

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road

Baltimore, MD 21209

www.chabadshul.org



July 13, 2024

Chukat

7 Tammuz, 5784

The G-dly Spark

Our Sages interpret the word Rebbe as an acronym for the words "Rosh Bnei Yisrael" - "the head of the Children of Israel." The brain contains a map of the entire body and has a portion associated with every limb or organ. Similarly, the Rebbe is a comprehensive soul and shares a soul connection with every Jew.

When writing of his father-in-law the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Rebbe explained that there are those who would describe him as a paradigm of self-sacrifice, a brilliant scholar, a man of exemplary character traits, a tzadik (righteous person), an individual endowed with divine inspiration, an individual who works miracles, and so on.

These, the Rebbe explains, are truly exemplary qualities. But they are all particular qualities, reflecting only limited aspects of his being. Beyond that, there is an essential quality, one which bonds him to all other Jews, that he is a Rebbe.

Similarly, when we try to define who we are, we obviously look past our bodies. Our bodies are not to be neglected, but what is significant about our bodies are how they reflect our G-dly core, the soul.

We all possess something transcendent, something that cannot be defined, who we really are.

Nevertheless, that G-dly core is often hidden, submerged beneath many other veneers of self.

The G-dly core in the Rebbe is not hidden. The G-dliness which we all possess is as real and cogent a factor to the Rebbe as ordinary material existence is to us. When a person comes in contact with such an individual, they cannot remain unmoved. The Rebbe stirs the souls of others, infusing them with the awareness of G-d and empowering every individual to relate to G-d within the context of his or her experience.

The spark of G-d we and the Rebbe share is as infinite and unbounded as is G-d. As such, the limitations of time and space do not confine it - and so, there are no restrictions holding back our connection to the Rebbe. This is the meaning of the Zohar's statement that the presence of a tzadik is felt tangibly even in this world after his passing.

There is no need to speak theoretically. The exponential growth of Chabad-Lubavitch over the last 30 years bears testimony to the Rebbe's continued influence.

In the era of Moshiach, the fundamental connection between G-d and the world will surface. Rather than relate to G-d as a separate entity with Whom we seek to bond, the essential G-dly spark that permeates all existence will be revealed and we will appreciate that this is our true identity.

This helps explain why the Rebbe pressed so powerfully for the perfect world of the Messianic Era: Because the Rebbe's mission is to reveal the G-dly spark within each individual and all of creation.

But we must do our part. The Rebbe called it "opening our eyes." Through recognizing, looking for, seeking out, the G-dly spark in everyone and in everything, we will attune ourselves to the new reality that is unfolding right in front of us. before our very eyes.

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

Reflecting on G-d

With the Jewish people complaining of thirst, Moshe and Aaron retreated to the Tabernacle for Divine guidance. They were instructed to speak to a specific rock and it would provide the needed water. Moshe inadvertently spoke to the wrong rock, and, lacking an alternative approach, chose to employ a tactic G-d instructed him to use in an earlier circumstance: hitting the rock (see Rashi, Bamidbar/Numbers 20:11). G-d, in his infinite compassion, allowed the water to flow forth from the rock, but Moshe and Aaron were chastised and punished. "Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of the Children of Israel, therefore you will not bring this congregation to the Land I have given them." (20:12) Bringing forth water from a rock in the middle of a desert is quite a miracle. In what way did Moshe diminish the honor of G-d?

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Rabbi Yosef Albo (1380-1444; Rabbi of Saragossa, Spain and later Castille; proficient in medicine, mathematics and philosophy and famous for his religio-philosophical work Sefer HaIkkarim/Book of Principles) explains that one branch of the belief in Divine Providence is the understanding that G-d bends nature to the will of righteous believers. As the need arises, they have the ability to pray for a miracle and G-d grants their wish. Tanach (the Bible) is replete with incidents of prophets and great individuals in Jewish history who performed miracles. Here, too, Moshe should have prayed for a miracle from the outset and not withdrawn to the Tabernacle.

Meshech Chochmah (Rabbi Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk; 1843-1926; foremost Torah scholar of his time) elucidates that throughout Moshe's leadership of the Jewish people G-d determined when it was appropriate to utilize a miracle – in contrast to later prophets who announced that a miracle would occur and G-d responded by fulfilling their call. Moshe chose a different modus operandi because of his humility. Whereas other prophets would physically tremble when they were receiving their prophesy, making it readily evident that the forthcoming miracle was coming from a higher power, G-d communicated with Moshe as a person speaks to his friend. Without the visible trembling, Moshe feared the masses would believe the miracles actually came from him, as if he possessed some Divine power, so he always requested Divine assistance and let G-d formulate the method to address the quandary.

The exception to Moshe's rule was the events involving Korach in last week's parsha. When Korach rebelled and publicly questioned the legitimacy of his leadership, Moshe proclaimed that a miracle would happen and G-d opened the earth, which swallowed Korach and his co-conspirators, just as Moshe had stated. Moshe broke his own rule because the situation mandated a display of his spiritual greatness and the intimacy of his relationship with G-d, to demonstrate G-d's endorsement of his leadership.

Now, Moshe reverted to his original practice. But the nation now knew that he had the ability to call for miracles, and, not appreciating the unique nature of the Korach situation, they questioned why he was only willing to do so for the sake of his leadership but not for the Jewish people at a time of distress. Moshe's decision to not openly call upon the rock to give water at a time that the needs of the masses mandated such a miracle desecrated the Divine name, a great dishonor to G-d.

We are all leaders – as teachers, as parents and even as peers. We must appreciate that our actions are watched and interpreted – even misinterpreted – reflecting on us and, more significantly, as Jews, reflecting on the Jewish people and on G-d.

(by Rabbi Moshe Peretz Gilden from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

Yahrzeits This Week:

Lawrence Ziffer	9 Tammuz - Sun night / Monday	for father	Pinchas ben Yosef Elimelech
Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan	13 Tammuz - Thurs night / Friday	for father	HoRav Moshe Binyomin ben HoRav Aryeh Laib

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DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

<p>Friday, 7/12 — 6 Tammuz Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Shabbat, 7/13 — 7 Tammuz Shacharit — 9:00 a.m. Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:29 a.m. Minchah — 8:00 p.m. Shiur — after Minchah Ma'ariv — 9:21 p.m.</p> <p>Sunday, 7/14 — 8 Tammuz Shacharit — 8:00 a.m. Minchah / Maariv — 8:15 p.m.</p> <p>Monday, 7/15 — 9 Tammuz Shacharit — 6:50 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.</p>	<p>Tuesday, 7/16 — 10 Tammuz Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.</p> <p>Wednesday, 7/17 — 11 Tammuz Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.</p> <p>Thursday, 7/18 — 12 Tammuz Shacharit — 6:50 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:15 p.m.</p> <p>Friday, 7/19 — 13 Tammuz Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Candles — 8:11 p.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.</p>
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