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Tell Your Children

Miraculous Visit to Berlin

In honor of the Baal Shem Tov's yahrzeit on the first day of Shavuot, we present the following story:

The innkeeper could not believe his ears. The stranger who had stopped by his inn last night with his followers insisted he intended to spend the coming Shabbat in Berlin. "But that city is hundreds of miles away! How can you possibly make it?"

The Baal Shem Tov had not revealed his identity, all he had said was that as a traveling *darshan* (preacher in synagogues), he wished to be present at the wedding of a certain wealthy person which was to take place that Friday in Berlin.

"I have excellent horses," the Baal Shem Tov insisted. "I have no doubts of reaching there by Shabbat."

"Very well then, can I come along with you? I have to be in Berlin too." The innkeeper had to be in a city some twenty miles from Berlin but thought this an excellent opportunity to get a ride. Besides, he was quite curious to see how close his guest would get to the German city.

Journey to Berlin

When the following day dawned the innkeeper was up and about, making bustling preparations for his journey. The Baal Shem Tov, however, took his time. He prayed leisurely and then was served a nice breakfast.

"Why are you not hurrying?" the innkeeper asked in concern. "You will never reach your destination in time for Shabbat."

"Never fear," his guest calmly assured the man. "We will reach Berlin by tomorrow, please G-d."

The innkeeper looked at his guest in amazement and thought, "He seems so sure of himself. I must go along and see what happens."

As it happened, the Baal Shem Tov did



painting by Zalman Kleinman, a "h
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not leave until that evening when he finally called together the chassidim accompanying him and the innkeeper. They set forth, traveling all that night; the passengers all fell asleep, of course.

When the morning sun shone upon the world, the innkeeper could see that they had arrived at their destination. His surprise was beyond description.

City in an Uproar

The Baal Shem Tov made his quarters some distance from the rich man's home. At 12pm that day the city was in an uproar. The bride had suddenly fainted and lay unconscious. Nothing could revive her. All the noted doctors of the city tried their best, in vain. A crowd of curious spectators surrounded the house, attracting the visiting innkeeper as well. When he learned the cause of all the commotion the innkeeper spoke up, "I think I know someone who might be able to help the girl."

He began to tell of the miraculous journey in which he had participated. "This *darshan*," he continued, "claims that he can perform medical wonders as well. I would suggest asking him to come here."

The rich man himself went to the hotel where the Baal Shem Tov was staying. He pleaded for him to come and see what

could be done for his bride. To his dismay, the Baal Shem Tov commanded the household staff, "Prepare the shrouds according to your custom." He turned to the distraught man with further instructions, "Go and order a grave dug. Take along the wedding garments which the kallah was to have worn."

The funeral procession made its way to the cemetery. "Place the coffin with the bride into the grave," the Rebbe instructed.

The Miracle

Then he called two strong men from the spectators. "Come and stand by the grave," he said. "When you see any change in the girl's face, you are to remove her at once from the grave." He leaned over the body and stood bent over, for a quarter of an hour.

Suddenly her face assumed a rosy hue. In an instant the two men lifted her out of the grave. "Lead her immediately to the *chupah* (wedding canopy)," the Baal Shem Tov further instructed.

The bride was dressed up in the clothes that had been provided and taken directly to her house where the wedding ceremony was held without delay. At the request of the chatan, the Baal Shem Tov agreed to officiate at the ceremony.

continued on page three

Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	6:59	8:20
Tel Aviv	7:21	8:22
Haifa	7:12	8:24
Beer Sheva	7:19	8:20
New York	8:01	9:09

Shabbos Table

Perfect Spiritually and Physically

When G-d commanded to count the children of Israel, He established that the counting should be based on two criteria: first, from the age of twenty and above, and second, all those who are fit to serve in the army of Israel.

The second condition requires explanation. At that time, the children of Israel did not need "those who serve in the army." They were surrounded by the Clouds of Glory, which protected them from any enemy and even prepared the roads, destroying harmful creatures. So why was there a need for "those who serve in the army"?

Healing of All

The commentators explain that "those who serve in the army" means those who are fit to serve in the army—that is, those without physical defects. Therefore, in this census, there was a wondrous thing: the number of those aged twenty and above was equal to the number of those "fit to serve." How could it be that among six hundred thousand people, there were no one with defects, unfit for military service?

This came about because, at the time of the Giving of the Torah, all the sick and those with physical defects were healed.

The revelation at Mount Sinai brought the people of Israel to spiritual perfection, and since spirituality and physicality are interconnected, this spiritual perfection also brought about physical perfection. This perfection was maintained for a whole year after the revelation at Mount Sinai, as the census described in our portion demonstrates.

Complete Alignment

Our Sages teach that the 248 physical limbs correspond to the 248 positive commandments, and the 365 tendons correspond to the 365 prohibitive commandments. From this, we understand the connection between spirituality and physicality. When a person is spiritually whole, it also brings completeness to his physical limbs.

However, there are times of concealment, when there may be a mismatch between the spiritual and the physical states. In such times, it is possible for a person to be spiritually whole but not physically, or conversely, for a person to be physically complete even if his spiritual state is not in order.

This situation arises from the world's descent through sin, and it is not the correct state according to the Divine order of creation.

Preventing War

The state of perfection of the children of Israel, which was expressed in the census held in the desert, is what brought about the protection of the Clouds of Glory. Since the children of Israel were "those fit to serve," expressing their spiritual perfection, the Clouds of Glory surrounded them and protected them from any harm.

This is the true role of "those fit to serve" in Israel—to prevent any attempt to harm the people of Israel in the first place, as the Holy One, blessed be He, promised: "Today I will begin to put the dread of you and the fear of you upon the nations that are under the entire heaven..." (Deuteronomy 2:25).

Indeed, this was the case in the days of Moses—"...Arise, Hashem, may Your enemies be scattered..." (Numbers 10:35). The enemies scattered on their own, in the face of the spiritual power and holiness of the people of Israel.

This is the special power of the Jewish people: when they engage in Torah and stand in a state of spiritual perfection, they instill awe and fear in the nations of the world, who, from the outset, would not dare to challenge the people of Israel.

(Adapted from the teachings of the Rebbe, Torat Menachem, Vol. 11, p. 279)

Frome Our Sages

Shavuot

Mutual Oath

"Shavuot" comes from the word "shevua" (oath). On the day the Torah was given, G-d and the Assembly of Israel swore a mutual oath. We swore to the Master of the Universe that we would never exchange Him, G-d forbid, for other gods; and G-d swore to us that He would never exchange us for another nation.

(Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh)

can bring forth trees and good plants.

(The Maharal of Prague)

Refining the Lowliest

"...and they stood at the bottom of the mountain." (Exodus 19:17)

Specifically at the bottom of the mountain. This teaches us that the purpose of the giving of the Torah is for man to refine the physical world and make a dwelling for G-d in the lowest realms.

(the Rebbe)

Giving and Receiving

Shavuot is called, "*The Time of the Giving of Our Torah*," not "*The Time of the Receiving of Our Torah*."

The giving of the Torah was equal for all of Israel. But the receiving of the Torah is not the same for every individual; each person receives it according to their level and understanding.

(Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk)

Without Torah – a Desert

The Israelites received the Torah in the desert because man (in Hebrew, adam) is named after the earth (in Hebrew, adamah).

A person without Torah is like a barren desert with no grass or vegetation. Therefore, the Torah was given to him – to complete him – so that this "earth"

The Torah Decides

In the town of Liozna lived a Torah scholar who also responded to halachic (Jewish legal) questions. This Jew suffered from an incurable illness, and no medicine or remedy proved effective.

At that time, the Alter Rebbe, author of the *Tanya*, lived in Liozna and was known as "the Maggid of Liozna." The ill man came to him and requested a blessing for a complete recovery.

The Rebbe asked him how he ruled on a certain halachic question in the laws of *treifot* (disqualifying physical defects in animals). The man replied that he ruled it to be forbidden (*treif*). The Rebbe began to engage him in a halachic discussion, until the man was compelled to admit that, in truth, the case in question was kosher and not disqualified.

The Rebbe said to him: "Now you can be healed, because that was precisely your illness. As long as you believed that this illness was *treif* (incurable) – you could not be healed."

Chassidus Page

Shavuot—True Unity in the Third Month

Our Sages emphasize the special quality of the Giving of the Torah—a quality connected to the number three: a three-part Torah (Torah, Prophets, Writings), a three-part nation (Kohanim, Levites, Israelites), and the third month (Sivan, the third from Nisan).

This emphasis on the number three requires explanation. The entire purpose of the Torah is to reveal Divine unity in the world—"Hashem is One"—through a single Torah. It would therefore seem that the Torah's greatness should be expressed through the number one, not three!

A Test of Unity

The answer lies in the deeper meaning of unity. Indeed, the goal of the Torah is to reveal unity in the world. But unity is only truly tested when there is awareness of an alternative reality. If unity exists only because a person is unaware of anything else, then it is not complete unity—for we cannot be sure what will happen once he becomes aware of another reality.

The soul's descent into this world is compared to a king's son whose father decides to test his loyalty to the king. For this purpose, the son is removed from the royal palace and exiled to a distant place among lowly and coarse people. When the prince behaves there in a manner befitting a royal son—then it becomes clear that he is truly connected to his father.

True unity, then, is expressed only when there exists an alternative reality—and yet, unity prevails. Two paths are possi-

ble: to nullify the alternative reality and disregard it; or to transform the alternative reality itself into a vessel for unity.

The second option represents a deeper form of unity. Disregarding the alternative reality still leaves it intact—it is simply ignored. But when the alternative itself is transformed into a vehicle for unity, then a true and complete unity emerges, without any leftover traces.

Three Months

These stages are symbolized by the three months: Nisan, Iyar, and Sivan. Nisan, the first month, represents Divine revelation—"The King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to them." This is a revelation from Above, unrelated to the state of the world.

Following comes Iyar, in which every day is marked by the mitzvah of counting the Omer, a process focused on refining the emotional traits of the animal soul. Here, we engage with the "other reality," but without yet transforming it into G-dliness.

Perfection is reached in the month of Sivan, the third month. It represents the transformation of the physical world into a vessel for G-dliness. A new reality is created—one in which the world does not oppose holiness but reveals it. That is why the Torah was given in this month: its role is to reveal this unity in the world, until the entire world becomes one with the Holy One, blessed be He.

Adapted from the teachings of the Rebbe, Likutei Sichot, Vol. 2, p. 301

Miraculous Visit to Berlin

continued from page one:

At the end, as the young bride lifted her veil to drink the wine, she suddenly took a closer unobstructed look at the Rabbi in front of her. "This is the man who saved me from death!" she exclaimed in surprise.

After the chupah, the bride told the entire story. The rich man, a widower, had taken his niece into his home when she had become orphaned. In the course of time his wife had sickened. As she lay on her deathbed, she had one final request: her husband refrain from marrying the niece, for she was jealous. She made both her husband and his niece give their word and hand not to marry after her death. Despite their promise, the two eventually decided to get married. On her wedding day, the kallah was visited by the deceased woman who intended to murder her.

"I had to hold a din Torah (a Rabbinical court case)," the Baal Shem Tov explained, "between those two litigants. I found the chatan and kallah to be innocent for they only gave their promises to ease the first wife's departure from this world. So, when I was standing in concentration over the young girl's grave, I rebuked the spirit of her aunt, telling her that the bride must not be prevented from going to the chupah."

"That was the voice I heard while I lay in the grave," the kallah spoke now, "and this was the first face I saw when I removed my veil."

The Baal Shem Tov remained there for that Shabbat. When he left Berlin on Sunday, he was accompanied by a huge crowd of admirers who wished to escort him on his way.

Excerpted and modified by Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles from "Tales of the Baal Shem Tov." Rabbi 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 Dissemination of Judaism

The preparation best suited to bringing the Redemption nearer, is to undertake activities which anticipate the lifestyle of that era — "to perfect the world under the sovereignty of G-d."

In plain words, this entails spreading the practice of Judaism, the study of the Torah and the fulfillment of its mitzvot, with ever-increasing radiance.

True, this is a mighty task, but it is likable work, and its success is certain.

The Rebbe, From Exile to Redemption, reprinted with perm. from Sichos in English

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Human Interest

A Journey of Rediscovery

Two years ago, Menachem Mendel Krashunsky and his wife left Los Angeles and made Aliyah. They now live in Ashdod with their young children, building a Torah-centered life in Eretz Yisrael. He serves as Head of HR at Chabad Concierge, a company devoted to helping Shluchim around the world grow their impact through skilled virtual assistants. But this mission is more than just professional—it's personal.

His journey began at 14. One day, he felt a powerful urge to put on Tefillin, although he barely knew what Tefillin were. A family friend introduced him to Rabbi Moshe Levin, a Chabad Shliach in Los Angeles. Rabbi Levin helped him get his first pair and taught how to use them.

During one of their conversations, he shared that he had no Hebrew name—only the name Maxim. Rabbi



Krashunsky and his great-great-great-grandfather

Levin explained the Rebbe's teaching: when someone is becoming religious, the new name should have some similarity to the name given at birth. "Your name begins and ends with M—how about Menachem?" He then suggested, "Mendel."

That Shabbat, at Chabad of Tarzana, he quietly received the name Menachem Mendel. He didn't tell anyone. His family, at the time, was against the path he was beginning.

Two weeks later, his great-grandmother casually mentioned that her grandfather—his great-great-great-grandfather—had been a Chasidic Jew named Menachem Mendel. No one knew this when the name was chosen. The connection was unknown, unspoken—and unmistakable. He had been the last observant Jew in the family, and he had always dreamed of moving to Eretz Yisrael.

Now, more than 60 years after his passing, his descendant bears his name and lives that very dream—in the land he longed for.

By Menachem Mendel Krashunsky

Farbrengen



Question: I travel a lot for work, often to places that don't observe my level of kashrut. I used to bring my own food or stick strictly to what I knew was within my standards. Sometimes that meant eating very little. Over time, I became more lenient—I'll now eat things without a hechsher, telling myself, "It's probably fine, and I need to eat." But I know it's not right. I want to return to how I used to be, but I can't seem to get back there.

Answer: Everyone faces spiritual challenges—some loud, some quiet. What they all have in common is this: they're meant to lift us. A test isn't a punishment; it's an invitation to reach higher.

There's a story about a young man who had been connected to a Chabad House but began turning down Shabbat invitations. The Rabbi, noticing the man seemed to be hiding something, gently asked what changed. The young man admitted he was planning to marry a non Jewish woman. The Rabbi made him a deal: "if you will travel with me to the Lubavitcher Rebbe and tell the Rebbe your news, I will attend your wedding." The young man agreed.

When he stood before the Rebbe and explained, the Rebbe looked him in the eye and said, "You have no idea how much I envy you." The man was stunned. The Rebbe continued, "A test is a ladder. The greater the test, the higher the person is elevated when passing the test. You were given a tremendous test and so too you were gifted with a very tall ladder. I envy you. I was never given such a test and therefore was not given the opportunity to ascend such a high ladder."

The man left the Rebbe's room, sat on a bench and cried. After an hour, he said to his Rabbi, "I'm calling off the wedding."

As Rabbi Michael Taib explains, a powerful yetzer hara isn't a sign of failure—it's a sign of deep inner strength. The Rebbe Rashab taught that those with intense struggles also have elevated souls capable of overcoming them. The potential is already there. The test is only revealing it.

Your struggle with kashrut isn't a sign that you've fallen. It's a sign that you're being called upward. The ladder is still there. All that's left is to take the first step.

Aharon Schmidt, marriage & individual counseling: www.aharonschmidt.com.

**To receive periodic ideas on navigating marriage and personal growth, reach out to aharonschmidt@gmail.com*

Cooking Tip of the Week

Lemon Cheesecake

Filling: 500g goat or cow's cheese (5–9%), 1 cup enriched yogurt, ½ cup sugar, ¾ cup lemon juice, optional lemon zest. Add 4 eggs. Pour into crust. Bake (160C), chill, enjoy.

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Halacha Corner – Must someone who stays awake all night on Shavuot interrupt their study at dawn to recite the blessings over Torah study?

Anyone who speaks words of Torah is required to bless beforehand. One should say the blessings before the morning prayers.

Chabad and Sefardim hold that someone who stays awake all night is obligated to recite them from dawn (*alot hashachar*). According to Ashkenazi custom, one does not recite the blessings on their own, but instead listens to the blessings recited by someone who slept at night (who intends to fulfill the obligation on their behalf), responds *Amen*, and fulfills the requirement in that way. However, if one slept during the previous day in a bed, they must recite the blessings at dawn according to all opinions.

Some are of the opinion that one must stop studying at dawn, wash their hands as required, and recite the blessings. However, in practice, many communities continue studying, and only when there is a break do they recite the blessings. This was the practice of the Rebbe at many *farbrengens*.

Adapted and translated from Rabbi Yosef Simcha Ginzberg



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