

The Jewish Weekly

The Sabba Kadisha or the Kotzker?

By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

Rabbi Yisachar Dov Ber of Radushitz, the Sabba Kadisha (1765-1843) was a disciple of Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak Horowitz, the Chozeh of Lublin, and later on the disciple of Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak of Pshischa, also called "Yehudi Hakadosh, the Holy Jew".

Rabbi Yisachar, asked the Chozeh, "Show me one general way to serve Hashem." The Chozeh replied, "it is impossible to tell people what way they should take. For one person it's through learning, another through prayer, another through fasting, and still another through eating. Everyone should carefully observe what way his heart draws him, and then choose this way with all his strength."

R' Chaim was a chassid of the Rebbe of Radushitz. He was a Torah scholar, and very wealthy, yet wasn't blessed with children. Finally, after several years, he was blessed with a daughter. R' Chaim gave her the best education and derived great nachat. When she came of marriageable age, he set out to find the right boy, a Torah scholar, with good middot, whom he would support for life.

He was offered an appealing boy named Noach, who fit the description in learning and middot. R' Chaim asked his Rebbe advice on the match, and with a blessing from the Rebbe, the match was finalized. After the wedding, R' Noach sat in Shul (synagogue) endless hours, learning Torah and advancing in Avodat Hashem (serving Hashem).

R' Chaim was amazed and gratified with his son-in-law. They would frequently visit the Rebbe of Radushitz, as R' Noach was also his Chassid. In the Shul, R' Noach became close to a prominent Kotzker chassid, where both spent many hours together studying Torah and serving Hashem. This Jew introduced him to the teachings of the Kotzker Rebbe, Harav Menachem Mendel.

R' Noach's soul gradually became more and more attached to the Kotzker Rebbe with heart and soul. The Kotzker chassidim were known to be very elevated spiritually and minimized their eating and sleeping while being immersed in learning the Torah for many hours. It was said that the highest level Kotzker chassidim could have been Rebbes themselves.

R' Chaim tried to persuade his son in law that not everyone was able to follow this path, and R' Noach had a weak constitution;

his health started to decline until he became bedridden. R' Chaim took his son in law to the best doctors but no one could cure him. R' Chaim now went to the Radushitzer Rebbe for a Bracha and advice on how to cure his son in law. The Rebbe said: "Let R' Noach come to me, and he will leave with a complete recovery".

R' Chaim knew that Noach was a staunch Kotzker Chassid and would never agree to visit the Radushitzer Rebbe. However, as the condition worsened, R' Chaim pressed his daughter to beg her husband to visit the Radushitzer Rebbe.

R' Noach, a fervent chassid and believer in the Kotzker Rebbe answered, "If my Rebbe cannot help me, then the Radushitzer Rebbe cannot help me either"! But as his condition became downright grave, his wife begged him:

"Noach! What do you have to lose? Have mercy on me, your loyal wife! Go to my father's Rebbe!"

R' Noach softened and answered her: "The only way that the Radushitzer Rebbe can help me, is if I am convinced with rock solid Emunah (faith) that he can help me. In Kotzk we were taught that we can only have Emunah in a Rebbe if he is a giant in Torah, with unblemished righteousness. I want to ask your father to elaborate on the greatness of his Rebbe, about his level in learning and what he performs for Jews in need".

After hearing what he wanted to hear, R' Noach announced that he was willing to go to the Radushitzer Rebbe. His intention, which he took pains to conceal, was to ask the Radushitzer Rebbe a few very complex questions in learning; if he would answer them, then he would have Emunah in him, as receiving a brachah for recovery was concerned.

When they arrived in Radushitz, they waited to see the Rebbe. When R' Noach saw the Rebbe, he suddenly regained an inexplicably strong bond to him. The Rebbe asked R' Noach if he was knowledgeable in learning, as he wanted to test him. R' Noach answered like a true Kotzker chassid: "I do learn but am not sure if I really can learn!"

The Rebbe smiled and asked R' Noach if he was willing to hear a Torah thought from him and a story to go along with it. R' Noach didn't understand what a story had to do with testing his learning, but nevertheless he willingly consented.

The Rebbe closed his eyes, grasped R' Noach's hand tightly and embarked on a very deep aspect in chassidut and then closed out with a story from tzaddikim. R' Noach, his eyes closed, concentrated on the sweetness and depth of the Torah and the story he was hearing. He felt a sense of lofty elevation in understanding Hashem.

It Once Happened...

Suddenly he felt that the Radushitzer Rebbe had read his mind and had just then answered all the questions that he prepared. Suddenly, R' Noach let out his intense emotion: "It's amazing! The Rebbe just answered all the difficult questions I was intending to ask!"

The Rebbe smiled and released his hand. R' Noach exclaimed, "Rebbe I now see that you are a great Tzaddik, and I want to accept you as my Rebbe."

The Radushitzer Rebbe tried to dissuade him. "No! Not so fast! Everyone knows you are a Kotzker Chassid, so it's better to stay on that path."

"No Rebbe! I have found my true place here in Radushitz."

The Rebbe smiled and said "It's clear to me that you have attained true Emunah. In that merit, I promise that you will soon recover completely". R' Noach answered 'Amen' from the depths of his heart.

Slowly but steadily, R' Noach began to regain his strength and with time, regained his former health. Noach felt an obligation to the Kotzker Rebbe and told him all that had happened in Radushitz.

The Kotzker Rebbe, in a sign of generosity and fatherly love, told R' Noach that this experience showed clearly that his soul lay in Radushitz and that the Radushitzer Rebbe is a holy Tzaddik. The Kotzker spoke about him as one of the Tzaddikim in the generation who can approach Hashem without permission from the appointed angels. (The gemarah Sukka 45b states that in every generation there are at least two Tzaddikim who are on this level.)

When R' Noach heard this glowing approbation, he felt enormously gratified for the Kotzker Rebbe's endorsement, although he always retained a certain inspiration from his spiritual stay in Kotzk. R' Noach was confirmed as a devoted chassid of the Radushitzer Rebbe, thereby giving great nachat to his wife and father in law R' Chaim.

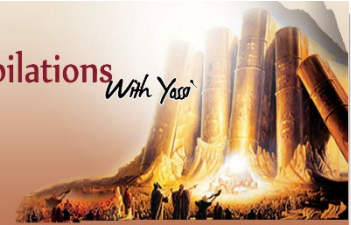
Reprinted from an email of Pardes Yehuda.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Parshat Vayechi

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	4:18	5:34	6:12
Tel Aviv	4:32	5:35	6:08
Haifa	4:22	5:33	6:08
Be'er Sheva	4:37	5:37	6:13



To Save a Friend

By Chaya Sarah Silberberg

Gedalia Moshe Goldman, who later became the Grand Rebbe of Zvhil, and Chaim Shaul Bruk, a renowned Chabad mashpia (mentor), were serving time together in a Soviet prison camp. Their "heinous" crime? Observing and spreading Judaism under the Communist regime.

One Shabbat, the sadistic commandant of the camp called Gedalia Moshe into his office. "I have here the papers for your release," he said as he waved some papers in the air, "and if you sign them now, you will be a free man."

"But it is Shabbat," replied Gedalia Moshe. "I cannot and will not sign on Shabbat."

The commandant – who, of course, knew that Gedalia Moshe wouldn't transgress the Shabbat – shouted, "If you don't sign the papers now you will remain here another eight years!"

"Nevertheless, I will not sign and desecrate the Shabbat."

"Very well," sneered the commandant. "Don't sign. You will be in this prison for eight more years. And we'll see how your G-d will help you..."

"If you don't sign the papers now you will remain here another eight years!" "If my G-d wants to help me, He'll do it without you. And if He wants me to be in this prison eight more years, I will be here eight more years even if you would decide to let me go," replied Gedalia Moshe calmly. "It has nothing to do with you."

The already enraged commandant saw red. He whipped his pistol out of its holster, pointed it at Gedalia Moshe's heart, and screamed "Let's see who will help you now!"

He cocked the gun...

And his daughter walked into the office. She saw her father pointing the gun at Gedalia Moshe and said in a bored voice, "Father, it's a waste of a bullet..."



The Rebbe of Zvhil and Chaim Shaul Bruk

Slowly the commandant lowered the gun. "Don't think it was your G d that saved you!" he shouted at Gedalia Moshe who was standing there serenely. "If it hadn't been for my daughter you would be dead meat by now!"

He turned to an aide and yelled to him, "Bring in the other Jew trouble-maker, Chaim Shaul!"

A few moments passed, and Chaim Shaul was standing in the office next to Gedalia Moshe. The commandant made him the same offer as he had to Gedalia Moshe: "Sign these papers and you can go free."

"Of course I can't sign the papers," replied Chaim Shaul, "It's Shabbat, and I don't violate the Shabbat."

"You will remain here another eight years."

"I will not write on Shabbat."

Suddenly Gedalia Moshe said, "Give me the papers. I will sign for him."

The commandant was dumbfounded. "What? You said you wouldn't write on Shabbat! You're going to be here for another eight years! And now you'll sign for him?"

"Of course I wouldn't sign on Shabbat to gain my freedom," Gedalia Moshe replied. "But this is different. I'm strong, and I can withstand the conditions in this prison another eight years. But Chaim Shaul is weaker, and he cannot stand this place any longer. It would be dangerous for him to remain here another eight years."

Give me the papers and let me sign..."

Both men were freed from prison within the next few days.

For after all, it wasn't the commandant who was in control.

Reprinted from an email of archives of Chabad.Org.

Of all communal organizations, which are the most sacred?

In Parshat Vayechi, we read how Yaakov was preparing for his death. He told Yosef his son, "ועשית עמדי חסד ואמת - Please practice kindness and truth with me when I have passed away."

Now, what did Yaakov mean? חסד - lovingkindness, infers going the extra mile in order to engage in acts of compassion. אמת - truth, means that you must do what is right, and that is all. So, on the one hand he's saying, 'do the right thing,' while on the other hand he's saying, 'go the extra mile.'

Sefer Panim Yafot explains beautifully. Yaakov was saying to Yosef that he should do what is right, the אמת: in this case, as a child, he would have a responsibility to bury his father. In addition to that, Yaakov was saying, "I would love you to engage in חסד." – I would love you to go the extra mile in order to take my remains back to the Holy Land so that I can be buried together with my ancestors.

This term, 'חסד של אמת' is the slogan of every single Chevra Kadisha organization in the world. Indeed it is the Chevra Kadisha (translated as Sacred Society) which, to my mind, is definitely the most precious of all of our communal organizations: simply extraordinary men and women who in their separate divisions look after people once they have physically passed away.

Within our communities, we are blessed to have their 'חסד של אמת.' First of all, they do what is right, to guarantee that every person will have a burial, and in addition, the חסד that they apply, their acts of lovingkindness, going the extra mile with such devotion to those who have passed away and to their families, is always something very remarkable for us to witness. Their kindness is of the ultimate form because the person to whom they are showing kindness will not be able to repay it in any way. It's absolutely sincere – it comes from the heart and it is in the finest tradition and spirit of our faith.

You probably don't even know who most of the members of your Chevra Kadisha are. That's the spirit in which they are operating. They don't do it for any thanks, but let's ensure, as communities, that we do always express our full gratitude to these most wonderful people.

Most of you are not aware that I have been involved in חסד של אמת for many years now. I often personally take on the task to bury a מת מצווה (a person who has nobody to arrange his burial) all over the world, which involves a lot of expenses. If you would like to take part in this holy Mitzvah feel free to contact me, either by whatsapp or by email yossi@hwb.world

Join me by praying 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. Also 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.

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NO MITZVOT IN THIS PARSHA

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 85
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1158
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 4448

HAFTORA:
Melachim I 2:1 – 12

ויחי
פרשת

This week has been sponsored by Shmuel and Dina Halpern In memory of his father ר' שמעון צבי בן הרב דוד ז"ל Whose Yahrzeit is Monday ט"ג טבת

Yossi