

The Jewish Weekly

An Outrageous Marriage Made in Tsfat

By Rabbi Baruch Abuhatzera

During his stay in Tsfat (Safed) in 5683 (1923), my father ['Baba Sali'] made discreet inquiries about which talmidei chachamim (Torah scholars) were in need of receiving tzedakah (charity).

The Rabbis of Tsfat informed him that R. Tzion Cohen, a distinguished and elderly talmid chacham, was physically disabled and in desperate need of charity. His wife and all his children perished in the terrible famines of the First World War, leaving him to suffer his pain in utter solitude. Being that he was partially paralyzed, even the most minor chore was an excruciating task for the sick and elderly man.

My father visited Rabbi Tzion in his tiny, stale, unlit room. It measured no more than four amot by four amot [2 meters x 2 meters]. He found the elderly man lying helplessly in his bed, unable to move. Were it not for the generosity of the men and women who came regularly to feed him, his situation would have been much worse. My father gave him a substantial sum of money from his charity fund and then he prepared to bless him with a speedy recovery, intending to take his leave immediately afterwards.

But the sick man suddenly turned to my father and pleaded with him: "Rebbe! Give me a perfect blessing!"

My father, surprised by such a request, asked him, "What blessing do you want me to give you, Grandfather?"

He answered, "Give me a blessing that I should merit to heal from my illness that I should marry and bear children, in order that I may leave offspring in my memory."

My father was astounded by the sick man's request. How could he pray to G-d that an invalid man in his seventies should marry and bear children? This request was beyond the ways of nature.

R. Tzion discerned my father's astonishment, and with confidence he encouraged him. "Rebbe, I have absolute faith that if you will bless me as I have requested of you, my wishes will be fulfilled."

Still, my father was uncertain. "Do you really have total faith?"

"Yes!" the sick man answered. "Otherwise I would not ask this of you."

At last, his perfect faith succeeded in inducing my father to give him the blessing he so strongly requested.

* * *

Ten years later, in the year 5693 (1932), my father once again visited Eretz Yisrael. When he arrived in Tsfat, he suddenly remembered the sickly Rabbi Tzion Cohen and the blessing he had given him.

When he made inquiries about R. Tzion's state, one of the prominent rabbis of Tsfat led him to a fine house. There, to my father's amazement, was none other than R. Tzion, sitting on the porch on an elegant couch, dressed in the finest clothes. At his feet played two youngsters.

After having refreshments brought in, R. Tzion invited my mystified father to listen to his miraculous tale.

"You see, Your Holiness, a wealthy widow from South America arrived in Tsfat with her seventeen-year-old daughter. Upon asking the rabbis of Tsfat to whom she should give charity, she was directed to my poor home.

"When she saw my awful state, this saintly woman became extremely distressed, and she took pity on me. She ordered her servants to remove all the furniture from my tiny room at once, to paint the walls, and to purchase a new bed and linen. As well as covering all the costs, she personally supervised that her orders were executed precisely according to instructions.

'But this was not the end of the miracle.

"The holy woman decided not to return to South America, but instead, to remain at my side and to take care of me. An interpreter informed me of her decision, and I protested strongly.

"G-d forbid! I will not remain in seclusion with a woman and thereby violate the prohibition of yichud ('aloneness': remaining in seclusion with any woman other than one's wife [or mother or grandmother or sister]).

"The interpreter relayed my refusal to her, but the determined woman asked, 'What can I do so that I will be permitted to stay by your side?'

"The bewildered interpreter answered, 'The only way is for Madam to marry R. Tzion according to Jewish law.'

It Once Happened...

"And can Your Holiness believe G-d's ways in the world - she consented to marry me immediately!

"I again protested vehemently, however, much to the surprise of the local rabbis.

"They threatened me, stating, 'If you refuse to marry this woman, we will announce a prohibition against helping you any further.'

"So, when I saw that there was absolutely no other choice, I went even further and made what must have seemed to be quite an outrageous request: 'If you really want to help me, then ask her to allow me to marry her daughter!'

"Well, when the widow was told of my latest request, she again startled us all and answered, 'The decision is not mine to make. My daughter must decide for herself.'

"At that point, the daughter was told the entire conversation as well as about Rabbi Tzion Cohen's firm belief that he would father children, and asked whether she would agree to marry an old, sick man. Of course we all assumed the bizarre tale had reached its conclusion, but her answer also astonished everyone.


"I will do whatever my mother says. If my mother agrees, then I am 100% willing to marry him. It will be a great privilege and a merit to be married to such an important Torah sage and to bear the children that he so absolutely has faith will be born.'

"And so, my dear Savior, this apartment was rented immediately, the best medical care was made available to me, and thank G-d, I have recovered from my illness. But again, that is not the end of the miracles - your blessing came to be; I have borne two sons!'


"And you know, Your Holiness, all of these blessings came to me as a consequence of my devotion to the study of Torah and my fear of Heaven, as it says, 'G-d desires the prayer of the righteous, He hears their supplications, and fulfills their words.'"

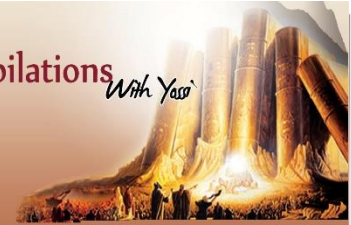
Reprinted from an email of "Our Master, Our Teacher. The holy Baba Sali"

Editor's Note: Rabbi Yisrael Abuhatzera, the Baba Sali ז"ל's 40th Yahrzeit was Sunday, 4th Shevat - January 14th of this year



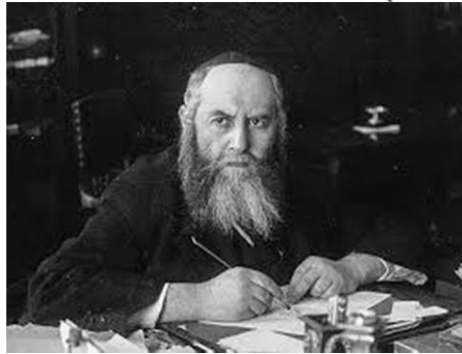
Shabbat Times - Parshat Bo

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
 Jerusalem	4:25	5:41	6:19
Tel Aviv	4:40	5:42	6:15
Haifa	4:29	5:40	6:16
Be'er Sheva	4:44	5:44	6:20



The Panicked Nurse

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles



Rebbe Rayatz, Rabbi Yosef-Yitzchak Schneerson

In 1947, only a few years before Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson (the “Rayatz”), sixth Rebbe in the Lubavitch Chabad dynasty, passed away, his son-in-law and eventual successor, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, traveled to Paris. His mother had made it out of communist Russia. The Rebbe, who had escaped from Europe to the United States in 1941, arrived in Paris to greet his mother whom he had not seen for more than 15 years and escort her back to the United States.

In Paris, he met a group of Lubavitch chassidim who had survived the Holocaust and very much wanted to immigrate to the United States but could not get visas. They asked him that upon his return he tell the Rebbe Rayatz of their plight and ask him to awaken compassion and mercy upon them from Heaven. The Lubavitcher Rebbe explained to them that they must be a little naïve to think that the Rebbe Rayatz needs to be directly informed in order to be made aware of their problems. In order to make his point he told them the following story.

At the time, the Rebbe Rayatz was ill and required a certain injection of drugs every day. A private nurse would come to his study at 770 at a set time to administer the injection. One day the nurse was a few minutes late. When she knocked on the door of his study there was no answer. Usually, there were rabbis from the Rebbe Rayatz’s secretariat around, but this time there was no one there. So she slowly opened the door to his study. When she walked in she saw him sitting at his desk, his eyes gazing off into the distance, obviously unaware that she had entered. He had the look of someone who was not in this world altogether. She had never seen anything like this and was certain that something had happened to him, perhaps he had even lost consciousness.

She ran out looking for someone from the family or the staff. She encountered the “Ramash” (as the Rebbe-to-be was known in those days), who quickly came into the room and approached near to his father-in-law’s mouth to hear what he was mumbling. He heard that the Rebbe Rayatz was reciting by heart and with the Torah melody the words of the “Song of the Sea”, Az Yashir. It was as if the Rebbe Rayatz was praying. So, immediately he realized that the Rayatz was in a state of communion (with G-d) and not that he was sick. This state is known as disembodiment and the person seems to have lost touch with

reality (the truth is very much the opposite, as we will see in a moment). Indeed, after a few minutes the Rebbe Rayatz seemed to snap out of it.

But, the Lubavitcher Rebbe sensed that there was a reason for all this. He decided to do some research and learnt that during those very moments that the Rebbe Rayatz was in a state of communion and disembodiment, thousands of miles away, a small group of chassidim had tried to illegally make it across the Russian-Polish border. If they had been caught, they would have been summarily executed. During those critical moments, the Rebbe Rayatz had awakened the mercy of Heaven that they be successful.

So, the Rebbe-to-be told the chassidim in Paris that after this story they should understand that the Rebbe Rayatz does not need anyone to tell him when to awaken mercy on his disciples. Every chassid is always on his mind. He sees and knows exactly what is happening with him, and continually sacrifices himself and prays for each and every one of them.

This is an important story to make us reflect that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is indeed thinking of each and every one of us, and continually awakening the mercy of Heaven upon us.

One more point that we can take with us from this story is that there is a powerful connection between saying the “Song of the Sea” and awakening mercy from Heaven. If the Lubavitcher Rebbe noted this (he could have told the story without noting what the Rebbe Rayatz had been saying during his disembodiment), it means that we should be aware of this. If you think about someone who needs Heavenly mercy and recite the “Song of the Sea” with sincerity and the proper intent, you will be awakening the Heavens to be merciful with him. This is true both for an individual and for the entire Jewish people.

The “Song of the Sea” appears in Parshat Beshalach, the Torah reading of the week during which the tenth of Shevat, the Rebbe Rayatz’s yahrzeit, usually falls. So this story and its teaching are particularly suited to the tenth of Shevat.

Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.

Editor’s Note: the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson ז”ל’s 74th Yahrzeit and the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson’s inauguration 5711 (1951) is Today, 10th Shevat – January 20th of this year.

In Parshat Bo, the Torah states, “והיה לאות על-ידיכה - ולטוטפת בין עיניך” - And they shall be a sign upon your arm and frontlets between your eyes.”

Here there is a reference to the “תפילין של יד” the Tefillin which we wear on the arm and the “תפילין של ראש” and the Tefillin which we wear on our heads. But notice, with regard to the Tefillin of the arm, that what the Torah says is in the singular: והיה לאות – it shall be a sign, whereas with regard to the Tefillin of the head, it is טוטפת, in the plural. An explanation of this can be derived from the Aramaic translation of Onkelos, who translates טוטפת as Tefillin, in the plural as well.

So from here we learn that while we only have on the ‘של יד’ (the Tefillin of the arm) which we start with, that is only in the singular – it’s not the whole thing. It’s only once we have the ‘של ראש’ on (the Tefillin of the head) together with the ‘של יד’ of the arm that it is Tefillin – we have the entire set.

‘של יד’ and ‘של ראש’ are actually separate mitzvos. However the impact of them comes when both are there together.

There are two very powerful messages here for us. First of all, the ‘של יד’ (Tefillin of the arm) represents action, because the arm is the busiest, most active part of the body, whereas the Tefillin ‘של ראש’ (of the head) represents thought and intention. The message is that it’s not good enough just to think, to have intentions. We need to implement our intentions so that they can be realized through our actions.

Secondly, the Tefillin של יד faces the heart which is the seat of emotion whereas the Tefillin של ראש is upon our heads which is the seat of logic. The message here is that we shouldn’t only be cerebral beings; we need to also be feeling beings. We need to connect emotionally with others with love and affection, and also we need to recognize that we can’t allow our emotions to run away with themselves. We need to apply logic and reason and sometimes our minds need to put the brakes on our hearts.

So on a daily basis, therefore, Tefillin are so relevant for us. They remind us to always translate our good intentions into meaningful action, and also to guarantee that we have the highest quality of mind power and also emotional capacity in everything that we do. So let’s join together to 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.

בא
טולטל

This week is sponsored
In memory of the
previous Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson ז”ל
Who’s Yahrzeit is today

י' שבט

The Jewish Weekly's
PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 20
MITZVOT ASEH: 9
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 11

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 105
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1655
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 6149

HAFTORA: Yirmiyahu 46:13-28

Yossi