BARDICHEVER YAHRTZEIT EDITION

THANK YOU HASHEM!

THE NEKUDA TOVA

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לזכות עלקא דבורה בת מרים רבקה חנה





Madly in Love

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When the Bardichever Rebbe passed away, Rebbe Nachman of Breslov sent out a letter instructing everyone to check their *tefillin shel rosh* to make sure they were kosher. Why? Because *tefillin* is called **פאר**, splendor; it is the splendor of a Yid, and the Bardichever was the *pe'er* of Klal Yisroel. So if we lost the *pe'er* of Klal Yisroel, we need to check to see if there are issues with the pe'er of *tefillin*. Sure enough, thousands of *tefillin* were found to be *passul*.

In Kedushas Levi, the Bardichever wrote the following idea about *tefillin*. The Gemara says that just like the Jewish people keep mitzvos, Hashem keeps mitzvos as well. The example the Gemara gives is that "Hashem also wears *tefillin*." Our *tefillin* says Shema and talks about the greatness of Hashem. What does it say on Hashem's *tefillin*? *Mi ke'amcha Yisroel, goy echad ba'aretz*. With our *tefillin*, we declare the greatness of Hashem, and with Hashem's *tefillin*, He declares the greatness of the Jewish people.

Artwork by Yitzchak Moully

A Yid should always be thinking about one of two things: either how great Hashem is or how great the Jewish people are.

The Jewish people are obsessed with talking about how great Hashem is, and Hashem is obsessed with talking about how great the Jewish people are.

The Kedushas Levi brings another example of this. In the Torah, the Yom Tov of Pesach is called *Chag Hamatzos*. That's what "Hashem calls it," so to speak. But Yidden refer to the Yom Tov as "Pesach." Why do we call the Yom Tov by a different name than Hashem does?

The answer is that the Jewish people are obsessed with talking about how great Hashem is. So when we refer to the Yom Tov, we call it Pesach and highlight the greatness of Hashem, that He passed over the houses of the Yidden during *makkas bechoros in Mitzrayim*.

And Hashem is obsessed with talking about how great the Jewish people are. So He refers to it as *Chag Hamatzos*. This highlights the greatness of the Yidden — "look what My Yidden did, they didn't have bread to eat when they followed Me off into the desert; all they had was matzah!"

The *halacha* in *tefillin* is that one cannot be *meisiach daas* from *tefillin* (we cannot take our minds off the *tefillin*). The Bardichever says that this is not just a *halacha* that pertains to what we think about while we are wearing *tefillin*. This is a *yesod* we need to hold on to throughout our entire life! The two things that a Yid should never take his mind off and should never stop talking about are either the greatness of Hashem ("our *tefillin*") or the greatness of the Jewish people ("Hashem's *tefillin*").

There are countless stories about the Bardichever Rebbe, and they all fall into just one of two categories. They either show how madly in love he was with Hashem or how madly in love he was with the Jewish people.

The Bardichever did not keep that flaming love to himself. He did not even seem to be capable of controlling it, and often it was expressed in unique ways. For example, he would often jump around wildly while he was davening, unable to keep his body still due to the love for Hashem that was bursting out of him.

continued on next page

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So unusual was his davening that some people who disliked the Bardichever would mimic his unusual davening to make fun of him and even make plays, where people would come watch the show of "The Bardichever Rebbe during davening."

One such Yid once travelled to Bardichev and spent some time watching Reb Levi Yitzchak's davening, training himself to put on the perfect show. He traveled back to his village, got himself a stage, and sold tickets to his show. The show started off well. He was jumping around in a perfect replication of the Bardichever's davening, and the crowd was amused.

Then he started crying, and the crowd roared with laughter! This was a perfect imitation of the Bardichever's davening; he always cried while he davened (and laughed, and jumped, and danced, and so on).

But the performer just kept crying and crying, and eventually it wasn't funny anymore. The crowd stopped laughing and quickly became agitated, as this was not the comedy show they had paid for. The show was clearly over, and the performer was just crying now. When they asked him about it, he didn't know what to say. "When I started, the tears were a show, but then they became real." Eventually, he returned from his ways and ended up becoming a real chassid of the Bardichever.

Do I love pepper?? I LOVE THE RIBBONO SHEL OLAM!!

This was the *koach* the Bardichever had to bring out the best even in Yidden who hated him, so strong was his burning love for every Yid.

Reb Baruch of Medzhybizh was a great tzadik who lived at the same time as the Bardichever, but his ways were dramatically different. He was very controlled and more serious and didn't let his passion express itself like the Bardichever did.

Once, the Bardichever was travelling on Erev Shabbos and needed to stop at an inn for Shabbos. A short while later, Reb Baruch of Medzhybizh happened to stop at the same inn, asking for a room. There were no rooms left available, but the innkeeper said, "We happen to have another Rabbi here with us. Why don't you share the room with him?"

Reb Baruch agreed and was escorted to the room, where he quickly learned who he'd be spending Shabbos with... He said *shalom aleichem* to the Bardichever and then asked him to please do him a favor and control himself this one Shabbos, not to be so excited and jump around. Reb Levi Yitzchak agreed.

Friday night davening came along, and sure enough, Reb Levi Yitzchak's was calm, with none of the usual fireworks that were part of his davening. They sat down at the Shabbos *seudah*, and his Kiddush was calm. The Bardichever was keeping to the agreement.

Until it was time for soup. The waiter came around, served Reb Levi Yitzchak soup, and then asked him if he liked pepper. He looked at the waiter incredulously and said, "Do I like pepper? You want to know if I love **pepper**?" (And Reb Baruch was probably thinking... uh-oh... here we gooo.)

Reb Levi Yitzchak then jumped up onto the table, unable to control himself anymore, and screamed out, "I LOVE THE RIBBONOI SHEL OLAM!! I LOVE THE RIBBONOI SHEL OLAM!!"

And when he did that, he spilled his soup all over the *bekeshe* of Reb Baruch.

The end of that story is that Reb Baruch was so impressed with this expression of Reb Levi Yitzchak's burning *Ahavas Hashem* that he refused to clean the soup spill off of his *bekeshe*. He left that soup as a reminder and used to wear that *bekeshe* that Reb Levi Yitzchak spilled soup on for special occasions.

Ahavas Hashem, and *Ahavas Yisroel*. That's what the Bardichever Rebbe was.

Based on what Harav Yussie Zakutinsky shared with the chevra before entering the Bardichever Rebbe's Kever a few years ago.





Our Awesome Kids

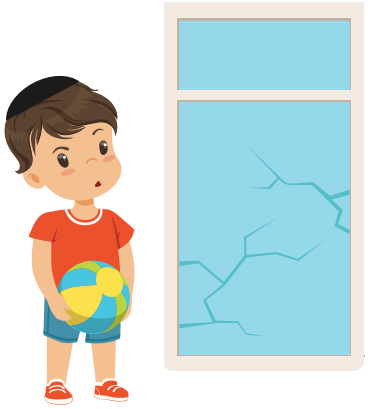
Danny Louis

L'kavod the heilige tzaddik, ba'al m'chaber sefer Kedushas Levi, Reb Levi Yitzchok of Bardichev, zy'a.

The Bardichever built an entire life around one skill. He'd see a Yid doing something wrong, and figure out a way it was right. He was the classic defense attorney, and always on call.

I would suggest that most of us have this skill within us, at least towards some people. Clearly, if it's a mitzvah in the Torah to judge people favorably, that means there is some real avodah to do, and we have to work on it. But by nature, Yidden have that spark already, and we just have to learn to fan it. We can easily motivate ourselves — after all, wouldn't we want people to come to our defense when we've made a mistake?

What's hard to swallow (at least for me) is that I don't think I do this so well with my kids. They get different treatment than strangers do, for some reason.



If I can wear the Bardichever hat a little longer, I should report it back to the Boss.

I've gotten used to the really loud guy in shul. He's not trying to annoy me personally, he just either enjoys singing a lot or has fantastic *kavana*. Both are fine with me.

The friend that doesn't answer my emails, that one's harder, but I know him already, he's busy, too busy for his own good, and I've learned to feel some *rachmanus* for the guy.

So why do my kids get a different standard entirely? My kids interrupt me. I don't bother explaining it to the youngest one yet, the middle one gets a somewhat nice reminder, but the oldest gets a punishment. Now, maybe he should get that punishment. After all, it was the 13th time he did that today, and he probably did it 13 more times to his mother.

But even with that punishment, I should probably remind myself that he's not a bad kid — he's just nine years old! And if I wanna be a real Bardichever, I should up the bet — this nine year old is so excited about something that he wants to share with his father! What a tzadik!

And then, if I can wear the Bardichever hat a little longer, I should report it back to the Boss. "Hashem, this kid over here wants to connect to his parents. He doesn't know how to hold in his excitement about telling them something important to him. What a great form of *chutzpah*! And that's Klal Yisroel — we're *chutzpahdig* to You, but just because we want to connect!" OK, needs work, but not a bad start.

Maybe we can take this one day at a time. We can decide to look at our children and see the part that is honest, tired, overwhelmed, or a million other things, and zoom in. We can choose to represent our own children the way we'd want someone representing us.



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RELENTLESS ADVOCACY

The Bardichever Rebbe was famous for his relentless advocacy on behalf of the Jewish people. There are many well-known stories showing how he would use anything and everything, from a mitzvah a Yid did to an apparent *aveirah*, to bring out the greatness of Yidden. But another unique way he went to bat for the Jewish people was through his creative use of Torah, tefillah, and many other elements of Yiddishkeit, finding ways to prove to Hashem why He **must** pour down *shefa*, take care of our needs, and take us out of *galus*.

There is an old sefer called *Toldos Kedushas Levi*, which has barely been printed in the last hundred years but used to appear in the back of some editions of *Kedushas Levi* in prewar Europe *(it is available on Otzar Hachachma)*. In it, there is an incredible compilation of many of the unique arguments the Bardichever Rebbe used to defend the Jewish people before our Father in Heaven. In honor of this special yahrtzeit edition, we've translated a few of these into English on these pages.

Our tzadikim teach us that even mentioning the name of the town "Bardichev" awakens Heavenly mercy. The holy Bardichever Rebbe, Rav Levi Yitzchak ben Sara Sosha, is undoubtedly continuing to advocate for our nation from his place in Gan Eden. Let's learn from his example to turn everything we can into a reason to see good things, think good thoughts, and say good things about Yidden.

§

הקב"ה הבורא ברוך הוא בחר רק בישראל, לפיכך אין שום אחד רשאי
לומר על ישראל שום דבר רע, רק ללמד זכות על ישראל

Hashem chose only the Jewish people, therefore not a single person has any permission to say anything bad about the Jewish people, but rather only to find merit in the Jewish people.

KEDUSHAS LEVI, PARSHAS BO

FILE #0362

The Apple Brief

Hashem must forgive us.

Reb Levi Yitzchok would say: On Yom Kippur, we make a *bracha* in *Shemoneh Esreh* that says Hashem is the "King who forgives and pardons." But how can we say that? How can we be so sure that He will forgive us? And worse, if He doesn't, we will have made a *bracha l'vatalah, chas v'shalom*! The answer can be understood with a *mashal*: A smart young boy asked his father for an apple, but his father wouldn't give him one. The boy went ahead and made a *bracha*, *"borei p'ri ha'etz,"* with Hashem's name and everything. He stood there, saying *"nu, nu, uh,"* waiting for his father to give him the apple so it wouldn't be a *bracha l'vatalah*. The father didn't want his son to end up with an *aveirah*, so he had no choice and gave him the apple. So too with us. We're making this *bracha*, a real *bracha* with Hashem's name, and we're saying that Hashem forgives us. That's exactly why we trust that He will indeed forgive, because He doesn't want us, His children, to have made a *bracha l'vatalah!*

FILE #0310

The Wealth Clause

Shefa ad bli dai

Once, before the shofar blowing on Rosh Hashanah, Reb Levi Yitzchok saw that a harsh decree had been passed, and many Jews would lose their source of *parnasa*. During his *drasha*, he cried out to Hashem: "Master of the World, You chose the Jewish people to marry Yourself to us. The foundation of our worthiness for this marriage is that we have amazing *yichus* (lineage), being the descendants of Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov. But You, Hashem, bring us nothing in the way of *yichus*, as You have no father at all! But You do bring neverending wealth! And You promised to give from that wealth and provide our livelihood in abundance. Therefore, bless us with *parnasa*!"



FILE #2901

The Case of the Exiled Nation

We want Moshiach now!

One year, before the shofar blowing, Reb Levi Yitzchok said: "Master of the World, You've commanded us that this day should be '*yom t'ruah*, a day of shofar blowing.' And based on that one commandment, we blow 100 shofar blasts, along with many hundreds of thousands of Jews who are doing the same. And we have all been doing this for thousands of years. All we've asked of You is to blow one shofar blast to free us from our *galus*, and You still haven't sounded Your shofar!"



FILE #0138

Chometz v. Contraband

Yidden don't need police to force them to serve Hashem

Reb Levi Yitzchok once said before shofar blowing: "Master of the World, there is no nation as holy as the Jewish people. You commanded them to get rid of all *chometz* before Pesach, and You appointed no one to oversee that they would do so or to punish anyone for not following through. And even so, on Erev Pesach, after *bedikas chometz*, I myself searched all the Jewish homes and couldn't find even a *k'zayis* of *chometz*! I even offered a large sum of money to any Jew who would show me any leftover *chometz*, but it simply didn't exist. On the other hand, when the local government decided to ban the import of one particular item, it had to appoint thousands of enforcers who were allowed to give harsh punishments, and even so, tons of that contraband item made it into the land. What a holy and pure nation You have!"

FILE #0006

Hashem's Own Tefillin

Mi ke'amcha Yisroel

Reb Levi Yitzchok said, quoting the Tanna d'bei Eliyahu: It is a mitzvah to say over the praises of the Jewish people, and Hashem has a special type of *nachas ruach* from this. This is because it is forbidden to take our minds off of the Tefillin while we wear them. And we know *(Brachos 6a)* that Hashem also has Tefillin. The parshiyos in His Tefillin all contain verses that speak of the greatness of the Jewish people, such as *"mi k'amcha Yisroel, goy echad ba'aretz."* Therefore, we are required to also be occupied with these ideas and not take our minds off of them, and to show Hashem that His *parshiyos* are *kosher* and *mehudar*!

FILE #0529

The Case for Constant Advocacy

Be a meilitz yosher

Often the Gemara will refer to a certain *tanna* or *amora* as a great person because he "didn't walk four *amos* without Tefillin." But this seems impossible, because we don't wear Tefillin on Shabbos or Yom Tov, or while in the bathhouse or similar places. Rather, Reb Levi Yitzchok explained as follows: Whenever these great people would remove their own Tefillin, they would occupy themselves with Hashem's Tefillin, which contain verses about the praises of the Jewish people. They would be *meilitz tov* about every Jew, bringing up their greatest qualities in their favor. In doing so, they truly never went four *amos* without Tefillin, either their own pair of Tefillin or Hashem's.

FILE #1601

By the Plaintiff's Own Admission

Hashem already said He forgives us.

One Yom Kippur night, Reb Levi Yitzchok said as follows: Chazal tell us *(Megillah 16a)*: **כל האומר דבר בשם אומרו מביא גאולה לעולם** — *one who says over a message and quotes the original source brings geulah to the world.* Therefore, let us bring Geulah to the world by also saying something in the name of the One who originally said it: **"ויאמר ה' סלחתי כדברך** — *Hashem said: As you asked, I have forgiven the Jewish people!"*

FILE #0204

In Defense of Stumbled Words

Hashem understands His children even when we don't speak clearly.

One Rosh Hashanah, Reb Levi Yitzchok said a great defense for those Yidden who would not pronounce the words properly when they davened. He said, "Master of the World, it is the way of a father to understand the subtle hints and phrases of his children, even his unspoken intentions. Your children, whom You've always loved — the children of Avrohom — may sometimes trip on the words when they pray, but You shouldn't punish them, because You understand their inner desires and love their mistakes, as it says *(Shir HaShirim 2:4)*, **'ודלגו עלי אהבה'** — *their omissions are beloved to You!'"*

FILE #5570

The People v. The Satan

We have to defeat the satan however we can.



Once, on Rosh Hashanah, Reb Levi Yitzchok's neshama traveled to the higher realms (where he would be shown some of what goes on there). When he returned, he told over what he had been shown. He said that he had gone up to *shomayim* and saw a place where people are judged. It was a large hall where the *satan* and all his helpers were bringing bundles and bundles of all types of aveiros done by Jews. He then saw that he himself had been chosen to serve as a defense attorney against these evil forces, and he didn't know how he could possibly argue against them.

He then looked to his right and saw an entrance to *Gan Eden*, where the *avos hakedoshim* and holiest *tzaddikim* dwell. And on his left, he saw an entrance to *Gehinnom*, and he realized what was at stake and knew that he had to do something immediately. When the *satan's* troops left to go bring more *aveiros*, he started grabbing the bundles and threw them into the entrance to *Gehinnom*, one by one, where they were entirely burned up.

When the *satan* and his camp returned and saw what had happened — that all their efforts were in vain and the "merchandise" they had gathered all year long had been stolen and destroyed — he let out a tremendous scream. He set his eyes on Reb Levi Yitzchok, understanding what he had done, grabbed him by his cloak, and brought him to the heavenly court for judgment.

They *paskened* — as is the ruling of the Torah — that a thief caught in the act has to pay back double what he stole, and if he has no way to pay, he must be sold into slavery. An announcement was made that the Bardichever Rebbe would be sold as a slave, and this caused a great stir in the upper worlds. The *avos hakedoshim* and the *tzaddikim* all left their place in *Gan Eden* and came to demand to redeem the Bardichever. The *satan* kept raising the "redemption" price for the Rav — no matter what the *avos* and *tzaddikim* would offer, he would say it would cost more to redeem him. Then, Hashem Himself stood up and gave the highest redemption price possible, and said: "I own everything in creation, and I am giving the highest price so that I will own the Bardichever as My own." From that point, Reb Levi Yitzchok became a dedicated servant to Hashem.

He used this revelation to explain a phrase we say on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur: "**לקונה עבדיו בדין** – to the One that acquires His servants in judgment."

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CONNECTING WITH OUR TZADIKIM

The Bardichever Rebbe

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It was the day after the most historic wedding to ever take place in Bardichev — the children of the Baal Hatanya and the Bardichever Rebbe had gotten married to each other, and these two tzaddikim were now *mechutanim*!

Rav Levi Yitzchok said to the Baal Hatanya, "we have so much to thank Hashem for! Let's go do a special mitzvah together." He then told him about a poor, orphaned girl who was in need of financial help to get married. He suggested they go collecting for her.

Rav Levi Yitzchok said to the Baal Hatanya, "we have so much to thank Hashem for! Let's go do a special mitzvah together."

The *chassidim* of the Baal Hatanya weren't used to these types of things, and felt that it wasn't befitting the honor of their Rebbe to go around collecting tzedaka. Rather, they quickly gathered together a large sum of money from between the chassidim and gave it to the Bardichever. Rav Levi Yitzchok looked up to shomayim, something he did quite frequently, and called out, "Aibishter!! Look how holy your children are, they raised the tzedaka to help out an orphaned Kallah, and wanted to avoid their Rebbe needing to go collect tzedaka!"

However, he did not want to accept the money. He insisted on going collecting with the Baal Hatanya.

While on the road, the Bardichever asked the Baal Hatanya to agree to one condition. Whatever money they were offered, they were to accept, even if it was a very small amount. He then told the Baal Hatanya about a very generous Yid in town named Reb Lipa. He was famous for giving to anyone who asked, and he suggested they start their trip by going to his home.

When they arrived at Reb Lipa's home, he was very excited to see these great tzadikim. They told him what they needed. He then fished in his pockets and pulled out a half copper coin [probably equivalent to one dollar in today's terms] and gave it to them. The Baal Hatanya watched in disbelief as Rav Levi Yitzchok thanked him profusely and got up to leave.

On the way out, the Baal Hatanya questioned accepting this donation, as the man could clearly give more. But the Bardichever just reminded his new *mechutan* of their policy of accepting any amount.

As they were walking down the road, Reb Lipa came running after them. He apologized for giving such a small amount, and then took out ten golden coins and gave it to them. This was far more than his original donation, but also wasn't nearly

what the man could give. The Bardichever accepted it with love and blessings to Reb Lipa, and the Baal Hatanya knew to wait and see what would happen next.

The tzaddikim continued walking down the road, and sure enough, Reb Lipa came running after them again. He broke out into tears, saying, "I don't know what happened to me! I'm so sorry for my disrespect!" He then pulled out what seemed to be one thousand gold coins — an astronomical amount — and gave it to them. They thanked him profusely and poured *brachos* on him.

When they came back to Bardichev, Rav Levi Yitzchok explained to the Baal Hatanya what had happened.

"This Yid truly is a big *ba'al tzedaka*. Recently, he was sitting with some noblemen, making a large business deal. A pauper knocked on the door, and when no one answered, he let himself in. He walked through all the corridors until he came to the room where the meeting was taking place, opened the door, and asked Reb Lipa for tzedaka. Despite the disrespect, Reb Lipa didn't get angry. He smiled at him, reached into his pocket, and pulled out the only money he had on him — one half copper coin. He told the man that this was all he had right then, but he would please come back later and he would give him more.

The pauper got very angry, in front of all the noblemen, and threw the coin back in Reb Lipa's face, wounding him. He then ran away.

Needless to say, Reb Lipa was very hurt and offended. His yetzer hora started telling him, "this only happened since



continued on next page

FUN FACTS

One day the Baal Shem Tov was sitting in his *beis medrash* and told everyone after davening that he would like to make a *l'chayim*, in honor of a great neshama that has just come into the world. This neshama, he told them, would be a great *meilitz yosher* (advocate) for Klall Yisroel. He was referring to Rav Levi Yitzchok.

Even though Rav Levi Yitzchok was 20 years old when the Baal Shem Tov passed away, he was never *zoche* to meet him. The Maggid of Mezritch (one of the main students of the Baal Shem Tov) explained that this had to be so. When it was decided in Heaven that Rav Levi Yitzchok's *neshama* was to come down to this world, the *yetzer hara* protested. He was afraid that people would be so inspired by Rav Levi Yitzchok's avodah, they would lose their free will. In response to the yetzer hora's concern, the Heavenly court decided that this *heilige neshama* would only be allowed entrance into the world under three conditions: Firstly, that this person would never be able to meet the Baal Shem Tov. Secondly, he would always have enemies in this world that would fight against him. And lastly, he would become the Rav of a town at a very young age, which would make him very busy and limit the time he had to help Yidden change their ways.

Once, the Baal Shem Tov met the *yetzer hora* and asked him, "how is our Rav doing," referring to Rav Levi Yitzchok. The *yetzer hora* answered, "I deeply regret that I let his neshama come down. I knew that he would be a Rav, but I did not realize he would be the Bardichever Rav!"

WH
AT
WOULD
THE
BARDICH
EVER REBBE
SEE?

My Glasses Guy
See Good Things

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"Connecting with Our Tzadikim" continued from page 7

you give so much tzedaka. People expect you to give so much all the time. If you would start giving smaller amounts, people wouldn't expect it, and no one would get angry if you were able to give a small amount."

Unfortunately, he fell for the *yetzer hara's* argument, and decided he would never give more than a half copper coin. Word spread amongst the beggars that used to come to him frequently, and eventually, they all stopped coming.

Rav Levi Yitzchok continued, "Until we came, he hadn't done the *mitzvah* of *tzedaka* in many months! I felt so bad for Reb Lipa. He was such a big *ba'al chesed*, and now, he had fallen so far. Therefore, even though Reb Lipa shouldn't have fallen for the yetzer hara's trap, I decided I had to find a way to help him. That's why I wanted us to go to his home.

However, there was a problem. We know that *"aveira goreres aveira,"* one sin causes another one. Since he had avoided giving *tzedaka* for so long, it wasn't so easy for him to start giving again. He needed someone to accept that small donation, and only then, through the opposite *middah* of *mitzvah goreres mitzvah*, one mitzvah leads to another, would he have the spiritual strength to get back to giving tzedaka properly. Once we accepted that small amount, his heart was opened somewhat. Then he was able to give more, and that opened him up more. Until, eventually, he realized how he had been fooled by the *yetzer hara* and managed to do full *teshuva*! This is why I bothered you to come with me. Like I said, it was a rare mitzvah!"

The Tiferes Shlomo writes that the great Chozeh of Lublin would thank Hashem every day for a full hour that the Bardichever was alive. He did this for sixteen years!

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Fivel's Family



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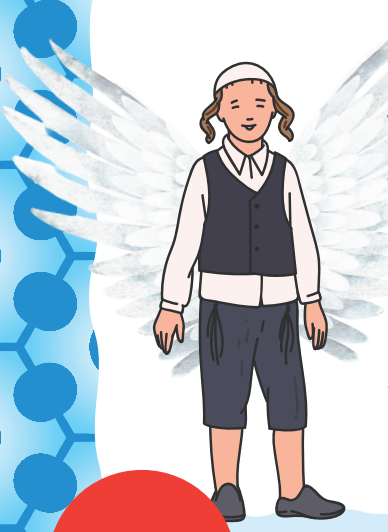
Did you know?

Why do we say "l'chayim" when we drink wine?

The Daas Zkeinim (a commentary on the Chumash by the Baalei Tosfos) explains as follows. According to one opinion in Chazal, the *eitz hadaas* was a grape vine, and the first action of eating done with grapes brought death into the world. Therefore, when we access that same fruit, we give a *brocha* of *"l'chayim,"* that this wine should bring life into the world!



Why wasn't a person created with wings like a bird?



A fascinating reason is brought in the *sefer* Halachos Katanos. Hashem didn't create us with the ability to fly for our own benefit, so that if he wanted to pursue an *aveira, ch'v*, it would take him extra time to get there, and he would have a chance to regret his decision. Also, the need for us to walk to shul, or to our learning *seder*, or to any other *mitzvah*, means that we get *s'char* for every step along the way!

Why does the Torah begin with the letter beis, rather than aleph?

The Baal HaTurim says the reason is that we want to begin the Torah with the letter that represents *brocha*. The Meiri adds that this is also the reason that the first *masechta* in *shas* in *brachos*!

Bere

#1

The Torah says that grass was created on the third day and the sun and the moon were created on the fourth day. But Chazal also say that everything was really made on the first day. So how did it work?

STORY

Once, the Baal Hatanya was put into a Russian jail. One of the great Russian ministers came to interrogate him. When he walked into the holy tzadik's cell, he could tell by the tzadik's face that he was in a state of deep connection to the spiritual world. It was almost like the Baal Hatanya wasn't even physically in his body! He realized that he was about to have some time with a great person and decided to ask something that had been bothering him for some time.

"After Adam's sin," he asked, "it seems that Hashem goes looking for Adam. He asks "*ayecha*, where are you?" But clearly, Hashem knew where Adam was, so why did he have to ask him?"

The Baal Hatanya answered, "The Torah was written for all generations, and so, Hashem is talking to every person. He asks everyone this question — where are you? Maybe you were already in this world for 54 years [the exact age of the minister]. Have you been doing good things during those years? Did you ever do anyone a favor?"

The minister was very taken back by the answer and reported to the Czar that the Baal Hatanya was definitely not a criminal!

Answers: 1) Everything was indeed created on the first day. On the other days, all the various items were put in their correct place, so for example, the sun and moon becoming visible only on day four. 2) *Menuchа*, rest itself, was indeed created on Shabbos! 3) Chazal say that the trees didn't listen. Hashem had commanded that the bark of the tree should taste just like the fruit, and the trees did not grow that way.

ishis

#2
The pasuk says (B'reishis 2:2) "Vayechal Elokim bayom hashvi'i, Hashem finished creating the world on the seventh day." But I thought nothing was created on Shabbos!?

#3
Which creation didn't listen to the Creator during the creation of the world?

PARSHA PIX

By R' Eli Perlman

BARDICHEVER EDITION

What does this picture have to do with the parsha?



ANSWER: The *Kedushas Levi* (*Bereishis* 2:6) asks: What are the four rivers flowing out of Gan Eden? He explains that when we do a mitzvah, Hashem gives us a special feeling of *ta'anug* — the joy and pleasure of being connected to Him. And then Hashem gives us a flow of more opportunities to do mitzvos!

Those waters flow into four mighty rivers, representing the four ways of understanding Torah: *Pshat*, *Drush*, *Remez*, and *Sod*. They fill the "garden" — a person's mind — with more and more Torah and connection to Hashem.

This is why the Mishnah in Avos tells us to be just as careful with a "small" mitzvah as we are with a "big" one. We never know which mitzvah might open the door to an even greater connection to Hashem — and to many more mitzvos!

The bottom line? **Grab every mitzvah you can!**

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