

# The Jewish Weekly

## Feeling Exceptional Happiness

By Mrs. C.R. Benami

Mr. David Dana, currently a resident of Be'er Sheva and a professional tour guide, grew up in France in a family that wasn't religiously observant. He began getting closer to Judaism through a program intended to acquaint young French Jews with Judaism, organized by Rabbi Ya'akov Mazuz, today the Rabbi of the Chabad synagogue for French immigrants in Netanya.

In those years in France before he moved to Israel, Rabbi Mazuz, as part of his programs, organized trips for young people to visit the Lubavitcher Rebbe in New York. David registered with a group of around one hundred youth travelling to the Rebbe in the beginning of 5750 (fall 1989). Throughout their stay they merited to receive special attention from the Rebbe. The Rebbe would signal to them to say l'chaim during the farbrengens (chasidic gatherings). He also would make strong hand motions to encourage them to intensify their singing and joy.

The moments that made the deepest impression on David's soul was during the famous 'distribution of dollars.' Every Sunday for six years, the Rebbe would stand for many hours at the entrance of his room, while thousands of people would file past each week to receive a dollar bill (sometimes more than one) from his hand to donate to charity. At the same time the Rebbe would give each person his blessing.

The first time that David received a dollar and blessing from the Rebbe, it made such a strong positive impression on him that he made sure to go again at every opportunity. Each time he felt exceptional happiness at having in his hand something tangible from the Rebbe, the dollar, in addition to the blessing and the warm welcoming expression on the Rebbe's face.

Filing past the Rebbe affected him and his friends deeply and caused a genuine turnaround in their daily lives. Most of the members of the group started or became more careful in observing the mitzvot (commandments), also David started keeping the mitzvot and learning Torah. In the following two years he often went back to be in the Rebbe's presence, never missing the opportunity to pass before him on Sunday for dollars, to receive a dollar from his holy hand and a blessing.

On Gimmel Tammuz (June 12) 1994, the day the Rebbe passed away, David felt a personal loss and grief. The thought that he would not be able to stand in front of the Rebbe, see his luminous face, receive a dollar from his hand and a blessing of "Bracha v'hatzlacha" ('blessing and success').

He was consoled by what he heard from Chabad rabbis and mashpi'im (scholarly chasidic influencers), that a leader and faithful shepherd doesn't abandon his flock. As is written in the Zohar, tzadikim (righteous people) continue to act and influence in this world also after they pass on, and even more than when they were alive.

Several months later, towards Chanukah 1994, David flew to New York. Friday, erev Shabbat, he went to the burial site of the Rebbe in Montefiore Cemetery in the Queens borough of New York City. With a broken heart he prayed and read the psalms one says at a burial place, after which he made personal requests.

At that time, David was at a crossroads. He was considering making aliyah (emigrating to Israel) but he was hesitating, uncertain if it was the right thing to do. Now, while standing by the Rebbe's tziyun (tombstone), his main request was to receive a clear sign and direction if he should make aliyah to the Holy Land. As well as a request for a blessing to find his destined soul mate in the near future.

After finishing his prayers he left the Ohel (the large enclosed area surrounding the Rebbe and previous Rebbe's tombstones) with a twinge in his heart. With deep felt longing he remembered the times when he would leave the presence of the Rebbe full of happiness and satisfaction, in his hand a dollar of the Rebbe, feeling the closeness and the love the Rebbe radiated to each and every one, and the actual dollar in his hand as a souvenir of the visit.

Now, he thought, all that is over. No more distribution of dollars, no more specific blessings. Who knows, he suddenly thought, if all our prayers at the tziyun are heard.

The same thoughts occupied him during the Shabbat, even when he tried to immerse himself in the prayers, the Torah lessons and the farbrengens in the beit midrash (house of study).

On Sunday he had a feeling of emptiness. How different the situation now is, than it was then, he thought On all his previous visits this was the set time for the distribution of dollars. He

## It Once Happened...

would prepare himself for the personal meeting with the Rebbe and never missed an opportunity. And now, there was nothing.

Since Sunday was free, he decided to go shopping in Manhattan. In the afternoon he went to a kosher dairy restaurant in town.

After finishing his meal, he gave the cashier a ten dollar bill. The cashier gave him change in some coins and a one dollar bill. David was about to put the change into his pocket when he noticed something written on the dollar bill. A wave of emotion washed through him. He also used to write on the dollar bill he received from the Rebbe, the date and the words of the blessing.


Indeed, on the dollar were written the words "I received from the Rebbe shlita ('may he live many long good days') [in] 5751 - and he said 'for the aliyah to the Holy Land.'"

David was completely overwhelmed. Divine Providence had sent him a dollar from the Rebbe on a Sunday, just as he previously had merited to receive a dollar from his holy hand! But the even more incredible thing was the writing, the words "for the aliyah to the Holy Land". There could not be a clearer message than that! He felt he had received an answer to his main request.

He studied the writing on the dollar again and a new wave of emotion filled him. The person who had received the dollar has written the year 5751, in Hebrew taf-shin-nun-alef, but changing the order of the letters to, taf nun shin alef, an acronym for "you shall get married."

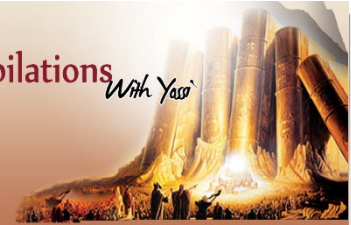
Less than a month and a half later, David was already a permanent resident of Israel. That same year he met his future wife and merited to establish a true Jewish home. He experienced in a tangible way that personal requests are received and answered because the faithful shepherd doesn't abandon his flock.

*Reprinted from an email of Here's My Story.*



**Shabbat Times - Parshat Toldot**

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	4:00	5:15	5:52
Tel Aviv	4:14	5:16	5:49
Haifa	4:03	5:14	5:49
Be'er Sheva	4:18	5:18	5:53



## The Rabbi and the Rich Man By Rabbi Amrom Malka

The Rebbe made a point of saying “thank you” every time I served him, and then again when I removed his plate. Of course, we served the Rebbe first, but he would not touch his food until he saw that everybody — including us waiters — had a portion.

I couldn't always follow the discussions in Yiddish taking place on the other end of the table — but I was enchanted by the atmosphere in that room all the same. On Shavuot, once again, I was asked to help during the holiday meal, but this time I reluctantly declined. The Rebbe wanted chasidim to go out and visit synagogues outside of Crown Heights on the first night of the holiday in order to bring extra holiday joy to other communities and share chasidic teachings. So even though it meant missing the meal, I wanted to go on “tahalucha,” as this program is called.

When I made it back to 770 later that night, I hadn't yet prayed or eaten. But suddenly, I got word that the Rebbe had summoned me; apparently, he had noticed my absence at the meal. By then, the stairs leading up the second floor of 770 were packed with chasidim who had come back from tahalucha and were waiting for the Rebbe to come out and greet them. And so, with no other way in, I was hoisted up and passed over the crowd until I was standing right behind the Rebbe.

“Have you prayed yet?” he asked me, implying that if I had prayed already I was invited to join the meal at his table! I told him that I had not, but before he left, he checked again to see if I was ready to have the meal. I was struck by the fatherly care and sensitivity that the Rebbe showed me; I was just a young boy who helped around the house!

That summer, Zalman Shazar, then the President of Israel, paid the Rebbe an official state visit. Before he arrived, the Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Leibel Groner, asked me to help prepare the Rebbe's office. Together with a few other boys, we got to work packing up and clearing the mounds of books the Rebbe had either received as gifts or had been studying from.

Then, handing me a few rags for the walls and windows, Rabbi Groner asked me to stay on for a little longer to put on the finishing touches.

At one point, I noticed a stack of pictures sticking out of a half-open drawer in the Rebbe's desk. When I got a closer look, I saw that it was a family photo of people that I recognized. “They must have sent this picture of themselves to the Rebbe,” I thought to myself. “I also want to send the Rebbe a picture of my own family.”

I wrote to my parents, and they soon sent me a picture of the entire Malka family which I put into a beautiful frame. Before I returned home, I had a private audience with the Rebbe. When I came into his room, along with my letter, I also presented the framed picture in an envelope, with a little dedication and the names of my family members on the back.

The Rebbe read my letter, gave me a blessing, and then opened the envelope. After studying the picture for a moment, he took the photo out of the frame and laid it on the table. Then, still holding the empty frame, the Rebbe said: “When people would bring their bikurim, the offering of the First Fruits, to the Temple, the Mishna says that the wealthy would bring their offerings in gold and silver containers, while the poor brought theirs in wicker baskets. The wicker baskets were given to the priests along with the fruit, while the expensive containers were returned to their owners.”

Then, handing me the frame, he added, “I've taken your picture, but, like they did with the wealthy people, I'm giving the frame back to you.” When the Rebbe returned that frame to me, he truly made me feel rich.

Reprinted from an email of Here's my Story.

What is your most favorite outfit of clothing? For what special occasion did you wear it?

I heard from The Chief Rabbi of England and the Commonwealth, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, that in Parshat Toldot we are told, “ותקח רבקה את בגדי עשו בנה הגדל ההמדה – Rivka took her oldest son, Eisav's, favorite outfit, and she placed it on Yaakov.” Of course she was preparing Yaakov — we are all familiar with the story — to deceive his father Yitzchak, so that he would receive the blessing of the “בכור” — the firstborn.

But if Eisav had a favorite outfit, why wasn't it in his own home? What was it doing in the home of his parents, Yitzchak and Rivka?

Our Sages explain that Eisav kept his favorite outfit in his parents' home, so that when he appeared before his father, such was the deep respect he had for him, he would always change into his smartest clothes.

But wasn't Yitzchak blind? If he couldn't see what Eisav looked like, surely his clothes made no difference whatsoever?

The answer is that Eisav's respect for his father was totally sincere. Of course, it would be nice for his father to see that he respected him, but that was not why he was doing it.

I believe there are two important messages that emerge from this, for us and for all time.

The first is, that when it comes to “כיבוד אב ואם” — the respect we must have for our parents, like that of Eisav, should be natural. Not just to check the box to let our parents know that we are respecting them, but rather, whether we are in their presence, outside of their presence, or well beyond their lifetime, we should continue to respect their wishes and to live according to the values that they taught to us.

There is a second message. Over Shabbat Parshat Toldot, Eisav gets a lot of bad press. Within shuls right around the world we highlight what a “צדיק” — (a righteous person,) Yaakov was, and what a “rotten apple” Eisav was. But right in the midst of this story, we highlight the fact that Eisav did excel in one area: the respect that he had for his father. This reminds us of that great teaching in Ethics of the Fathers: “אין לך אדם שאין לו שעה” — there is not a single person on Earth who doesn't have his or her moment.”

We learn something from everyone. As some people say, “Even a broken clock tells the right time twice a day”.

So let's join together and pray with all our hearts for the healing of all those injured, for the safe return of those taken as hostages, as well as Divine Protection for our brave IDF soldiers, Police officers, medical professionals, Firefighters, ZAKA members, security personnel and all those citizens protecting us in Israel as well as around the world, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children or parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, safe, quiet and sweet Shabbat.

Yaacov

## The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NO MITZVOT IN THIS PARSHA

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 106

NUMBER OF WORDS: 1432

NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5426

HAFTORA: “Machar Chodesh,” the special Haftora for a Shabbat whose morrow is Rosh Chodesh. (Shmuel I 20:18-42).

We came to Israel from Casablanca when I was five, and for the first seven years, we lived in a migrant camp in Pardes Chana. My twin brother Eliyahu Moshe and I studied in a government school, but when our parents realized how far it was from traditional Judaism, they moved to Bnei Brak, where we received a proper Torah education.

When we graduated from the school in Bnei Brak, they sent us to the Chabad yeshivah in Lod and then to Kfar Chabad. In those yeshivot, the children of Yemenite and Moroccan families learned alongside the sons of old-stock Russian Chabad families. And so did we discover the world of Chabad, imbibe its spirit, and eventually adopt its way of life as devoted chasidim of the [Lubavitcher] Rebbe. That is why it was only natural that I joined a group of students who were going to study in New York, in the Rebbe's court — a program known today as “kvutzah.”

When we arrived in 1965, I was thrilled to be the first member of the Malka family to ever visit the Rebbe. A few weeks later, after Rosh Hashanah, a friend of mine asked me whether I could help build the Rebbe's sukkah. “But no looking around, and no questions,” he warned me. Of course, I agreed, while wondering to myself how I — a simple, wide-eyed yeshivah student — had landed the privilege of working for the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

First, we carried sukkah walls from the basement of 770 up to the second floor, which was where the Previous Rebbe had lived. There I met the Previous Rebbe's wife, Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, for the first time. Until her passing in 1971, her son-in-law and her husband's successor, the Rebbe, used to have meals during festivals in this apartment, and there, on the balcony, we built the sukkah that would host them.

Next, we built a sukkah at the Rebbe's home on President Street — which was another first for me. The Rebbe's wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, opened the door for us when we came, and after we finished working, she brought out some fruit and other treats. “You worked hard,” she explained, and encouraged us to partake.

Later, one of the Rebbe's secretaries handed me an envelope with twenty-five dollars. “This is from the Rebbetzin,” he said. She didn't want me to work for free. Now that I knew the protocol, on Simchat Torah, I was once again called to the Previous Rebbe's apartment to help set up some tables, and I kept being invited back to do various jobs for the Rebbe and his family.

That Passover, I helped out with the pre-holiday cleaning, and then again I helped serve and clear at the Seder. This meant that I also had the honor of sitting at the Rebbe's Seder table, alongside several venerable Chabad chasidim. Rebbetzin Nechama Dina instructed me to put a full setting at the head of the table, for her late husband, the Previous Rebbe. Of course, nobody sat there, and the Previous Rebbe's two sons-in-law, the Rebbe and Rabbi Shmaryahu Gurary, sat on either side.

המולד יהיה ביום ראשון, 49 דקות ו151 חלקים אחרי 4 שבועות בבוקר

ראש חדש כסלו יהיה מחר ביום ראשון וביום שני  
Rosh Chodesh Kislev will be tomorrow and Monday

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