

# The MERKOS Connection

## ISSUE 40

### Date:

8th Kislev 5782  
12th November 2021

### Parsha:

Vayeitzei

### Shabbos Times:



Light Candles

Before:

7:49 pm



Shabbos Ends:

8:51 pm

## Heart to Heart

by Mrs Nicole Luba Kornhauser

The concept of sleep has received much attention over the past few decades. There are many sleep clinics all over the world which focus on sleep patterns and the correlation between health and the amount of sleep a person has. As women we can all relate to the “joyful effects” of sleep deprivation. Whether it’s a crying baby, an incomplete task or simply an upcoming event there are many reasons why we may suffer from some type of sleep deprivation.

In this week’s parashah of Vayetze we learn that our forefather Yaacov was completely dedicated to learning Torah in the yeshivah of Sheim and Eiver and did not even take a break to sleep for an entire fourteen years. It was only when Yaacov left B’eer Sheva and was running to Charan we are told that Jacob stopped in the holiest place of the world Har Hamoria the future location of the Bais Hamikdash and fell asleep. When Yaacov woke from his sleep he said “ G-d is truly in this place, yet I was not aware of it! (vayeitzei 28:16) Yaakov’s timing seems to be very strange. Is there something we can learn from his falling asleep in such holy territory?

When one is lying down it seems that both the spiritual aspects of man and the physical aspects of man are on the same level. The head of a person symbolises intellect, the heart of a person symbolises feeling whilst the legs symbolise the power of doing. One would assume that the position of standing upright indicates a spiritually upright person, with the mind showing dominance over the heart and the feet. In a state of slumber, it seems that there is a spiritual descent with the higher and lower faculties on the same level. Chassidus teaches us that from our earthly perspective there is indeed a significant difference in spirituality between the head and the feet. In contrast, from the perspective of Hashem both the spiritual and physical components of a person are both intrinsically linked to a higher G-dly reality. In essence a truly spiritual person is one who serves his creator with every fibre of his being. Truly serving one’s creator means that the more refined and higher levels of a person are in harmony with the seemingly lower parts of a persons’ body. To bring this concept closer to heart there is a famous story told about the Rebbe Rashab. Once a group of Rabbis questioned him about the way in which he washes his hands and why he washes in a particular way. The Rebbe Rashab responded that he could not give a source for his practice except to say that he trained each and



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## *Heart to Heart*

everyone of his limbs to act in accordance with the will of the Almighty and so he instinctively knew this was the correct way to wash. From this encounter we can see that when a person is truly animated with the will of his maker then every mundane action in one's day to day behaviour reflects a higher G-dly expression. A close friend of mine once comforted me when I complained that I had run to Shul with my children to hear the birchas kohanim, the special prayer the Kohanim bless the congregation with at the end of davening on the Yomim Tovim only to discover that I had arrived a few minutes too late. She said don't worry even though you missed the blessings you are nevertheless given (schar halicha) merits for walking in the right direction. Her encouraging words made me realize that true holiness is when even the lowest limb is programmed to act in accordance with the almighty.

May we all take to heart the example of Yaacov and work hard to allow the G-dliness that we absorb in our learning and classes to filter down into our most mundane activities. The ladder which Yaacov dreamt about with the base rooted into the ground and the top reaching heaven shows us that there is a unification and connection between earth and heaven. May we always climb a ladder of goodness moving from one good deed to the next until we reach a point in time when our eyes will perceive the G-dliness inherent in every detail of our lives.



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## Letter From the Rebbe

By the Grace of G-d

Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, 5739

Brooklyn, N.Y.



My dear Assaf:

I was pleased to receive your letter, but I was very much surprised at the questions you asked.

You wrote: "I want to know if HaShem really exists." I will answer it this way: Suppose you were walking in the streets and saw a skyscraper. Would you ask, "Is there someone who made it?" And if this is so with a building of a number of floors, what will you say about the whole world, with the sun, moon and stars, oceans and mountains and woods, and all the creatures on land and in the seas, and so on?

Your other question was: If you daven the rest of the year, will you get a trumpet?

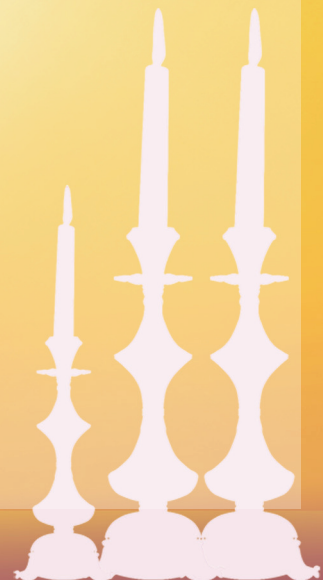
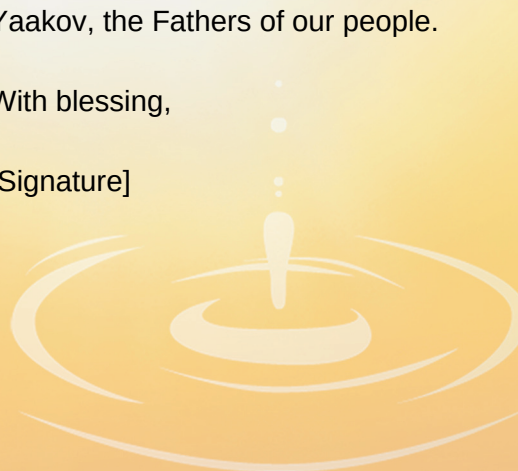
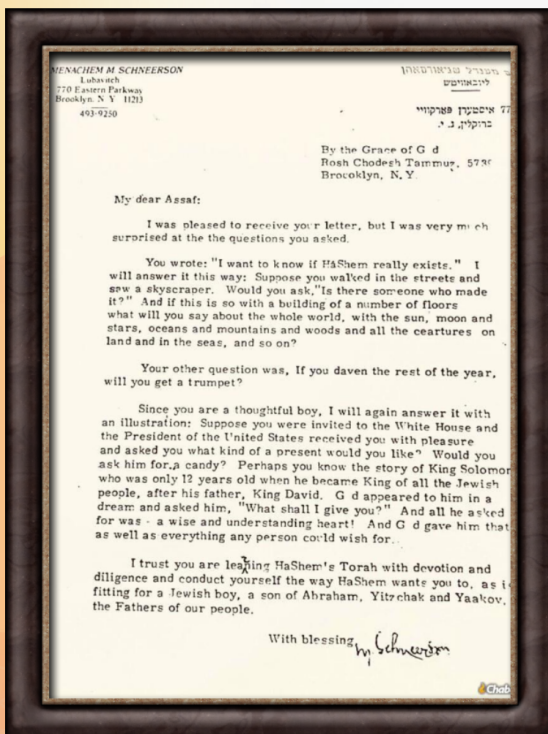
Since you are a thoughtful boy, I will again answer it with an illustration: Suppose you were invited to the White House, and the President of the United States received you with pleasure and asked you what kind of a present would you like. Would you ask him for a candy? Perhaps you know the story of King Solomon, who was only 12 years old when he became king of all the Jewish people, after his father, King David.

G-d appeared to him in a dream and asked him, "What shall I give you?" And all he asked for was – a wise and understanding heart! And G-d gave him that, as well as everything any person could wish for.

I trust you are learning HaShem's Torah with devotion and diligence and conduct yourself the way Hashem wants you to as fitting for a Jewish boy, a son of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, the Fathers of our people.

With blessing,

[Signature]





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## Moshiach Thought

### Reflections of Love

By Chaya Hoch

Hashem sees the pain of Leah, who like the other Imahos, was barren. In Parshas Vayetzei, passuk lamed beis, perek chof tes, Leah is blessed with a son, Reuven. The passuk continues 'Ki raah Hashem be-onyi ki atah ye-ehevani ishi - because Hashem has seen my affliction, for now my husband will love me.' Leah was troubled by the fact that Rochel was his beloved, and so with the birth of Reuven was also born the love between Yaakov and Leah.

We know that Hashem and the Jewish people are compared to a husband and wife. How does the above passuk translate in our relationship with Hashem, as our husband? In times of golus, the Jewish people, mirroring the woman, have suffered from spiritual poverty. One of our greatest afflictions has been that the Beis Hamikdash, where the shechina rested, was destroyed, leaving us bereft of our holy place of worship. When Rabbi Akiva saw the foxes roaming near the destruction it was only he who rejoiced, that if this prophecy had come true, so too the completion of this prophecy will see us to the third temple. There have been many stumbling blocks throughout our exile that have threatened our bond with Hashem, another is that we were exiled from our land. Not all the Jewish people reside in Eretz Yisroel.

During all these times of concealment, the ultimate love between Hashem and the Jewish people is hidden and not fully expressed. Nevertheless, the Aibishter looks at the Jewish people and sees that despite all the suffering and the hardship of exile, the Jewish people continue to be faithful to Hashem. When Hashem witnesses our attachment to Him, it reflects a strong love in return. 'Kamayim haponim el ponim - just like the face looks into the water and sees its reflection, so too, a heart reflects the feelings that are shown to it.' When Hashem sees how we relate to Him, He in turn relates with warmth and love.

When Moshe Rabeinu foresees the generation before Moshiach, he is envious of our devotion to Hashem, despite all the significant tests of faith presented to us in the times we live in. A yid, situated anywhere in the world, with all trials and tribulations that he/she has to withstand in this day and age, challenging our very existence as a Jew, should know that Hashem sees our every mitzvah and every effort in our avoda. Hashem is proud of all the accomplishments of His 'aishes chayil.' He has nachas from all we do, 'big or small', nothing goes unnoticed, as every good deed adds up and can tip the scale to inspire Hashem's love towards us and bring the redemption.

Hashem certainly sees this generation spread Yiddishkeit despite all the darkness golus can bring. Our labor of love, to do everything that is in our power to bring light to this world, spreading the wellsprings of mystical teachings and being a partner in His creation through Torah and Mitzvos, causes a deep love from above and brings us ever closer to the ultimate reunion, the Geulah.



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## *Moshiach Thought*

### *Reflections of Love*

When Leah cries with joy that, 'Hashem has seen my affliction, and now my husband will love me,' this alludes to golus, when there are spiritual obstacles and despite that Hashem sees that we are fully committed to him *belev uvenefesh*, heart and soul. This unprecedented devotion and faithfulness to Hashem and his Torah and Mitzvos, causes a profound love towards His bride, His nation, and will ultimately lead Hashem to bring His beloved to our final 'vayetzei' - the much awaited Geulah.

Based on a sicha on Parshas Vayetzei

Lizechus Gershon Chaim ben Miriam and Eliyahu Gershon Ben Liron for a speedily recovery

## *Halacha Corner - Inspiration Action*

by Rabbi Yehuda Hoch

If one leaves milk in a meaty pot for twenty four hours the pot absorbs the taste of the milk and expels the taste of meat. This is true despite the lack of any heat. The same is true in the opposite case of a dairy pot and a meaty liquid such as chicken soup.

Although the pot would have to be kashered, the milk/soup would remain kosher. The reason for this is that by the time the taste of the pot is expelled from its walls, it is already a foul taste since twenty four hours have past.





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## Notes from Tanya

By Shahaf Chaya Tehila Shalev

We now move on to chapter 38 in our Tanya journey. Previously, the A'R discussed why mitzvos make a dira betachtonim and the advantage of Torah study over mitzvos in making a dira betachtonim- but that the priority is still to do mitzvos first. Now that doing mitzvos and studying Torah has been established, and their respective importances in making a home down here for Hashem discussed, the A'R goes onto explaining the need to have kavanah when doing mitzvos, and how that institutes an even greater dira betachtonim for Hashem.

Praying or making a blessing without kavanah is like a body without a soul. Kavanah-intent- refers to the person's yearning and thirst to cleave to Gd, and that the reason they are performing this mitzvah is so that this cleaving can occur. It's much more than doing the mitzvah for the sake of the mitzvah, but rather, having an ulterior, more connected purpose.

Doing the mitzvah with kavanah inspires the person, reminding him that the world is nullified to Hashem, that Hashem echad, and that the only reality and only truth is the Eybeishter. It reminds him that he should love Hashem with all his heart and soul, and that nothing in this world can exist without Hashem.

This plays a part in further make a home down here for Hashem because although the main focus is in doing mitzvos, if there is no kavanah, the home is dark. The home is built, but with no light. And the way to introduce this light into the home, is by having kavanah.

One may ask though, if we know that mitzvos make a dira betachtonim here for Gd, and that the ultimate purpose of creation IS in making this home for Gd, then should we not just focus on collecting mitzvos, doing as much mitzvos as we can, and once Mosiach comes, Gdliness will be revealed and we will all feel the kavanah. What is the relevance to us now?

And the answer to this question is that kavanah hamitzvos is essential even in our times. Hashem wants a home down here made by US, not by heaven. Therefore, the onus is on US to make a lit up home, and not just wait for Hashem to do it. The light of Hashem that's inside kavanah hamitzvos is much greater than the light of Hashem that one experiences when he just does the act without intent. Therefore, Hashem wants this higher level of light, He wants us to feel the connection and yearn for it, rather than blindly perform His mitzvos.

While we all want to hasten the coming of Mosiach, and performing mitzvos indeed allows for that, it's important to remember that there's more to it than just quantity. The quality of our mitzvos matter too, for it allows us to experience a connection and revelation that is superb, and helps bring us closer to our Creator- an unmatched feeling.



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## Maamer in A Nutshell

by Rabbi Yehuda Hoch

In this weeks parsha we read *וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעַר שֶׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חָרָנָה. וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיְלֵן שָׁם כִּי־בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבְנֵי הַהָאָרֶץ וַיִּשְׁכֵּב בְּמִקְוֵם הָהוּא* And Yacov left Beer Sheva, and he went to Charan. And he arrived at the place and lodged there because the sun had set, and he took some of the stones of the place and placed [them] at his head, and he lay down in that place."

The lives of the forefathers are instruction and guidance for us. What can we learn from this occurrence in Yacov's life?

Yacov is leaving the spiritual comforts of home in Beer Sheva and going to a place of spiritual darkness, Charan. There he will have to deal with his dishonest uncle Lavan, who continuously tries to trick him. But ultimately Yacov builds his family in Charan where almost all of his children were born. And they weren't just regular children. Every one of them turned out to be a righteous. He did better than Avraham, who had Yishmael and better than Yitzchak who had Eisav. There were no rotten apples in this bunch of kids. And all were born in Charan which our sages say relates to the words charon af shel olam, the place in this world that created the most anger on High.

When we are born our soul travels from high up there in heaven where it is one with Hashem and comes down into a "deep pit", a place of total concealment. This is similar to leaving Beer Sheva for Charan. Therefore the Torah tells us that when Yacov left home the sun suddenly set. The sun represent G-Dliness and it's setting represents concealment of Hashem. Yacov lying down, when his head and feet are equal reflects a low state where the mind and the higher senses of the person are level with the feet. They are not functioning as they should.

One is likely to become depressed and dejected when they realize what kind of world they were sent to. Yacov however sees this as an opportunity for true growth and as his unique mission to bring light to the darkness.

We should recognize that we were sent by Hashem on this special mission to bring Him to the conscious awareness of his creations. No matter how dark a situation may seem, it was sent by Hashem for us to uncover the light inside it. In fact, it is these opportunities that allow us to access the essence of Hashem. This is because only Hashem's essence doesn't differentiate between the physical and the spiritual, between light and dark. To Him everything is equal and the body can shine like the soul. Darkness can reveal His essence just as light can. When we work with the concealment of the physical and bring to it the light of Hashem, we call forth His essence which will allow His light to shine there as much as anywhere.

This is the deeper and positive meaning of Yacov laying down. His head, meaning, his soul and his feet, which represent the lower elements or body, were equal. This is because he experienced a revelation of the essence of Hashem.

When we approach the coarse and mundane world with strength and certainty, when we are determined to reveal the G-Dliness inside it, we will succeed as Yacov did. It is specifically in this physical world that we will flourish and have true nachas as our forefather Yacov.



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## Thought of the Week

By Shahaf Chaya Tehila Shalev

The Hayom Yom of the 6th of Kislev states that:

“ My father said that the reciting of sh'ma before retiring at night (p. 118-124) is, in miniature form, like the Confession before death. But then one leaves the marketplace permanently, and the commerce of "Today to perform them" is finished. With the Bedside Sh'ma every night, however, one is still in the middle of the "market" and can still accomplish and achieve.”

This Hayom Yom has an extremely powerful message. We should use the knowledge of the Shema having a similar confession to that before death to influence us in realising that we have a limited time on this earth and that we are here for a purpose- to serve Hashem and make a home for Him down here. Our days can often mesh together and we can tend to forget how precious our time is. Knowing and actively reminding ourselves of the association between the Shema and the Confession before death helps reframe the way we view each day, to ensure we do not let any day go to waste. We should mamish aspire every day to become better and do better, and in turn, be able to hasten the coming of Moshiach. \*

\* some of the ideas mentioned are inspired by what Rabbi Hoch talked about in class





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## *Words to Inspire*

by Rabbi Yehuda Hoch

Mrs. Esther Sternberg tells a wonderful story that teaches us about the spiritual effects of hearing the Rebbe's farbrengen even from a young age: "In 5741 there was a siyum for a Sefer Torah that was written for Jewish children, which was to take place in Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe spoke about the subject for many months, and my father wanted to purchase a golden crown for the Torah scroll.

"At that time I was planning to have a caesarean section. I am an only daughter, and my parents wanted to be by my side.

"However, in honor of the Siyum, which took place on chof Menachem Av, the Rebbe said that my father should be the one who would bring the crown, and so my parents left for EY.

"After the birth, the Rebbetzin called me twice a day at the hospital, and inquired about my welfare. The Rebbetzin also called my house to find out from my eldest daughter what was doing with the little ones at home.

"On the third day after the birth, when my daughter was three days old, the Rebbetzin called me as usual in the morning and again in the afternoon. In the conversation that afternoon, the Rebbetzin asked me if I had a way of hearing the Rebbe's chof Menachem-Av farbrengen. I said I have a device to listen to broadcasts, and from wherever I am I can dial in and hear.

"The Rebbetzin said that I should take my daughter (who was three days old!) to my bed, so she could hear the farbrengen as well, because it is very important that a baby hears chassidus.

"Today we know that babies begin to hear already after birth, but then they thought that they only hear at a later stage. But the Rebbetzin ordered that the baby hear the farbrengen."

What we allow our children to hear has a profound effect on their soul. Just like we want to make sure that they have the healthiest diet with regard to physical food, equally, and even more importantly we should ensure that they are given the best spiritual diet





# The MERKOS Connection

## *Parsha Vayeitzev in a Cake.*

by Judith Samuel

Parsha Vayeitzei begins with Jacob fleeing from his hometown, toward Charan. During his journey, Jacob encounters “the place”. He stops for the night, placing twelve stones around his head for protection, and goes to sleep. He dreams of a ladder connecting Heaven and Earth, with angels climbing up and climbing down the ladder. Gd appears to Jacob and promises him that the land where he is resting will be given to him and his descendants. During the night, the stones fused into one stone, and in the morning, Jacob takes that stone and makes it into a monument, pledging that it will be made into the House of Gd.

The inconsistency between the plural stones at night and the single stone by morning teaches us a profound truth not only about human relationships but also about our destiny as Jews. We can either view each other as distinct and diverse, as the other, or as one. Only the perspective of one will lead us out of our current darkness.

The twelve stones find their symmetry in the twelve tribes. Jacob’s sons become the twelve tribes, and ultimately their separateness is resolved, and they become unified in their spiritual mission. We are the spiritual sons and daughters of these tribes, yearning for the unity, for the light, that will follow the resolution of our differences.

While at “the place”, Jacob prayed to Hashem. Praying during daylight, the way Avraham and Isaac did, is symbolic of situations where Gdliness, where spirituality, are apparent. Praying during the night is about connecting with Gd during emptiness and darkness, during times when there is no obvious Gdliness. We follow the pattern Jacob set, brightening the darkness we find ourselves in, bringing spiritual light no matter which country or on which continent we live.

The place where Jacob dreamt of the ladder and promised that a House of Gd will be built, is the site where the Beis HaMikdash stood in Jerusalem. When we are ready to fuse into one spiritual entity, the way the stones fused into one, united by our collective mission, we will merit to see our return to “the place”, complete with the third Beis HaMikdash, the ultimate “ladder” connecting Heaven and Earth, banishing the darkness and basking in light forever.

Jacob’s dream of the ladder with the angels first climbing up before climbing down hint to us that when we daven, those prayers start here on Earth and then go up to Heaven, bringing down the blessing the bracha thereafter. The Beis HaMikdash will become a reality when we want it enough, when our mitzvot and our prayers here in this world reach Heaven. May it be speedily in our days.

Good Shabbas  
Shabbat Shalom





## Pavlova

*An easy and elegant dessert that will be finished in minutes!*

Recipe by Chaya Cohen

### Ingredients:

- 1 Coles Pavlova base
- 1 pareve frozen whip
- Vanilla
- Fresh berries of choice
- Passionfruit
- Icing sugar

### Method:

1. Whip the pareve cream until stiff.
2. Spoon into plastic bag
3. Cut a hole in the corner of the bag, and pipe the cream onto the Pavlova base.
4. Decorate with berries and passionfruit to your liking
5. Add icing sugar if desired.
6. Serve immediately





# The MERKOS Connection

## Why Can't I Set Boundaries?

by Chaya Cohen

Pavlova is super simple. It's easy and looks great, and everyone enjoys it. The only place that I get tripped up is when I'm piping the cream. It's all too easy to pipe the cream too close to the edge, and then it slowly drips over. Game over.

Initially, you might not be too bothered by that extra cream. Sweet cream and more of it, great! This is how our boundaries are broken with the simple "but if you really care about me you'll do it..." They don't pounce out at you, they slowly slide their way in.

Conjure up an image of your delicious Pavlova, with the beginnings of a drip of cream slowly sliding down the side. That's how I picture a broken boundary. Cream, get back to where you belong!

So you wipe it up, make sure everything looks all neat and nice, and go to check your whatsapp for a minute. In your peripheral vision you notice... BAM that cream again! How is it still slipping down the sides?? This process keeps repeating itself, as you keep wiping the excess cream off every couple of minutes.

We spend all too much time wiping cream and way too little time fixing the cake. We invest ourselves in stemming the symptoms instead of addressing the issue. We fruitlessly (pun intended) attempt to create and reinforce stronger boundaries, instead of examining the reason they're being broken.

We ask what instead of why. Why can't I set strong boundaries?

According to Michelle Farris "setting boundaries is the ultimate test of self care".

For me personally, it is way easier to care for someone else than to care for myself. If someone would yell at a friend at work and verbally abuse her, of course I'd say something. Yet when it comes to myself, suddenly I'm so compliant, too scared to cause conflict.

Setting boundaries is realising I'm my own best friend. I'm the person I'm going to have to live with for the rest of my life. I better protect her, because no one else will.

### Why You *Don't* Set Boundaries

~ by Michelle Farris, LMFT

**Fear of what others think**

**Assume others will be mad**

**Think it's not that important**

**Doesn't want the hassle**

**Wants to avoid conflict**

**Prefers going with the flow**

**Fear of being seen as selfish**

**Don't know where to start**

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# The MERKOS Connection

## Timetable

### MERKOSWOMEN

5781 /2021 Timetable

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00am		<b>Tanya</b> Rabbi Hoch	<b>Tanya</b> Rabbi Hoch	<b>Tanya</b> Rabbi Hoch	<b>Tanya</b> Rabbi Hoch	<b>Tanya</b> Rabbi Hoch
10:00am		<b>Maamorim</b> Rabbi Hoch	<b>Maamorim</b> Rabbi Hoch	<b>Maamorim</b> Rabbi Hoch	<b>Maamorim</b> Rabbi Hoch	<b>Maamorim</b> Rabbi Hoch
11:00am		<b>Break</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>Break</b>
11:30am		<b>Chitas</b> Mrs Kornhauser	<b>Chitas</b> Mrs Kornhauser	<b>Chitas</b> Mrs Kornhauser	<b>Chitas</b> Mrs Kornhauser	<b>Chitas</b> Mrs Kornhauser
12:00pm		<b>Halacha</b> Rabbi Hoch	<b>Halacha</b> Rabbi Hoch	<b>Halacha</b> Rabbi Hoch	<b>Halacha</b> Rabbi Hoch	<b>Halacha</b> Rabbi Hoch
1:00pm		<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
7pm		<b>Bayis Yehudi</b> Bracha Kantor	<b>Chassidus</b> Rabbi Glasman	<b>Relationships</b> Kalman Rubin	<b>7:30 pm</b> <b>Farbrengen</b>	
8pm				<b>Timely Sichos</b> Rabbi Hoch		

Timetable is subject to change. Zoom option available. Please contact office