

The Bal Shem Tov Lights a Fire!

When Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism, saw that the Jewish people were threatened by tragedy, he would go to a particular place in the forest where he lit a fire, recited a particular prayer, and asked for a miracle to save the Jews from the threat. Because of the Holy Fire and faithfulness of the prayer, the miracle was accomplished, averting the tragedy.

Later, when the Baal Shem Tov's disciple, the Maggid of Mezrich, had to intervene with heaven for the same reason, he went to the same place in the forest where he told the Master of the Universe that while he did not know how to light the fire, he could still recite the prayer, and again, the miracle was accomplished.

Later still, Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sasov, in turn a disciple of the Maggid of Mezrich, went into the forest to save his people. "I do not know how to light the fire," he pleaded with God, "and I do not know the prayer, but I can find the place and this must be sufficient." Once again, the miracle was accomplished.

When it was the turn of Rabbi Israel of Rizhyn, the great grandson of the Maggid of Mezrich who, who was named after the Baal Shem Tov, to avert the threat, he sat in his armchair, holding his head in his hands, and said to God: "I am unable to light the fire, I do not know the prayer, and I cannot even find the place in the forest. All I can do is to tell the story. That must be enough."

Imagine if you knew how to light the holy fire?! Imagine if you knew how to light the fire and had the opportunity to teach others how to light the fire?! Here is your opportunity!