

The Jewish Weekly

The Forgotten Bandage and Doing a Good Deed

By Rabbi Chaskel Besser

After moving to Crown Heights, in 1948, I would pray at "770," Lubavitch World Headquarters, each Friday night.

Congregants would not sit at the table where Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (who later became the seventh Chabad-Lubavitch Rebbe and was then respectfully known by the acronym "Ramash") would pray, affording him the respect due to the son-in-law of the Sixth Rebbe.

(I knew the Ramash's brother, Reb Yisrael Aryeh Leib, from my visits to Tel Aviv, and would occasionally bring his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, pictures of her grandchild. In 1947, the Rebbetzin told me, "It is a good idea for you to get to know my son, Mendel." But I never quite took her up on that.)

One Friday evening, my six-year-old son Shlomo and I arrived for prayer services, and my son could not find a prayer book. Seeing that there was someone praying at a table alone, he figured that he could either stand or sit next to him and share his prayer book...

The others congregants did not appreciate the scene unfolding before them. When the Ramash noticed this, he asked that they leave the child alone. "When done together with him, my praying goes very well."

A couple more nuggets:

In the 1940s, it was very uncommon for men to immerse daily in a mikvah (ritual pool) before praying. On one occasion, I wanted to go to the mikvah, and inquired as to where I could find a key. I was told, "The Ramash has the key, for he goes daily to the mikvah."

This was how I began to get to know the Rebbe, of righteous memory, just a little.

One day in 1952, Shlomo Carlebach told me about a Jewish girl, an acquaintance, who was seeking employment; the Rebbe sent Shlomo to me to see if I had any positions available. Soon thereafter I employed her as a secretary.

Several months later, my partner told me that he has an appointment for a private audience with the Rebbe, organized by our new secretary. He explained that he had no idea what to do in the presence of a Rebbe, and asked if I'd be willing to join him. I, of course, agreed, looking forward to my first audience with the new Rebbe.

We made up to meet in my house, in Crown Heights, at 10:00 p.m. and from there to go together to Lubavitch World Headquarters where we were scheduled to meet the Rebbe at 11.



The Lubavitcher Rebbe and Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, deep in conversation

At 10:30 p.m., my partner arrived at my house and told me that he would not be going. "I have a relative living in the neighborhood; she's very ill and I haven't seen her in a long time," he said.

"She recently had a growth that was surgically removed, but it grew back. The doctors are divided as to what should be done; one says operate and the other says not to. Since I am already here, I want to go visit her."

I explained to him that, on the contrary, this would be an excellent time to ask for advice and a blessing from this great Jewish leader. He agreed, and we both headed out to the Rebbe's office.

We ended up meeting the Rebbe at 2:30 a.m. The Rebbe greeted us warmly, and my partner accepted the Rebbe's invitation to sit down. Then the Rebbe turned to me and requested that I too take a seat. I told the Rebbe that I cannot sit before a Rebbe.

My partner handed the Rebbe a note he'd prepared with the name of his sickly relative and some details about her condition.

As the Rebbe read the details, his face transformed before our eyes; from welcoming and jovial to somber and serious. It was at that moment that I understood the difference between a great man and his now becoming a Rebbe.

My partner began to relate all the details about his relative's grave condition. The Rebbe asked several questions, and then asked, "Does she herself know the details of the diagnosis?"

"I don't know," my partner replied.

The Rebbe asked about her Jewish background, and my partner responded that she has no knowledge of Judaism.

The Rebbe said, "She should take on a good deed that should stand her in good stead."

"Of course," my partner said, "if it would not be too hard."

The Rebbe suggested that she light Shabbat candles, to which my partner responded that he was sure she already lights them.

It Once Happened...

"So how could you say she has no background in Judaism?" the Rebbe asked.

"Perhaps it is possible to influence her to place some coins in a charity box prior to the candle lighting?"

The Rebbe concluded, "Don't worry, everything will be alright."

The Rebbe then asked my partner if he had kids, which school they attend, and what he had in mind for their future.

My partner had a young child, and the Rebbe encouraged him to send him to a Jewish school of higher education when he grew up. My partner responded that he wanted his son to go to college to "become educated."

The Rebbe asked, "Is it true that you want him to marry a Jew?" My partner nodded his head affirmatively, and the Rebbe patiently continued, "He will go to college and perhaps find a [non-Jewish] girl he likes... why should he not marry her?" He again affirmed what the Rebbe was saying, and said that he will have to think about it.

They continued to speak at length on the topic.

When we left the audience, my partner told me, "He is a brilliant man. I do not entirely agree with everything he says, but I will send my son to a Jewish school."

When my partner arrived at the office the following morning, he was very emotional. "This morning," he said, "one of the doctors called to ask where I was last night. I responded to him that I was at the Lubavitcher Rebbe."


"He told me that they had decided to operate on her, and when they opened the area, they did not find a growth. What they did find was some surgical bandage that was causing an infection."

Several months later, I received a phone call from the Rebbe's office, asking how Shulamit, my partner's relative, was doing. I told them that she is well.

I was astonished that several months later the Rebbe remembered and cared to ask about her wellbeing.

Reprinted from an email of the Chabad Victims Terror Project.

Editor's Note: the Lubavitcher Rebbe - Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the 7th Chabad Rebbe ז"ל's, 29th Yahrzeit is Thursday, 3rd Tammuz – June 22nd of this year



Shabbat Times – Parshat Korach

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	7:11	8:29	9:04
Tel Aviv	7:26	8:32	9:02
Haifa	7:19	8:34	9:05
Be'er Sheva	7:27	8:30	9:03



The Rearranged Bones

By Rabbi David Hoffman



Rav Mordechai Eliyahu zt"l

A shadar is a sh'lucha d'rabbanan – a rabbinic emissary, who is sent by the rabbanim of poor communities to raise much needed funds on their behalf. One of the most famous emissaries, as well as one of the greatest Sephardic sages of his time, was the holy Chida, Chacham Chaim Yosef David Azulai zt"l. He was born and raised in Jerusalem, but spent more than 50 years of his life traveling abroad on various missions. In 1753 (5413), at the age of 29, he traveled to Europe as an emissary of the communities of Eretz Yisrael, and again in 1772 on behalf of the city of Chevron. Each trip lasted in excess of five years. He completed his second trip in Livorno, Italy, where he remained for the rest of his life.

Despite the honor he was accorded abroad, he always yearned to return to the Holy Land. His reasons for remaining in Livorno until his death are unclear. It is believed that he was worried that the Jews in Eretz Yisrael wanted to appoint him to the position of Sephardic chief rabbi, which, in his humility, he did not want to accept.

The Chida, who suffered from many ailments throughout his life, passed away on the 11 Adar 5466 (1806), at the age of 83. His death was mourned by Jews all over the world. In Livorno, hespeidim (eulogies) were delivered by the Italian geonim, Rav Yaakov d'Medina zt"l and Rav Chayim Shlomo Abulafia zt"l. Additional hespeidim were given by the greatest sages of the generation in Turkey, North Africa, Germany, Poland, Tunisia, France, Syria, and Eretz Yisrael.

More than a century and a half after the Chida was buried in Livorno, plans were made to exhume his remains and bring them to the Land of Israel, where he was to be reburied on Har HaMenuchos. In 1960, arrangements were made by the Sephardic Chief Rabbi Chacham Yitzchak Nissim zt"l to transfer the Chida's casket to Eretz Yisrael and re-inter his remains in a new plot in a different cemetery, because the local Italian authorities in Livorno planned to convert the cemetery in which he was buried into a public park, with a nearby highway passing directly through it.

With great care and as delicately as possible, members of the agency charged with exhuming the holy Chida's mortal remains had them brought from the cemetery and loaded onto a plane headed for Israel. It was not an uneventful flight, as turbulence caused the plane to shake violently, dipping and climbing steeply on a number of occasions. When

the plane bearing the aron finally landed in Lod International Airport, the rabbanim who had come to escort it to Jerusalem learned that during the flight, the casket had fallen twice, and each time that it was picked up, it was turned upside down.

One of the rabbinic escorts meeting the plane was Chacham Mordechai Eliyahu zt"l, who later served as Israel's Sephardic chief rabbi. After the necessary arrangements for bringing the aron to Jerusalem were made, Rav Eliyahu told them to wait. "The bones must be in terrible disarray," he said. "We must open it up and properly arrange the Chida's remains."

The other rabbanim were unsure; however, Rav Mordechai insisted that it wasn't respectful to bury the Chida in such a state. Then, fearfully yet courageously, he lifted the casket's lid slightly and said, "Rabbeinu HaChida, please forgive me if in any way I am not fulfilling this mitzvah properly." He reached inside and began to rearrange the contents.

After a few moments, though, he trembled and closed his eyes. Whispering in a broken voice that he did not possess the ability to complete the task, he asked pleadingly, "Rabbeinu, please do this task by yourselves, lest I err."

Immediately, a powerful, almost explosive sound was heard; the aron began to shake, and a terrifying rattling caused by the tzadik's bones striking the inner walls of the casket was heard. All the other rabbis fainted on the spot. Rav Eliyahu did not faint, explaining afterwards that his absorption in the mitzvah helped him remain conscious. It was beyond belief! The banging and shaking continued until, bone by bone, the entire skeleton rearranged itself perfectly.

From Lod, the aron was brought to Jerusalem. There it was met by tens of thousands of Jews, who escorted it to Har HaMenuchot, where hespeidim were conducted before the reburial. The Chida had finally come home.

Reprinted from an article in the Queens Jewish Link.

Editor's Note: HaRav Mordechai Tzemaeh Eliyahu zt"l's, 13th Yahrzeit was Wednesday, 25th Sivan – June 14th of this year

What made Korach do something so crazy?

Even the most egotistically minded person would have realized that his revolt against people who had been appointed by Hashem to lead the people, would certainly not succeed.

Rashi explains that Korach had some Divine insight. Prophetically, he could see that in future generations, there would be household names descended from him – well known to the people, who would be great individuals – like Samuel the Prophet, and many Levites who led services in the Temple.

Korach could contemplate on what we read in Psalm 99, which we recite in Shul on Friday night, 'משה ואהרן בכהניו', 'ושמואל בקוראי שמו', 'Moshe and Aharon were amongst those who were the Priests of Hashem and Shmuel amongst those who called on His Name'.

And notice, say Chazal in the Talmud, Shmuel in his generation, is considered to be as great as Moshe and Aharon were in their generation. And notice as well, that Shmuel by himself, is compared to Moshe and Aharon combined. And this is the type of impression that Korach had, as a result of which he thought that he was greater than Moshe and Aharon combined.

I believe that Korach's mistake was rooted in the wrong definition that he gave to greatness. Korach thought that to be great means, you've got to be famous. No. He made a terrible, fatal error.

In our tradition of course, the truly great people are those who live selflessly for the sake of others, enriching our society through their piety. That's why the Talmud talks about the 'לו' מדקיים', the 36 pious people, through whose merit the world continues to exist.

To be great, means being a mensch, being there for the sake of others, whether the world knows about you or not. Korach wanted us to remember him to this day because of his fame. Sadly, for him, we recall his name for the wrong reasons. And from him we can learn a lesson for us all, and that is, each and every one of us can be truly great.

Another Torah I heard from Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, Rashi explains why Hashem sent the snakes as a punishment, because they talked against the Manna, the snake was punished for talking bad, another reason is because the snake tastes in everything a taste of earth, they talked against a heavenly food that tastes like everything they could imagine, the truth is that its all one meaning, the deepest depth is when one walks around talking bad on another person, seeing only bad in everything, then he tastes a "taste of earth" in everything, in all his life, but when someone has the holiest privilege to see only good in everyone, he can taste "the taste of all tastes", his life is so sweet.

So let's try to see only the best in everyone and let's 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.

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 9
MITZVOT ASEH: 5
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 4

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 95
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1409
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5325

HAFTORA: Shmuel I 11:14 - 12:22

Rosh Chodesh - Monday & Tuesday, June 19 & 20, 2023

This week we study Chapter 4 of Pirkei Avot