

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

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October 24, 2020

Noach

6 Cheshvan, 5781

Soul Talk

Two souls met each other at the half-way point between heaven and earth. One was descending into this world to be en clothed in a body. The other was ascending, having completed its mission here.

"What's it like down there?" asked the first soul warily.

"Well, for three kopecks you can buy the strings for tzitzit (the fringes on a four-cornered garment)," replied the ascending soul.

"Wow, imagine that!" exclaimed the first soul, awed at the relatively inexpensive price of performing mitzvot (commandments). The soul began plummeting even more quickly, without fear or hesitation.

"Don't be so eager," the second soul called out after it. "Just wait until you see how hard you have to work to get that money!"

Thank G-d, it's not nearly as tough as it used to be to make a living. Most of us live lifestyles that would have been considered opulent in the days when tzitzit cost three kopecks. What our great-grandparents considered luxuries are today's bare necessities.

Most of us needn't be work-a-holics to have money to spend on mitzvot. Loose change can be dropped into a tzedaka box. A dollar can buy a box of a dozen Shabbat candles. For \$10 you can purchase a nice bottle of kosher wine over which to recite the "kiddush" on Shabbat. Thirty dollars will get you a kosher mezuzah parchment. Unlike our great-grandparents, most of us can hardly claim that doing mitzvot will take food out of our mouths. These amounts of money are not an issue.

What our great-grandparents lacked in money, they made up for in unwavering commitment, enthusiasm and faith. They also inscribed in their minds and on their hearts the words contained in the first ruling of the Code of Jewish Law: Do not be embarrassed by scoffers. They weren't concerned with what the neighbors would say. For all these reasons and more, even when they really didn't have the three kopecks, they somehow found the money rather than neglect the opportunity to perform a mitzva.

If those two souls were to encounter each other in our times, the soul returning from its sojourn on earth would not comment on how hard it is to earn money to do mitzvot. Perhaps the conversation would go something like this:

"What's it like down there?" asks the first soul warily.

"Well, for only \$20 you can buy a really nice bottle of kosher wine to use for kiddush on Shabbat," replies the ascending soul.

"Wow, imagine that!" exclaims the first soul, awed at the relatively inexpensive price of acquiring mitzvot. The soul begins plummeting even more quickly, without fear or hesitation.

"Don't be so eager," the second soul calls after it. "Just wait until you see how hard it is to convince your body that it's important to make kiddush on Shabbat let alone break your teeth on the Hebrew!"

Do a mitzva. Your soul will surely appreciate it, and so will you! You'll both be glad you did.

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

The Hidden Blessing

"And Cham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and related it to his two brothers outside, and Shem and Yefes took the garment, and covered the nakedness of their father." (Bereshit/Genesis 9:22-23) Noach (Noah), whom the Torah tells us was a righteous individual, had been treated disgracefully by one of his sons and respectfully by his other two. The Torah's record of the reaction of this righteous individual to this incident is unusual. First he cursed the descendants of his grandson Canaan that they should be slaves to the descendants of Shem and Yefes, and then he blessed the descendants of Shem and Yefes.

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One would expect such an individual to be more forgiving, particularly toward his own grandchild. He did not reprimand him to improve his behavior, he simply cursed him. Why? Further, Noach's reaction seems to be an impulsive result of anger. If G-d deemed Cham's actions worthy of punishment, He is certainly capable of doing that without Noach's curse. What is the significance of Noach's curse, that the Torah recorded it? Finally, why did Noach connect his curse of Canaan to the blessings of Shem and Yefes, and once he did connect them, why did he not offer the blessing first?

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch explains that the name Cham – Hebrew for “hot” – is indicative of his nature. Canaan, Cham's son, was an individual who, in the heat of the moment, would lose his self-control as well as respect for anything or anyone spiritually elevated, including his grandfather's honor. Knowing Canaan's nature, he understood his descendants would likely possess these same traits. For such people, leadership and even freedom can be very destructive. Chasam Sofer explains that Noach's curse did not come from anger. He was interested in fixing that which Canaan (and Cham) had done wrong. Therefore, Noach “cursed” Canaan's descendants to be slaves because that would ultimately be in their own best interest. By being subservient to the G-d-fearing descendants of Shem, the descendants of Canaan might be influenced positively and improve themselves. At least they would be limited in the amount of destruction they could cause themselves and the rest of the world. The blessings of the other sons were meant to help them be true role models, secondary help for Canaan's service-bound descendants.

We often wonder why we are not the recipients of wealth, power, or other blessings that we would like, curious why we must face the challenges and choices we confront daily. We forget that these “blessings” may indeed be curses, with many tests and responsibilities that we are ill equipped to face and are not in our best interest. What ever our current situation presents us, it is a custom-tailored opportunity from G-d, that He has sent us to utilize to feed our spiritual growth and forge our G-d consciousness. What we, with our finite minds and blinded perspective, may view as a curse, He has afforded us as one of our greatest blessings.

(by Rabbi Pinchas Avruch from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

Yahrzeits This Week:

Dr. Allan Genut	6 Cheshvan - Friday night / Shabbat	for father	Yisroel ben Boruch
Laurie Margolies	8 Cheshvan - Sunday night / Monday	for mother	Sheindel bas Avraham

SHUL DIRECTORY

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DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 10/23 — 5 Cheshvan
 Shacharit — 7:00
 Candles — 5:57 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 10/24 — 6 Cheshvan
 Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
 Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 10:06 a.m.
 Beitzah Gemora Shiur — 4:45 p.m.
 Minchah — 5:45 p.m.
 Ma'ariv — 6:57 p.m.

Sunday, 10/25 — 7 Cheshvan
 Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:55 p.m.

Monday, 10/26 — 8 Cheshvan
 Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:55 p.m.

Tuesday, 10/27 — 9 Cheshvan
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:55 p.m.

Wednesday, 10/28 — 10 Cheshvan
 Shacharit — 7:00a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:55 p.m.

Thursday, 10/29 — 11 Cheshvan
 Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:55 p.m.

Friday, 10/30 — 12 Cheshvan
 Shacharit — 7:00
 Candles — 5:48 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:50 p.m.