

The Jewish Weekly

"ישועת ה' כהרף עין"

"The salvation of Hashem is like the blink of an eye."

By Menachem Sheikevitz

It was about a week after Purim this year. Rabbi Chaim Hillel Matusof, one of the Chabad emissaries in Toulouse, France, received a phone call from a friend who told him about a five-year-old Jewish boy who was hospitalized in critical condition at the Toulouse Children's Medical Center. The friend asked the rabbi to offer support and encouragement to the family during this difficult time.

Rabbi Matusof replied that he knew the family well. They lived in the city of Castres, about an hour's drive from Toulouse. The mother was Jewish, but her husband was not Jewish and was hostile toward Israel, which had caused unpleasant friction between them.

Rabbi Matusof himself had had the privilege of arranging the sick child's circumcision. The father had agreed to allow the child to undergo a brit milah only after his wife told him that she would leave him if he refused.

The brit milah was held at the Chabad school, and special security measures were required to allow the father to enter because of concerns that had arisen. Before entering, he was asked to hand over his phone so that he would not be able to photograph the premises and provoke trouble.

The brit milah was performed in full accordance with Jewish law. Afterward, Rabbi Matusof suggested that the mother purchase a letter for her newly circumcised baby in the Torah scroll for Jewish children that was being written in Jerusalem.

In 5741/1981, the Lubavitcher Rebbe launched the campaign for every Jewish child to purchase a letter in a special Torah scroll for Jewish children. The Rebbe called upon every Jewish boy and girl to purchase one letter in this unique Torah scroll, which unites all the children of Israel.

Nine Torah scrolls have already been completed, with every one of their letters belonging to a Jewish child.

When the father heard the request, he erupted angrily.

"Thank you very much! It is enough that I allowed you to perform the circumcision. Leave me alone with all these things. I do not want to have anything to do with you from now on, and I am certainly not prepared to register him in a Torah scroll written in the Land of Israel."



This was the background to Rabbi Matusof's hesitation when he was asked to visit the child. He asked his friend to confirm that the family really wanted to see him, promising that he would come immediately if they did.

A short while later, the friend called him back.

"The child's condition is extremely serious, and the family is completely broken," he said. "They agree and are asking you to come."

Rabbi Matusof immediately drove to the medical center. Before entering the child's room, he approached the doctors treating him and asked them for an update, as he also served as the medical center's rabbi.

The doctors told him that the child was suffering from multiple organ failure. They advised him to enter quickly so that he could recite with the child the final prayer traditionally said with a person in such a condition, Heaven forbid.

When Rabbi Matusof entered the room, he saw the child lying in bed with almost no signs of life. He performed with him the practices he had learned from his uncle, the renowned Chabad emissary in Paris, Rabbi Shmuel Azimov: Torah, prayer and charity.

He placed several coins in the child's hand and guided his hand toward the charity box he had brought with him. He then recited into the child's ear verses and teachings of the Sages from the Twelve Torah Passages that the Rebbe instructed children to memorize. He also recited a chapter of Psalms and a passage from the daily study of Maimonides' Book of the Commandments.

Rabbi Matusof then asked the mother whether she would agree to purchase a letter for the child in the Torah scroll for Jewish children.

Once again, the father intervened angrily.

"I told you to leave me alone with these things. I am not interested!"

This time, however, the mother spoke up. She said that since the doctors had told her they were unable to help, she wanted to do it. Perhaps it would contribute to her child's recovery.

It Once Happened...

The rabbi told her that as soon as he returned home, he would send her a registration form, and he asked her to register the child without delay. At the end of the visit, he told the family that whatever might happen, they should call him if they needed him.

As soon as he reached his car, Rabbi Matusof put on his gartel and wrote a pan - a letter requesting a blessing from the Rebbe - on behalf of the child. He sent it to the Rebbe's holy resting place. As he had promised, when he returned home, he sent the child's mother the registration form for purchasing a letter in the Torah scroll.

From there, the rabbi continued to a regular Torah class with members of his community. After the class, he saw that the mother had tried several times to call him while he was teaching. When he had not answered, she had sent him a video.

He opened the video and was astonished.

The child, who only a short time earlier had been suffering from multiple organ failure, was sitting up in bed and speaking with his parents!

"I called them immediately," Rabbi Matusof relates. "The mother excitedly told me that an open miracle had occurred. Immediately after she registered her son in the Torah scroll, he woke up, sat up and began to speak!"

Two days later, the family informed him that the child was being discharged from the medical center and that they were returning home.

Rabbi Matusof asked the mother and her eldest daughter to thank God for the miracle by resolving to light Shabbat candles. The mother promised that she would do so and shared that she had not lit Shabbat candles for more than twenty years.

From that day onward, she has been careful to light candles every Friday evening.

Before Passover, the rabbi sent the family handmade shmurah matzah and a Passover Haggadah. Shortly before the holiday began, the woman sent him a moving video. She was sitting with her children around the holiday table, with matzah, wine and a Passover Haggadah, preparing to conduct a Passover Seder together.

Edited and translated by Yossi Fraenkel from Sichat Hashavuah.



Shabbat Times – Parshat Shoftim

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	6:48	8:02	8:40
Tel Aviv	7:04	8:04	8:38
Haifa	6:56	8:05	8:40
Be'er Sheva	7:05	8:03	8:39



A Tale of Two "Loyal" Chassidim

By Rabbi Shalom DovBer Avtzon.

Reb Shmuel Schneerson, the Rebbe Maharash once related the following story.

The Baal HaTanya [Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, 1745-1812] once instructed a messenger to go to a certain town and tell two noted chassidim that he needs money for a certain purpose.

The messenger arrived and relayed the message to the first one of them that the Rebbe mentioned. He said, the Rebbe sent me here and instructed me to tell you that he needs money.

The chassid inquired, do you know how much money the Rebbe needs?

No, was the reply. I gave over the entire message, exactly as the Rebbe said it.

Please wait here for a few moments, replied the chassid.

He got up and went out of the room and began collecting all the money that he had available in the house. He placed them in a bag and handed it to the messenger, adding please G-d I plan to go to the Rebbe tomorrow and we will see if the Rebbe needs more, and if yes, I'll start selling possessions.

The messenger then went to the second chassid and he repeated the exact same message. That chassid also asked the exact same question, did the Rebbe specify how much money he needs?

Hearing that the Rebbe had not, the chassid replied, bezras Hashem I will travel tomorrow to the Rebbe and will ask him.

The shliach returned and placed the money on the table saying this money is from the first chassid the Rebbe instructed me to go to, and he mentioned that he would be coming to see if the Rebbe needs more.

And did you meet the other chassid, the Rebbe asked?

Yes, he also asked me how much money the Rebbe needs, and when I replied that the Rebbe didn't specify, he said he will come and ask the Rebbe how much is needed and will give whatever amount the Rebbe mentions.

Hearing this the Rebbe said quietly, yes, but will he come before or after the fact?

The messenger didn't understand the Rebbe's remark.

The next morning the two chassidim woke up early. The first one went immediately to the barn and hitched his horses to the wagons. When he arrived, he was allowed to enter and asked the Rebbe if the Rebbe needs anything else.

The Rebbe told him, return home and move to a different place.

The chassid didn't ask any questions. He returned home, packed up the necessities that he could take along and sold or gave away the other possessions and began driving.

When his children asked him, Tatty, "what is happening, why and where are we going?"

He replied, the Rebbe told me this morning to move, so we are moving. Where, I don't know, but somehow, we will see a sign from Hashem and we will know where we should settle.

Meanwhile the other chassid also arose early. He went to shul to daven and learn something. He then returned home, ate breakfast, instructed his workers what to do, and had the wagon prepared. As he was about to go to the Rebbe, a storm broke out and lightning hit a house on his street and in a few minutes the fire spread to every house on the street. Miraculously he managed to save his family, but that was it. All of his possessions were destroyed.

The Rebbe Maharash continued, both of them were chassidim, but the difference was, one when he heard the Rebbe said something, he acted immediately on it and did whatever he could at that moment. What I don't understand, I will find out later. The second one was also willing to give the Rebbe everything, but he wanted to first understand it.

Reprinted from an email of Rabbi Avtzon's Weekly Story.



A Time of Reflection and Repentance

We began to recite אורי' on the 2nd day of Rosh Chodesh until Shmini Atzeret, some hold until Simchat Torah, and some hold Hoshanah Rabbah inclusive. Some began on the first day.

We began to blow the Shofar every weekday at the conclusion of Shacharit until the day before Erev Rosh Hashanah where we don't blow at all.

If you were blessed to have a Sefer Torah, which room in your house would you keep it in?

In Parshat Shoftim, the Torah gives us a commandment relating to the king. "והיה כשבתו על כסא ממלכתו" - And it shall come to pass when he sits on his throne and rules the people," "וכתב לו את משנה התורה הזאת על ספר" - He must write two Sifrei Torah."

The Torah goes on to say, "וקרא בו כל ימי חייו" - And he must read from the Sefer Torah on every day of his life."

The Chatam Sofer explains that from here we learn that the king would need to consult with the Sefer Torah each and every day to guarantee that Torah law would guide and inspire him while he ruled the people. Now Rashi tells us what the king did with the two Sifrei Torah: he writes that one of them was to accompany him wherever he would go and the other he was to keep in his treasury, where all his money and his jewelry was. We see that the Torah resided in that part of the palace which stood for materialism in order to guarantee that when the king would consult with the Torah on every day of his reign, spirituality would triumph over materialism and ultimately the word of Hashem would guide the king in all ways.

This was the way in which Yosef ruled Egypt as is described to us in the book of Bereishit. The Torah tells us how, immediately after revealing his true identity to his brothers, Yosef charged them with the responsibility of going back to Canaan to tell their father Yaakov that Yosef had said in Bereishit, "שמני אלקים לכל מצרים" - Hashem has made me the lord over all Egypt."

The Kotzker Rebbe beautifully interprets it a different way: שמני אלקים is not 'Hashem has made me' but rather 'I have made Hashem' - 'I have made Hashem to be 'אדון לכל מצרים', the Lord over all Egypt, meaning that in every decision that Yosef took, for every policy that he made for Egypt, he was inspired by one single consideration - what would Hashem want me to do? In this way, he guaranteed that it was actually Hashem who was ruling Egypt.

Just like the ancient kings of Israel, let us guarantee that in every decision we take, in all the policies we have in our homes and in our workplaces, we will be guided and inspired by what Hashem wants us to do. In addition, bearing in mind where the Sefer Torah was kept in the king's palace, let's always ensure that our רוחניות - our spirituality, will be the priority of our lives by praying with all our hearts, for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevre 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, loving and sweet Shabbat.

The Jewish Weekly's Yossi PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 41
MITZVOT ASEH: 14
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 27

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 97
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1523
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5590

HAFTORA:
Yeshayahu 51:12- 52:12 (אנכי אנכי) (this is the fourth of seven Haftorot, [the Seven Haftorot of Consolation] that precede Rosh Hashanah).

This week we study Chapter 1 of Pirkei Avot

פרשת שופטים

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