

# Living Jewish



## Tell your Children

### A Rabbi's Chemical Cure for Insanity

Once, a religious Jewish man, whom we will call Reb Yona, had a son who became mentally ill. Shortly before his Bar Mitzvah, the boy suddenly stopped eating and drinking, and began wandering aimlessly around the house, mumbling incoherently to himself like a madman. The father spared no money or time searching for a cure. But, after all his savings were gone and he had exhausted all sources of charity with no results, he, like all the best doctors and professors he had seen, gave up.

Then he heard about the Alter Rebbe. Thousands sought the help of Rebbe Shneur Zalman, the founder of Chabad, (nicknamed the "Alter (elder) Rebbe") both in mundane and spiritual matters. He, however, would have no part of it - who ever heard of asking a human being for a blessing? G-d is the one who cures!

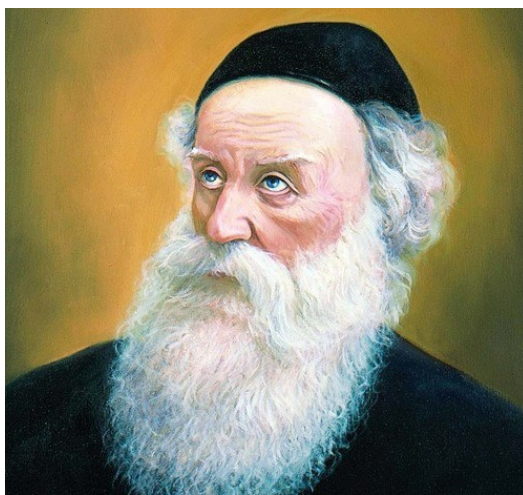
But, as the man's wife pointed out, if it is permissible to ask doctors for help and throw away hundreds of rubles on them, why should it be forbidden to ask the help of a tzaddik? There are myriads of stories in Judaism about people requesting blessings from Moses, Elijah and from the holy scholars of the Talmud. Yona tried to resist, but finally gave in to his wife's tears and urgings, agreeing to travel to Liadi. A few days later he was with his son before the Rebbe, gazing into the Rebbe's infinitely deep eyes.

### You Son Will Be Healthy

"Your son will be healthy, G-d willing," the Rebbe said. "He needs just one small treatment. Mix a small potion of two grams of silver nitrate in a tablespoon of olive oil and have him swallow it. This will heal him completely, G-d willing."

Yona was overjoyed! The Rebbe was a different person from anyone he had ever seen. There was truth and certainty in the Rebbe's eyes the man had never dreamed existed in this world. Finally, there was hope! He immediately set out to find someone to fill the prescription.

It so happened that in the town of the Alter Rebbe there lived a highly esteemed doctor. So, when Yona began



asking around for someone to make this concoction, he was directed to his house. But, when he asked the doctor for help, he was shocked by the doctor's response. "What! Silver nitrate?" the doctor almost screamed. "What in the world would anyone need that for? Who told you to take this?"

### Persistence

Yona tried to explain, but it didn't help. "Deranged son?" the doctor exclaimed, shrugging his shoulders in disbelief. "What has silver nitrate got to do with mental illness? The opposite is true; it could be dangerous!"

Nevertheless, Yona insisted. He put money on the table, told the doctor he trusted the Rebbe and in moments was exiting with the elixir in hand. Full of hope and anticipation he sped home and gave it to his son...but, nothing happened. True, nothing bad happened. But nothing good happened, either. Perhaps he had misunderstood what the Rebbe said. He decided to ask again.

The next day he was again standing before the Rebbe explaining what had happened. The Rebbe smiled and then replied, "ah, whoever mixed the medicine must have made a mistake in measuring. Go back and ask him if he measured exactly as I told you. It has to be exact!"

"Mistake?" the doctor replied later, "I didn't make any mistake. As a matter of fact, I didn't measure at all! I just put in the smallest amount of silver nitrate possible. Why waste time measuring some

thing that is useless?" But Yona pleaded again, and finally the doctor softened. He even agreed to measure and mix it all in front of Reb Yona. Sure enough, this time when the man administered the mixture to his son, the boy's entire complexion and composure changed almost immediately. As though he had just woken from a dream, he began to ask for food to eat and books to study.

### A Miracle

Yona returned to the doctor with his son, and the doctor could not believe his eyes. "It simply makes no sense! I suppose you want to say it was a miracle. But, if it was a miracle, why did the measure have to be exact? Anyway, silver nitrate has nothing to do with mental illness. I simply can't understand it! Still," he concluded in an abashed tone, "I'm afraid that I must admit that what happened here was a miracle."

Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the translation of Rabbi Tuvia Bolton from one of the most authoritative collections of Chasidic stories, "Sipurim Nor-a'im" by Rabbi Yaakov Kaidener.

Rabbi Tilles of Tsfat, is a co-founder of ASCENT. His email list for stories is in its 27th 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.

### Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	4:04	5:24
Tel Aviv	4:25	5:25
Haifa	4:12	5:23
Beer Sheva	4:27	5:26
New York	4:19	5:23

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## We Don't Belong In Exile

This week's Torah reading, Vayechi, begins: "And Jacob lived in the Land of Egypt." The Baal HaTurim explains that Jacob spent his best years in the land of Egypt."

To explain: Throughout his life, Jacob was beset by problems and difficulties. In Egypt, he was able to live in wealth and prosperity and spend his final years sharing his wisdom with his sons. These were obviously the best years of his life.

### Light Over Darkness

One might, however, ask: Why were the best years of Jacob's life spent in Egypt? Egypt is a depraved land, a place of spiritual darkness. Why was it that Jacob found fulfillment there rather than in Eretz Yisrael, our holy land? Couldn't G-d have structured it otherwise?

The commentaries explain that this reflects a motif suggested by the Zohar. On the verse: "I saw an advantage to light over darkness," the Zohar explains that it is through darkness that it is possible to attain the higher quality of light.

The existence of every entity in the world is maintained by G-dly life-energy. Even those objects which appear to be spiritually

empty possess G-dly sparks. Indeed, from a certain perspective, the G-dly energy contained within them is greater than that manifest in situations where holiness is openly revealed.

### Emulating Jacob's Example

How can the G-dliness within these entities be tapped? By emulating Jacob's example. Jacob saw no difference between life in Egypt and life in Eretz Yisrael. Certainly, the externals were not the same. Here he lived amid affluence and security, and there he struggled with perverse foes. In one place, the land was holy, and in the other, it was corrupt.

But internally, he saw no change. In both places, his life was characterized by an unchanging and uninterrupted commitment to Torah. Even in Egypt, this was the focus of his existence. Despite the decadence of Egyptian society, he and his descendants remained focused on the spiritual.

Through these efforts, he was able to tap the latent spiritual potential that was present within Egypt, enabling the higher quality of light to surface. And by doing so, he generated the potential for the exodus from Egypt, when his descendants would proceed from exile to redemption.

Similarly, the closing passages describe how Joseph tells his brothers that ultimate-

ly G-d will take the Jews out of Egypt.

### A King Inside and Out

Why is Joseph the one to communicate this message? Because his spiritual level transcended the exile. Yes, he descended to Egypt and was even enslaved there. But these external events did not change his inner makeup. Inside, he was a king and because he was a king inside, ultimately, his external circumstances changed to reflect this inner core.

This was the message Joseph communicated to his brethren: "You will live many years in Egypt and you will ultimately be enslaved, but that will not define who you are. Egypt is a land of limitations and you possess a Divine potential that transcends all limitations. Eventually, that potential will surface and you will be redeemed."

This is a message not only for the Jews of Joseph's generation, but also for the Jews of all time. A Jew does not belong in exile, for he possesses a soul that is an actual part of G-d. As he realizes this potential and expresses it in his conduct, it surfaces and influences the external environment, causing redemption to be a tangible reality.

*Based on the teachings of the Rebbe, from Keeping in Touch, reprinted with perm. from Sichos in English*

## From our Sages

*Which I took out of the hand of the Emorite with my sword and with my bow (Gen. 48:22)*

As Rashi notes, the sword and bow Jacob was referring to were his "wisdom" and "prayer," for allegorically, the Emorite is identified with the Evil Inclination. This battle takes place in every Jew's soul. The Emorite, from the Hebrew word meaning speech, becomes powerful when we speak inappropriately or entertain extraneous thoughts. The way to conquer him is with "wisdom" and "prayer," uttering words of Torah and praying to G-d.

*(the Alter Rebbe, Torah Ohr)*

*And when he saw that the resting place was good...he bent his shoulder to bear (Gen. 49:15)*

Issachar recognized that although leisure is good and pleasant, it can also be dangerous. In times of peace and tranquility the Evil Inclination intensifies its efforts to lead a person astray, which can lead to disaster. Issachar therefore "bent his shoulder to bear" the yoke of Torah, for Torah study is the antidote to this pitfall.

*(the Previous Rebbe)*

*And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger (Gen. 48:14)*

Because Ephraim was younger, Jacob placed his stronger hand upon his head to bless him. For young children always require more attention, supervision and encouragement than older people.

*(Techiyat Yisrael)*

*And let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 48:16)*

Jacob was afraid that the younger generation (especially Joseph's children, who were born and bred in Egypt and accustomed to the wealth of the royal palace) would assimilate among their Egyptian neighbors. To prevent this, he insisted that his grandchildren keep their original Jewish names. Changing one's name is the first step toward assimilation.

*(Imrei Chein)*

*From our Sages reprinted from LchaimWeekly.org - LYO / NYC*

### Selfless Support

Reb Volf Greenglass related: There was a radical anti-Zionist magazine published in Jerusalem which also carried some nasty articles about Lubavitch. Sometimes, they even wrote brazenly about the Rebbe himself. Suddenly, without any prior notice, the publication ceased to appear.

When a member of Chabad of Jerusalem was in yechidut (private audience with the Rebbe), the Rebbe inquired why the magazine had stopped. The chassid explained that they had run into severe debts, resulting in the closure of the publication. Hearing this, the Rebbe took money from his drawer, and asked him to deliver it to the periodical. "But make sure," warned the Rebbe, "they do not know it comes from here."

One of the chassidim expressed his surprise to the Rebbe's support of the magazine, seeing as they hindered the work of Lubavitch. "But they are needed," the Rebbe replied. "They also write some very true and productive things."

*Likutei Sipurei Hitva'aduyot, p. 342; "Selfless Support" & "Holy Images" reprinted from The Weekly Farbrengen by Merkaz Anash, on-line at TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com*



# Chassidus page

## Song in the Service of Hashem

Already as a young child the Alter Rebbe displayed a great talent in negina (song). The Previous Rebbe said, "he was a born menagen". His father, Reb Baruch, who was one of the students of the Baal Shem Tov, would often be visited by his colleagues, the hidden tzaddikim, and at these visits the Alter Rebbe learnt many niggunim from them. He was very fond of nature and after finishing his day in cheder he would immediately head out to the fields where he would review his learning and many times break forth with a niggun.

In fact, as he grew older he drew many followers through his niggunim. When he would daven, the listener would become entranced by the sweetness of his voice, unable to move away.

### A New Appreciation

All this was even before the Alter Rebbe went to Mezritch, where he met his Rebbe, the Maggid of Mezritch. There he learnt that negina is one of the ways to serve Hashem and that it can help with one's davening. During his stay he heard many niggunim that were sung by the Baal Shem Tov, reviewing them until he knew them perfectly.

After returning to his home in Vitebsk the Alter Rebbe was asked what he had learned while in Mezritch. He replied there were three things: "Firstly, the source of my Neshama. Secondly, my purpose in this world, namely to reveal Chassidus Chabad. And, thirdly, that this is accomplished through negina."

The first Pesach in Vitebsk after his return

from Metzritch, he sang many niggunim that he had received there. All the leading scholars from the city came to hear him and every one of the listeners felt that his 'shores ha'neshama' (the very core of his soul) was in a revealed state due to the power of the Alter Rebbe's singing.

### Emphasis on Song

Already from the beginning of his leadership, the Alter Rebbe placed much emphasis on the importance of negina and established it as one of the Darchei Ha-Chassidus (ways of Chassidus). There was a chassid named Reb Moshe Zalman who was nicknamed, "Moshe Zalman der Feldman", for he would spend much time in the field singing. Being that the Alter Rebbe taught his students niggunim, we can thus find many niggunim attributed to various Chassidim, for example, Reb Moshe Vilenker, Reb Shlomo Chasnik'er, or they are just known as 'Chasidei Admur Hazakon'...

The Tzemach Tzedek (the Alter Rebbe's grandson and the third Rebbe of Chabad), once said that the Alter Rebbe in his kindness gave the power to a chassid to wash out "the disgusting vessel" and this is through a niggun.

The Mittlerer Rebbe (the Alter Rebbe's son and second Rebbe of Chabad) once said, "my father was able to enter into the inside of a chassid and remove what didn't belong there, either through a maamar (Chasidic discourse) or a niggun.

*adapted from Derher*

## Daled Bavos

This Niggun is commonly known as "The Alter Rebbe's Niggun". It is the foremost fundamental niggun among chassidim and considered very holy, sung only on special occasions, such as Yud Tet Kislev, Purim, and so on. In Lubavitch it was also sung during the month of Elul, when Chassidim would daven at length. It is also customary to sing it at joyful occasions: brit, bar mitzva, or chatuna. When sung during these times it causes a simcha Above. However, if sung at a regular occasion it can cause kitrugim (heavenly accusation). It is also Chabad custom to sing the niggun under the chupah, as was done by the Rebbe's wedding.

The niggun is most profound and contains deep intentions. There is a lengthy letter of the Previous Rebbe in which he repeats a farbrengen of the Rebbe Rashab from Yud Tet Kislev, 5663. Towards the end of the farbrengen at 4:30am, the Rebbe Rashab turned towards Reb Nosson Notah Paharer and requested that he should lead his group of singers in singing Daled Bavos.

Before they began, the Rebbe Rashab said: "The niggun corresponds to the four worlds, the four worlds correspond to the four letters in Hashem's name and they illuminate the four levels of the nefesh (excluding yechida). Since it represents these levels, one must sing this niggun precisely for it has an effect on his nefesh, when one sings it with an inner arousal, it is a fit time for teshuva and hitkashrut, and one can even ask - after davening with this niggun - for a blessing in children, health and sustenance.

The Rebbe Rashab explained each of the four stanzas and their spiritual significance, and when he concluded, he asked that they sing the first three parts, and then the fourth one 10 times! It is customary to sing a special preparatory niggun before Daled Bavos, which was sung in front of the Rebbe Rashab.

The Previous Rebbe once said: since we don't know all the intentions (kavanot) for the niggun we must sing it bi'pshtut (with simplicity) and Hashem will help...

*adapted from Derher*

## Moshiach Now

"...You must put the utmost effort into shalom bayit with your spouse...As our Sages famously teach us, a woman is daata kala [easily affected] and cries easily—therefore, you have to be the one to compromise, especially in matters of the world. The time of Moshiach is coming closer; we are holding at Erev Shabbat after midday. If our Sages always spoke of the importance of shalom bayit, how much more so on erev Shabbat.

"There is an especially strong darkness regarding shalom bayit because of the greatness of peace...This is especially true in this final exile, which was caused by a lack of peace. The closer we get to the end of exile, the more the "other side" [i.e. the forces of evil] works to prevent peace in the world at large, and especially between husband and wife, who are a reflection of Above. But we are only given challenges that we can overcome, and certainly you were given the energies to withstand the test."

*(the Rebbe, reprinted from Derher)*

*To receive Living Jewish each week visit [chabad4u.org.il](http://chabad4u.org.il)*

## Human Interest

### Helping Israel

As the war in Israel drags on, unfortunately, we may begin to be lax. To counter this, those entering 770 (Chabad World Headquarters in Crown Heights, NY) were greeted with signs proclaiming: "Emergency Kinus (gathering)," help our sisters and brothers in the Holy Land!

Some 300 Chassidim gathered to daven, learn, and take resolutions to increase in mitzvot, honoring the soldiers and "storming the heavens" to have the hostages released. The Kinus began with a video of the Rebbe's strong words of encouragement, with directives for the leaders in Israel to finish this war at lightning speed.

Rabbi Mendel Yusewitz stressed the



danger of lessening our learning, davening, mitzvot and chesed. It is as severe as a soldier deserting his post!! Specifically, every chassid must find an opportunity to do 'Mivtza Tefilin', about which the Rebbe quotes the verse, "And all the nations of the earth will see that the name of G-d is called upon you and will fear you" – this refers to the tefillin of the head.

Rav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, a member of the Chabad Rabbinical Court of Crown Heights, urged all to add even in very small acts, as insignificant as they may seem.

Rabbi Yisroel HersHKowitz, the Chabad emissary to Ofakim, Israel, said we all are still experiencing Hashem's guiding hand and open miracles! He inspired all to increase in joy and even to make a Seudat Hodaah (thanksgiving meal) celebrating in advance, for future miracles!

*adapted from COLlive*

### Cooking Tip of the Week

Arriving in the U.S. late and tired my cousin greeted us with cheese latkes. She said the recipe came from an old cook book, Spice and Spirit. I used the recipe and it was great! Pull out the recipe books you loved and recycle some of your old favorites.

*Alizah Hochstead,  
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## Halacha Corner – Holy Images

Seeing holy images has a positive effect on a person, while negative images have the opposite effect. Our Sages list certain things at which one should not gaze, such as the face of an evil person or someone who is angry. The Gemara relates how things that a woman looks at could have an effect on her offspring. Shulchan Aruch mentions the scrupulousness of avoiding the sight of impure animals (e.g. dog or donkey) at certain auspicious times.

The Rebbe spoke of the praiseworthy practice to surround a child with images of holiness and Judaism, and avoiding even non-kosher animals and weaponry. This is especially important for children, who are so impressionable, and what they see has a life-long effect on them. The Rebbe encouraged everyone to adopt this practice, and added that toys given to an infant should only be kosher animals, and even pictures drawn should be completely holy.

Whenever it comes to teaching Torah, one can and should use non-kosher animals as well if that is the subject being discussed. Taking children to the zoo is also allowed and recommended, and a teacher can bring non kosher animals and insects to the classroom, since this helps teach children about the wonders of Hashem's creation. Many shuls have pictures of a lion to represent the lesson learned from it in our service of Hashem, i.e., to be strong like a lion. The Rebbe connected this heightened level of holiness with preparing for the imminent Geula, when all impurity will be removed from the world.

*Adapted from Rabbi Chaim Raskin, Chabad Rav of Petach Tikva*

## Farbrengen

**Question:** I have a hard time learning Tanya in that I can't get beyond the idea that, according to Tanya, we are rashaim (evil people). Everyone is always talking about the greatness of Tanya. But, I want to feel good, not hear that I am a rasha. What is your opinion?

**Answer:** The Alter Rebbe composed the Tanya as a guide to enable us to reach our highest potential. To this day its teachings continue to revolutionize the Jewish world, providing the tools to serve Hashem with true love and awe.

The terms tzaddik and rasha, in the mainstream vernacular, describe one's behavior. A person with more merits than sins is termed a tzaddik; a person with more sins than merits is termed a rasha. Thus, it is no wonder that many people share your question: how can the Alter Rebbe call me a rasha!?!?

However, in Tanya, the term rasha is not a description of one's behavior. Rather, the term reflects one's inward spiritual state. Each of us is composed of a yetzer hara (evil inclination) and a yetzer tov (good inclination). The yetzer hara wants to enjoy the delights of this world; the yetzer tov thirsts to do Hashem's will, to learn Torah and perform mitzvot. A tzaddik has transformed his yetzer hara to a yetzer tov—the yetzer hara now also delights in Torah and mitzvot and longs to be close to Hashem. This is an exalted level which is achieved by only a few.

Thus, by referring to the general population with the term rasha, the Alter Rebbe is not implying we are bad. Rather, he is merely stating that we are comprised of both a yetzer tov and a yetzer hara - which is normal. This awareness is beneficial for a number of reasons:

1. Self-awareness is the first step to growth.
2. Prevents self-criticism. A person realizes that foreign thoughts are not a measuring stick of their spiritual level. Such thoughts are normal, manifestations of the yetzer hara, which merely need to be pushed away. On the other hand, if a person thinks they are, or should be, a tzaddik, such thoughts lead to self criticism.
3. Humility creates the space for Hashem to dwell in our lives. The awareness that we still have a yetzer hara enables sincere humility.
4. Delight. When one is aware of their distance from Hashem, the closeness that results from performing mitzvot and learning Torah is experienced with much greater spiritual excitement.

Tanya provides us with a detailed picture of our spiritual anatomy. From this vantage point, we begin the journey to access our highest potential. On the other hand, believing we are a tzaddik, when we are not, can prevent growth.

*Aharon Schmidt - marriage & individual counseling; coachingandcounseling1@gmail.com*



Off to exercise?

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