00 a.m.  
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema – 9:48 a.m.  
Minchah – 4:35 p.m.  
Ma'ariv– 5:51 p.m.

**Sunday, 1/16 – 14 Shevat**

Shacharit – 8:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv – 5:00 p.m.  
Father and Son Learning – 6:00 p.m.

**Monday – Tu B'Shevat, 1/17 – 15 Shevat**

Shacharit – 6:50 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv – 5:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, 1/18 – 16 Shevat**

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

**Wednesday, 1/19 – 17 Shevat**

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

**Thursday, 1/20 – 18 Shevat**

Shacharit – 6:50 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv – 5:00 p.m.  
Chavrusa Learning with Chabad Yeshiva – 8 to 10 p.m.

**Friday, 1/21 – 19 Shevat**

Shacharit – 7:00 a.m.  
Shabbat Candles – 4:56 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv – 5:00 p.m.