

# The Jewish Weekly

## "Two Grams of Silver Nitrate in a Tablespoon of Olive Oil"

by Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

The Alter Rebbe was truly a holy person. When he was only a child he had already mastered all the wisdom of the Torah and by the age of twenty he knew all the secrets of the heavens and the earth.

So it was no wonder that he aroused jealousy. Many considered him a threat to their existence and even sought to kill him; much like the biblical story of Yosef and his brothers.

And like Yosef when the Rebbe was released from prison, it brought blessing and salvation to all mankind.

Thousands sought the Rebbe's help whether in spiritual or in mundane matters and here is a story of one of them.

One religious Jew, who we will call Reb Yona, had a son who was clearly mentally ill. Shortly before his Bar Mitzvah the boy suddenly stopped eating and drinking and began wandering aimlessly around the house, mumbling incoherently to himself like a madman.

Reb Yona spared no money or time searching for a cure. But after all his savings were gone and he had exhausted all sources of charity with no results he, like all the best doctors and professors he had seen, gave up.

Then he heard about the Alter Rebbe. At first he would have no part of it - who ever heard of asking a human being for a blessing!? G-d is the one that cures!!

But his wife pointed out to him that if it's permissible to ask doctors for help and throw away hundreds of rubles on them to boot, then why should it be forbidden to ask the help of a Tzadik?

Not only that, but there are myriads of stories in Judaism about people requesting blessings from Moses, Elijah and even from the holy scholars of the Talmud.

Reb Yona tried to protest, but he finally gave in and decided to travel to Liadi.

A few days later he was standing with his son before the Rebbe looking into the Rebbe's infinitely deep eyes.

"Your son will be healthy, G-d willing" the Rebbe said, "Just one small treatment. You have to mix a small portion of two grams of silver nitrate in a tablespoon of olive oil and give it to him. This will heal him completely."

Reb Yona was overjoyed!! The Rebbe was a completely different type of person from anything he had ever seen! There was truth and certainty in his eyes that he never

dreamed existed in this world! Finally there was hope!! He immediately set out to find someone to fill the prescription.

Now it so happened that in the town of Liadi also lived a very great doctor and when our hero began asking around for someone to make this concoction he was directed to his house.

But when he asked the doctor for help he was in for a surprise.

"What!? Silver Nitrate?" he almost screamed. "What in the world would anyone need that for? Who told you to take this?"

Reb Yona explained it all but it didn't help.

"Demented son!?" the doctor exclaimed shrugging his shoulders in disbelief. "What has silver nitrate got to do with dementia!? Exactly the opposite! It could be dangerous!"

But nevertheless Reb Yona insisted. He put money on the table, told the doctor that he trusted the Rebbe and in moments was exiting with the elixir in hand.

He gave it to his son full of hope and anticipation. ... but nothing happened. True, nothing bad happened. But nothing good happened either. Perhaps he misunderstood what the Rebbe said. He decided to ask again.

The next day he was again standing before the Rebbe explaining what happened and the Rebbe simply replied.

"Ahh, whoever mixed the medicine must have made a mistake in measuring. Go back and ask him if he measured exactly as I told you. It has to be exact!"

"Mistake?" the doctor replied, "I didn't make any mistake. In fact I didn't measure at all! I just put in the smallest amount possible. Why waste time measuring something that is useless?!"

But Reb Yona pleaded and finally the doctor agreed and even measured and mixed it all before him.

And sure enough, this time when he administered the mixture to his son the boy's entire complexion and composure changed almost immediately. And as though he had just woken from a dream he began to ask for food to eat and books to learn.

Reb Yona returned to the doctor with his son and the doctor could not believe his eyes. "It simply makes no sense!" he exclaimed. What happened here was a miracle, but if it was a miracle then why did the measure have to be exact? I mean silver nitrate has nothing to do with mental illness! I simply can't understand it!"

*Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.*

*Editor's Note: Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liozna, known as the "Ba'al HaTanya and the Alter Rebbe (in Chabad circles)" z"l's 211th Yahrzeit was Tuesday, 24th Tevet - January 17th of this year.*

## It Once Happened...



*A painting of The Alter Rebbe by E.K. Tiefenbrun*

### The Strongman of Shklov

by Rabbi Rafael Nachman Kahn

Translated by Basha Majerczyk

After a visit to the city of Shklov, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Chabad decided to return home. The opponents, in their anger, plotted to throw stones at the Rebbe as he departed.

When the chassidim got wind of their plan they met to decide on a course of action to protect the Rebbe. One of them, a particular strong and robust 18-year-old youth named Dovid, stood up and declared that he would accompany the Rebbe and make sure that no harm befell him.

When the time came to leave, a crowd of people armed with stones surrounded the Alter Rebbe's carriage in a threatening manner. Young Dovid, in the Rebbe's defense, ripped a tree out of the ground and faced the menacing group: "I will kill anyone of you who dares to lift a hand against this holy tzadik!" he roared. The crowd backed off, fully believing that he would carry out his threat. Dovid was then able to accompany the Rebbe to the outskirts of the city unmolested.

As soon as they were outside the city of Shklov the Alter Rebbe climbed out of the carriage and said to the boy, "Dovid! You were responsible for actually saving my life. May you live to be 120!"

A century later, one day before he was to turn 120, Dovid called the Chevrah Kadisha, the burial society, to his side. Although now a very old man, Dovid was still in good health. Together, he and his guests made a 'lechaim' on some whiskey. The very next day, on his 120th birthday, Dovid passed away.

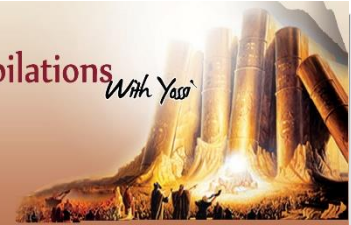
*Reprinted from Extraordinary Chassidic Tales.*



**Y-GRAPHICS**

Shabbat Times - Parshat Va'eira

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	4:26	5:42	6:20
Tel Aviv	4:41	5:43	6:16
Haifa	4:30	5:41	6:17
Be'er Sheva	4:45	5:45	6:21



## The Singing Stutterer By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

It is always a special experience to hear Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu Dan from Paris when he leads the prayers. Each word has its suitable trill, no syllable is pronounced by habit. Those listening would never guess that the possessor of this melodious voice not so long ago stuttered and had difficulty to speak clearly.

To understand how this happened we have to go back to the beginning, over six decades ago.

Rabbi Dan's father was one of the survivors of the 1929 Arab pogrom in Hebron. He left Israel as soon as he was old enough, and immigrated to France. There he married, but to the young couple's sorrow, they remained childless. When they finally accepted that there was no chance of their having children together, the wife, with great sacrifice, suggested to her husband that they get divorced and he marry her friend. In spite of the hardship, they took this drastic step, and that is how Rabbi Dan's father came to marry Rabbi Dan's mother.

On the holiday of Shavuot in the year 1963, in the seventh month of her pregnancy, the expectant mother went to the chassidic synagogue in the Pletzel, the Jewish neighborhood in Paris.

After the prayer service a farbrengen (chassidic gathering) was held. During the farbrengen, one of the participants cried out very loudly, which shocked the young woman so much, to the extent that it caused the onset of birth pangs.

She was rushed to the hospital where several hours later she gave birth to a tiny, fragile, pre-mature baby boy.

Developing slowly, the baby stayed several months in the incubator under his parents worried and watchful eyes. When finally the brit mila (circumcision) could be performed the parents breathed a sigh of relief. Many of the Jews of the Jewish community in Paris rejoiced together with them.

The newborn was named Shmuel Eliyahu.

When Shmuel Eliyahu reached the age of beginning to speak, it became clear that he stuttered. The doctors were of the opinion that this handicap was caused by the shock the mother experienced when in the synagogue. They had no cure for this congenital affliction.

The parents accepted the situation...but Shmuel Eliyahu did not! In spite of his severe handicap, or maybe because of it, Shmuel Eliyahu already as a child fell in love with songs and chazanut (cantorial music). He felt that he needed to find a way to overcome his difficulty with articulation.

Years went by. Shmuel Eliyahu studied in institutions whose interpretations of Torah, although genuine, were far removed from a chassidic way of life.

His connection with Chabad and especially with the Lubavitcher Rebbe came about through the Rebbe's emissary, Rabbi Yaakov Biton, from Sarcelles. It began

with the wedding of Rabbi Biton. The two were already close friends and during the week before the wedding Shmuel Eliyahu accompanied the groom everywhere.

After the wedding and the following festive week, Rabbi Biton flew to New York to the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He suggested to Shmuel Eliyahu to join him.

"You will thank me for every moment you will spend in the presence of the Rebbe," he promised.

"And he was right," says Rabbi Dan today.

"It was during the month of Tishrei 1987 that I arrived in Brooklyn to be near the Rebbe. I stayed in President Street. Close to me lived the musician brothers, Yossi and Avi Piamenta. A friendship was soon established between us. I loved spending time with them and enjoyed using my voice musically.

"It must be mentioned in their favor that they ignored my severe stuttering; instead they praised my vocal abilities. The openness and affection they showed me captured my heart.

"In their merit I started to believe more in myself. As is natural, I felt attracted to the world of those who embraced me with such kindness, the world of Chabad.

"The final stage of my entrance to the world of chassidut was on the night following Simchat Torah that month.

"As was his custom, the Rebbe poured wine from his cup kos shel bracha - "cup of blessing" to all those present, while all the chassidim stood around and sang enthusiastically. My friends told me that at this special occasion the Rebbe gives plentiful blessings to whomever asks.

"The truth is that I was extremely shy to speak to the Rebbe, but I decided that I owed this to myself. I needed to overcome the embarrassment and to ask for a blessing to be rid of the disturbing stuttering.

"I pushed my way into the line. When I was standing before the Rebbe, I took courage and asked for a blessing. The Rebbe's words, spoken amongst the tumult of the singing around him, astounded me with the divine spirit they revealed: "You will stop stuttering by means of singing."

"I left the shul shaking all over from emotion. How did the Rebbe know that I love to sing?"

"From then on, adhering to the guidance of the Rebbe, I sang and sang at each opportunity. It wasn't a long time before the blessing of the Rebbe was realized: the stutter disappeared as if it had never been!"

With twinkling eyes Rabbi Dan concluded, "The greatest merit I experienced was once being chazan (cantor) in the Rebbe's minyan, in his presence.

"Every opportunity that comes my way I try to use my voice in order to gladden other Jews. I feel that in this manner I express my great gratitude to G-d for the miracle he made for me, through the blessing of the Rebbe."

Reprinted from an email of [KabbalaOnline.org](http://KabbalaOnline.org).



We should never tolerate an intolerable situation. In Parshat Va'eira Hashem promises the suffering Bnei Yisrael in Egypt, "הוצאתי אתכם מחרת סבלות מצרים" - I will deliver you from under the burdens of Egypt."

The Chidushei HaRim brilliantly explains that the term 'סבלות' meaning the burdens, the suffering of the people comes from the same root as two other words: 'סבלנות' meaning patience and 'סובלנות' meaning tolerance. He explains that sometimes one can be enduring a totally unacceptable situation, however one gets used to it; one succumbs, and one starts to tolerate it.

In other circumstances one might exercise patience, believing that actually, one should fight against a particular circumstance, that it's totally unacceptable; but one waits for the right moment which never comes and as a result the 'סבלנות', the patience, leads to סובלנות, which is tolerance.

This, explains the Chidushei HaRim, is what happened to the Bnei Yisrael in Egypt. They suffered many years of slavery. They got used to it. They never believed that the situation could change. As a result, they tolerated what the Egyptians made them go through. Hashem, therefore, declared, "הוצאתי אתכם מחרת סבלות מצרים" - I will deliver you from the 'סבלות' - from your patience, your tolerance. First of all, you need to be delivered from your negativity, your acceptance of an unacceptable situation. Hashem says you need to deliver yourselves from your defeatist attitude and only after that will I be able to deliver you physically from the slavery in Egypt.

Of course when it comes to unacceptable circumstances one needs to pick the right time and method, but we should never get used to an intolerable situation to the extent that we just allow it to happen. This applies to ourselves, to the situations that we are going through, and equally to situations that we see others going through; we need to do what we can in order to help them in their time of trouble.

So from Parshat Va'eira we learn an important lesson: that we should never tolerate an intolerable situation.

Let's join together to bless and pray for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra 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 and Chodesh Tov.

Yossi

## The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NO MITZVOT IN THIS PARSHA

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 121  
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1748  
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 6701

HAFTORA:  
Yechezkel 28:25 - 29:21

Shabbat Mevarchim Chodesh Shvat.  
Rosh Chodesh is Monday, Jan. 23, 2023.

**וואַרע**  
טעג

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