



A Story for the Shabbos Table

סיפורי הבעל שם טוב

THE ALTER REBBE'S PIRUSH ON CHUMASH

On the day the Alter Rebbe was born, Chai Elul ת"קה"ח, which was also the birthday of the Baal shem Tov, the Baal Shem Tov was very happy. He was the chazzan for davening and he davened in the Yom Tov tunes. He even did not say Tachanun.

Later, the Baal Shem tov made a special farbrengen, and he told his talmidim that today a נשמה חדשה, a new neshomo, (that has never yet been in a body) has come into the world. This Neshomo will light up the world with the two lights – of the revealed part of the Torah, and the hidden part of the Torah (Nigleh and Chassidus) which will light up the world until the coming of Moshiach.

Here is a story about the Alter Rebbe starting to want to spread Torah at a very young age.

When the Alter Rebbe was 8 years old, he started writing a Pirush, an explanation on the Chumash. In his Pirush he included the Pirushim of the three great explainers of the Torah, Rashi, the Ramban and the Ibn-Ezra. All the great Geonim who read his Pirush were very impressed with it.

One day, when the Alter Rebbe was 10 years old, he had a very scary dream. In his dream he was sitting and learning in a small room near the Shul, when Reb Reuven Baal Shem (a well known Tzadik Nistar) came in and told him that he is being called to a Din Torah. "What did I do?" he asked. "Come with me to the Shul, and you'll find out," answered Reb Reuven.

When the Alter Rebbe entered the Shul, he saw the three Dayanim (Rabbanim) of the Beis Din, wrapped in their Talleisim,

and a little bit away from them, stood three older Yidden dressed in white, with shining faces.

The Dayan in the middle began talking. "These three elders are Rashi, Rabbeinu Ibn Ezra and the Ramban. They have called you to court. The reason is that until now, they had the zechus of explaining the Torah to all the Jewish people. They are afraid that you will take this zechus away from them. No one will learn their Pirushim anymore because your Pirush combines and includes everything that is in theirs."

In his dream, young Shneur Zalman trembled and cried and was not able to speak. Finally he promised that he would burn the Pirush that he had written. The three elders then came over, put their hands on his head and gave him a Bracha, saying "You should have Hatzlacha in your learning and discover many Chidushim (new explanations) in Torah. You should open new paths in serving Hashem and hundreds of thousands of Yidden will go in the light of your teachings, from generation to generation, until the coming of Moshiach."

When he woke up, Shneur Zalman was very disturbed and did not know what to do. He fasted and davened that Hashem should show him what he should do.

The next night he had the same dream, and then he had it another night.

After he had the same dream three times, he decided that he has to keep the promise he made in the dream. He threw his writings into the fire and they were completely destroyed.