

# The Jewish Weekly

In Loving memory of

Hershy Weiss

הבחור ישראל צבי  
בן משה הי"ו  
י"ט מנחם אב תשפ"א  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה

## Pierre - Louis and the Besh't

By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

The Besh't once gave one of his Chassidim, Rav Nissan, a closed envelope and ordered him to travel to the castle of the local ruler, Count Radzwill, and do everything possible to interest the Count's friend and drinking and hunting companion, Pierre Louis, to return to Judaism. The envelope was to be opened in two days time.

Rav Nissan was perplexed. He had heard of this Pierre Louis and as far as everyone knew, he definitely was not Jewish..... What did the Besh't mean 'return' to Judaism?

But the Baal Shem was never wrong. He often did miracles to reveal the purpose of creation, the value of every human and especially the uniqueness of the Jews. So Rav Nissan was only too happy to follow orders. He went in for last minute instructions and was on his way.

Count Radzwill was a fabulously wealthy man, with castles and villas throughout Europe where he spent most of his time enjoying life; traveling, partying and hunting. Years ago, when in France, he met a nobleman by the name of Pierre Louis and since then they were almost inseparable. Today they were returning to the Count's Russian palace after several months and all his serfs and servants were gathered before his castle to welcome him.

The joy was great. Unlike most of the Russian nobility Count Radzwill was a kind and just man and everyone was happy to see him back. Our Chassid, Rav Nissan, arrived just as the Count and his friend stepped out of their carriage, but as hard as he tried and from whichever angle he looked, Pierre Louis certainly did not look in any way Jewish.

After the two had entered the castle and the crowd had dispersed, Rav Nissan hung around the grounds for the rest of the day wondering what to do and at nightfall he still had no clue. Things looked bad; he had absolutely no way of entering the castle and even if he did, his chances of meeting Pierre Louis were zero and of actually speaking to him were less.

That night he slept in the town synagogue and the next day he returned to the castle hoping something would materialize. But as he approached he immediately noticed that something was wrong. There was again a large crowd gathered there, but they were unusually solemn, some of the Jews were reading Psalms and others were crying. He asked around until he got the entire picture.

It seems that shortly after the Count and his friend settled in at the castle, they couldn't resist the idea that the surrounding woods were probably filled with game. So despite their fatigue from the journey they went hunting.

The hunt was successful but when they returned toward evening, tired and laden with prey, a tragic accident occurred; the fatigued Count tripped on one of the castle steps, his pistol discharged and he was left with a large bleeding wound in his chest.

His friend Pierre Louis immediately had him moved into the castle and sent tens of carriages in all directions to bring help from nearby cities. All night carriages returned with different doctors and professors but despite all their expertise and efforts they weren't able to stop the bleeding. The Count was dying.

Suddenly Rav Nissan remembered the envelope the Besh't had given him.

He opened it, took out the letter and began reading. Even he, who was accustomed to miracles from his master, was amazed. It was a prescription with exact directions how to prepare a salve to cure...a gunshot wound to the chest!

He ran to the castle gate waiving the letter and demanded to be let in but the guards refused. They had strict orders to admit only doctors and despite his arguments and pleas they remained cold and unmoving like a stone wall.

Pierre Louis having heard the ruckus from inside the palace came running out to the gate obviously very irritated, "What do you want here Jew?" he shouted, "Don't tell me you are a doctor? You are no doctor!! Leave here immediately!! What is that you have in your hand? What is that paper you are holding?"

Rav Nissan tried to explain, but the Frenchman snatched the prescription from his hand and began to read. "This is your cure?!" He screamed. "This is nonsense!" He was about to tear it into pieces when one of the doctors emerged dejectedly from the castle, saw the commotion and approached.

He asked a few questions, examined the paper, turned facing Pierre with his back to Rav Nissan and whispered. "Don't send him away, what do you care? They've given up in there. Let the Jew try, he certainly can't hurt."

Minutes later Rav Nissan was in the castle, he prepared the medicine according to the Besh't's prescription and was beginning the treatment. Some of it he smeared on the wound, some of it he applied on various parts of the Count's body and every few minutes he repeated the process, exactly according to the instructions.

To everyone's surprise the wound stopped hemorrhaging almost immediately! After a few more minutes the Count even seemed to breathe more deeply and evenly. After an hour, instead of being dead as everyone had thought he would be, color returned to his cheeks and he regained consciousness!

The doctors and professors looked on with open mouths and were speechless; they had never seen anything even vaguely like it and Pierre Louis was moved to the essence of his very being; he felt something very potent was happening here but he had no idea what it was.

After several hours the Count was actually strong enough to call Rav Nissan to his bedside and thank him. He even offered to reward him but the Chassid refused. "Seeing you healthy is my reward. Just continue to treat the Jews kindly," he said. "But I do have one request; I want to speak with Pierre Louis alone."

The bewildered Pierre Louis and Rav Nissan went into a side room and closed the door.

After they sat opposite one another Rav Nissan looked him in the eyes and said, "I am a follower of a great Jew called Yisroel Baal Shem. He was the one that wrote that prescription and saved your friend. He told me to come here and....bring you back to Judaism."

Pierre was still in shock from the near death of his friend and his strange supernatural recovery. He felt as though he had been transported into another world, but he couldn't figure out which world was real; the one of pleasure and power that he had been enjoying for over forty years, or this new strange one of Jews, and miracles.

## It Once Happened...

Pierre just looked at the Chassid, eyes wide in disbelief; "Back? Judaism?" He mumbled to himself. "Back?"

"Just before I left him to come here the Baal Shem Tov told me to tell you that your real name is Pesach Tzvi" continued Rav Nissan. "He said that both your parents were Jewish and your mother even wanted to give you a Jewish education but your father opposed and so you were thrown into French society educated in the best schools and lost your Jewish identity. But now it is time for you to return."

"Return? How...How can this Baal Shem person of yours know this? How can he be so sure of these things?" asked the Frenchman in a whisper.

"I have no idea, but from my experience he knows everything," replied Rav Nissan.

"I don't understand" said Pierre, trying to clear his throat, "Are you saying that I am...a Jew?" A Jew? Mon Dieu, it's impossible!! Impossible!!"

Pierre Louis refused to discuss the subject further, abruptly ended the conversation by promising he would give it further thought and the Chassid left the castle.

Almost a year later Rav Nissan heard a knock on his door, opened it and there stood a bearded Jew. It was Pierre Louis, or rather Pesach Tzvi, returning to the G-d of his fathers.

So this answers our question: why is repentance so important; without the Torah and its laws there would be no such thing as sin and need for repentance.... wouldn't it have been better that way?

The answer is certainly not.

That would be tantamount to saying; better that G-d should not have created health so there would be no sickness and no need for healing"

The Torah is called the Tree of Life and the source of Truth. G-d gave the Torah not to invent the truth, but rather to reveal what the truth IS so that the truth can flow through us into this world .... like blood flows through a healthy body.

Just as a body is healthy when its soul is revealed through the blood, so too this world is 'healthy' when this G-dly purpose is revealed and circulated in this world.


Sin, on the other hand, like sickness, is a deviation from this purpose. When one transgresses the Torah he disrupts this spiritual life flow and he and the entire world require healing.

And that is the purpose of Repentance.

But repentance does even more than just healing; it can not only return health but ADDS health; as we saw in our story:

The Count's deadly accident and its treatment actually brought a spiritual elevation and blessing to both he and his friend Pierre; they both became connected to the Besh't and to a new awareness of the Creator they never had before.

*Reprinted from an email of Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim, www.ohrtmimim.org.*



**Shabbat Times - Parshat Shoftim**

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	6:49	8:03	8:41
Tel Aviv	7:05	8:05	
Haifa	6:57	8:06	
Be'er Sheva	7:06	8:04	



**Position Available**  
By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

During the month of Elul, a maggid (traveling preacher) came to Beshenkovitz, where Reb Shmuel Munkes lived. Reb Shmuel was a beloved chasid of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism. Though known for his sharp wit and "chasidic pranks," Reb Shmuel was no empty joker. He was a deep personality, one who could abide no falsehood, and whose own ego was completely nullified to perform the will of his Creator.

The townspeople saw the maggid's letter of introduction which referred to him as a great tzadik (righteous person), who traveled from town to town only to arouse and inspire Jews. Being G-d-fearing people, they immediately invited him to speak and inspire them to serve G-d better.

The maggid began his speech. Over and over again, he accused his audience of committing terrible sins. His entire speech was filled with accusations and descriptions of the terrible punishments awaiting them because their evil behavior had aroused G-d's anger. Only if they would wholeheartedly repent would they possibly have a chance to be spared. The townspeople were utterly broken by the maggid's harsh words, and they cried bitterly, fearing the awesome punishment.

After his speech, the maggid, satisfied with himself, retired to the room that the community had arranged for him.

A short while later, Reb Shmuel entered the maggid's room. He carried with him a long knife and a stone with which to sharpen it. Reb Shmuel closed the door behind him and then bolted it. Without saying a word, Reb Shmuel began to sharpen his knife.

A few tense moments passed. Finally the maggid broke the silence and asked in astonishment, "Sir, could you please tell me what you are doing?"

Without glancing up from the knife he was sharpening, Reb Shmuel answered, "As the honorable, great maggid knows, we are very simple people in this town. Perhaps, it is because of our unintentional sins that we have never merited to have a great, righteous, G-d-fearing scholar in our midst."

Not knowing what to make of this answer, the maggid replied, "Yes, that is true. Nevertheless, what does that have to do with sharpening the knife?"

Reb Shmuel answered simply, "We were taught by our parents that before Rosh Hashana, one is supposed to pray at the graves of the righteous."

Still unsure of what Reb Shmuel's point was, the maggid asked, "That is correct. But why are you sharpening that knife?"

"Oh, that is very simple," explained Reb Shmuel. "The nearest grave site of a righteous person is very far from our town. For some of us it is extremely troublesome and difficult to make such a long journey."

With these additional words, the maggid began to feel uneasy. He started sweating and ventured, "But you still have not explained why you are sharpening your knife in this room!"

Reb Shmuel answered, "Quite simply, I am sharpening my knife here because the townspeople want a very righteous person buried in this town."

Now the maggid had not even a shadow of a doubt as to what Reb Shmuel's intentions seemed to be. The maggid stammered, "But I am not completely righteous. I have also done some small sins, such as ..."

Reb Shmuel dismissed the maggid's revelation, saying, "Honored maggid, you are still a very righteous and learned person. As for the sins that you mentioned, I did not even know that they were transgressions."

The maggid trembled and stuttered, "But I did some transgressions that were much more serious, such as ..."

Concerning this revelation, as well, Reb Shmuel shrugged, insisting, "But to us you are still a tzadik; for us, you are quite good enough."

This strange dialogue continued for some time with the maggid, mentioning more and more severe transgressions and Reb Shmuel telling him, "But you are still acceptable to us, since you are far better than we are."

Finally, the maggid admitted to some extremely serious transgressions and that he was not really the great righteous man that his letter of introduction and credentials claimed him to be. In essence, he was saying, "I am an impostor."

Now, Reb Shmuel no longer played the simpleton. After putting away the knife, he began chastising the maggid for causing the Jews of the town so much pain and sorrow. After making sure the maggid fully understood how one is to talk to and treat another Jew, Reb Shmuel unbolted the door and let the maggid go on his way, much the wiser and more sensitive than before.

Reprinted from website of KabbalaOnline.org.



This week's Parsha starts off telling us "שופטים ושופטים תתן" "לך בכל שעריך" Judge and Police you should hire for yourselves in all of your gates..... And judge the nation favorably.

The Klei Yakar writes, that we learn from here, that one should first worry that he is complete, up to par on all of his middot before judging other people, after one has worked on his own Middot can he go help strengthen other people.

R' Simcha Bunim of Pshischa, says, "If a person is constantly judging himself, he will see what he needs to work on, that others are better at, the result is that you will judge others favorably. However, if one just looks at the negative parts of others and overlooks his own struggles, he corrupts the judgment and removes honest judgment in the world."

I am reminded of a song a good friend of mine, Avraham Fried sings from the prayer of Reb Elimelech of Lizensk, "אדרבה תן בליבנו שנראה כל אחד מעלת חברינו ולא חסרונם" Hashem, please put in our hearts, that we should all see the good in our friends, and not their faults. "הישר והרצוי לפניך, ואל יעלה בליבנו שום שנאה מאחד על חברו הלילה" That we should all talk to each other respectfully, and let no anger enter our hearts, on anyone.

A Passuk in this week's Parsha tells us "תמים תהיה עם ה'" "אלוקיך" The Targum Unkelus explains this Passuk as such "You should be complete with Hashem". The Ramban tells us that this Passuk is teaching us, that when we get nervous about what the future will bring we have to listen to Hashem, and to no one else, Hashem created and runs everything therefore we should rely on him.

We have another Passuk later on, that tells us "כי תצא למלחמה" "על איבך וראית סוס ורכב עם רב ממך לא תירא מהם כי יהוה אלהיך עמך" When you go to fight your enemy and you see horses and chariots, don't get nervous because Hashem is with you. The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh tells us that this is referring to the fight between man and his evil inclination the הצר הרע. Man has two things playing against him in this battle, one is that we are not familiar with the tactics of the הצר הרע and secondly when we slip and do the wrong things and we do an offense it has an affect on us, it gives us the desire to do that offense again. How is it possible to win the battle? True if a man tries to fight on his own he will not win as he is not strong enough, but it is because Hashem is with you on your side and fights with you that you will win.

As we have sprung into the Elul spirit, don't act differently than the way you want Hashem to act with you. Let us all reach this level being with Hashem always, and thru that we will win the battle against our true enemy and come to Rosh Hashana this year as new people. So join me and let's pray with all our hearts, for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra 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.

*Yossi*  
The Jewish Weekly's  
**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 (Diaspora and some in Israel study chapter 6) of Pirkei Avot

