



The Chabad Weekly

Vol. 23 Issue 18



Candlelighting
(Los Angeles)

5:23 PM

Friday Mincha:

5:40 PM

LATEST SHEMA: 9:19 AM

Shabbat Schedule

- **Tehillim** 8:00 AM
- **Shacharit** 9:30 AM
followed by
Kiddush,
Cholent &
Farbrengen
- **Class** 4:45 PM
- **Mincha** 5:15 PM
followed by
Seuda
Shlishit
- **Shabbat ends** 6:23 PM

Announcements:

Kiddush is sponsored by Rabbi Mendel and Aidie Shusterman in honor of Moshe Aharon's Bar Mitzvah.

Yartzeits: Yosef Enayati— Shevat 27, Rabbi Tzvi Shusterman - Adar 3, Leah Isaac - Adar 3.

Happy Birthday to Yoram Cohen, Yossi Perles, Sara Malka Mayberg, Chaya Mushka Sperlin, Dorothy Melvyn, Yonatan Hezghian, and Batsheva Lipsker.

Mazal Tov to the Shusterman and Geisinsky families on Moshe Aharon's Bar Mitzvah.

GOOD SHABBOS

Parshas Mishpatim / Shabbos Mevorchim / Shabbos Shekalim

Friday, Shevat 26, 5780 / Feb. 21, 2020

Not Yet

By Yossy Goldman

Everyone knows that Rome wasn't built in a day. There isn't a building site on earth where the contractor hasn't explained away his delays by using that well-worn cliché. But did you know that Jerusalem wasn't built in a day either? Nor was the Holy Land.

In this week's Torah reading, the Almighty tells the Jewish people that they will not inherit the land of Canaan immediately. It will be to their benefit that the conquest of the Promised Land be gradual and deliberate. To settle the land successfully would take time and they were cautioned up front to be patient:

I shall not drive them away from you in a single year, lest the land become desolate and the wildlife of the field multiply against you. Little by little shall I drive them away from you, until you become fruitful and make the land your heritage. (Exodus 23:29-30)

Overnight sensations are often just that. They don't necessarily last. Slow and steady, step by step, the gradual approach usually enjoys longevity and enduring success.

Every Jew has a share in the Promised Land; not only geographically but spiritually. There is a piece of Jerusalem inside each of us. We all have the capacity for holiness, sanctity and spirituality. But sometimes we may be discouraged from beginning the journey to our own personal promised land. The road seems too long and arduous. Here G-d is giving us wise words of encouragement. Don't expect overnight miracles. Don't say, "I have a whole country to conquer! How will I do it?" Rather say, "Where should I start today?" Don't look at the end of the road; look at the first few steps you need to take right now. Tomorrow you

will take a few more steps and the next day a few more, and before long the whole land will be yours.

If you asked an optimistic entrepreneur, just starting on his first business venture, "Are you a millionaire?" he wouldn't say, "No." Most probably he'd say, "Not yet, I'm working on it!" It should be the same in our Jewish journeys.

Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) was a German-Jewish philosopher who as a young man actually considered opting out of Judaism completely. But his intellectual bent compelled him to at least do a proper examination of Judaism first. So he went to a synagogue and, as it happened, experienced a spiritual transformation. He went on to become a serious student of Judaism. It's told that when Rosenzweig was once asked, "Do you put on tefillin?" his answer was not yet. Not no, but "not yet" – and there is a critical difference between the two. No implies that I am not doing it now nor do I have any plans to do it any time soon. Not yet means that while presently I may not be there, I am still open to the suggestion. Hopefully, the time will soon come when I will be ready to make tefillin part of my daily observance.

The not yet approach is a good one. There is no one who does it all. We all have room for growth. We should all want to aspire higher. If we don't practice a particular good deed at the moment there is no reason why we cannot begin doing it in the near future. Let us never be discouraged by the length of the journey. Let us begin the first steps and keep moving. It may be slow but as long as there is steady growth we will get there.

So if someone asks, "do you put on tefillin," or "do you keep kosher," or "do you observe Shabbat," and you don't, please don't say no. Say not yet.

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This Shabbat is the first of four weeks when we read a special Torah portion following the Torah reading. The special portion for this week, "Shekalim," deals with the command to every Jew to contribute half a shekel toward the building of the Sanctuary in the desert.

This half-shekel was not only a tax but served the additional purpose of being an atonement for the sin of the "golden calf." After hearing the command from G-d, Moses was perplexed as to how it was possible for a half-shekel to atone for such a horrendous sin.

The requirement to give half of a coin, indeed, had significant meaning. It signified to each Jew who gave - and every Jew did give - that G-d and the Jewish people are one whole. We are not, as mathematicians might think, two separate entities that join together - one plus one equals two. Rather, we are a half and G-d, as it were, is a half. It is only when the two halves are added up that there is one, unified, complete, whole individual.

In addition, there is a more "down-to-earth" implication to this analogy of a half-shekel. Each Jew, as we mentioned before, is a half. Only when one Jew joins together with another Jew - another half - does either Jew become whole. Whether the mitzva of charity, Torah study, visiting the sick, hospitality, or numerous other mitzvot, it is only through connecting with another Jew that we become whole.

From: L'Chaim #1461 - lchaimweekly.org

HaYom Yom Shevat 27

Ahava, affection, is the breath of life in the Avoda of Chassidus. It is the thread that binds chassidim to each other, that binds Rebbe to chassidim and chassidim to Rebbe. Ahava works in a direct way (initiated affection) and also in a reflective way (responding to the other's affection). It knows no barriers and transcends the limits of time and place.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Sunday 8:00 AM

Gemara – Tractate Sanhedrin
(men)

Monday 8:00 PM

Chumash (men and women)

Tuesday 8:00 PM

Gemara B'Iyun
Tractate Kesuvos (men)

Wednesday 8:00 PM

Halacha and Tanya (women)

Thursday 10:00 AM

Chassidus (women)

Daily

Chassidus 6:45 AM- 7:15 AM

Halacha Between Mincha
and Maariv

Daily Minyonim

Weekday Shacharis:
6:00 AM & 7:30 AM

Sunday Shacharis:
7:00 AM & 9:00 AM

Mincha/Maariv:
5:40 PM

NOW

For hundreds of years, perhaps since the beginning of Creation, a piece of the world has been waiting for your soul to purify and repair it.

And your soul, from the time it was first emanated and conceived, waited above to descend to this world and carry out that mission.

And your footsteps were guided to reach that place. And you are there now.

From the wisdom of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, of righteous memory; words and condensation by Rabbi Tzvi Freeman.

Story of the Week:

\$98,000 Cash

When Rabbi Noach Muroff needed a desk, he looked to Craigslist for a good deal. He got way more than he bargained for.

The desk, purchased for \$150 dollars, turned out to be hiding \$98,000 stuffed in a ShopRite plastic bag that had fallen behind the file cabinet.

And Muroff gave it all back.

Muroff bought the desk in September 2013, right before Rosh Hashanah. When it wouldn't fit through the door, he and his wife had to disassemble it. That's when they spotted a shopping bag full of a cash inheritance that the previous owner assumed had been lost somewhere in her home.

The ninth grade teacher at the Yeshiva of New Haven (Connecticut) looked at his wife and, despite the fact that it was nearly midnight, dialed the original owner's number. The money was returned the next day. According to Muroff, he didn't sleep that night knowing that sum was in the house.

"Our jaws kind of just hit the floor. We were in total shock and disbelief. This kind of thing only happens in the movies," Muroff said, laughing when telling the story to Anne Cohen of The Jewish Forward newspaper.

When Muroff's story went viral on the Internet that November, Cohen immediately made a note of it for the Forward's "Most Inspiring Rabbis in America" section. But when no one nominated him, she did so "on behalf of all those who expressed their awe and admiration for Muroff's honesty."

In the months since Muroff's story made the headlines, the rabbi has received emails and phone calls from

strangers telling him how much his story meant to them.

A father told him about his son who bought a camera on Amazon and received one worth three times what he had paid. He wrote the company a letter saying he was Jewish and was raised to be honest and would send back the camera. The son cited Muroff as his inspiration.

A man from Idaho wrote to him saying he had had this perception of Jews as greedy people and that Muroff's integrity had made him reconsider.

Without fail, Muroff is asked what went through his head when he decided to give up almost \$100,000. According to him, it was a decision that took less than a minute to make.

"Both my wife and I were raised as Orthodox Jews. We feel strongly that honesty is always the way to go," he declared. "We're commanded to do so in the Torah; and also to try to put oneself in the other person's shoes: how would you feel if you were the one losing such an amount? I know that my father in a million years would never have touched the money."

Muroff received a gift of \$3,500 from the original owner (plus the \$150 he paid for the desk). But the words that came with it sum up his real value:

"Dear Noah, I cannot thank you enough for your honesty and integrity. I do not think there are too many people in this world that would have done what you did by calling me. I do like to believe that there are still good people left in this crazy world we live in. You certainly are one of them."

Lightly edited by Yerachmiel Tilles from a submission by Daniel Keren (Original article by Anne Cohen)

Ascentofsafer.com

Parsha Insights

And these are the ordinances which you shall set before them (Ex. 21:1)

This section of the Torah comes immediately after the Revelation on Mount Sinai and the giving of the Ten Commandments. Yet what is enumerated here are not lofty principles pertaining to the relationship between G-d and man; they are very concrete laws governing man's relationship with his fellow man. We learn from this the lesson that "good manners are a prerequisite to Torah." Rabbi Mendel of Kotsk used to say: The same way that a book's preface informs the reader of the book's contents, a person's courtesy and manners indicate just how much Torah learning he has acquired.

Six years shall he serve, and in the seventh he shall go free (Ex. 21:2)

"Six years" symbolizes the six thousand years of the world's existence; "shall he serve" refers to our mission to learn Torah and perform mitzvot; "in the seventh" refers to the seventh millennium, when "he shall go free," when the Messianic Era shall reign on earth and G-dliness will no longer be hidden but revealed.

(Lubavitcher Rebbe)

For all manner of transgression...of which he can say, "this is it" (Ex. 22:80)

Pride is the root of all transgression. The essence of sin is when a person says of himself - "this is it" - "I am the most important thing in the whole world!"

From: L'Chaim #1461 - lchaimweekly.org

Supernatural Living

וַעֲבַדְתֶּם אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְגו': (שמות כג:כה)

[Rather than serve idols,] you must serve G-d, your G-d. Exodus 23:25

G-d established the laws of nature when He created the world; sometimes He acts within these laws and sometimes He overrides them. The two names of G-d used in this verse refer to these two ways in which G-d relates to the laws of nature. The first name refers to Him when He ignores the limitations of nature; the second refers to Him when He works within the laws of nature.

Thus, in this verse, G-d is telling us to spiritually refine ourselves ("to serve") until the supernatural becomes natural for us, becoming our "second nature." When we rise to this level of consciousness, we view everything in life from G-d's perspective, and see everything that happens as part of His all-encompassing providence.

(From: Daily Wisdom - chabad.org)