

# The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road

Baltimore, MD 21209

[www.chabadshul.org](http://www.chabadshul.org)



November 16, 2024

VaYera

15 Cheshvan, 5785

## Make Up Your Mind

Why can't I make up my mind? - Have you ever asked yourself that?

We've all encountered that problem when having to make decisions. Sometimes the decisions are minor, even trivial: should I wear the brown shoes or the black shoes?

Sometimes the decisions are only momentarily important. When we're grocery shopping, for instance, we may stand for a few minutes debating which breakfast cereal to buy.

Sometimes the decisions are important, but not significant. When choosing a car, for instance, a lot of features - an iPod dock, a dark blue interior - may be important, but they're not significant.

Other decisions are much more critical: a choice of occupation, a choice of spouse, how to handle a conflict with a child or parent - or boss.

In all these cases we have to make a decision, and often just can't make up our minds, agonizing over the possibilities, unsure of what's the best route - or the right thing.

And sometimes even after we've made a decision, we revisit it, debating it again, doubting the decision - more, doubting ourselves.

There's a word for this: ambivalence. Psychiatrists describe it as the feeling of being torn between opposing paths.

We often think that, when it comes to decisions, we should be decisive. We should know our minds, be able to total pros and cons like a ledger and choose.

In fact, though, if the choice was so obvious, there would be no choice. All real decisions involve some degree of ambivalence and uncertainty.

We have to recognize that ambivalence is part of the process, that we can't make up our minds until we go through the uncertainty and, yes, discomfort of considering consequences, of realizing that every decision involves risk. We have to see that ambivalence is itself "a tool for exploring alternatives and seeing the larger picture."

A famous story of Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev goes something like this: arguing with G-d that He should be lenient in judging people, he said: "You put the difficulties of observing commandments in this world and the rewards in the next, the pleasures of sin in this world and the punishment in the next. Reverse the placement and You will see how little people sin and how many mitzvot they do."

Experiencing doubt and uncertainty - ambivalence - shouldn't stop us from making a decision. On the contrary, when we feel ambivalent, we know we have a decision to make.

And here the ambivalence itself can tell us which decision to make. For instance, you've started trying to keep kosher. You stopped eating cheeseburgers, or gave up shellfish and non-kosher meat. And now you're debating, is this enough? How will taking the next step affect your life? What will my (fill-in-the-blank: parents, friends, children) say?

Or let's say you're already keeping kosher, but you learn about a higher standard. Should you go there? It's inconvenient, it'll be more expensive, but, it's really the best way to go.

In these cases - and many more (should I make a commitment to that weekly Torah class?) - we have to make a decision. And we have to be honest with ourselves about our ambivalence. Because, whatever we choose, we're going to be uncomfortable, for a while, and we may even have second thoughts.

But that's where a teaching from the Tanya, the primary work of Chabad philosophy comes in: only the tzadik, the completely righteous individual, doesn't have any internal conflict, any ambivalence.

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The rest of us, we were born to struggle, to constantly confront ambivalence - should we do the mitzva (commandment) or not? - precisely so we could make the right decision.

And when it comes to matters of Judaism, the Tanya tells us, G-d Himself is there to help us make up our mind.

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

**Kol Hanaarim— Father and Son Learning** – every Friday evening during the winter at **7:15 p.m. in The Shul**. Cholent and other refreshments are served. Each session is 'topped off' at the end with a fascinating story. For any questions, please see Rabbi Itzkowitz.

We happily wish Mazel Tov to **Mr. Reuven and Mrs. Gavi Frank** on the **Birth of a Son**.

Mazel Tov also to the honored **grandparents Mr. Michael and Mrs. Terry Frank and Mr. Meier and Mrs. Sarah Palanker** and the **great grandmother Mrs. Sally Friedman**.

The Shalom Zachor will be at the home of Michael and Terry Frank at 2318 Smith Avenue beginning at 7:30 p.m.



**'The Rav's Friday Night Hashkafa Q&A Shiur for Men'**

will take place **next Friday night – November 22<sup>nd</sup>** at 8:00 p.m. and will be held at the home of **Mr. Zvi & Mrs. Avital Friedman**, at 6715 Old Pimlico Road.

Questions can be submitted in advance to [rabbikaplan@chabadmd.com](mailto:rabbikaplan@chabadmd.com).

**Yahrzeits This Week:**

Allan Brman	17 Cheshvan - Sunday night / Monday	for father	Hillel ben Shmuel
Sara Itzkowitz	20 Cheshvan - Wednesday night / Thursday	for mother	Toba bas R' Dov Rimler
Rabbi Fred Lewin	20 Cheshvan - Wednesday night / Thursday	for sister	Rita Miriam bas Shmuel

**SHUL DIRECTORY**

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**DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE**

**Friday, 11/15 — 14 Cheshvan**

Shacharit —7:00 a.m.  
 Candles — 4:33 p.m.  
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

**Shabbat, 11/16 — 15 Cheshvan**

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.  
 Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:19 a.m.  
 Minchah — 4:20 p.m.  
 Shiur — after Minchah  
 Shkiah — 4:51 p.m.  
 Ma'ariv — 5:33 p.m.

**Sunday, 11/17 — 16 Cheshvan**

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
 Minchah / Maariv — 4:35 p.m.

**Monday, 11/18 — 17 Cheshvan**

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

**Tuesday, 11/19 — 18 Cheshvan**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m..  
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

**Wednesday, 11/20 — 19 Cheshvan**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.  
 Tanya Shiur: 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Tanya Shaar HaYichud V'Emunah which deals w/the nature of creation and the unity of Hashem — 8:00 p.m.

**Thursday, 11/21 — 20 Cheshvan**

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:35 p.m.

**Friday, 11/22 — 21 Cheshvan**

Shacharit —7:00 a.m.  
 Candles — 4:28 p.m.  
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:30 p.m.