

The Rebbetzin: Three Stories

By Mrs. Henya Laine

R' Chessed Halberstam, who served as helper to the Lubavitcher Rebbe and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, ate at our home one Shabbat.

I told him he has to pay for the meal by telling me stories of the Rebbetzin that nobody heard.

Here is the story he told.

One Friday, the Rebbetzin tripped on the stairs and bruised her foot badly. The doctor said that the best thing would be for her to stay off her foot.

The Rebbetzin asked Chessed not to burden the Rebbe with the news.

As soon as the Rebbetzin was comfortably resting in bed, Chessed ran to 770, knocked on the door of the Rebbe's room (he had permission to go in anytime) and told the Rebbe all that transpired, including the request of the Rebbetzin.

The Rebbe smiled and thanked him.

When the Rebbe came home Friday night, the Rebbetzin was sitting at the dining room table and apologized for not getting up, saying that because she was hungry, she had asked Chessed to make Kiddush for her.

The Rebbe played along and made Kiddush without comment. Then the Rebbetzin told the Rebbe she already washed for Hamotzi and ate a piece of Challa.

Again the Rebbe said nothing.

When the Rebbe arrived, Chessed had already had the fish on the table, so they both ate together. But then came the test. It was time for the soup, and the Rebbetzin always served the Rebbe. Since she could not walk, due to the pain, how could she serve it?

Before anyone could say anything, the Rebbe started to sing "Azamer Bishvochim," which is the Chabad custom to sing at the Shabbat meal, in the Yom Kippur niggun, and the Rebbe went into a devaikut (spiritual trance).

While the Rebbe was singing, the Rebbetzin called to Chessed, who always sat in the kitchen while they were eating waiting for instructions, and told him to quickly bring the soup, chicken and dessert.

As soon as all the food was out on the table, the Rebbe finished the Niggun, and they both ate the Shabbat meal together.

After the Rebbetzin's passing, Mrs. Edith Block told the following story at her Friday night Oneg Shabbat.

Mrs. Edith Block and her husband, obm were in Florida at a hotel on vacation. Friday night at the meal, a Chassidic woman sitting at her table, said to her: "You look like a Lubavitcher, I am very sorry about the passing of Rebbetzin Schneerson. I have something to tell you about your Rebbetzin."

This is the story she told.

"We were Bobover Chasidim, and Holocaust survivors. We were all young and a group of us just couldn't have children. Since we were the only survivors of our large families, we went to the Bobover Rebbe for blessings, but to no avail.

"One of the young women decided to go to the Lubavitcher Rebbe for a blessing because she heard he was a 'Baal Mofais' – a holy individual who has brought about miracles from G-d. About 10 of us women decided to join her.

"We knew that the Rebbe lived on President Street, which at the time was right next door to the Bobover Rebbe.

"As we came to 1304 President Street, we got cold feet and couldn't decide who should be the one to knock on the Rebbe's door.

"We were standing on the sidewalk talking about it, when a car pulled out of the driveway. The woman driver walked out of the car and asked us what she could do for us. We stumbled over our words, but finally we told her about our predicament.

The woman took out a pad and pen from her purse and asked us for our names. She then proceeded to give us the name of a fertility doctor in Manhattan and told us to call him in a few days."

This Chassidic woman continued and said, "I don't know what happened to all the other women. We all went our own ways. This is what happened to me.

"I called the doctor's office and the person at the other end told me that she could make me an appointment with this very busy doctor in a year. I started to cry and the person on the other end asked me to repeat my name. She then told me to wait. A few minutes later she came back to the phone, and told me that they actually have an appointment for me already reserved for the following week.

"Through that doctor," she continued, "G-d blessed me with a daughter. And that daughter has given me 10 grandchildren!"

"Later, I found out that the person who made the appointments for us was none other than the Rebbetzin herself."

Years ago, an Orthodox Jewish man had arrived in Paris, and needed to buy Kosher food. He had no idea where to begin looking for a kosher restaurant or store.

He was sitting on the Metro bench in the Paris subway, looking at passersby, trying to see who looked Jewish enough to ask this question.

It Once Happened...

Suddenly, he saw a Jew with a hat and a suit walk briskly out of the Metro door. This man ran after him calling, "Excuse me Rabbi, where is there a Kosher place to eat? I am starving."

The Rebbe stopped abruptly and told this Jew, "Come I'll show you a place."

The Jew followed the Rebbe back into the subway. They traveled a few stops, got out and walked into a building.

The Rebbe opened the door and announced to his wife in Yiddish, "Mir hoben a gast – we have a guest."

The Rebbe and the man walked into the tiny, immaculate dining room and sat down.

There were three settings on the table: set in real cutlery, china, and glassware with cloth napkin.

The man said he was in awe of the cleanliness in the tiny Paris apartment, and the regal way the table was set.

The wife brought in fruit as an appetizer, then fish with some vegetables and fruit as a dessert. The Jew was a little surprised that there was no Hamotzi or Mezonot, but did not say anything.

After Birchat Hamazon, the Rebbe apologized for not serving bread or cake. The Rebbe told him that he went to check out the bakeries and was not satisfied with the flour used in baking these foods. Therefore, his wife didn't buy flour at all, even to bake herself.

The Jew thanked them for literally saving his life, and left.

Many years later, this Jew was living in New York, and he chanced to see a photo of the Rebbe in the Jewish newspaper.


He was so upset realizing that the couple who served him was none other than the Lubavitcher Rebbe and Rebbetzin.

He was devastated, so he traveled to 770 to ask forgiveness from the Rebbe. When he saw the Rebbe, he burst out crying asking for forgiveness.


The Rebbe recognized him and said, "I have to thank you for giving me the opportunity to do the Mitzvah of Hachnasat Orchim."

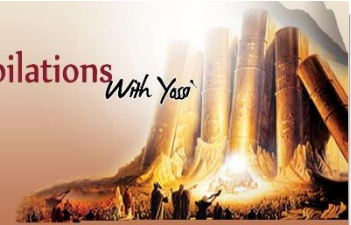
Reprinted from collive.com.

Editor's Note: Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson's 36th Yahrzeit was Thursday, 22nd Shevat – February 1st of this year.



Shabbat Times – Parshat Yitro

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
 Jerusalem	4:38	5:53	6:32
Tel Aviv	4:53	5:54	6:28
Haifa	4:42	5:52	6:29
Be'er Sheva	4:56	5:56	6:32



His Cheilik (Primary Self) By Shmuel Botnick

Rav Nota Greenblatt was in Palo Alto, California, where he had spent the bulk of the day writing quite a number of Gittin (Jewish divorces); those in the field can describe just how exhausting an experience that is. Upon completion of the last Get of the day, Rav Nota paid a visit to the Palo Alto Kollel.

There, he delivered an impromptu shiur with his classic brilliance, a whirlwind of Rambams and Raavads spinning like leaves on a windy autumn day. When the last of his questions was answered and the crowd dispersed, Rabbi Yitzchak Feldman, rabbi of Congregation Emek Beracha of Palo Alto, presented a question of his own.

"How is it," he asked, "that the rav is able to spend hour after hour writing Gittin and then immediately deliver such an incredible shiur?"

Here was Rav Nota's response: "In the Amidah on Shabbat and Chag we say, V'tein chelkeinu b'toratecha,' a request that Hashem grant us our cheilek (portion) in Torah."

Rav Nota paused. "What does it mean when we request our 'cheilek' in Torah?" he asked rhetorically. Rabbi Feldman was silent. "When we daven for our 'cheilek,'" Rav Nota explained, "it means our 'primary self.' Meaning, we ask Hashem that, no matter what it is that we do, the Torah should be our true portion, it should be our foremost identity."

Rav Nota completed this thought and then looked Rabbi Feldman in the eye. "My cheilek," he said, "is in Torah." It was a five-word explanation for a ninety-year phenomenon. No matter how weary, how traveled, or how busy Rav Nota was, he continued to learn. Torah was his cheilek.

No story demonstrates this as cogently as the following. Rav Nota once walked into the Phoenix Kollel's Beit Midrash while they were in the middle of second seder. The kollel was learning Beheimah HaMakshah - the fourth chapter of Masechet Chullin and they were in the heart of the difficult subject of ben pakuah. Rav Nota paused for a moment and listened.

He then produced his cellphone and placed a call. "Mrs. Goldstein," he said, "this is Rabbi Greenblatt. I want to ask you a favor. Something urgent has come up. Can we postpone our appointment for two or three hours?" Rav Nota listened for a moment, nodded, smiled, said, "Thank you, Mrs. Goldstein," and then rammmed his phone back into his pocket.

He then sprang into action. "Ich daft dus lernen, I must learn this!" he cried. "Siz shoyn asach tzeit vuhs ich hub dus nisht geleernt! I have not learned this part in a long time!"

He sat down. "Bring a Gemara, please," he requested, and a Gemara was quickly handed to him. "I'm not going to bother you," he called out to the students of the kollel. "I'm going to keep quiet." He opened the Gemara and began to learn softly. But after a few minutes, he couldn't contain himself. He began to talk, slowly at first, and then picking up speed and animation.

The students huddled around him as Rav Nota launched into a shiur that lasted for three hours, churning out sources and his own novel ideas as if he had spent weeks in preparation. The shiur ended and all present headed home, not quite believing what they had just witnessed. And Rav Nota? He headed to his appointment, ever grateful to Mrs. Goldstein for her gracious patience.

Torah was his cheilek, but, in a conversation with a young Memphian, Rav Nota revealed yet another perspective.

Josh Feingold was walking down Memphis's Cole Road when he presented his rabbi with a question. "When the needs of the community are so great," he asked, "how does one prioritize the study of Torah?"

Rav Nota paused. "Torah," he then said, "is a keter (crown)."

They walked in silence and Josh, not fully understanding Rav Nota's answer, tried again. Rewording the question slightly, he repeated it. "How does one prioritize limud haTorah when there is so much to do for the community?"

"Torah," Rav Nota repeated, "is a keter." And then Rav Nota repeated it once again. "Torah is a keter." It was a cryptic sentence, but the message was clear. When you recognize the primacy of Torah study, nothing can diminish its importance.

Reprinted from an email from At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table.



Two very different reasons are given for keeping Shabbat. In Parshat Yitro, in the Ten Commandments, the fourth commandment is to keep Shabbat. And a reason is given: "כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים ואת הארץ - For Hashem created the world in six days and then He rested on the seventh day."

Through keeping Shabbat we therefore have a 'זכר למעשה ה' בראשית' - an ongoing reminder of Hashem's act of Creation.

But then in Parshat Va'etchanan, there is a second version of the Ten Commandments, and here a different reason is given for keeping Shabbat: "וזכרת כי עבד היית במצרים - You should keep Shabbat to 'remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt,' and Hashem saved you therefrom. Here we have a second reason for keeping Shabbat: 'זכר ליציאת מצרים' - to remember the Exodus from Egypt.

Both reasons are crucial.

When it comes to our appreciation of the presence of Hashem in the universe, there are two ways in which we can approach this. First of all, "כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים ואת הארץ - Hashem created the heavens and the earth in six days. All we need to do is to look to the heavens and throughout the world. The vastness of this universe! It had to have had a Creator!

In addition, from the second version of the Ten Commandments, we learn that we discover Hashem through our experiences. Just as the Bnei Yisrael could recall the way in which they felt the presence of Hashem during the Exodus, so too, throughout our lives we feel that He is there.

We therefore have a cerebral connection to Hashem but we also emotionally know that He is with us all the time.

The Torah therefore teaches us that by keeping Shabbat properly every single week, we are blessed to experience Hashem in two separate and equally crucial ways. First of all, to actually know logically that He is present in our lives and secondly, having remarkable, wonderful experiences through which we feel His presence in the world.

So let's join together to ask Him together to keep our soldiers, police and medical professionals safe, especially through these trying times by adding a special prayer 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: 17
MITZVOT ASEH: 3
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 14

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 75

Many Chumashim print the number of pesukim at the end of the Parsha. In Parshat Yitro, the number is ע"ב or 72 pesukim. The discrepancy is due to different ways of counting the Aseret HaDibrot. The Aseret HaDibrot consists of 13 pesukim. However, when they are read as Statements, rather than pesukim, there are only 10.

NUMBER OF WORDS: 1104
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 4022

HAFTORA:
Ashkenazim: Yeshaya 6:1-7:6, 9:5-6
Chabad & Sephardim: Yeshaya 6:1-13

יתרו

This week is sponsored
In memory of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe's wife,
Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
Who's Yahrzeit was
Thursday
כ"ב שבט
February 1st of this year