

Living Jewish



Tell your Children

A Small Kindness Repaid with a Big One

America had finally entered World War I. Troops poured into Europe to put an end to the war. The war was in its final stages. American troops were dispatched throughout Germany. The year was 1917. A lone Jewish soldier from Duluth, Minnesota, Alex Lurye, found himself in a small German town called Sel-des. It was Friday night. Being far away from home was lonely. Having some time and feeling out of place, the young Jewish soldier decided to see what the local Jewish population was like.

His entering the local village synagogue must have created a stir. An American soldier in uniform! The Americans had fought the Germans in bitter combat. The lone soldier felt apprehensive. Almost immediately, however, he was greeted by a kind German Jew by the name of Herr Rosenau, who made him feel at home in the synagogue. What's more, after the services, Herr Rosenau invited the serviceman to his house for kiddush and the Friday night meal.

The Beauty of Shabbat

Seeing the beauty of a Shabbat together with the warmth and kindness of this German-Jewish family made a deep impression on this young soldier. He was a stranger, a foreigner, even an enemy; yet because he was Jewish he was invited to another Jew's home, given a delicious warm kosher home cooked meal, complete with wine and accompanied by the traditional Shabbat songs. Herr Rosenau's family, together with his teenage daughter, gave the soldier the feeling he was not alone, certainly not an enemy, even in such a far and distant land.

The soldier was never able to come back to see this kind family again. However, the warm impression that he had received, the experience of the Shabbat in a warm and caring Jewish home did not leave him. It meant so much to this young soldier that when he finally returned to Duluth, Minnesota, his home town, he took time out to sit down and write a letter to the German Jew who had touched his life with such kindness.



Painting by Shaye Sheiner of Kfar Chabad

This was in 1917. For some unknown reason, although Herr Rosenau received the letter it was never answered. It was placed in a desk drawer and there it rested for twenty-one years.

1938

Time moves on. Ruth, the teenage daughter of the German Jew, had grown up and was married to a German Jew by the name of Eugene Wienberg. They had three small children. In the year 1938 their oldest was a boy of eleven. It was a terrible difficult time for the German Jews. The dreaded Adolf Hitler had taken hold upon Germany and anti-Jewish proclamations were being contrived and enforced on a continually regular basis.

One day, Herr Rosenau was hosting the family. While ruminating about the dark and dismal future for himself and his fellow Jews in Germany, he wasn't paying much attention to his eleven-year-old grandson, Sigbert, who was rummaging through his desk looking for something of interest. Suddenly a foreign postage stamp caught his eye. He pulled out the envelope with the stamp from America. "Grandfather, can I have this?"

Twenty-one years had passed since he received the letter. "Yes, take it," the grandfather replies. The old forgotten envelope makes his grandson happy. He

takes it home to his mother. "Look, look what grandfather has given me!"

The mother and her husband, Herr Wienberg, eye the envelope with curiosity. They remove the letter inside and read it. It was the thank you letter from the American service man, from 21 years ago.

The mother remembered the young man. "Let's write to him! Maybe he will remember us and sponsor us, enabling us to immigrate to America." (In those years, the U.S.A. did not let refugees come to its shores freely. However, if an American resident citizen would sponsor you, there was a chance.) "We have no future in Germany, we must get out

before this mad man, Hitler, begins to do worse things to the Jews."

Looking on the envelope, they saw that there was no return address, only the name, Alex Lurye, and the city and state, Duluth, Minnesota. So they wrote a letter addressed only as follows: *Alex Lurye, Duluth, Minnesota.*

Can you send a letter to a person in a large city without a street address and expect it to be delivered? Of course not. You would have to be foolish to think it would get to its destination. But sometimes it works out.

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Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	4:14	5:32
Tel Aviv	4:35	5:34
Haifa	4:22	5:31
Beer Sheva	4:36	5:35
New York	4:30	5:34

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Moving Forward

A young man from an observant home was presented with many challenges as he tried to integrate himself into American life. His encounters with the chassidim and the philosophy of Lubavitch helped him overcome these hurdles.

Once, at a private meeting with the Rebbe, he asked whether he could consider himself a chassid. "I am attracted to the chassidic way of life," he explained, "but can never see myself donning a black hat or chassidic garb. Does this disqualify me?"

The Rebbe responded: "when every day a person endeavors to take a step forward in the service of G-d and the love of his fellow man, I am happy to consider him my chassid."

Advancing within our Jewish heritage does not necessarily mean adopting the clothing or the lifestyle of the past. Instead, it has to do with living in the present — and looking toward the future — in the most complete manner a Jew can.

The Blessing of Sons

This week's Torah reading, Vayechi, relates that Jacob blessed Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Menashe, saying: "through

you Israel shall bless, saying, 'may G-d make you like Ephraim and Menashe.'"

This is the blessing that a father gives his son on Friday nights, on the day before Yom Kippur, and on other occasions when blessing is appropriate.

Implied is that Ephraim and Menashe are prototypes. They both represent Jewish children born in exile, away from the Holy Land. Nevertheless, they point to two different motifs.

Menashe and Ephraim

The name Menashe was given him because: "G-d has made me forget... my father's household."

Implied is that a Menashe Jew is concerned about losing the link to his father's household. He realizes that he lives in Egypt, in exile, and does not have the awareness of G-d inherent to those who live in the Holy Land.

That bothers him. He is concerned about his forgetting and that makes him remember. Although he lives in exile, he is looking back to the time when his ancestors lived in Eretz Yisrael. This keeps him connected to his Jewish heritage.

The name Ephraim was given him because "G-d made me fruitful in the land of my

oppression." Ephraim does not look back; he looks forward. He takes exile, "the land of my oppression," and makes it fruitful, transforming it into a medium for the expression of G-d's intent.

Living in Exile

Certainly, living in exile is different from living in Eretz Yisrael. But there is a Divine purpose in that circumstance as well.

While a person is in exile, he need not spend all his effort trying to recall Eretz Yisrael. Instead, he should do what he can to spread G-dliness in his surroundings, showing how there is no place and no situation in the world apart from Him.

For this reason, Ephraim is given the greater blessing. For the path of Divine service his name connotes is more comprehensive, allowing us to appreciate how His presence permeates every element of existence.

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

From our Sages

He blessed Joseph, and he said, "G-d...bless the lads..." (Gen. 48:15, 16)

This verse opens by saying that Jacob blessed Joseph. Yet, we see from the next verse that Jacob blessed Joseph's children! However, "G-d bless the lads" is really Joseph's blessing. For, what greater blessing can one have than that one's children would be blessed.

(the Zohar)

Gather yourselves together, and I will tell you what will befall you in the last days. (Gen. 49:1)

Jacob spoke to his sons in a seemingly spontaneous manner. This is the manner in which Moshiach will arrive - with people paying no attention, seemingly by chance. A person will be involved with his work, and all of a sudden, he will see that Moshiach has arrived.

(the Baal Shem Tov)

And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt for 17 years (Gen. 47:28)

When the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, was a child, he learned

a commentary on this verse that these 17 years were the best years of Jacob's life. This surprised the boy, and he went to his grandfather, the Alter Rebbe, to find out how it was possible that the years spent in such a spiritually corrupt and abominable land could have been Jacob's best.

The Alter Rebbe replied: before Jacob descended into Egypt, he sent an emissary to establish yeshivot and places of learning. Whenever and wherever a Jew learns Torah, he cleaves to G-d and achieves a true and meaningful life. Further more, precisely because Egypt was such an abominable place, the holiness and spirituality Jacob attained there shone that much brighter against the dark and evil background of his surroundings.

(the Rebbe)

And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger (Gen. 48:14)

"The deeds of our forefathers are a sign for their children." Like Jacob, we should always try to draw the younger generation closer with our "right hand," symbolic of love and affection, to the light of Torah.

(Daat Chochamim)

Learning Torah Properly

The Alter Rebbe held a number of debates with the Torah scholars of Lithuania over the validity of Chassidus. On these occasions he would discuss concepts in halacha, generally the halachot of Birkat HaNehenin (Blessings of Enjoyment/Gratitude), and would conclude with a spiritual lesson.

At the second debate, which took place in Minsk, everyone recognized his outstanding genius, and it deeply impacted the Torah scholars.

At the conclusion of that debate, he taught a lesson from the Mishna: "Whoever drinks water out of thirst should say the blessing, shehakol nihyah bidevaro."

He explained that water symbolizes Torah, and the test of whether one is truly learning Torah properly is whether he recognizes that everything (shehakol) is being created by the word of Hashem (nihyah bidevaro).

Among those present were many diligent students who would learn for eighteen to twenty-one hours every day. When they heard this explanation, scores of them were attracted to becoming disciples of the Alter Rebbe.

The Rebbe Rayatz, reprinted from The Weekly Farbrengen by Merkaz Anash, on-line at TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com

Chassidus page

The Foundation of Her Home

Chassidim once asked the Maharil, the Alter Rebbe's brother, what caused his parents to merit to have four sons who were Torah giants. He replied that it was probably due to the awe and fear of Heaven and the passionate love of Torah of his mother, Rebbetzin Rivkah. To illustrate he shared the below story:

My father, Reb Baruch, once traveled on a business trip and brought back an expensive coat as a gift for my mother. Our teacher's wife became very jealous, and began nagging him to give her gifts as well. This had an effect on him, and his usual enthusiasm was lacking. Noticing this, my mother questioned him and he told her of his troubles. Without hesitation, my mother took out her coat and gave it to the teacher, saying, "give this to your wife, and continue to teach my sons with enthusiasm."

A Mother's Influence

Women are called the Akeret Habayit since they are the "ikar" (the mainstay of the home). It is clearly observable that the primary education of young children and even infants is accomplished not by the father, teacher, rosh yeshiva or the rav – but by the child's own mother. (*the Rebbe*)

When a home is run by an Akeret Habayit whose heart is a Mishkan (Sanctuary) for Hashem, and her conduct follows the instructions of the Torah, it can be seen in the conduct of her husband, sons, and daughters, whose thoughts, speech, and actions are permeated with creating a Mishkan for Hashem. Even the mundane vessels in the home become permeated

with holiness and G-dliness, as befits a home that is a Mishkan, about which Hashem said, "I will dwell within them." And this brings peace and unity in the home amongst all the family members. (*the Rebbe, Torat Menachem*)

Infusing Excitement in Children

The mitzvah of chinuch (education), to enforce the observance of mitzvot by children, is primarily the obligation of the father. However, practically speaking, the mother is the one who spends the most time with her children, and she is the one who raises them. Furthermore, the mother has an advantage since she educates in a soft spoken manner, expressing feelings of closeness, love and affection. Particularly in recent times, this approach of education is more successful.

The same is true for Torah study. Although, it is the obligation of the father to teach his son Torah, nonetheless, it is the mother who helps and encourages her sons to learn. Just as the Sages state that the mothers have a share in their sons' studies because of the physical help that they offer, the same is true for support and encouragement.

One way this is done is by asking the child about his learning in cheder or yeshiva. As is clearly observable, the mother's warmth and excitement can cause the boy to become extra excited about his learning (unlike the father's weekly test). (*the Rebbe, Sefer HaSichot*)

reprinted from The Weekly Farbrengen by Merkaz Anash, on-line at TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com

A Small Kindness Repaid with a Big One

continued from page one:

In this case, Alex Luyre was a wealthy businessman who was well known in Duluth, even though it was a city of more than a hundred thousand people. The postmaster delivered the letter. When Alex received it, he quickly sent a return letter acknowledging his receipt of their letter and pledging to help bring the Wienberg family to Duluth. Indeed, the entire Wienberg family arrived that same year, in May of 1938. Shortly thereafter, the Rosenau family were also able to reach America.

In Duluth, the Wienberg family began working hard to make life bearable through the depression era. Sometimes both the father and mother had to work two jobs in order to make it through the week. Yet in Duluth as in Seldes, Germany, the family made sure that the Shabbat would be joyously honored.

The rest of the family were fortunately brought over to the States before the horrors of World War II swiftly came. Most of German Jewry was destroyed.

The kindness that Herr Rosenau had given to a stranger twenty-one years earlier had come full circle. Because of their kindness, without any thought of personal gain, Herr Rosenau and his family were spared from the horrible fate of their fellow German Jews. The kindness that they had so warmly given to others without desiring a payment in return had come back to them with dividends. The entire clan was saved.

And they sprouted and grew—a family blessed with many children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren (as of the first writing of this report in 1997). All of whom took upon themselves always to honor the Shabbat.

Source: Edited by Yerachmiel Tilles from an article by Yisrael Nathan (as told to JewishMag.com staff). 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

The Rambam holds that the Ingathering of the Exiles will follow the building of the Third Temple. The Zohar teaches that the Resurrection will take place 40 years after the Ingathering of the Exiles. Thus, the order of events: 1. Moshiach's arrival; 2. Rebuilding the Temple; 3. Ingathering of the Exiles; 4. 40 years later, the Resurrection.

There is an opinion that certain righteous individuals will be resurrected at the outset with the arrival of Moshiach. As a reward for their lifelong divine service, they will thus be privileged to participate in the universal rejoicing that will accompany his arrival, and to witness the rebuilding of the Temple. Similarly, there is an opinion that Moshe and Aharon and his sons will be resurrected before Moshiach comes, so that they will be able to instruct the people as they did at the time of the Exodus.

Adapted from To Live and Live Again, reprinted with perm. from Sichos in English

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“Together at Home”

“Together at Home” is a unique initiative by the “Ayelet Hashachar” organization, bringing together designers and architects who will volunteer to help families from the South and North to rebuild their homes.

Many homes in the Gaza Envelope communities and the Northern conflict zone, which were damaged in the October 7th terror attack and the ongoing fighting, currently stand empty and destroyed. While some families are still living in hotels and temporary housing solutions, many are beginning to plan their return home.

As part of this initiative, which will launch at a conference the beginning of the Hebrew month of Tevet, architects and interior designers will volunteer to assist families in need. Each professional will accompany one family and help them redesign their home, taking into account the special needs that arose due to the situation.

“We see the families’ distress,” says Rabbi Shlomo Raanan, chairman of



the ‘Ayelet Hashachar’ organization behind the initiative, noting that “these are people who lost not just a roof over their heads, but their home with all its emotional significance. Our goal is not just to renovate and repair, but to help families rebuild their sense of home.”

The initiative’s launch conference is expected to be attended by architects and interior designers from Israel’s leading firms who are taking part in the project, alongside heads of councils from the Gaza Envelope communities and the Northern conflict zone, public figures, and social activists. The conference’s guest of honor, Israeli hero Amichai Shindler, who was critically wounded on October 7th, will share with participants the miracle of his survival and how he rescued his wife and children unharmed.

During the conference, the volunteers will be presented with the needs on the ground, and an initial meeting between volunteers and families will take place. In the second phase of the initiative, there are plans to expand the circle of assistance to include additional professionals, including electricians, plumbers, renovation contractors, and others, who will offer their services at cost price.

reprinted from Chabadinfo.com

Cooking Tip of the Week

Celery Root Salad: Combine 1/2 c mayonnaise, 2 tbs Dijon mustard, 1 tbs lemon juice and 2 tbs chopped parsley. Grate 1 peeled celery root and 1 green apple. Mix with the dressing and add salt and pepper. Chill until serving.

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Halacha Corner – Problematic Employment

There is a concept in Halacha, which originates in the Gemara, of Uman BaAvidtai Torid, that a professional who is involved in his work need not be concerned he will have inappropriate thoughts arising from his work. Uman BaAvidtai Torid, however, is not a blanket rule to be used in all situations.

For example, if a girl wants her hair cut by a professional male hairdresser, or a woman wants her sheitel cut by a male, this is unacceptable because the man is involved in actually beautifying the woman. In such a case, we do not use the rule of Uman BaAvidtai Torid; we don’t say that since he is involved in his work he will not have inappropriate thoughts. Likewise, the Rogatchover Gaon says that in regards to women singing, such as girls singing on a bus, we do not say that while the male bus driver is involved in his work, he will not hear the singing. Consequently, that is not acceptable.

Rav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita, member of the Badatz of Crown Heights. Practical Halachah: One minute a day. Reprinted from crownheightsconnect.com

Question: I have a hard time accomplishing. I have a lot of good ideas and get excited about doing them. But once I get down into the details and think of the challenges and obstacles, I decide it can’t be done and I drop it. I know it sounds cliché, but my life is scattered with unfulfilled dreams. As I get older and look back, I wish I could have accomplished more.

Answer: Rabbi Shabtai Slavaticki, Chabad emissary in Antwerp, Belgium tells the following story: Soon after he arrived in Antwerp he met a Jew who had not had a brit mila (circumcision). After speaking with Rav Slavaticki, he agreed to have the procedure. According to the law in Belgium, one could only have a brit mila in the local hospital. However, the earliest appointment was in two months. Seeing no alternative, Rabbi Slavaticki scheduled the appointment. He then wrote to the Rebbe requesting a blessing for the procedure. The reply by telegram from the Rebbe was quick in coming: “Why does the brit mila need to be delayed two months. There is the issue of spiritual excision [for someone without a brit].”

Rabbi Slavaticki received the telegram in the morning and told the mohel, “today we are doing the brit!” The mohel was in shock. Yet, in the end, the brit was done that day! Rabbi Slavaticki concluded, “if a person resolves that something will be done, it works out.”

In an answer to a person’s question, the Rebbe explained, “there are things that a person does not ask “whether” to do them, but rather, “how” to do them. You need to arrive at the goal. How? You will find the way! The power to find the answer resides within you.”

After the Jews victory over Egypt, the nations were afraid to do battle with the Jews. Yet, as the Jewish people were traveling to receive the Torah, the nation of Amalek attacked. This opened the door for others. Rashi explains that it was comparable to a boiling hot bath into which no person could descend. One went in, was scalded, yet cooled it off for others. In a spiritual sense, Amalek represents “doubt”. In Hebrew the word Amalek and safek (doubt) share the same numerical value of 240. Amalek cools us off; it is the voice that whispers, “it won’t work”; “no one will listen to you”; “you don’t have the time”, etc., etc. The answer to Amalek is a firm resolution. In the face of a determined decision, Amalek melts away.

Choose a project and plan one action item for each day. Each small step provides positive momentum to do more. The key is to keep moving forward. Make a firm resolution and the rest will follow.

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