



The Chabad Weekly

Vol. 27 Issue 41



Candlelighting (Los Angeles)

7:44 PM

Friday Mincha:

7:55 PM

Early Mincha: 6:25 PM

LATEST SHEMA: 9:28 AM

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

- Tanya 8:45 AM
- Shacharis 7:30 AM
9:30 AM
(followed by Kiddush, Cholent & Fabrengen)
- Jacob MM 6:50 PM
Graff Pirkei Avos Class (Chapt. 6)
- Mincha 7:35 PM
(Followed by Seuda Shlishit)
- Maariv 8:35 PM
- Shabbat ends 8:44 PM

Announcements:

Kiddush is sponsored by the Marshak Family in honor of Ryan's birthday / Bar Mitzvah parsha.

Happy Birthday to Daniel Moshe Mishael and Meira Chava Graff.

Yartzeits: Jacob M. M. Graff - Tamuz 17, Pauline Mayerhoff - Tammuz 18, Avrohom Eshel - Tamuz 19, Dovid Sochaczewski - Tammuz 22

Happy Anniversary to Rabbi and Mrs. Yosef Shusterman, Jordan and Nicole Pollack.

GOOD SHABBOS!

Parshas Balak

Friday, Tammuz 13 5784 / July 19, 2024

Alone, but Not Lonely

By Yossy Goldman

Isn't it incredible how King Solomon's ancient words "There is nothing new under the sun" still hold true? I find it absolutely fascinating that statements in this week's Torah reading still hold true over 3,000 years later.

It's the story of Balaam, the powerful heathen prophet who attempts to curse our ancestors at the behest of King Balak of Moab.² But, try as he might, Balaam's attempts fail miserably. G-d is clearly controlling him, and against his own wishes, he blesses the people instead of cursing them. Balak is exasperated, Balaam is frustrated, and he returns home a failure.

You may not be aware that it was Balaam who coined the phrase *ma tovu ohalecha Yaakov, mishkenotecha Yisrael* - "How good are your tents, Jacob; your dwellings, Israel,"³ a line that has made it into our Siddur and is one of our most well-known synagogue prayers.

Let me focus here on another of Balaam's memorable words. The prophet describes Israel as *am levadad yishkon*, "a nation that dwells alone."⁴ The commentaries offer a variety of interpretations to this expression. Some say it refers to this world, while others suggest it means the World to Come. Regardless, they seem to agree that it is intended as a blessing, rather than a curse.

So, it appears that alone does not necessarily mean lonely. Thus, alone may be understood as distinctive, exceptional, and unique.

And yet, there's no getting away from the simple meaning of the word. In my thesaurus, alone calls up the words lonely and lonesome. Indeed, the Jewish people have been very much alone throughout history, and

that hasn't changed. It was true in Balaam's day, and it remains true today. "There is nothing new under the sun."

In March 1972, when former Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin was Israel's Ambassador to Washington, he received a request from then President of Israel Zalman Shazar to convey the blessings of the President and Israeli government to the Rebbe on the occasion of his 70th birthday. Rabin spent a considerable amount of time with the Rebbe and later recounted their conversation.

The Rebbe asked Rabin if he did not feel alone as the Ambassador of Israel among the 120 countries represented in Washington. Rabin said it was an honor for him, even if he did feel lonely at times.

"We have to realize the uniqueness of the Jewish nation," said the Rebbe, and quoted the above Torah verse describing Israel as "a people that dwells alone." He asked Rabin whether it is by our own choice or by outside forces that Israel dwells alone among the other nations of the world. Is it a blessing or a curse? Is it something we embrace willingly, or is our rejection by the nations something which we must accept against our wishes? In short, is being alone a positive or a negative?

As their conversation continued, the Rebbe answered his own question.

"Being alone is both our own choice and forced on us by the nations of the world. On the one hand, we choose to hold fast to the Torah, our faith and traditions. This has preserved our uniqueness through millennia of persecution and wandering. Through the Inquisitions, expulsions, pogroms, and most of all, the Holocaust.

"On the other hand, external pressures have strengthened the core of Jewish belief and our loyalty to our traditions. In instances where a Jew may have been embarrassed by his Judaism and tried to hide it, there were external elements that forced his Judaism upon him, and this, too, prevented assimilation. So, it is a combination of both - choice and force - which has kept us alone among the nations - a combination of positive and negative."

Rabin shared with the Rebbe that even the Russians had a begrudging respect for Israel. "The Russian ambassador once told me, 'You are a small country, but you are a proud country.'"

As I have written elsewhere, while antisemitism is a terrible negative, it also has some positive consequences. Interestingly, philosophers who may themselves have been antisemites, have argued cogently that antisemitism has been good for the

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Jews and helped us retain our Jewish identity, rather than assimilating ourselves out of existence.

A few years ago, we had a guest speaker at our shul, Rami Sherman, one of the heroic commanders of the 1976 Entebbe hostage rescue. What that experience did for him spiritually, he shared: "I left an Israeli and I came back a Jew."

Yes, even today Israel dwells pretty much alone. Sometimes even our friends aren't as supportive as they could be. We know that we stand alone. And, especially in the UN, it can be very lonely.

On November 10, 1975, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution determining that "Zionism is a form of racism." Some years later, when he visited Johannesburg, I had occasion to interview the late Chaim Herzog, former president of Israel who was Israel's Ambassador to the UN at the time of that infamous resolution.

I asked him how he felt representing Israel during that dreadful time. He said it made him terribly angry, but also very proud. Responding to the UN resolution, he ended a brilliant speech with these words: "For us, the Jewish people, this resolution based on hatred, falsehood, and arrogance, is devoid of any moral or legal value. For us, the Jewish people, this is no more than a piece of paper and we shall treat it as such." He then tore the resolution in half.

The resolution was revoked by the United Nations in 1991.

Yes, we may be alone. But we are distinctive in our Jewish pride, and even in our defiance when necessary.

We have nothing to be ashamed of. We have nothing to be prouder of than our distinctive Jewish values and way of life. We may be alone among the nations, but we are not at all alone, for G-d is with us, protecting us and guiding our destiny.

May we all realize that "a people that dwells alone" is not a curse, but a most beautiful blessing. chabad.org



The Shul wishes its condolences to the Sarraf Family on the loss of their father

Mr. Albert Sarraf
Avraham Yosef Chay ben
Yechezkel Chaim A"H

May they know of no more sorrow

Fast of 17th of Tammuz
(Tues. July 23)

Fast Begins: 4:46 AM
Mincha: 7:40 PM
Fast Ends: 8:36 PM

ZOOM CLASSES:

Monday 8:30 PM

Parshas Hashavua

Wednesday 8:30 PM

Halacha & Tanya

Daily Mon. - Fri: 6:45 AM

Torah Ohr (In Shul)

Please visit

www.rabbishusterman.com

where you can access over 3000 of Rabbi Shusterman's classes in Halacha, Tanya, Gemara, Torah Ohr, Likutei Torah and more.

Daily Minyonim

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

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

**Mincha/Maariv:
7:55 PM**

"A star will shoot forth from Jacob, a staff will stand up from Israel." (Num. 24:17) Ac-

According to the Jerusalem Talmud, this verse refers both to Moshiach and to the Jewish people. Chasidic teachings explain that the soul of Moshiach is a soul that contains within it all the souls of Israel. The soul of each and every Jew, therefore contains a spark of Moshiach's soul. Hence, each and every Jew is given the same appellation ("star from Jacob" and "leader of Israel") as that which is given to Moshiach, for it refers to the Moshiach within the Jew - the essence of the Jew's soul. When the Divine essence of the Jew's soul will be openly revealed in his/her personal life, this effects a personal "coming of Moshiach."

(Neirot.com, based on a talk of the Rebbe, Simchat Torah eve, 1985) (L'Chaim #1378)

Story of the Week:

SPIRITUAL CHILDREN, SPIRITUAL LOVE

"My Spiritual Children"

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Posner relates: It was Sukkot 5701 (1940) and my first yechidus (private audience) [with the Sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, the Rebbe Rayatz]. As my brother and I were escorted by Rabbi Simpson into the Friediker (previous) Rebbe's room, Rabbi Sholom-Mendel Simpson [the Rebbe's attendant] introduced us, saying we were [Rabbi] Sholom Posner's children, and the Rebbe blessed us.

It was during that year that the Rebbe Rayatz had decided to open a Lubavitcher yeshiva for lower grades. My brother and I, however, were learning elsewhere, at "Torah Vadaas" - an excellent but non-Lubavitcher school. Nevertheless, every so often we'd hop over to 770 [Eastern Parkway in the Crown Heights district of Brooklyn].

We were supposed to go home to Chicago for Passover, but since I was going to celebrate my bar mitzvah on 11 Nissan [4 days before Passover] that year, I had asked for yechidus with my brother before we left.

In those days, yechidus took place three times a week: Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday nights. Since our bus was leaving Sunday afternoon, our appointment was set for Thursday night. Rabbi Simpson phoned us at ten p.m.

"It's late," he said, "and the Rebbe is tired. I can get you in at the next earliest opportunity."

"But we have to leave Sunday afternoon," I protested. "We won't be able to have yechidus on Sunday night."

Rabbi Simpson sighed. "Well, in that case, you can have yechidus Saturday night."

It was Motzei Shabbos (the night immediately following Shabbat's end at nightfall). My brother and I waited at 770, but Rabbi Simpson, who lived in Boro Park - another Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn - had not yet arrived. Finally, we phoned him and said that since he had promised us a yechidus, what were we supposed to do?

His reply: "Go to Rabbi Shmuel Levitin [a leading senior chasid]."

Rabbi Levitin in turn directed us to Chaim Lieberman, the Rebbe's secretary. We knocked at his office door and explained the situation.

He said, "Go down and go in."

We stared at him in shock, but he said, "Nu, nu; go in."

Before entering the Rebbe's office, I told my brother to knock at the door. He did, and opened the door a bit.

The Rebbe was seated at his desk. As we timidly entered, I noticed that when he saw us, he smiled, and our fear dissipated. We stopped before his desk.

"Are you returning by bus?" was the

Rebbe's first question.

We stared at him, in confusion. Perhaps we hadn't heard him correctly - since by then the Rebbe, who was not well, spoke unclearly, making comprehension difficult. The Rebbe repeated his question and we answered affirmatively.

He then asked, "Will you davven (pray) on the bus in the morning?"

Once again, we answered in the affirmative.

"With tefillin too?" he asked.

When we said yes, he said, "Good."

Then the Rebbe explained, "Everything must be according to the place and time, and according to the place and time, I am satisfied with you.

"But with your father, who was in Lubavitch, it is completely different. Still, from you, more is demanded than of 'kinder (children) from the street."

"You are my children," the Rebbe continued. "To your parents, you are fleishigdik kinder - children of the flesh - but to me, you are spiritual children."

Then we spoke about the upcoming bar mitzvah, and the Rebbe wished us a good trip.

"A Far Greater Love"

Rabbi Yisroel Gordon relates: A Chabad chasid and his family lived in Russia, in a small town where there was no fire department, running water, or doctor. When his expectant wife became dangerously ill, the Chasid, concerned over the lack of medical service, took her to the city Vilna, where the doctor ordered her to go to the hospital and terminate the pregnancy.

The chasid, who of course refused to do anything without consulting the Rebbe, wrote the latter for advice. The Rebbe Rayatz replied: "The woman should remain at home, without an abortion. The child will be fine."

And that is what happened - the child was born healthy. And this isn't just 'one of those stories'; I am that child!

Since there was no telephone or telegraph in that town, my father had no way of informing the Rebbe of my birth. So instead, he took money as a redemptive donation and placed inside a Tanya (the foundational book of Chabad chasidut) a written request: that the healthy boy his wife gave birth to would merit to become a genuine chasid.

From this story we learn that chasidim always knew about the great love the Rebbe had for them, and they reciprocated with great love towards him. In his discourses, the Rebbe Rayatz stressed that the Rebbe's love for a chasid is far greater than the love parents have for their children.

Source: Adapted and annotated by Yerachmiel Tilles from an emailing of the Avner Institute (Rebbebook@gmail.com).

Ascentofsafed.com

Pirkei Avos

"Each and every day a heavenly voice goes forth from Mount Horeb" (Avos, 6:2).

Mount Horeb is another name for Mount Sinai, where the Jews were given the Torah and became God's chosen people. The Baal Shem Tov taught that whenever a Jew feels an inner awakening to strengthen his observance of Torah and mitzvot, it is because his soul is responding to the call which it heard emanating from G-d at Sinai.

"This is the way to Torah: Eat bread with salt, drink water in small measure" (Ethics Of The Fathers 6:4).

Someone once came to Rabbi Akiva Eiger to inform him that one of his students was living in abject poverty.

"It's a pity, Rabbi," the man said. "Every night he eats dry bread, recites the Shema, and goes to sleep."

Said the Rabbi: "It's a much greater pity when a person eats the finest roast chicken for dinner, but goes to sleep without reciting the Shema!" (the Lubavitcher Rebbe)(L'Chaim #274) - lchaimweekly.org

Hidden Treasure

מי מנה עפר יעקב וגו' (במדבר כג:10)
[Balaam said,] "Who can count the dust of Jacob?" Numbers 23:10

The Jewish people are here compared (positively) to dust. Just as there are hidden treasures buried in the earth, so are there treasures of pure faith in G-d and deep love and fear of Him hidden in every Jew. These treasures may at times be hard to uncover, just as the treasures buried in the earth are often buried deep below the surface. But they are there, nonetheless, and with sufficient effort they can be revealed.

(From: Daily Wisdom)(Chabad.org)

Hayom Yom - Tammuz 14

The Tzemach Tzedek notes in one of his discourses: "On Tuesday of parshat Balak 5562 (1802) our master, of blessed memory, said to his sons as follows: To understand the problem posed by the astronomers, that since the earth is round and spherical like an apple, why do not those people fall who live on the side of the globe opposite to ours, 'down below,' in America?... Their answer is not the true one... Our master, of blessed memory, said that the answer lies in explanation of the Etz Chaim that the Nine Spheres are nurtured by that state termed igulim, 'Circles,' and in a circle there is no above or below. For this reason those who live opposite us, 'down below,' have their heavens high above them arching in one continuity with the heaven above us, and the earth there is below, relative to the heavens over it."