

Living Jewish

חב"ד
כל הלב לכל אחד
צעירי אגודת חב"ד

Tell your Children

Claude Knew the Truth

About three years ago I walked into the Tchekenov shul in Ramot after work one evening to study with my chavrusa. I found him learning with a young man who I had never met before. I was somewhat taken aback when I first set eyes on Eliezer. Dressed like any other hareidi young man, he stood out from the crowd for he had just arrived from the West African country of Ghana.

Eliezer was then known as Claude. He was born in Benin and had escaped from that very dangerous country by illegally crossing the border into Burkina Faso and from there he crossed over to Ghana, again illegally. Ghana was much safer and more stable than the previous two countries.

Crossing the border in this way was extremely hazardous and many who did so were killed. However there was no legal way to gain entrance to Ghana as it did not accept Benin citizens. Claude felt the hand of Hashem guiding him safely to his new home in the capital, Accra, where he secured a profitable job as a cook at the French embassy.

One fine day a chareidi Jew from Ramot, Jerusalem by the name of George Brown arrived in Accra. He had come to work in the mining industry and had rented a villa. He told some of his new colleagues that he needed someone to run his home as he was unfamiliar with the local scene. Very soon thereafter Claude knocked at his door.

"My friend just told me that there is a Jew from Israel who is looking for someone to manage his household. I immediately handed in my notice at the embassy and came running to work for you. I have never met a Jew before but I know that they are the Chosen People. It will be an honor for me to assist you throughout the time that you are in Ghana."

Thus Claude began to help George establish his home. He went with him everywhere. He helped him toivel his dishes, kosher the kitchen, purchase a Shabbat kettle and hotplate, install a time switch for the Shabbat lights, and set aside a place where he could pray undisturbed.



"I am Hashem Your G-d"

Yehoshua Wiseman - yehoshuawiseman.com

One day as George finished his prayers, Claude asked him what were the things he had been wearing. George answered that they were items that G-d had commanded the Jews to wear during prayer. Claude asked if he could do likewise. George explained to him that it wasn't necessary because he was not Jewish.

"Nevertheless I want to keep this commandment," Claude retorted firmly.

George went on to explain that it was forbidden for a non-Jew to perform such mitzvot but Claude did not bat an eyelid.

"Then I will become a Jew so that I will be able to keep all the beautiful mitzvot that I have observed in your home."

George told him that in order to become Jewish according to the specifications of the Jewish religion he would have to go to a Beit Din but there wasn't one in Ghana; nor in hardly any of the African countries. Claude was not the least bit deterred. He spent every spare moment researching Judaism online, delving deeper and deeper, with his burning desire to convert growing stronger with every passing day.

Time moved on and with the help of some roving emissaries, George was able to organize a minyan for Yom Kippur. Claude turned up in the morning

wearing a tallit and clutching a machzor with a French translation. He had been walking for over an hour, fasting, because he knew it was forbidden to ride on Shabbat and Yom Tov. George explained to him that as he was not Jewish he was forbidden to observe Yom Kippur and moreover, to do so would incur punishment.

"I don't care," he answered, "I am prepared to die as a Jew, no matter what price I have to pay."

The following year shortly before Rosh Hashana, George told Claude that the time had come for him to leave Ghana. Foreseeing complications and problems that would arise were Claude to accompany him back to Israel, he waited until the last moment to announce his departure, hoping that would dash any irrational attempts on the part of Claude to join him. Claude of course begged to go so George consulted with his wife.

"Of course you must bring him to Israel," she exclaimed.

He turned to Claude and said, "the flight is due to depart in six hours. If you can be ready by then, you are welcome to join me, but be aware that you will have to enter Israel on a tourist visa with all that it entails."

Claude ran home and told his wife Hannah that they were going to Israel right away. They packed as fast as they could and then dashed to the airport. Luckily by that time they had acquired the necessary passports. *Continued on page 3*

Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	6:59	8:16
Tel Aviv	7:16	8:18
Haifa	7:10	8:19
Beer Sheva	7:14	8:16
New York	7:55	9:02

Chabad Of Israel
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Published by M.L.S. Kfar Chabad (03) 3731777
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Everyone Matters

This week's Torah reading begins the fourth book of the Torah which is called Numbers in English.

Why is it given that name? Because the book focuses on several censuses — the first is described in this Torah reading — taken during the journey of the Jewish people through the desert.

The Real "I"

What does a census teach us? That everyone is counted the same.

Of course, we are different. Some are smarter, others are stronger and still others have potentials in other areas. Yet, when it comes down to counting, no one is given greater distinction than anyone else.

Why is this? Because there are two fundamental equalizers within the spiritual makeup each one of us possess. First and most fundamentally, every man or woman has a soul that is an actual part of G-d. The core of each one of us is a spiritual potential that is essential G-dliness.

On the most basic level, when we focus on what is our real "I," we come to the realization, not of our individual egos, but of this G-dly spark. Quite obviously, one person's essential G-dliness cannot be greater

than another's.

One Body

Moreover, even where our individual selves are concerned and we appear to be separate and distinct from each other, we share a fundamental equality. For the unity we share can be pictured by means of the analogy of the human body. Although the limbs and organs differ in form and function, they work in harmony, each contributing a necessary element to the operation of the body.

It is not only that the head and the heart are both essential to life. Even our non-essential limbs each contribute a complementary element to our beings that enables us to function optimally.

For example, the feet provide mobility through which the senses are exposed to a greater range of stimuli, enabling the brain to collect and process information. So too, there are head souls, heart souls, and feet souls; each one with a different makeup and each one contributing a quality the other lacks.

Every one of us possesses something that can make humanity and the world in which we live better. Indeed, that is the reason why G-d created every individual person. He made him or her with a mission, endowing him within a unique quality that no

one else possesses, so that he or she could express that quality and thus bring about a meaningful and significant change in the world.

Every Jew is Essential

These concepts also relate to the Giving of the Torah soon to be commemorated. Our Sages tell us that if even one person had been lacking at Sinai, the Torah would not have been given. Moses would not have received the Torah if one of the simple folk had not been there.

Indeed, this concept is so fundamentally connected with the Jewish people that it is alluded to in their name, Israel - ישראל - for that name is interpreted as an acronym for the phrase - יש ששים ריבוי אומות לתורה - meaning, "There are 60 myriads (600,000) letters in the Torah." Just as every letter is necessary for a Torah scroll and without it, it is disqualified, so too, every Jew is necessary for the success of our people.

Adapted from the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Keeping in Touch, vol. 3, reprinted from Sichos in English. From our Sages reprinted from LchaimWeekly.org – LYO / NYC

From our Sages

A man of every tribe who is the head of his family division. (Num. 1:4)

It is easier for a person to be considered great by strangers than by his own family who know his faults well. If a person is appreciated by his "family division" - those who know him well - it is a sign that he is worthy of being at the head of his tribe.

(Otzreinu Hayashan)

...in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting (Num. 1:1)

"In the wilderness of Sinai" teaches that a Jew should be as humble as Mount Sinai, the smallest of all the mountains; "in the Tent of Meeting" teaches that he should be joyous, as the word for "Meeting," "Moed," also means festival.

The greater one's humility, the more genuine joy he will experience at having merited to be able to serve G-d.

(Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk)

Take a census of all the congregation of the people of Israel (Num. 1:1-2)

In most years, the Torah portion of Bamidbar is read on the Shabbat immediately before the holiday of Shavuot. This is because the main preparation for the Giving of the Torah is the mitzva of, "And you shall love your fellow as yourself," Jewish unity, which Moses' census accomplished and underscored.

(Beit Avraham)

...according to the sign of his father's house (Num. 2:2)

Every individual is obligated to ask himself, "when will my deeds reach the deeds of my forefathers?"

This does not mean that a Jew has to worry about exactly emulating the Patriarchs, but that his behavior should at least "touch" the high standards ("sign") they set for him, and strive to follow in their ways.

(Sefat Emet)

Yaakov Avinu's Niggun

All his life, the Baal Shem Tov yearned to remember the niggun of Yaakov Avinu and was unable to. What was this niggun?

This is what he told his talmidim:

"I heard a beautiful niggun when I was in my first incarnation as a sheep in Yaakov's flock. Yaakov would sing this niggun when he cared for the sheep. He would pour out his heart to Hashem until he heard Hashem's voice blessing his sheep. I have a tradition that Yaakov sent his sons to Yosef in Mitzrayim with this niggun, as it says, 'And Yisroel their father said to them, if so, this is what you should do, take *m'zimras* (from the fruit, but can also be read as from the song) of the land.' (B'Reishis 43:1)

"Just one other time was I able to hear this niggun, when I passed by a shepherd who was singing this song to his sheep. When I heard this, I nearly turned back into a sheep."

When the Baal Shem Tov wanted to move to Eretz Yisroel, he said, "perhaps I will merit once again hearing that niggun. When I learn it well and know it, I will not forget it again. When this niggun becomes known to all, the Geula will come to the world."

Reprinted from Beis Moshich Magazine

Chassidus page

The Torah is our Life

Eliyahu Hanavi related: A student who was not well versed in halacha once asked me, "I learn Torah and strongly desire and await that Torah come to me, but it does not." I explained to him that only one who gives up his life for Torah, for the honor of Hashem, merits this.

Toiling in Torah

At the Rebbe's wedding, the Previous Rebbe went around greeting the guests and pouring L'chaim. Approaching the standing area of the yeshiva students, he said: "Temimim! Torah can only succeed through great effort. One who toils will understand the learning more than another who has better qualities than him. You must dedicate yourselves to learn with effort!"

The Chida writes: The Beis Yosef once learned a very difficult passage in the Rambam. Days passed and no explanations were found. One night, late into the night, the Beis Yosef was deep in thought and suddenly uncovered the answer.

The next day in the yeshiva he announced, "yesterday Hashem gave me the merit to understand the words of the Rambam." He began by presenting the question to the yeshiva students when a young boy asked for permission to offer an answer. The young student presented the very conclusion reached by the Beis Yosef only after days of toil! The Beis Yosef congratulated the boy saying, "blessed are you to Hashem! This is the path I took and it is the true one." The Beis Yosef, however, was bothered that he had to work so hard for something that

this boy came to so easily.

Later, the angel that taught him secrets of the Torah shared, "do not feel bad. You had the merit of toiling and working out the meaning of that section of the Rambam. Until today, there was no one who understood that section, but after you brought the meaning into the world, it became accessible to everyone, and as such this young man was able to uncover the answer."

A Mother's Love of Torah

Chassidim once asked Maharil, the Alter Rebbe's brother: What was the merit by virtue of which his parents were blessed with four sons who were Torah giants?

Maharil told them that it was probably due to the yiras Shamayim (awe of Heaven) and the passionate love of Torah of his mother, Rebbetzin Rivka. He illustrated this with the following story:

My father, Reb Baruch, once traveled on a business trip and brought back an expensive coat as a gift for my mother. Our teacher's wife became so envious that she began nagging him to give her gifts as well. This distressed him, and his usual enthusiasm faded. Noticing this, my mother questioned him and he told her of his troubles. Without hesitation, she took out her coat and gave it to the melamed, saying, "give this to your wife, and continue to teach my sons with enthusiasm."

Torah is our Life and Moshiach Now!
reprinted from *The Weekly Farbrengen* by
Merkaz Anash, on-line at *TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com*

Claude Knew the Truth

continued from page 1: When he landed in Israel, Claude was in seventh heaven. He found a French speaking beis hamedrash and studied Torah there from morning till night. On Yom Kippur he went to shul with George and stood for 25 hours fasting and reciting every word from his French machzor. After Succot George took Claude to a Beis Din where he expressed his wish to convert, but it was denied.

"It's not for you," the Dayanim told him. "You can be a righteous gentile and keep the seven Noachide laws."

Claude was not discouraged and returned to the Beis Din a second time and again his request was refused. Determined as ever, he went back a third time and was refused yet again, this time with a strict warning never to reappear. Claude was not fazed in the slightest.

"Before I leave I would like to ask each one of you three judges to sign on the dotted line that I Claude, came to you on such and such a day requesting to convert to Judaism and you refused me."

"Why on earth would you want such a document," the Dayanim asked.

Claude answered that Moshiach's arrival was imminent and when they met he would ask him: "Why did you not become Jewish? **You knew the truth!**"

"So I will tell him that the Beis Din turned me away, and I will produce this document to prove I am telling the truth."

Within a matter of seconds the Dayanim approved Claude's request for conversion. After all the Halachic requirements had been fulfilled, Hannah and Eliezer stood under the chupa and became husband and wife "according to the law of Moshe and Israel."

By Rabbi Yaakov Cass. This story is presented in relation to Shavuot when we read the story of Rut, the first Ger Tzedek. With much appreciation to Rabbi Moshe Viner and Mr. George Brown for their valuable time and involvement in this article. Rabbi Cass is a Lubavitcher chossid living in Jerusalem. Until recently he was a senior official in the Israel Ministry of Health.

Moshiach Now

Tasting and Hastening the Redemption

The Rebbe explains that through learning Chassidus, one can 'taste' the revelation of Hashem that will exist when Moshiach will come. Therefore, one should prepare for Moshiach through learning and feeling the light of Chassidus.

On another occasion, the Rebbe said that our service today must be to see and feel the geulah (redemption) in the world. Therefore, we should learn Chassidus and about the geulah, and in such a manner that it brings us to recognize the geulah.

In addition, among the specific mitzvos to hasten the geulah which the Rebbe mentioned were: learning Mishnayos, learning Talmud Yerushalmi, developing chidushim (Torah novelties), giving tzedakah, ahavas yisroel, spreading Yiddishkeit, kashrus, kedusha and tznius, learning and spreading chassidus, and more.

Human Interest

Lag B'Omer - Beit Shemesh

Tens of thousands of residents in all parts of Beit Shemesh including, Ramat Beit Shemesh Gimmel, Ramat Beit Shemesh Bet, Ramat Beit Shemesh Alef, Shchunat Hamishkafayim, Yefei Nof, Cheftziba, Kiriya Hachareidit, Givat Sharet, Ramat Lechi, Nofia, and Migdal Hamayim enjoyed and rejoiced in honor of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai this Lag B'Omer.

Due to the coronavirus, Chabad Beit Shemesh had a unique challenge in many ways. Yet, these challenges



didn't stop the crowds from enjoying the spirit of the day with music trucks displaying large video screens, car parades, entertainment, giving out balloons and art projects, raffles, dancing from balconies, prizes to children having their first hair cuts and more.

Bike riders followed the car parades, children were invited to say pasukim and people danced in the streets. It was truly a fun and meaningful day for all. All of this abiding with the guidelines of the Ministry Of Health.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe stressed that Lag B'Omer is a day of Jewish Pride and this was shown throughout the town by young and old, men and women, children and youth. May we merit that through this event of unity and Jewish Pride we go straight to the Geula with the coming of Moshiach!

Cooking Tip of the Week

Avacodo Salad: Avacodos are in season now. Here is a way to lighten up your salad without losing the taste. Add the following ingredients to your food processor: 1 peeled (and chopped) avacodo, 1 small cucumber (also peeled and chopped), 1 small chopped onion, 1 garlic (tooth) clove sliced, cumin, salt and lemon juice (to taste). Process till it is the way you like it. Great dip for Shabbos.

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Halacha Corner – Blessing Secondary Food

When eating a mixture of two or more foods, the *brachah* is usually made on the *ikar* (primary food) and not on the *tafel* (secondary one). For example, when eating fries with ketchup, a *brachah* is made on the fries, but not on the ketchup.

What is the *halachah* if some of the *tafel* is left over after the *ikar* has been eaten? It depends on whether the *ikar* and *tafel* are considered one unit: If the items were cooked or baked together, or if when they were being prepared the intention was that they be eaten as one dish, then the secondary item remains secondary, and no *brachah* is made on it. However, if the original intent when preparing the food was to eat the items separately and they were combined afterwards, then a separate *brachah* is made on the *tafel* that remained.

When eating ice cream in a plain cone (not a sugar cone), the *brachah* is made only on the ice cream, since the cone is considered secondary. If there is some of the cone left over, it's questionable whether a *brachah* is called for; it is therefore preferable to finish eating the cone together with the ice cream. (When ice cream is served in a sugar cone made from grain, the *brachah* is made on the cone only—and that is *mezonos*).

Rav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, *shlita*, Mara D'asra, Member of the Badatz of Crown Heights; *One Minute Halacha*, vol. 1, 325, crownheightsconnect.com

Farbrenge

Question: My wife doesn't care about my opinion. She hears me, but does what she wants. Whether it is regarding our children, the home, work, whatever. The problem is, I can't tell her anything without her getting upset and defensive. So the other day I got up the courage and said that I think if she would start dinner earlier, the kids would not be so tired and wild at bedtime. She responded, "can't you just let me live my life! You are so intrusive!" And she stamped out. I really feel in despair; it is so hard to live with someone I can't discuss things with.

Answer: Rabbi Shabtai Slavaticki is the Director of Chabad in Antwerp, Belgium, and a highly acclaimed international speaker. Before his marriage he consulted the famed mashpia (spiritual guide) Rabbi Mendel Futerafas for guidance. One day Reb Mendel asked, "are you ready?" Rabbi Slavaticki responded that he was trying. Reb Mendel requested to see the ring. Upon receiving the ring he asked Rabbi Slavaticki what he sees. "I see gold in the shape of a circle," he answered. Reb Mendel responded, "the main thing in the ring is not the gold, rather, the empty space. If you want to truly get married, you need to make an open space in your heart; an empty space so as to accept the other person as they are, not like you want them to be, and not as you dream they should be. Take her as she is!"

Not everyone or everything will be just like we want. Each person has their background, beliefs and outlook and we need to give them their place. Reb Mendel was saying that this is the foundation and beginning of marriage.

While communication serves a valuable purpose, when used inappropriately, it can impede true closeness. Closeness comes from accepting and valuing the other person, not from trying to change who they are. Consider your wife's statements. Why did she claim you are intrusive; that you do not let her live her life? Is it simply because you want her to start dinner earlier?

The pain couples experience from power struggles, disagreements, insensitivity, coldness, etc., are usually only the presenting problems; symptoms which have germinated from a lack of acceptance and understanding. Acceptance requires inner strength; the courage to step back and allow alternative ways of being and thinking; to understand and accept the other person's truth as also valid. The more we make space for our spouse in our heart, the more they will make space for us in theirs.

Aharon Schmidt - marriage & individual coaching - video and telephone available. For an appointment or to share a question contact: coachingandcounseling1@gmail.com

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