

A STAR IS BORN

Every once in a while a shining star is born, making an enormous positive global impact on the world. Although these moments are rare, the influence of these great lights continues to radiate uninhibitedly beyond the limitations of time and space.

We use the word greatness all too often in describing extra ordinary people. Yet, what does greatness really mean? And how do we measure it.

In the year 1698 (5458) on the 18th of Elul, in a small town in the Carpathian Mountains a special soul entered this world; a man who would profoundly impact the lives of thousands of people in his lifetime and many millions thereafter. The ideas he taught, the stories he told and the experiences he shared continue to inspire young and old, secular and religious alike, until today.

Who was this man and how did he manage to make such an extraordinary impact on so many people.

Great phenomenons in life as with great people in history, almost always have something very simple that defines them. The complexities of their personalities or the intricacies of their life experiences exist only on the exterior. At their core however lies something pure, simple and powerful that permeates their beings and radiates to the outside world. The more pure and simple the phenomenon, the greater the impact.

This man possessed something so pure and simple, so powerful, that when he shared it with others it changed their lives forever; hundreds of thousands in his lifetime, millions more thereafter. The phenomenon we are talking about is "Love": pure and simple love to every single Jew, with all his heart and soul. The kind of love that is totally selfless. Unadulterated, unconditional and uninhibited. It is so pure that nothing can stand in its way. It is so powerful that no person can resist it.

It was this pure unadulterated love to each and every Jew that is imbued in countless inspirational stories that continue to inspire millions of Jews across the spectrum. It also permeates his timeless teachings that changed conventional paradigms. It was this love that made the Baal Shem Tov one of the greatest and most inspirational people in history.

*Warm regards,
Yosef Vogel*

Fri 19th August 2014

Nitzavim-Vayelech

Shabbat Begins: 6.52pm

Shabbat Ends: 7.51pm