

Living Jewish



Tell your Children

The Astonishing Wrong-Line Blessing

In honor of the birthday of the Lubavitcher Rebbe on the 11th of Nissan (Tuesday night and Wednesday of the coming week), we present the following story:

Thousands of Jews were crowded into the huge shul at 770 Eastern Parkway, the shul of the Chabad Chassidim in Brooklyn, New York to hear the Lubavitcher Rebbe speak. Not only Chassidim but all sorts of Jews were there. Even those who didn't understand a word of Yiddish were hypnotized by the awesomeness of the man.

Mr. David Asulin came to see for himself and, although he didn't exactly believe all the stories, he was glad he came. He had been born in Morocco. There everyone believed in tzadikim; unique Jews who were very G-dly. So all this wasn't completely new to him.

However, since he moved to France twenty years ago and became comfortably settled there, he had almost forgotten about the tzadikim. This was his first visit to America, where he was going for business. His friends had told him that if he wanted an unforgettable experience he must see the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He did, and it was just as they said.

For the Wedding

After about two hours of listening with ten minute pauses between topics, many people stood up and formed lines to the Rebbe, which eventually became one line. When they reached him, he gave each one a bottle of vodka.

Mr. Asulin didn't understand that the bottles were only for those people that were making celebrations (such as weddings or bar mitzvahs) throughout the world; he thought that everyone was entitled to a bottle. So he got in line as well! When it came his turn and he was face to face with the Rebbe, the Rebbe smiled, gave him a large bottle and said in French, "This is for the wedding."

He was amazed; how did the Rebbe



knew he speaks French! That was astounding, it verifies all the other stories he had heard. The Rebbe certainly has uncanny powers of perception!

But on the other hand, he decided, what the Rebbe said to him in French also proves he isn't infallible. David had been happily married for years. What he said about the wedding was clearly wrong!

Let's Make a Party

A week later he returned to France. When he showed his wife the bottle they had a good laugh over what the Rebbe said. But when he visited his local Chabad House in Cartel, Rabbi Chaim Malul didn't agree with David's conclusion. Instead, he assured him that in time he would see that it was no mistake.

David laughed to himself. "The Rebbe is such a nice man, and very dedicated. So what if he made a little mistake." And then David promptly forgot the entire incident.

Months later he happened to open the cabinet where he put the bottle and it reminded him of his Brooklyn experience.

"You know," he said to his wife, "It's a shame this bottle from the tzadik should remain unused. Let's make a party, invite all our family and some friends, and give them all to toast L'chayim. It will be fun for everyone and a blessing as well. I'm sure they will all come."

They began making plans. First they

thought of making the party at their home, but at the last moment decided it would be less trouble to move it to the small wedding hall of the local shul in Rancee (near Paris) and have it catered by a kosher restaurant.

The day of the party arrived and the guests began arriving in good spirits. A small band played happy music and people were exchanging greetings and handshakes. But as they were sitting down to begin the meal, the Rabbi of the synagogue entered the room with a smile, looked around for David, and when he found him took him

aside and whispered something in his ear.

David turned to the crowd and said: "The Rabbi needs nine men to make a minyan. He says it will take only a few minutes. Who wants to come? I for one am going." In no time he had the required number following the Rabbi to the next room for what they thought would be prayer, but they were in for a surprise.

In the room stood a bride, a groom and a chupah; it was a wedding! But, surprisingly, the couple was all alone. In fifteen minutes the entire ceremony was over. David and the other men shook the groom's hand and wished the newlyweds 'Mazal Tov.'

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Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	6:21	7:37
Tel Aviv	6:43	7:39
Haifa	6:32	7:39
Beer Sheva	6:42	7:38
New York	7:06	8:06

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The Greater the Love, The Greater the Forgiveness

The beginning and end of this week's Torah reading (parsha) of Vayikra appear to be in complete contrast.

The parsha begins with "Vayikra el Moshe" (He called out to Moshe)—a call of affection. Moreover, it does not say "Vayikra Hashem el Moshe", but simply "Vayikra", indicating that this call came from Hashem Himself, as He is beyond any name or designation. Thus, the beginning of the parsha speaks of an exalted Divine revelation.

In contrast, the end of the parsha deals with the laws of sinners—"If a person sins"—not referring to unintentional sins but to deliberate transgressions. Furthermore, the sin discussed is "acting unfaithfully to G-d"—a betrayal of Hashem, G-d forbid, to the extent that one "swore falsely". The parsha even concludes with the words "incurring guilt through it".

The Contrast

This contrast is puzzling. A parsha's name reflects its entire content, even its final words. Moreover, the end of the parsha is particularly connected to its beginning,

following the principle "its beginning is wedged in its end, and its end in its beginning". How can it be that the parsha starts with "Vayikra", a term of affection, yet ends with "incurring guilt through it"?

This can be understood through Rashi's commentary on the unique nature of "Vayikra".

After explaining that this call of affection preceded all communications and commandments, Rashi contrasts this with the way Hashem reveals Himself to the prophets of the nations: "But to the prophets of the nations, He appears in a manner that is casual and impure."

A Basis for Comparison

Even the need to contrast Moshe with the prophets of the nations requires explanation. How could one even entertain the thought that Hashem would express such great affection toward them—an affection even beyond the Torah itself?

The answer lies in the fact that this divine revelation is so supremely lofty that one might assume that, from its perspective, Jews and non-Jews are equal.

If the call had come from a level of Divinity associated with Torah, there would be no comparison, as Torah was given exclusively to Israel.

However, since this "Vayikra" originates from beyond all commandments and revelations, one might think that at this level, all are equal before Hashem.

Infinite Love

To this, the Torah teaches that even at the highest level, there remains a clear distinction between Israel and the nations.

While Moshe is privileged to receive the most exalted revelation—"Vayikra," a term of affection—the prophets of the nations experience revelation only in a "casual and impure" manner.

This also explains why the parsha concludes with the laws of a sinner.

Since Hashem's love for the Jewish people is infinite—beyond even Torah itself—even when a Jew transgresses the Torah's commandments and behaves like Esau, Hashem still loves him, atones for him, and forgives all his sins, to the extent that even intentional sins can be transformed into merits.

(from the teachings of the Rebbe, Likkutei Sichot, Volume 7, translated and adapted from Sichat HaShevua)

From our Sages

Refining the Animal Soul

Dispelling Darkness Automatically

When the G-dly soul strengthens itself through Torah study, the animal soul is weakened as a natural consequence, without requiring direct effort. A person does not need to work to banish the darkness—darkness is automatically dispelled before the light.

(the Previous Rebbe)

Examining One's Intentions

A person who seeks to sacrifice himself and devote his soul must carefully examine whether it is truly for the sake of Hashem, ensuring that his goal is lofty and correct. Too often, people waste their time and energy on pursuits devoid of real meaning.

(Rabbi Yehuda Leib Eiger)

Revealing Silver

Silver is found deep within the earth. It

must be extracted and purified from the waste that clings to it. This is a metaphor for love ("kesef" is related to "kisufim", longing and desire).

The animal soul naturally possesses a capacity for love. This love must be drawn out from the depths of the animal soul, cleansed, and elevated for the service of the Creator.

(the Previous Rebbe)

The Advantage of the Animal

The traits of the animal soul are inherently stronger than those of the G-dly soul, just as an animal is physically stronger than a human. When the animal soul is absorbed into the G-dly soul, its strengths are elevated beyond what they were before.

This is reflected in the Midrash's interpretation: "Good" refers to the good inclination, while "very [good]" refers to the evil inclination—because when the animal soul's traits are properly refined, they achieve "very good."

(Likkutei Torah, the Alter Rebbe)

Know what to Ask

When the Rebbe began sending emissaries to Jewish communities around the world, it was a groundbreaking and revolutionary idea.

At times, even Chabad Chassidim found it difficult to accept the idea that they would need to travel to distant places and leave the environment in which they had grown up.

During those years, the Rebbe had to explain the importance and privilege of being an emissary—going on shlichut.

Once, the Rebbe asked to send a young couple on shlichut.

The husband wrote to the Rebbe, explaining that since he was ill and weak, he requested to be exempted from the shlichut.

The Rebbe replied to him:

"I thought you would write the opposite – since I must fulfill the mission, and because my weakness makes it difficult for me to do so, I request a blessing that I should have the strength to fulfill the shlichut assigned to me."

Chassidus page

The Secret of the Sacrifices

The common translation of the verse in Yayikra (1:2), is, "When a man from you brings an offering to Hashem, from the animals..." However, the literal translation, maintaining the exact Hebrew order of the words, reads, "a man when he brings *from you* an offering..."

Chassidus explains the verse is coming to teach that the offering, *korban*, must be "from you"—from within yourself. You must offer your soul as a sacrifice to Hashem. And which aspect of your soul? "From the animal"—the animal soul within every person. This soul must be "burned" with a fire of love for Hashem until it, too, comes to love Hashem.

A Fire within the Soul

This is the eternal spiritual meaning of the *korban*—a word derived from *kiruv*, drawing closer to Hashem. The goal is to ignite a fire of divine love even within the animal soul. As the Sages interpret the verse, "You shall love Hashem your G-d with all your heart"—"With both of your inclinations" (the good and the evil inclination)—the ultimate purpose is that even the animal soul within a person should come to love Hashem and yearn for Him.

This process happens during prayer, when a person kindles a flame of divine love in their heart, striving to arouse this love for Hashem also within their animal soul. Thus, our prayers are considered "in place of the sacrifices."

However, the *korban* is not merely a sym-

bolic or spiritual process. The physical component—the actual offering of an animal or a grain offering—is of great significance. The Zohar states: "The secret of the *korban* ascends to the secret of the Infinite One."

Additionally, whenever the Torah discusses sacrifices, it specifically uses the name Hashem (Y-H-V-H)—the essential Name of G-d—rather than any other divine names. This reflects the immense significance of *korbanot*.

Ultimate Rectification

Here we arrive at "the secret of the *korban*." The *korban* restores the world to its proper order, which had been disrupted.

Both the animal and plant kingdoms possess a spiritual soul rooted in very lofty realms. When a person takes an animal and offers it as a *korban*, its soul is elevated back to its divine source. Through this act, Hashem bestows an infinite divine light upon the world.

At the time of the Temple, the world stood on an incomparably higher spiritual level due to the divine flow resulting from the sacrifices.

When Moshiach comes, this reality will be restored on a greater scale. The restoration of *korbanot* is a central part of the world's ultimate rectification in the era of redemption.

Adapted from the writings of Rabbi Menachem Brod, Sichat HaShevua

The Astonishing Wrong-Line Blessing

continued from page one:

Gingerly they asked where the wedding meal would be (they also were wondering why there were no guests but were embarrassed to ask). When the groom answered that no meal had been arranged, David joyously announced, "then you are invited to ours." Instantly, David's informal party became a real wedding party. The band played merrily and the men began to dance on one side of the room with the groom, while the women on the other side danced with the bride.

When the dancing finished they all sat down to eat. In the middle of the meal David stood, held up the Rebbe's bottle, cleared his throat for silence and told the story of the Rebbe saying it was "for the wedding," since he finally understood that the Rebbe wasn't mistaken at all.

"What!" exclaimed the bride. "That bottle is from the Lubavitcher Rebbe for my wedding?" and she burst into tears, tears of sheer joy. When she calmed down she explained.

This was her second marriage. Her first ended in a bitter divorce that, coupled with the fact that she decided to be an observant Jew, resulted in a major rift in her family and none of her relatives showed up. No one came from her husband's side either, but his reason was more simple. He was a convert to Judaism and so he had no Jewish family.

She felt so alone and uneasy that a few weeks previously she decided to immediately act on the suggestion of an acquaintance that she write to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, asking for some sign the marriage would succeed. "And here you are with the Rebbe's blessing!!"

Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from email of Good Shabbos Everyone as posted on ShabbosStories.com.

Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles of Tsfat is co-founder of ASCENT. His email list for stories is in its 28th year. To join the list a/o his WhatsApp group for Saturday night Audio, Video and Zoom stories, go to AscentOfSafed.com or WhatsApp +972-526-770-137.

Moshiach Now

Brain vs. Heart

Chassidus is replete with explanations about the positive aspects of exile — it is a descent for the sake of an ultimate ascent; it demonstrates "the superiority of light [that proceeds] from darkness"; and so on. These explanations are all addressed to the mind. As far as the feelings of the heart are concerned, however, the bitterness of the exile makes all of these explanations unacceptable.

And that is why, even after all the explanations have been offered, the Jewish people still ask and cry out in prayer that the exile should finally be annulled, and that the Redemption should come!

the Rebbe; reprinted with permission From Exile to Redemption, Sichos in English

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Rabbi Moshe Weber

At the HaNeviim Boutique Hotel, in Meah Shearim, a farbrengen and seudat mitzvah took place to mark the 25th yahrtzeit of Rabbi Moshe Weber, who passed away on the 18th of Adar, 5760 (2000).

The event was led by Mashpia Rabbi Ido Yitzchak Weber, with the participation of Admurim, Rabbonim, and Mashpi'im. Among them was Rav Kalman Meir Ber, the Chief Rabbi of Israel.

The Tefillin Stand at the Kotel was established by Rabbi Weber after the 1967 war. Rabbi Weber would walk daily to the Kotel, braving the elements of Jerusalem's heat and cold, standing for many hours to put tefillin on thousands of Jews. His



legendary warmth and love was felt by every visitor to the Kotel.

Many enjoyed Rabbi Moshe's hospitality for Shabbat and Yom Tov meals in his modest home in Meah Shearim. He opened himself to all streams of Jews. He was well-known in Meah Shearim as the "go-to" person if anyone came looking for hospitality.

Less publicly, he distributed enormous sums of tzedakah to the city's poor. It is known that, decades ago, the Rebbe said of him that he is one of the holiest and kindest people in the world.

He published several volumes of Torah insights in Yarim Moshe. There is an ongoing periodical of his teachings distributed weekly called Shemu V'Techi Nafshechem, which also offers for sale his audio recordings.

Following Rabbi Moshe's passing, Chabad established in his memory a newly renovated and expanded tefillin booth at the Kotel.

Adapted from Chabadinfo.com

Cooking Tip of the Week

Pesach Beef Tzimmes

Brown 700g beef in a deep pan. Add 2-3 sliced onions, salt, and cook until golden. Stir in 1kg sliced carrots and 2 cups water. Cover and simmer on low until the meat falls apart, about 3 hours. The carrots add natural sweetness.

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Halacha Corner – Eating and Drinking after the 4th Cup

One is not to eat or drink anything, including water, after drinking the 4th cup of wine at the Pesach Seder, until morning, on both nights of the Seder. If he is very thirsty, he may drink water or a water-based drink, and if not available, then one may drink any non-alcoholic beverage.

Some halachic authorities rule that once one awakens from sleep, he may eat and drink as usual even if it is before Alot HaShachar (a halachic time, commonly translated as dawn).

However, other halachic authorities rule one may not eat or drink until Alot HaShachar even if he awoke from sleep.

Practically, one is to be stringent in this matter, unless one is very thirsty, as stated above.

By Rabbi Yaakov Goldstein, shulchanaruchharav.com

Question: My husband is 30 and has been smoking for 10 years. He wants to stop but never follows through. I want to help him, but when I bring it up, he gets annoyed and tells me to stop telling him what to do and let him live his life. I'm worried about him but don't know what to do. Please advise. Thank you.

Answer: It is well known that cigarette smoking is harmful to one's health. The Lubavitcher Rebbe also strongly discouraged smoking and addressed it in several letters.

From your letter, it's clear that your husband agrees that quitting would be beneficial. That's already a positive starting point. The question now is: how can you help him stop?

Your husband's words, "stop telling me what to do, just let me live my life," may be painful for you to hear, but they also offer insight into how to approach him. Some spouses are more receptive to advice, while others may perceive even well-intentioned suggestions as attempts to control them or as signs that they aren't accepted as they are. Your husband seems to be in the latter category.

As long as he feels that your advice is an attempt to control him, even your most caring intentions may only create distance, marital friction and hurt feelings for both of you.

Chassidus explains that the Divine sefirot — the emanations through which Hashem reveals Himself and conducts the world — consist of both light and vessels. The light not only fills the vessel but helps it grow and thereby contain even more light. However, if the light is too intense for the vessel, it can cause the vessel to break.

You have much light to give your husband, but he needs to be able to receive your light. Just as light must adapt to the vessel, your love and concern need to adapt to your husband. With the right approach, he will gradually become more open to receiving your guidance.

In practical terms: accept your husband as he is and trust that he can make the necessary changes. Your acceptance and trust will give him the confidence, strength, and support to move forward. As he feels your trust and acceptance, he will, over time, be more open to your advice.

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***Shalom Bayit seminar beginning after Pesach. To register and/or receive more information, please contact the above email.**



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