

Living Jewish



Tell your Children

Special Delivery

Once, a group of Chabad Chassidim in a certain town were being severely oppressed because of their chassidic practices. Some of the chassidim were even arrested, due to the slander and false accusations presented to the local authorities. G-d was merciful, however, and the innocent victims were released. They immediately sat down together to write a letter to the "Alter Rebbe", Rabbi Shneur Zalman, informing him of the good news of their deliverance.

Among this group was a poor tinsmith named Shimon, who was only average in knowledge and understanding, but was strongly bonded to the Rebbe with love and dedication. He was often heard to spontaneously cry out, "Oy Rebbe!" This Shimon took it upon himself to arrange the delivery of the letter to the Rebbe. Instead of sending it by regular mail, he decided to hire a private messenger in order that their letter get to the Rebbe "express," absolutely as soon as possible. He arranged to pay for the extra costs out of his own pocket.

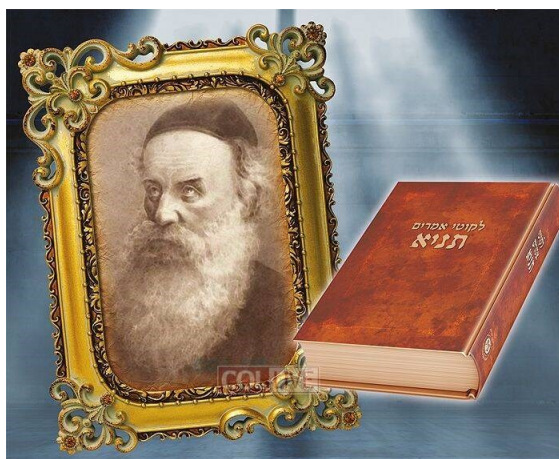
Reb Shimon's Determination

In those days, every Chabad chassidic community had its own council, which would direct all chassidic matters. The council members were all well acquainted with the dire economic situation of R. Shimon—how he sometimes had to trek from village to village to find more work, how he barely managed to support his family at the most minimal level, how his wife and children were sick.

When he said he intended to pay the expensive fees for the express messenger out of his own meager funds, they refused to hear of it. They told him he shouldn't do it.

R. Shimon, however, refused to accept their decision. He said that the good news of their release would give the Rebbe relief and happiness, and if such news could reach the Rebbe even just one hour earlier, it was worth more to him than all the wealth in the world.

As part of the council, one chassidic



19th of Kislev—Rosh HaShana of Chassidus

elder in each community was responsible for matters of education and guidance, and he would report on a regular basis directly to the Alter Rebbe.

When the matter of the messenger was brought before the elder chassid in this position in R. Shimon's town, who also oversaw the fundraising campaigns for the "Rabbi Meir Baal HaNess" fund [to support the Chassidic community in the Holy Land] and for "Maimad" [to support the Rebbe's household], he counteracted the council and endorsed the tinsmith's choice.

The Special Letter

Eventually, the report of what R. Shimon had done became known to the Maharil (Rabbi Yehuda Leib, brother of Rabbi Shneur Zalman and a tzaddik in his own right), who had been appointed by the Rebbe to be the overall supervisor in Chabad communal matters of tzedakah.

After some time had passed, one of the leading Chassidim, Rabbi Yaakov of Semillian, arrived in the town as an emissary of the Rebbe.

He had been sent to collect the money for the above-mentioned campaigns from all the chassidic communities in that area of Russia.

Much to the astonishment of the chassidim who had all gathered to meet with R. Yaakov, he delivered a letter to R. Shimon the tinsmith written entirely in

the personal handwriting of the Alter Rebbe himself.

In it the Rebbe thanked him for arranging a special messenger to deliver the good tidings of the release speedily.

The Rebbe concluded by blessing R. Shimon that G-d Al-mighty should bless him to be always a bearer of good news.

Bearer of Good News

Not long after that, R.

Shimon's situation started to improve. His wife and children became healthy, and he himself began to prosper greatly.

The Rebbe's blessing was fulfilled. Because R. Shimon the tinsmith exerted himself to make another Jew happy, especially a great tzaddik, and at great personal sacrifice, he merited to become a bearer of happy news—of himself, his family, and the chassidic brotherhood of his town.

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.

Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	3:59	5:19
Tel Aviv	4:20	5:20
Haifa	4:07	5:18
Beer Sheva	4:22	5:22
New York	4:13	5:17

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Trust in Hashem

After Joseph was thrown into prison on false charges, he languished there for eleven years. Providentially, Pharaoh became enraged with his chief butler and chief baker and cast them into prison as well. Both of these officers had disturbing dreams. Joseph interpreted the chief butler's dream encouragingly, foreseeing that he would be returned to his position.

After conveying that interpretation, Joseph asked the butler for a kindness: to recall him favorably to Pharaoh. Our Sages teach that Joseph was punished for making this request and his release was delayed for another two years.

Why was Joseph punished? Because in the chief butler, he sought a medium through which G-d would send him his salvation. That resolution, however, raises a question: we are taught not to rely on miracles. Therefore, Joseph sought a means within the natural order through which G-d would help him. Was there anything wrong with that?

A Different Level

For most people, the answer would be "no". But Joseph was on a different spiritual level than most people. Generally, G-d relates to mankind according to the

pattern of nature. When G-d relates to a person in such a manner, the person should seek an appropriate medium and create a natural vessel or conduit for the fulfillment of his needs.

There are, however, times when G-d relates to people in a manner that does not accord with the pattern of nature. When G-d relates to a person in such a way, a higher level of trust is demanded of him. He is expected to do nothing more than trust G-d, confident that G-d will certainly help him by arranging his affairs in an appropriate manner. Joseph was on a level on which G-d continually related to him on a level that transcends nature. Therefore, he should have conducted himself at the loftier level of trust.

G-d is the Source of Blessings

These concepts are also relevant to people who are not on such an elevated spiritual level. Even when it is necessary for a person to seek a natural medium or conduit for his livelihood, health, and other material needs, the medium or vessel should hold no importance in its own right in his eyes. He should know that it is no more than a medium and that G-d alone is the source of the blessings he receives.

These concepts apply in the microcosm and the macrocosm. When a person encounters obstacles and encumbrances in

his observance of the Torah and its mitzvot, he should realize that the elimination of these obstacles is dependent upon him and his conduct. If he has absolute trust in G-d, that G-d will help him so that the situation will be good until he is utterly serene without any worry and all, his trust will bear fruit.

Needless to say, he must also do whatever he can in a natural way to remove these obstacles, but it is his trust that will shift the flow of the paradigm. He will see the realization of the promise: "Think positively and the outcome will be good."

The Imminent Redemption

Similarly, on a national scale, with regard to the redemption from Egypt, it is said: "in the merit of [their] trust [in G-d], the Jews were redeemed from Egypt." So, too, with regard to the redemption from our present exile, our Sages state: "the Jews are worthy of redemption in reward for their hope [of redemption] alone." The Jewish people's trust in the promise that "My deliverance is soon to come," serves as a catalyst to make that promise a tangible reality.

From the teachings of the Rebbe, reprinted from Keeping in Touch, with permission from Sichos in English. From our Sages reprinted from LchaimWeekly.org - LYO / NYC

From our Sages

And his master saw that G-d was with him, and that G-d made all that he did prosper in his hand (Gen. 39:3)

Blessing and abundance from Above are directly contingent upon one's Torah and mitzvot, as it states, "if you will go in My statutes...I will cause it to rain in the proper time." Nowadays, this cause and effect relationship is often obscured by our sins and by the concealment of G-dliness that characterizes the exile. For Joseph, however, there was no such concealment; it was obvious to all that his righteousness and good deeds were responsible for his success in all areas of life.

(the Rebbe Rashab)

We were binding sheaves in the field...and behold, your sheaves placed themselves round about, and bowed down to my sheaf (Gen. 37:7)

This world, in which physical objects appear to be distinct and separate entities from G-dliness, is likened to a field. To make a sheaf, the stalks of wheat must first be uprooted and then bound together. Similarly, the task of the Jew is to take physical objects, "uproot" them from their

corporeality, and utilize them in the service of G-d so that they become vessels for holiness.

(the Rebbe)

There has been no harlot here (Gen. 38:21)

No element of impropriety surrounded the birth of Peretz and Zerach; the entire incident was all part of the Divine plan that would lead to the birth of Moshiach, who will be a descendant of Judah. The reason for the circuitous and concealed manner in which this came about was solely to divert the attention of the Satan.

(Rabbi Meir of Premishlan)

The chief butler did not remember Joseph, and forgot him (Gen. 40:23)

While "not remembering" Joseph indicates a passive, unintentional action, "forgetting" refers to the chief butler's deliberate attempt to dismiss him from his mind. His failure to remember Joseph was purposeful.

(Ohr HaTorah, the Tzemach Tzedek)

Get Active!

After participating in the 5733 (1972) Yud Tet (19th) Kislev farbrengen at Kfar Chabad, Israeli Major-General and author Avraham Adan wrote to the Rebbe his impressions.

"I had a special experience and a feeling of elevation," he wrote.

"As a Tzahal (Israeli army) person, and especially as a commander," the Rebbe responded in writing, "it is certainly superfluous to emphasize that what counts in the army is action.

"To the point that one must put aside intellect, to follow orders..."

"Therefore," concluded the Rebbe, "I hope that the 'special experience and a feeling of elevation' will be translated to action."

Hitkashrut Issue 245; Igrot Kodesh vol. 28 p. 135

"Get Active!"; "In the Alter Rebbe's Presence"; and "It Can't Be", reprinted from The Weekly Farbrengen by Merkaz Anash, on-line at TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com

Chassidus page

The 19th of Kislev - Rosh HaShana of Chassidus

The Alter Rebbe's release from prison on the Yud Tet (19th) Kislev, 5559 (1798), marked the beginning of a new era; not only for Chabad Chassidim, but for the world at large. From after the Alter Rebbe's release, the mission given to the Baal Shem Tov by Moshiach really began its fulfillment: disseminating the wellsprings of Chassidus to the outside.

The Rebbe Rashab (the fifth Rebbe of Chabad) declared Yud Tet Kislev as "Rosh Hashanah of Chassidus." About Rosh Hashanah it is said, "*Today is the beginning of Your works*" - this day, the day that man was created (Rosh Hashana), is when the purpose of the entire creation was potentially fulfilled. The same is true of Yud Tet Kislev: on this day, when Chassidus was revealed, the complete and ultimate purpose is actualized by bringing G-dliness into this world.

Throughout the generations, this special day was celebrated by the Rabbeim and chassidim with joyous farbrengens. It was the day that chassidim expressed their gratitude to Hashem for having been exposed to the great light of chassidus. The Alter Rebbe promised that whoever will rejoice in his celebration, he will take them out of distress and bring them to a better place.

A most important component of the Yud Tet Kislev celebration is of course the chassidish farbrengen. In Hayom Yom for the 19th of Kislev, the Rebbe categorizes the day as a "...a day for farbrengen and taking resolutions to establish times for the study of nigleh (the revealed as-

pects of Torah) and Chassidus publicly, and to strengthen the ways of chassidim in true friendship."

When the Rebbe was a young boy, his father, Rav Levi Yitzchok, used to farbreng for hours late into the night, pouring out words of Chassidus and Kabbalah and offering meaning into the nature of the day and the story of the Alter Rebbe's liberation. The children in Yekaterinoslav also held their own special "farbrengen."

Reb Nochum Goldshmid, who was a child there at the time, later related: "throughout the year, the Rebbe was generally more reserved and spent little time with other children. He was always engrossed in Torah study. But the one exception was on Yud Tet Kislev. A few days before the Yom Tov, the children would put together some money and purchase food and drink for their farbrengen. The one in charge of holding the money and overseeing all the arrangements was the Rebbe."

The Previous Rebbe writes: the same teshuvah that emerges as a result of a terrible pogrom, G-d forbid, or a wicked king or minister like Haman, can also come as a result of a chassidish farbrengen and chassidic childhood memories. But in this case it is all good, without any pain and suffering.

On each Yud Tet Kislev, a new light illuminates the world that was never here before, similar to each year on Rosh Hashanah.

Adapted from Derher

In the Alter Rebbe's Presence

This awe-inspiring event took place during the farbrengen of Yud Tet Kislev, 5715 (1954).

As the farbrengen drew to a close, the Rebbe turned to Reb Shmuel Zalmanov and instructed him to sing all ten of the Alter Rebbe's niggunim.

The Rebbe said, "our Sages state that when one repeats the Torah teachings of a Sage, one should imagine that the sage is present. The Tzemach Tzedek once said that when one repeats Torah teachings, it is only **as if** the original author is present. But regarding a niggun, the composer is present in actuality.

"When the Alter Rebbe's niggun was then sung at the Tzemach Tzedek's farbrengen, the chassidim actually turned to see whether they would merit a glimpse of the Alter Rebbe."

Suddenly, the Rebbe stopped talking. His face turned ashen white, and his hand, which was on the table, began trembling...

It Can't Be!

The Rebbe urged chassidim to routinely think over the chassidus that they learn. Reb Meilach Tzviel, related the following instances of the Rebbe's involvement in this realm:

A yeshiva student I knew asked the Rebbe for direction in his service of Hashem. The Rebbe guided him to spend time contemplating the chassidus he learned that day, before he began davening. Additionally, the Rebbe instructed him to recap "the nekudah" (a focused summary) of the idea before beginning the Blessings of the Shema.

Another student, who was diligent in his service of prayer, told the Rebbe that he spends ten minutes every day thinking over a chassidic concept, but he was frustrated since "he didn't see any results." The Rebbe looked surprised, and responded, "*es ken nit zain!*" (It can't be!)

as heard from Reb Meilach

Moshiach Now

Becoming Attuned to the Redemption

We can gain awareness of Moshiach by studying pnimiyut HaTorah, the Torah's mystical dimensions, and in particular, through the study of the subjects of redemption and Moshiach. This process will open the eyes of our mind, so that as we live our lives day by day, we will remain constantly attuned to the concept of redemption.

The increase in our awareness of the nature of the Redemption will serve as a catalyst, which will hasten the coming of the day when we can actually open our eyes and see — that we are in Eretz Yisrael, and in Jerusalem, and, indeed, in the Bet HaMikdash, with the coming of the Redemption. May this be realized in the immediate future.

Reprinted from As a New Day Breaks, with permission from Sichos in English

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A Painting to Remember

Yecheil Offner, of Kfar Chabad, is a 50-year-old artist-painter. For years he has painted the life of the Jewish town of old, and the life of chassidim today. He is also a special education teacher and studies psychodrama therapy. For over twenty years, he has served in the IDF's identification unit in the south.

Offner recounts: in the midst of Simchat Torah, I was called to go to a military base in the south. I did not imagine the magnitude of the event. Thanks to our efforts, thank G-d, families were able to bring their loved ones to burial.

After hard days of work at Kibbutz Kisufim, I entered the home of the Zeke family, to identify the remnants of the horror. In this home, parents and a child had been killed. Against the background of the smells and thoughts, I couldn't hold myself back and suddenly started drawing on the sooty wall. The painting just came out of my heart: two soldiers protecting a child. Although this drawing did not materialize, and unfortunately the



soldiers did not have time to save the victims, it was something that burst out of me in those moments. I didn't even sign my name on the painting.

When the "Yad Ben Zvi" people responsible for preserving the history of the State of Israel saw the painting, they wanted to find who the painter was and the story behind it. They managed to locate Offner and said they decided to preserve the painting and display it for future generations. Perhaps in a museum in memory of the 7th of October.

Offner continues: I was surprised. I never dreamed that a spontaneous painting on soot would be a work to preserve. The Tel Aviv Museum of Art and Yad Ben-Zvi consulted experts on how to preserve the painting. And so, just before the demolition of the house, the wall was uprooted and transported with a crane to be preserved in state treasure warehouses.

The "Hamiklat" gallery, on behalf of the Jerusalem Municipality, will be exhibiting Offner's paintings from Dec. 17th until Jan. 10th. On Jan. 10th, during the closing ceremony, there will be a film about the preservation of the wall. Address: #7 Yehuda Maccabi Street, Jerusalem. Phone: 0585001019.

Cooking Tip of the Week

Cheese Latkes: Every ethnic group has their favorite Chanukah treat. In my family its cheese latkes. Beat 2 eggs, 1/2 tsp salt, 2 tbsp sugar and stir in 1 package of farmers cheese 200-250g (Tuv Taam) with 1 cup of flour. I like to add 1 tsp of baking powder. Fry and enjoy!

*Alizah Hochstead,
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Halacha Corner – Lighting Chanukah Candles

The Rambam states, "the Chanukah lights are an extremely precious mitzvah. Be extra careful in observing this mitzvah, in order to publicize the miracle and to praise G-d and thank Him for the miracles that He performed for us."

Men and women are equally obligated in the mitzvah of kindling the Chanukah lights. Even a pauper who survives on tzedakah is expected to sell his garment if need be and to purchase oil for his menorah.

A household member may fulfill his obligation through the menorah that is lit by the head of his household. In that case, he should listen to the blessing and respond amen, but he should not respond baruch hu u-varuch shemo.

Rav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita, member of the Badatz of Crown Heights, One Minute Halacha, #175, reprinted from crownheightsconnect.com

Question: My wife and I recently began to observe Torah and mitzvot and are expecting our first child, thank G-d. It will also be the first grandchild for both of our parents. The issue is that there is a lot of pressure around what the name will be. Our parents are not aggressive but, in a polite and sometimes indirect way, they make it known what they want the name to be. We do not want to offend somebody. What should we do?

Answer: In one of the Rebbe's letters, the Rebbe responds to a grandfather who asks for advice on how to name his new grandson. (Igrot Kodesh, volume 9, pg. 136). The Rebbe answers that his father-in-law, the Previous Rebbe, instructed that others should not get involved in these matters. As the Arizal teaches, the parents are directed from Above to give the name that is appropriate for the child's soul. In other words, Hashem puts the name in the mouth of the parents; like a temporary prophecy to choose the right name.

This can be further understood in the light of Chassidus: when Adam HaRishon named the animals, he did not choose randomly. He saw the life force that is drawn down into the animal through the vehicle of the letters of the name. In other words, the Hebrew name is a vessel for each creation's animating life force; the name connects the physical creation with its soul. So too with a human being, a person's name connects their soul with their body. (see the Rebbe's Chassidic discourse, Basi Legani, 5721)

The birth of your first child is a special time in your life that should be cherished. Enjoy each moment, focus on the good and support your wife physically and emotionally. Share with her the spiritual significance of the name and the parent's role in naming the child.

In that you are recently observant, there will likely be other changes that are not familiar to your parents, i.e. things you can't eat, Shabbat and Yom Tov observance, etc. Thus, you will need to be able to stand up for your values, your new way of life. Continue to act pleasantly and respectfully with your parents. At the same time, give yourselves the space and freedom to choose the name. In the end of the day, we can't control everyone and every situation, and people may get offended. Yet, over-personalization (blaming ourselves for things we are not responsible for) leads to guilt, stress and insecurity. We can only move forward and do the best we can. The more secure and confident you are, the more accepting they will be of your way of life.

And, most importantly, trust in Hashem. In the vast majority of cases, the things we worry about work out fine.

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