

The Jewish Weekly

Spiritual Children, Spiritual Love

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

"My Spiritual Children"

It was Sukkot 5701 (1940) and Rabbi Yehuda Leib Posner's first yechidut (private audience) with Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, the Rebbe Rayatz. As my brother and I were escorted by Rabbi Simpson into the Friediker ('previous') Rebbe's room, Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson [the Rebbe's attendant] introduced us, saying we were [Rabbi] Sholom Posner's children, and the Rebbe blessed us.

It was during that year that the Rebbe Rayatz had decided to open a Lubavitcher yeshiva for lower grades. My brother and I, however, were learning elsewhere, at "Torah Vadaat" - an excellent but non-Lubavitcher school. Nevertheless, every so often we'd hop over to 770 [Eastern Parkway in the Crown Heights district of Brooklyn].

We were supposed to go home to Chicago for Passover, but since I was going to celebrate my bar mitzvah on 11 Nissan that year, I had asked for yechidut with my brother before we left.

In those days, yechidut took place three times a week: Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday nights. Since our bus was leaving Sunday afternoon, our appointment was set for Thursday night. Rabbi Simpson phoned us at ten p.m.

"It's late," he said, "and the Rebbe is tired. I can get you in at the next earliest opportunity."

"But we have to leave Sunday afternoon," I protested. "We won't be able to have yechidut on Sunday night."

Rabbi Simpson sighed. "Well, in that case, you can have yechidut Saturday night."

It was Motzei Shabbos (the night immediately following Shabbat's end at nightfall). My brother and I waited at 770, but Rabbi Simpson, who lived in Boro Park - another Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn - had not yet arrived. Finally, we phoned him and said that since he had promised us a yechidut, what were we supposed to do?

His reply: "Go to Rabbi Levitin [a senior chassid]."

Rabbi Levitin in turn directed us to Chaim Lieberman, the Rebbe's secretary. We knocked at his office door and explained the situation.

He said, "Go down and go in." We stared at him in shock, but he said, "Nu, nu; go in."

Before entering the Rebbe's office, I told my brother to knock at the door. He did, and opened the door a bit.

The Rebbe was seated at his desk. As we timidly entered, I noticed that when he saw us, he smiled, and our fear dissipated. We stopped before his desk.

"Are you returning by bus?" was The Rebbe's first question.

We stared at him, in confusion. Perhaps we hadn't heard him correctly - since by then the Rebbe, who was not well, spoke unclearly, making comprehension difficult. The Rebbe repeated his question and we answered affirmatively.

He then asked, "Will you daven (pray) on the bus in the morning?"

Once again, we answered in the affirmative.

"With tefillin too?" he asked.

When we said yes, he said, "Good."

Then the Rebbe explained, "Everything must be according to the place and time, and according to the place and time, I am satisfied with you.

"But with your father, who was in Lubavitch, it is completely different. Still, from you, more is demanded than of "kinder (children) from the street."

"You are my children," the Rebbe continued. "To your parents, you are fleishigdik kinder - children of the flesh - but to me, you are spiritual children."

Then we spoke about the upcoming bar mitzvah, and the Rebbe wished us a good trip.

"A Far Greater Love"

Rabbi Yisroel Gordon relates:

A Chabad chasid and his family lived in Russia, in a small town where there was no fire department, running water, or doctor. When his expectant wife became dangerously ill, the Chassid, concerned over the lack of medical service, took her to the city Vilna, where the doctor ordered her to go to the hospital and terminate the pregnancy.

The chasid, who of course refused to do anything without consulting the Rebbe, wrote the latter for advice. The Rebbe Rayatz replied: "The woman should remain at home, without an abortion. The child will be fine."

And that is what happened - the child was born healthy. And this isn't just 'one of those stories'; I am that child!

Since there was no telephone or telegraph in that town, my father had no way of informing the Rebbe of my birth. So instead, he took money as a redemptive donation and placed inside a Tanya (the foundational book of Chabad chasidut) a written request: that the healthy boy his wife gave birth to would merit to become a genuine chasid.

From this story we learn that chasidim always knew about the great love the Rebbe had for them, and they reciprocated with great love towards him. In his discourses, the Rebbe Rayatz stressed that the Rebbe's love for a chasid is far greater than the love parents have for their children.

Reprinted from an email of the Avner Institute.

It Once Happened...

The Power of Being Happy

By Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

A poor person earned his parnassah by digging and selling clay. Once, he was digging in the earth, and found a precious stone, worth a great fortune. He went to a jeweler to have it appraised. The jeweler said, "There is no one in this country that can pay for its value. You should travel to London, to the capital city..."

But he was poor, and he didn't have money to travel. He sold everything he owned, and he went from house to house collecting handouts, until he had enough money to travel to the port.

He wanted to get on a boat that was heading to London, but he didn't have money, so he went to the captain and showed him his diamond. The captain immediately welcomed him onto the ship with great honor. "You are surely wealthy." He gave him a first class private cabin with all amenities, as is given to the very wealthy.

His cabin had a porthole to the sea and he would always make himself happy with his diamond. He would especially cherish and look at his diamond as he ate his meals, because joy is good for digestion.

Once, he was eating his meal with the diamond on the table and he fell asleep. The cabin boy came in, took the tablecloth with the crumbs on it and dumped them into the sea. He didn't realize that the diamond was on the table. When this man awoke, he understood what happened, and was immensely distressed. He almost became insane from agony.

But he couldn't afford being sad, because the captain was a crook, and would surely kill him if he didn't pay for the passage. So, he continued to be happy, pretending as though nothing happened.

The captain used to come and chat with him for some time every day, and that day, he came as usual. The man pretended that he was happy. It wasn't noticeable on his behavior that anything changed.

The captain said to him, "I know that you are wise and honest. I want to buy a lot of wheat to sell in London. I can earn a lot of money from this transaction, but I'm afraid people will say that I'm stealing money from the king's treasury. Therefore, I want the purchase to be on your name. I will pay you well for this." The man liked the idea, and agreed.

As soon as they arrived in London and purchased the wheat, the captain died. The wheat remained with this person and he profited several times more than the value of the lost diamond.

Reb Nachman of Breslov concluded from this mashal, "The diamond was never his. The proof of that is that it got lost. The wheat was his, and the proof is that its profits remained by him. And the reason he got what's rightfully his is only because he remained happy."

Reprinted from an email of Torah Times Media.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Parshat Pinchas

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	7:04	8:20	8:57
Tel Aviv	7:20	8:22	8:54
Haifa	7:12	8:23	8:57
Be'er Sheva	7:21	8:21	8:55



It's My Money

By Rabbi Chaim Mentz

Years ago, the Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel was entirely dependent on the generosity of its brethren in the Diaspora. To that end, special emissaries would travel throughout Europe collecting donations, visiting local Jews and soliciting funds.

One time an emissary arrived in a certain city and was given a warm welcome. All of the townspeople came to the synagogue to hear him deliver his appeal. At the end of the speech, a prominent member of the local community volunteered to accompany him on his rounds from house to house.

The two men walked through the Jewish section knocking on doors and asking for donations. Not one family refused to contribute. The contributions varied according to financial circumstance, but everyone was happy to give at least something. Then the emissary noticed that they had skipped a mansion, and asked his companion why. "It would be a waste of effort," he was told. "The man who lives there is a miser. He has never given even a penny to charity."

"But we have to try," the emissary insisted. "Who knows? Maybe our words will penetrate his heart."

They knocked on the door, which was opened by the wealthy miser himself. "Good day!" the emissary said cheerfully. "May we speak with you for a minute?"

"You may certainly speak, but if you've come for a donation of money you're wasting your time," the miser said dryly.

But the emissary would not give up. "You're obviously a wealthy man. Don't you want to help support the poor and hungry Jews of the Holy Land? Everyone else in town is contributing generously."

"My money belongs to me," the miser declared sharply. "I worked very hard for it, and saved every penny. I refuse to give the fruit of my labors to someone who didn't expend the effort."

The emissary looked at him with pity in his eyes. "You're right, it's your money and your decision," he conceded. But before he left he added under his breath, "It looks as if you're going to be the third."

The miser closed the door with the emissary's words echoing in his ears. What did he mean? A whole day he couldn't get the comment out of his head, and that night he tossed and turned in bed. "It looks as if

you're going to be the third." The third what? He had to find out.

The next day the miser searched the city until he found the emissary from Israel. "I must know," he pleaded with him. "What did you mean when you said that I would be the third?"

The emissary smiled. "Yesterday I honored your principle of not giving away any of your hard-earned money. So how can you expect me to share my wisdom with you for nothing? I also worked very hard to acquire it."

The miser acknowledged that he was right, and agreed to pay for the answer. The emissary insisted on a sum three times what he usually asked of the rich, and the transaction was made.

"Now I will tell you a story," the emissary began. "Many years ago there lived a very wealthy man who was as stingy as he was rich. He was even miserly when it came to himself. He even refused to marry, lest a wife and children drain his finances.

"The man worked very hard his whole life and eventually amassed a fortune. Before he passed away, he instructed the Burial Society to bury him with all his money. Even after death he refused to part from his riches.

"His final wishes were carried out, and not one cent remained above ground. When the grave was filled, the angel in charge of the deceased came to accompany him to the Heavenly Court.

"Did you study Torah?" the man was asked. 'No,' was his reply, 'I was a businessman.'

"Then certainly you supported those who did with your charity. Tell us,' the judges urged him, 'which good deeds did you perform with all your money?'

"Look, there's nothing to talk about,' the man answered. 'I brought all my money with me. Do whatever you want with it.'

"You don't understand,' they explained. 'Here money has no value. The currency is mitzvot - commandments.' The man's fate hung in the balance.

"After much discussion the judges realized that there was only one precedent in history, when the wealthy, rebellious Korach had been swallowed up by the earth with all his riches. In the end it was decided that the miser, who had also been buried with all his money, should be sent to keep him company. The lonely Korach would no doubt be delighted.

"But it's very hard to spend such a long time with even two people," the emissary continued. "I'm sure that Korach and his friend are very bored by now, and would welcome a third conversationalist into their group. When I met you I thought to myself, 'Who knows? Maybe their boredom will soon be alleviated. But now that you've given me your donation, I think that Korach and his friend will have to wait a while longer.'"

From that day on the former miser was always the first to contribute to every charitable cause that came his way.

Reprinted from an email of chabadofbelair.org.

A rabbi once returned to his shul after a vacation. One of his congregants said to him, "Rabbi, you should have been here to see what it's like without you!"

The rabbi took that as a great compliment. And if there is one Biblical character whose presence made all the difference to those around him, it was definitely Aaron HaKohen, Aaron the High Priest.

At the commencement of Parshat Pinchas we're given a genealogy of the people at a time of census and Rashi notices some changes. He attributes the changes to the fact that a civil war had happened in the wilderness. And why did it happen? It happened because Aaron had passed away.

The Torah recounts the death of Aaron for us. He was buried in a place called Hor HaHar and the entire nation wept bitterly for him because they loved him so dearly.

In Parshat Eikev we are told that Aaron died in a place called Moserah, and that's where he was buried. So how is it possible that in one place we're told that he was buried in Hor HaHar because he died there, and in another place, that it was Moserah?

So Rabbi Shimon Schwab based on the Rashi in our parsha says as follows: Actually Aaron died in Hor HaHar and that's where he was buried, but because he was the great peacemaker of our people, his absence was felt dearly and, for the very first time, civil war raged in our midst and many people died.

Rabbi Shimon Schwab explains that Aaron's death in Hor HaHar was felt in Moserah and therefore, when the people were in Moserah it was as if Aaron had died there and that's why they were fighting against each other in Moserah.

We often notice how the presence of one person – whether in the family circle, an office setting or a community – can make all the difference, sometimes positively, and sometimes negatively.

From what we learn about Aaron, let's all ask the following question to ourselves. What kind of positive impact does our presence make wherever we are? And to what degree will we be missed when we're not there?

Let's also try to have a positive impact as Aaron did, by praying with all our hearts for all those who need a recovery from sickness, for the release of the hostages, as well as praying for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra Kadisha members worldwide, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, sweet, and happy Shabbat.

Yossi

פנחס

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The Jewish Weekly's
PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 6
MITZVOT ASEH: 6
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 0

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 168
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1887
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 7853

HAFTORA: Yirmiyahu 1:1-2:3 Divrei Yirmiyahu (The three Haftorot of the three weeks preceding the Ninth of Av, are called the — שלש דפורות — the "Three (Haftorot) of Punishment").

This week, we study Chapter 1 of Pirkei Avot.