

WHAT FOLKS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE MAGGID

Just a Great Evening

"You get a resounding bravo from me for your writing and portrayal of the Maggid. Just a great evening."

Like a Prayer

"What a treat to experience your wonderful storytelling, more like a prayer for me. Powerful and of course meaningful."

Richard Stone's Writing and Performance Were Brilliant

"I was privileged to attend The Maggid on March 30th. Richard Stone's writing and performance were brilliant. He is a great storyteller and his delivery about stories of the Baal Shem Tov touched me deeply. Many of us look to the Baal Shem Tov for wisdom. I highly recommend attending a performance if you are seeking an evening of joy, truth and wisdom."

Connected Me to a Tradition My Upbringing Did Not Provide

"I never had much exposure to Hasidic stories about The Baal Shem Tov - so I really enjoyed it and the metaphysical nature of the story. I enjoyed the way you weave a story! It connected me to a tradition that my Reformed Jewish upbringing did not provide me!"

Mesmerized

"I was sitting in a position that gave me a great view of the audience's faces last night. Every single face I saw looked mesmerized. I was greatly moved and entertained."

Wonderfully Executed

"Wonderfully executed stories faithfully and artfully recounted by a dramatic wordsmith."

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THE MAGGID



DIVINE SPARKS AND TALES OF THE BAAL SHEM TOV

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY RICHARD STONE

www.maggidtales.com

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DIVINE SPARKS AND TALES OF THE BAAL SHEM TOV

Israel ben Eliezer, better known as the Baal Shem Tov, or simply by the acronym the Besht, was born in 1698 and died in 1760. He was a Jewish mystic whom many regard as the founder of the Hasidic movement. Translated, his name means "Master of the Good Name." Most of what we know about the Besht comes down through oral stories about him and his many deeds. When these oral tales were first collected in *Shivhei ha-Besht (In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov)*, people didn't quite know what to make of them. Rebbe Shlomo Rabinowicz of Rodomsk declared, "Whoever believes all the miracle stories about the Baal Shem Tov...is a fool, but whoever denies that he could have done them is an apikoros [a heretic]." One thing is for certain, his stories and their lessons still reverberate to this day.

While his teachings stressed the spirit, more important to him than prayer was a friendly relationship with sinners. Unselfishness and high-minded benevolence are just two of the motifs in the legends about him. It was also believed that the Besht's soul had reached such a high level he could "ascend" to heaven and speak with any soul there and intervene between humans and G-d.

Nearly twenty-five years ago, Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, may his memory be a blessing, shared with Richard Stone a tale about the Baal Shem Tov and a disciple who went on to become a Maggid—a travelling preacher and storyteller. This story continued to percolate in Richard's soul until he recently wove it into the screenplay that is the source for this performance. We hope that this tale will spark something in you too, deepening your connection with all that is mysterious and holy.

About Richard Stone

Richard has been working with stories for nearly 30 years, writing fiction and non-fiction; developing story-based products, games, and training tools; exploring how story can help others illuminate what is most authentic in them; painting; exploring the mysteries of trees through his photography; and, telling stories. He is the author of *The Healing Art of Storytelling*, *Stories: The Family Legacy*, and *The Kingdom of Nowt*, and co-created an award-winning board game *Pitch-A-Story*.



His fascination with the tales of the Baal Shem Tov as well as other Jewish stories began thirty years ago and he continues to explore their relevance for our contemporary lives. Richard now resides with his wife Elizabeth Cohen in Decatur, Georgia and is developing story-based tools for personal transformation for college students and business leaders through his organization StoryWork International.

The Maggid Performance

The performance runs approximately 60 minutes without an intermission and requires few props to stage it. Performed by Richard, the story opens in the early life of the Maggid when he first meets the Baal Shem Tov and weaves together a series of tales that culminate in an unexpected revelation. Each of the tales explores important life themes—living with faith, forgiving transgressions, understanding life's difficulties and why bad things sometimes happen to good people, how to truly pray, and listening to one's calling in life.

How to Bring The Maggid to Your Community

Visit www.maggidtales.com or contact Richard directly at: Email storywork18@gmail.com. Mobile Phone 407-599-0101.