



IT HAPPENED ONCE

The young, newly married couple were happy in every respect. But when the young man lost his job, their joy was clouded over. An expert mechanic, he just couldn't find another job, and their panic increased from one day to the next as they grappled with their financial difficulties.

One day, the young man was speaking to some of his acquaintances, who happened to be Chasidim of Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber (the fifth Chabad Rebbe, known as the Rebbe Rashab). "Why don't you go to see our Rebbe. He is very wise, and he will help you."

The young man, who was not a Chasid, responded, "What does the Rebbe know about being a mechanic? How can he possibly help me?" But, as time passed and no job appeared, the proposition gained credibility in his mind. After all, the young man reasoned, what could I lose? He went to the Chasidim and told them that he was now ready to see their Rebbe. Everyone contributed a little and soon they had enough money to send the young mechanic to Lubavitch.

Eventually, the mechanic had his chance to speak privately with the Rebbe. He described his terrible plight while the Rebbe listened attentively. Then the Rebbe said, "You and your wife should go to [a certain city]. There you should open a hat store." The Rebbe blessed them with much success, and the confused young man departed for home.

When he returned, he confronted the Chasidim: "Your Rebbe gave me the strangest advice! He told me to go to a city I never heard of and sell hats - something I know nothing about!" The Chasidim were not in the least put off by the seemingly irrelevant advice. "A Rebbe is not like other people," they told him. "If he gives you advice, listen to him, even if it makes no sense to you. The Rebbe sees further than we do," they concluded.

The young man left, and after discussing it with his wife, they decided that maybe they should try the Rebbe's advice. Another collection was taken up, and soon the young people were on their way to what they hoped would be a new beginning.

When they arrived in the town they looked for a suitable property, but all they could afford was a very small place on the outskirts of town. How would anyone ever find out about their shop? Would anyone come to buy hats from them? Their doubts were confirmed as days and weeks went by. They sat in their tiny shop and looked at their beautiful hats, but no one came. They began to wonder if they had made a mistake by listening to the Chasidim and the Rebbe.

Then one day, a luxurious coach pulled up in front of their shop. A well-dressed man entered their modest shop and said, "I am returning home from a business trip, and I'm looking for a gift for my wife." He began selecting hats and placing them on the counter. Within the space of several minutes the man had amassed a great selection of hats. In fact, almost every hat in the little store was sitting on the counter.

"How much do I owe you?" he asked.

The young proprietors stood tongue-tied. If they charged him the actual price, he would surely change his mind about his extravagant purchase, so they mentioned a very low price. "What!" the wealthy man exclaimed. "That can't be the correct price!"

"Actually, sir," replied the man, "We are giving you the wholesale price."

"No, I insist on paying a fair price for your merchandise," said the buyer, taking in the apparent lack of activity in the tiny shop and the nervous look on the proprietors' faces. He counted out a generous sum to cover the many hats he had chosen, and was about to leave, when he stopped.

The young man looked so sad. "What," he asked solicitously, "is the reason for your downcast appearance?"

The wealthy man's inquiry elicited a detailed explanation. "I'm a mechanic," the young man said, "and a very good one, too. But a few months ago I lost my job and couldn't find another one. The Chasidim in my town convinced me to go to their Rebbe, and the Rebbe told me to move to this town and set up a hat business. Your purchase has set us on our feet. But really, sir, I am a mechanic, not a shopkeeper."

"I may have the perfect solution!" cried the wealthy man. "My brother owns a factory and two of his most valuable machines stopped working almost six months ago. He's at his wits' end since no one seems to be able to fix them. Maybe you'll be successful." The wealthy man then gave him a letter of introduction and lent him the money for traveling expenses.

A week later the young man reported to the factory, and two days later, to the great relief of the factory owner, both machines were up and working. "You're the only one who was able to repair the machinery, and I'd like to offer you a position. How would you like to be the manager of my factory?" The young man was overcome with happiness at his change of fortune. Some months later, the young couple returned to their hometown and the Chasidim anxiously gathered around them wanting to be filled in on their progress. The happy couple recounted the whole story and they drew the obvious conclusion: the Rebbe was right, and so were his loyal followers.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

And Abraham drew near (Gen. 18:3)

Rashi notes that Abraham approached G-d "to speak [with Him] in a harsh manner," to plead that He change His mind and not destroy Sodom. Abraham, the epitome of loving-kindness, saw fit to go against his natural inclination and "speak harshly" with G-d! We learn from this that when it comes to saving lives, either literally or in the spiritual sense, a Jew must pull out all the stops and do all in his power, even if it goes against his very nature. (Likrat Shabbat)

G-d rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire... (Gen. 19:24)

At the present time Sodom remains in its ruined state. However, when Moshiach comes and evil will be completely removed from the earth, Sodom will return to its original state of blessing and beauty, as it says, (Ezek. 16) "And I will return the captivity of Sodom." (Sefer HaParshiot)

Abraham called the name of his son... Isaac (Gen. 21:3)

In the Messianic age, it is specifically of Isaac that we will say "for you are our father" (a verse from the book of Isaiah). The name Isaac is an expression of laughter and delight; when Moshiach comes the supernal joy and delight of our present service of G-d will be fully revealed. (Likutei Sichot, Vol. I)

G-d has made laughter for me; whoever hears it will laugh ("yitzchak") on my account (Gen. 21:6)

"Laughter" refers to the supreme delight that will be revealed to the righteous in the World to Come. The Hebrew name "Yitzchak" ("he will laugh") is in the future tense, alluding to the time when this will take place. (Torah Ohr)



4:28 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
19 Cheshvan // Nov 6
Torah portion Vayeira
Shabbat ends 5:28 pm

L'Chaim

1646

19 Cheshvan, 5781
Nov 6, 2021

The Weekly Publication for Every Jewish Person

נסדס תוד ימי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"Unveil my eyes, that I may perceive the wonders of Your Torah." (Psalm 119:18)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

The *Haftora* for the portion of *Vayeira* tells us two stories of miracles from our prophet Elisha. The first story is about one woman, the widow of a prophet, who cried out to Elisha: "My husband died..." According to tradition the husband was the prophet Obadiah, who saved a hundred prophets from King Ahab and his evil wife Jezebel by hiding them and borrowing money to feed them. The creditor came for the money and the widow didn't have it; he wanted to take her two sons as slaves. What was she to do?

Elisha asked, "What do you have in the house?" She responded, "There is nothing... but a jug of oil." Elisha told her to borrow vessels from all of her neighbors, "empty vessels, not a few." Then she should close the door, start pouring the oil and fill all the vessels. And so she did.

Even though there was just a little oil in the jug, it filled all of the vessels. She then went to Elisha and shared what happened. He told her to sell the oil and pay the debt, and "you and your two sons will live off the rest."

Chasidic teachings explain that while this story happened, it is also a metaphor for someone who feels empty and apathetic towards Judaism, and wants that to change.

The "one woman" in the story is the soul, that is always one with G-d. The soul cried with bitterness to Elisha - symbolizing G-d: "My husband died!" Husband, "ishi" in Hebrew, can be divided into "aish," meaning "fire," and the letter "yud" symbolizing G-d. The soul doesn't feel the G-dly fire burning inside; she feels that her Judaism is hollow and void of meaning. The "creditor" is the animal soul, which yearns for physical pleasure and makes us forget about G-d. He "is coming to take my two sons" - the animal soul wants to take our love and fear of G-d and use them for selfish desires and pleasures.

To this Elisha asked, "Tell me, what do you have in the house?" Is there anything left of your connection with G-d? She responded "There is nothing... but a jug of oil," oil symbolizes the essence of a Jew that is always one with G-d. He said, "Go borrow vessels... empty vessels," Torah and *mitzvot* (commandments) are vessels for G-dliness, but now they are empty, lacking meaning, love and fear of G-d. "Not a few," meaning, do a lot of Torah and mitzvas, even though due to your lack of passion they may seem empty, because they are vessels for G-dliness. "Pour on them oil," tap into your essence and allow it to flow and fill all of your vessels.

After you pay the creditor, "you and your children will live with the extra." Meaning, not only will you regain the connection you lost, but you will have extra. When you break the dark state that you were in, you bring out a light that is beyond anything that you experienced before. This is the great light that comes out of the darkness.

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com. Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

Nesting Dolls

Why is it that in difficult times, when Jews are under pressures from without - or within - that we remember that we are Jews, and that G-d is in charge?

The answer is really quite simple, and maybe because of its simplicity it is often overlooked. In an age when self-help books continually top the best-sellers charts, when our society approaches the ancient Greeks' idolization of the human mind and ability to reason, it is sometimes hard to accept the seemingly intangible, non-intellectual explanation of "the Jewish soul." But, current events, and "current events" throughout Jewish history, have always led us back to the unmistakable fact that within every Jew is the magnificent treasure of the Jewish soul.

So, why does it so often take a tragedy - sometimes personal, sometimes global - or preferably, thank G-d, a happy event or victorious occasion to bring out the Jewish soul? And then again, why often is this personal discovery only momentary, fleeting, and the soul soon relegated to its hidden space?

Imagine a set of nesting dolls: those little wooden Russian peasant figurines or their variation we've all seen or played with. No matter what our age, we delight in opening the doll, only to find a slightly smaller one inside, which we expectantly open. Then, we find a slightly smaller one, and a slightly smaller one inside that, on and on until, at last, we find the tiniest doll which does not open. That minute doll,

if you will, is the essence of the Jew, the "Yiddische neshama" - the Jewish soul. And the Jewish soul, though not a physical entity, is just as real as the smallest nesting doll.

The tiny figurine can be covered and enclosed by layers and layers of bigger dolls. But bigger doesn't necessarily mean better, for we all know the tremendous disappointment of opening all the dolls just to find that the smallest one is missing.

Thankfully, the Jewish soul, the



"piece of G-d" which He invests in each one of us, can never be lost. Though initially covered by bigger, more elaborate, seemingly better layers, part of our life-long job is to work at uncovering our soul, allowing its presence to be felt, thereby enriching every aspect of our lives. Sometimes the uncovering of this tiny soul happens through hard-work, sometimes, quite by accident.

Sometimes, someone else tries to help us, or G-d, Himself, eases the way. But, just as it is within our power to nest it once again within larger figures, we also have the ability to keep it uncovered.

SLICE OF LIFE

Go Figure
by Reuven Morris



It's been more than 100 years since my mother's family came to New York. And here I was, generations later, connected to my Judaism – via Ukraine, Manhattan and Brooklyn. Hint: two of these places are boroughs in New York City ... one of them is not!

How do they mesh? Well, in 1988, when I was 43, I started on my path toward *teshuva* (Jewish return). And even though I never thought that being observant could ever be me, it turned out that it was me. And it is me.

And I can point to a major influence in my life that I'm sure enabled my new path: my family's kosher kitchen in the Bronx set up by my grandmother, who lived with us. And that kosher kitchen continued on through the years by my mother.

But even though we never went to *shul* (synagogue) except for very short stints on the High Holidays, I would always look forward to our Friday night dinners at home. And for sure I looked forward to our beautiful Passover Seders. And Chanuka? I always lit candles for the eight nights on the family menorah – which I still have. So, as an adult, when I had the chance to reconnect, I took that chance.

Through the years, if I would go to synagogue at

all, I always felt more comfortable at conservative or reform synagogues. Orthodox seemed like too much work. So I started going to a basics class in Judaism at a local conservative synagogue, B'nai Jeshurun, and then I, in turn, branched out to see what other synagogues in the area might be offering. So I popped into another local synagogue in Manhattan, which I didn't even know was orthodox, Lincoln Square Synagogue, and I started going to a couple of classes there.

One of my teachers, Rabbi Kasriel Kastel, program director of the Lubavitch Youth Organization, was teaching a class there in *Tanya* (the magnum opus of Chasidic philosophy written by the founder of Chabad Chasidism Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi). I was enthralled with the subject matter and with Rabbi Kastel: his intellect, his teaching style, and his sense of humor.

And when he invited me to spend a Rosh Hashana in Crown Heights, I of course said ... no. Not that I didn't want to go, but I was afraid that not being Chasidic I wouldn't be accepted there.

But, of course, I was wrong. I went to Crown Heights, and felt accepted as soon as I arrived. And I had one of the best, if not the best, Rosh Hashanas I'd ever experienced. Here I was, reluctant to go to Orthodox synagogues, but feeling comfortable in a Chasidic community. Go figure.

A few months later, I went back to Crown Heights for what's known as a Shabbaton (Jewish gathering on Shabbat). I immediately bonded with fellow Jews who were also curious about their Judaism. I was in the right place. On Saturday night we all watched a video of the Lubavitcher Rebbe who was born in the then Russian city of Nikolaevo. But when he was approximately five years old, his family moved to the Russian city of Yeketrinislav, where the Rebbe's father became the chief rabbi.

When I heard the name Yeketrinislav, I was a bit taken aback because I remembered that my mother, my grandparents, and my great grandparents were born in Yeketrinislav: a city in The Ukraine (then a part of Russia), which has since been renamed simply: Ukraine (now a separate country). And Yeketrinislav (since 1926) was renamed Dnepropetrovsk, but is now called Dnieper. (My father and his family were from

Lida in White Russia, which is now Belarus.) Whew! It would have been so much easier if both my parents were born in Pittsburgh! But alas, 'twas not meant to be.

I just couldn't disregard these coincidences. And through the continuing influence of Rabbi Kastel, I felt reconnected and subsequently found myself on that path back to my Judaism.

I started putting on tefillin every Sunday thru Friday mornings; I found myself *davening* (praying) the three times daily; I learned how to observe Shabbos (and how to eat more chicken and kugel that I ever thought I was capable of eating, of course, outside of a Chabad Shabbaton); and I went back to keeping kosher!

I also started going to Crown Heights every Sunday when the Rebbe would greet people individually to distribute dollars (to represent, in turn, giving charity to others). And so one week, after waiting the few hours, when it was my turn to address the Rebbe, one of the things I mentioned was that my mother was born in Yeketrinislav. The Rebbe beamed! and said, in a voice that turned heads, "Oh, Yeketrinislav!" I'll never forget it.

Well, now I was more determined than ever to visit there – and to actually see it! Up till then, it was just a name and a dot on the map. So in 2017 and 2018 I went to Russia – and to Ukraine. There are now thriving Jewish communities in each! The Menorah Center in Dnieper being especially robust and active; with the buildings in the shape of a menorah! What a sight! Now I had my proof that Yeketrinislav, the name I grew up with hearing, was actually a place! Names can change, but not the place.

My great grandmother's kosher kitchen in Yeketrinislav; my grandmother's kosher kitchen in our apartment in the Bronx; my mother continuing to keep our kosher kitchen through the years; me finding myself in Crown Heights leading me to now live a Torah observant lifestyle.... What can I say. With all the comforts and distractions of sometimes easy modern life, why do I choose to live with the sometimes demanding disciplines of observant Judaism? Coincidence? Hmm. Go figure.

Reuven's Website: www.richardmorrisworks.com

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

14th Elul, 5739 [1978]

Greeting and Blessing:

This is in reply to your letter in which you write about, what you call, a novel analysis and rendering of the Genesis Recording in the Torah.

I trust you know that every so-called "orthodox" Jew (the reason for the quotation marks is that according to our Sages all Jews are "believers the sons of believers," in other words, "orthodox," even though this essential nature of a Jew is in some individuals eclipsed in actual practice) believe in the literal interpretation of the Torah, including the Creation account with which the Torah begins. You might say that Jews are the original "fundamentalists," to use a familiar term in this country.

The immediate consequences to this literal interpretation are: (1) that the Universe was created ex nihilo; (2) that immediately on the first day of Creation both the heaven and the earth came into being, as distinct from the so-called "big bang" theory which you mention, or other cosmogonist theories; (3) that the six days of creation refer to actual days, not "periods," as clearly evidenced by the "seventh day" in the same context, which the Creator blessed and sanctified as the day of Shabbos, and which He commanded us, Jews, to observe every seventh day of the week. And while we also have a Sabbatical Year, Shmitta, which is the seventh year of a seven-year cycle (incidentally, the new year, 5740 is such a year), the seventh day of each week – Shabbos – which Jews have observed for countless generations to this day is living testimony that "in six days G-d made heaven and earth."

I am, of course, aware that even in certain orthodox circles there have been well-meaning apologists who attempted to rein-

terpret the Creation account of the Torah in one way or another in order to "reconcile" it with changing theories as to the origin of the Universe. But since I am speaking of the authentic time-honored traditional view, the way it has always been understood and taught to Jewish children, the chedarim and yeshivos, as it is still understood and taught today, the above-mentioned three basic points of Creation are absolutely fundamental; and there are other corollaries, which cannot be entered into here.

In addition to plain text of the *Torah she'bi'Ksav* (Written Torah) there are numerous teachings in the *Torah she'be'Al-Peh* (Talmud, etc.) reiterating and expounding the Creation account, which is the very foundation of our religion and belief. The Rambam (Maimonides), the Great Codifier of Jewish Law, clearly rules that our belief in the Divine origin of both the Written and Oral Law is indivisible and if one is denied, G-d forbid, in whole or in part, so is ipso facto the other.

As for your statement that scientific data were not available generations ago, etc., let me say that with all due respect to science, it has not in any way (except in a most speculative way) challenged the authenticity of the Torah account of Creation. Be it noted that the Torah itself gives science a strong validity (in the so called exact and empirical sciences), as for example when a physician rules that a person must not fast on Yom Kippur, in which case the doctor's opinion assumes the validity of a Torah rule overriding the fast.

Unfortunately, most contemporary scientists seem to conceal one of the inescapable consequences of the relativity theory, according to which neither the principle of Ptolemy that the earth is the center of the Universe, nor that of Copernicus that the sun is the center of the "solar system," is relevant any more since modern science cannot, *a priori*, rule on this question definitively. From the viewpoint of modern science, either of them could be right, and if one of them is rejected on any ground, the same objection would apply to the other, as anyone who is familiar with the theory of relativity knows.

continued in next issue

From www.NissenMindelPublications.com, *The Letter and the Spirit*

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

This Shabbat, we mark the birthday of the fourth Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom Ber, who was known as the Rebbe Rashab. It is said that on a person's birthday, the "spiritual source of the soul shines powerfully." Therefore, it is important to understand what the central point of the Rebbe Rashab's leadership was, and how it differed from the other Chabad Rebbes.

The Rebbe explains how each of the Rebbes was characterized by a particular dimension which reflected his individual nature.

Chabad Chasidut is characterized by the ability to make the esoteric teachings of the Torah, which remained hidden from the majority of the Jewish community, accessible to every single Jew. The Rebbe Rashab was able to bring the teachings of Chabad Chasidut to an even more comprehensible level than his predecessors.

The Rebbe Rashab's teachings put a great emphasis on summarizing subject matter so that it could be more easily implemented into daily life. For this he is referred to by many as the "Rambam [Maimonides] of Chasidut," because he summarized Chasidut in the same way the Rambam summarized the Oral Law, making it comprehensible and giving it clear directions for every aspect of our conduct. The lessons of the Rebbe Rashab are easily understood and are concluded with directions for the practical application of those lessons.

In 1897 the Rebbe Rashab established a yeshiva, Tomchei Tminim, and he was personally involved in every aspect of it, designing the curriculum, and asking for a detailed progress report on each student. He strove to raise both their standard of learning and their standard of behavior. It was a great honor to be accepted into the yeshiva, and its students were highly respected by the community.

The Rebbe Rashab published many of his teachings, which deal with improving one's character, how to prepare for prayer and the importance of prayer, and of studying Chasidut. May we all benefit from his teachings.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה י מושקה

The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.

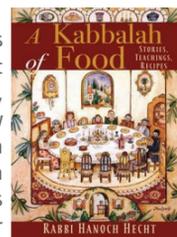
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A Kabbalah of Food

A Kabbalah of Food: Stories, Teachings, Recipes was recently published by Rabbi Hanoch Hecht. Guest lecturer at the Culinary Institute of America, 2016 appearance on Food Network's hit show *Chopped*, and co-founder and co-director with his wife Tzivi of Chabad of Dutchess County in Rhineback, New York. Rabbi Hecht's recipes – a fusion of traditional, modern, and kosher cuisines – have appeared in culinary publications all over the world. Innovative in its style and format, *A Kabbalah of Food* illuminates the essential role food plays in Jewish tradition. The book weaves 63 recipes with 39 Chasidic stories and includes mystical interpretations, creating a narrative which is as fascinating as it is unique.



WHO'S WHO

Betzalel was the son of Uri, from the tribe of Judah. He was a master artisan, of whom the Torah states, "I have filled him with the spirit of G-d, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship to devise skillful works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in carving of wood..." (Ex. 31:1-6) Together with Oholiav he produced all the ritual items for the Sanctuary - the ark cover, the furniture, the table and its vessels, the altars, menorah, etc. All were made according to the prophecy that Moses had received at Sinai.

MOSHIACH MATTERS

When Rabbi Sholom DovBer was four or five years old, he came to his grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek, for a blessing on his birthday. When he entered the room he burst into tears. "Why are you crying?" the Rebbe asked. "I learned in this week's Torah portion that G-d appeared to Abraham after he circumcised himself.

Why doesn't G-d appear to me?" The Tzemach Tzedek explained that when a righteous person decides to circumcise himself at the age of 99, he is truly deserving of G-d's revelation! From this story we learn the importance of educating our children in a Torah way, that a fervent desire for holiness and G-dliness is developed. Similarly, our longing for the revelation of G-dliness in the world should be just as strong; we must also demand that G-d appear to us in His full glory with the Final Redemption. (*The Rebbe, Parshat Vayeira 5752-1991*)