

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road
Baltimore, MD 21209

www.chabadshul.org



January 1, 2022

Vaera — Shabbat M'vorchim

28 Tevet, 5782

It's All A Dream

Times, thank G-d, are good. We are, for the most part safe, well fed, and free to pursue the lifestyles and goals we choose. Why do we need Moshiach? Everything is just fine. How can this be called exile?

This bewilderment regarding the need for Moshiach is the biggest indication of how much we need Moshiach. The most distressing aspect of exile is that we are unaware that we are in exile.

Physical suffering is not exile's cardinal characteristic, as is obvious from the experience of most Jews today. The definitive feature of exile is the absence of a central, unifying purpose to existence. People's lives appear to be determined by random forces: economic, political, and physical.

One classical metaphor for exile is that of a dream. A dream is often a grossly distorted melange, totally alien to what one encounters in normal life. From the dreamer's point of view, the dream world appears entirely ordinary and very real. The surrealistic distortion that is so apparent on awakening is entirely acceptable and natural in the dream. The dreamer may be terrified by something that, on awakening, merely evokes a shiver or even a bewildered smile.

In the dream-like world of exile there is the illusion of reality. People are entirely comfortable with the lunacy of modern life. No one sees it as unusual that billions of people watch videos for hours, enjoying murder, rape, filth and perversion. It is normal for thousands of people to push and scream in a stadium to watch a man hit a ball with a stick. A person spends his precious life's strength laboring to acquire prestige or a moment's illusion of power. Driven by advertisements he labors mightily for the latest electronic gadget or luxury vacation. Such behavior is not only "normal," it is exemplary.

In resolving the question as to why people are content with exile, the dream metaphor raises an even more perplexing paradox. If we are all products of the dream of exile, how can we objectively assess our circumstances? How can we expect a world that is blind to its own madness to yearn for redemption?

The answer is that the darkness of exile is not absolute. There are those for whom the dense obscurity of exile is only partial. They are like dreamers who know that they are dreaming and are thus able to stand somewhat aloof and perceive the truth. The agonizing impact of exile can be properly appreciated only by such people. Such individuals must be totally out of step with the rest of humanity.

Each Jew has the innate ability to be such an individual. The Divine Jewish soul penetrates the profuse concealments of exile and illuminates the life of the Jews in this world. The strength of this influence varies, from prophets and holy individuals whose very perceptions are those of the Divine soul, to ordinary Jews in whom the illumination is somewhat beclouded by the insensitivity of the body and the delusions of worldly life.

The Jews have always been a people apart, isolated, alienated, regarded with suspicion by an uncomprehending world. For 2,000 years the Jews have yearned for redemption and to that end, have pursued goals that are incomprehensible to the rest of humanity. Because Jews, in essence, transcend exile, we are ultimately capable of, and therefore responsible for, ushering in the redemption, for ourselves, and for the entire world.

(by Dr. Yaakov Brawer from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

Pharaoh's Secret Power

Hashem told Moshe to arise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, because that is when he goes out to the water [see 7:15].

Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki provides a well-known explanation from the Medrash (actually, that Rashi records it is undoubtedly why this is the well-known explanation): Pharaoh wanted people to believe that he was a god, and didn't need to relieve himself. So he would secretly go out to the Nile in the morning to address his needs, and Hashem wanted Moshe to meet him there and show him that he knew he was no god.

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But there is another Medrash, Rabbi Biederman says, with an entirely different explanation. This Medrash says that Pharaoh wanted to go out to pray. This is why Hashem told Moshe to go out early — before Pharaoh had a chance to pray — because after he prayed it would be too late!

This is said, of course, about the wicked Pharaoh who enslaved and tortured 600,000 Jews — saying that Moshe had better be sure to get there before he has a chance to pray. This means that even his prayers had power.

Rabbi Biederman then says, “if a little voice, the evil inclination, comes to me and says, ‘Meilech, who do you think you are? You think you can pray to Hashem?’ I can reply, ‘I know who I am — but I’m definitely not Pharaoh!’”

If Pharaoh’s prayers could have stopped Moshe, then our own prayers and good deeds have unimaginable power that we cannot truly appreciate.

We have to remind ourselves of this every day: we are definitely better than Pharaoh!

(by Rabbi Yaakov Menken from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

<p>The Kiddush this Shabbat is being sponsored in honor of the Kiddush Committee, Anonymously.</p>	
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	<p>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.</p>
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<p>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.</p>

SHUL DIRECTORY	
<p>Rabbi: Shmuel Kaplan . . . rabbikaplan@chabadmd.com Treasurer: Michael Frank . . . shul.chabad@gmail.com Kiddush: Reuven Frank rfrank82@gmail.com Bulletin: Howard Kaplon hkaplon@towson.edu Website: Shoshana Zakar sue.zakar@gmail.com</p>	<p>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 / email: alephjli@gmail.com</p>

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE	
<p>Friday — Legal Holiday, 12/31 — 27 Tevet Shacharit — 8:00 a.m. Shabbat Candles — 4:35 p.m. Minchah / Ma’ariv — 4:35 p.m.</p> <p>Shabbat, 1/1 — 28 Tevet Shacharit — 9:00 a.m. Sof Z’man Kriat Shema — 9:46 a.m. Minchah — 4:25 p.m. Ma’ariv— 5:37 p.m.</p> <p>Sunday, 1/2 — 29 Tevet Shacharit — 8:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma’ariv — 4:50 p.m. Father and Son Learning — 6:00 p.m.</p> <p>Monday — Rosh Chodesh Shevat, 1/3 — 1 Shevat Shacharit — 6:40 a.m. Minchah / Ma’ariv — 4:50 p.m.</p>	<p>Tuesday, 1/4 — 2 Shevat Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma’ariv — 4:50 p.m.</p> <p>Wednesday, 1/5 — 3 Shevat Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma’ariv — 4:50 p.m.</p> <p>Thursday, 1/6 — 4 Shevat Shacharit — 6:50 a.m. Minchah / Ma’ariv — 4:50 p.m. Chavrusa Learning with Chabad Yeshiva — 8 to 10 p.m.</p> <p>Friday, 1/7 — 5 Shevat Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Shabbat Candles — 4:41 p.m. Minchah / Ma’ariv — 4:45 p.m.</p>