

LIVING JEWISH

Tell Your Children

A Life-Changing Dream

Reb Pinchas began his journey to wealth as a timber merchant. At first, his business was modest in scope, but over time it expanded. Gradually, he became a man of means and eventually a very wealthy businessman.

At first, the community rejoiced in his success, for it also benefited charitable causes and the welfare of the needy. Slowly, however, Reb Pinchas became increasingly estranged from the members of his community and their needs.

Eventually, he no longer felt comfortable living among his fellow Jews and moved to the opposite end of town, to an entirely non-Jewish neighborhood. There he built himself a magnificent mansion, surrounded by high walls and guarded by gatekeepers.

His growing distance from Jewish life also led him to withdraw from acts of charity. At first, it was still possible to knock on his door and receive a small coin. But after some time, even that came to an end. The charity collectors sadly removed Reb Pinchas's name from the list of generous benefactors.

Stormy Winter Night

One stormy winter evening, fierce winds blew through the streets, and the bitter cold chilled people to the bone.

A destitute wanderer noticed the mezuzah on Reb Pinchas's front door and knocked, hoping to find a compassionate Jewish home. Fortunately for him, Reb Pinchas was away at the time. The gatekeeper, whose heart was moved by the sight of the poor man nearly frozen from the cold, took him inside.

After the traveler had warmed himself a little, however, the gatekeeper warned him, "you should quickly find another place to spend the night. The master of the house does not like guests."

Just then, the sound of a carriage was heard. Reb Pinchas entered the house, wrapped in a thick fur coat.



Elul is the month of preparation for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The sound of the shofar throughout the month awakens us to reflect, grow, and prepare spiritually. (picture from COLlive)

The moment he saw the stranger, he exploded, "what is this—a soup kitchen?! Get out of here immediately!"

The next morning, the town was shocked by the news: an unknown traveler, who had arrived only the previous evening, had been found dead in the street, not far from Reb Pinchas's estate.

Reb Pinchas knew exactly who the deceased was, but he did not allow the incident to disturb his peace of mind.

The Dream

That night he had a terrifying dream.

Two powerful men burst into his house. "Come with us," they commanded, seizing him firmly.

"Where are you taking me?" he asked. "To stand trial before the holy tzaddik, Rabbi Mordechai Shraga of Husiatyn" (the son of Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin).

"For what?"

"You will find out in due time."

Suddenly, he found himself standing in a large courtyard surrounding a beautiful building. For a brief moment he admired the scene, but as he was led into a crowded hall filled with people, fear gripped his

heart once again.

The Trial

"Make way for the Av Beit Din—the Rebbe of Husiatyn," a voice rang out. The Rebbe entered and took his place between two judges who had already been waiting.

Reb Pinchas immediately recognized the plaintiff. It was none other than the poor traveler.

The man began recounting his story. He described his exhaustion and hunger when he had stood at Reb Pinchas's doorstep, pleading with his eyes for mercy. He vividly described the humiliation of being thrown back into the freezing street. "My last strength was gone," he testified. "After many days of wandering with an empty stomach, hunger and cold overcame me, and I died."

The presiding judge thundered, "do you have anything to say in your defense?"

For the first time, Reb Pinchas remained silent. He felt deep remorse and shame for what he had done.

After consulting with the other judges, the Rebbe pronounced the verdict:

continued on page three

Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	6:56	8:09
Tel Aviv	7:12	8:11
Haifa	7:03	8:12
Beer Sheva	7:12	8:09
New York	7:46	8:48



Who May Eat Meat?

Before entering the Land of Israel, Hashem commanded the Jewish people: “When the L-rd, your G-d, expands your boundary... and you say, ‘I will eat meat,’ because your soul desires to eat meat, you may eat meat, according to every desire of your soul.” (Deuteronomy 12:20)

According to one of the commentaries, this verse granted them permission to eat meat out of desire. Until that time, in the desert, it had been forbidden to eat ordinary meat (*basar chullin*); only meat that had been offered as a sacrifice on the altar could be eaten. However, from the time they entered the Land of Israel, eating ordinary meat became permitted.

The Ability to Refine

At first glance, this seems difficult to understand. In the desert, the Jewish people stood on a very high spiritual level. They were not burdened with the mundane concerns of earning a livelihood and daily physical needs; rather, they were able to dedicate their entire existence to serving G-d. In contrast, in the Land of Israel they began living ordinary earthly lives, occupied with all their daily responsibilities. Why, then, was it specifically when they seemingly descended from their higher spiritual level that they were permitted to

eat ordinary meat?

The explanation is that precisely in the desert they were forbidden to eat meat out of desire because they had not yet been given the ability to refine and elevate the physical world. During that period, they needed to protect themselves from the influence of the material world and its distractions. Their food itself was spiritual nourishment — the manna.

It was upon entering the Land of Israel that they received the power to refine the physical world. This was the beginning of the Jewish people’s mission of *birurim*, refining and elevating the physical aspects of this world and transforming them into a dwelling place for the Divine Presence.

Therefore, at that point they were also given the ability to elevate even “meat of desire” to holiness. For this reason, G-d permitted it to them.

Without Blood

How can ordinary meat be elevated to holiness? The Torah continues: “However, be strong not to eat the blood...” Blood represents excitement and desire. The Torah teaches: eating meat itself is permitted, but the desire and passion are forbidden. Blood is sprinkled only upon the altar — meaning that enthusiasm and desire must be dedicated to holiness and

the service of G-d.

What should a person do with physical desires? The Torah says: “...you shall spill it on the ground, like water.” A Jew has no connection to physical desire for its own sake. When a Jew engages in worldly matters — such as eating meat — it must be solely for the sake of Heaven, in order to serve G-d, following the idea, “know Him in all your ways...”

The Inner Desire

When a Jew feels a desire for physical things, although this desire appears to come from the body, it comes from the soul. The soul longs to refine these matters, elevate them to holiness, and reveal the Divine sparks contained within them.

Thus, the verse can be explained: “And you say, ‘I will eat meat’” — when you feel a desire to eat meat, know that “because your soul desires to eat meat” — the desire comes from the soul, which longs to elevate the meat to holiness and to refine the Divine sparks within it.

When we relate to the physical world in this way, these desires do not cause a person to fall spiritually. On the contrary, we are able to elevate the world and transform it into a dwelling place for G-d.

(the Rebbe, *Likutei Sichot*, Volume 4)

From Our Sages

"Bind up the money in your hand" (Deuteronomy, 14:25)

Bind up your money and keep it in your hand—in your control. You should control your wealth—not let your wealth bind and control you.

(Rabbi Meir of Premishlan)

"You shall open your hand to him" (Deuteronomy 15:8)

From this verse our Sages learned that charity is a positive commandment from the Torah. If so, why do we not recite a blessing before fulfilling this mitzvah?

Because if pious people would pause to make all the customary preparations before the blessing—washing their hands, reciting *L'shem Yichud*, and so on—the poor person might die of hunger while they were preparing.

(Rabbi Bunim of Peshischa)

"You shall surely give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him..." (Deuteronomy 15:10)

Even if a person gives generously to the poor, if he lacks genuine empathy for the poor person's situation, it is considered akin to bloodshed.

(the Baal Shem Tov)

"...and you will begrudge your needy brother and not give him, and he will cry out to the L-rd against you, and it will be a sin to you." (Deuteronomy 15:9)

If not only do you fail to help the poor man, but you also look upon him with a begrudging eye and attribute his suffering and distress to his own sins, then "he will cry out to the L-rd against you." Heaven will examine your deeds, and "it will be a sin to you"—your own sins will be remembered.

(Rabbi Shmelke of Nikolsburg)

Measure for Measure

Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli was extremely poor. Near his home lived a wealthy Jew who was also known for his great hospitality. The man took pity on the tzaddik's family and decided to set aside a special place in his home for the family's lodging. From that day onward, the man saw remarkable blessing in all his endeavors.

One day, someone said, “would it not be better if instead of hosting Rabbi Zusha, you would bring a great rosh yeshiva (head of a yeshiva) into your home? Then your reward would be even greater.” The man, in his simplicity, accepted the suggestion and informed Rabbi Zusha that he no longer had room for him in his home.

From that very moment, his fortune began to decline. He went to Rabbi Zusha to ask for his forgiveness. The tzaddik said to him, “in my heart, I have no complaint against you at all. However, from the moment you began scrutinizing the worthiness of your guests, Heaven also began scrutinizing you...”

This issue of *Living Jewish* is dedicated to all of the Jewish People. May Hashem bless us with an Elul filled with the joy of teshuvah—the joy of returning to Hashem—and may it be a proper preparation for a wondrous, abundant, and sweet New Year, with blessings for a Ketiva V'Chatima Tova L'Shana Tova U'Metuka!

Chassidus Page



Elul—Reciprocal Delight

Based on the Chassidic discourse, Ani L'Dodi V'Dodi Li by the Rebbe (5726)

The month of Elul is a time of *teshuvah*—a deep return to G-d. The Sages teach that "Elul" is an acronym for the Hebrew verse in *Song of Songs*: "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine."

But what inspires this desire to return? Is it fear? Awe? The approaching Days of Judgment? The Rebbe teaches that the deepest motivation for *teshuvah* is neither fear nor obligation—it is **pleasure**.

The Alter Rebbe illustrates this with his famous parable of the *King in the field*, explaining the revelation of the *Thirteen Attributes of Mercy* during Elul. This extraordinary Divine light is normally reserved for the holiest days of the year. Yet in Elul, it is accessible to every Jew.

In Elul, the King leaves His palace and comes into the field, so to speak. In other words, Hashem meets each Jew where he is, wherever he may be spiritually, and every Jew is given the unique opportunity to approach the King.

The King's presence in the field grants us a *netinat koach*—a Divine arousal—to draw close to our Creator. When we then take that first step by expressing our desire to approach Him, a desire manifested through our commitment to do His will, the King receives us with a "smiling countenance" (*panim sochakot*). More than simply a smile, the expression literally conveys joy and laughter. Just as laughter reflects an inner, intrinsic delight, so too does the King's smiling countenance reveal Hashem's essential delight in His people.

This G-dly pleasure is even higher than the delight generated by our observance of Torah and mitzvot, and even higher than our *teshuvah*. It stems from G-d's very

Essence and from the essential bond between Him and every Jewish soul.

When the King "shows a smiling countenance" to the people, revealing His essential delight in them, it awakens within us a reciprocal delight in G-dliness. Our pleasure in G-dliness becomes the essence of our pleasure—our greatest delight.

This awareness gives us the strength to overcome every obstacle and return to Hashem wholeheartedly. The energy of Elul comes not only from delighting in Hashem, but from feeling Hashem's delight in us. Realizing that He is our Beloved and we are His beloved awakens a powerful desire to reciprocate that love.

The natural place of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy is the King's palace, not the field. They belong to the highest spiritual realms and should seemingly be revealed only on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Yet G-d willingly leaves His palace because His greatest desire is to dwell in this world and have a genuine relationship with every Jew.

When we sense Hashem has come to meet us, we long to accompany Him back to the palace, meeting G-d in His true splendor on the High Holidays. We prepare for the High Holidays by clothing ourselves in Torah and mitzvot—acts that express and deepen our relationship with Him.

The Jewish soul originates even higher than Torah and mitzvot, rooted in G-d Himself. Yet it is specifically through Torah and mitzvot in this physical world that this essential bond is revealed, allowing the mutual delight between Hashem and His people to shine openly.

By Rabbi Ariel and Chana Margulies. To receive a free Elul meditation, email admin@geulawives.org.

A Life-Changing Dream

continued from page one:

"You must sell your possessions and divide them into two equal parts. With one half you will support the family of the dead man and provide for all their needs. With the other half you will provide for your own family. If you accept this judgment, change your ways, and open your gates to every poor and needy person, your soul will merit its rectification."

Rabbi Pinchas awoke drenched in sweat. At first, he tried to dismiss the dream, but it returned again and again over the following nights. He realized that Heaven was sending him a message. After much inner struggle, he decided to travel to Husiatyn.

As he approached the Rebbe's home, his heart began pounding. He recognized it. The courtyard. The building. Everything was exactly as he had seen it in his dream. His knees trembled as he entered the study hall. It was the very room in which his heavenly trial had taken place.

The Rebbe is Calling You

A large crowd of chassidim had gathered to hear the Rebbe speak. Standing among them, Reb Pinchas felt increasingly certain that this was the very judge from his dream. Suddenly, the crowd parted, forming a narrow path. Someone whispered, "the Rebbe is calling you."

Reb Pinchas could hardly stand. With trembling legs, he walked to the Rebbe. The tzaddik looked directly at him and said, "be careful to carry out everything that was decreed for you. Do so, and your soul will be rectified." Reb Pinchas collapsed.

When he regained consciousness, he was no longer the same man. Filled with profound remorse, he knew exactly what he had to do. He faithfully fulfilled the decree that had been given to him. He longed to repair his soul and return to the spiritual source from which it had come.

(With thanks to the sender of the story, Aharon Grossman, Jerusalem.)

Moshiach Now



Redeemed Through Charity

"...you shall surely open your hand to him" (Deuteronomy 15:8)

In these times—the era known as the "**footsteps of Moshiach**" (Ikveta d'Meshicha)—the primary form of Divine service is the work of charity, as our Sages said:

"Israel will be redeemed only through charity."

(the Tanya)



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Human Interest

The Stamp of a Cohen

Rabbi Chaim Farro, a Kohen and the Rebbe's shliach in Ramat Beit Shemesh Alef, who previously served as a shliach in Manchester for more than thirty years, was recently invited to serve as the Kohen at a *Pidyon HaBen* for the newborn son of Shmuel and Sarah Yehudit Edrei in Kfar Chabad. Following the ceremony, Rabbi Farro shared a remarkable story that added a unique dimension to the occasion.

Many years ago, on Erev Yom Kippur, Rabbi Farro stood in line to hand the Rebbe his annual letter. As he drew near, the Rebbe said to the man



standing in front of him, while pointing toward Rabbi Farro, "That young man behind you—he is a Kohen."

Of course, no one questioned Rabbi Farro's status as a Kohen. However, hearing the Rebbe himself identify him as such gave the *Pidyon HaBen* an added sense of holiness. Since the mitzvah is performed with a Kohen, those present felt privileged knowing that the Rebbe himself had affirmed Rabbi Farro's kehunah in such a memorable and public way. The story lent an especially meaningful and uplifting atmosphere to the celebration.

Cooking Tip of the Week

Oven Tips: When buying a new oven, consider one with a 24-hour timer—it's ideal for making yapchik and other long-cooking Shabbat dishes.

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Halacha Corner – When in Need of Divine Mercy

In addition to making good resolutions in the observance of mitzvot, and especially in mitzvot that have the special quality of providing protection, such as having one's tefillin and mezuzot checked, and praying together with the congregation and at the gravesites of righteous individuals, our Sages and the great leaders of Israel have recommended the following:

Reciting Tehillim (Psalms): It is customary to recite the verses in Tehillim that correspond to the sick person's name, as well as the letters ק-ר-ע-ש-ט"ן ("tear up the Satan") found in the alphabetical acrostic of Chapter 119. Our Sages said: "Everything that King David said in the Book of Psalms was said on behalf of himself, on behalf of all Israel, and for all times." The Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek explained: "The chapters of Tehillim shatter all barriers... prostrate themselves before the Master of all worlds, and accomplish their effect with kindness and mercy." The Rebbe encouraged that whenever Tehillim is recited, it is proper (on weekdays, of course) to give charity.

Changing a Name: This is also one of the things that can tear up an unfavorable decree. However, a name should **not** be changed except in exceptional circumstances and only after consultation with leading Torah authorities who are well versed in the inner teachings of the Torah. An expert Rabbinical judge (dayan) should also be consulted regarding how the new name should be used (for aliyot to the Torah, legal documents, and everyday life).

A Related Note: In recent years it has also become increasingly common to replace or amend a ketubah (Jewish marriage contract) when there are serious marital difficulties or similar issues. However, this should never be done without the guidance of an expert dayan.

Adapted from Rav Yosef Ginzberg, Sichat HaShevua

Farbrengen

Question: There is a member of our community to whom I'm fairly close who enjoys making jokes about marriage. People laugh, which only encourages him. Recently, his wife invited our family over for Shabbat dinner. My wife is looking forward to it, but I know that if he makes one of his signature marriage jokes, she won't appreciate it and may respond with a sharp comment. I can easily imagine my friend being taken aback and the atmosphere turning uncomfortable. What should I do?

Answer: Marriage challenges us to step beyond ourselves and make room in our lives for another person—someone with distinct opinions, experiences, personality traits, interests, and preferences. This is beautifully symbolized by the round wedding ring, which represents creating space for someone else.

Rabbi Shais Taub shares a poignant insight: people who make cynical jokes about marriage often resist the personal growth that marriage demands. Conversely, those who value marriage recognize it as one of life's greatest opportunities for growth.

That said, while we should do what we can, we cannot control or micromanage every situation. At some point, we need to leave the rest in Hashem's hands. Your wife is excited about the invitation, and your friend may or may not make one of his jokes. If he does, your wife may or may not respond sharply. And if she does, it might actually give your friend something to think about.

More importantly, this is a prime opportunity to practice putting your wife first. Your primary concern shouldn't be preventing an awkward moment for your friend, but standing steadfastly by your wife. That does not mean encouraging her to make a sharp remark. Rather, it means validating her feelings and ensuring she knows you are in her corner. One of the foundations of a strong marriage is your spouse knows you are their greatest ally.

If an uncomfortable moment does arise, your first responsibility remains with your wife. A tangible expression of putting your marriage first means consistently choosing your spouse over everyone else—standing by her side. That loyalty is one of the clearest expressions of love and commitment.

Aharon Schmidt, relationship and personal coaching: www.aharonschmidt.com

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