**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Terumah 5772**

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**Baba Sali and the**

**Women’s Mikva**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**

After the Jews were expelled from Spain, Morocco became a great center of Jewish life. In fact until just recently it was the home of myriads of 'Tzadikim' (completely holy Jews) one of the most famous of which was Rabbi Yisroel Abuchasera. (Often nicknamed 'the Baba Sali')

Besides being fluent in all aspects of the Torah; (mystical, legal, Talmudic etc.) he, like Moses thousands of years earlier, often did open miracles in order to help others.

Here is an example.

**Regularly Traveled to Inspire Other Jewish Communities**

It was the Baba Sali's custom to regularly travel to other Jewish communities to strengthen, bless, advise and inspire them.

Once he traveled to a distant city and, as usual, when the all the Jews there heard of his arrival, they all rushed to greet him, hear him speak and bask in his presence.

He was then ceremoniously ushered to the largest synagogue in town where, after the evening prayer, he spoke words of Torah.

**Talking Both on Simple and Mystical Concepts**

He held the crowd spellbound for several hours with everything from simple and practical stories to deep and mystical concepts and when he finished the entire crowd stood on their feet beaming with joy and awe and crowded around to kiss his hand and thank him.

The head elder of the congregation was the first in line and he requested the honor and blessing of having the holy guest Tzadik spend the evening in his home.

But the Baba Sali didn't move. Rather he cleared his throat for attention and when everyone fell silent he announced; "Despite my fatigue from the journey I would like to first request that I be taken to see your Mikva."

**A Requirement for Married Women**

(Married women are required by Torah law to regularly immerse in a 'ritual pool' filled with rain water called a 'Mikva' built according to Torah standards.)

The town elders began turning colors in shame nervously clearing their throats and shooting desperate, sheepish looks at one another. Until finally one of them stepped forward, hung his head

and explained.

"Well, you see, that is…. Errrrr… rain doesn't fall very often here and, well. Well, the Mikva is empty, that is dry and…"

He felt he was melting under the stare of the Tzadik as he continued. "And it hasn't been used for, well, as long as I can remember. The women here travel to the Mikva about an hour's ride from here."

**Persists on Asking to Be Shown the Mikva**

The Baba Sali replied "Where is the Mikva?"

"But it's empty" someone else meekly protested, "and it's filthy. I mean, it hasn't been used for at least fifteen years"

But the Tzadik wanted to see the Mikva. So in ten minutes they were standing before the dilapidated Mikva building covered with dirt and surrounded by weeds.

The Baba Sali opened the door and entered and in a few moments came out, removed his fine linen outer robe rolled up his sleeves and re-entered to begin cleaning.

In just seconds all the men in the town were at work clearing the room and even the grounds outside. And after they were finished the women entered and put on the finishing touches. Five hours later, well after midnight, the place was spotless and sparking clean.

But what about the rain water?

The Baba Sali put on his coat, stood before the Mikva building, raised his hands to heaven and cried out:

"Creator of the Universe! We have done all we can. Now You do what only You can… your children need rain!!"

In just moments, as though from nowhere, the sky darkened, a cold wind blew furiously and suddenly rain began pouring in such torrents that everyone ran for cover more in fear of the awesome miracle than from the rain.

**Quickly Overflowing with Miraculous Rain Water**

In no time the Mikva was full to the brim and the rain stopped. Some of the younger men even began dancing for joy in the puddles that filled the road.

But the Tzadik didn't look happy. Exactly the opposite. He held up his hands for quiet and everyone gathered round him again.

"Empty the water from the Mikva!" He announced grimly to a shocked audience.

Someone whimpered, "But we never have rain here, and after so long… when will it rain again?!"

**Repeats Command to Empty the Water**

"Empty the water!" He repeated. I have just discovered that the rain water ran to the Mikva through metal pipes. And according to the opinion of the Bait Yehuda; the great Tzadik Rabbi Yehuda Ayish, this is not kosher."

The crowd couldn't believe their ears but with no other choice they dispersed, each one brought a bucket from his home and in no time the precious miracle Mikva was, sadly, empty again.

**Replacing the Metal Pipes**

Rav Abuchatzera then directed the men to remove the metal pipes and replace them with wood and as soon as the work was done he stood just as before, raised his hands to heaven and declared:

"Rabbi Yehuda Ayish! We have just disqualified, emptied and corrected this Mikva to comply with your interpretation of the holy Torah. Please intercede for us to the Creator of the Universe that rain should again descend for His children to do His will!"

And so it was, in just minutes the skies again darkened and torrents of rain again descended and filled the Mikva.

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel. Adapted from a story published in the January 25, 2007 edition of HaShavoa Newspaper.*

**Story #743**

**Napoleon’s Red Velvet Cloak**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[**editor@ascentofsafed.com**](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0000xZ00:001FHCiD00003bs9&count=1329932985&randid=1949832806&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=0&randid=1949832806##)

Napoleon Bonaparte and his French armies began their invasion of Russia. Napoleon had dreams of conquering the vast Russian army. On the way, he passed through the town of Lelov, where lived the renowned Rabbi Dovid of Lelov. When the monarch heard about the saintly man and his powers of prophetic vision, he decided to visit him.

Let’ see what he will tell me about whether or not I shall succeed in my campaign," he thought.

He covered up his royal garments with a soldier’ winter overcoat, and thus disguised as a plain soldier, he entered the humble abode of the Lelover rebbe.

**The Rebbe Addresses Napoleon**

What can I do for you?" asked the rebbe.

Napoleon unbuttoned his soldier's coat and revealed his kingly robe. "I am Napoleon Bonaparte," he declared. "They say that you can see into the future. What is my future? Will I succeed in conquering Russia?"

"What if my answer displeased Your Majesty. Will I be punished?" Reb Dovid first had to be reassured.

"You have my word that I shall not punish you, no matter what you say," the emperor promised.

**Tells Him that He Will**

**Suffer Total Defeat**

"Then I don't have good news. You will suffer total defeat," replied the Lelover rebbe.

The emperor's face burned red with rage. Clenching his first tightly, he hissed, "Rabbi, if you turn out to be wrong, you'll be in deep trouble."

Napoleon and his armies continued on toward the heart of Russia to the capital city of Moscow. They won one victory after another. They captured Moscow. But when they turned back toward France, they found that the Russian winter had set in.

The soldiers suffered from lack of food and from the bitter cold. Their morale was low. Now when the Russian soldiers attacked them, Napoleon's troops were too weak and dispirited to fight back. They were forced to retreat. Subsequently they were attacked by the armies of Austria and Prussia.

**Makes Special Trip to**

**Revisit the Lelover Rebbe**

Napoleon was forced to run for his life. The once glorious monarch fled from one city to the next. Soon he neared the town of Lelov. He remembered the rebbe and what he had foreseen.

"That rabbi he turned out to be a holy man after all," Napoleon mused. "I must stop by and concede to him that he had seen accurately." He found Rabbi Dovid Lelover's house.

"Rabbi," he admitted, "you were right after all. I would like to leave you my royal velvet mantle to remember me by."

Reb Dovid thanked Napoleon for his gracious gift and the monarch continued his flight.

**The Rich, Soft, Bright**

**Red Velvet Cloak**

Eventually his enemies caught him, captured him, and sent him into exile. The Lelover kept the cloak. It was a rich, soft, bright red velvet cloak altogether magnificent. Reb Dovid was not interested in beautiful garments and material possessions.

He treasured the mantle because it represented something else to him: the fact that the Gentile nations of the world and their monarchs recognize that the Jews are a G-dly nation. To him it meant that the following verse had come true: "And all the nations of the world will see that G-d's name is upon you and they shall fear you" [Deut. 28:10].

**The Cloak is Brought to Israel**

When Rabbi Dovid passed away, the mantle was inherited by his son and successor, Moshe. Rabbi Moshe Lelover took the royal mantle with him when he and his chasidim moved to Israel. There he built a synagogue and yeshiva. For the curtain on the holy ark, Reb Moshe had Napoleon's majestic cloak cut and sewn to fit on the Aron Kodesh.

Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from "Why the Baal Shem Tov Laughed" by Sterna Citron [Aronson].

Connection: Weekly Reading -- The Holy Ark and its coverings.

Biographical note: Rabbi David Biederman of Lelov (1746 - 7 Shvat 1814) was a close follower of the Seer of Lublin. He was known for his extraordinary compassion for, and inability to see faults in, his fellow Jews. His main disciple was Rabbi Yitzchak of Vorki, whose son, Yaakov David, was the first Amshinov Rebbe. Two printed collections of stories about him

are Migdal David and Kodesh Halulim.

**Son-in-Law of the “Holy Yid”**

Rabbi Moshe Biederman of Lelov [? - 13 Tevet 1851] was the son of R. David of Lelov and the son-in-law of "the Holy Yid" of Pshischah. He declined to officially succeed his father as rebbe, considering himself unworthy of the position. He moved to Israel in 1851, where he helped to strengthen the Chassidic community in Jerusalem, although he passed away soon after his arrival. He is buried on the Mount of Olives, near the prophet Zacharia.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed*

[*www.ascentofsafed.com*](http://www.ascentofsafed.com)[*ascent@ascentofsafed.com*](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0000xZ00:001FHCiD00003bs9&count=1329932985&randid=1949832806&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=0&randid=1949832806##)

**The Human Side of the Story**

**Turning Point in the Lobby**

**By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach**

It happened in the lobby of a Swiss hotel. An Israeli visitor active in charitable causes noticed a family parked on lobby sofas at a late hour of the night. Upon inquiring he learned that the father, mother and daughter had an early morning return flight to Israel. In order to save the expense of another night in their hotel room they had checked out and were spending the remaining hours till their ride to the airport parked outside the lobby.

When they refused his invitation to come to his room for some refreshments he brought some cookies and chocolates to them in the lobby. Upon his return to Israel he forgot the entire incident until some months later when he received an invitation to the daughter’s wedding referring to him as the main *mechutan* (title usually reserved for the parents of the

bride and groom).

Unaware of his connection he called for clarification. He was told that the bride had strayed from the religious lifestyle of her parents and had become engaged to marry a non-Jew. The trip to Switzerland was a desperate attempt to dissuade her but she refused to budge.

**Influenced to Return**

**To a Religious Lifestyle**

It was only on the flight back to Israel that she kept talking about how wonderful that religious Jew was to them in the hotel lobby. She was so moved by his thoughtfulness that she decided that she wanted to return to a lifestyle which had such values.

The result was that she called off the intermarriage and soon became engaged to marry a fine, religious Jew.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of OHRNET, the Ohr Somayach Torah Magazine of the Internet.*

**A Special Brocha at**

**Newark Airport**

**By Leeat Avraham**

I am graduate student and work for a non-profit Jewish educational organization. Wednesday, February 15, 2011, Chaf Bet Shvat, I left work to catch a bus service from Port Authority to Newark International Airport so that I can spend my time earlier with my family in Miami around President’s Day Weekend. After waiting a while for the bus, to my dismay, the bus was not running on time, the waiting became longer, and there was nothing anybody could do.

By the time I finally arrived at Newark International Airport, I ran as fast as I could and asked the few people waiting in line if I can go ahead so that I will not miss my flight. The lady in front of the line was reluctant, made a grimace at me, and didn’t even show any empathy.

When I finally arrived at the front desk, one of the representatives from Continental Airlines informs me that I cannot board at this time and I will miss my connecting flight from Washington, DC, to Miami. Flustered, I asked her when the next available flight will be. After finishing helping a previous customer, she began typing on her computer and at the same time speaking to customer service on the phone for what seemed like an eternity. She kept typing feverishly, checking other cities, upgrades, continental branches and partner flights, but to no avail. She told me that there are no other available flights to Miami (or even to Ft. Lauderdale), but that I could leave tomorrow or Sunday morning. However, the booking fee, changing fee, and tax fee basically equaled a round trip ticket to Israel.

**Hysterically Distraught**

Hysterical, I explained to her that I am a student. (Moreover, I wouldn’t be able to spend my only Shabbat with my family and old friends.) Seeing how distraught I was (and the fact I was getting several stares from travelers), she told me that I should go to the ticket sales department and explain my situation to them. But she tells me that I didn’t hear it from her. I said thank you and left.

While shlepping my heavy duffle bag, feeling almost helpless, I saw a crowd of chassidim in front of the ticket sales department area. As I passed, I could not help but notice a rabbi who people were trying to speak to. I quietly asked one other rabbi on the side, “Excuse me, who is that rabbi?”

“[That's] Rav Yitzchok Soloveitchik,” he said.

To be honest with you, I heard of his name before, but I didn’t really know who he is. I prodded further and asked, “Does he give brachos?”

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Rav Yitzchok Soloveitchik

The man seemed hesitant, but then he turned cautiously to another chossid, who came up to me and said, “Sure.” When the crowd became quiet and I saw Rav Soloveitchik, I said hello, told him my name and told him that I missed my flight. He smiled and said, “BARUCH HASHEM!”

One person from the crowd asked me when the next flight for me will be. I said, “There is no other flight available.” I then asked Rav Soloveitchik for a bracha and he told me, “Hashem should always be with you.” I replied, “Amein,” and left.

**A Chassid Asked for Her**

**And Her Mother’s Name**

As I walked towards the ticket sales department, one chossid walked over to me holding a cell phone to his right ear and asked me for my name, my mother’s name, and my family name. After I did so, he smiled and left with the phone still held to his ear.

Okay, I told myself. Even if all does not work out, at least I got a bracha from a great rov, at Newark International Airport, in the Continental Airlines terminal, and will not leave with nothing.

When I came to the ticket sales department, I explained my story, but the representative told me that I need to speak with the agent at the other front desk and not him. I explained my situation frantically to the agent. After hesitation, she smiled, asked me for my destination and ticket number, and began typing on her computer.

She then asked another agent at the front desk to help her. After a short time, they both handed me tickets for a flight to Washington, DC, departing at a different time and a ticket for a connecting flight to Miami - the one I was supposed to take - free of charge. I cannot begin to describe how I felt.

**As If He Knew the Entire Time**

As I walked back, the same chossid who asked me for my name stopped his conversation with someone, walked to me with a huge smile on his face, and asked if I got a flight as if he knew the whole entire time! I wanted to ask who in the world he spoke to on the phone, but decided that it would be best if I kept quiet.

I expressed my gratitude, tried to control my emotions, and walked to a different front desk to express my gratitude to the lady who suggested to me about the ticket sales. When I told her my story and showed her my tickets, she was ecstatic and took my tickets to double check if I will be on standby. As she was searching on her computer, her eyes widened. She then asked me, “How in the world did you manage to get a seat?”

An Amazing Occurrence

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“There are 5 people waiting to get a seat,” she replied, “and 6 people on standby. I guess there was an opening at the last minute.”

Before she handed me my tickets back, she looked back at them one last time to make sure her eyes were seeing correctly.

I would like to thank Hashem, Rav Soloveitchik, the kind shliach, and the crowd of chassidim who were so nice to me. If any of you who were there that day, please tell Rav Soloveitchik thank you from me!

*Reprinted from the February 17, 2012 edition of the Matzav.com website.*

**Grandpa's Bar Mitzvah**

**By Avraham Berkowitz**

What inspired my eighty-eight year old grandpa to finally celebrate his bar mitzvah

Last August, I was visiting my grandparents at their home in Los Angeles. I live in Moscow and travel often to the US, and I try to make it a priority to fly to L.A. at least once a year to visit.

Sitting in the living room with my grandparents on that summer night, I inquired about a family member who was turning thirteen and whether he will be having a Bar Mitzvah, and how I could help him celebrate one.

**Grandfather Never Had a Bar Mitzvah**

Grandma says to me, "Why are you worried about your cousin, if your own grandfather never had a Bar Mitzvah?"

"Papa, you never had a Bar Mitzvah?" I asked, not so surprised.

"No, I did not, Avraham, and it's your fault too!" Papa tells me.

Grandma and Papa lead good, ethical lives, but are not Orthodox. My mother embraced observant Judaism in her early twenties and I was raised in a home full of the spirit and way of life of Chabad chassidim.

For me and my eight siblings, our grandparents have always been a pivotal part of our family life. Despite the cultural and religious differences that divide us, we always find myriad ways to connect, as families should, with love and joy.

**Religion was a Touchy Subject**

**With My Grandparents**

The one subject that was a challenge, though, was religion. As a teen, I was tested to the core; my grandparents never wanted me to practice my faith or religion by rote or accept without questioning.

Out of respect, I never urged them to increase their observance in Judaism. They are my elders and teachers, not the other way around.

"Papa, how is it my fault?" I asked, thinking that the response was sure to be interesting.

Papa reminded me of a ride he gave me in 1997 from his home in the Hills to the Valley in Encino, to visit with Mr. Lionel S., whom I had met the previous summer on a trip to Alaska.

**Greeting Tourists Disembarking**

**From Cruise Ships Arriving in Alaska**

In July 1996, I was spending my second summer in Alaska working for my Chabad outreach mentors, Rabbi Yosef and Esther Greenberg, who serve as remarkable Chabad representatives to one of the last frontiers. I was standing on Fourth Avenue outside the Alaska Visitors Center in downtown Anchorage; I had a pair of *tefillin* and packets of information about the Chabad Jewish Center. My task that morning was to greet tourists and passengers disembarking from cruise ships who may be interested in a kosher meal or Jewish services during their stay in beautiful Alaska.

**Spotted a Tall Elderly Man and His Wife**

It was always a delight to meet tourists from all over the world who were usually very surprised, or not surprised at all, to see a young Chabad student reaching out to fellow Jews on the street side, in Anchorage no less.

Then I saw a tall, elderly man with his wife coming out of the visitor's center and heading to Fourth Ave.

I approached them with a smile and greeted them. The man looked at me sharply, and in a loud stern voice told me to keep on walking. Shaken, I said, "I apologize; I was greeting fellow Jews who have come to Alaska."

"Then go find someone else to bother," he shot back. "I want nothing to do with you!"

My head was spinning; I was hurt inside, yet knew I had done nothing disrespectful. It was obviously what I represent—being a religious Jew, wearing a beard and a kippah on my head—that upset him so.

"Sir, with all due respect," I quickened my step, stood beside him, and looked directly into his eyes. "I assume that an Orthodox Jew has done something very wrong to you and therefore you won't talk to me. Please, tell me how you have been wronged, so I, as another Orthodox Jew, will not repeat the same mistake in the future."

The man calmed down and asked me to sit down with him and his wife on a nearby bench. For the next hour, I sat enwrapped listening to Lionel S.'s story:

**Father Wanted Him to**

**Have a Bar Mitzvah**

"I was born in London in 1929. My father was a soldier in the British allied forces against the Nazis. Before my father went to the front, he begged my mother to take good care of me and make sure that I will be Bar Mitzvah. As the Germans pounded London during the blitzkrieg, my mother and I fled to Wales to escape the bombardment.

"Life was extremely difficult, we were poor and we lived from hand to mouth. My mother, however, wanted to prepare me for my Bar Mitzvah as she promised my father, so she brought me to the synagogue in Cardiff for Bar Mitzvah lessons. A few other boys were gathered there and I sat through my first class listening carefully, trying to take my mind off the war and our troubles.

**Refuses to Teach Lionel**

**Without Receiving Payment**

“When my mother came to fetch me, the Bar Mitzvah instructor told my mother that the classes would cost one pound sterling. My mother, who was penniless, begged the rabbi to forgive the costs. He responded, 'Sorry, no pound, no Bar Mitzvah!'

"My mother was humiliated. She took me by the collar and we left the synagogue. That was the last time I ever set foot into a synagogue! I never had a Bar Mitzvah and my father, who never returned from the front, never had his last wish fulfilled."

Lionel and I were crying on the bench, and I could not find words of defense for what had been done to him and his mother. I could have argued that the teacher/rabbi was feeding many children and also had to survive. He may have been using the funds for saving other displaced families... I looked at Lionel and said, "I am now a rabbinical student, and I promise you that if parents do not have the means to make a Bar Mitzvah for their son, I will always remember your story and will not charge the parents for their son's Bar Mitzvah."

**The Deep Hurt of Not**

**Having Had a Bar Mitzvah**

Lionel was satisfied with my response, but I could sense his deeper hurt, from having never celebrated his own Bar Mitzvah.

"Lionel, come let us go put on *tefillin* and have your Bar Mitzvah and fulfill your father's last wish."

And so, the short young rabbinical student and the tall, elderly, and formerly antagonistic man walked down the Anchorage street to Lionel's hotel suite where I was privileged to put *tefillin* on Lionel for the first time in his life and celebrate his Bar Mitzvah.

Lionel was thrilled and excitedly called his children in the lower forty-eight to tell them the story of his Alaskan Bar Mitzvah.

**Visits Lionel Again**

**In His L.A. Home**

A year later, I was visiting my grandparents in L.A. and I asked my grandfather to drive me over to Lionel's home so I could visit him again.

And now Papa told me that after that meeting and hearing Lionel's story of his belated Bar Mitzva, he, too, was ready to have one.

My Grandfather was reminded of his own childhood. He was born an orphan, as his father died in a Typhus epidemic in 1918 while his mother was still pregnant with him. He was raised by his hard working mother, but never had a father to take him to the synagogue to have a Bar Mitzvah.

But I had never followed through, I never made the request... And that is why it is my fault that, until today, he had never celebrated his Bar Mitzvah!

"Tomorrow morning, Papa," I promised.

"Great! I will have my Bar Mitzvah in the morning."

At 6:30 AM on Friday morning, August 10, 2007, my 88-year-old grandfather and I went to the back patio of his home, where I helped him put on my *tallit*, gently wrapped the hand *tefillin* around his arm, and placed the other one on his head. Papa made the blessings and said the Shema and then I received the most loving and long embrace from Papa, while we sang together *Siman Tov U'mazal Tov*. Grandma and Papa were both moved to tears of joy.

This was absolutely the most moving highlight of my personal and rabbinical life—to be able to come full circle with my own grandfather.

My grandfather quickly called my mother in Detroit and sent emails and follow up calls to my eight siblings living around the world. I went to Radio Shack and bought my grandfather a large screen for his computer as his Bar Mitzvah present, so he can continue to stay in touch with all of his grandchildren and his more than twenty great-grandchildren for many happy and healthy years to come.

*Reprinted from the website of Chabad.Org*

**Fake Being Happy**

**If You Must**

"Don't get so upset!" "Put a smile on your face." "Sha, sha. Don't cry. Everything will be okay."

It's hard to keep track of what the latest trend is in expressing or suppressing one's feelings or how deep one should (or must) dig in order to get to the essence of what one truly feels.

So what's a Jew to do when the Jewish month of Adar begins and we're told that the standard "Serve G-d with joy" and "It is a great mitzva to be continually joyous" is supposed to be intensified?

Fake it!

**Pretend that You are Happy**

Yes, you read correctly, pretend as if you are really happy. You'll be amazed at the results.

A Chasid wrote to the Tzemach Tzedak (the third Rebbe of Chabad) and told him that it was difficult for him to attain a level of "joy."

The Rebbe answered: "Thought, speech and actions (the three 'garments of the soul') are the three main parts of a person's behavior, and he was given control over what he thinks, speaks and does according to his desire.

"A person must guard what he thinks, thinking only thoughts that cause joy; he must keep away from speaking about matters that are sad and depressing; and he must act as if he has a full and joyous heart, to show joyous mannerisms even if that is not how he feels at the moment. Ultimately it will be this way in actuality."

In a similar vein, a Chasid came to the Alter Rebbe asking how he could help a fellow Jew who made out as if he were pious but was actually quite a sinner.

The Alter Rebbe declared: May the words of the Mishnah be fulfilled upon him!"

The Chasid was taken aback. He had hoped for some practical and pleasant advice. Not what seemed to be a curse!

**Learning from the Man Who**

**Pretends to be a Pauper**

Then the Alter Rebbe explained: "The Mishna says that a person who pretends to be a pauper but is not will ultimately become a pauper. So, too, this man who pretends to be pious but is not should ultimately become pious!"

As indicated in both of these stories, the initial step to being happy is even to go so far as to pretend we are happy even if we are not. Eventually, the play-acting will no longer be acting but actual.

This "put on a happy face" attitude encompasses our religious duties but extends to our interaction with others, as well.

**An Inward Expression**

**Of One’s Feelings**

Judaism teaches "Receive all people happily" and "Receive all people with a cheerful countenance." Receiving people happily is an inward expression of one's feelings. Even if we aren't inwardly, genuinely happy to see someone, at least we should greet them with a cheerful countenance, an external expression of joy.

"Even if your heart does not rejoice when someone visits you, pretend to be cheerful when he arrives," a great Sage once taught.

So, be happy, it's Adar. And even if you don't feel happy, fake it until you do!

*Reprinted from Issue #407 of “L’Chaim,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization that came out in Parshas Teruma 5756 (February 23, 1996)*

**It Once Happened**

**Trying to Harass**

**The Belzer Rebbe**

When the construction of the new synagogue of the Belzer Rebbe, Reb Sholom, was well underway, the local gentile landowner decided that it was not fitting for a Jewish house of worship to have such prominence. He would show the Jews just what he thought about them and their religion by building a large, imposing church directly opposite their synagogue. He had the plans drawn up and when he was sure that his building would dwarf the Jewish structure, he began construction.

**A Reference to Haman**

In case his intentions were not clear enough, he sent a message to the Rebbe: "I am the most powerful noble in Belz, comparable to Haman." To that message the Rebbe replied, "May your end be the same as his," and the construction continued on both buildings.

The conflict continued and escalated to the point that the young son of the noble accosted the Rebbe on the street and stuck a piece of pork in the tzadik's face demanding, "Eat this, Jew!" No sooner had the words left his mouth than the boy fell to the ground in a fit of uncontrollable shaking and in a matter of minutes was no longer alive. After that, the landlord was the implacable enemy of Reb Sholom.

**Trying to Put a High**

**Steeple on the Church**

As the shul neared completion, the nobleman saw that it would tower over every other structure in the vicinity. He gave orders that a high steeple be constructed on the roof of the church, and so the building "competition" continued from day to day. When Reb Sholom met the nobleman they exchanged words, and Reb Sholom replied, "With G-d's help, you will not be able to overcome me, nor will your building ever see completion."

G-d rules the world, and the word of a tzadik stands, and so, in time, it became public knowledge that the land on which the noble was spitefully constructing his church was not his. In fact, it belonged to a family of orphans who were contending in court for the property rights. The court battle raged on, but in the end, the land was put up for public sale. The nobleman was furious, and he made it known that nothing would prevent him from killing any Jew who dared to bid on the property.

Reb Sholom, however, was not deterred. He lost no time contacting a certain medical doctor in Vienna with whom he was on intimate terms. He requested that the doctor come to Belz for this special auction and purchase the land for whatever sum was necessary. And this the doctor did. Over the following few months, two handsome buildings were constructed at the behest of the Belzer Rebbe on that property.

**The Nobleman Doesn’t Give Up**

The nobleman was also undeterred, and although the original property was no longer available, he began construction anew on a different, adjoining street. Once again, the gentile nobleman and the Rebbe were at odds over their construction sites.

Now, the festival of Passover was approaching, and the nobleman saw a good opportunity to get revenge on his rival. He issued a law forbidding the baking of matza in the area of Belz, on the pretext that there was a danger of fire.

Every year, the young students of the Belzer yeshiva were sent to surrounding towns and villages to celebrate the holiday with the Chasidim there who were able to provide them with their holiday needs. This year, though, the Rebbe decided that they would remain in Belz, being confident that he would be able to provide enough matzas for all.

**Going for a Horse Ride on a Fine Spring Day**

Early one fine spring day, the nobleman decided to take his favorite horse out for a brisk trot. Suddenly the trail seemed too narrow and another rider appeared before him -- it was the count of another neighboring town, someone he had never held in much regard.

"Move aside!" he ordered. But the other nobleman took great offense.

"I will not move aside, Sir," he bellowed. An argument quickly flared up and within minutes the landowner from Belz was dead.

That Passover the Rebbe celebrated together with all the Jews of Belz and all the students of the yeshiva -- there was matza for all, and they weren't bothered by the arrogant, wicked landlord.

*Reprinted from Issue #407 of “L’Chaim,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization that came out in Parshas Teruma 5756 (February 23, 1996)*

**Good Shabbos Everyone.**

**Parroting**

This week we will read an incredible story of how a parrot brought a Jew and his family under the wings of the Shechina - Hashem's holy presence.

Yossi Wallis is one of the founders of the famous organization [Arachim](http://www.arachimusa.org/Index.asp?CategoryID=86&ArticleID=90), which has worked to bring thousands of Israelis and Jews around the world back to Judaism. Yossi happens to be found of parrots. In fact, the Wallises had for many years a parrot in their house. The parrot was very smart and learned several expressions in Hebrew, which of course is the language spoken in the Wallis household.

**Mistakenly Sprayed Water on the Parrot**

One day, a member of the Wallis family mistakenly sprayed water on the parrot. Now, at the time, the parrot was not in his cage, as his wings were clipped and it was considered safe to let him roam around the house. In any case, by this time, unbeknownst to the Wallises, the parrot's wings had ground back considerably. To make a short story long, the parrot was spooked by the spraying of the water and he flew out of an open window.

Yossi was obviously extremely distraught at this mishap and he and other members of the family went outside immediately to search for the lost parrot. Unfortunately, even after looking high and low, they could not find the parrot.

**Mother Hears Her Son’s Voice**

**Emanating from a Tree**

Soon after, Yossi's mother called him to tell him that she thought that she was hallucinating, because she thought she heard Yossi's voice emanating from a tree next to her house. Thankfully, she was not hallucinating; it was Yossi's parrot in a tree. The parrot had learned to parrot Yossi's voice and was doing so quite nicely outside of Yossi's mother's house.

Yossi rushed over to his mother's house but to no avail; the wayward parrot had escaped once again. Yossi and his family did not give up. They posted signs in the adjoining neighborhoods and even put ads in the newspaper. But... there was not a hide nor hair nor feather of the parrot. The Wallises sorely missed their parrot and, seeking a replacement, they bought a new one.

Fast forward six months... One day, someone in the Arachim office told Yossi about a "fresh" Baal Teshuvah (returnee to Judaism) who had a fondness for parrots. Being that Yossi was a parrot aficionado, the staff though it was a good idea for Yossi to contact the man to discuss parrots (and Torah).

Soon after Yossi found himself driving from Jerusalem to Bnai Brak on his way to bring his son to a shidduch (a formal introduction). Suddenly, Yossi's cellphone range and it was "Moshe" (not his real name), the Baal Teshuvah who was interested in parrots.

**Moshe Tells How the Parrot**

**Made Him a Baal Teshuvah**

Yossi and Moshe got to talking and Moshe began to tell his amazing story of how a parrot made him a Baal Teshuvah. One Shabbos afternoon, Moshe, who was not observant at the time, was playing soccer on a field with a bunch of his friends. Suddenly, they noticed a parrot nearby. The parrot appeared to be sickly. Moshe had pity on the bird and brought it home, intending to nurse it back to health.

As soon as he brought the parrot into his apartment, the bird said "Yom Ha'Shishi.." (the opening words of kiddish said on Friday nights). Then the bird said "Boruch Hashem." Moshe and his family were shocked. They had never heard a bird speak so much, let alone say such things. Moshe got to thinking. "If a bird can sing Hashem's praises, why can't I?" Little by little he began to investigate Judaism and soon after, he and his family became fully observant!

**Parrot is Reunited with Yossi**

Yossi listened to the story. He mentioned some identifying characteristics of the parrot and Moshe confirmed that it was his bird. Yossi immediately diverted his car to drive straight to Moshe's house. Yossi positively identified the parrot and it was returned to its rightful owner. (Heard from Reb Label Lam, who heard it from Yossi Wallis himself.)

Hashem commands us this week saying "Make for Me a sanctuary and I will dwell among them." (Shemos 25:8) The commentator Ohr HaChayim points out that the verse states "Make for Me a sanctuary and I will dwell among them" It would seem to make more sense if the Torah had said "Make for Me a sanctuary and I will dwell in *it*" Explains the Ohr HaChayim, when the verse says "them" it is referring to the Bnai Yisroel. Hashem feels at home where there is holiness.

The Medrash says the following about the verse "...I will dwell among them" "If they (the Jewish People) will do My will, my Shechina - holy presence will never leave them." (Tanchuma parshas Bechukosai 3)

If a Jew opens up his soul just a little for Hashem, then Hashem will shower him with an infinite amount of goodness and he will merit to have the Shechina - Hashem's holy presence, rest upon him.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of Good Shabbos Everyone.*

**A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt”l**

**Start Being Joyful at**

**The Beginning of Adar**

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| **QUESTION:** |

When [the Hebrew month of] Adar comes in we are told to increase our joy. Why is that?

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| --- |
| **ANSWER:** |

|  |
| --- |
| Happines |

Because it's a season that requires a certain frame of mind. Purim requires joy, Pesach requires joy. In order, however, to be prepared, you must start at the beginning of Adar.

You can't be glum and sad, and suddenly when Purim comes, you jump up and down and you celebrate. No! You're doing it with a heavy heart.

**Look for Ways of**

**Generating Happiness**

When Adar comes in you begin looking for ways and means of generating happiness, and you look at the world. The world is full of happiness. The sunshine causes happiness. The fact that you're able to see. One of the greatest pleasures in the world is the ability to see. It's **fun** to see. You have two movie cameras taking pictures constantly wherever you look, color pictures. Isn't it fun to see? Oh, close your eyes, [and you prerceive] a dark sad world. Open your eyes. Oh!! Moving pictures! And they function in synchronization, together.

And the pictures are recorded in your mind. You know the pictures that you are taking right now will never be forgotten? I could prove to you that the pictures are recorded forever in your mind. Forty years later somebody will say, “You remember sitting in Rabbi Miller's shul years ago? He was talking about the wonders of creation.”

“Oh yes I remember now,” and the pictures suddenly flashes out from the filing cabinets of your mind and you see everything once more.

Where was the picture for forty years? It was there, because the pictures you are taking are never erased from your mind. You might forget, because it goes back in the depths of the cabinets, but the pictures are there. Someday you might take them out and see them again, and reminisce about your youth. You remember even the voices; that's because you have a sound recording in your head.

**Realize that it’s Fun to Live**

So you start in the beginning of Adar, piling up Simcha. It's **fun** to see, (Rabbi Miller took a big breath) it's **fun** to breathe. Rabosai, let's all practice the Simcha of filling our lungs with this wonderful air in this little place here. (And everyone in the audience took a deep breath) AHH, that's joy. It's **fun** to be alive! Baruch Hashem, it's **fun** to live. It's **fun** as the heart causes the blood to course through your vessels; it's **fun**. Everything in life is **fun**. How silly people are! You know when they realize life is **fun**? When they are on the verge of dying. Oh, oh, oh, it's all over. Now is the time, enjoy life right now.

It's **fun** everywhere. When you sit down tomorrow morning at breakfast, it's **fun** to use those teeth to chew food, teeth are **fun**. False teeth are also **fun**. Life is **fun**, life is happiness, and we thank Hakdosh Baruch Hu for it.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of “A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt”l” that is transcribed from questions posed to Rabbi Miller by the audience attending his classic Thursday night lectures at the Bais Yisroel Torah Center in Flatbush, Brooklyn. To listen to an audio of this Q & A please dial (201) 676-3210.*