

The Jewish Weekly

The Lubavitcher Rebbe And the Ohr Hachayim by Eli-Noson Silberberg

A Boyaner chassid came to Melbourne, Australia to be the chazan (cantor) for the High Holidays of 5771 (2010). Rabbi Mottel Krasnjanski noticed that from time to time in the middle of the services he would pause and glance at a little piece of paper that he had placed on the podium with his Machzor (High Holiday prayer book).

After the services were over, Rabbi Krasnjanski asked the chazan about the paper. The chazan replied that about 20 years earlier, shortly before the High Holidays, he had gone to the Lubavitcher Rebbe on a Sunday when the Rebbe distributed dollars to be given to charity. The chazan told the Rebbe that he was going to be a chazan in a certain shul. The Rebbe's response was, "We must remember that we are praying to G-d."

The chazan appreciated the nice thought but didn't take it too seriously at the time. After the holidays however, it occurred to him that throughout the services he was so preoccupied with remembering the tunes, hitting the notes crisply, creating the right emotions through his voice, that he really hadn't thought much about G-d! He then realized that the Rebbe hadn't just told him a "nice thought," but rather had given him guidance and something to work on. Since then," the chazan concluded, "whenever I lead the prayers, I carry with me this piece of paper on which I wrote the Rebbe's message, 'We must remember that we are praying to G-d,' and look at it from time to time during the prayers to make sure that I never forget it!"

Rabbi Krasnjanski asked the chazan what brought him to the Lubavitcher Rebbe that Sunday for a dollar? The chazan answered that he had previously corresponded with the Rebbe, and then began to relate the following story:

"Years earlier, as a young man in Jerusalem, I would go every Thursday to the grave of Rabbi Chayim ben Moses ibn Attar (known as the "Ohr Hachayim"). There in the cemetery on the Mount of Olives, I would study the weekly Torah portion with the commentary of the holy Ohr Hachayim.

"At that time period, the Mount of Olives was not a totally safe place to be. And, sure enough, one time when I was studying at the Ohr Hachayim's grave, I turned around and saw an Arab standing behind me with a drawn knife! Petrified, I turned back to the grave and beseeched the Ohr Hachayim to help protect me from the great and immediate danger in which I found myself.

"After my prayer, I turned back around and saw the Arab frozen in fear. An instant later the Arab was running away like someone running for his life! I started to run too, chasing the Arab out of the cemetery. I then continued running until I was back at my own home.

"After this incident, my mother insisted that I stop going to the Ohr Hachayim's grave each week, as she believed I was putting my life in danger. I disagreed. But she was so determined that I not go that she threatened to cut off her relationship with me. Finally I proposed that we would send a letter

to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and whatever the Rebbe would answer we would both accept.

A short while later the answer from the Rebbe arrived: 'Ask a Rav (a Jewish legal authority).' I asked the renowned chief judge of the "Badatz" rabbinical court, Rabbi Yitzchok Weiss. The Rav replied that if the Rebbe felt that I shouldn't go to the grave anymore then he simply would have said so. Rather it must be that the Rebbe wants me to continue, but with the added strength of a pesak halacha (Jewish legal ruling) and that was why the Rebbe had said to consult a Rav. 'Therefore,' said Dayan Weiss, 'I rule that you can continue going there!' And of course, that is what I did. That was my earlier correspondence with the Rebbe," said the chazan.

Rabbi Krasnjanski sensed that there was still something else that the chazan hadn't yet told him. After all, when he and his mother had had the disagreement, they both agreed to consult the Lubavitcher Rebbe. "Why him rather than a tzaddik (pure, righteous person) or a Rav in Jerusalem?" Rabbi Krasnjanski asked.

The chazan smiled and answered that indeed there was one earlier connection already, and that involves yet another story:

"My wife gave birth to a set of twins. A few years later, one of them was diagnosed with a very serious illness. In addition to consulting with numerous doctors and specialists, we went to various great rabbis and tzadikim for advice and blessings. Someone encouraged us to get a blessing from the Lubavitcher Rebbe as well. We wrote, and the Rebbe's response was to go see a 'rofeh mumcheh yedid' (a doctor who is a specialist and a good friend).

We were very surprised at this advice because we didn't know any specialists at all, and definitely we did not know a doctor whom we considered a 'friend'!

We decided to make an appointment with a new doctor whom we had never before consulted, thereby fulfilling at least the 'specialist' part of the Rebbe's response. You can imagine our surprise when as soon as we entered the doctor's office, the doctor greeted me by saying, 'Ah my yedid is here, how can I help?' - calling me his good friend with the same expression that the Rebbe had used! This doctor went on to diagnose the illness and he prescribed a course of treatment and medication. At the end of the appointment, I asked the doctor what he had meant by calling me his 'yedid'; after all, he never met me before and knew nothing about us before the visit!

"I really don't know, and I can't explain why I greeted you with that unusual expression. I can only say that as soon as you entered the room, a very warm feeling toward you enveloped me and that is why I called you my yedid.

"In amazement, I told the doctor of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's response to me, which was actually our reason for making this appointment. The doctor was equally amazed at this clear display of G-d's guidance, as well as the holiness and power of the words of a Tzadik. He promised to do everything he could for our child and refused to take any payment for his services.

"Needless to say the doctor was indeed the emissary to bring about the full recovery for the child.

"So you see," the chazan concluded, "my experience and relationship with the Rebbe really goes back a long time, and has repeatedly affected me in truly wondrous ways."

Reprinted from an email from LchainWeekly.org.

Editor's Note: Rabbi Chaim (ben Moshe) Ibn Atar the Ohr Hachayim zt"l's, 279th Yahrzeit was this past Thursday, 15th Tammuz - July 14th of this year.

It Once Happened...

One Can Always Do Teshuvah

by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg

There is a powerful story in the Gemara (Avodah Zarah 17a), about Elazar ben Durdaya, who strayed from the path of Jewish life and became addicted to certain Aveiros. One day he was told that he would not be accepted in repentance, even if he were to try to do Teshuvah.

He became overwhelmed and shocked by his low level, and he felt a deep desire to return to Hashem. He went to seek external help. He sat between two mountains and hills and said, "Mountains and hills, pray for mercy on my behalf, so that my Teshuvah will be accepted!" They said to him, "Before we pray for mercy on your behalf, we must pray for mercy on our own behalf."

He said, "Heaven and earth, pray for mercy on my behalf!" They said to him, "Before we pray for mercy on your behalf, we must pray for mercy on our own behalf."

He said, "Sun and moon, pray for mercy on my behalf!" They said to him, "Before we pray for mercy on your behalf, we must pray for mercy on our own behalf."

He said, "Stars and constellations, pray for mercy on my behalf!" They said to him, "Before we pray for mercy on your behalf, we must pray for mercy on our own behalf."


Elazar ben Durdaya said, "Clearly, the matter depends on nothing other than myself. He placed his head between his knees and cried loudly until his soul left his body.

A Divine Voice emerged and said, "Rebbi Elazar ben Durdaya has earned his life in Olam Haba! When Rebbi Yehuda HaNasi heard this story, he cried and said, "There are those who acquire their share in Olam Haba only after many years of hard work and toil, and there are those who acquire their share in Olam Haba in just one moment!"

Rebbi Yehuda HaNasi further commented, "Not only are Baalei Teshuvah accepted, but they are even called 'Rebbi', as the Divine Voice referred to Elazar ben Durdaya as 'Rebbi Elazar ben Durdaya!'"

In one brief moment of serious realization, Teshuvah, and change, Elazar ben Durdaya made a complete turnaround in his life and earned S'char in Olam Haba!

Reprinted from an email of Torah U'Tefilah.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Parshat Pinchas

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	7:10	8:27	9:03
Tel Aviv	7:26	8:30	
Haifa	7:19	8:31	
Be'er Sheva	7:27	8:28	



Keeping the Rebbe's advice By Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

The CEO of a houseware manufacturing company in England was looking to hire a salesperson. Yehoshua M., an experienced salesman, applied for the job, and the CEO hired him on a trial basis. The CEO said, "If you succeed in making new connections, you will remain with us. If you don't, we will have to seek someone else."

Yehoshua asked, "How many new sales are you expecting?"

"I reckon in two months time you should have made enough connections to sell forty thousand pounds worth of merchandise per month."

"I'll try my best," Yehoshua answered.

Each industry has its own set of challenges and tests, so before Yehoshua began his new position, he asked his rav for halachic guidance.

The rav said, "If, when speaking to a potential customer, you discover that he is currently using a Jewish supplier, you mustn't convince him to switch and buy your products. That would be hasagat gvul, taking away your fellow man's source of income. If you ever come across such a situation, you must forfeit the sale."

Yehoshua began his job, and succeeded to make several good connections. Being a talented salesman, he knew how to meet customers and convince them to try his company.

There was one particular large store that he was having a difficult time getting into. When he finally got the big boss on the phone, the owner said, "We already have a supplier, and we are satisfied. We're not looking for changes."

Yehoshua explained that he could supply the same quality products for less money, but the man didn't want to hear of it.

Yehoshua didn't let up. After two weeks of trying, a meeting was arranged between them.

After understanding the needs of the store, Yehoshua told the storeowner, "We can supply you with the products you need for two thousand pounds, each month."

The storeowner was very happy with this prospect, as it was substantially less than what he was paying until then.

"Let me show you what we were paying now," the storeowner said, as he took out his notes. Yehoshua didn't want to look at the invoices because he knew that if he sees the name of a Jewish supplier, he would have to back out of this good deal. But his curiosity got the better of him. He glimpsed at the invoice and saw the name of the supplier on top of the page. It was a Jewish supplier.

"I'm sorry," Yehoshua said, "but I can't close this deal. It's against my principles."

The CEO was surprised. He never heard of a religion that doesn't allow closing good deals. This potential client immediately took out his phone and called Yehoshua's boss. "You have a strange salesman here," he shouted in the phone. "He had the opportunity to get a monthly account for two thousand pounds, and he threw it away..."

The factory owner was upset with Yehoshua, and Yehoshua explained to his boss the conditions his rabbi set for him. "Why don't you find yourself a different rabbi? Someone more lenient?"

Yehoshua replied, "I'm sorry, but I must remain loyal to my religion."

A few weeks passed, and Yehoshua's probation was almost up. So far he managed to make thirty-eight thousand pounds of new sales per month. He was still two thousand pounds short, and time was running out. His yetzer hara was telling him, "Why did you listen to your rav? This might cause you to lose your job." But then his yetzer tov told him that he did the right thing. "Everything will work out," he told himself. "I won't lose out from following halachah."

As these thoughts were passing through his mind, he received a phone call. "You don't know me," an unfamiliar voice said, "but I'm a salesperson in the same field as you. But unlike you who works for a company, I work on my own. I buy in bulk from one of the large manufacturers, and I sell it to stores. One of my clients is the store you visited a few weeks ago. You didn't want to deal with him because you didn't want to take away my parnassah. I'm impressed by your integrity. I decided that from now on I will only buy products from your company. If you agree, I will order fifteen thousand pounds worth of household products per month from your company." And that is what they did.

Yehoshua said to his boss, "When I lost the two thousand pound sale, you thought we were losing money. At first, I also thought so. But now we see that one never loses out by observing the Torah. The profits are always greater, even in this world." *Reprinted from an email from The Torah Wellsprings.*



I heard from the Chief Rabbi of England and the Commonwealth, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis that, great leaders are not irreplaceable. They ensure that they will be replaced by the best possible person. This was the hallmark of the greatest of all of our leaders – Moshe Rabbeinu.

In Parshat Pinchas, Hashem informs Moshe that he is just about to pass away. Moshe expresses no remorse. He doesn't wallow in self-pity, even though he will not be achieving his lifelong aspiration to enter into the Holy Land. What is his response? Moshe says, "יפקוד ה' אלוקי הרוחות לכל בשר" – May the Lord, the G-d of the spirits of every person, appoint a leader over the community."

Moshe's only consideration was, who was going to succeed him and he went about ensuring that the mantle of leadership will be passed over from him to his successor during his lifetime. And how does Moshe describe Hashem in this context? It is a description for the Almighty we do not find anywhere else. "ה' אלוקי הרוחות לכל בשר" – G-d of the spirits of every person."

You see, Moshe recognized in Hashem the fact that He is the Creator, He is the Master of the entire universe and at the same time He cares about every single person.

Similarly, Moshe is saying, the type of leader I would like to be succeeded by, is someone who will lead the nation at global level but would also be a person who cares about every single individual within that nation.

Here we find the attribute that is necessary for a truly great leader. It is not just a national leader, it could be an organizational leader or the chairman of a shul. They have to worry about the entire community, the direction that the whole entity is moving in and, at the same time, they need to have genuine care for every single person who makes up that community.

We have a fascinating blessing to be recited on rare occasions. When you see more than six hundred thousand Jewish people, we say, "ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם חכם הרזים" – Blessed is the Lord, the G-d of the entire universe Who has the knowledge of the secrets of every person."

When seeing such a vast crowd of people, one would have thought that the blessing is over the huge group of people, but instead the blessing mentions the fact that Hashem knows the secrets in the minds of each person. What is most important in that large gathering is every single individual. That is exactly what Moshe identified as being the characteristic of a great leader – to lead the nation and also to care for every single person.

So therefore, here in our Parshah, we have one great leader, passing on the mantle to another great leader and yet again the Torah shows the way.

So let's try to love every individual for who they are and let's pray with all our hearts, for those suffering from the current situation in Eastern Europe, as well as for the recovery of all the sick, our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevre Kadisha members worldwide, for peace 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 and sweet Shabbat.

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 6
MITZVOT ASEH: 6
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 0

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 168
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1887
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 7853

HAFTORA: Melachim I 18:46 – 19:21

THE FAST OF SEVENTEENTH OF TAMMUZ (Shiva Asar B'Tammuz) IS SUNDAY, JULY 17, 2022. Shiva Asar B'Tammuz is the beginning of the "Three Weeks".

This week in Israel, we study Chapter 1 of Pirkei Avot (outside Israel one studies Chapter 6).

פינחס בלק

This week is dedicated to those who perished in the Miami disaster last year.

May their Neshamot be a blessing for all of Klal Yisrael.

May tomorrow's fast day turn to a Chag, with the rebuilding of the Beit Hamikdash