

Living Jewish

חב"ד
כל הלב לכל אחד
צעירי אגודת חב"ד

Tell your Children

A Path Back to Joy

Purim at the Alexander court was a special event. Joy erupted like a rushing river in the Beit Midrash of the Yesmach Yisrael, a moment of spiritual favor for those in need of salvation.

Behind the celebration stood a devoted follower, R' Yerachmiel Kinober—an exceptional Torah scholar, witty and eloquent, with a unique talent for speech. At the height of the Purim feast, he would climb onto the table, slightly inebriated yet clear-headed, delivering a chain of rhymed remarks—both humorous and spiritually stirring.

Between songs and laughter, disciples approached the Rebbe with heartfelt requests. Miracles unfolded at the Rebbe's table, as it was said, "A righteous man decrees, and G-d fulfills."

One year, however, the Rebbe's face remained solemn, casting a heavy atmosphere over the gathering. R' Yerachmiel, despite his efforts, failed to uplift him. The crowd laughed at his witty remarks, but the Rebbe's expression remained unreadable.

The Whistle

Then the Rebbe spoke:

"In the days of the Baal Shem Tov, a harsh decree was cast upon a Jewish community. On Yom Kippur, the Baal Shem Tov exerted immense spiritual efforts to annul it, yet to no avail. As the Ne'ilah prayer reached its climax, his disciples joined in fervent cries, but his severe expression showed that the gates of mercy remained shut.

"Suddenly, a piercing whistle rang through the synagogue, cutting through the prayers and lifting heads from the prayer books. At that moment, the Baal Shem Tov's face transformed into joy.

"At the post-fast meal, he revealed the source: a simple village boy, unlearned in reading or prayer, who longed to participate. Overcome with emotion, he placed his fingers in his mouth and whistled with all his heart. That heartfelt whistle shattered the barriers above and



"And these days shall be remembered and celebrated..." (Megillat Esther)

annulled the decree."

The Rebbe sighed, "Ah! Where will we find such a whistle?"

R' Yerachmiel called out, "The Rebbe needs a whistle? Here!" He placed two fingers in his mouth and let out a sharp whistle. Instantly, the Rebbe's eyes lit up, and the joyous Purim spirit returned as if nothing had happened.

Tragedy

Time passed, and tragedy struck R' Yerachmiel. In one blow, he lost both his wife and daughter. The joyous chassid was broken. His spark dimmed, his mischievous eyes dulled, and his mouth, once overflowing with words, fell silent. The community worried—not only for him but for the upcoming Purim. Just as there is no joy without wine, there was no Purim joy without R' Yerachmiel. But now, only his shadow remained.

Purim in the Rebbe's court began as usual—joyful tunes, overflowing wine, eager anticipation for R' Yerachmiel's table performance. Yet he remained in a corner, eyes hollow with grief. The chassidim urged him to join, but to no avail. Even the Rebbe's direct plea did not move him. His sorrow was too deep.

That year, Purim joy was dampened. Disciples left with heavy hearts, while the elder chassidim gathered at the Rebbe's private meal. R' Yerachmiel, too, dragged himself there, standing dejectedly in the corner.

The Rebbe suddenly called out, "Is this the way of chassidut? Where is the commandment to rejoice?"

Lowering his gaze, R' Yerachmiel finally spoke:

continued on page three

Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	5:07	6:22
Tel Aviv	5:28	6:24
Haifa	5:17	6:23
Beer Sheva	5:28	6:24
New York	6:44	7:43

Chabad of Israel
Rabbi Joseph I. Aronov
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Editor: Aharon Schmidt
livingjewishweekly@gmail.com
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Forty Days on Mount Sinai

In this week's Torah reading, Ki Tisa, we learn that Moshe ascended Mount Sinai to seek atonement and forgiveness from Hashem for the Jewish people following their sin of the Golden Calf.

All in all, Moshe was on Mount Sinai for 120 days—three periods of 40 days. During the first 40 days, Moshe received the first tablets. During the second 40, Moshe asked Hashem to grant atonement and forgiveness to the Jews. During the third 40, Moshe received the second tablets.

40 Days and 40 Nights

When Moshe ascended to receive the Torah, he stayed there for forty days and forty nights, and the Torah testifies about him: "He ate no bread and drank no water."

How could this be possible? After all, according to Jewish law, it is impossible to survive without food or drink for more than seven days. Anyone who swears not to eat anything for seven days is considered to have made a oath in vain!

There are three explanations for this.

First Explanation: Even during Moshe's time on Mount Sinai, he retained the natural traits of a human being in this world. His body required food, drink, and sleep.

However, G-d performed a daily, continuous miracle, enabling Moses to remain alive and fully functional without food or drink, despite the needs of his body.

Second Explanation: This was not a miracle but rather an extraordinary natural event. When Moshe went up to Mount Sinai, he was filled with immense joy on one hand and deep concentration on the other, in preparation to receive the Torah.

From his intense preoccupation and joy, his mind and spiritual powers were strengthened to the point where they overcame his physical needs. His body was indeed hungry and tired, but Moshe did not feel any of these demands due to his excitement over the Torah.

Third Explanation: When Moshe ascended Mount Sinai, his physical nature was transformed into that of an angel. Just as angels do not need food or drink, so too Moshe did not require these physical needs, because his body was elevated to the level of the bodies of angels. According to this explanation, Moshe did not feel hunger, thirst, or fatigue, because he had ascended to a spiritual level where these concepts did not exist.

Continuous Miracle

According to the principle, "these and those are the words of the living G-d," it

can be said that these three explanations correspond to the three times Moshe ascended Mount Sinai.

The first time, when he went up to receive the first set of tablets, a continuous miracle occurred, and he did not need food or drink. Just as the tablets were miraculous "a work of G-d," "a writing of G-d," so too a miracle was performed for Moses, and his body did not require food or drink.

The second time, when he ascended to atone for the sin of the Golden Calf, he was so preoccupied with his prayers and requests for the Jewish people that he did not feel his body's needs and was able to survive without food or drink.

Like an Angel

The third time, when he ascended to receive the second set of tablets, he reached such a high spiritual level that his body became like that of an angel, where there is no need for food or drink.

Therefore, it was specifically after the third time that Moses was granted the rays of glory (קרני הוד) - the skin of his face had become radiant. These rays of glory testified to the purification of his physicality, so much so that Moshe's face shone with the light of his soul.

This purification occurred specifically on the third occasion, when Moshe's body was purified to the point that he reached the level of an angel.

(from the teachings of the Rebbe, Likutei Sichot, Vol. 36, translated and adapted from Sichat HaShevua)

From our Sages

Protection from Amalek

The Torah says (Devarim 25:17) "Remember what Amalek did to you" - "you" in the singular, not "you" in the plural. This hints that Amalek only attacks someone who is in the state of "you," (singular) meaning someone who is separated from the community and lives for themselves. But someone who is involved with others, a person who is in the state of "you all" - Amalek cannot harm them.

(Shmuot and Sipurim)

Not an Ancient Story

In the Talmud (Megillah 17a), it is said: "One who reads the Megillah in reverse does not fulfill their obligation." If one reads the Megillah and only sees it as a story of the past, and does not feel these events are also relevant to the present, they have not fulfilled their obligation.

(the Baal Shev Tov)

Two Villains

When Rabbi Yonatan Eibeschitz was a child, about six years old, he was asked at a Purim meal why Mordechai revealed the secret of Bigthan and Teresh to King Achashverosh. Why did it matter if

Achashverosh died, and there was one less villain in the world? The child Yonatan answered: "By revealing the secret, Bigthan and Teresh were executed, and through this, two villains were removed."

The Power of Unity

When Haman came to King Achashverosh to convince him to destroy the Jews, he said: "There is a certain people scattered and separate among the peoples..." He knew the strength of the Jews is their being "one people" - unified and loving one another. The plan was to scatter and separate them, for then their unity would be lost, and so would their power.

Hard to Imitate

In one yeshiva, the students put on a Purim play. The student who portrayed Haman did so with more persuasion than the one who portrayed Mordechai. A leading Mussar scholar commented: "It is easier to portray Haman, because each of us has a bit of pride and arrogance. But to portray the qualities of Mordechai is difficult, because for that, one needs true greatness of soul."

(HaMorot HaGelodim)

To Appreciate Money

Once, before Purim, the tzadik, the "Ohev Yisrael" of Apt, asked to be brought gold coins. He took the coins and played with them for a long time.

His household members were puzzled, as they knew him as someone who despised money and did not want to see any form of currency before his eyes. They asked him to explain this behavior.

The tzaddik replied:

"On Purim, there is a commandment to give 'matanot la'evyonim' (gifts to the poor). And I, if I give money to the poor, it would not be a commandment done with my whole heart, because money means nothing to me.

"Therefore, I asked to have gold coins brought before me, to make money a little more beloved in my eyes, so that when I give it to the poor, I can fulfill the commandment properly..."

Chassidus page

Purim—Beyond Understanding

Regarding the Jews acceptance of the Torah at Mount Sinai, we are taught, "G-d held the mountain over them like a jar and said to them: If you accept the Torah, fine; if not, here shall be your grave."

However, in the days of Purim, the Jews accepted the Torah anew, of their own free will. Therefore, it is said (in the Megillah), "And the Jews accepted what they had begun to do," because Mount Sinai was only the beginning of the acceptance of the Torah on Purim.

Test of Loyalty

Chassidus explains that at Mount Sinai it was not a negative coercion against the people's will. On the contrary, the people accepted the Torah with great love for Hashem. However, this love itself was the coercion. At the giving of the Torah, Hashem revealed an incredible love to the people of Israel. This closeness created an immense longing on their part towards Him, which is why they said, "we will do and we will listen." (na'asei v'nishma) This is called, "Hashem held the mountain over them..." because through this love, their free choice was taken away.

On Purim, the situation was the opposite. Not only was there no revelation of the Divine Presence, but it was a time of hiddenness. The entire story of the decree and the miracle seemed to unfold according to the natural course, without the supernatural power of Hashem being revealed openly and clearly. A sign of this is the fact that Hashem's name is not mentioned even once in the Megillah.

This was the first time that the entire Jew-

ish people was put to the test of loyalty to Hashem. The trial was extremely difficult. On the one hand, they faced the threat of total destruction, and on the other hand, they had the option to convert and save themselves. Yet, not a single Jew even thought of such an option. This was a renewed declaration of allegiance of the Jewish people to Hashem and His Torah, and it did not come from a Divine revelation but from the people's free choice. On Purim, the people accepted the Torah once again, by their free will, and this is the greatness of these days.

Rising Above Understanding

This is expressed in the way we celebrate the miracle of Purim "ad d'lo yada" ("until he cannot distinguish between 'cursed is Haman' and 'blessed is Mordechai'"). On Purim, a Jew must rise above intellect and understanding ("ad d'lo yada"), and reveal the supra-rational connection between himself and Hashem and the Torah.

The self-sacrifice of the Jewish people was not intellectual or logical. It was an expression of the deep, supra-rational connection between the soul of the Jew and Hashem. It cannot be explained with logic because it transcends logic.

This essential connection is revealed every year on Purim. However, when intellect and understanding dominate us, we cannot sense it properly. Therefore, a Jew must rise above intellect and understanding, even through 'drinking,' and the other mitzvot of Purim, and then his inner essence—the essential connection with Hashem—can be revealed.

A Path Back to Joy

continued from page one:

"Once, in a small village, lived two Jews—one a chassid, the other not.

"The chassid tried to instill enthusiasm and joy in his neighbor, who eventually agreed to join him on a journey to his Rebbe.

"On the way, a brutal peasant attacked them. The chassid cried out, begging for mercy. His companion asked, 'Where is your joy?' The chassid replied, 'Not when you're being beaten like this!'"

With that, R' Yerachmiel left. The room fell silent in pain for their friend.

Moments later, he returned—this time dressed as a Polish lumberjack. In broken Polish, he called out, "Rebbe, see this log in my hands? I've been trying to split it with my axe, but I can't! What should I do? Is the wood too hard? Is the axe dull? Or am I simply not trying hard enough?"

The Rebbe gazed at his grief-stricken chassid with deep love and replied in Polish, "What should you do? Keep going! Keep going! Strike the wood again and again—eventually, it will split."

Upon hearing these words, R' Yerachmiel leaped onto the table, his face shining once more.

He broke into song, rhymed verses, and humorous remarks, just as he had always done.

That Purim, they said, R' Yerachmiel surpassed himself.

When asked what had changed, he simply replied:

"That is the power of the Rebbe."

(Adapted from 'Ma'oran Shel Yisrael', translated from Sichat HaShevua.)

Ultimately, the story reminds us that even in our darkest moments, there is a path back to light and joy.

Moshiach Now

Your Teacher Shall Hide Himself No Longer

During this time of exile we do not perceive the word of G-d which gives life and existence to every creation. At the time of Redemption, by contrast, this G-dly animating force will be manifest; as it is written, "your Teacher shall hide Himself no longer."

In this light we can better understand the teaching of our Sages, that in future time the Holy One, blessed be He, will give the tzaddikim the strength to receive their reward. This means He will fortify them so they will not expire out of existence when confronted with the Divine light that will then be revealed, unscreened by any garment.

Tanya, chapter 36; Derech Mitzvotcha, p. 40; adapted From Exile to Redemption, reprinted with permission from Sichos in English

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Human Interest

7,000 Jewish Teens!

7,000 Jewish teens from 60 countries gathered in Times Square on Motzei Shabbat, March 1st, singing, dancing, and proudly declaring their Jewish identity. Amid global challenges they came not to explain who they are, but to live their Judaism out loud and together.

Rabbi Mendy Kotlarsky, Chairman of CTeen International, kicked off the event with "Shavua Tov,



CTeen!" followed by thousands of teens joining in. Among them was Alan Krasnov, a 12th grader from Buenos Aires, who was surrounded by 42 peers from CTeen El Lazo. For Alan, who often faces the need to explain his Judaism at home, this night was a moment of belonging and unity.

The event highlighted Jewish pride with powerful moments, including 7,000 voices reciting the Shema, a prayer for peace, and an orange balloon release in memory of the Bibas family. The teens also coshered a New York food truck, marked 50 years of the Rebbe's Kosher Campaign, and held a Havdalah ceremony led by IDF reservist Noam Buskila.

CTeen is the largest Jewish Teen network in the world.

Cooking Tip of the Week

Honey Hamantaschen

Mix 4 cups flour, ½ tsp salt, and 1 tsp baking powder. Add ½ cup softened shortening, 4 eggs, and 1 cup honey. Knead, roll out, and cut into circles or squares. Add filling, fold into triangles, and bake at 180°C for 20 minutes until golden. Use home-made or commercial filling.

Alizah Hochstead
alizahh@hotmail.com

Halacha Corner – Striking Haman

Question: What is the source for the custom of making noise when hearing "Haman" during the Megillah reading?

Answer: The Midrash, commenting on the verse "...that I will surely obliterate the remembrance of Amalek..." (Exodus 17:14), states: "Even from the trees and from the stones." The Beit Yosef, quoting the Orchot Chaim, explains that from this Midrash stems the custom that "when the reader mentions the name of Haman and his sons, children strike with stones or wooden boards that they hold, on which the names of Haman and his sons are written, and through this striking, the names are erased."

From this, the practice of "hitting Haman" during the Megillah reading in shul developed. The Beit Yosef further adds: "One should not abolish any custom or mock it, for they were not established without reason."

The Maharil did not practice this custom. Some halachic authorities opposed it, arguing "the losses outweigh the gains, as it causes much disruption." However, the Chacham Tzvi would "strike and stomp his foot and tap his sandal when the name of Haman was mentioned." The Ben Ish Chai followed the practice of striking at the first and last mention of "Haman" in the Megillah.

According to Chabad, Haman is struck multiple times throughout the reading, when his name appears with additional descriptors such as "son of Hammedatha," "the Agagite," "the wicked one," and similar titles.

excerpted from Rabbi Yosef Simchah Ginzburg, *Sichat HaShevua*

Farbrengen

Question: In response to people facing challenges, you have often mentioned the well-known phrase, "Think good, and it will be good." When I think good, I may feel better, but I don't see my positive thinking leading to an actual tangible positive outcome.

Answer: As Chassidus teaches, "*Think good, and it will be good*" is not just an inspiring phrase but a powerful vessel to draw revealed goodness into our lives. That said, your experience is valid. You have not yet observed the results you were hoping for. Here are some key areas to consider:

What does "thinking good" really mean? In the realm of livelihood, Chassidus highlights two core approaches:

1. Trusting with absolute faith that Hashem will provide.
2. Living as if your needs have already been met, cultivating a mindset of abundance.

True bitachon (trust in Hashem) is not merely about suppressing worry but about *living* with the confidence that Hashem will shower you with revealed goodness. It is not hoping for a good outcome, but *knowing* Hashem will provide; internalizing trust and joy.

Application matters.

Intellectual understanding alone is not enough; the concepts must be internalized. If a person is prone to worry, trusting in Hashem may take more time and effort compared to someone with a happy and easygoing nature.

My Rosh Yeshiva once shared a story: A student complained that the techniques of Chassidus to awaken love and awe of Hashem weren't working for him. The Rosh Yeshiva replied, "*They only work if you actually do them.*" The same applies here—learning about positive thinking is not enough; it must be internalized and reinforced daily, becoming part and parcel of your being.

The power of positivity and gratitude.

The Zohar explains that when we are happy and positive, we open channels for blessings to flow into our lives. In addition, when we focus on the good, we *notice* blessings that our negative mindset previously obscured. Very often, we have more blessings than we realize.

While you may not yet see the results you desire, do not lose hope—continue thinking good, and the good *will* come.

Aharon Schmidt, marriage & individual coaching,
coachingandcounseling1@gmail.com



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