

# Living Jewish



## Tell your Children

### Captured!

Rabbi Hershel Schacter [not to be confused with Rabbi Hershel Schachter, the Rosh Kollel at YU] was a prominent American Rabbi with a distinguished career in the rabbinate and in public Jewish life. During World War II, he was a chaplain in the Third Army's VIII Corps and was the first US Army Chaplain to participate in the liberation of the Buchenwald concentration camp shortly after it had been liberated by General George Patton's troops on April 11, 1945. While others begged to leave Buchenwald due to the unbearable stench, Rabbi Schacter stayed for months, tending to survivors and leading religious services.

Yechezkel[1] was a young man from a Polish Chasidic family. Rabbi Schacter found him charming and took a special liking to the boy. Yechezkel had lost his entire family during the war and had completely renounced his faith in G-d. Yechezkel defiantly told the rabbi about his plans to assimilate and live the rest of his life in post-war Germany, without a trace of Judaism. Rabbi Schacter listened sympathetically and tried to offer his moral support. They talked often.

Some time after his arrival in Buchenwald, Rabbi Schacter organized a train transport for 200 boys to Switzerland. Each boy was issued a special ticket from the Swiss government, and Rabbi Schacter was responsible for distributing them to the boys. He knew that this was a desperate time, and they needed to get more than 200 of these boys into Switzerland. He invited another survivor who was an expert artist to create additional tickets. You could not tell the difference between the original and the copy.

Rabbi Schacter distributed the copies, so nearly 400 boys were planning to make the trip. He also offered Yechezkel a ticket, but the boy refused. He wanted no part of restarting a Jewish life. The day came when the train for Switzerland arrived at Buchenwald. Rabbi Schacter told Yechezkel, "look, even if you don't come with us to Switzerland, at least come to see us off when we board the trains." Yechezkel reluctantly agreed. A



young mother and her small son were desperate to get out of Buchenwald, but babies were not allowed on this transport. "Don't worry, we'll get you out," Rabbi Schacter said. "Get on the train, and hide in one of the lavatories. Lock the door. Under no circumstances shall you open it unless I call you." He gave them food to tide them over.

Rabbi Schacter was rushing to and fro, making sure each boy was accounted for. All the while, Rabbi Schacter was wondering if Yechezkel would show up. As the train was ready to depart, Yechezkel came up to shake the rabbi's hand. "Yechezkel, it's so nice of you to come and say goodbye!" And with that, he grabbed the boy's hand and with a burst of strength hauled Yechezkel onto the train just as it was starting to pull out of the station! Yechezkel was shocked and furious. Rabbi Schacter told him he just did it on impulse, but to please not be so angry. Yechezkel was steaming!

Finally, the train made its way to Switzerland. The Swiss protested that there was double the number of boys. Rabbi Schacter coolly threatened to call a press conference to tell the world that Switzerland is refusing entry to destitute war orphans. The Swiss quickly backed down. The mother and child also made it safely.

After their arrival Rabbi Schacter attempted to make a minyan on Shabbat. There was easily enough people for Shacharit, but Mincha proved difficult. He could only find nine men, including himself. Remembering Yechezkel, he went in search of the young man, who was not happy to see him.

"Yechezkel, I need you for a minyan."  
"Are you crazy? Absolutely not!"

"But we only have nine. We need a minyan in order to davven and lein (read from the Torah scroll)."

"Oh really? Well, you need a minyan. I do not!" To prove his point, he brazenly lit up a cigarette.

"Yechezkel, I'm begging you. Just come in to the tent - we'll pray quickly." In a huff, Yechezkel replied, "Fine! Just this once!" He entered the makeshift shul with a scowl.

The nine men who would be praying started the preliminaries, followed by Kaddish. All the while, Yechezkel made sure everyone knew how unhappy he was. Rabbi Schacter then took out the Sefer Torah and asked if any of the men knew how to read. They all shook their heads. Yechezkel, meanwhile, was looking longingly outside the tent.

Then Rabbi Schacter remembered, "Yechezkel!"

"What do you want," the boy replied, icily.

"Didn't you tell me you were a ba'al koreh (qualified Torah-scroll reader) before the war?"

"Maybe. So what?"

"So you're the only one of us who knows how to lein. We need to hear the Torah reading for this Shabbat afternoon."

"There you go again with your 'We need to....' You might need to. I certainly don't!"

*Continued on page 3*

### Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	7:04	8:20
Tel Aviv	7:21	8:23
Haifa	7:15	8:24
Beer Sheva	7:19	8:20
New York	8:01	9:09

Chabad Of Israel  
Rabbi Joseph I. Aronov  
Published by M.L.S. Kfar Chabad (03) 3731777  
Editor: Aharon Schmidt  
livingjewishweekly@gmail.com  
Please guard the sanctity of this publication

## Shavuot - Practical Education

The *Midrash* relates that before G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people, He asked for guarantors.

The nation offered several options: the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and the other prophets, but G-d rejected them all. The people then volunteered: "Our children will be our guarantors."

G-d agreed and gave the Torah.

On one hand, the concept is obvious. If you want an idea or a practice to be perpetuated, you must involve youth. Perhaps the point of the *Midrash* then is the nature of the involvement asked of our children.

### First We Will Do

A lot of times people say, "I will show my children an approach. I'm sure that they'll appreciate that it's good. But I won't force them. I'll let them make up their own minds."

Judaism takes a much different tact. Before the Jews received the Torah at Mount Sinai, they told G-d: "We will do and we will listen," making a commitment to observe the Torah, before they knew what G-d was commanding them.

This practice is mirrored in the way we

train our children to approach the Torah. The first thing is actual deed. They observe the *mitzvos* without understanding their rationale. Instead, they grow up practicing them as an integral part of their existence. They do not see Judaism as merely a set of beliefs whose value they comprehend, but a fully integrated way of life that encompasses every dimension of their existence.

### Teaching Our Way Of Life

"Brainwashing," someone might protest. "Denying the children free choice."

But it is not. Our children will always have a choice. They grow up in a world where material things are openly evident to all of us, and the existence of spiritual truth is only in books. Is there any question that they will hear the other side?

And raising them without a thorough involvement in Judaism as a way of life is also a message. It teaches them that Judaism is secondary, perhaps a nice pastime, but not one of the fundamental elements of life. What kind of choice does that leave the child?

### Reliving Mount Sinai

Shavuot is the anniversary of the giving of the Torah, an appropriate time for each of us to renew and deepen our connection with it. The Lubavitcher Rebbe instituted

the custom of recreating the Sinai experience by having all Jews - men, woman, children, even infants - gather in the synagogue to hear the reading of the Ten Commandments on the first day of Shavuot.

Following that custom brings home the above concepts. For whether or not they understand the reading, everyone attending will appreciate that it is special. A child will know that even if he did not comprehend the reading, he did establish a bond with the Torah.

And the truth is that the adults should take precisely that message home. For the truth of the Torah is G-dly, beyond human conception. No matter how much we do understand, there is always infinitely more which is beyond our understanding.

*Adapted from the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Shabbos Table and Moshiaich Now! reprinted from Keeping in Touch, Sichos in English. From our Sages reprinted from LchaimWeekly.org - LYO / NYC*

## How to Deal with Ga'ava (Pride)

Reb Yosef Yitzchock Zaltzman, shliach to Toronto, Canada, relates:

I was in yechidus for my seventeenth birthday, 25 Shevat 5733 (1973). I had written on my note that I suffer from gaivah (pride), and whatever I do makes me feel that I am a groiser mentch (a great person).

The Rebbe answered the following: "Firstly, there is a solution to learn chapter 41 of Tanya by heart. Whenever you feel gaivah, just contemplate about what is explained there: that Hashem is standing over you and examining your inner parts... This awareness should make the gaivah decrease.

"Secondly, it is explained in many books, including the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, that one should toil in Torah also shelo lishmo (for ulterior motives). So when the yetzer hara confuses you with the notion of your greatness, simply answer him, 'True, I'm great! Therefore I ought to learn like a great person - with diligence! And therefore I must be mehader in mitzvos!' (beautify the mitzvos)

"And when the yetzer hara sees that you're utilizing the gaivah for kedusha, he'll leave you alone."

*reprinted from The Weekly Farbrengen by Merkaz Anash, on-line at TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com*

## From our Sages

*"I am the L-rd your G-d."*

Why did G-d use the singular form when giving the Ten Commandments to millions of people? To teach us that each and every Jew must say to himself, "The Ten Commandments were given to me, and I must keep them." One should not think it is sufficient that the Torah is kept by others.

*(Midrash)*

### Shavuot - Oath

Shavuot comes from the word "shvua" - oath. On the day that the Torah was given, G-d and the Jewish people made a mutual vow. We swore to G-d that we would never exchange Him for another god and He swore to us that He will never exchange us for another nation.

*(Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh)*

*And Israel encamped there opposite the mountain (Ex. 19:2)*

Why was the Torah given on a mountain? The difference between level ground and a mountain is not qualitative; both are

made of dust and earth. A mountain is just more of that earth collected and heaped up into a larger mass. The fact that the Torah was given on a mountain teaches us that a Jew's purpose in life is to take that earth-- physical matter and corporeality -- elevate it and transform it into holiness.

*(Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

### Baal Shem Tov - Love Every Jew

The Baal Shem Tov taught that we must love every Jew, the simplest person as well as the greatest Torah scholar. Jews are G-d's "tefilin," as it were, the Baal Shem Tov explained.

Scholarly Jews, those with great intellectual abilities, are the tefilin that are worn on the head. Simple Jews, those who perform G-d's mitzvot with joy and gladness, are the tefilin that are worn on the arm. Just as when putting on tefilin the hand precedes the head, so too must we demonstrate love for the simple Jews first.

*(Maayan Chai)*

# Chassidus page

## Self Education - A Lesson in our Lives

Some people think they cannot change their behavior. But the truth is we all have the power to change our behavior for the better, regardless of our education or upbringing. In this regard, we can look to the example of three great figures in Jewish history who are connected to Shavuos—Moshe Rabbeinu, Dovid Hamelech, and the Baal Shem Tov.

Moshe Rabbeinu obviously did not receive a proper education. From the age that he was weaned—formative years in a child's education—he lived in the house of Pharaoh. He was self-educated in the ways of the Torah and ahavas Yisroel, and if Moshe Rabbeinu was able to rise above his circumstances and his education, so can every single Jew. Every Jew can emulate Moshe Rabbeinu.

Dovid Hamelech was a shepherd in his youth. We can assume that he didn't have much time to spend in the beis hamedrash for a proper education. The great Dovid Hamelech too was self-educated.

The same is true about the Baal Shem Tov. We are told that he was orphaned at a very young age. The only education that his father was able to impart to him was, "Fear no one but G-d. Love every Jew with all your heart and soul, no matter who he is." We can infer from this that he was too young to have been taught Chumash, and definitely too young to have been taught Gemara or the inner dimensions of Torah. Yet, the Baal Shem Tov rose above his circumstances and educated himself, eventually becoming the one who brought the inner dimensions of To-

rah to the masses.

The lesson is clear: the fact that one may not have been taught something as a child should by no means stop him from doing the right thing. As soon as he learns that this is the way of Torah, he should waste no time in implementing it in his life. Especially in the realm of ahavas Yisroel, which is a "fundamental principle in the Torah." We must always conduct ourselves in the spirit of ahavas Yisroel. It cannot be that this is beyond our reach, for Hashem does not ask us to do what is beyond our capabilities.

Every day we make a bracha on the Torah. Yet, the command to study Torah is constant. Why then must we make a bracha anew every day? The reason is because each day we are created anew, and we thus receive the Torah anew. With this in mind one can overcome the fact that he may have not been raised to follow a certain aspect of the Torah. He can forge ahead because every day is a new day.

If this holds true with regard to every aspect of the Torah, then it definitely applies to the mitzvah of ahavas Yisroel, the basis of the whole Torah. We can train ourselves to love every single Jew, regardless of how we were yesterday; for every day we are born anew. When we treat a fellow Jew with unconditional love, we can truly reach out to one who is far and bring him back into the fold. When we behave in this manner it is sure to bring the geulah!

*Adapted from the teachings of the Rebbe, from Derher*

## Captured!

*cont. from page 1:* "Yechezkel, please! This is the first chance in years for people to hear the Torah publicly read. I'm begging you. I know you can do this!"

With extreme reluctance, Yechezkel threw his cigarette outside, and approached the table. He cast an expert glance at the Sefer Torah and immediately found the starting point. "Okay," he sighed. "Let's get on with it." A man was called to the Torah and made the blessing. "...who has chosen us from all other nations and given us the Torah...."

"Amen," Yechezkel found himself saying automatically. It came back so easily. Yechezkel began to read the 3300-year-old sacred text. Something unexpected happened. The holy letters of the precious scroll seemed to jump off the page and hit him in the face with full force. He looked as if he was literally being struck with the powerful black letters, and that they were searing his soul. Yechezkel's angry veneer had been shattered. He broke down crying like a baby, and barely got through the Torah reading. When he had begun to read, it had been someone else's Torah. Now he had reclaimed it. And it had reclaimed him!

Yechezkel was forever changed by that Torah reading. He returned to the path of mitzvah fulfillment and remained Torah-observant for the rest of his life. He built a beautiful Jewish family in Australia and championed Torah causes there in his city. Yechezkel also stayed a devoted friend to the Schacter family for many decades.

1] Yechezkel is a pseudonym, to protect his family's privacy.

*Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the article by Rabbi Shlomo Horwitz, who heard the story from Rabbi Jacob J. Shacter in June 2014, the son of Rabbi Hershel, and posted it on the OU site (ou.org) on July 31, 2018. Rabbi Tilles of Tsfat is a co-founder of ASCENT. His mailing list (ytilles3@gmail.com) is now in its 23rd year. The first two of his "Full Moon" storybooks (Koren Publ) are available for purchase at Kabbala-Online-shop.com and Jewish bookstores.*

## Moshiach Now

**Shavuos is *yahrzeit* of the Baal Shem Tov.** R. Pinchas of Koritz gave the following analogy to explain the Baal Shem Tov's place in Jewish history. In previous generations, there were no illuminated highways. When people would journey there was a tendency to look back to the city from which they departed. The knowledge that their journey had a starting point reassured them that they were not merely wandering aimlessly. Then at a given point their focus would change. They would see the lights of the city to which they were going and the sight would engender new inner strength.

Throughout the exile, the Jews would look back to the Temple for their inspiration. From the revelation of the Baal Shem Tov onward, not only did our people "know from where you came," they could also perceive "to where you are going." For the Baal Shem Tov made the coming of *Moshiach* a palpable goal, something that could be appreciated not merely as a hope for the distant future, but a dynamic that is in the process of happening.

## Human Interest

### "TillesTells"

Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles's stories have been a staple for Living Jewish readers. Born and raised in the Bronx, Tilles began telling stories weekly in 1973; moved from NY to Tsfat in 1978; helped found ASCENT in 1983; translated "A Mother in Israel" - Memoirs of Rebbetzin Chana Shneerson - from Hebrew in 1984; started his email story list in 1998 and authored two hard-cover books of stories in 2013 and 2016, with the third of the series due to be available before Rosh Hashana, G-d willing.

Many people will now have the opportunity to enjoy even more of Rabbi Tilles's stories. Due to the lockdown,



he decided to move his weekly *Malveh Malka* storytelling sessions at *Ascent in Tsfat* to social media. His "TillesTells" WhatsApp group, now in its fifth week, has close to 400 members. To join, send a WhatsApp to +972-526-770-137 or an email to TillesTells@gmail.com, or go to ascentofsafed.com. Then you can enjoy:

- 1) A VIDEO story every Sat. night, posted at approximately 9:30.
- 2) An AUDIO story posted at 10:00.
- 3) At least once each month a "Saturday Night ZOOM Stories" session at 10:30pm.
- 4) A link to his weekly story published on the Ascent website is posted to TillesTells by Thursday evening.

Join ASAP and enliven your Saturday nights with at least 3 different stories a week. It's well worth it!

### Cooking Tip of the Week

**No-Bake Cheese Balls:** An easy no-bake cookie for Shavuot. Mix 250 grams of spreadable goat's cheese, 200 grams of cookie crumbs (any kind you like), some vanilla and a bit of maple syrup (not a lot). Form into balls and freeze on a pan covered in baking paper. When frozen dip into melted chocolate (your favorite) and refreeze till you need them.

Alizah Hochstead,  
alizahh@hotmail.com

### Halacha Corner – Shavuos

Flowers, plants, and trees have long been used to decorate shuls and homes in honor of Shavuos, as described in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, to recall the joy of Matan Torah and also to remind us to pray for the fruits of the trees whose fate is decided in heaven each Shavuos. This custom is mentioned in Lu'ach Kollel Chabad and was practiced in the shul in Nikolayev (where the Rebbe lived as a young child), but it is actually not the Chabad custom (in Chabad shuls).

During the 10 commandments, the entire congregation stands facing the Torah. In HaYom Yom, it states that in 5740 the Rebbe called for all children including tiny infants to come to shul on Shavuos to hear the 10 commandments.

The custom to eat a milchig (milky) meal on Shavuos does not override the obligation, the mitzvah, of eating meat on Yom Tov. The former is a custom, while the latter is a mitzvah. However, we are not permitted to eat dairy and meat products in the same meal even if we wait the necessary time in between courses. Therefore, an after-bracha on the milchig foods must be recited before washing for the meaty meal. It is our custom to wait one hour from milk to meat. This spans the time from finishing milchigs to beginning eating fleishigs, so washing can commence soon after concluding the dairy meal.

Rav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita, Mara D'asra and member of the Badatz of Crown Heights; reprinted from [www.crownheightsconnect.com](http://www.crownheightsconnect.com)

## Farbrengen

**Question:** I am 67 and feel like I am basically who I am and cannot change. So I made a decision (which you probably will not like!). Rather than get down on myself because I get angry, worry, and am not happy, I have come to the realization that this is who I am - for better or worse. It is too hard to change my bad middos - and after so many years I do not think I can anyway. You talk about self-acceptance and accepting others - so, there you go! I will just accept myself as I am.

**Answer:** Self-acceptance is good. We want to be on our own side; not beating ourselves up because of our faults. We are a work in process and Hashem gave us the years of our life to reach completion. When we accept that it is okay not to be perfect, we stop the internal criticism and can breathe. Yet, we also must believe that we can grow. As our Sages teach, we are helped from Above to go in the path we desire.

At times the mountain looks insurmountable. Yet, Hashem does not give us challenges we cannot overcome. A man once received a report that his fortune had sunk at sea. He fainted. Every time he awakened and realized what happened he fainted again. The Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek concluded that the news was not true. Shortly thereafter a messenger announced that the ship carrying the man's fortune did not sink. Those present were amazed at the prophetic vision of the Tzemach Tzedek. However, the Tzemach Tzedek remarked that it was not prophecy, explaining that Hashem only gives a person a challenge he can handle. When the man kept fainting, it proved the report was false.

Another story: A yeshiva student had a personal audience with the Rebbe. He explained that he was getting sick from limiting his eating and sleep while diligently applying himself to his studies. He requested a blessing for more strength. The Rebbe explained that he was making a mistake. When the G-dly soul begins to shine, it naturally pushes out the animal soul, lessening the need for sleep and eating. However, if the G-dly soul doesn't need more space, not eating and sleeping will lead to sickness. The key is to strengthen the G-dly soul.

The more we strengthen the good by giving charity, fulfilling mitzvot, learning both the revealed and inner dimension of Torah, increasing in ahavas Yisroel, etc., the more our negative traits will melt away. As the saying goes, a little light banishes a lot of darkness. And, when we take the first step, Hashem will help.

Aharon Schmidt - marriage & individual coaching - video and telephone available. For an appointment or to share a question contact: [coachingandcounseling1@gmail.com](mailto:coachingandcounseling1@gmail.com)

NO NEED FOR A SHABBAT URN!  
NOAM 1 AT YOUR SERVICE ON SHABBAT  
WITH PLENTY OF HOT WATER!



FOR DETAILS \*8510

New Showroom! 40 Givat Shaul St. | Jerusalem

