

# The Jewish Weekly

## Who is that Young Baby?

By Rabbi Chaim Mentz

The tables were set for twenty-three people with a few meager pieces of fish, cucumbers, onions and potatoes and two loaves of bread. But the two candles, the white tablecloth and the bottle of wine betrayed that something festive was happening.

It was a brit; the festival of circumcision the Jews had been making on their eighth day old male babies since the days of Abraham. But this was not just any brit.

It was the brit of the first born child of a simple, poor Jew by the name of Reb Yitzchak (Isaac) after twenty years of barrenness!!

That's right! For twenty years G-d had not answered his and his wife's prayers - until now! But for some reason Reb Yitzchak wouldn't allow the event to begin. The crowd was getting impatient but hour after hour passed and he kept telling everyone to wait for just a few more minutes.

An older man, a stranger with old, patched up garments entered the door and looked around. He was obviously some sort of vagabond or wanderer and looked like someone who needed a meal and a handout. But as soon as he entered Reb Yitzchak smiled with joy and yelled out "Let us begin".

He escorted the fellow to the center of the room where there had been placed a large chair and sat him down. He was to give him the honor of being 'Sandek' (the one who holds the child at the circumcision) an honor usually reserved for either the father of the child or the most honorable person present.

After the circumcision was finished and the name Shlomo (Solomon) had been given to the child, they all sat down and began the 'festive' meal at which point the disheveled 'Sandek' stood and began to speak.

He spoke simply about how the name 'Shlomo' was reminiscent of how king Solomon was offered one wish by G-d and he chose wisdom (Kings 3:5-9). So also, he concluded, this child will be wise and teach the Jews wisdom.

After the meal everyone asked Reb Yitzchak who the old fellow was and he answered.

"The story is a long one but I will make it short.

"For years my wife and I lived at the edge of poverty. Our house was, and still is, a one-room ruin and many nights we had to go to sleep hungry. But what bothered us most was that we had not been blessed with children. We prayed, did good deeds, everything possible with no results.

"Well, one day I happened to be wandering aimlessly at the edge of the river praying to G-d for some sort of miracle when suddenly a glimmering in the mud caught my eye.

"I bent down and picked it up and.. lo and behold it was what looked like a large precious stone. Huge!! I ran to the jeweler and after looking at it for a minute or so declared that not only was it a genuine diamond but it was the largest stone he had ever seen in his life and was worth .... a fortune!!

"I excitedly ran home to tell my wife about our amazing blessing and we decided to sell it as soon as possible ... it was dangerous keeping it in the house and give a large portion of the money to charity.

"I left for a few moments to see if I could find a buyer and just after I left the jeweler arrived. He excitedly produced a bag of golden coins, poured them on the table and offered my wife a small fortune for the gem.

She almost took the money then and there, but he happened to blurt out in glee that the priest would probably be overjoyed! He had been searching for months for a diamond like that to be used as one of the eyes in the massive statue in.....the church!!

"When my wife heard that she almost fainted. The stone would be used for idolatry, she would be supporting idolatry!!! But she hid her surprise and calmly answered that she would have to ask me.

"Of course when I came home and heard the story I refused. I was sure that if G-d wanted us to be rich He would do it in a completely permissible way.

And sure enough He did!!! (or so I thought at the time).

"The next day there was a knock at my door and when I opened it there stood the local duke with a job for me. He wanted me to accompany him, at a very high wage, for a week on a sea journey to buy some things for his business. He said that he would be dealing with Jews and needed a Jew with him to help. He heard that I was honest etc. and even paid me something in advance.

"Needless to say I took the offer and the next day we set sail. But after a few days at sea he pulled out an even larger bag of coins than the jeweler did and offered it all for the diamond. He must have known that I would be afraid to leave the stone at home with only my wife to guard it. He said that if I refused it wouldn't be good for me and my wife... and he was dead serious.

I was stuck!

There was nowhere to run and at any time he could have just killed me and taken it, so I sort of owed him a favor. And the duke kept stressing that it was enough money to make me a rich man for the rest of my life!

## It Once Happened...

"I had to think fast. In my mind it was obvious that I could not give him the stone... so I pretended to be happy and told him I agreed.

"Then I kissed the diamond as though saying goodbye, held it up to the sun and declared 'Ahhh, just look at this beautiful gift from heaven!'" and suddenly 'slipped' on the deck and 'accidentally' tossed the diamond from my upraised hand over the railing of the ship and into the churning sea below us.

"I even screamed in horror and began weeping so convincingly that the duke actually began to comfort and console me. But inside I was rejoicing that I avoided being a partner to idolatry.

"At that moment suddenly everything became silent, I didn't hear anything around me, rather a voice, like an echo, issued from heaven and said: 'Rejoice Reb Yitzchak. Because you lost riches to avoid idolatry you will have a son that will illuminate the Torah like a precious gem'

"A year later my wife gave birth to our son and the very night she gave birth I had a dream. A holy Jew with a long white beard and joyous eyes appeared and said,

"'Ask what you want the child to be blessed with and it will be given; perhaps riches, perhaps long life, perhaps wisdom'.


"Immediately I yelled out 'Wisdom!'

"The old man smiled and said, 'Because you requested wisdom as did Melech Shlomo (King Solomon) so your son should be called Shlomo and he will enlighten the Jewish people with his wisdom in the written and oral Torah.' Then he added, 'Tomorrow wait for me. I want to hold the child at the time of circumcision.'


"That man," continued Reb Yitzchak, "was the one that we waited for, I recognized him when he entered the door. I'm certain that he must be none other than Elijah the prophet" (who attends every Jewish brit but is rarely seen or recognized.)"

The child, Shlomo ben Yitzchak was none other than the great Rashi whose genius commentaries, found on every page of the Pentateuch and Talmud have made the Torah clear and helped keep Judaism alive for the last almost one thousand years.

*Reprinted from an email of Shabbos Stories - Chabad of Bel Air.*



**Shabbat Times – Parshat Lech Lecha**

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
 Jerusalem	5:19	6:31	7:11
Tel Aviv	5:34	6:33	7:08
Haifa	5:24	6:31	7:08
Be'er Sheva	5:37	6:34	7:11

What gave Avraham a great name?

At the commencement of Parshat Lech Lecha, Hashem commands Avraham and Sara to make aliyah, a pilgrimage, to the land that He would show them, the land of Canaan. Hashem promises, "ואעשה לגוי גדול" - I will make you into a great nation, "ואברכך" - and I will bless you, "ואגדלה שמך" - and I will make your name great."

The Gemara in Masechet Pesachim, brought down by Rashi, explains that the commencement of our Amidah, our central prayer when we stand before Hashem three times a day, is based on this text.

The Torah tells us that Hashem said to Avraham, "ואעשה לגוי גדול" - I will make you into a great nation." That's why we proclaim, "אלהי אברהם" - G-d is the G-d of Avraham."

Hashem continued, "ואברכך" - and I will bless you." That's why we say, "אלהי יצחק" - the God of Isaac."

Finally came the third statement, "ואגדלה שמך" - and I will make your name great." That's why we say "אלהי יעקב" - the God of Jacob."

Now Rav Soloveitchik asks a great question.

We can understand the connection between the second statement, 'I will bless you,' and 'אלהי יצחק.' Avraham was blessed through Yitzchak, because Hashem blessed Avraham miraculously with a child (Yitzchak) when he was old. However, what is the connection between the third statement and 'אלהי יעקב' - that is, in what way did Avraham's 'name become great' through Yaakov?

Rav Soloveitchik explains beautifully. He says that when it comes to parenting, it's a marvelous achievement to see one's child walking in one's footsteps. But it's an even greater achievement to witness one's grandchildren emulating one's ways. That is exactly what Avraham achieved through Yaakov having internalized the values of his grandfather and who in his own right became a great person. Therefore we see that Avraham's name became great through his grandchild.

A very important lesson emerges for us from this. Famous and renowned people can make national and global impacts but ultimately the most significant impact that anybody can make is within their own families.

So let's all join as one family and let's pray with all our hearts for the healing of all those injured, for the safe return of those taken as hostages, as well as Divine Protection for our brave IDF soldiers, Police officers, medical professionals, Firefighters, ZAKA members, security personnel and all those citizens protecting us in Israel as well as around the world, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children or parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, safe, quiet and sweet Shabbat.

## The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 1  
MITZVOT ASEH: 1  
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 0

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 126  
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1686  
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 6336

HAFTORA:  
Yeshayahu 40:27 - 41:16

Tonight (Motzei Shabbat) don't forget to move your clocks back one hour to winter time (from 2am to 1am)

## Accessing the Hidden Lights of Creation

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

"Rabbi Elazar said: The light that the Holy One, Blessed be He, made on the first day of Creation was not that of the sun but a different kind of light, through which Adam could observe from one end of the world to the other. But when G-d looked upon the generations of the Flood and the Dispersion and saw that their ways would be corrupt and that they might misuse this light for evil, He arose and concealed it from them... And for whom did He conceal it? For the righteous people in the future, as it is stated: "And G-d saw the light, that it was good", "good" referring to none other than the tzadikim (perfectly righteous people)." (Talmud Chagiga 12a)

The uniqueness and greatness of the holy Baba Sali, Rabbi Yisrael Abuhatzzeira of blessed memory, was not limited to those times that he revealed his powers by performing open miracles, for his entire behavior and true spiritual level were beyond the comprehension of ordinary men. All were amazed by the simplicity with which he spoke about the secrets of creation and the hidden ways in which G-d guides His world. Even as we know that the pathways in heaven are as familiar to tzadikim as the entryways to their own homes, the matter-of-fact manner in which the Baba Sali spoke about heavenly concepts was astounding.

Stories heard from reliable witnesses abound. One of the most remarkable stories about the holy light and vision of the Baba Sali took place over fifty years ago:

A terrible incident occurred in 1972 when a daughter of one of the most prominent Jewish families in Mexico was kidnapped by a group of Mexican gangsters who had been tracking the girl in the hopes of holding her for a large ransom. They demanded \$60 million for the safe return of the young girl. If their demands were not met, they threatened, the girl would be executed. There were to be no further negotiations, they declared.

Unfortunately, this was not wholly uncommon. Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, the Mexican Jewish community lived in relative stability. The economic boom that followed World War II lasted for nearly thirty years and

continued to allow Mexican Jews to greatly prosper. However, the country began to experience economic difficulties, which affected them in numerous ways. Abductions, theft and gang-related crime became all too commonplace and no one was safe, least of all the wealthy Jews of Mexico and its environs.

The family of the girl was in a state of panic. They could not possibly come up with that absurd sum of money and the Mexican police could not be relied upon to find their daughter alone.

An uncle of the kidnapped girl was dispatched to Netivot, in southern Israel, to seek the blessing and advice of the holy Baba Sali. The man rushed to the Tzadik's home and explained what had occurred to his niece in Mexico. He informed the Baba Sali that the kidnappers had said they would not negotiate. They wanted their money or the consequences would be dire.

The Chacham (sage, wise man) sat in his chair motionless. His face was almost entirely covered by the veil he wore over it. He seemed to have immersed himself totally inward.

Suddenly, he called for a pen and paper. His attendant ran to bring the items and the Baba Sali began to talk as he traced the shape of a building on the paper. This is what he said:

"In order to rescue the girl, this is what you must do. Go to so and so (he named a specific place) and there you will find two of the kidnappers. One is short and stout like a barrel and the other is tall and thin like a tree. Bring with you twenty policemen and overwhelm the two kidnappers who are acting as lookouts.

"Then, take these two men and have them lead you to the spot where the girl is being kept. Be careful. There are another six kidnappers who are hiding out there. Let the first two open the doors and then the police can storm in and rescue the girl. Do this and you will be successful."

The uncle rushed out and relayed the information, just as the Baba Sali had drawn it up on paper. The police were informed, the raid was successful, thank G-d, and the girl was rescued. The entire plan was carried out exactly how the Baba Sali had outlined it from his home in Netivot, over 6,000 miles away!

The Baba Sali had never stepped foot in Mexico, nor, of course, had he ever seen the buildings he diagrammed or how the kidnappers looked. And yet, he could see them; he could see it all! Undoubtedly, it was the special light - the "Ohr Haganuz" (Hidden Light) - which enabled him to see from one end of the world to the other.

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# לך לך

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