

# The Rebbe's Wedding Day

written by Yehudis Golshevsky

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In Rebbe Nachman's time, it wasn't uncommon for children to be married off in their early teens. The Rebbe himself was married soon after his bar mitzvah on Rosh Chodesh Nisan 5545 (March 11, 1785), and on his wedding day, he acquired his first chassid.

At the Rebbe's bar mitzvah, his uncle Rabbi Ephraim of Sudilkov, author of Degel Machaneh Ephraim, pulled him aside.

"Know that today you receive a fresh gift of spiritual vitality, just like you did on the day you were born," Rabbi Ephraim told him. "The well-known verse in Psalms, 'Behold, I have borne you today,' refers to right now." Rabbi Ephraim continued at length, encouraging his nephew to embark on his path to adulthood with renewed energy and passion.

Soon after, [Rebbe Nachman](#) married Sashia, the daughter of Rabbi Ephraim of Ossatin. On the day of the wedding, prominent

guests gathered in Medvedevka to celebrate the marriage of a great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov.

The young groom appeared to be deeply immersed in thought and prayer the whole day, taking full advantage of this fresh start – the full forgiveness for all sin – that a bride and groom attain on their wedding day.

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At a certain point, close to the time of the chuppah, Rebbe Nachman approached a group of young men who lived in the town. He began to speak with them, to test their mettle: were they serious about serving God, or were they engrossed in the fleeting desires of this world? One of the young men, Reb Shimon b'Reb Ber, caught his attention. Rebbe Nachman took him aside and started to speak with him personally, trying to see where his heart really lay. When Reb Shimon made it clear that his only desire was in the simple service of God, Rebbe Nachman grabbed hold of him.

“Finally, someone who can hear me!” he exclaimed. He then began to speak passionately of Divine service, igniting the heart of Reb Shimon, who was much older than he.

As the Rebbe was called to the chuppah, Reb Shimon said with certainty, “I can see that you are going to be a great tzaddik. When you come into your own, please, let me be your *shamash* (personal assistant)!”

*Based on Or HaArot I, pp. 119-123*