

# Living Jewish



## Tell your Children

### Back in Yekatrinslav

The majestic wedding ceremony of the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Kislev 5689 (1928) was attended by hundreds of Chassidim and world-famous Torah leaders.

The Rebbe's parents, Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana, then resided in Yekatrinslav, Russia, which was under communist rule. As the wedding was to take place in Warsaw, Poland, the marriage waited for several months, with all hoping the Rebbe's parents would be able to attend. However, it became clear that the communist officials would not grant the permission.

The Rebbe's parents would not let such an occasion simply pass by. In her memoirs the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana recounts the joyous celebration that took place in their home. She describes in detail the vast preparations for the long-awaited evening, and describes how their entire community joined in the celebration with song and dance. The onlookers watched with tears streaming from their eyes as their illustrious Rav, Levi Yitzchok, danced with his father-in-law and brother, privileged to have been with him in this "bittersweet" moment, despite the heavy price that they would very likely be liable to pay for such "anti-government activity".

The following is a recounting from that period, but is less known. It is excerpts of a letter from the Rebbe's uncle, Rav Shmuel Schneerson, in which he recounts to the Rebbe and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, the occurrences of the preceding Shabbos, when the Rebbe's "oifruf" was commemorated in his father's home. This too, as with the chupah, in the absence of the chosson:

I speculate that you wish to know of what transpired here on the "big day". Let me begin from the "Oifruf", which I was privileged to have spent together with your parents, may they live and be well. On Shabbos morning following davening, there was of course, a grand Kiddush followed by a festive meal. Although the actual invitees were quite few, a vast crowd participated. A number of speeches were offered to honor the occasion, and the new couple. Above



*The Rebbe and his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, after the engagement*

them all, stood the exceptional address of your father, who spoke through his tears of joy that flowed from the depth of his heart. It truly seemed to us as though the chosson and kalla sat here at our side, and no barrier of distance existed at all; as if you were with us in totality...

The meal continued on until eight o'clock in the evening, and nearly all the participants remained until its conclusion. In the midst of the meal, as our hearts rejoiced in an upbeat manner, we broke out in a joyous dance as would befit such an occasion - and perhaps even more than befitting...

The dance was not only on the ground, but it ascended "upward"; we found place to dance upon the table as well. And not only did our souls spread forth, but even our bodies, i.e. we removed our outer garments revealing our tzitzis... All -in-all, it was a day of great celebration, one of sincere joy, truly magnificent. Even I myself "let-loose" a bit ...

As this day concluded, we began the preparations for the wedding, with which we busied ourselves for three consecutive days, from Shabbos, until Tuesday evening. We actually celebrated an authentic wedding, although the chosson and kalla were not here (something

which may have had its affects on the celebration somewhat). However, truth be told - taking into consideration the sense of joy in the air - it really seemed as if you were here; not only in spirit, but in body as well!

The grand event commenced at seven o'clock in the evening. Your father opened by notifying all the partakers, with tears in his eyes, of this joyous moment, and requested of them all that they join him in his celebration. Despite the restricted space availability - which may result in some sweating - he asked that as true friends, they overlook the discomfort and sweat along with him on this momentous evening (and this they indeed carried out...).

This was followed by seven or eight speeches, and then your father delivered his words, as is customary. The speeches persisted until eleven o'clock in the evening. In the meantime, a music band was fetched, and the dance was on non-stop. This continued until seven o'clock in the morning. Again, our joy surged forth so much so that it caused an outbreak of our souls and bodies, and we revealed our tzitzis (those who wore no tzitzis opened their outer garments, revealing their shirts...) And the city of Dyeneper was beaming with joy! ("Tzohala Ve'someicha...")

We made private dances between ourselves - the invitees, and we had communal dances with the remainder of the community. It could be said that one who has not seen rejoicing as such, has not seen true rejoicing in his days...

### Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	4:01	5:14
Tel Aviv	4:15	5:16
Haifa	4:04	5:13
Beer Sheva	4:18	5:17
New York	4:12	5:14

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## Ladder from Earth to Heaven

In the beginning of this week's Torah portion, Vayeitzei, Jacob sets out from Israel and journeys toward Charan. Reaching Mount Moriah, the place where the Holy Temple would one day stand, he decided to spend the night. "And he reached a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun had set."

Our Sages tell us that this was the first time in 14 years that Jacob had slept, having occupied his nights as well as his days studying Torah in the yeshiva of Shem and Eber.

This raises a very important question. Why, having not slept in such a long time, did Jacob choose the holiest site in the world to finally allow himself to sleep?

### Asleep and Awake

In order to understand, we need to examine the phenomenon of sleep and its spiritual significance.

Man's unique advantage over all other creatures is most openly expressed by his upright stature when he is awake. At such times, his head, the seat of the intellect, is clearly superior to his heart, from whence the emotions are derived.

## From our Sages

*And he gave him Rachel his daughter to him for a wife (Gen. 28:28)*

How did Jacob marry both Rachel and Leah, when the Torah prohibits a man from being married to two sisters at the same time?

The lineage of the children of a non-Jew (Laban) is determined by their mother; Rachel and Leah were the daughters of two different women. Accordingly, Rachel and Leah did not have the legal status of sisters.

*(Bechor Shor)*

*And he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head (Gen. 28:11)*

Why didn't Jacob choose something softer to use as a pillow?

Jacob said: "A stone of Eretz Yisrael is more precious than all the pillows and cushions I will ever use in the Diaspora."

*(Otzar Chaim)*

At the very bottom are his feet, symbolic of man's capability to perform concrete actions. However, when a person lies down to sleep, his head, heart and feet are all on the same horizontal level.

The upper body symbolizes man's spirituality; the lower part, his physical nature.

When one is awake, the superior, spiritual component is dominant (and thus physically on a higher level); sleep, therefore, represents a great descent, for the spiritual and the physical are one the same level.

### The Higher Concept of Sleep

Paradoxically, the phenomenon of sleep also expresses a much higher concept, one which transcends the limitations of the physical world. For from G-d's perspective, there is no difference at all between the spiritual and physical realms; both are identical when compared with Him.

Thus, when Jacob went to sleep on the holiest site on earth, the place where the light of the Infinite G-d illuminates most strongly, the limitations of the physical world (and indeed, the concept of "higher" and "lower" realms), were thus abnegated entirely.

This, then, is the inner meaning of Jacob's decision to sleep when he reached the site

*Lo, the day is yet long; it is not the time to gather the cattle (Gen. 29:7)*

"The day is yet long" -- the great and powerful Day of the L-rd is approaching; "it is not the time to gather the cattle" -- there's no time to waste accumulating possessions in this temporal world, as every moment is precious.

*(Maya'anut HaNetzach)*

*He took the stones from the place and put them around his head. (Gen. 28:11)*

Yaakov protected his head but not the rest of his body. He had spent all of his years studying Torah, and now he would have to give up some of his studying time to engage in worldly matters.

He knew that he would encounter negative influences and forces that could be hostile to a Jew. Therefore, he protected his "head" to prevent anything from interfering with his Judaism.

*(the Rebbe)*

of the Holy Temple.

### Uniting Physical and Spiritual

This same theme is also expressed in his dream of "a ladder set up on earth, and its head reached the heavens" -- linking and uniting both the physical and spiritual planes of existence.

The power to effect this connection was given to Jacob precisely during his journey to Charan, where he would marry and establish the Jewish people.

For in truth, establishing a dwelling place for G-d in this physical world is the essence of the mission of the Jewish people, a mission that will reach its ultimate fulfillment in the Messianic era, "when all flesh shall see that the mouth of G-d has spoken."

*Adapted from the teachings of the Rebbe, Sefer HaSichot, 5752, Vol. 1; Shabbos Table and From our Sages reprinted from LchaimWeekly.org - LYO / NYC*

### The Source of our Livelihood

Though Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk rarely agreed to accept money, he usually did accept support from one wealthy and scholarly chassid. However, one day this chassid was distressed to find that the tzaddik refused even his accustomed gift.

Asking the Rebbe for his reason, he was told: "Every livelihood has a cause activated by HaShem, Who sometimes removes the cause to test whether the person places his trust in the cause -- or in HaShem, Who brings about the cause.

"If the man had placed his trust in the cause, thinking that his livelihood depended on it, then when the cause is removed, his parnasa is cut off. If, however, he had placed his trust in HaShem, then another cause is provided and his livelihood continues.

"In my case," Reb Menachem Mendel explained, "your support has been the cause of my income. If HaShem should want to test me and remove my cause, you will become poor and thus be unable to support me. I would therefore prefer to remove the cause."

The chassid insisted that he nevertheless would like to continue, even if he became poor. After declining his request many times, the tzaddik agreed to accept his gifts as before. That year, the chassid lost his wealth and had to seek other employment in order to support his family.

*Sipurei Chasidim Zevin Torah, pg. 505;*

# Chassidus page

## The Day We Were Connected

*In honor of the 14th of Kislev (the anniversary of the marriage of the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, daughter of the Previous Rebbe, in 5689 (1928)), we present the following selection from the Rebbe's sicha (talk) at a farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach, the 14th of Kislev, 5714.*

During the wedding meal (of the Rebbe's marriage), my father-in-law, the (Previous) Rebbe went around the tables and distributed mashke to all the invitees along with a blessing.

When he reached the area where the yeshiva students were seated, he instructed the mashgiach (yeshiva supervisor) to hand mashke to each of them, and then said a sicha to them beginning with the words of Chazal: "The Torah is only acquired by one who toils (lit. gives his life away) over it..."

### Nigleh & Chassidus - Soul & Body

He continued: "Tmimim (as Chabad yeshiva students are called); you must know that you have to nullify yourselves in totality. This is your task. Learn Torah diligently; Nigleh (the revealed Torah) and Chassidus... Then I will bless you..."

Torah study must encompass both Nigleh and Chassidus, for Nigleh is likened to a body and Chassidus to a soul; one must have both together.

Much as it is not possible to have only a

soul on its own, for it must be bound with the body, so is it as important to study Nigleh properly. And vice-versa as well: much as it is impossible to have a body on its own, for it needs to have a soul, so is it as important to study Chassidus and act in its accordance – this is the soul of Torah, infusing life into the "body" of Torah.

By way of example: When the soul resides inside the body, it does not merely rest inside it as a separate entity effecting its external shell, but [the two become one entity], by transforming the body into a living being...

### Connected Together

The Rebbe continued: "...Generally speaking, even regarding a private person, his wedding constitutes an all-encompassing event [in his life]. For me, however, my wedding [was certainly of broader nature, for it] brought me into more general and communal affairs.

**This is the day when I was connected with you, and you were connected with me.** Together we will successfully toil to bring about the true and final redemption. May Hashem help [us] that we will see fruitful results from our labor!

[The Rebbe then instructed that the yeshiva students say L'chaim, and ask for a blessing that they should enjoy success in learning Torah – Nigleh and Chassidus.]

*Material on this page and page one reprinted from Derher*

## Such a Son-In-Law!

It was a mere few weeks after the liberation of the Previous Rebbe from Soviet prison on the 12th of Tammuz 5687.

The Previous Rebbe was to leave the Soviet Union and only his family members were granted the necessary papers to come along.

When the Previous Rebbe submitted the list of his household to the Soviet authorities to issues exit visas from Russia, they objected to one name only.

"Do you really need to bring a future son-in-law from here?" they asked.

The Previous Rebbe replied, "Such a son-in-law can't be found elsewhere!"

(This special son-in-law would later become the Lubavitcher Rebbe.)

## I Gave My Daughter to a Man

In a letter to the Rebbe shortly after the wedding, Harav Levi Yitzchak (the Rebbe's father) writes: "You were brief where you should have written at length! I want to know what, specifically, were the words [uttered by your father-in-law (the Previous Rebbe)] when he declared, 'I can state, 'Es biti nasati l'ish, I gave my daughter to this man.' You conclude with, 'vechulu vechulu (etc., etc.).' But the meaning of 'vechulu vechulu' I do not know! Report to me his words as they were. This will not be arrogance on your part, for it was not you who said it!"

What, in fact, were the words the Rebbe's father is referring to? During the wedding, an elderly chassid, Reb Berel Moshe Shmotkin (one of the witnesses on the ketuba) asked the Previous Rebbe, "Tell me about the chosson!"

The Previous Rebbe responded: "I have fulfilled, 'Es biti nasati l'ish, I gave my daughter to a man.' He is baki (expert) in (Talmud) Bavli and Yerushalmi; he knows the Rishonim (early commentaries) and Acharonim (later commentaries), as well as Likkutei Torah with all its references, and much, much more."

## Moshiach Now

### Tasting Redemption

The Rebbe explains that through learning Chassidus, one can 'taste' the revelation of Hashem that will exist when Moshiach will come. Therefore, one should prepare for Moshiach through learning and feeling the light of Chassidus.

On another occasion, the Rebbe said that our service today must be to see and feel the redemption in the world. Therefore, we should learn Chassidus and about the redemption, and in such a manner that it brings us to recognize the redemption.

*Tasting Redemption and the Source of our Livelihood reprinted from The Weekly Farbrengen by Merkaz Anash, on-line at TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com*



## Human Interest

### Shazak Parsha Videos

Thousands of frum millennials grew up with the sights and sounds of Shazak videos and books: Queen of Persia, Out of Egypt, and Miracle lights. Now, Rabbi Moshe Moscowitz—the creator, voice technician, humorist, and designer behind the beloved series—has unveiled the fruits of years of painstaking research, writing, and recording: Shazak Parsha.

Using a blend of audio effects, thousands of custom-drawn illustrations, cutting-edge technology, and a good dose of humor, Shazak Parsha keeps children riveted as they listen, read, draw, and play their way through the weekly Torah portion.

An educator with years of classroom experience, and an early adopter of



technology, Moscovitz is also an accomplished researcher and scholar, a published authority on Rambam and other historic figures in Jewish history. The Shazak Parsha Experience has grown to include a home or classroom experience with audio and visuals, quizzers, online coloring sheets, insights, mock news reports, games, and just enough silliness to keep kids hooked.

“Our students have never had so much fun learning Parsha,” attests Rabbi Avrohom Wagshul, 1st-grade teacher at Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy in Beverly Hills, CA. “As soon as I turn on Shazak, the room goes quiet, and I know that we are in for a wholesome learning experience, peppered by lots of laughs.”

To learn more, request a school demo, or to subscribe, visit [shazak.com](http://shazak.com) or email [info@shazak.com](mailto:info@shazak.com)

*Adapted from COLlive.com*

### Cooking Tip of the Week

#### Shortening Cooking Time:

Cooking on a glass or metal pan versus a disposable pan shortens and improves the quality of the baking. Makes things crispier, more evenly baked and tastier.

*Alizah Hochstead,  
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## Halacha Corner – The Correct Attitude To Converts

It is a mitzvah to love every single Jew as we love ourselves, “Ve’ohavtah l’reiacha kamoachah.” Regarding converts to the Jewish faith, there is another mitzvah in addition to the mitzvah to love every single Jew: “Va’ahavtem es hageir”, love the convert, “ki geirim heyisem be’Eretz Mitzrayim”, because you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

Likewise, there is a prohibition not to harass or tease people in general. Regarding a ger, there is a separate mitzvah not to tease, harass, or ridicule a convert, “Ve’geir lo sone velo silchatz.” Sometimes people treat converts as they are not truly Yidden, when in fact converts are equally part of our nation, and in some ways even more than people born Jewish.

The Rambam tells us in a number of places that the mitzvah to love a convert is the same as loving Hashem Himself; “Tziva al ahavas hageir,” Hashem commands us to love a convert, “kemo she’tziva al ahavas Atzmo”, the same as He commands us to love Him. The Rambam adds that Hashem has a special love for converts.

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## Farbrengen

**Question:** I became religious about four years ago but I really struggle. I have a lot of desires (tayvos) for things from my past life. I know it is not right and I want to live a good and holy life, but it is hard to make that separation. For all these people I see around me in shul, in the beis midrash, etc., etc., it looks so easy. Even for other baal teshuvos it looks much easier than for me. I feel like I can’t make the switch. What can I do?

**Answer:** As written in HaYom Yom, 24th MarCheshvan: In material matters one should always look at he whose situation is lower than one's own, and thank the good G-d for His kindness to him. In spiritual matters one should always look at he who is higher than oneself, and plead with G-d to grant him the intelligence to learn from the other, and the ability and strength to rise higher.

Thus, it is good that you are looking at those who are more advanced and desire to grow higher. Yet, it may be comforting to know, that what you see is not always as it appears. In other words, many people struggle daily with the same issues as you do.

In regards tayvos, the Rebbe quotes a number of sources which advise one to imagine how they will feel after fulfilling the desire. After a person “gives in”, they usually realize that it was not all that special. They are even surprised that they were not able to restrain their desire. The Rebbe then asks the question: But how can a person, when they are burning with desire, really be expected to put themselves in the mindset as if they are after the tayva? It seems too much to ask.

The Rebbe answers by explaining that we receive spiritual strength and inspiration from our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. After Yitzchak was almost sacrificed at the Akeida, he was given a soul from the World to Come. Thus, Yitzchak lived in a physical body yet, at the same time, existed beyond the confines of the world. Yitzchak represents the unification of unlimited and limited. So too, as one of our forefathers, this potential is granted to each and every one of us. Even before the tayva, we can live as if after the tayva.

Although this may seem esoteric, the Rebbe is teaching us a valuable lesson. We have the capability to transition from “it’s hard” to “I can!” True, it takes effort, but when the foundation is “I can” our potential is unlimited.

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