



In Berdichev lived a man named Hirshele who was a failure in every business enterprise he attempted.

Needless to say, he was not a happy man. His neighbors disdained him, and his wife wouldn't let him live.

On the eve of Yom Kippur, he hoped to have a small bite to eat before the fast, but with what should his wife have prepared a meal? Instead of even a meager meal, Hirshele received a tongue lashing from his frustrated wife, and set out early for the synagogue. His stomach gurgled as he trudged to the shul, where everything gleamed and shone in anticipation of the great day.

Hirshele felt even worse as he looked around at the congregants, each wearing a stark white kittel and talit. Hirshele tried not to listen to the angry growling of his poor stomach, but the harder he tried, the less success he had.

Then a thought entered poor Hirshele's head. It was certain that he wasn't going to get anything to eat, but just maybe Reb Baruch, the wealthy businessman who sat at the first row near the eastern wall, would give him a little smell of his snuff. That would, perhaps, revive his spirits enough to allow him to pray.

Hirshele cautiously approached the front of the synagogue and tapped Reb Baruch on the back: "Shalom Aleichem, Reb Baruch. Maybe I could have a little sniff of your tabak?"

Reb Baruch turned with an incredulous look on his face. Who could have the nerve to bother him now, interrupting his prayers on this holiest of nights, to ask for some snuff? When he saw it was none other than Hirshele, the pauper, he just looked at him, and with an unmistakable tone of disgust said only one word: "Now?!"

Hirshele turned stiffly and made his way back to his seat, as humiliated as he had ever been. "Humph," he thought, "I'm not even worth a sniff of tabak."

No one in the shul had witnessed the little episode, but on High, the ministering angels were in an uproar. How could the wealthy man have humiliated his poverty-stricken brother like that? It was decreed that in the upcoming year, things would be radically different. The wheel of fortune would turn and Hirshele, soon to be known as Reb Hirsh, would be on top for the first time in his life. Reb Baruch, however, would be on the bottom.

And so, right after Yom Kippur, Hirshele received an unexpected inheritance from a deceased relative, and invested in some merchandise. Hirshele made an enormous profit and reinvested it. Again, he had the wildest success, and from that time on, whatever he set his hand to was successful.

At the same time, Reb Baruch began losing money at every turn. He went to his rebbe, Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev who asked him, "Can you think of any dealings you may have had with Reb Hirsh?"

At first Reb Baruch could think of nothing, but then he remembered Yom Kippur when he refused the snuff to Hirshele.

"That must be it!" said the Berdichever. "Because of your actions, it was decreed that you would lose your money and that he would become wealthy." Reb Baruch was stricken with remorse. "How can I atone?" he cried.

Reb Levi Yitzchak just looked at him. "It won't be easy. All I can say is that when you approach Reb Hirsh and ask for a sniff of snuff and he refuses you, then you will have something to bargain with."

Many years passed and Reb Baruch was unable to extricate himself from his crushing poverty. Reb Hirsh, however, continued to prosper. He was now a respected member of the community and when his daughter reached marriageable age, she was betrothed to the son of the Rabbi of Zhitomir.

The whole town looked forward to celebrating the great event. Reb Baruch's anticipation was perhaps greater than most, for he had a plan to recoup his wealth. As the young couple stood under the wedding canopy surrounded by their happy parents,

Reb Baruch quietly came up to Reb Hirsh and said, "A sniff of tabak, Reb Hirsh?"

Without a thought, Reb Hirsh removed his gilt snuff box from his coat pocket and handed it to Reb Baruch. Reb Baruch immediately fell to the ground in a dead faint. A stir went through the crowd.

When Reb Baruch regained consciousness, Reb Hirsh asked him, "Was it something I did which caused you to faint?"

"Please come with me to some place where we can speak privately," replied Reb Baruch. The two men sat down and Reb Baruch explained everything that had transpired and related the words of Reb Levi Yitzchak. They agreed to go together to the tzadik and follow the advice he would give.

The Berdichever Rav listened to the story and turned to Reb Hirsh. "Are you willing to give a percentage of your wealth to Reb Baruch?"

Reb Hirsh decided to divide his great wealth with Reb Baruch and the two lived as close as brothers, in prosperity and health for the rest of their lives.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

We are like clay in the Creator's hand (from the Yom Kippur prayers)

Bricks of clay can build an opulent mansion or a wretched hovel; so too it is with us. The only question is the type of edifice we wish to build -- a palace to bear testimony to G-d's glory, or a destitute and poverty-stricken shack. (Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli)

For the sin that we have sinned

When confessing our sins it is customary to beat the chest just over the heart as a symbol of repentance as each transgression is enumerated. Yet logically the opposite would seem to make more sense: Should not the heart strike out at the hand that actually committed the sin? Our intention, however, is the source of all transgression -- the lusts and desires of the heart that lead to sin. (Hegyonot Shel Ami)

For the sin that we have sinned with an insincere confession (literally "a confession of the mouth")

This type of sin is one to which we have already confessed, but have only given lip service, as it states in Psalms, "For my transgression I will tell; I am worried that I not sin." Although the lips may have declared their concern, the heart does not participate... (Torat Yitzchak)

How to repent

A Jew once came to the saintly Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin and cried, "Rebbe! I am a very great sinner and I want to repent." "So why don't you repent?" the Rabbi asked him. "I don't know how," he replied. "Where did you learn how to sin?" the Rabbi asked. "First I sinned, and only afterward did I learn that it was a sin," he explained. "In that case, you already know how to proceed," the Rabbi said. "All you have to do is repent. Afterwards you'll see that you did it properly!"



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L'Chaim

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Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
(Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth" (Psalms 124:8)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

The mitzva of teshuva, returning to G-d in sincere repentance, is a commandment independent of a specific time or place. Whenever a Jew commits a sin, G-d forbid, he is immediately obligated to do teshuva. In this light, a Jew who never sins is technically exempt from the mitzva of teshuva, for he has neither misdeeds to regret nor a need to repair his relationship with G-d.

According to this simple explanation of teshuva, the comments of Maimonides concerning Yom Kippur are problematic: "Yom Kippur is a time of teshuva for all," he writes, "both for the individual and collectively...everyone is obligated to do teshuva and confess his sins on Yom Kippur."

The question raised by Maimonides' words is therefore two-fold: If a person is obligated to repent immediately after committing a sin, why repeat the process again on Yom Kippur? Furthermore, why would a Jew who never sinned need to do teshuva at all?

Yet Maimonides maintains that "everyone," without exception, is obligated in teshuva on Yom Kippur.

The answer to these questions lies in the very essence of Yom Kippur and the uniqueness of the day itself.

The teshuva one does on Yom Kippur is of a different nature than the teshuva that is required as a result of one's transgressions, and is an obligation that falls equally on every single Jew, regardless of his spiritual standing.

Throughout the year, the mitzva of teshuva is dependent on the individual's personal circumstances. If a Jew sins he must do teshuva in direct proportion to the severity of the transgression. A person who never sins is logically exempt from this obligation.

On Yom Kippur, however, the obligation to return to G-d stems from the holiness of the day itself. On Yom Kippur, it doesn't matter whether a Jew transgressed, G-d forbid. For those Jews who may have committed a sin and not properly repented during the year, Yom Kippur offers atonement simply by virtue of its holiness. At the same time, those individuals who have already corrected their behavior can reach an even higher level of teshuva on the holiest day of the year.

Maimonides explains that every Jew must confess his sins on Yom Kippur, even those for which he has already done teshuva, as it states in Psalms, "For my sin is before me always."

This obligation applies even to tzadikim (the righteous), for "there is no righteous person in the world who does only good and does not sin." Every single Jew is obligated to thoroughly scrutinize his deeds on Yom Kippur, irrespective of his current level of observance.

The uniqueness of Yom Kippur -- a "time of teshuva for all" -- lies in the special bond between the Jew and G-d that is revealed on that day, a connection that transcends the limitations of the natural world.

Integral to this special relationship with G-d is the obligation to do teshuva in an ever-increasing and ascending manner, both for those who may not yet have done teshuva in the most basic sense and those who stand on a higher spiritual plane.

With true teshuva, every Jew can renew his commitment and attachment to G-d on Yom Kippur, and be blessed with a good inscription in the Book of Life for the coming year.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot of the Rebbe, Vol. 29

Soul Communication

Two souls met each other at the half-way point between heaven and earth. One was descending into this world to be en clothed in a body. The other was ascending, having completed its mission here.

"What's it like down there?" asked the first soul warily.

"Well, for three kopecks you can buy the strings for tzitzit (the fringes on a four-cornered gar-ment)," replied the ascending soul.

"Wow, imagine that!" exclaimed the first soul, awed at the relatively inexpensive price of acquiring mitzvot. The soul began plummeting even more quickly, without fear or hesitation.

"Don't be so eager," the second soul called out after it. "Just wait until you see how hard you have to work to get that money!"



Thank G-d, it's not nearly as tough as it used to be to make a living. Most of us live lifestyles that would have been considered opulent in the days when tzitzit cost three kopecks. What our great-grandparents considered luxuries are today's necessities.

Most of us needn't be workaholics to have money to spend on mitzvot. Loose change can be dropped into a tzedaka box. A couple dollars can buy a box of Shabbat candles. For a few more dollars you can purchase a decent bottle of kosher wine over which to recite the "kiddush" on Shabbat. Fifty dollars will get you a kosher mezuzah parchment. (To put things in perspective, a monthly subscription to a music streaming service will set you back at least \$12.95 a month and for a ball game you have to shell out almost \$60.)

Unlike our great-grandparents,

most of us can hardly claim that doing mitzvot will take food out of our mouths. These amounts of money are not an issue.

What our great-grandparents lacked in money, they made up for in unwavering commitment, enthusiasm and faith. They also inscribed in their minds and on their hearts the words contained in the first ruling of the Code of Jewish Law: Do not be embarrassed by scoffers. They weren't concerned with what the neighbors would say. For all these reasons and more, even when they really didn't have the three kopecks, they somehow found the money rather than neglect the opportunity to perform a mitzva.

If those two souls were to encounter each other in our times, the soul returning from its sojourn on earth would not comment on how hard it is to earn money to do mitzvot. Perhaps the conversation would go something like this:

"What's it like down there?" asks the first soul warily.

"Well, for only \$30 you can buy a nice bottle of kosher wine to use for kiddush on Shabbat," replies the ascending soul.

"Wow, imagine that!" exclaims the first soul, awed at the relatively inexpensive price of acquiring mitzvot. The soul begins plummeting even more quickly, without fear or hesitation.

"Don't be so eager," the second soul calls after it. "Just wait until you see how hard it is to convince your body that it's important to make kiddush on Shabbat let alone break your teeth on the Hebrew!"

Do a mitzva. Your soul will surely appreciate it, and so will you! You'll both be glad you did.

SLICE OF LIFE

Rebbetzin Chana First-Person Encounters



Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson obm

In honor of Yov Tishrei, the yahrzeit-hilula of the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson obm, we are pleased to offer some personal stories which give us a small glimpse into the remarkable life and personality of Rebbetzin Chana. May she be an inspiration to us all.

YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER

Rabbi Berel Junik and his family were very close with Rebbetzin Chana, a relationship that began in Russia. Rabbi Junik merited to serve in the Rebbe's household for many years.

After her illustrious husband, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok passed away, Rebbetzin Chana was living in Alma-Ata near the Raskin family who assisted her. The decision was made by the leaders of the Chassidic underground to try and help Rebbetzin Chana escape Russia and join her family in New York.

Rebbetzin Chana had to make the long convoluted trip from Alma-Ata to New York. Mrs. Sarah Katzenbogen (Kazen) escorted the Rebbetzin on one leg of the trip while in Russia, even going so far as to distract an entire train-car of people so they wouldn't think to talk to the lady in the corner. (This extra precaution needed to be taken, as bearing the name Schneerson was very dangerous in those times).

Once in Levov, the border town, the escape organizers began working on sending the Rebbetzin out of Russia. After the war, the Soviet

government agreed to allow Polish refugees to return to their homeland.

Passports at that time did not have pictures and they were not stamped with entry or exit visas. Therefore, the plan was to bring used passports back into Russia and reuse them to help train loads of Chassidim escape.

The organizers would try to match the passports with families that had similar family sizes. If the original bearer of the passport was a father with two sons, they would try to use it for an actual father with two sons whose ages matched the ones on the passport.

In other instances they would combine or separate families, based on the passports. For Rebbetzin Chana, they arranged a passport of an elderly woman with a grown son. Looking for a son they chose a young man, Berel Junik, because they felt his calm personality would be a good companion for the Rebbetzin on this journey. He and his sister, Etta Yurkowitz helped Rebbetzin Chana during the long train ride.

Because Rabbi Berel Junik came out of Russia using the passport as if he was the "son" of Rebbetzin Chana, both the Rebbe and Rebbetzin Chana referred to him as the Rebbe's "younger brother". Rebbetzin Chana once asked the Rebbe "Vos macht dyn yunger bruder - How is your younger brother doing?"

Berel's wife, Mrs. Fruma Junik also met the Rebbetzin before they lived in America. Once out of Russia, Rebbetzin Chana went to Peking, Germany and resided in a displaced persons camp.

From Peking she continued to Paris where the Rebbe came to escort her back to America.

Mrs. Fruma Junik met her there. "I used to go to a school called Schneerson's school which was like a home for children of the war. They chose me to be the spokesman for the school. I delivered a speech in front of Rebbetzin Chana and the Rebbe.

In Paris the Rebbe would meet his mother every day. He would go with her on walks, always holding the door for her as she entered and exited buildings. One could see the great honor the Rebbe had for his mother.

A MOTHER'S PRIDE

Mrs. Fradel Sudak also heard from the Rebbetzin how proud she was of the Rebbe. She first met Rebbetzin Chana as a young girl, when she came to New York from England to study.

There was a Chabad women's convention in Sivan, and the young English girl was chosen to deliver a report from London, thereby sharing the stage with Rebbetzin Chana who was sitting at the dais.

Her report was written for her by her father Rabbi Bentzion Shemtov. Included in the report were a few remarks discussing the Rebbe and the importance for Chassidim to connect to him.

After the speech, Rebbetzin Chana approached her and said how much she enjoyed the speech and how she could "hear who is speaking through your speech". Rebbetzin Chana knew Fradel's father, Reb Bentche, from her time in Paris, as he had helped her immensely during her few months stay.

Mrs. Sudak also had the merit of staying overnight with Rebbetzin Chana. There was another woman who usually stayed with her in her apartment so she wouldn't be alone. One Pesach, this woman was not available to stay with the Rebbetzin.

Reb Bentche, hearing that Rebbetzin Chana wouldn't have anyone staying with her over Yom Tov, arranged for his daughter to sleep overnight in the apartment. On both Seder nights, she picked the Rebbetzin up from 770 after the seder, walked home with her and stayed the night, leaving the next morning.

Later, she visited Rebbetzin Chana before her wedding together with her Chosson. The Sudaks got married in London and stayed on as Shluchim. When they came back to New York they made sure to visit Rebbetzin Chana, bringing their infant son Levi Yitzchak who was named after her husband. She was very happy to see that they had given him the name, and she played with the child for a while.

ROYAL VISITS

As is well known the Rebbe would visit his mother every single day. Rebbetzin Chana would prepare herself for the Rebbe's visit by dressing in her best clothing. Sometimes the Rebbe would make tea, other times they would just talk.

What is less known is that the Rebbe would visit on Friday nights and they would go out for a walk. Crown Heights at the time was full of all types of Jewish people. When they would see the Rebbe walking with his mother they would nod with saying 'there goes the Rebbe'. Some would approach the Rebbe for a blessing.

From derher.org

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

In the Days of Teshuva, 5732 (1972)

On Rosh Hashana, all Jews as one, proclaimed their acceptance of the kingship of G-d as indicated in the Torah portion read before Rosh Hashana: "You are standing firmly this day, all of you together...your heads...to the drawer of your water."

I wish to take up a point brought out by Rabbi Shneur Zalman, namely, that in certain respects the "foot" assumes the role of "head," the latter following the former.

Indeed, this occurs also in the body, where the head directs the entire body, yet the legs and feet have the special quality of moving the body, together with the head, from place to place.

This analogy applies also in the spiritual realm, where this "water-drawer" can rise to the level of "head" and serve as an inspiring example to be emulated by the "head."

For "heads," in the spiritual sense, denote intelligence, understanding and comprehension in depth, whereas the "water-drawer" refers to a person whose spiritual approach (the observance of the mitzvot) is often no more than mechanical, as also in the case of his physical counterpart, the actual water-drawer, whose job requires no thinking or special comprehension, but only faithful compliance with the task.

How is it possible, then, that the "water-drawer" should become "head," and "your heads" should follow him?

Moreover, in the category of "your water-drawer" -- in the lowest order of Jewish diversity -- there are further subdivisions, down to the inclusion of Jews who are the spiritual counterparts of the water-drawer in the plain sense, and products of similar circumstance that made him into a water-drawer: he was born with a minimum of intellectual capacity, precluding him from engaging in an intellectual occupation; he grew up in poverty, without any means for intellectual pursuits, consequently, he could do no better than become a water-drawer.

However, since his absolute ignorance and simplicity were entirely no fault of his own -- for he is a product of circumstances beyond his control -- he is included in and united with the community of Israel as part of "all of you together."

But how can also this kind of Jew rise to the level of "head," as above?

This leads to a further question:

Inasmuch as G-d has prescribed the manner of Jewish conduct in daily life, how is it altogether possible that there could be a situation wherein a Jew does not have the possibility of conducting himself, in all details of his daily life, in accordance with the will of G-d?

Yet, as we all know and see, in certain parts of the world, there is such a situation where Jews -- with all their desire and even self-sacrifice -- are actually precluded from adhering in every detail to the Will of G-d, because of circumstances beyond their control.

To cite a well-known analogy:

Self-sacrifice can spur a person to jump from the roof, but it cannot make him leap from the ground to the roof.

The answers, briefly, are as follow:

To be sure, the essential thing is the actual deed.

On the other hand, feeling and devotion are also of supreme importance.

Thus, when a situation sometimes arises wherein a Jew finds it impossible, even with self-sacrifice, to carry out a Divine commandment in actual deed, it evokes in him a distress and anguish at being unable to perform the particular mitzva: a true and profound anguish that pervades him through and through to the core of his soul.

This brings him to such a close attachment to G-d and to Torah and mitzvot and Judaism in general, the like of which he could not have attained without the said distressing experience.

In such a case, not only is he deemed quite guiltless for not having actually fulfilled the mitzva -- since he had no possibility of doing it -- but he is rewarded for his intense desire to fulfill it.

What is even more important, his soul henceforth gains a profundity and completeness to which he might possibly never have otherwise reached.

Also, in regard to actual performance, it becomes evident that when G-d eventually takes him out of that situation and places him in circumstances in which he is able to carry out the mitzva or mitzvot which he was previously unable to fulfill, he now carries them out with a depth, enthusiasm and sincerity which he had not had before.

Thus, the "water-drawer" becomes a "head" in the performance of mitzvot to perfection with all his heart and soul, so that those who had not been through this crucible of pain can emulate him and be inspired by him.

A word of precaution must here be inserted, which is of extreme importance:

The Yetzer-hara [Evil impulse] is an expert in his trade, an extraordinary specialist, particularly when he injects a most effective "bribe" -- the person's natural self-love.

One of the accuser's tricks is to delude a person into thinking that he is unavoidably prevented from performing a mitzva, bolstering this delusion by various arguments and "proofs," giving no respite.

And since a person tends to be partial to himself, and it is very difficult to be objective in a matter concerning his own self, a person must be always aware that what seems to him a case of being a victim of circumstances, is not necessarily so in actual fact.

Therefore, in order to clarify his true position, he must turn to a person who is beyond such bribery and corruption, not corrupted also by a desire to be popular, but one who is permeated by the spirit of the Torah of Truth and truth brooks no compromise.

For only such a person can evaluate the situation and determine whether it is indeed a case of unavoidable constraint, or delusions stemming from the Yetzer-hara....

from our exile; reveal the end of exile when You will acquire us again; come swiftly to have mercy upon us; proclaim that we are Your chosen people and we will acknowledge You as our G-d.

(From the Yom Kippur prayers)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

In Memory of Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman, Director of the Lubavitch Youth Organization and Founder of the L'Chaim Publication.

From the Archives

We are currently in the days known as the Ten Days of Repentance from Rosh Hashana up to and including Yom Kippur. In the midst of these awesome days we observe the yahrzeit of Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, mother of the Rebbe.

In a talk following his mother's yahrzeit, the Rebbe noted that all women named Chana share a connection to the first Chana. The Biblical Chana was a prophetess and the mother of one of our greatest prophets, Shmuel. A scene from her life, and her prayer -- the intertwined request for a child and the Messianic Era -- are the Haftarah reading on the first day of Rosh Hashana.

Two stories recounted by the Rebbe at gatherings in honor of his mother's yahrzeit illustrate a fundamental concept.

The first anecdote took place when the Rebbe's father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, was in exile. Rebbetzin Chana ingeniously managed to produce different color inks from wild plants for Rabbi Levi Yitzchak to use in writing his Torah innovations, as he was not even afforded ink with which to write.

The second incident related by the Rebbe took place after Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's passing. Rebbetzin Chana miraculously succeeded in smuggling Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's writings out of Communist Russia.

The Rebbe explained that these two incidents teach us that when, by Divine Providence, a mission is given to an individual -- even if that mission seems utterly futile or impossible -- one's efforts will ultimately be crowned with success.

Though one must work within the confines of nature, one must not be constricted by nature, for it is the infinite and supranatural G-d who has presented one with this mission.

As our Divinely appointed mission in these last moments of exile is to hasten the Redemption's arrival and prepare ourselves for the long-awaited Messianic Era, we can look to the prophetess Chana and her namesake, the Rebbetzin Chana, for inspiration.

And, as the Rebbe concluded a letter written on Rebbetzin Chana's yahrzeit: "May G-d grant that everyone actively strive for the above, in accordance with the prayer of the prophetess Chana:

'My heart rejoices in G-d, my strength is uplifted through G-d... I rejoice in His help... and He will raise the horn of His Anointed one (Moshiach)'

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה'י מושקא

The name of our publication has special meaning.

It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.



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Chairman Editorial Comm.
Rebbe photo

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Singapore Kinus Celebrates 40 Years of Chabad in Asia



From Hong Kong to Hanoi, a region once devoid of Jewish infrastructure is now dotted with thriving centers, schools, and communities. For two days, Singapore's Jewish community became a nerve center for Jewish life across Asia, as over 70 Chabad Lubavitch emissaries from 15 countries gathered for the regional Kinus Hashluchim.

Forty years after Rabbi Mordechai Avtzon arrived in Hong Kong as the first Chabad shliach to Asia, the region now counts 56 Chabad centers.

Veteran shluchim like Rabbi Yosef Chaim Kantor of Bangkok shared the sentiment. "The Rebbe encouraged gatherings of shluchim because they spark new ideas, fill us with renewed commitment, enthusiasm, and joy" he said. "Our two days in Singapore did exactly that. The impact will be felt across Asia in the days ahead."

A CALL TO ACTION

Teshuva

Spend time during these "Ten Days of Repentance" in sincere introspection with the knowledge that "nothing stands in the way of repentance."

Our sages have taught that our transgressions are turned into merits if we repent properly.

The Rebbe adds that by beginning to fulfill a mitzva that one had previously neglected and encouraging others to do so, one can actually retroactively rectify any spiritual damage caused by one's neglect.

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Proclaim to all our love; walk in the midst of our camps; seek the redemption