



G-d's Nourishment

In his early years, before he went public with his teachings and disciples came from far and wide to learn from him, the founder of the Chassidic movement, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, was an incessant traveler.

Dressed in the clothes of a simple villager, he would travel from town to town and from hamlet to hamlet, asking questions. "How are things?" he would inquire of the water-carrier yoked to his pails, of the market-woman minding her stall, of the child playing in the doorway of his home. "Is there enough to eat? Is everyone healthy?" "Baruch Hashem, blessed be the Almighty, all is fine" or "Thanks to the Almighty, things are improving," these simple, G-d-fearing and G-d-trusting Jews would reply, and the traveler would depart with the gratified step of one who has found what he was seeking.

One day, Rabbi Israel arrived in a village and made his way to the study hall. There, in a corner, sat an ancient Torah scholar over his books, wrapped in tallit and tefillin. This was the village porush ("ascetic"), who led a life of holy seclusion. From sunrise to sunset, not a morsel of bread or a sip of water would pass his lips; he spoke to no one and never lifted his eyes from the sacred tomes. For more than fifty years he had kept to this regimen, utterly removed from the mundane cares of material life.



So why was this stranger pestering him? "How are things?," he was inquiring, "Is there enough to eat? Is everyone healthy?" The ascetic made no reply, hoping the stranger would go away. But the stranger only leaned closer, and his questioning grew more insistent. Impatiently, the ascetic waved him away, pointing him to the door.

"Rabbi," the stranger now asked, "why are you denying G-d His livelihood?"

The words had their desired effect: the old man was roused to indignant attention. G-d's livelihood?! The audacity of this uncouth peasant! "What are you saying?" he demanded in a thunderous voice. "How dare you disturb me with such blasphemous babble!"

"Only what King David, the sweet singer of Israel, proclaims in his Psalms," replied the Baal Shem Tov. "Tell me, Rabbi, what is the meaning of the verse, 'And You, the Holy One, who dwells by the praises of Israel?'"

"We mortal beings," continued the Baal Shem Tov when the porush made no reply, "subsist on the sustenance that G-d provides us in His great kindness. But what does G-d 'subsist' on? On the praises of Israel! When one Jew asks another, 'How are things' and his fellow responds by praising and thanking the Almighty, they are nourishing G-d, deepening His involvement with His creation."

(as told by the Lubavitcher Rebbe from <http://www.chabad.org/>)

Baal Shem Tov Born (1698): Elul 18 is the birthday of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Chassidism. After many years as a member of the society of "hidden tzaddikim", living under the guise of an ignorant clay-digger, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov was instructed by his masters to reveal himself and begin to publicly disseminate his teachings. This he did on his 36th birthday, Elul 18, 5494 (1734).

"You shall come to whomever will be the Kohen in those days, and you shall say to him, 'I declare today to Hashem, your Elokim, that I have come to the Land that Hashem swore to our forefathers to give us'." (26:3)

Rashi z"l comments: "You must declare that you are not ungrateful."

(continued on the other side)

R' Ben Zion Nesher shlita (one of the senior rabbis in Tel Aviv, Israel) asks: At first glance, a person who is ungrateful has a character flaw, while a person who feels and expresses gratitude is "normal." If so, announcing that one is not ungrateful is the equivalent of announcing that one doesn't have a blemish; for example, a broken arm. If so, why should a person declare publicly that he is not ungrateful?

In light of this question, R' Nesher writes, we must reject our initial understanding. Apparently, not being ungrateful is something to be proud of. The reason for this is that being ungrateful is part of the human condition, so that a person who is not ungrateful has lifted himself above the human condition, above nature. Our first ancestor, Adam, was ungrateful, a trait he exhibited when he said (Bereishit 3:12), "The woman that You gave to be with me—she gave me of the tree, and I ate." In effect, Adam rejected all the gifts that Hashem had given him, including a wife, and blamed Hashem for his own (Adam's) downfall.

R' Nesher continues: From the earliest time in Gan Eden, when angels prepared Adam's food, man has lived with the attitude, "It's coming to me!" The Mitzvah of Bikkurim / First Fruits, the subject of the first section of our Parashah (including our verse), is meant to teach a person that nothing is coming to him. After a person toiled in his field, vineyard, or orchard for an entire season, the Torah commands him to give the first fruits to the Kohen, as well as to give other portions to Kohanim, Levi'im and the poor. A person who successfully performs the Mitzvah of Bikkurim can rightly proclaim: "I am not ungrateful!" (Haggadah Shel Pesach Shir Tziyon p.10)

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

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Sponsorships are available for two flower displays on the Bima during each of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Succot. Please consider sponsoring the flowers in honor or in memory of someone. Please email Allan Genut at agenut@gmail.com to make arrangements.

Yahrzeits This Week:

Marvin Pazornick	17 Elul - Saturday night / Sunday	for mother	Zelda Pazornick
Dr. Chaim Eisenberg	19 Elul - Monday night / Tuesday	for mother	Estelle Rose Eisenberg
Eliyahu Schwartz	21 Elul - Wednesday night / Thursday	for mother	Chava Basya bas R' Tzvi HaCohen

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DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 9/1 — 15 Elul

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 9/2 — 16 Elul

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.

Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:48 a.m.

Minchah — 7:05 p.m.

Shiur — after Minchah

Ma'ariv — 8:19 p.m.

Sunday, 9/3 — 17 Elul

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:15 p.m.

Monday — Labor Day, 9/4 — 18 Elul

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:15 p.m.

Tuesday, 9/5 — 19 Elul

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:15 p.m.

Wednesday, 9/6 — 20 Elul

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:15 p.m.

Thursday, 9/7 — 21 Elul

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:15 p.m.

Friday, 9/8 — 22 Elul

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Candles — 7:08 p.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.