

TALES of the HASIDIM

<http://goo.gl/e8QIo>

Please enjoy this eclectic selection of most excellent wisdom.

May it richly bless you in a greater understanding of the reality we all share. As some have said, not all of the tales are to be taken literally of course, some of them are, it is up to you to find out which ones are which. Enjoy them a!!

The Bold Faced and the Shame Faced

Our Sages say:

"The bold faced go to hell, the shame faced to paradise."

Rabbi Zusya, God's fool, expounded these words as follows.

"Whoever is bold in his holiness, may descend to hell in order to raise what is base. He may roam about in the alleys and market-places and need not fear evil. But he who is shame-faced, who lacks boldness, must keep to the heights of paradise, to studying and praying. He must beware of coming into contact with evil."

Answering Back

The Yehudi's wife often subjected him to long quarrelsome speeches. He always listened to what she had to say, but remained silent and accepted it cheerfully. Once however when her nagging was a good deal worse than usual, he answered her back. Later his disciple Rabbi Bunam asked him:

"In what way was this different from others?"

The Yehudi answered him:

"I saw that her soul was about to leave her body for rage because I did not let her scolding annoy me. And so I said a trifling word, that she might feel that her words troubled me and draw strength from this feeling."

LABOR PAINS

The Rabbi of Rizhyn said:

"If a pregnant woman goes into labor in the eight month when her time is not yet come, they try to stop her labor. But not so in the ninth month. If the woman goes into labor then, they try to hasten it, so that she may soon give birth.

That is why formerly when people called Heaven begging God to free the earth

of some misery, their prayer was granted, for the time was not yet come. But now that redemption is near [**TITE INVERSION(c)** <http://goo.gl/BJzPM>], no prayer which ascends in behalf of the sorrowful world is of avail, but sorrow is heaped upon sorrow so that the birth may soon be accomplished.”

When It Is Good to Deny the Existence of GD

Rabbi Moshe Leib said:

“There is no quality and there is no power of man that was created to no purpose. And even base and corrupt qualities can be uplifted to serve GD. When, for example, haughty self-assurance is uplifted it changes into high assurance in the ways of GD.

But to what end can the denial of GD have been created? This too can be uplifted through deeds of charity. For if someone comes to you and asks your help, you shall not turn him off with pious words, saying: ‘Have faith and take your troubles to GD!’ You shall act as if there were no GD, as if there were only one person in all the world who could help this man - only yourself.”

Country Houses

Rabbi Pinhas said:

“Gd's relationship to the wicked may be compared to that of a prince who, besides his magnificent palaces, owns all manner of little houses hidden away in the woods and in villages, and visits them occasionally to hunt or to rest. The dignity of a palace is no greater than that of such a temporary abode, for the two are not alike, and what the lesser accomplishes, the greater cannot. It is the same with the righteous man. Though his value and service be great, he cannot accomplish what the wicked man accomplishes in the hour he prays, or does something to honor Gd, and Gd who is watching the worlds of confusion, rejoices in him. That is why the righteous man should not consider himself better than the wicked.”

The Rabbi of Lublin and a Preacher

A famous traveling maggid was once preaching in a city, when word came that the rabbi of Lublin had arrived. And immediately all the maggid's audience left to greet the zaddik. The preacher found himself quite alone. He waited for a little while and then he too saw the Seer's table heaped with the "ransom-money" which the petitioners and other visitors had brought him.

The maggid asked

“How is this possible! I have been preaching here for days and have gotten nothing, while all this came your way in a single hour!”

Rabbi Yitzhak replied:

“It is probably because each awakens in the hearts of men what he cherishes in his own heart: I, the hatred of money and you the love of it.”

The Query of Queries

Before his death, Rabbi Zusya said:

“In the coming world, they will not ask me: **'Why were you not Moses?'**

They will ask me: **'Why were you not Zusya?'** “

With the Evil Urge

Once, when Rabbi Pinhas entered the House of Study, he saw that his disciples, who had been talking busily, stopped and started at this coming.

He asked them:

"What were you talking about?"

"Rabbi," they said, "we were saying how afraid we are that the Evil Urge will pursue us."

"Don't worry," he replied.

"You have not gotten high enough for it to pursue you. For the time being, you are still pursuing it."

The Limits of Advice

The disciples of the Baal Shem heard that a certain man had a great reputation for learning. Some of them wanted to go to him and find out what he had to teach. The master gave them permission to go, but first they asked him:

"And how shall we be able to tell whether he is a true zaddick?"

The Baal Shem replied.

"Ask him to advise you what to do to keep unholy thoughts from disturbing you in your prayers and studies. If he gives you advice, then you will know that he belongs to those who are of no account. For this is the service of men in the world to the very hour of their death; to struggle time after time with the extraneous, and time after time to uplift and fit it into the nature of the Divine Name."

Beside the Tree of Life

The Baal Shem told:

"Once I went to paradise and many people went with me. The closer I came to the garden, the more of them disappeared, and when I walked through paradise, there were only a very few left. But when I stood beside the Tree of Life and looked around, I seemed to be alone."

The Truth

The Baal Shem said: "What does it mean, when people say that the Truth goes over the whole world ? It means that Truth is driven out of one place after another, and must wander on and on."

To One Who Admonished

The Baal Shem said this to a zaddick who used to preach admonishing sermons:

"What do you know about admonishing ! You yourself have remained unacquainted with sin all the days of your life, and you have had nothing to do with the people around you - how should you know what sinning is !"

With the Sinners

The Baal Shem said:

"I let the sinners come close to me, if they are not proud. I keep the scholars and the sinless away from me if they are proud. For the sinner knows that he is a sinner, and therefore considers himself base - God is with him, for He dwelleth with them in the midst of their uncleanness.' But concerning him who prides himself on the fact that he is unburdened by sin, God says, as we know from the Gemara:

"There is not enough room in the world for myself and him."

In the Hour of Doubt

It is told:

In the city of Satanov there was a learned man, whose thinking and brooding took him deeper and deeper into the question of why what is, is, and why anything is at all. One Friday he stayed in the House of Study after prayer to go on thinking, for he was snared in his thoughts and tried to untangle them and could not. The holy Baal Shem Tov felt this from afar, got into his carriage and, by dint of his miraculous power which made the road to leap to meet him, he reached the House of Study in Satanov in only an instant. There sat the learned man in his predicament. The Baal Shem said to him:

"You are brooding on whether God is; I am a fool and believe."

The fact that there was a human being who knew of this secret, stirred the doubter's heart and it opened the **Great Secret**.

Rather Not

Rabbi Shmelke once said:

"If I had the choice, I should rather not die. For in the coming world, there are no Days of Awe, and what can the soul of man do with the Days of Judgment?"

The Worst

Rabbi Shelmo asked:

"What is the worst thing the Evil Urge can achieve?"

And he answered:

"To make man forget that he is the son of a king."

Thanking for Evil

A hasid asked the Seer of Lublin: *"To the words in the Mishnah: '**Man should thank God for evil and praise him,**' the Gemara adds: '**with joy and a tranquil heart.**' How can that be?"*

The zaddick could hear that the question sprang from a troubled heart. "You do not understand the Gemara," he said. "And I do not understand even the Mishnah. For is there really any evil in the world?"

The Secret of Sleep

Rabbi Zusya's younger son said:

"The zaddikim who, in order to serve, keep going from sanctuary to sanctuary, and from world to world, must cast their life from them, time and time again, so that they may receive a new spirit, that over and over, a new revelation may afloat above them. This is the secret of sleep."

To God

Once Zalman interrupted his prayers and said:

"I do not want your paradise. I do not want your coming world. I want You and You only."

Extricated from Time

Rabbi Shneur Zalman told his hasidm:

"I was walking in the street toward evening and happened to see something improper. I was deeply troubled that I had not guarded my eyes, placed myself with my face to a wall and cried my heart out. When I turned around I saw that it was dark and time for the Afternoon prayer had passed. Then I took counsel with myself. I extricated myself from Time and said the Prayer."

A Dish of Beans

A number of young men came to Rizhyn from a distant town in order to spend the Days of Awe near Rabbi Israel. When they noticed that he did not keep the prescribed hours for prayer but waited until he was seized with fervor, they wanted to imitate him and also waited, though they did not quite know what for. After the Feast of the Rejoicing in the Law, they went to the rabbi to take leave of him. He gave them his blessing and said:

*"See to it that you do not delay your prayers, but say each at its proper time. I shall tell you the story of the man whose wife served him a dish of beans for dinner year in, year out, day after day. Once she was delayed and the meal was put on the table an hour late. When her husband saw the beans, he grew angry and cried: **'I thought that today you were going to serve me an especially fine dish, and that the cooking of it had taken up so much time because it required many ingredients and particular care. But I am not in the mood to wait for the beans I eat every day!'**"*

With that the zaddik ended his tale.

The young men bowed, and started on their homeward journey. In an inn, where they stopped on the way, they met an old man whose face was unfamiliar to them, but with whom they immediately entered into conversation. When they told him what the rabbi had said to them in parting, he smiled and said:

"The cause of the man's anger was that there was as yet no perfect love between him and his wife. If there is such love, the man is well pleased if his wife lets him wait a long time, and then serves him a dish he eats every day, and there is nothing his heart does not regard as new and good."

The words struck the men deeply. When they went to Rizhyn again on the Days of Awe, they told the rabbi of the incident. He was silent for a time, and then said:

"What the old man said to you he also said to me, and he also said it to G-d."

Of Modern Inventions

"You can learn something from everything," the rabbi of Sadagora once said to his Hasidim. "Everything can teach us something, and not only everything G-d has created. What man has made has also something to teach us."

"What can we learn from a train?" one hasid asked dubiously.

"That because of one second one can miss everything."

"And from the telegraph?"

"That every word is counted and charged."

"And the telephone?"

"That what we say here is heard there."

Everyone Has His Place

Rabbi Abraham was asked:

*"Our sages say: '**And there is not a thing that has not its place.**'*

And so man too has his own place. Then why do people sometimes feel so crowded?"

He replied:

"Because each wants to occupy the place of the other."

The Choice

Rabbi Nahum once said tho the Hasidim gathered about him:

"If we could hand all our sorrows on pegs and were allowed to choose those we liked best, every once of us would take back his own, for all the rest would seem even more difficult to bear."

Playing Checkers

On one of the days of Hanukkah, Rabbi Nahum, the son of the rabbi of Rizhyn, entered the House of Study at a time when he was not expected, and found his disciples playing checkers, as was the custom on those days. When they saw the zaddik they were embarrassed and stopped playing. But he gave them a kindly nod and asked:

"Do you know the rules of the game of checkers. The first is that one must not make two moves at once. The second is that one may only move forward and not backward. And the third is that when one has reached the last row, one may move to where he likes."

The Tree of Knowledge

They say that once, when all souls were gathered in Adam's soul, at the hour he stood beside the Tree of Knowledge, the soul of the Baal Shem Tov went away, and did not eat of the fruit of the tree.

Satan's Threat

It is told:

Satan came to Rabbi Elimelekh and said:

"I simply won't stand for it any longer that you persecute me with your Hasidim! Don't imagine you can get the best of me! I shall make all the world Hasidim and then you will no longer have power."

Some time after this, Rabbi Elimelekh went into the House of Study with a cane to drive out some of the Hasidim. No one knows why he did not do it. I suppose he did not venture to single out the messengers of Satan.

A Transaction {read very carefully}

It is told:

The emperor in Vienna issued an edict which was bound to make thoroughly miserable the already oppressed Jews in Galicia. At that time, an earnest and studious man by the name Feivel lived in Rabbi Elimelekh's House of Study. One night he rose, entered the zaddik's room, and said to him:

"Master, I have a suit against G-d."

And even as he spoke he spoke he was horrified at his own words.

But Rabbi Elimelekh answered him:

"Very well, but the court is not in session by night."

The next day, two zaddikim came to Lizhensk, Israel Koznitz and Jacob Yitzhak of Lublin, and stayed in Rabbi Elimelekh's house. After the midday meal, the rabbi has the man who had spoken to him called and said:

"Now tell us about your lawsuit."

"I have not the strength to do it now," Feivel said falteringly.

"Then I give you the strength," said Rabbi Elimelekh.

And Feivel began to speak.

"Why are we held in bondage in this empire? Does not G-d say in the

Torah: 'For unto Me the children of Israel are servants.' And even though he has sent us to alien lands, still, wherever we are, he must leave us full freedom to serve him."

To this Elimelekh replied:

"We know G-d's reply, for it is also written in the passage and reproof through Moses and the prophets. But now, both the plaintiff and the defendant shall leave the court-room, as the rule prescribes, so that the judges may not be influenced by them. So go out, Rabbi Feivel. You Lord of the world, we cannot send out, because your glory fills the earth, and without your presence, not one of us could live for even a moment. But we herewith inform you that we shall not let ourselves be influenced by you either."

Then the three sat in judgment, silently and with closed eyes. After an hour, they called in Feivel and gave him the verdict: that he was in the right. In the same hour, the edict in Vienna was canceled.

The Horses

When Rabbi Wolf drove out in a carriage, he never permitted the whip to be used on the horses.

"You do not even have to shout at them," he instructed the coachman.

"You just have to know how to talk to them."

The Quarrelers

Rabbi Wolf saw no evil in any man and regarded all human beings as righteous. Once, when two persons were quarreling, and Rabbi Wolf was asked to side against the one who was guilty, he said:

"According to me, one is as good as the other - and who would venture to come between two righteous men?"

The Gamblers

A hasid complained to Rabbi Wolf that certain persons were turning night into day, playing cards.

"That is good," said the zaddik.

"Like all people, they want to serve G-d and don't know how. But now they are learning to stay awake and persist in this, all they need do is turn to G-d - and what excellent servants they will make for him then!"

The Thieves

One night, thieves entered Rabbi Wolf's house and took whatever they happened to find. From his room the zaddik watched them but did not do anything to stop them. When they were through, they took some utensils and among them a jug from which a sick man had drunk that very evening. Rabbi Wolf ran after them.

"My good people," he said. "whatever you have found here, I beg you to regard as gifts from me. I do not begrudge these things to you at all. But please be careful about that jug ! The breath of a sick man is clinging to it, and you might catch his disease!"

From this time on, he said every evening before going to bed:

"All my possessions are common property," so that - in case thieves came again - they would not be guilty of theft.

Refusal

The people of a certain city begged the Baal Shem Tov to induce his disciple Yehiel Mikhal to accept the position of rabbi, which they had offered him. The Baal Shem Tov urged him to accept, but he persisted in his refusal.

"If you do not listen to me," said his master, "you will lose this world and the coming world too."

"Even if I lose both worlds," answered his disciple, "I shall not accept what does not befit me."

"Then receive my blessing, my son," said the Baal Shem, "that you have withstood temptation."

The Man Who Denies God

Rabbi Pinhas said:

"Whoever says that the words of the Torah are one thing and the words of the world another, must be regarded as a man who denies G-d."

The Want

In early life, Rabbi Yehiel Mikhal lived in great poverty, but not for an hour did happiness depart him.

Someone once asked him:

*"Rabbi, how can you pray day after day, '**Blessed be thou... who has supplied my every want?**' For surely you lack everything a man has need of!"*

He replied:

"My want is, most likely, poverty, and that is what I have been supplied with."

Temptation

Rabbi Mikhal said:

"When the Evil Urge tries to tempt man to sin, it tempts him to become all too righteous."

Dubious Faith

A disciple asked the maggid of Zlotchov:

"The words in the Scriptures that Noah went into the ark 'because of the waters of the flood' Rashi interprets to the effect that Noah had small faith. He believed, and yet he did not believe, and not until the waters of the flood compelled him, did he go into the ark. Shall we really count Noah, that righteous man, among those who were small in faith?"

The zaddik replied:

"There are two sorts of faith: simple faith, which accepts the word and waits to see it fulfilled, and working faith whose power contributes to the fulfillment of that which is to be. With all his heart Noah feared to believe in the coming of the flood, so that his faith might not make that coming more sure. And so he believed and did not believe, until the waters compelled him."

The Blessing

Rabbi Mikhal once said to his sons:

"My life was blessed in that I never needed anything until I had it."

Rich People's Food

One day, a rich man came to the rabbi for a blessing. But before dealing with his spiritual question, the Maggid first asked,

"What are you in the habit of eating?"

The man replied,

"I am modest in my demands. Bread and salt, a drink of water, I need no more."

The rabbi is outraged.

"What are you thinking? You must have a good goose for dinner, or a steak, and a really good wine. And you must eat a luxurious breakfast each morning."

The rabbi did not let the man leave until he promises to change his ways.

The rabbi's disciples hear him instructing the man, and they can't believe their ears. A sinner wants to atone, and the Maggid tells him to eat well instead! So afterward, they ask him why. The rabbi explains,

"Not until he eats meat will he realize that the poor need bread. As long as he himself eats only bread, he will think the poor can live on stones."

Hide & Seek

Nearly two centuries ago Rabbi Barukh told his disciples a story.

His grandson David was once playing hide and seek with another boy. He hid himself well and waited for his playmate to find him. When he had waited for a long time, he came out of his hiding place, but the other child was nowhere to be seen. Now David realized that his friend had not looked for him from the very beginning. This made him cry, and crying he ran to his grandfather and complained about his faithless friend.

Then tears brimmed in Rabbi Barukh's eyes and he said:

'God says the same thing: "I hide, but no one wants to seek me"'

The Ten Principles

Said the maggid to Rabbi Zusya, his disciple: "I cannot teach you the principles of service. But a little child and a thief can show you what they are:

"From the child you can learn three things:

- He is merry for no particular reason;
- Never for a moment he is idle;
- When he needs something, he demands it vigorously."

The Maggid of Mezritch said:

"Every lock has its key which is fitted to it and opens it. But there are strong thieves who know how to open without keys. They break the lock. So every mystery in the world can be solved by the particular kind of meditation fitted to it. But God loves the thief who breaks the lock open. I mean the man who breaks his heart for God. "

"The thief can instruct you in seven things:

- He does his service by night;
- If he does not finish what he has set out to do, in one night, he devotes the next night to it;
- He and those who work with him love one another;
- He risks his life for slight gains;
- What he takes has no value to him, that he gives it up for a very small coin;
- He endures blows and hardship, and it matters nothing to him;
- He likes his trade and would not exchange it for any other."

Doing my job as best as I can

The rabbi of Sasov once traveled about trying to collect money to ransom persons in the debtor's prison, but he did not succeed in getting together the sum he needed. Then he regretted having wasted time he might have spent studying and praying, and resolved that henceforth he would stay home. On the same day he heard that a Jew who had stolen an article of clothing had been soundly beaten and put in jail. Rabbi Moshe Leib interceded with the judge and gained the thief's release.

When the zaddik went to fetch the thief from jail, he warned him:

"Remember the beating they gave you and don't ever do anything like

that again!"

"Why not?" said the thief, "If you don't succeed the first time, you may succeed the next."

"If that's the case," said the rabbi to himself, "then I must keep trying at my job, too."

The Wicked & the Righteous

The Rabbi of Lublin said:

"I love the wicked man who knows he is wicked more than the righteous man who knows he righteous."

But concerning the wicked who consider themselves righteous, it is said:

"They do not turn even on the threshold of Hell." For they think they are being sent to Hell to redeem the souls of others !!!