

Keep Smiling!

written by Chaim Kramer
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Reb Aharon of Kiblitsh was a devoted Breslover chassid who was known for his extraordinary diligence in Torah study and his cheerful demeanor, which was immediately apparent to all who saw him. Though beset with financial difficulties and other hardships, Reb Aharon always managed to remain happy, singing and dancing at the slightest excuse. Needless to say, his joy was contagious.

He once described how after an especially lively dance, the evil inclination had taunted him, "Aharon! You are the poorest man in town. You have all sorts of problems. Where did you find the joy to dance with such enthusiasm?"

"I borrowed it," he readily admitted. "I borrowed that dance from the better days ahead!"

Based on Oneg Shabbat, Hosafot, p. 525

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The legendary Polish Breslover chassid and tzaddik Reb Ben-

Zion Apter lost his entire family during the Holocaust. Somehow he survived and immigrated to Israel, where he was a favored guest in the courts of many great Chassidic rebbes.

In his later years, he would go to weddings and other celebrations to collect money for the poor, even though he lived in dire poverty himself. A skilled badchan (wedding entertainer), Reb Ben-Zion would sing and dance, invent rhymes in Yiddish, and pretend to play the violin, holding an invisible bow across his outstretched beard.

Once he entertained a wedding party that included David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel. Ben-Gurion laughed at the old chassid's antics until tears came to his eyes.

"For me, a good laugh is a rare and precious thing," Ben-Gurion confessed. "How can I repay you for this?"

"Ich hob tzuris mit di tzeyner—I have troubles with my teeth," the badchan answered, gesturing comically at his poorly-fitting false teeth to indicate the legitimacy of his request.

Ben-Gurion immediately gave Reb Ben-Zion his dentist's business card and promised to make all the necessary arrangements right away.

Sometime later, after receiving the finest dentures available, Reb Ben-Zion also incorporated this into his routine. "Look!" he would tell everyone, pointing to his mouth. "These are Ben-Gurion's teeth!"

Heard from Reb Akiva Greenberg, who, as a young yeshivah student,
attended Reb Ben-Zion Apter