

SCHEDULE

שבת קדש

Mincha & Candles Erev Shabbos	4:40 PM
Daf Yomi	7:30 AM
Shacharis-Followed by Kiddush	8:30 AM

-Sof Zman K"ס- א"א 8:35 א"א 9:16

Mincha	2:15 PM
Mincha -	4:30 PM
<i>Followed by Shalosh Seudos</i>	
Maariv -	5:48 PM

Father/Son Learning:	6:45 PM
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Weekday Minyanim

Sunday

Shacharis I	6:50 AM
Daf Yomi	7:30 AM
Shacharis II	8:30 AM
Mincha / Maariv	4:45 PM

Weekdays

Daf Yomi	5:45 AM
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Shacharis:

Monday, Thurs. א"ב	6:35 AM
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Thursday	6:40 AM
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Tue., Wed., Friday	6:45 AM
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Mincha (Mon-Wed)	1:45 PM
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MINCHA/MAARIV	4:45 PM
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Daf Yomi (Take II)	9:00 PM
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Maariv (Monday-Thursday)	9:45 PM
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מזל טוב!

MAZAL TOV!!

MICHAEL INSEL

On his Bar Mitzvah this Shabbos!

Mazal Tov to Benyamin Insel, Shirah & Moshe Wealcatch, and the extended Insel, Teles, & Wealcatch families who have come from far and near to celebrate this wonderful Simcha. The entire Shul is invited to a Kiddush at **The Towers** following Davening and the regular Kiddush at Shul.



Shul Contacts

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Issue#355



Avos U'Banim

Beginning THIS Motzei Shabbos

6:45 PM

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Michael Insel's Bar Mitzvah

By Riki & Azi Rosenblum

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RABBI'S MESSAGE

Let's Be Friends

Imagine life without laughter. Laughter is a sign of joy, friendship and satisfaction with life. But laughter can also indicate derision and cruelty, the cynical laughter of an adversary gloating over another's folly and misfortune.

The word that is used throughout the Torah for laughter, צחוק, makes a disproportionate appearance in this week's portion.

והצחוק שרה (בראשית י"ב)

Sarah laughs seemingly out of joy upon hearing of the tiding that she would mother a child at the ripe age of ninety.

יהי כמצחוק בעיניו (שם י"ד)

Prior to the destruction of Sodom, Lot desperately seeks to convince his sons-in-law to escape the ensuing inferno, but they simply write off the 'jester' and his antics.

והרא שרה את בן הגר... מצחוק (שם כ"ט)

Sarah observes how Yishmael is humorously teasing his younger brother Yitzchok by feigning to shoot arrows at him in the field, laughing at Yitzchok's reaction with Yishmael excusing his behavior by claiming he was only 'playing'. (רש"י שם בשם) (המדרש)

In each of these instances there was a negative consequence.

Sarah was taken to task for her laughter in that it was tinged with an iota of disbelief. As opposed to Avraham who was happily astonished as well but never doubted the veracity of the tiding, Sarah was accused of laughing over the absurdity of the situation.

The laughable impression Lot obviously made in the eyes of his sons-in-law as a joker resulted in their being consumed by the fires of wrath that incinerated Sodom. Yishmael with his mother were summarily booted out of the house of Avraham lest they negatively affect Yitzchok.

Perhaps the Torah is revealing for us the dangerous progression of cynical laughter that lays the seeds for dissent and division in contrast to healthy laughter that bonds people together.

One often laughs when hearing something preposterous. If someone tells you just won ten million dollars in the lottery you quickly laugh it off in disbelief. On a very refined level Sarah displayed a taint of the notion that it was impossible for her to conceive. It was that absurdity that fueled her reaction. But why would she doubt G-d's ability? Did she truly think at the age of ninety, after being privy to miracle upon miracle in their lives, that G-d couldn't pull it off?

What she doubted wasn't G-d's ability but rather her own worthiness. She exhibited a slight cynicism, perceptible only to G-d, towards her deserving such a gift. The flaw in her thinking is that a person must have faith in the abiding love that G-d has for us that there are no barriers to the possibility of His benevolence. What often leads one towards being cynical is a lack of happiness and acceptance of oneself. The poisonous remedy for that unhappiness is the doubting of others and their intentions allowing themselves to take refuge in their weaknesses by creating a barrier of mockery around themselves.

Lot vacillated between what he knew to be the truth and his inability, or better yet, his unwillingness, to rise to that role. He felt it was easier to accept his deficiency and dwell among others of less moral stature, creating for himself a comfort zone of moral relativism. He could deride the miscreants of Sodom satisfying himself in the notion of his moral superiority.

Lot made one critical error however. The cynicism towards others only placates the cynic himself. The targets of his disdain would see with utter clarity the hollowness of his beliefs and values. Lot's attitude would merely engender a similar cynicism towards him where his detractors would perceive him as a bumbling clown. No one takes the cynic seriously but himself.

Yishmael's attitude took cynicism to its most pernicious level. With no ideal nor

mission only jealousy towards his younger brother who represented the legacy of Avraham, Yishmael sharpens the knife of cynicism utilizing it to mock solely for the purpose of stirring contempt and hatred. With no alternative goal or purpose Yishmael seeks solely to destroy Yitzchok with his taunting derision.

A cynic sees only himself and his own needs. He alienates all those who interfere with his selfish goals by accusing them of precisely what he lacks; values and honesty. To the cynic the world is an unfriendly place where everyone is suspect and no one worthy.

The antidote to the cynic is the persona of Yitzchok.

We recite at the Bris of a child the blessing that begins אשר קידש יידי מבטן, praising G-d for having sanctified the beloved one from the womb. Rashi teaches that this refers to Yitzchok and his having been the first child conceived subsequent to Avraham having received the command of Milah.

Why is this so significant and why the title of ידיד which is more often translated as 'friend'?

The Torah reports that the consequence of Avimelech having abducted Sarah was that the body orifices of the populace became closed and they were unable to relieve themselves or give birth.

After Avimelech returns Sarah seeks to appease Avraham, he prays on behalf of the Plishtim and they were cured. Rashi quoting the Talmud states that in the merit Avraham prayed for their needs to reopen the orifices, his need as well to beget children was fulfilled first.

Avraham had every right to expect this nation of G-dless souls to forever be cast off. Nevertheless holding no grudge he readily prays for their cure.

The Talmud derives from this incident that one who can not forgive the one who offended him is deemed an אכזר, a cruel person.

Can it be that someone whose wife was abducted and almost ravaged is called 'cruel' if he harbors resentment?

The word אכזר doesn't literally mean cruel. It is a contraction of the sentiment אך דברים לב לג, completely estranged. (RSRH)

The extraordinary Mashgiach, Harav Shlomo Wolbe writes that a child from the moment he enters the world is presented with an עולם הידידות, a Friendly World. The world is a reflection of the Oneness of G-d. The opportunity to unite all its components and certainly the human one is the natural order of the world. The evil inclination is referred to as an אל זר, a diety of alienation. His goal is to create division and contempt preventing the unifying of forces that reflect G-d. He accomplishes this by first instilling within man a sense of estrangement from himself, an unwillingness to see himself with satisfaction. From that emptiness develops an alienation from people and ultimately G-d. In the vernacular of the Zohar this is known as עלמא דפרודא, the world of division and separation. (עלי שור, ה"ב ד' פג ועוד)

Avraham Avinu who is called by G-d (ישעיהו מט ז), אברהם אהבי, Avraham My friend is secure in the knowledge of who he is and in the unconditional love G-d has for man. Avraham seeks to bring the scattered pieces of the puzzle called 'World' together. He promotes this ידידות, his friendship in an expression of the love he himself senses that empowers him to extend himself towards other without any need to 'protect' his identity. Avraham is the antithesis of the אכזר, those who seek identity by mocking others and creating estrangement in a world of friendship, he is the purveyor of ידידות, friendliness in the image of the Creator.

Rashi tells us that Yitzchok is called ידיד, beloved, as evidenced in the verse where G-d instructs Avraham prior to the Akeida to take the child אשר אהבת (שבת קל"ז: ד"ה אשר קידש), whom you love, referring to Yitzchok. (בראשית כ"ב)

This wasn't simply a fatherly love but more accurately the instilling within Yitzchok of that same sense of self and worthiness that Avraham was privileged



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Dani & Eli Drabkin
On the Birth & Bris of
Gavriel Shlomo!
The Shalom Zachar was last week!

to sense from G-d. This would enable Yitzchok to forge ahead with confidence in reaching out effectively in fusing the world back towards its inherent oneness.

The command of Milah, circumcision, is symbolic of the removal of the ערלה, the barriers that divide us, that prevent the world from being illuminated by His presence.

May we each restore our individual sense of self in light of the love G-d extends to each one of us. The moment we accept that we can begin to wash away the layers of cynicism we employ to artificially protect us. We can begin to see the opportunities we each have to make the world into the friendly place it is destined to be.

באהבה,
צבי טייכמאן