**Shabbos Stories Commemorating the**

**Fifth Yahrtzeit of Nechama Keren, A”H**

**Sivan 21, 5779/June 24, 2019**

**Compiled by Daniel Keren**

**From past emails of Shabbos Stories for the Parsha**

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**DEDICATION**

This year we mark on 21 Sivan/June 24th the fifth yahrtzeit of the matriarch of our family – Nechama bas Noach, a”h. The pain and loss of her petirah is still sharply felt especially as we approach a half decade since my wife’s passing and the void especially at times when the family gathers together is sharply felt.

May she continue to serve as an intermediary in Shomayim for our family and for all of Klal Yisroel and may we be worthy of the coming of Moshiach very soon and Techias Hameisim when once again our family will be reunited in joy.

This commemoration of the fifth yahrtzeit of my beloved wife consists of stories from my weekly email Shabbos Stories for the Parsha that began in 2009 and today we have more than 1,000 subscribers around the world who receive it for free. The stories in this commemoration are from various emails from 5776. I hope you will read these inspiring stories as a zechus for Nechama’s neshama.

Daniel Keren

Brooklyn, NY

13 Sivan 5779/June 16, 2019

**Remembering Mommy**

**(Nechama bas Noach, a”h)**

**By Chava Leah**

Four long years have passed me by

Four years and countless tears I've cried

Though you're no longer with me

You're place will always be in my heart

With all the fond memories

These passed years our family’s grown

There have been grandchildren born

Two of them bear your special name

You can see things are not the same

**Chorus:**

**Mommy you are remembered by all**

**Your memory will always stay with me**

**On my mind**

**With your picture in sight**

**You will always be part of my life**

**Even though**

**You are no longer here**

**You left behind an impression forever**

**So although**

**I cannot hold your hand**

**Your memory is staying alive**

**Deep inside**

Some days I can hear your voice

I see your smile and shining eyes

But then I blink

And suddenly you are gone

You have faded away

It’s as if you came to let me know

That you are with me even though

We cannot talk and laugh

Like those days in the past

But I feel that you are watching me

**Chorus:**

**Mommy you are remembered by all**

**Your memory will always stay with me**

**On my mind**

**With your picture in sight**

**You will always be part of my life**

**Even though**

**You are no longer here**

**You left behind an impression forever**

**So although I cannot hold your hand**

**Your memory is staying alive**

**Deep inside**

The precious moments that we shared

Your love told me how much you cared

All that you taught me each day

In your motherly way

Made me who I am today

As I approach a milestone

Sometimes I feel I’m on my own

But all that you’ve instilled

Will help me to build my own home

I know I’m not alone

**Chorus:**

**Mommy you are remembered by all**

**Your memory will always stay with me**

**On my mind**

**With your picture in sight**

**You will always be part of my life**

**Even though**

**You are no longer here**

**You left behind an impression forever**

**So although I cannot hold your hand**

**Your memory is staying alive**

**Deep inside**

***(Written by Chava Katz (nee Keren) last year on her thoughts about her mother’s fourth memorial anniversary.***

**The Baal Shem Tov and**

**The Tavern Keeper**

**By** [**Menachem Posner**](http://www.chabad.org/search/keyword_cdo/kid/12145/jewish/Menachem-Posner.htm)



Two carts clattered along the dusty road. Inside one sat Rabbi Meir Margulis, known for his scholarly works called the Meir Nesivim. In the other sat Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, whose fame as a man of G‑d was just beginning to spread.

Curious to get to know the mysterious man about whom so much had been said, Rabbi Meir asked the Baal Shem Tov to disembark so that they could speak. “They say you can perform miracles and can even read people’s minds,” he began. “Is that true?”

“Well, I’ll just tell you this,” replied the Baal Shem Tov. “When you were praying this past Shabbat, you accidentally chanted the weekday blessings instead of the special insert for Shabbat.”

“Yes, it’s true!” replied Rabbi Meir in amazement. “Now, please tell me what I can possibly do to correct this lack.”

The Baal Shem Tov advised him to carefully scrutinize his deeds and think thoughts of remorse, the standard course of correction for such an error.

“Rebbe,” said Rabbi Meir. “I know about those remedies. I was looking for something more.”

“In that case,” replied the Baal Shem Tov, “you should be sure to be patient in judgment.”

With that, the two men returned to their respective carts, and they were off.

As the spiritual leader of a large region, Rabbi Meir made a point to travel through every Jewish town and hamlet in the area at least once a year.

Upon his arrival in a rural community, the villagers asked the rabbi to help them solve a weighty problem that had torn their tight-knit group apart.

“You see,” explained one of the elders. “There is a young man who lives a ways out of town. None of us know who he is or where he comes from. He dresses all fancy, like a non-Jewish prince, and operates a tavern. One day, one of our men asked his wife to go pick up some vodka at the tavern. She took her time in returning. Things seemed just a bit suspicious, and rumors began to swirl that she and the tavern-keeper were up to no good.”

After listening to the accounts of various villagers, the rabbi determined that the situation did seem suspicious and called the tavern-keeper to appear before him.

Sure enough, the young man soon swaggered in, decked out in colorful silks and furs. Yet despite the accusations of the villagers, the man steadfastly maintained his innocence.

Unable to conclusively rule on the matter, Rabbi Meir left the village, feeling uneasy about the entire affair.

As he traveled along, he came upon the Baal Shem Tov once again. He stopped his horses and asked the Baal Shem Tov to do the same. Sitting in the Baal Shem Tov’s cart, Rabbi Meir recounted the chain of events that he had just encountered.

“Did I not tell you to be patient in judgment?” the Baal Shem Tov chided him. “You should know that in every generation there are 36 righteous people in whose merit the entire world stands. That tavern-keeper is the greatest of them all.”

Rabbi Meir immediately climbed into his cart and asked his driver to return to the village so that he could personally beg the young man for forgiveness.

But it was too late. The mysterious man was already gone without a trace. All Rabbi Meir could do was share the Baal Shem Tov’s words with the villagers, thus restoring the tavern-keeper’s good name.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Mattos-Massei 5776 email of ChabadOrg Magazine.*

**Jews Take Care**

**Of Each Other**

**By Emuna Braverman**

**A recent Shabbos experience in Europe reminded how privileged it is to be a part of the Jewish nation.**

"I've always relied on the kindness of strangers," says Blanche DuBois at the end of "A Streetcar Named Desire." For her it was a statement of tragic irony, filled with innuendo. For Jews, it is a statement of genuine reality and the power of living in a community – both locally and globally.

Recently my husband and I have been traveling frequently for business (too frequently if you ask our children!). Due to the timing of a conference we were attending we knew we'd spend Shabbos in a European capital (which shall remain nameless except for the fact that it won't be a European capital much longer!).

The conference was ending close to Shabbos and the traffic was terrible. We didn't want to risk the trek out to the more populous Jewish neighborhood but we knew there was a synagogue close to our hotel. So what were two lonely (and hungry!) observant Jews to do?

Call the local rabbi; what else? Actually we emailed – and we didn't do it last minute; my mother taught me better than that!

What was amazing was not that we called (we were desperate!) but that he graciously offered to host us. Lest you think he felt he had no choice, there is a specific offer on the website to contact him if anyone needs a meal for Shabbos, not his secretary, the rabbi himself!

When we arrived at the shul (completely unmarked for security reasons which definitely gave us pause) we quickly discovered that we were not alone. Visitors from Israel, from other parts of the city, and even from beautiful downtown Brooklyn graced his table.

Everyone was given a warm welcome – and a full plate. It was very moving, one of those "Who is like Your people Israel?" moments. It was done without pomp, without fanfare, just with the simple warmth and caring of one Jew (and his wife/Rebbetzin) for many others.

As Dennis Prager wrote when discussing anti-Semitism, the allegation that "Jews only care for themselves" should be reframed. It's not that "Jews only care for themselves" but rather that "Only Jews care for themselves". I can't speak to the experience of other ethnic groups or nationalities throughout the world but I can only say that ours was special. And yet not surprising. We've come to expect it. Because that's what it means to be family. We take care of each other. Even when we don't really "know" you.

We felt privileged and moved anew to be part of such a people. Not to mention that the food was delicious..

*Reprinted from the July 16, 2016 website of Aish.com*

**Chacham Tzemach Tzarfati**

**And the Plague Striking Tunis**

**By Rabbi Dovid Hoffman**

The city of Tunis was known as a great spiritual center for the Jews of North Africa, and many students came to the yeshivah there to learn Torah with its renowned spiritual leader, Chacham Tzemach Tzarfati zt”l, who implanted in his students a love of Torah, and an understanding of the various commentators on the Talmud.

Chacham Tzarfati was a man of astonishing wisdom, with purity and holiness. His courteousness to all people, and his nobility of spirit, was well known, to the point that even non-Jews respected and esteemed him as well. Chacham Tzarfati devoted his days and nights to the study of Torah. At night, when a tallow candle was necessary in order to learn by its light, the Chacham would burn through a full candle each night.

On one occasion, when he had no way to light his candle, he asked a baker’s assistant to light his candle and the young boy did so joyfully. Even when the candle went out a number of times, the assistant kept coming back to light the Tzaddik’s candle, and in return, Chacham Tzarfati blessed him with great riches. The blessing came true and many years later, this baker’s assistant turned wealthy businessman, returned the favor by providing the Chacham with enough money to live out the rest of his life peacefully in the Holy Land of Israel.

He was fluent in the revealed Torah, yet his knowledge of the hidden paths of Nistar, for which only a select few traversed, was equally voluminous. It was said that his mastery of the Zohar and other mystical works allowed him to retain a certain measure of control over the angels and other celestial beings. No one knew to what extent this power contained, until an episode occurred and the people of Tunis were awestruck with wonder.

One year, a terrible epidemic struck Tunis, producing numerous victims. Cries of distress rang out from every home. There was not one house that was not touched by illness. Men, women and children - no one was exempt from the path of this massive plague, and few caregivers could continue to treat the sick for fear that they too would contract the deadly illness. People began streaming to Chacham Tzemach Tzarfati for blessings and amulets that would protect them from the plague.

The Chacham obliged as many people as possible, but he found that he was unable to continue his rigorous schedule of Torah learning due to the stream of hapless Jews who required his assistance. Finally, the Chacham could no longer tolerate seeing the suffering of his people. He stood up, and in a loud voice, ordered the Angel of Death to come to the Bet Midrash. The students sitting at his feet were stunned and began cowering in fear, but Chacham Tzarfati told them to remain silent. After a moment, he signaled to them with his hand that the destructive angel had arrived.

In front of his students and many other bystanders, he began to rebuke the angel in harsh terms. Then, he picked up a bag of beans that had been on his desk and held it aloft. “I order the Angel of Death to immediately leave this city and its inhabitants alone for as many years as there are beans in this bag.” Then, he put the bag down and resumed learning.

Pushed by curiosity, one of the students dared to ask the Chacham for the bag in order to count the number of beans inside. Distractedly, he handed over the bag and the student counted out exactly eighty beans. Word spread rapidly, and soon the epidemic lifted. People began to recover and the inhabitants of Tunis breathed easier. They had seen with their very eyes that “a Tzaddik decrees and Hashem executes.”

And in fact, eighty years later the epidemic once again struck the city, but Chacham Tzarfati was already in the world where only goodness reigns. Near the end of his life, the Chacham fell gravely ill and suffered terribly for two years, without a remedy for his ills. Then, Eliyahu HaNavi appeared to him and gave him the cure to his ailment: If he studied Gemara and Poskim on the eve of a Brit Milah in the home of the baby’s mother, he would be healed.

The Chacham agreed to do this, and he was quickly healed. From that day on, he was invited into each home in which a boy was born. There he studied Torah until daybreak. Since that time, the custom among the Jews of Tunis has been to gather a minyan of scholars in the home of a newborn baby to study until daybreak. Chacham Tzarfati passed away in Jerusalem in 5477 (1717), and received the honor due a Tzaddik.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Pinchas 5776 email of Torah Tavlin.*

**The Washing Machine**



Our washing machine was breaking and there was no money for a new one, the signs that it was on its last legs were getting stronger and all that was left in my wallet was a prayer to the Creator of the World that He show us mercy and provide a fitting alternative.

Two weeks later the washing machine died and the laundry was beginning to pile up. We felt that we had reached our breaking point when my cell phone began to vibrate.

On the other of the line was an older man whom I knew asking if I was interested in a washing machine in good condition. Interested? Certainly! He asked that I come to his house.

The elderly man told me that they were leaving their large apartment and were moving to an assisted living facility and there were things that they did not need and they thought of offering it to me first because two weeks earlier when a large fire broke out near their apartment and I went to their home and tried to convince them to leave their apartment because of the danger. However, they refused in spite of my pleading.

Because of my concerns for them as a distant neighbor they were touched and decided to offer me their items before offering them to others. I received a washing machine that was literally almost new and some other things that I needed gifts from Heaven… (Mr. Y.A.)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Balak 5776 email of Tiv Hakehilah.*

**It Once Happened**

**Reb Meir of Premishlan**

**And the Rich Man**

All his life, the rabbi had longed for one thing only: to live in the holy land of Israel. There was no doubt in his mind that the time had now come to move to the Holy Land. Of course, just how he would manage it wasn't so clear, but G-d would surely help. The rabbi was sure that a trip to obtain the blessing of the great tzadik Reb Meir of Premishlan would facilitate his plans, and so the rabbi packed a bag and started off by foot.

When he finally arrived in Premishlan and was led into Reb Meir's study, the tzadik asked, "How will you raise the money for the journey?"

"Well," the rabbi began, "I have many relatives, and I am sure that when I explain the situation to them, they will be generous enough to help me."

Reb Meir didn't respond, but he appeared to be lost in thought. Finally, he said, "It would take many months to accumulate so much money - months which would be better spent devoted to Torah study. There is a different way. Remain here and you will obtain all the money you need for your journey and to set up your household." Needless to say, the rabbi readily agreed.

When the meeting ended, Reb Meir didn't dismiss his visitor as was usual. Instead, he had the next petitioner admitted to his study while the rabbi was still there. This man was a very wealthy person, and when he entered, Reb Meir said, "I would like to tell you a story, but I want the rabbi to listen as well for it will contain meaning for both of you.

"There was once a man named Moshe, who was very rich, but was a cruel and selfish person. Although G-d had provided him with great riches, he was the stingiest person you would ever have the misfortune to meet. Whenever a poor man came to his door asking for food or money, he would throw a veritable tantrum, screaming and cursing the hapless beggar. 'What do think this is?' he would thunder, 'a charity institution? Get out of here before I break every bone in your body!' And that beggar would be directed to the home of Moshe's neighbor, Reb Matisyahu. Now, this neighbor was not wealthy, far from it. But he had a kind and generous nature and never refused a fellow Jew in need.

"This scene occurred many times over the years, and Reb Matisyahu never failed to rise to the occasion. You might think that Moshe's reputation had gone as low as possible, but you would be wrong. For, since he was a very rich man, there were always those who sang his praises in order to ingratiate themselves with him - maybe there would be some gain in it for them.

"Reb Matisyahu's interminable kindnesses went unnoticed; after all, he was a nice guy and people expected him to be kind. The inequality of the situation may not have drawn notice down here, but in Heaven, it provoked the angelic host to fury. It was decided that Moshe's great wealth should go instead to Reb Matisyahu. The sentence was about to be carried out, when Elijah the Prophet spoke up. 'It's not right for a person to be judged on hearsay. I propose to go down to earth and test Moshe. Perhaps he isn't as cruel as we have heard.'

"This proposition was accepted, and soon an emaciated Elijah stood at the door of Moshe, knocking and begging for help. Moshe's reaction was the same as usual. First he berated the beggar for coming, and then he threw him outside into the bitter cold night. Elijah didn't give up so easily, though. He knocked again and with tears streaming down his face, he begged for a bit of food, a drop of warmth. But all to no avail, and the prophet realized that Moshe had forfeited his chance. The tears which continued to stream down his face were being shed for Moshe's lost soul."

The rabbi and the rich guest listened with rapt attention to the story, and as Reb Meir paused for a moment, they looked at him anxiously, wanting to hear the conclusion of the story. "When I heard about the terrible verdict that had been pronounced against Moshe, I felt very sorry for him. How could a man be condemned without fair warning, I thought.

“And so, I took it upon myself to provide Moshe with one last chance to redeem himself. If Moshe would provide the money necessary for the rabbi's move to the Holy Land, then he would be worthy of redemption. But, if, G-d forbid, he lost this one last opportunity, his soul would be lost. He would lose his fortune and be condemned to wander for the rest of his days, at the mercy of everyone he would meet."

Then, Reb Meir turned and his eyes met the terror-stricken eyes of the very Moshe of his story, but just for a split second, for Moshe fell to the floor in a faint. When he came to, he tearfully said to Reb Meir, "You are so right about me, and yet you have given me another chance to live and redeem my soul. He reached into his pocket and took out a heavy purse which he offered to the rabbi.

"Here, please take this, and when you reach the holy city of Jerusalem, please pray for me," said Moshe through his flowing tears.

The rabbi and his family were soon in Israel, living the fulfillment of their dreams. And Moshe completely turned his life around. In fact, every beggar or traveler who passed through his village was directed to his home, which was a comfortable haven for them all until the end of his days.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Balak 5776 edition of “L’Chaim Weekly,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY.*

**Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages**

**The Rebbe of Saklid’s Request to Chaim Tzvi**

During the dark days of the Holocaust, a seventeen year old boy named Chaim Tzvi Solomon who learned in a Yeshivah in Hungary was rounded up for slave labor. Before he left the Yeshivah, he approached the Rebbe of Saklid and asked for a Brachah.

The Rebbe placed his two hands on him and said, “Promise me that you will maintain a constant connection between yourself and Hashem.”

The Bachur was very moved by his words and he gave his promise. The Rebbe again placed his hands on his head and said, “This connection will guard you everywhere you go!”

Chaim Tzvi, whose parents and seven siblings were sent to their deaths in Auschwitz, not only maintained his connection to Hashem, but also managed to wear his Tefilin every day. He took them everywhere he went, even to slave labor. Once, the Germans decided to conduct a search, and they told everybody to remove their clothing. In a flash, while everybody was undressing, Chaim Tzvi dug a small hole in the earth and placed his Tefilin inside it. He stood on top of the hole, but one of the Germans noticed what he was doing.

Chaim Tzvi whispered in the German’s ear that he wouldn’t gain anything from what he had placed in the hole, but he would gain from what he would give to him. Chaim Tzvi took out an expensive gold watch which he had managed to smuggle out and keep with him, and gave it to the German, and incredibly, the German left him alone.

Chaim Tzvi continued to maintain his connection with Hashem, and with great Mesiras Nefesh, he strived to fulfill as many Mitzvos as he could. He survived until the liberation, and eventually returned to his hometown. There, he found everything destroyed. The town was in complete shambles.

Chaim Tzvi sat on a stone and began to weep over this Churban. With bitter tears, he Davened to Hashem and said, “Hashem, I accept everything You do, but I can’t forego the ancient Sifrei Torah which were in my father’s Shul. Ribbono Shel Olam, if the Sifrei Torah are still in this area, please help me find them!”

These Sifrei Torah were extremely old, and they were written with an unusually Mehudar type of writing. All the Rabbanim and Talmidei Chachamim of the area always preferred to read from these Sifrei Torah.

Suddenly, Chaim Tzvi heard the sound of loud barking. He opened his eyes and saw a dog running towards him. As it got closer, he recognized it as the dog that used to belong to his family. They had used it as a guard dog for his father’s factory.



The dog was barking frantically in a way that Chaim Tzvi, in all the years of the dog’s faithful service, had never heard before. Chaim Tzvi sensed that the dog was trying to tell him something. As Chaim Tzvi stood up, the dog began to run, and Chaim Tzvi ran after him. The dog ran to the edge of the town, and stopped next to a wheat field.

The dog began to dig with his feet into the ground. Chaim Tzvi started to dig as well, but he found nothing. He almost gave up and left but the dog refused to stop. He continued to dig and bark at Chaim Tzvi, so Chaim Tzvi started to dig again. When he had reached a significant depth, he heard the sound of metal, and soon they had uncovered a huge metal suitcase. Chaim Tzvi pulled the suitcase out and opened it up, and inside he found the two Sifrei Torah from his father’s Shul, completely intact!

The dog, however, did not calm down, and continued to bark. Chaim Tzvi continued to dig, and a little deeper, he found a box filled with a huge sum of money. It was his father’s fortune that he had managed to hide together with the Sifrei Torah before he was taken away!

A week later, the dog died. It showed Chaim Tzvi that Hashem kept the dog alive all this time just to answer his heartbroken Tefilah, and that one will always benefit from keeping a constant connection with Hashem! (Aleinu L’Shabei’ach)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Devorim 5776 email of Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**Why the Megaleh Amukos Decided Not to Leave Krakow**

The Megaleh Amukos once announced to his congregation that he had decided to leave his rabbinic post in Krakow and go elsewhere, but he didn’t want to tell them the reason behind his decision. The community begged him to stay, but he wouldn’t be persuaded.

When the final day of his tenure arrived he let the community know that he changed his mind and would stay with them. The people of the city were overjoyed, but also perplexed.

They said, "Why were you planning to leave, and what caused you to change your mind?"

The Megaleh Amukos replied, "I will still not tell you why I originally planned to leave, but I will tell you about a din Torah that came before me just yesterday, which caused me to reassess my decision and I decided to stay."

The people listened attentively as their great rav told them about the din Torah: "There's a certain pauper in our city; he earns his parnassah by selling breads. His wife bakes them, and he sits on the roadside, like the standard poor peddler, selling breads to the passersby.

A couple of months ago, a wealthy person recognized him. "Aren't you the son of so-and-so?"

"Yes, that's me."

"You're a talmid chacham, this job is beneath your dignity. I also know your prestigious lineage. How did it happen that you ended up like this?"

"This is what I do for a living," the pauper answered simply.

The wealthy man said, "I will support you. You can remain in beis medresh and learn Torah, as is fitting for a scholar like yourself, and I will send you a weekly stipend. It will be even more than you earn now…"

The pauper agreed, and this arrangement continued for a couple of months. But recently, the wealthy man caught the pauper on the street again, selling breads. "What happened? We made an agreement. Why are you outdoors selling breads again?"

The pauper replied, "I decided to back out of the deal."

"You can't back out without my consent. We made a deal, and like every agreement, you can't back out on your own. It needs to be done before a beis din." The Megaleh Amukos continued, "Yesterday they presented this unusual din Torah to my beis din. The wealthy person wants to continue supporting, and the pauper doesn’t want to accept.

"I asked the pauper why he wants to break the agreement, and this was his response:

"As a peddler, my wife and I are continuously davening. When my wife kneads the dough, we pray the dough should rise properly. We pray that I should find dry firewood (wet wood creates smoke, which ruins the breads), and we also daven to sell the breads. Our entire day revolves on our tefillos and we continually trust in Hashem. But ever since the wealthy person supported us, we almost stopped davening. We feel that we can manage with the weekly gift that he sends us, and we forget to daven to Hashem. We’ve become detached from Hashem. I want to be a peddler again."

"When I heard this poor man's words I said, I want to remain in this city, to be around people like this."

A similar story happened with the Bas Ayin. He arrived in Eretz Yisrael in the month of Elul. Originally his plan was to stay in Tzefas until after the holidays, and then move to Yerushalayim.

But just as he was about to leave, he heard a woman tell her son, "Yerachmiel! We have to protect the schach from rain. On Simchas Torah we benched geshem and it will rain very soon."

When the Bas Ayin heard this, he decided to stay. He wanted to be among people who believe with a complete faith in the power of tefillah.

A person once came to the rebbe of Kotzk and told him about his many problems. The rebbe said, "So why don’t you daven to Hashem to help you?" "Rebbe," he answered, "I would love to daven, but I don’t have peace of mind. The tzaros overcome my ability to think straight and I can't pour my heart out in tefillah."

The Rebbe of Kotzk said, "Not being able to daven is your greatest problem. Why did you tell me all your other problems first and leave this problem for last? This is the first thing you should have told me, because it is the greatest problem of them all."

The Rebbe of Gustantin zy'a would tell the people who came to him that they should daven. They came to him, because they wanted him to daven for them, and he would respond that they should daven for themselves. Often, he would recommend which chapters of Tehillim to say each day until they have their salvation. Many people were helped in this manner.

Once, someone came to the Rebbe, and told him his problems. The Rebbe asked him, "Did you daven yourself yet? Did you pray for a salvation?"

The man replied, "That's why I came here. I want the Rebbe to daven for me. As the Gemara says, "Anybody that has an ill person in his home should go to a Torah scholar, so the scholar can daven for him" (Bava Basra 116).

The Rebbe of Gustantin told him, "You've misunderstood the Gemara. It should be read like this: whoever has an ill person in his home should do the following two things: (A) he should ask a chacham to daven for him. (B) and he should also daven for himself." Their joint tefillos, will bring yeshuous. Interestingly, the Me'iri translates this Gemara the following way: "When there is an ill person in the home, he should go to a chacham, and the chacham will teach him how to daven." It isn't proper to rely solely on tzaddikim to daven for you; one should daven himself as well.

The Noam Elimelech zy'a (end of Ha'Azinu) writes that davening for yourself is the highest form of tefillah – even greater than the tefillos of tzaddikim – because it emanates from the depths of the heart. Let us therefore maximize and utilize our potential for tefillah. With tefillah, all our hearts' desires can be attained.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Va’eschanan 5776 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman, shlita as compiled by Rabbi Boruch Twersky.*

**Steven Hill Dies at 94**

**Orthodox Jewish Actor Starred in ‘Mission Impossible,’ ‘Law & Order’**

**By JTA Staff**

[](http://cdn.timesofisrael.com/uploads/2016/08/steven-hill.jpg)

**Steven Hill appeared in 225 episodes of “Law & Order” from 1990 to 2000. (NBCU Photo Bank/Getty Images)**

Steven Hill, an Orthodox Jewish actor best known for playing a Jewish Manhattan district attorney on the hit TV series “Law & Order,” has died at 94.

Hill, who sacrificed numerous career opportunities in order to observe Shabbat, died Tuesday in Monsey, New York, Hollywood Reporter [said](http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/steven-hill-dead-law-order-880765), citing Hill’s son, Rabbi Yehoshua Hill.

The New York Times cited Hill’s daughter, Sarah Gobioff, in reporting that Hill lived in Monsey, a heavily Orthodox Jewish area in suburban Rockland County, but died [August 23, 2016] in Manhattan.

On NBC’s “Law & Order,” Hill played District Attorney Adam Schiff for more than 225 episodes from 1990 to 2000, earning two Emmy nominations for outstanding actor in a drama series. Schiff was loosely modeled on longtime Manhattan DA Robert Morgenthau, who also was Jewish.

In a 1996 interview with The Washington Post cited in the Times obituary, “Law & Order” creator Dick Wolf called Hill “the Talmudic influence on the entire zeitgeist of the series.”

“Steven has more moral authority than anyone else on episodic TV,” Wolf said.

In a statement made after Hill’s death, Wolf said, “Steven was not only one of the truly great actors of his generation, he was one of the most intelligent people I have ever met … He will be missed but fortunately he can be seen ubiquitously on Law & Order reruns.”

[](http://www.imfdb.org/wiki/Steven_Hill)

**Steven Hill as Daniel Briggs in Mission Impossible (1966)**

Hill, born Solomon Krakovsky in Seattle, Washington, made his professional acting debut in the 1946 production of [“A Flag Is Born,”](http://www.jta.org/2006/08/31/life-religion/features/zionist-brando-play-turns-60) a controversial Zionist play by Ben Hecht.

In the 1960s, after having established himself in television and on Broadway, Hill became Orthodox. In a 1983 interview with The New York Times, Hill said he was inspired to explore Judaism after performing the role of Sigmund Freud in “A Far Country,” a play in which a character screamed “You’re a Jew!” at the founder of modern psychology.

“When she would let loose this blast, I would take it. And in the pause that followed, I would think, ‘What about this?’ And I was provoked to explore my religion,” Hill told the Times. “I slowly became aware that there was something more profound going on in the world than just plays and movies and TV shows.”

His newfound observance of Shabbat, which coincides with performances on Friday night and Saturday afternoon, effectively ended Hill’s stage career, according to Hollywood Reporter.

However, Hill was still able to work in television. He appeared on several hit shows and was in the original cast of “Mission Impossible,” but was forced to leave after a year due to his unavailability for rehearsals on Friday night and Saturday.

After a 10-year hiatus from acting in which he worked in real estate and writing, Hill returned to acting in 1977, appearing in several TV shows and films, including “Thirtysomething,” “Yentl” and “Brighton Beach Memoirs.”

Hill is survived by his second wife, Rachel, nine children, and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

*Reprinted from the August 23, 2016 email of the Jewish Standard.*

**Mistaken Identity**

**By C.H.**

Father was rushed unconscious to the emergency room after passing out for no apparent reason. Upon arrival at the emergency room he regained consciousness but because of overcrowding of patients there was no one available to treat him. I arrived at the hospital an hour after the ambulance in order to visit my father, but whoever I asked to examine him told me: “There are patients in more serious condition that need treatment and when a doctor will be available he will be treated.”

Helplessly, I emotionally recited Tehillim. Twenty minutes later the full senior team of doctors arrived and gave my father a comprehensive examination, and then they took him to a private room where he was greeted by a senior specialist who devotedly treated my father and he diagnosed a severe stroke and he quickly treated him and saved him from certain paralysis.

I thought to myself with great amazement, ‘Who sent the specialist to treat my father privately?’ The doctor and my cousin solved the riddle after a telephone conversation that was confusing itself.

My father’s cousin had difficulty moving his hand and his family took him to the same hospital my father was taken to in order to diagnose the source of the problem which had been going on for the past several weeks, and so they contacted a private specialist.

The doctor, on his way to the hospital called the receptionist and asked to arrange the necessary examinations ahead of everyone else. Since the names of the families were the same the doctors mixed them up and took my father from the emergency room and conducted the examinations and the doctor treated him as he was certain that he was treating his patient until the family called him and asked him why he was so delayed and he responded:

“I am treating your father for more than an hour with life-saving treatments.” “What treatments? I am by my father’s side for more than an hour and you have not shown up!”

It was only then that the mistaken identity was clarified after our father was saved and his cousin was fine and the whole family was jubilant because of the miracle.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Va’eschanan 5776 email of Tiv Hakehila, a parsha sheet published by Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz’s Shul in Yerushalayim.*

**Not a Simple Ferry Ride**

**By David Bibi**

This week I read an amazing story by Rabbi Yonasan Abraham, a Dayan and member of the London bet Din. He titles it, The Ferry Ride

He writes: “As I once stood in a small Beit Midrash in London, I soon found myself surrounded by a number of philanthropists, among them a man named Joe Orenstein. His father had been a Holocaust survivor who hailed originally from Opatow, an eminent Polish town. Having met much financial success, Joe was heavily involved in helping set up the London Jewish community and various chesed organizations.

“It was one year during the month of August that he and his wife flew to New York to attend a wedding. Finding his table number and taking a seat, he was met by another gentleman sitting across from him. The man was dressed in Chassidish attire and appeared to be a distinguished individual. Striking up conversation with the man, Joe began to relate how he had recently moved from England to Israel and how a large part of his family now lived in Lakewood, New Jersey.

“It was then the other gentleman’s turn to recount some of his past experiences and background. But there was one particular word which caught his attention when listening to Joe speak about his own life: England. Mentioning how years ago, he had also visited England, the man went on to tell Joe what exactly transpired on that one occasion:

“Thirty-five years ago, I took a trip to England. I was twenty-two years old at the time and didn’t have anything to do with Judaism. My father wasn’t Jewish and I had no connection to it either. After being in England for some while, I continued on to Amsterdam, and from there to Berlin and then Paris. From Paris, I eventually decided I would make my way over to London.

“To my luck, a rowdy group of fifteen-year-old boys sat alongside me on the train from Paris. Of course, I was somewhat older than they were and was unable to peacefully fall asleep listening to their noisy antics. But I managed to keep my cool. It was after this train ride that I needed to take one last ferry to my final destination. While I thought that I would now be able to enjoy a moment’s reprieve, I was mistaken. The same group of fifteen-year-old boys followed me onto the ferry. That was the last thing I wished would happen.

“But then, all of a sudden, they became quiet. Surprised and curious as to what happened, I looked up and noticed that they were taking out black boxes from their bags. I had no idea what they were doing. All I could think about was how it was quiet and that now I would finally be given a few moments to peacefully relax.

“But then, one of the boys walked over to me and began explaining what they were doing. Asking me if I was Jewish, I told him, “I’m sorry, but I am not. My dad is not Jewish.” “What about your mother?” he said. After replying in the affirmative, he reassured me that I was Jewish despite my father not being Jewish and my complete ignorance of Judaism. “Why don’t you try these on?” he told me.

“Touched by the boy’s genuine sincerity in coming over to me and taking an interest in someone he never met before, I agreed to do so. And so, I began wrapping the black straps around my arm with his assistance. It was the first time in my life that I put on Tefillin. The boy also proceeded to teach me the verse of Shema Yisrael and explain what it means.

“After this unexpected event, I was tremendously moved. While all I had wished to do was get off the ferry and move away from that group of noisy teenagers, in hindsight, that ride on the ferry changed my life forever. After looking further into Judaism, I eventually traveled to America and went on to learn little by little and become who I am today: a religious practicing Jew.”

“After hearing this story, Joe Orenstein was certainly moved. But, rather quickly, Joe realized that this story was closer to his heart that he would have thought at first.

“Can I tell you something?” said Joe to the gentleman. “Do you know whose Tefillin those were who you put on thirty-five years ago? Mine. I was that boy who went over to you and helped you wrap Tefillin for the first time. And here we meet thirty-five years later. Pleasure to meet you again…”

“Years later, the two neshamot which had connected decades earlier met again. While Joe Orenstein may have believed he was simply exposing a fellow Jew to the beauty of a mitzvah, little did he realize that he was planting a seed that would later flourish into a plentiful tree with abundant fruit. This man’s life and the lives of his children saw an entirely different destiny due to that one morning on the ferry. Never should we minimize even the smallest gesture of outreach to a fellow Jew. Its impact can last forever.”

*Reprinted from the Parshat Vaet’hanan 5776 email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.*

**The Segulah of Reciting Birchas Hamazon Properly**



Reb Shimon is an elderly Yid who lives in Yerushalayim. When he was young, he lived in Lublin (before the Holocaust). Reb Meir Shapiro zt'l once came to his cheder to test the students. Generally, after testing the children, Reb Meir Shapiro would distribute gifts or sweets to the children, but this time Reb Meir Shapiro didn’t have anything to give them.

"Instead of a gift, I will tell you a wonderful segulah," Reb Meir Shapiro told them. "If you will follow my counsel, you will be successful and always lead a tranquil life. He told them about the wonders that happen to people who say birchas hamazon properly. He quoted the Ba'ch who says, "Whoever recites birchas hamazaon with kavanah, neither wrath or destruction will ever befall him."

And he told them the Chinuch, who says, "Whoever is careful with birchas hamazon will have parnassah bekavod his entire life." He also told them the Be'er Heitav who concludes, "Those who are careful will always say the birchas hamazon from a siddur and not by heart." Reb Meir Shapiro zt'l quoted these sources and concluded, "This is my present to you."

Reb Shimon took the lesson to heart. He decided right then and there that he would be careful with birchas hamazon. He kept this kabalah throughout his entire life. In cheder, his friends would bench quickly and go out to play, while he lingered behind, in order to bench properly. It was challenging, but he didn’t want to abandon this wonderful gift that Reb Meir Shapiro gave him.

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A few years later, the Nazis invaded Poland. Reb Shimon was standing in line for a 'selektzia.' Whoever was short was being sent to the left for execution. Reb Shimon prayed that he should be saved from 'wrath and destruction' in the merit of birchas hamazon. When it was his turn, he stood on his toes to appear higher; the Nazi signaled him to the right. His life was saved in the merit of birchas hamazon. Soon afterwards, Reb Shimon found himself standing in line again. This time, each person had to tell the Nazi in charge what he could do for parnassah. Reb Shimon didn’t know what he could say. He was only a teenager, taken away from yeshiva to this cursed place. As he waited in line he prayed, "In the merit of birchas hamazon, which is mesugal for parnassah, Hashem, please support me…"

The person behind him in line tapped him on the shoulder and said, "Tell the Nazi that you are a cook and that I'm your helper." He said this and they were both sent to work in the kitchen. As the Chinuch promised, he had enough food to eat because he was careful with birchas hamazon.

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In the camps, Reb Shimon continued to be extremely careful with birchas hamazon. For example, if he understood that he wouldn’t have enough time to say the birchas hamazon properly, then he wouldn’t eat bread to begin with.

Once, a Nazi saw Shimon working in the kitchen and he wasn't pleased that he had this 'good' position, surrounded with food.

"What are you doing here? You look like a young child."

"I work here," Shimon explained. "I am a cook."

The Nazi took Shimon outside and showed him a stony area, outside the kitchen. "Dig a two meter ditch here. You have two hours to finish, or you will be buried in it." He gave him a tiny shovel.

At that time, the Nazis were building trenches to hide in, in case they would be attacked by the Russians. But the task the Nazi gave Shimon was absolutely impossible. The ground was covered with heavy stones, he only had two hours to finish the chore, and he was given only a small shovel to work with.

Reb Shimon raised his eyes to heaven and said, "I say birchas hamazon with kavanah. This is mesugal to save me from 'wrath and destruction.' I was saved before. Please save me again in this merit."

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A few moments later a German jeep drove by, filled with Nazis, and they saw this young lad trying to dig a ditch with a small shovel. To tease him, they threw tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, and other vegetables at him.

Reb Shimon thought wryly, "I see that in the merit of birchas hamazon, I once again received the blessing for abundance. Now I need the blessings for protection from wrath and destruction as well." Shortly afterwards a jeep with Russian POWs showed up. When they saw all the vegetables around Shimon, they stopped and asked for them. (They were hungry, because the Nazis hardly fed these prisoners.)

With an authoritative voice, Shimon told the Russians, "When there is a pit two meters deep here, I will give you the vegetables."

The Russians had the right tools for digging. They took them out of their jeep, and began digging the trench. There were several of them, so they were able to finish the job in a half-hour.

The Nazi returned and saw that the task was completed. He said, "I always knew that G-d takes care of you. I just didn’t realize to what extent." Shimon was saved once again, in the merit of birchas hamazon.

When he came to Eretz Yisrael after the war was over, he continued to enjoy many blessings of abundance. He always had parnassah, and he married off all of his children honorably, never going into debt – all in the merit of birchas hamazon.

*Reprinted from “Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman” as compiled by Rabbi Boruch Twersky.*

**Trust in Hashem and Just Send One Appeal Letter**

A father called the mashgiach of one of the prominent yeshivos in Eretz Yisrael, and asked information about one of the bachurim. The mashgiach, said in Hebrew, “Lo kol hatov/Nothing is good” about this bachur", but the shidduch was finalized anyway.

At the vort, the mashgiach warmly shook the father's hand, and wished him a joyous mazal tov, and out of curiosity, he asked the father why he decided to go further with this shidduch, even after what he had told him

My daughter said that it doesn't bother her if he doesn’t have a good voice." The father misunderstood the mashgiach because Hashem wanted the shidduch to transpire. “Lo Kol hatov” could also mean the boy doesn’t have a good voice.

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Rebbe Mordechai of Zvhil zy"a (before he became rebbe) needed twenty-six thousand dollars for an upcoming chasunah. He went to the office of the Eitz Chaim Yeshiva, where he studied, and asked the director of the yeshiva to give him the addresses of wealthy donors in America, because he wanted to send them letters, asking for money for the chasunah.

The director didn’t want to give him the addresses (because he wanted their support for the yeshiva) so he gave Rebbe Mordechai Zvhiller some old addresses from people who used to support the yeshiva, but hadn't given a donation for a long time.

When Rebbe Mordechai returned home with the list, his wife rebuked him, "Do you really think that these are going to help you? The director certainly gave you the addresses of people who don't have money anymore."

Rebbe Mordechai explained to her that he was doing hishtadlus.

"If your goal is hishtadlus, why do you have to send letters to all of them? Just send one letter, and that will be your hishtadlus..." she chided.

Rebbe Mordechai replied, "You're right. I'll send only one letter."

He sent off one letter and soon received an envelope in return with a check for twenty-six thousand dollars inside. Rebbe Mordechai went to the director to thank him for the addresses.

The manager was shocked. "You mean your letters were answered?"

"Not the letters, I only sent one letter, and I received twenty-six thousand dollars." And he told him the name of this baal tzedakah.

The manager called up this baal tzedakah and asked, "I see that you have money, because you just gave one of our students twenty-six thousand dollars for hachnasas kallah, so why did you stop sending money to the yeshiva?"

The man replied, "I don’t have money anymore. The money was from my daughter, who is a kallah. After her engagement we discovered that she has an illness. We went to Reb Moshe Feinstein, and asked him whether we must tell the chassan and the mechutanim about it. Reb Moshe inquired about the nature of the illness, and then ruled that we don’t need to say anything.

'However,' Reb Moshe advised, 'if your daughter has some money of her own, it is a good idea for her to give it for hachnasas kallah. In the merit that she helps another kallah go to the chuppah, she will also merit going to her chuppah.' Just then, we received Rebbe Mordechai's letter, and his request for hachnasas kallah. My daughter works, so she had some money saved up. She emptied her account, and immediately sent it to Rebbe Mordechai, for his daughter's wedding." Rebbe Mordechai had bitachon, and received all the money he needed with one letter. This story is an example of hashgachah pratis. Immediately after Reb Moshe advised them to donate money for hachnasas kallah, Reb Mordechai's letter arrived in the mail.

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Reb Eliyahu Shamni and his wife were childless for twenty years, before they decided to adopt. Adoption is a long process. The first step is to fill out forms at the adoption agency, then, the agency tries to determine whether the couple applying is capable of raising a child (according to their criteria).

The first question on one of the documents was: "State, in order of preference, the five things you love the most." Reb Eliyahu Shamni wrote, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu" first and then he filled out the other four.

The agency reviewed his answers and asked him, "If you will have an adopted child, will you love the child more than the five items you listed here?" This is the agency's method to determine whether the couple will love the adopted child.

Reb Eliyahu Shamni answered, "I will never love anyone or anything more than HaKadosh Baruch Hu!"

There was another religious couple in the agency at this time who was also applying for adoption. They said to Reb Eliyahu Shamni, "Just tell them what they want to hear. It's just a procedure. You don’t have to tell them the truth. Otherwise, they will not accept you."

But Reb Eliyahu Shamni was unyielding, "I love Hashem more than everything in the world," he said emphatically, "and I refuse to say differently." The Shamni's were disqualified, and the adoption agency removed them from the waiting list. Nine months later exactly, the Shamnis had twins. The other religious couple who was with them in the agency was still waiting for their adopted child. The adoption process can take a lot of time, but Reb Eliyahu and his wife were blessed with their own set of children. Reb Eliyahu wisely told me, "When one doesn’t give up on the One, he ends off with two."

*Reprinted from the Parshas Terumah 5776 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman as compiled by Rabbi Boruch Twersky.*

[**Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis a”h**](http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/baruch-dayan-haemes-rebbetzin-esther-jungreis-ah/2016/08/23/)

**By:** [**Jewish Press Staff**](http://www.jewishpress.com/author/jewishpressstaff/)

[](http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/baruch-dayan-haemes-rebbetzin-esther-jungreis-ah/2016/08/23/)

With deep pain and anguish we are saddened to report the petirah moments ago [Tuesday, 19 Menachem Av/August 23, 2016] of Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis a”h founder of HINENI and pioneer in the world of Kiruv. With the Rebbetzin’s petirah K’lal Yisroel has suffered an irreplaceable loss.

The Rebbetzin was a trailblazer, for over a half century, crisscrossing the globe with her message of loving-kindness and hope. She was a teacher of Torah to millions of Jews from every walk of life.

She spent her life showing the beauty of Yiddishkeit to Jews across the globe bringing countless neshomos back to their roots.

Rebbetzin Jungreis was born in Szeged, Hungary in 1936, where her father HoRav Avrohom HaLevi Jungreis zt”l was Chief Rabbi.

A Holocaust survivor, Rebbetzin Jungreis made it her life mission to bring back Jews to authentic Yiddishkeit. She was a pioneer in the world of kiruv/outreach and founded the international HINENI Movement.

The Jungreis family had been deported with other Jews from Szeged. After suffering through many concentration camps, B’chasdei HaShem, the family eventually arrived in Switzerland.

In 1947, after being spared the horrors of the concentration camps and the Holocaust, the Jungreis family arrived in Brooklyn, New York where the Rebbetzin married a distant cousin, HoRav Meshulem HaLevi Jungreis zt”l. The newly-married Jungreis couple settled in North Woodmere, New York, where Rabbi Jungreis was the spiritual leader of Ohr HaTorah.

The Rebbetzin, together with her husband embarked on a lifelong mission devoting their lives to combating the spiritual Holocaust that was occurring right in front of their eyes here in the United States. She waged a fierce battle against interfaith marriages, secularization, and other forms of assimilation, which she firmly believed was an existential threat to the continued existence of K’lal Yisroel.

Under the Rebbetzin’s leadership HINENI became a worldwide movement, inspiring Jews to seek out their roots and return to Yiddishkeit. Rebbetzin Jungreis authored several best-selling books including “The Jewish Soul on Fire”, “The Committed Life”, and “The Committed Marriage”, all of which have been translated in many languages with millions of volumes disseminated in every corner of the globe. Her latest book – “Life Is A Test” was widely acclaimed as one of the 10 best Jewish inspiration books of all time.

The Rebbetzin’s pioneering work has been widely recognized, and she received brochos and encouragement from numerous gedolim, including such giants as the Satmar Rebbe, HaRav Yoel Teitelbaum zt”l, HaRav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin zt”l, HaRav Moshe Feinstein zt”l, and many others.

She was also recognized by numerous world leaders for her work within the Jewish community to advance Yiddishkeit. Among them were such notables as the late Prime Minister of Israel Menachem Begin a”h and President George W. Bush who asked the Rebbetzin to accompany him to Yerushalayim for the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the State of Israel in 2008.

The Rebbetzin was an incredible woman – a person who has literally influenced and touched countless people. The many thousands of individuals who were fortunate enough to receive her brocho immediately felt the connection with this unique person.

Rebbetzin Jungreis is survived by her children Chaya Sora Gertzulin, Rabbi Yisroel Jungreis, Slovi Wolff and Rabbi Osher Jungreis, and by many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

*Reprinted from the August 24, 2016 email of The Jewish Press.*

**Esther Jungreis, Known as ‘the Jewish Billy Graham,’ Dies at 80**

**By William Grimes**



Esther Jungreis in 2004 at her office at Hineni, the outreach organization she founded, which offered classes in Torah and social mixers at which Jewish singles could find one another. Photo Credit - Carol Halebian for The New York Times

Esther Jungreis, a charismatic speaker and teacher whose enormously popular revival-style assemblies urged secular Jews to study Torah and embrace traditional religious values, died on Tuesday in Brooklyn. She was 80.

The cause was complications of pneumonia, her son-in-law, Rabbi Shlomo Gertzulin, said.

Ms. Jungreis (pronounced YOUNG-rice), a Hungarian Jew who spent several months in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp as a child, was often called “the Jewish Billy Graham,” and her artfully staged rallies, with theatrical lighting and musical accompaniment, were in fact inspired by Mr. Graham’s Christian crusades.

She styled herself “rebbetzin,” the Yiddish honorific bestowed on wives of rabbis. Her husband, Rabbi Theodore Jungreis, led the Congregation Ohr Torah, an Orthodox synagogue in North Woodmere, N.Y., on Long Island.

But the title understated her role. In “American Judaism: A History” (2005), Jonathan Sana wrote that “to some of her followers she functioned as a full-fledged rabbi in almost everything but name.”

Alarmed at the threats to Judaism posed by assimilation, secularism and the rise of religious cults, Rebbetzin Jungreis held a rally attended by 10,000 people at the Felt Forum in Madison Square Garden in 1973 to inspire a Jewish awakening. She also founded an outreach organization, [Hineni](http://www.hineni.org/), its name — Hebrew for “I am here” — alluding to Abraham’s answer when called upon by G-d in Genesis.

The organization offered classes in the Torah and [social mixers](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/31/nyregion/public-lives-scholar-matchmaker-and-convention-presence.html?_r=0) at which Jewish singles could find one another. As its leader, Rebbetzin Jungreis addressed large audiences around the United States and abroad and, beginning in 1982, broadcast a weekly half-hour Torah program, “Hineni,” on National Jewish Television.

Her style was impassioned, her message urgent. She routinely called the threat of assimilation “a spiritual Holocaust.” Onstage, she would exhort and scold, admonish and warn, tugging at the heartstrings with both hands, distraught at the erosion of Jewish identity and religious devotion.

“We have a generation that has surpassed expectations in every field,” she told The New York Times in 1997. “But when it comes to the Torah, we — the people of the book — have Jewish illiterates.” It was her life’s mission to correct this state of affairs.

Esther Naomi Jungreisz was born on April 27, 1936, in Szeged, Hungary, to Abraham Jungreisz, a rabbi descended from a long line of rabbis, and the former Miriam Cohen.

In June 1944, as mass deportations of Hungary’s Jews gathered momentum, Esther, along with her parents and her two brothers, was put on a train bound for Auschwitz. Although the family did not realize it, an aunt in Budapest had placed their names on the passenger list of a special train traveling from Budapest to Switzerland, organized by Rudolf Kastner, a founder of the Jewish Aid and Rescue Committee. Mr. Kastner had bribed Adolf Eichmann to allow some 1,600 Jews to escape the country.

On reaching Budapest, the family was transferred to the Kastner train, which, for unknown reasons, was diverted to Bergen-Belsen. Esther and her family remained there as inmates for six months — she was prisoner No. 5357 — before being released and traveling on to a refugee camp in Caux, Switzerland.

The family emigrated to the United States and settled in a basement apartment in the East Flatbush section of Brooklyn. Her father started a shul and yeshiva in the Canarsie neighborhood. She recounted the events of her childhood in her first book, “The Jewish Soul on Fire” (1982), which wove her life story together with her religious views.

Esther received a yeshiva education at the Bais Yaakov School for Girls, then studied in Israel with the biblical scholar Nechama Leibowitz. On returning to the United States, she married a distant cousin, [Theodore Jungreis](http://www.nytimes.com/1996/01/27/nyregion/theodore-jungreis-74-a-rabbi-with-an-imaginative-approach.html), also a Hungarian refugee, in 1955.

After moving to Long Island, the couple founded both the North Woodmere Jewish Center and Congregation Ohr Torah in 1963, and Rebbetzin Jungreis began developing her speaking style by lecturing to Jewish groups and presiding over Torah lunches.

Hearing her speak at a hotel in the Catskills in the early 1960s, the editor of The Jewish Press invited her to write an advice column, “Rebbetzin’s Viewpoint.” It ran for the next 45 years. Her last column appeared on Aug. 19.

She is survived by her two brothers, Jacob, a rabbi, and Benjamin; two sons, Yisroel and Osher, both rabbis; two daughters, Chaya Sora Gertzulin and Slovi Wolff; 23 grandchildren; and 32 great-grandchildren. Her husband died in 1996.

Initially, Hineni offered classes and social events in the Canarsie shul, but over the years it expanded its reach, establishing offices in Jerusalem and elsewhere. In 1989, Rebbetzin Jungreis opened the [Hineni Heritage Center](https://www.hineni.org/) on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, where it houses a multimedia museum and offers Torah classes, singles events and religious services on High Holy Days.

To apply the lessons of Torah to modern life, Rebbetzin Jungreis wrote the self-help books “The Committed Life: Principles for Good Living From Our Timeless Past” (1998), “The Committed Marriage: A Guide to Finding a Soul Mate and Building a Relationship Through Timeless Biblical Wisdom” (2002) and “Life Is a Test: How to Meet Life’s Challenges Successfully” (2006).

Her aim, she said, was to bring secular Jews home to their religion, but not to any specific form of it. “There is not one page in Torah that says anything about being Orthodox or Reform,” she told Malka Drucker, the author of “White Fire: A Portrait of Women Spiritual Leaders in America” (2002). “These modern-day manifestations have only created disharmony. I believe that every Jew is a Jew; we have one Shabbat, one G-d, one Torah and one faith.”

*Reprinted from the August 26, 2016 website of The New York Times.*

**The Stranger from Spain**

**By**[**Menachem Posner**](http://www.chabad.org/search/keyword_cdo/kid/12145/jewish/Menachem-Posner.htm)

For centuries after the expulsion of Spanish Jewry in 1492, pockets of Jewish people clung to their faith in secret. While giving the appearance of being devout Christians, they maintained Jewish practice in hiding.

Some of these crypto-Jews held positions of great prominence in Spanish government, finance, culture and academia. One such Jew was a very high official in the royal court who enjoyed a close relationship with the reigning monarch.

But the day came when the powerful arm of the Inquisition caught up with him, and he was accused of living as a Jew. He was summarily tried and sentenced to death by *auto-da-fé*.

Since he had many important duties, he asked the king to defer his punishment for a year so that he would be able to put the kingdom’s affairs in order before being burned. Although the king rarely involved himself in Inquisition matters, he requested that his friend be granted a year, and his wish was honored.



The year passed all too quickly, and the king once again asked that the punishment be delayed by one month. This was followed by a request for an additional week and then a day.

Finally, word was given that the treacherous Jew, who had pretended to be a faithful Catholic, would be put to death by burning in the city square.

People gathered from miles around to witness the event. The pyre was burning, and the priests were performing their last rites.

Suddenly, the ground shook. Buildings crumbled. The bleachers wobbled. The crowd dispersed in panic as the city was gripped by an earthquake. In the mayhem, the accused managed to slip away from his captors.

A few weeks later, he escaped out of Spain to safety.

Well versed in classical philosophy, the Jew knew no rest. Was the earthquake sent by G‑d just to save him, or was it simple happenstance? Could it be that G‑d was intimately involved in his personal affairs and cared about him?

After giving the matter some thought, he decided to further contemplate the issue. If he would conclude that it was simple coincidence, then he would continue to live his life in the relative safety of his non-Jewish persona. If, however, he would come to understand that G‑d had ordained the earthquake for his personal protection, he would have no choice but to live according to G‑d’s will, as an open and proud, practicing Jew.

He immediately began discussing the issue with the philosophers and thinkers whom he met in Germany, where he had come to reside. He always talked of a theoretical minister, never letting on that it was he himself who had experienced such an amazing turn of events.

The opinions flew fast and furious, and every wise man had his say, but there was no answer that satisfied the stranger from Spain.

In desperation, he decided to travel eastward to seek the council of RabbiIsrael Baal Shem Tov, the leader of the nascent Chassidic movement.

As the travel-weary man came to the courtyard of the famed rabbi, he saw a man stroking the horses. It was none other than Reb Volf Kitzes, one of the Baal Shem Tov’s star pupils.

In response to the Spaniard’s query, Reb Volf indicated that the Baal ShemTov was inside the house.

As soon as the stranger entered, even before he was able to speak, the Baal Shem Tov called out, “Welcome, minister from Spain!”

Shaken by the fact that the Baal Shem Tov knew who he was without being told, he stood silently. “Regarding your question,” continued the Baal Shem Tov, “you would do well to speak to my student, Reb Volf. He’s the one you met outside stroking the horses.”

After hearing the man’s story, Reb Volf explained: “It is entirely conceivable that this earthquake had been preordained since the beginning of time. However, the fact that your punishment had been timed just so that it happened neither before nor after the earthquake is clearly a miracle that G‑d has brought about through His many messengers.”

Satisfied at last, the man began to live openly as a Jew and as an adherent of the Baal Shem Tov’s teachings.

Source: Adapted from Otzar Sippurie Chabad, p. 119-120.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Re’eh 5776 email of Chabad.Org Magazine.*

**Strange Advice from**

**The Shtefeneshte Rebbe**

Nachum the cattle dealer was a chassid of the Shtefeneshte Rebbe, R’ Avrohom Mattisyahu Friedman (grandson of R’ Yisroel of Ruzhin). The words of his Rebbe were to him like the words of the Urim V’Tumim.

One year an epidemic spread among the cattle of Romania. Within one week, Nachum lost over 300 cows to the raging epidemic. It was time to travel to Shtefenesht.

Nachum arrived before Shabbos, too late to see the Rebbe. Nevertheless, he begged the gabbai to get him in to see the Rebbe. “Please, my animals are dying!” he pleaded. The gabbai tried, but the Shtefeneshte Rebbe uncharacteristically replied in the negative. Nachum could not enter.

Nachum spent Shabbos in Shtefenesht. During the third Shabbos meal, a group of chassidim sat in the darkened Beis Medrash and sang zemiros with the Rebbe.

The Rebbe sang, “Baruch Hashem Yom Yom” and had reached the words “nidachim kovetz.” Nachum was sitting at the long table, about fifty people away from the Rebbe. He tried hard to hear the Rebbe’s voice.

When the Rebbe said, “nidachim koveitz,” Nachum thought he heard the Rebbe talking directly to him and saying, “Nachum, koif vetz,” – Nachum, buy wheat. It was a command, in answer to the question he had not been able to even ask.

Nachum figured that the Rebbe was telling him to sell his flock before the cows died, to buy wheat with the money, and to become a wheat dealer. But how could the Rebbe have answered a question that had not been asked? And how should a cattle dealer know how to buy or sell wheat?

That is the power, the beauty, of emunas chachomim. You don’t ask questions; you just do it! Nachum traveled home without having mentioned his problem to the Rebbe. That week he sold his remaining cows and bought several tons of fine wheat. Within a short while he became a rich man.

Nachum again traveled to Stefenesht to thank the Rebbe. The Rebbe told him, “When you came to me before Shabbos I put you off because I had no answer for you. I saw that devastating poverty had been decreed for you and I could not do a thing for you. But you, with your honest belief, heard things that I never said. And in the merit of this simple belief, you opened a new channel of prosperity and abundance that had not existed before. It was your own power that saved you, not mine!” (More Tales for the Soul)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Va’eschanan 5776 email of The Weekly Vort.*

**The Ben Ish Chai’s Story About A Poor But Generous Woman**



**Ben Ish Chai**

The Ben Ish Chai zt’l told the following story: There was once a poor, albeit generous, woman. She would bake four breads each day. She gave three breads to the poor, and kept one for her family.

One morning, after distributing the three breads, a fourth pauper came to her door begging for food. He said he hadn't eaten for a few days. She had mercy on him, and gave him the fourth bread.

"I'll bake another one for my family," she thought. She took her bag of wheat kernels, and went to the shore, where the communal mill stood. After grinding her wheat into flour, she filled her bag with flour, flung it over her shoulder, and headed home to bake bread for her family.

Just then, a powerful gust of wind snatched the bag out of her hands, and tossed it into the sea. She began to cry. "Why do I deserve this punishment? Is this my reward for giving tzedakah?"

There was a yeshiva near the shore, and she went inside and asked the rosh yeshiva for an explanation. "I gave extra tzedakah today. I even gave my family's bread away. Is this my reward for the tzedakah I give?"

The rosh yeshiva told her that her questions are valid, and what happened to her was truly astonishing. However he told her that we must trust that the ways of Hashem are just and there’s surely an explanation for what occurred.

Just then, two merchants came in carrying two jugs filled with gold coins. "These are for the yeshiva," they said. The shocked rosh yeshiva asked them why they were donating this large sum.

"We just returned from our business travels overseas" they said. "The way back was very stormy, and the ship crashed into a large boulder. Water came pouring into the ship. Our lives were in danger. We vowed that if we survive, we will give tzedakah to the first yeshiva we find.

“As soon as we made this pledge, something miraculously closed the hole in the ship. That's why we’re bringing you these jars filled with gold."

"Do you know what sealed the hole of the ship?" the rosh yeshiva asked. "Yes, we know. When we got off the boat, we wanted to see what saved our lives. We were surprised to see that it was a sack of flour! The flour turned to dough, and glued the bag onto the ship, exactly in the right place to save our lives. It was clearly a miracle!"

The rosh yeshiva said to the poor woman, "Now you have the answer to your question. Heaven repaid your charity, by granting you the privilege to save an entire ship with people, because the bag that saved the ship was your bag. This is your reward for giving tzedakah with mesirus nefesh…"

This story reminds us that even when we don’t understand, and matters seem to be wrong, everything is just, correct, and good. If one believes that, he can often merit seeing how everything is for the good.

The Gemara says, "Reb Akiva taught, 'a person should always say 'everything Hashem does is for the good.' Once, Reb Akiva was traveling and he arrived at a town. He sought a place to sleep overnight, but no one took him in. Reb Akiva said, 'everything Hashem does is for the good.' "He slept in the fields. He had a rooster [to awaken him in the morning], a donkey, and a candle. A wind blew out the candle, a cat ate the rooster, and a lion devoured the donkey. Reb Akiva said, ' Everything Hashem does is for the good.'

"That night, an army invaded the city and took all the residents captive." Now it became clear how everything was for the good. As Rashi clarifies, "Had the candle been lit, the army would notice [and capture him]. If the donkey would bray or if the rooster would cockle, the army would have come and captured [Reb Akiva]."

And if the people of the town would have taken Reb Akiva in to be their guest, he would have also been taken captive. Reb Akiva believed that everything was for the good, and he was proven correct.

Reb Akiva said to his students, "Didn’t I tell you, everything Hakadosh Baruch Hu does is for the good?" (Brachos 60:) The Ben Ish Chai explains that Reb Akiva wasn't bragging, chalilah, when he said these words to his students. He was explaining to his students how he merited seeing that everything is for the good. Because although we believe that everything is for the good, we don’t always merit seeing it.

Reb Akiva told his students that he always says "Everything Hashem does is for the good," and when one says those words, one is granted the ability to witness that it is exactly so.

An insect bit a student of the Baal Shem Tov zt'l, and this woke him up. He sat up to wash negel vasser, and accidentally spilled half of the water on the floor. The student washed his hands with the remaining water, stood up and that's when he saw the burning coal on the ground. The water had put it out.

If it weren't for the water, the house could have burned down. He realized that a miracle just happened to him. He praised Hashem, and then a beam from the ceiling fell onto his bed. Had he been still sleeping there, he would have been killed. He thanked Hashem for this second miracle.

He told the Baal Shem Tov about the miracles that happened with him. The Baal Shem Tov replied, "When one believes that everything is from Hashem, for the good, one merits seeing that it is so."

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei 5778 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.*

**The Mesiras Nefesh**

**Of Alex Clare**



Rabbi Fischel Schachter tells an amazing true story about current day sacrifices that Jews make on a daily basis, this particular story is about a musician named Alex Clare. Alex was born in 1985 and grew up in London with a totally secular background, without any Jewish education. He had a passion for music and was extremely talented. He played many instruments, sang and composed songs and he was determined to make music his career.

In 2007, at the age of 22, he began learning about Judaism and before long he felt very spiritually connected to the jewish religion. He began keeping Kosher and then he committed to keeping Shabbat. He eventually signed a contract with a major record label, Island Records. But he told them in advance that he would not perform on Shabbat.

They were not happy about it, but they agreed because he was so talented. He recorded his debut album with them, but he needed opportunities to promote it. As it happened, every event or appearance was scheduled for Friday night, and Alex turned them all down.

Then, an excellent opportunity arose. He was offered the chance to do a world tour with an English singer named Adele. His producers told him, "*This is it, the chance you've been waiting for.*"

But Alex told them, "*I'm sorry, it comes out on my holiday of Passover. I'm going to have to turn it down.*" That summer his album was released, but did not receive much attention, due to his limited promotion.

A few months later, right after Yom Kippur, Alex found a message on his phone from Island Records. "*You' re not going to believe this, but BBC Radio told us that they had a cancellation for one of their segments and they want you to play live. This will be in front of a national audience and broadcast throughout Europe. You will receive national coverage and gain thousands of listeners. This is what we need to promote your album. The best part of it is that it's on a Thursday night, so you can do it."*

Alex couldn't believe the opportunity he was hearing about. Thursday night, however, was the first night of Succot. With a lot of courage, Alex called them and said he couldn't do it. This was the last straw. They told him, "*If you turn this down, we are cutting your contract. This will result in you being blacklisted and basically end your very short career."*

At that time, Alex was penniless. He couldn't even make his next rent payment. But he began to think of the Piyut he had read that day, on Yom Kippur, about Rabbi Amnon who gave up his life for Judaism. With tremendous strength, he said to himself, "*If he could give up is life, I can give up my music*."

He told his promoters that he would not play on his holiday under any circumstances, and indeed they cut his contract. All of his dreams were shattered in an instant.

In need of Chizuk, Alex went to his Rabbi, Dovid Tugendhaft. He told him, *"Rabbi, I don't understand. All I have ever done since I came to religion is sacrifice for Judaism, and now I lose everything?"*

His Rabbi told him, "*This reminds me of the story of Avraham Avinu. He invested his whole life to change the world and spread the belief in One G-d, a loving and compassionate G-d who doesn't want people sacrificing their children to Idolatry. And then he was asked to sacrifice his very own son, which would have made all of his teachings a mockery in the eyes of the world. He would have to give up on his lifelong mission, but he showed readiness to obey and became great as a result. That was one of the greatest moments in Jewish history*."

The rabbi continued, “*Alex you are being asked to give up your dream for Hashem. It will make you great."*

A few hard months passed, until one day, he received a phone call from Microsoft. They wanted to use one of his tracks to launch their new version of Internet Explorer. Of course, he agreed, and the song was used in an ad in March 2012. The song was soon playing all over the world. It became the number one hit in Germany, number four in the UK singles chart and number seven in the U.S. His debut album now sold over six million copies. Alex Clare became a multi-millionaire instantly.

He did not lose from keeping Shabbat. But it is important to note that he did not see any success arise from his sacrifice for a very long time. Week after week, he turned down jobs, and it kept getting worse.  A person never loses from following Hashem, but he doesn't always see immediate results. We also see from this that Hashem knows how to find a person and bring him success when He wants. Alex didn't have to go play in a hundred different places to gain recognition. It was one advertisement that did it. If a person follows Hashem, he is automatically a success.

May we all realize that the sacrifices we make for Hashem and our Torah can be very difficult to go through, but we have to know that these hurdles or sacrifices that we face are all hand-picked by Hashem for us to triumph over and grow stronger in our devotion to our father in Heaven, and ultimately for our benefit! Amen!

*Reprinted from the Parshat Vayikra 5778 email of Jack E. Rahmey with the Guidance and Teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes*

**The Two Turkish Merchants Who Settled in Yerushalayim**

Two merchants from Turkey came to Eretz Yisrael and settled in Yerushalayim. Every morning they studied together for several hours before they went off to work. They never missed a day.

They made a pact that whoever dies first would come back to tell the other what he saw in heaven. One died, and after quite some time, came to his friend in a dream.

He said, “A human being made of flesh and blood and living in the world of falsehood can't understand what’s happening in heaven. But there is one thing that I can tell you: After I died I was brought to the heavenly court, and at my side were my parents and grandparents. Good malachim placed my mitzvos on the scale. Demons (malachei chavalah) were amassing my sins on the other side of the scale and Hakadosh Baruch Hu was the judge.

“My fright was immeasurable because the scale was tipping towards the side of sin. Suddenly, an iron wall separated me from the demons, and an announcement came forth, ordering me to go to Gan Eden.

"I didn’t understand how this happened. I asked the malachim, ‘Why am I permitted to go to Gan Eden? What about all my sins? This is the world of truth. How were my sins overlooked? And why did an iron wall separate me from the demons?'

“The malachim answered, ‘The wall was created by your kviyas itim l’Torah. You had a set time to learn Torah, and you never missed those times. This became the wall that protected you. If you would have missed occasionally, or if you would interrupt in the middle of your studies, there would be breaches in the wall, and the malachei chavalah would be able to pass through. But since you never missed, you had a strong protection, and now you can go to Gan Eden.'

“The reason I didn’t come earlier,” the friend said, “is because it’s difficult to get permission to leave Gan Eden to come to Olam HaZeh. But I kept asking for permission so I could keep my promise, and they finally let me. Heaven decided that it is good that I should come back to the world to tell you what happened, so people will know how special it is when people have set times to study Torah every day."

After relaying this message the man left.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayikra 5778 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts of Rabbi Eli Biderman.*

[**Seek Not Revenge**](http://www.jewishpress.com/kidz/midrash-stories/seek-not-revenge/2016/08/19/)

**By** [**Rabbi Sholom Klass**](http://www.jewishpress.com/author/rabbisholomklass/)

It is very easy for a person to be good and kind to those who are his friends. It is much more difficult to act this way towards those who have hurt or have angered him. This is why the Torah reminds us, “You should not seek revenge” and “You should not hate thy neighbor in your heart.”

When you see the goodness repaid to a former wife, who had made life miserable for him, the greatness of Rabi Yosi Haglili is even more apparent.

**A Difficult Marriage**

Rabi Yosi Haglili was a great scholar with hundreds of *talmidim* and a very righteous man who lived during the time of the Talmud. There was only one thing that marred Rabi Yosi’s life. He was married to a woman who went out of her way to make life miserable for him.

One day, as he was sitting with his students, she suddenly burst into the room and publicly shamed him before their very eyes. The students were terribly embarrassed for their teacher but said nothing. However, when it continued happening on a regular basis, they finally spoke up.

“Rebbe, forgive us for speaking, but we cannot bear to see you shamed in this manner. Why do you continue to bear these insults? Would it not be better to divorce her?”

Rabi Yosi only sighed and answered: “Would that I could! I am a poor man, and do not have the money to pay the amount written in her *kesuvah*.”

**The Guest**

The days passed and Rabi Yosi continued to suffer the taunts and evil tongue of his wife. One day, Reb Elazar ben Azarya came to visit Rabi Yosi and hear words of Torah from him.

When the lecture had ended, Rabi Yosi invited Rabi Elazar to stay for dinner. Going to the kitchen, he told his wife:

“I have invited a guest for dinner, the great Rabi Elazar. Please serve him with us.”

His wife began to rave wildly and said: “Is that all I have to do, to feed uninvited strangers?” And with this, she turned to leave the house.

“I beg of you not to shame me in front of this man,” cried Rabi Yosi. “If you do not wish to serve him, tell me what we have to eat and I will serve him myself.”

“We have nothing but vegetables,” she said, as she stormed out of the house.

**The Miracle**

Rabi Yosi went to the stove and lifted the cover off the pot. He was shocked to see that there weren’t any vegetables inside. Instead there were roasted chickens.

Rabi Elazar, who had heard everything, laughed and said: “It appears that the A-mighty has been good to us. He has turned vegetables into chickens!”

Then, turning serious, Rabi Elazar said: “Rabi Yosi, why do you allow this woman to torment you so? Divorce her.”

Once again, Rabi Yosi explained that he lacked the money for the *kesuvah*. When Rabi Elazar heard this, he asked: “If, by chance, you were able to find a man who would loan you the money, would your wife accept a divorce?”

“The woman hates me. Many a time she has said that if only I would give her the amount of money in her *kesuvah*, she would gladly be free of me.”

When Rabi Elazar heard this, he laid the required money on the table and said: “Here is the money. Give it to her together with the divorce decree and be free of her forever.”

**Bad Times**

And so, Rabi Yosi divorced his wife and he began to know happy days again. However, his former wife was not so lucky. Because of her nature, no one wanted to have anything to do with her, and her sharp tongue prevented her from finding means of employment. Thus, her money quickly dwindled until it was gone.

Now desperate, she was finally forced to become the wife of a lowly watchman, already advanced in years, and barely earning enough to buy bread for the two of them.

When the woman contemplated her current lot, and remembered the former days, she grew bitter at the thought of what she had turned away. But the darkest days were still ahead of her. With the advance of years, the watchman became blind and could no longer fulfill his duties. Thus, the two were left without a means of livelihood.

“There is only one thing that we can do now,” said the watchman. “You must take me by the hand every morning and lead me to the market place. There we will wait until people have pity on us and give us enough money and food.”

The woman began to cry. “What! Go begging in the streets! I will never do this!”

“If you do not do this, I will beat you,” cried the watchman.

And so the woman had no choice. Every morning they would go out to beg, and the people who saw whispered: “Can this be the former wife of Rabi Yosi Haglili?”

**Reunion**

One day, the watchman said to his wife, “I notice that in all these months, you have never guided me to the home of Rabi Haglili. I understand that he is a man of great charity. Take me there so that we may benefit from his goodness.”

When the wife heard this, she turned pale and said: “I would rather starve than go to that house.”

The blind man, tired of her complaining, began to beat her. As she began to scream, the entire neighborhood arose to find out what was happening.

They took the two before Rabi Yosi and there, to his amazement, the scholars learned that this was his former wife.

**The Past Forgotten**

Despite all the evil that she had done to him in the years gone by, Rabi Yosi now forgot the past. He turned to the blind man and said, “How are you not ashamed to hit your wife? Can you not see that she is an unfortunate and tragic person?”

The blind man was deeply ashamed, and answered, “I am sorry. It is only that I have kept asking her to bring me to the home of Rabi Yosi Haglili, who will give us food and money. But she continually refuses to heed my requests.”

When Rabi Yosi heard this, he said, “If I give you and your wife a place to live and food to eat, will you promise me that you will respect your wife forever?”

“If you will do this for us,” replied the blind man, “I give you my word that I will live with my wife in peace forever.”

And so, Rabi Yosi bought the couple a modest dwelling in the neighborhood and every day would see to it that enough food for them was provided. The two lived until the end of their days in peace, and Rabi Yosi was happy for them.

This is how a man pays back good for evil. It is a difficult thing, perhaps, to overlook hurts and wounds, but if we were never to forgive, we would live in a world that knows only fear and revenge. If the A-mighty sees fit to forgive man’s sins, how can we not do the same?

*Reprinted from the August 19, 2016 email of The Jewish Press.*

**Two Old Horses**

**By**[**Yossi Winner**](https://www.chabad.org/search/keyword_cdo/kid/21550/jewish/Winner-Yossi.htm)



During Napoleon’s invasion of Russia, a group of his highly trained soldiers got stuck in a snowstorm and had to spend the night in the home of a pious Jew. Although Napoleon’s cavalry was the best of their kind, the heavy winter snow would not allow them to journey on any further.

As they were getting accustomed to their new surroundings, one of the soldiers gazed out the window and saw an extraordinary sight. An old man was sitting in a carriage being led by two very old horses. They were trekking through the evening snowstorm with ease.

Puzzled, a soldier turned to his new host and asked: “How is it possible that our highly trained horses could not make it through the snowstorm, while these two very old horses seem to be moving along without a problem?”

The host took a look outside and smiled as he recognized his neighbor enjoying his evening ride.

“You see,” said the man, “I know this man for many years. He has owned these horses since they were born. They both grew up on the same farm and have always been inseparable. What is unique about them is that they feel each other’s pain. When the man whips one horse, the other horse feels the pain of his friend and therefore pushes harder as well. It’s the effort of both horses working in tandem that allows them to weather any storm.”

*The Torah tells us that it was during the difficult exile in Egypt that G‑d saw the unity that the Jewish people displayed. When one slave finished his daily backbreaking quota, he would help his neighbor complete his workload. The unity inspired G‑d to deliver them from the mighty Egyptian empire.*

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tzav 5778 website of Chabad.Org Magazine.*

**42 Chairs**

**By Rabbi David Ashear**

The way a person is able to get through a challenge in life depends on his level of Emunah. Those with a high level of Emunah are always happy, no matter what is happening. Those with little Emunah can get thrown off with the slightest inconvenience. A man told me that he has to sell his house and look for something cheaper. However, the market doesn't have much to offer. The man said, "I'm not worried. I am trying as hard as I can. When the time is right, Hashem will give me the exact house HSe wants me to be in."

A lady told me that she and her husband had been living in a very small two-bedroom apartment since they were married. They have, Baruch Hashem, seven children, with an eighth on the way. It was becoming very hard to continue living in that apartment, but the houses were too expensive.

She recently heard a Shiur about donating money to a Gemach as a Segula for extra financial blessing, so she donated a large amount, relative to her standards. A few days later, she heard about a house that became available in the exact location she always wanted to be in-a religious neighborhood next to her friends and family.

However, the price was too high. She and her husband tried looking in to mortgages, but they found out that the house was already bought by someone else. The woman, with a lot of Emunah, told her husband, "Let's donate more money to the Gemach as a Zechut," and they did.

A couple of weeks later, they saw that the new owner of the house was putting it up for rent. For some reason, he wasn't able to move in and live there, so he was looking to buy another house and keep this one as an investment. The woman and her husband quickly grabbed the opportunity. The rent was affordable, and Baruch Hashem her family now has a lot of room in a house that she couldn't be happier in. Hashem has a place for everyone to live in, and He can make things happen even for those who have low incomes. It is so clear, to those that are looking, that Hashem is running the world.

A man by the name of Michael, who started a Chesed organization called "Mitzva Man," said that he received a call from someone who just opened a new Shul, but was totally out of funds. They couldn't even afford to purchase new chairs. They have been standing up for all of the prayers, and they asked him if he could please find 42 chairs.

Michael replied, "I have no idea who would have Shul chairs available." That very same day, he was driving in Brooklyn and saw stacks of chairs in very good condition, on the curb outside a Shul. He went inside to ask if they were available, and the Rabbi said, "Sure. We just got a donation of 42 brand new chairs, and we don't need these anymore. The call for the chairs came from a Shul in Lakewood. Michael, who received the request, "just happened" to see the exact number of chairs needed in a different state. How often are there nice Shul chairs piled up on the curb for taking, let alone the exact number needed?

There is only one explanation: Hashem is running the world. The more we internalize it, the greater our level of Emunah will become.

*Reprinted from the August 18, 2013 email of Daily Emunah.*

**It Once Happened**

**The Reward of**

**Helping a Poor Bride**

A young girl approached the rabbi of her village. With tears in her eyes she described her situation to the kindhearted rabbi. She was engaged, but her joy in her upcoming wedding was marred by the fact that she was an impoverished orphan, and her intended was also very poor. There was no money for a wedding gown or even a proper wedding feast.

The rabbi turned to her and said, "Don't worry, my child. With G-d's help we'll celebrate a fine wedding." The young girl went home, comforted by the rabbi's optimistic words.

No sooner had she left when the rabbi immediately donned his coat and set off to visit some of the wealthier members of the community to attempt to raise money for the wedding.

His first stop was at the home of a very wealthy and generous man, and the rabbi felt confident that he would find success there. When he arrived, the wealthy man greeted him warmly.

"Peace unto you, Rabbi," he said. "I am greatly honored by your visit. Please allow me to fulfill the mitzva of welcoming guests properly." With that, he offered the rabbi a seat and served him some fruit.

The rabbi pointed to the fruit and said, "While I enjoy the fruit that you have so kindly offered me, I want you to enjoy the fruit that I have brought."

The man looked puzzled, and the rabbi went on to explain:

"As we say in our morning prayers, 'These are the things, the fruits of which a man enjoys in this world and the remainder is held for him in the World to Come: Honoring one's father and mother, giving charity, hospitality, visiting the sick, endowering a bride...'

"You see, my friend, I am collecting money to enable a poor orphaned girl to get married, and I have come to offer you a chance to partake in this great mitzva (commandment) of endowering a bride."

His host smiled at him and replied, "If you will stay and enjoy some refreshments, I will take upon myself the full expense of the wedding, And if your time permits, I would like to tell you a story which will explain why I'm so eager to fulfill the mitzva of endowing a bride."

The rabbi was indeed curious to know what motivated his host to make such a generous offer, settled himself comfortably and listened intently to the man's story.

"This happened soon after my own wedding had taken place. It was my first time heading out to the market to seek my fortune. I had a substantial amount of money in my pocket, and I was eager to get involved in the noise and excitement of trading in the marketplace.

"As I was about to get started, I noticed a poor woman standing off to the side, crying quietly. I was greatly affected by her obvious distress, and went over to her to uncover the cause of her sorrow. When I inquired as to what was wrong, she informed me that her daughter was to be married shortly, and she had no money to cover the expenses, and both she and her daughter were heartbroken.

"At that moment, the bundle of money in my pocket began to feel like a heavy burden. I took it out and handed it to the woman without saying a word, and then I left quickly before the woman could even thank me.

"I had no choice but to return home, as I had no money to purchase goods in the marketplace. As I made my way home, a stranger stopped me and greeted me warmly, and then he offered me some diamonds for sale. As my father had been a diamond merchant, I was able to examine the stones competently, and I judged them to be beautiful stones offered at a fair price. I told the stranger that I would be happy to purchase them, but I had no money.

"The stranger didn't seem surprised by that, and he said, 'I knew your father, and I know you to be an honest man. Take them on credit, and when you resell them you can pay me back. You will be able to find me in the study hall.'

"I had no problem selling the stones at a substantial profit. At the end of the day I hurried to the study hall to pay back my debt. I searched the study hall, but the stranger was nowhere to be found.

When I arrived home, I calculated my earnings, and they were ten times what I had given that poor woman. I put the money aside, but I have not seen him since. Since then, I have, thank G-d, been very successful, and I have always been aware of the importance of this mitzva. Permit me then, rabbi, to arrange the wedding of the orphaned bride in my home."

With that, the wealthy man handed the rabbi an additional sum of money to pay for the wedding gown and to cover additional expenses of setting up a home.

The wedding was celebrated amidst great joy and festivity, and the young couple was able to set up a true Jewish home which was the pride of the community.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Va’eschanan 5776 edition of “L’Chaim Weekly,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY. Orginally pubished Talks and Tales, published by Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch*

**A Most Unusual Family Reunion in Yerushalayim**

Rav Moshe Kormornick relates a powerful story. When a train filled with a large transport of Jewish prisoners arrived at one of the Nazi killing centers, many Polish goyim came out to watch the Jews being taken away.

A Nazi officer in charge called out to the villagers standing there, “You may take anything these Jews leave behind, because they will not be coming back to get them!”

Two Polish women who were standing nearby saw a Jewish woman wearing a large, expensive coat. They ran to her, knocked her down, grabbed her coat and ran away. They rummaged through the pockets and discovered gold jewelry, silver candlesticks and other treasures, and to their astonishment, in a secret pocket in the lining they found a tiny baby girl!

Shocked at their discovery, one woman took pity on the baby and said, “I don’t have any children. You take the gold and silver and let me have the baby.” The Polish woman took her new “daughter” home, and raised the Jewish girl as her own. They treated her very well, but never told her anything about her history.

The girl excelled in her studies and eventually became a doctor, and worked as a pediatrician in a hospital in Poland. When her “mother” passed away many years later, the mother’s friend came by to visit. She said to the daughter, “The woman that passed away last week was not your real mother”, and she proceeded to tell her the whole story of how they found her.

The daughter did not believe her at first, but the woman insisted and said, “When we found you, you were wearing a beautiful gold pendant with strange writing on it, which must be Hebrew. I am sure that your mother kept that necklace. Go and see for yourself.”

The daughter looked in her mother’s jewelry box and found the necklace just as the friend had described. She was shocked. It was hard to fathom that she had been Jewish, but the proof was right there in her hand. As this was her only link to a previous life, she cherished the necklace, and wore it every day.

Sometime later, she went on vacation abroad and came across two Jewish boys standing on a main street, trying to interest any Jewish person passing by to put on Tefilin or accept Shabbos candles to light on Friday afternoon.

Seizing the opportunity, she told them her entire story and showed them the necklace. The boys confirmed that a Jewish name was inscribed on the necklace, and they recommended that she write a letter to their teacher, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and explain everything to him to seek his advice. She sent a letter that very same day, and received a quick reply which said that it was clear from the facts that she is a Jewish girl, and perhaps she would consider using her medical skills in Israel where talented pediatricians were needed.

Her curiosity was piqued and she traveled to Israel where she consulted a Rabbinical Court, a Bais Din, who declared her Jewish. Soon she was accepted into a hospital to work, and eventually met her husband and raised a family.

Many years later in Israel, a terrorist blew up a busy cafe in the center of Yerushalayim, and the injured were rushed to the hospital where this woman worked. One patient was brought in, an elderly man, who was in a state of shock. He was searching everywhere for his granddaughter who had become separated from him.

This pediatrician tried to help him, and asked how she could recognize his granddaughter, and the frantic man described a gold necklace that she was wearing. Eventually, they finally found this girl among the injured patients. When the pediatrician saw the necklace the girl was wearing, she froze in her place.

She asked the old man, “Where did you buy this necklace?”

He responded, “You can’t buy such a necklace. I am a goldsmith and I made this piece of jewelry. Actually, I made two identical pieces for each of my daughters. This is my granddaughter from one of them, and my other daughter did not survive the war.”

With tears welling up in her eyes, the pediatrician pulled out the necklace she was wearing and showed it to him, who also began to cry. They quickly realized that after almost sixty years, a father and daughter had finally become reunited!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Devorim 5776 email of Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**A Promise to the**

**Yeshiva’s Cook**

That night there were only three students learning in the Beis Medrash of the great Chevron Yeshivah in Yerushalayim. Only three? Where were the hundreds of young men who were usually absorbed in Torah study – arguing, gesticulating, debating…? They were attending the wedding of one of the yeshivah’s outstanding students which was taking place in another city.

The three stayed behind so that the light of Torah should not be extinguished for even one night. The shrill ring of the telephone shattered the quiet of the night. The three yeshiva students chose to ignore the loud ringing of the phone in the yeshivah office.

But when it rang incessantly for the third time, with no less than twenty rings each call, they felt it must be an urgent matter. It was. Shaarei Tzedek Hospital was calling to inform the yeshivah that Mrs. Minna, the yeshivah’s cook, had just passed away. Arrangements had to be made for the funeral.

A childless widow, Mrs. Minna had poured her entire soul into the food she cooked for the yeshivah boys, treating them as she would have her own children. The labor of her heart and hands helped to assuage her loneliness and bitter fate. But even more so, the promise, nay the guarantee, of the Rosh Yeshivah, R’ Yechezkel Sarna, alleviated her anguish.

R’ Sarna had promised that at her funeral, hundreds of Bnei Torah would accompany her to her final resting place. She held fast to this promise and her belief in R’ Sarna’s words breathed strength and comfort into her bitter life. And everyone knew of this promise, because Mrs. Minna would speak of it often.

But now, at 9:00 pm, it seemed that Mrs. Minna would have to be buried with the promise unfulfilled. The yeshivah students would not return for at least three more hours and one cannot leave a body unburied overnight in Yerushalayim. The three students rushed to R’ Zvi Pesach Frank, Rav of Yerushalayim, and explained the entire situation. He ruled that the funeral must take place immediately with a small minyan, and should not be delayed until morning.

Before the three ran over to the hospital to make the arrangements, they first returned to the yeshivah to close the lights and lock up the Beis Medrash. Just then they heard the shrill ringing of the phone. It was the hospital again. It seems that a few hours ago, Mrs. Minna’s vital signs had been checked numerous times and since there had been no heartbeat or breathing and her blood pressure had plummeted to zero, she had been declared dead.

Now there was an uproar in the hospital. The “dead” Mrs. Minna was moving under the sheet and she was pulling it down, away from her face, her eyes wide open! The hospital staff was shocked! It was unmistakable techiyas hamaysim! They were calling now to inform the yeshivah. The three students were relieved, and happily returned to their studies.

The next morning, when the entire yeshivah had already returned from the wedding, the hospital called to inform the yeshivah that Mrs. Minna had indeed passed away. At midday, hundreds of yeshivah students respectfully followed Mrs. Minna on her final journey, in perfect fulfillment of R’ Yechezkel Sarna’s promise, in which she had believed with her entire heart and soul. (Tales for the Soul, Vol. 4)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Re’ay 5776 email of The Weekly Vort.*

**Dashing to Hear the Shabbos Mincha Torah Reading**

**By** [**Tzvi Yaakovson**](https://yated.com/author/tzvi-yaakovson/)

Our story is about a gentleman whom we will call Betzalel. This Shabbos, Betzalel left his home late for Minchah and rushed madly toward the shul. “I have never been late for Kerias HaTorah at Minchah on Shabbos,” he gasped to his companion, Feivel, who was barely managing to keep up with him. “I am certain that I will make it there on time today as well.” Betzalel’s confidence seemed to be contradicted by the late hour, and Feivel doubted that his prediction would come true, but he chose to remain silent. Meanwhile, Betzalel raced down the street at an impressive speed; it was hard to believe that he is a man who rarely climbs more than four steps without resting in between.

When Betzalel rushed into the shul, he found a fellow named Minkowitz reciting the brachos over his aliyah. Betzalel nearly burst into tears; Minkowitz is a Yisroel, and if he was beginning his aliyah, it seemed that the first two aliyos had already gone by. You can imagine that Betzalel was overjoyed to hear the baal

Alex couldn't believe the opportunity he was hearing about. Thursday night, however, was the first night of Succot. With a lot of courage, Alex called them and said he couldn't do it. This was the last straw. They told him, "*If you turn this down, we are cutting your contract. This will result in you being blacklisted and basically end your very short career."*

*and Teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes*

**His Touch Changed Me**

**By Rabbi Sholom Avtzon**

*In honor of Yud Aleph Nissan (March 27, 2018), I am posting the following thought and story about the [Lubavitcher] Rebbe (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson) that I heard from Rabbi Nissin Mangel this past Shabbos in Ksav Sofer, who heard it directly from the person himself.*

As we know, sometimes we explain that Shabbos is the culmination of the week that past, while other times, we explain that Shabbos blesses the incoming week. Both of these points are true, but today we will be focusing on the latter.

As everyone knows the Rebbe’s birthday is in this coming week. So one may ask where in the parsha is Yud Aleph Nissan – the Rebbe – alluded to?

It is stated, (Vayikra 6:20) “whatever touches the korbon shall become holy”. This is explained, that if a piece of bread or anything touches the korbon, it also becomes holy and has the same guidelines as the korbon, where and for how long it can be eaten.



With this thought, one can see how the Rebbe is referred to in the possuk.

On Kingston Avenue, between Eastern Parkway and Union Street was a store called Mr. Mikes. Mr. Mike was a very friendly and pleasant individual who served the community. Although in the 1950’s (when this happened), Lubavitch was not quite large, he developed a relationship with them.

Every day on his way to visit his mother, the Rebbe would pass by Mr. Mike’s store and raise his hand in a gesture and greeting to him. Mr. Mike was astute and realized that to the other Jewish storekeepers and individuals who the Rebbe passed by on his way to his mothers’ apartment, the Rebbe nodded in greeting, but to him, the big Rabbi raises his hand. Is the Rabbi perhaps trying to politely pass on a message?

After contemplating it for a while, he thought that perhaps the Rabbi is not merely greeting him, but is also pointing towards the heaven and reminding him that there is One above us, and we should conduct ourselves accordingly.

As this thought passed through his mind, he appreciated the Rebbe’s sensitivity. The Rabbi is telling me something, while everyone thinks he is merely greeting me in a most friendly manner. He is saying a rebuke, without embarrassing me in the least. In fact he is allowing me to decide if it is a greeting as everyone thinks, or is it something more. He is showing me a tremendous amount of respect. So he decided that he, who owns a hat store and sells various hats and caps, would also begin to wear a cap to cover his head and will no longer go bare head in the store.

The next day, he awaited the time that the Rebbe would pass by (I believe it was often around 6 P.M.), and looked carefully through the window to see the Rebbe’s gesture. Sure enough the Rebbe passed by, but instead of raising his hand in greeting; the Rebbe greeted him as he greeted all of the other storekeepers with a nod. Mr. Mike was pleased that his intuition was correct and his respect and admiration for the Rebbe intensified daily.



**Photo of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, circa 1950s**

After a period of time (I don’t know if it was weeks, months or even years), Mr. Mike went into 770 and requested to be admitted into the Rebbe’s room for a meeting. He had no concept of what Yechidus with the Rebbe was; to him it was to meet a person whom he admires greatly.

Entering the Rebbe’s room he said, “Rabbi, I didn’t come to ask you a question or request from you a blessing; I just want to express my friendship and give you a hug.”

The Rebbe stood up from his chair and walked in front of his desk and he stood a few inches away from me, showing that he is allowing me to do as I requested. I did as I expressed myself and placed my hands around him and gave him a hug.

To my astonishment, at the same time, the Rebbe embraced me in a heartfelt hug of his own and I realized that our feelings of friendship and admiration are mutual.’

Leaving his room, I decided I can no longer remain unobservant as I was until then. The great Rabbi genuinely loves me because I am a Jew, and therefore there must be much more to Judaism than I thought. It has meaning and purpose. I began observing various mitzvos and that Friday afternoon, I closed my store for Shabbos for the first time and never looked back.

So yes, whoever comes into contact with holiness becomes elevated them self!

*Reprinted from the Yud Aleph Nissan email from Rabbi Avtzon, a veteran mechanech and the author of numerous books about the [Lubavitcher] Rebbeim and their chassidim. He is available to farbreng in your community and can be contacted at avtzonbooks@gnail.com*

**His Whole Life Turned**

**On a Sandwich**

**By** [**Michoel Gros**](http://www.jewishpress.com/author/michaelgros/)

You never know what event will spark a person’s desire to return to Judaism. Art Sherman was an assimilated Jew married to a Polish Catholic woman. He owned a non-kosher Italian “hero sandwich shop” and an unbelievable comment, one day by his Rastafarian employee, sent him on a life-changing journey.

After their wedding in 1973, Art and Karen moved from place to place, first to Philadelphia and then to Brooklyn. There, he decided to open a small sandwich store. He made all types of sandwiches, from five different kinds of cheese steaks to Italian hoagies stacked high with ham, pork-salami and provolone cheese. Customers loved the sandwiches and business was great.

Over time, he started noticed specific groups of people who would not eat particular sandwiches. He had lots of Jamaican, Seventh Day Adventist and Muslim customers who said they didn’t eat pork because it was prohibited in the Old Testament.

Art continued to devour his non-kosher sandwiches, but over time he began to sense the irony of his non-Jewish customers attempting to follow religious dietary laws, which he ignored completely.

“The Muslims would make me wipe off the slicing machine before I cut roast beef or corned beef for their sandwiches. For myself, I couldn’t care less,” Art said. “I could eat so much pork it would make the Pope sick. I had all these non-Jewish people coming in who had more respect for where I came from than I did.”

One of his employees, who was a Rastafarian, refused to eat meat altogether. He was a vegetarian, because as he told Art, “the Bible forbids the consumption of blood.” Rastafarians take this Biblical statement to further prohibit the consumption of any animal flesh.

Art continued to consume away. One day in his store, he had a craving for a huge hoagie, with everything on it.



“I wanted a ‘Marciano’ Italian Hot Ham and Provolone cheese. The sandwich had to have perfect balance. It was my place. I could put on as much meat or cheese as I deemed appropriate. But too much meat, not enough cheese, and the balance would be thrown off. I had to have room for the lettuce, tomatoes, thinly sliced onions, hot peppers, oil and oregano,” Art said. “I was in Alpha concentration. Totally focused on the task at hand when the Rastafarian guy walks up behind me and says in a deep voice, ‘you know Art, you really shouldn’t eat ham.'”

Something about the Rastafarian’s statement caused Art to stop and think about what he was doing.

“I felt like I had been slapped in the face! Shot in the heart! It woke me up,” Art said.

“I knew I really shouldn’t eat ham. I went to Hebrew school. But the last person I expected to call me on it was this guy. What could I say? He was right.”

Art made a commitment at that moment to keep what he called “Arab Kosher.” He decided to stop eating all pork and shellfish products. “It was a big step for me and I was proud to take it.”

Art came home that night and told his wife about his epiphany. She immediately agreed to join him. Although it created tension with her family, Karen remained steadfast in her determination. In the past, every other little Jewish activity, such as having a Passover Seder, had seemed to bring them closer together, and this action was no different.

The commitment to cut out pork and shellfish from their lives launched the Shermans on a journey of growth and exploration. Soon, Art closed his store and he and his family moved to his hometown, a small Jewish neighborhood in Margate, outside Atlantic City. Art and Karen, along with their two daughters, began going to a synagogue around the corner from their house, and he and his wife began taking Jewish classes. Over time they began keeping kosher and took on more mitzvot.

“I felt like there was something really familiar about it,” Karen said. “When the teacher talked about Sinai, I knew clearly that that’s where my soul had been. I finally began to understand the identity of my soul.”

With this newfound realization and excitement, Karen continued learning. She and her daughters eventually converted. Years later Karen learned that several of her ancestors had actually been Jewish.

Art and Karen say they still look back in astonishment at the extraordinary source that launched them on their growth. That one comment from the Rastafarian employee, of all people, sent them on an incredible life journey. But the fact that it came from such an unexpected source was a major reason it had the impact that it did.

“Sometimes you’re all ready to defend yourself from a religious Jew, but you’re not ready to defend yourself against a Gentile telling you things that the rabbis taught,” Art said. “I was like a tank. I was fortified, heavily reinforced from the front for a frontal attack, but my armor was not as thick on the side. When you get hit on the side, sometimes – boom – the rounds go through. The Rastafarian caught me in the ribs.”

Hashem has lots of quills of all different types in His quiver, depending on who He is trying to reach. And you just never know what quill He will use next.

Today Art Sherman makes Kosher Hoagies while speaking to Jewish groups about his journey. In early 2009 he will be opening a new kosher meat restaurant in Manalapan, NJ called “Just Good Food!” that will offer hoagies as well as Middle Eastern and Italian dishes. He can be reached at 347-581-4411 or [Asher26593@aol.com](http://www.jewishpress.com/judaism/judaism-101/his-whole-life-turned-on-a-sandwich/2009/01/28/Asher26593@aol.com).

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*Reprinted from the January 28, 2009 edition of The Jewish Press.*

**Rebbe Shlomke and the Benefit of Being Shamed**



Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil zt'l was near the Kosel, sitting among the paupers (as he would do at times) and somebody came by and gave a small coin to everybody. This man didn’t know Rebbe Shlomke, thought he was a pauper like the others, and gave Rebbe Shlomke a small coin too.

When the man left, Rebbe Shlomke gave his coin to the man sitting next to him.

"Why didn’t you tell him that you aren't poor?" the man asked.

Rebbe Shlomke replied, "I didn’t want to lose out on the opportunity to get some shame."

Once, Rebbe Shlomke's granddaughter came to him and told him how she and her family were suffering immense poverty. They almost didn’t have bread to eat.

Rebbe Shlomke advised her to daven at the Kosel. She went there and poured her heart out, with piercing sobs and loud tefillos. In that era, the Kosel plaza was just a small area, and her shouts disturbed one of the women standing nearby.

"Sha! Sha!" The lady kept shouting at her, but to no avail. She continued crying out all of her pain in her prayers. When she left the Kosel, the lady asked her, "What did you think? That the entire Kosel is yours? Why can't you pray silently? There are other people around who have their own tefillos they want to say. They don't want to hear yours…"

And she disgraced her some more in this manner. Rebbe Shlomke’s granddaughter bore the shame in silence and didn’t answer back. On the way home, she found a Napoleon coin, which could support her family for the next half a year.

She came to Rebbe Shlomke and said, "Baruch Hashem, Hashem heard my tefillos and sent me the money. But why did I have to undergo all that shame?" Rebbe Shlomke explained to her that the shame was the beginning of her salvation. "Hashem heard your prayers, and therefore, Hashem sent someone to shame you. That was the beginning of your salvation, because shame has the power to remove all forms of troubles and hardships from you and from your family. And after the matter was rectified, you found the money."

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria-Metzorah 5778 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman as compiled by Rabbi Boruch Twersky.*

**The Rich Man’s Snuff Box**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**



**Antique snuff box**

There was once a very wealthy Chassid who was known for his holiness and erudition. We will call him Reb Yaakov. One day, Reb Yaakov was standing before the Baal Shem Tov (Besh’t) almost in tears.

"I can't understand it" he moaned "Everything I do is failing. I used to have such business sense. It's as though I've been cursed! Has someone cursed me?"

The Besh't said nothing. Reb Yaakov tried to wait for an answer but the silence was unbearable.

"Every time I make an investment it fails. Every hunch I have is wrong. I'm losing money hand over fist! If it keeps up I'll lose it all. What should I do?!"

The Besh't looked up at him sadly and said. "Do you have a snuff box?"

"Of course!" He replied as he nervously fumbled in his jacket pocket producing a small, finely decorated, golden box that he proceeded to open.

But the Besh't paid no attention and continued.

"About a half year ago you were sitting in Shul (synagogue) with some of your friends you took that box out and offered them snuff. Do you remember?  
"I... I don't.. that is...almost every day some of us we sit together after Shachrit (morning prayer) and …

"Do you remember about a half a year ago that you took out your snuff box and offered everyone to take a bit of snuff but when you saw the Shul beggar get up from his seat in the corner and approach to take some you closed it and put it back in your pocket. Do you remember?"

Reb Yaakov was deep in thought he tried not to remember but suddenly it was clear as day. He didn't want that bum to get too close. He looked smelly and disgusting. Not only that but he had been in the middle of telling a joke to his friends and didn't want to disturb it.

"Well", concluded the Besh't "Maybe it meant nothing to you at the time because your success and wealth blinded you and hardened your heart! But you really shamed that man to the essence of his being. So, it was decided in heaven that you will lose all your money you and be given to him!"

Reb Yaakov was stunned, he couldn't believe his ears! But it was happening, it was true! He was losing everything at a frightening pace and now that he thought about it, he hadn't see that beggar for months. He seemed to have disappeared. It was a curse all right; but it was he that had cursed himself!!

As in a dream he looked at the Besh't imploringly and stammered "Is there any way I can…”

"There is only one way you can get your money back." The Besh't said. "You have to reverse the process. If you find him and ask him for a pinch of Snuff and he refuses you.. then he will lose it all, just as you did, and your wealth will return. But if not everything is lost."

Reb Yaakov returned home and his bad luck continued. Within a few more weeks he lost everything including his house and belongings just as the Besh't said he would.

It was then that he discovered that that Shul beggar (whose name was Issac) had, in fact, miraculously become a rich businessman 'overnight', was now making daring million-dollar investments and was surrounded by some of the wealthiest men in the country.

Several times Reb Yaakov, who was now a pauper, considered just going up to Mr. Isaac when he left his house in the morning and asking him for snuff but decided against it. He would wait for a better opportunity... a time when Isaac was busy.

And finally, it came.

One morning on the Shul bulletin board was an open invitation to everyone in the city, in two weeks, in the massive town square to the wedding of Mr. Issac's daughter!!!  A real G-dsend!!

Two weeks later Reb Yaakov was there with a foolproof plan.

The wedding ceremony was just about to begin, the band played solemnly and then stopped as the couple stood under the wedding canopy with hundreds of people gathered around. The Rabbi finished all the blessings, the groom broke the glass cup, the band broke into joyous playing and everyone began dancing, shaking the hand of the groom and the father of the bride, slapping them on the shoulders and yelling Mazal Tov!!!  Isaac was surrounded by people, smiling, shaking hands. Totally occupied!!!

And at that very moment; at the height of the festivities Rab Yaakov ran up, pushed through the guests to Mr Issac, tapped him on the shoulder and said

"Give me a pinch of snuff!"

Mr. Isaac looked at him strangely hesitated, turned back to the person that he had been speaking to (aha!! He's ignoring me!! Thought Reb Yaakov!!) said 'excuse me and turned around, snuff box in hand and offered it!"

Reb Yaakov fainted. A doctor was called. He was carried to a side room and after a few minutes Mr. Issac appeared.

"He'll be alright" said the doctor. "Maybe it was too warm or something."

"But why is he weeping?" Mr. Isaac asked.

"I'll tell you why" Reb Yaakov replied weakly. Remember me? I'm the rich man that refused to give you a pinch of snuff a while ago in Shul and because of that I lost all my riches and you gained them. Well, just now when you didn't act selfishly as I did back then I lost my only chance to regain my wealth." And he resumed crying bitterly.

But the story has a happy ending.

When Mr. Isaac heard the story he calmed Reb Yaakov down, invited him to the wedding feast and assured him that he had nothing to cry about. He would provide him with a home and a job for the rest of his life.

*Reprinted from the Tazria-Metzorah 5778 email of Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.*

**Rabbi Aurbach’s Old Jalopy**

**By Rabbi Chaim Tzvi Blau**

Harav Moshe Ahron Aurbach, ל''זצ , who was known as a great Baal Chesed in Toronto, was once driving with two passengers in the back of his car. As they were traveling, his passengers started to speak lashon hora .Rav Moshe Ahron repeatedly asked them to change the topic, but to no avail. His entreaties fell on deaf ears.

Rav Moshe Ahron brainstormed. After thinking for a few moments, he fearlessly stopped his car in the middle of a very busy intersection and pretended that his car had stalled! He pulled out the keys and got out to “fix” the car.

The scene was incredible – there were cars coming from every direction! People were honking and beeping, and there was traffic backed up all over. After a few minutes tinkering with the motor, Rav Aurbach closed the hood, gave it a few good bangs and got back into the car.

He jiggled the key in the ignition, and the car started. For the rest of the ride, the only topic his passengers could talk about was “Rav Aurbach’s old jalopy”! (As told to me by his grandson Harav Aryeh Walden Shlita)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria-Metzorah 5778 email of ONEG SHABBOS (London, United Kingdom.)*

**Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky and The Lakewood Rosh Hayeshiva**

A few years after Rabbi Shneur Kotler, O”BM, succeeded his late father Reb Aharon as the Rosh Yeshiva of the Lakewood Yeshiva, the Yeshiva’s enrollment began to expand. No longer was Reb Shneur able to sit and study in the large Yeshiva all day. He was suddenly forced to raise funds, day in and day out, often leaving early in the morning and returning home past midnight.

A brief respite was the annual Agudas Israel convention of at which nearly 1,000 laymen and rabbinical leaders would gather for a long weekend to discuss the state of Torah affairs.

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, O”BM, the oldest member of the Council of Torah Sages would often highlight the keynote session on Saturday night. As the eldest of the world’s Torah sages, Reb Yaakov would find a way to sneak up to the dais, usually through a back door, to avoid having the entire crowd arise upon seeing his presence as is required by Jewish Law.

Yet this year things were different. Reb Yaakov engaged the much younger, Reb Shneur in conversation outside the large ballroom and waited until everyone took his or her seats. Then he took Reb Shneur by the hand and said, “I think it is time we took our seats.” He proudly held Reb Shneur by the arm and escorted him to the dais as the throng of people rose in awe.

**Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzy Rabbi Shneur Kotler**

Reb Shneur, stunned by Reb Yaakov’s departure from his trademark humility, asked him why he did not go through the back as usual.

“Reb Shneur,” he explained, “your Rebbitzen (rabbi’s wife) is sitting in the auditorium. The entire year she sees you in a much-dishonored light. You run from donor to donor in order to keep the Yeshiva open, you have hardly any time to prepare your lectures, and all she sees are people knocking on your door with their problems. Yet she stands beside you faithful and unwavering. It is time that she sees that you get a little honor.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria-Metzorah 5778 email of Torah Sweets Weekly edited by Reb Mendel Berlin.*

**The Rabbi’s Purchase**

**Of a Rack of Lamb**



Lashon Hara has been known to destroy lives, and there are many stories that portray this concept. The way to avoid Lashon Hara is to look upon everyone with Ayin Tova and give others the benefit of the doubt, because you never know what's behind another person’s actions.

There’s a story of a Rabbi from a local Yeshivah in Boro Park that was seen in the butcher shop buying a rack of lamb for $132. The lady standing in line behind him overhears what the Rabbi is buying and texts her friend: ”*My son’s Rebbe is buying a rack of lamb for $132, no wonder my son’s tuition is so high*!” That person tells her friend the same thing and says and we only eat chicken to save money!

Another person then complains through text, *“the Rabbi is spending way above his pay grade!”*

Another person said “*I know their son from camp and he is a little weird*!” Someone else says*, “they tried to make a shiduch with his son, but B’h it didn’t work out!”*

Then someone else texts that her sister who lives next door says, “*This makes sense because they just LOVE food*!”

Then someone else responds, ”*I don’t think this Rabbi is a good role model for our children*!”

Now they want to report the Rabbi to the principal of the school because they feel he has serious issues! Another person agrees and says*,”We’d better nip this problem now before it gets out of hand!”*

Now the wife of the Rabbi gets a call from her friend in Lakewood that she’s hearing all kinds of problems about her husband’s spending habits! Finally the Rabbi gets home and his wife tells him: ”*People are saying bad things about you and telling everyone that you spent $132 at the Butcher shop today?!*”

The Rabbi replied, “*Of course, Mr. Schwartz asked me to do him a favor and pick up his order of rack of lamb at the butcher for his son’s Sheva Berachot tomorrow night!”*

At 2:29 this afternoon this Rabbi was a beloved Rabbi in the community and by 2:55 his reputation was destroyed. From the time it took the Rabbi to walk home from after doing a good deed, over 100 people from BORO Park to Flatbush to Monsey to Williamsburg and all the way to Lakewood NJ all had heard about the extravagant and fictitious spending habits of this Rabbi.

But None of it was true! This is a made up story but it can easily happen. IF LASHON HARAH IS LIKE A GUN AND CAN DESTROY A PERSON...LASHON HARAH ON THE INTERNET IS LIKE A WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION! How many people have been harmed like this? How many times have we destroyed the Bet Hamikdash today? Next time you’re about to send an email or text...**Think before you click SEND!**

*Reprinted from the Parashat Tazria-Mesora 5778 email of Jack E. Rahmey with the Guidance and Teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.*

**Rav Chaim Volozhiner**

**And the Fancy Gold Watch**



When Rav Chaim Volozhiner, zt”l, was the Rosh Yeshivah, it was almost unheard of for anyone to own a watch. In those days, watches were very expensive and most people could not afford them.

Once, late one night, Rav Chaim was learning with a small group of students, and he asked if anyone knew what time it was, but no one was able to tell him the time.

Rav Chaim then said to them, “It seems that we don’t have enough Emunah, faith in Hashem. If we had perfect Emunah, we would have a watch to know what time it is— even a good gold watch.”

Rav Chaim then started teaching his students about the different aspects of Bitachon, trusting in Hashem. As the Shiur continued, the door to the room suddenly swung open and a young soldier entered and approached Rav Chaim.

He said, “Rebbe, I need your help. I come from a very wealthy home, and I have been drafted to go into the Russian army. My father had arranged for me to be exempted by a doctor, but there was a confusion and the doctor exempted someone else while I had to go report for service. Now it is too late and I have no choice but to comply. Right now, I am the only Jew in my group. I have with me a very expensive gold watch, and I am very afraid that it will be stolen. I am too far from home to return it there, and I don’t know anyone in this town. Could I please ask the Rav to hold my watch for me until I come back to claim it?”

Rav Chaim replied, “My son, I would very much like to help you, but my home is wide open to everyone, and I can’t guarantee that your watch will be properly guarded.”

When he heard this, the young soldier said, “In that case, Rebbe, I am giving you the watch as a gift. I would rather it belong to you than to some thief!”

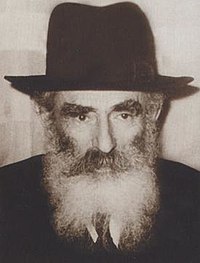
Before Rav Chaim had a chance to protest, the man took his watch and placed it in Rav Chaim’s hand and ran out the door. Rav Chaim immediately ran after him, but he was unable to find him outside in the dark.

Rav Chaim returned to his students and said, “As I told you. If we truly have Emunah in Hashem, He will supply us with all of our needs, and look, Hashem even sent us a nice gold watch!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria-Metzorah 5778 email of Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**A Goy’s Kiddush**

**Hashem in Shanghai**

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**Rav Chatzkel Levenstein**

When the members of the Mir Yeshivah fled Europe during World War II, they spent a number of years in Shanghai before they were able to relocate to Eretz Yisroel and America. Although the Jewish students and faculty were generally treated well by the local Chinese and Japanese occupation officials, there was a group of Japanese naval officers who did not like them and who plotted against them.

They secretly arranged that the members of the Yeshivah would be taken onto a ship, and once the ship would sail out to sea, the ship would be sunk. One top-ranking Japanese man who knew about this plot felt a certain closeness to the Jews. He had respect for the boys and knew that they were men of G-d. Therefore, he revealed the details of the operation to the authorities, and the plot was foiled. However, the group that had planned the attack discovered this Japanese man who had ruined their plans. They tracked him down and when they found him, they beat him to death.

The entire Yeshivah was very troubled by this incident. After all, this righteous gentile had saved the Yeshivah from a catastrophe. He didn’t do it for his own honor or for riches. Instead, he had saved them because he felt it was the right thing to do. Why had Hashem punished him in such a way?

A group of Yeshivah boys decided to ask this question of their great Mashgiach, Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, zt”l, to help them understand what had happened.

However, as they approached the door to his office, they heard him crying out in Tefilah. He said, “Ribono Shel Olam! This gentile was a wonderful man— but he was a goy. This is the first and only time he helped the Bochrim (students) of the Yeshivah, and You gave him a special gift. You gave him the chance to be Mekadeish Shem Shamayim, to sanctify Your Name and die by a Kiddush Hashem.

“But I, Chatzkel Levenstein, have served You faithfully my entire life! I have helped the Bochrim many times! I want this special gift from You so much! Why have I not merited to give my life for You?”

When the boys heard this they understood that their question had been answered. Hashem had granted that the man was given the gift to sanctify Hashem’s great Name and make a tremendous Kiddush Hashem!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria-Metzorah 5778 email of Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**The Bear that Davened**

**By Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon**



Moshe considered himself very fortunate. The local Poritz (squire) had hired him to manage all of his estates. Not only would his personal financial stability improve, but as the manager, he would now be in a position to hire and help many other Jews in the community. They would no longer have to bribe the officials in order to lease an inn or to acquire any other license.

However, at the same time he made sure that the local peasants also had employment, so he hired skilled artisans to teach them various skills. As their income improved they began building bigger houses, bought new clothing and some luxuries, benefitting many other people in the community.

The Poritz was thrilled as he saw these improvements with new families moving in and building new buildings, which all caused more money to be coming into his treasury. Some days he would sit in Moshe’s office to review the books and discuss new projects and he saw how Moshe treated everyone fairly and respectfully.

He also noticed that many people came to Moshe for advice and he marveled at Moshe’s patience and understanding. He gave it to everyone in a friendly manner and often even gave them some food or money for their family.

As the years passed, his town was slowly developing into the center of the area. Moshe had arranged that a large fair take place there twice a year and all the merchants in the nearby towns and villages would spend a week in his town, buying from the wholesalers directly. This not only brought in income to the Poritz, but equally important, it raised his prestige among the other Poritzim (squires).

Now that he became extremely wealthy, the Poritz rebuilt his villa into a beautiful mansion with large gardens and decided to throw a party for the local nobility. His estate was beautifully designed and he wanted to show it off. They were invited for a dinner and concert.

The other noblemen remembered how desperate he used to be just ten years ago and how his well-known and respected manager left because there was no money, and now just look at him. They couldn’t believe the transformation that took place. His estate indeed rivaled or even surpassed theirs and he had become the center of commerce.

After the festivities were officially over, some of the nobleman couldn’t restrain their curiosity and asked him, how did you do this? Our estates have more lumber and other natural resources than yours, they stated, yet you have surpassed us manifold.

It is all because of my Moshke, my new manager. He is a miracle worker, he can do anything, stated the Poritz.

Anything, inquired the other poritzim, with envy.

Yes! replied the Poritz boasting confidently.

Seeing that their “friend” was quite drunk, one of the other *poritzim* quickly thought of a scheme to make a lot of money, so he said; I will make a wager with you. I will prove to you that he can’t do everything and anything. I am willing to wager ten thousand ruble that he can’t.

The Poritz who was half drunk retorted Of course he could and let us write a contract signed and witnessed by the distinguished guests. The contract was duly signed and he sent someone to call Moshe.

When Moshe entered the room, the Poritz greeted him with a smile and said, Moshe you transformed my estate into the pride of the region. Now I have a request for you; you have the opportunity to make me really wealthy. I told my friends that you are the one behind my success and you are a miracle worker and can do anything.

So we made a bet. In thirty days, I am going to have another party and by the party my pet baby bear is going to take one of your Jewish prayer books and pray, just like you do. You will be richly rewarded for teaching it to pray. Now go and focus only on this responsibility and let your helpers run the estate.

I am going to become ten thousand rubles richer because of this! concluded the Poritz.

Moshe couldn’t believe his ears; the Poritz is so drunk; he doesn’t realize that he is going to lose everything he owns. He is asking me to do the impossible. Yet, Moshe realized that he and all the Jews would be blamed for the failure. So he meekly said, Yes your highness and went home.

When he arrived home, his wife noticed immediately that he wasn’t looking good. Nervously she asked, what is bothering you? Is everything ok? Should I call the doctor?

No don’t call the doctor, because there is nothing physically bothering me. It is just that the Poritz said I have to do the impossible. He gave me thirty days to teach his pet bear how to daven. How am I going to do that? No one can teach a bear to daven!

His wife replied, I don’t know, but we will figure it out tomorrow. In the meantime you must be starving as you really couldn’t each too much at the Poritz’s party, so sit down to eat, and tomorrow night we will think of something.

The next morning Moshe got up early as he could barely sleep that night, as he was thinking about the calamity that will befall the community, since he can’t do the impossible. He then went to shul and davened. Not knowing what he could do with the bear, he decided to say some extra Tehillim and then he would surprise his children by eating lunch with them. He bought a fresh loaf of bread and some food to help his wife prepare a hearty meal for the children.

When they saw him enter the house with the food they were surprised to see their father, as he normally was in his office at this time. So they asked, father are you alright, is everything ok? Why aren’t you in the office?

Moshe didn’t want to scare his children, so he replied, *Boruch Hashem* I am healthy. Just the Poritz said I should take a few days off of work and be home with you after I worked so hard the last few weeks arranging his big party. So I decided to make this meal for my wonderful family.

The family sat down and he spoke with them as if everything was regular and there was no concern on his mind. After the meal they all bentched together. The baby who was barely two began mimicking them as if he too was bentching, by babbling whatever sounds he was able to make.

After sending out the children to do their chores and play, his wife sat down by the table and said, Moshe, I have a solution. I know how you can teach the baby bear how to daven in the *siddur*.

Moshe didn’t know if he should laugh or cry, it was so absurd, he is going to attempt to teach a bear now to daven. Yet his wife says it can be done. So he said to her, “Yes, how?”

She replied, I was watching how you and the children were bentching. The older ones know the entire bentching, and said it properly and beautifully. But our Zalman doesn’t even know the *aleph beis*, so he obviously doesn’t know how to bentch. Yet he was sitting in his highchair and babbling the bentching, as if he was bentching with the others. So we will get the bear to do the same.

She then explained to him her plan.

Moshe jumped up in astonishment and exclaimed, you are not just a wonderful wife, you are a genius! Not only did you save us, but you protected the entire Jewish community.

He took a large siddur and gave it to the bookbinder with the request that he covers the first twenty pages with strong plastic and then reinforces the binding. He also hired workers to build in his yard a strong enough cage for the baby bear.

For a few days, he brought the bear its food until the bear felt comfortable with him and began licking the honey off the large spoon he would hold as a treat. Each time the bear tasted the honey, it would make a deep guttural sounds to express its happiness. Then he placed the honey between two pieces of wood and trained the bear to carefully move the top piece away in order to get to the honey on the second piece.

After the bear mastered this, came the big test. He placed the newly bound siddur on a *shtender* (podium) with the back cover securely attached to the *shtender* and placed some honey between the cover and the first page.

The bear smelled the honey, but it couldn’t move the cover aside as he had done with the pieces of wood. With the assistance of the trainer, Moshe showed and taught the bear how to flip it open with its left paw. It then eagerly licked up the honey.

At the beginning of the third week, Moshe began placing a little amount of honey on a few more of the plastic covered sheets and sure enough with some coaxing, the bear mastered the art of licking up the honey, and then turning the pages one by one happily licking each and every page, expressing its happiness as it found more and more honey.

At the beginning of the fourth week, Moshe placed honey on each of the twenty pages and looked with bewilderment as the bear masterfully turned the pages after it happily licked up the honey on that page. He immediately sent a message to the Poritz that everything is working out and he will demonstrate how the bear prays at the upcoming party.

The only thing that was bothering Moshe was, that besides for the noises that a bear normally makes when it has honey, the bear wasn’t saying anything, so how can he say it was praying. Won’t they realize that it was just a ruse?!

Once again his wife calmed him down and said, the *poritzim* (noblemen) don’t understand our language so they won’t realize this “problem”. They think all Jews mumble their words while they pray.

The big party came and all of the *poritzim* came to see the spectacle. They were positive that their host, the Poritz would plead that he was drunk when he agreed to this wager and ask for their mercy etc. it will be a spectacle to see him squirming in agony as they take away his fortune.

The Poritz greeted them with a smile and invited them to enjoy the banquet. He also mentioned to everyone that they signed as witnesses and they will be the judges. He handed over a bag of ten thousand rubles to the head judge and asked the other poritz to do the same. At the end of the banquet we will have our entertainment and the winner takes both bags, as agreed upon.

After the feast, the judges asked for silence and then instructed the poritz to bring in his bear and they will decide if it is praying just like a Jew prays.

Moshe entered first and showed the judges the special siddur that would be used, swiftly flipping some of the pages, so they see that Hebrew letters were written on it. He then secured the siddur on the shtender and stood to the side.

The bear was brought in and quickly smelled the honey. It went over to the shtender, stood on its back feet and flipped open the cover with its paw and put its head to the paper.

The judges were flabbergasted. The bear indeed opened the prayer book and is slowly turning the pages. Obviously they couldn’t see that the bear was licking the honey. All they saw was that after it made some sounds and shook a little bit, going from the top of the page to the bottom, it turned a page after page, moaning and groaning making mumble jumble sounds the entire time.

In their mind this was just like a Jew davening (since to them the language the Jews speak is also mumble jumble sounds) and they declared the Poritz the victor. The bear had indeed prayed like a Jew. He won the wager of the ten thousand rubles!

The Poritz embraced Moshe and rewarded him with five hundred ruble. Moshe went home relieved, but he resolved never again to rush through the davening and mumble some words. He is going to daven like he should, and not like a bear.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Emor 5778 Weekly Story email of Rabbi Avtzon, a veteran mechanech and the author of numerous books on the Rebbeim and their chassidim. He is available to speaking engagements in your community and can be contacted at* [*avtzonbooks@gmail.com*](mailto:avtzonbooks@gmail.com)

**In Search of Bafoofsticks**

**At the Kotel**

**By Rabbi Refoel Sandler**



**Rabbi Noach Weinberg, zt”l at the Kotel (Western Wall)**

*“And you shall be holy…”*

Mike, a nineteen-year-old student from LA arrives at the Kotel for the first time. As he walks down the steps he stares up at the ancient wall, connecting him with the history of his people.

As he approaches the wall to pray, he expects to feel an immense sense of purpose, perhaps something within might awaken, and maybe he will even feel the tiniest bit of inspiration.

Looking for holiness, Mike tries and tries but feels nothing. Mike is not the first, nor will he be the last, to have such an experience. Holiness is difficult to experience.

When Mike meets the famous founder of Aish HaTorah Rav Noach Weinberg zt’’l, the Rosh Yeshiva asks him to describe his experience. In recounting his moments at the Kotel, Mike expresses his frustration at how it was a difficult and meaningless experience. “There is nothing holy about a pile of bricks” says Mike.

Rav Noach stops him mid-sentence and says, “Mike, I understand your frustration but at least tell me you saw the bafoofsticks?”

Mike slightly perplexed responds, “The bafoofsticks?”

“Yes, the bafoofsticks....... did you see them?”

Mike says, “I might have, but I don’t know what a bafoofstick is…...” Responds Rav Noach, “Exactly! In the same way that you couldn’t find a bafoofstick if you don’t know what it is, how can you know if you are experiencing holiness when you have no idea what it is?”

*Reprinted from the Parshat Acharei Mot – Kedoshim 5778 email of ONEG SHABBOS: North West London’s Weekly Torah & Opinion Sheets)*

**Rav Moshe Feinstein**

**And the Air Conditioner**

One summer, it was scorching hot. Many people who lived in the city had gone out to spend the summer in the mountains, but that summer, it was sweltering even in the mountains.

Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt”l, who suffered from respiratory issues, was affected much more by the heat. Some people went out and bought an air conditioner for Rav Moshe, but when it was brought to his room to be installed, he objected.

He said “Do you expect that I should enjoy the air conditioner, while the Yeshivah Bochurim suffer in the heat? And what about all the other families that are here?”

The Bochurim were amazed by his refusal to have the air conditioner installed.

There was an elderly man there who was close to ninety years old. Seeing their amazement, he said to them, “If you would have asked me, you would never have even thought of bringing the air conditioner to Rav Moshe in the first place!” He explained, “You don’t know him, but I remember Rav Moshe from back in Luban. Rav Moshe began to serve as Rav in our town before he was married, and I remember his wedding in the town. It was held on a Friday afternoon, as was customary at the time, and it took place the week after Shavuos.



There was one fiddler in the town, his name was Itzeleh, and he informed the Rav that he would play music at the wedding from beginning to end. However, since the Sefirah period had just ended and no weddings had been made recently, that same day was the wedding for the daughter of the shoemaker and the daughter of the tailor.

Since there was only one fiddler in the town, Rav Moshe insisted that either Itzeleh attend all three weddings and play music, or he should not come to Rav Moshe’s wedding either! And in order to ensure that the fiddler would indeed play at all the weddings, Rav Moshe announced that his Chupah would be held last of the three! Of course a person who thinks like that would not accept an air conditioner when other people don’t have one!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Acharei Mos- Kedoshim5778 email of Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**The Dangerous Sea Storm**



Rabbi Yechiel Spero writes a powerful story. In the year 1827 in Pinsk, the wife of Rav Yeshaya Bardaki had passed away after a sudden illness, leaving two orphans, a young boy and his older sister.

After much deliberation, Rav Yeshaya decided that the best thing to do for his children was to start anew, and he arranged to move to Eretz Yisroel, where he hoped he would be able to rebuild his life.

Shortly after Pesach, the family packed up their belongings and prepared for the long journey. They traveled from town to town, staying at inns or in people‘s homes. Rav Yeshaya would put his children to sleep every night by telling them stories about the holy city of Yerushalayim.

Finally, after a few months of travelling, they were almost there. They had reached the city of Beirut, Lebanon, just north of Eretz Yisroel, where they were going to take a boat to get to Acco, and they hoped to arrive right before Succos. As Rav Yeshaya reached the port, he saw a group of men loading a ship with wood to take to Acco in order to build a house for a wealthy gentleman who lived there.

Rav Yeshaya was anxious to board that boat, but the workers were not interested in taking along any extra passengers and baggage. Rav Yeshaya reached into his pocket and pulled out the last of his money, and gave it to the men in the hope that it was enough to convince them to change their minds, and it was.

They boarded the ship and started heading toward Acco, eagerly anticipating their arrival in the Holy Land. The trip was not supposed to be long, but as soon as they set sail, the sky darkened and a storm began to rock the ship. Rav Yeshaya Davened that everything should turn out well. The sailors were very concerned, but then, just as quickly as the storm had begun, it disappeared.

Everyone in the boat was grateful and relieved, especially Rav Yeshaya, who thanked Hashem for allowing them all to continue safely. The ship was now off schedule and would reach its destination a few days later than originally planned, and it became obvious that they would still be on the boat when Succos began.

The men on the ship graciously offered Rav Yeshaya some of the wood they were carrying so that he could build a Succah. This generosity made Rav Yeshaya realize that although they had not yet arrived in Eretz Yisroel, the Hand of Hashem was guiding and protecting him.

The next day, the winds picked up once again and another storm tossed the ship around, hurling them from one side of the deck to the other. This storm seemed to be much more intense than the first one. The thunder cracked and bursts of lightning lit up the sky. The sails fluttered wildly in the air, as the ship struggled to stay afloat.

Suddenly, a sailor screamed, “Land! I see land!” and pointed out in the distance, where land was visible a few thousand feet away. The enormous waves carried the boat high in the air, and then came crashing down violently, flooding the deck.

Rav Yeshaya held onto his little children, Davening that they would be saved. Some of the sailors thought that it was too dangerous to stay on the ship and they jumped into the sea, hoping they could swim to the shore, but Rav Yeshaya was not able to do this with his two small children.

Then, all of a sudden, a tremendous noise ripped through the air, as the ship had broken in two! Rav Yeshaya fell into the ocean, holding onto his children with all of his strength. He tried his utmost to hold onto them, but his grasp was slipping. He looked at his children, each one holding tightly onto one of his arms. He felt that as much as he tried to swim with them, he could not do it, and he felt himself being pulled down.

He just wanted, more than anything he had ever wanted, to not to let go of his children. He cried out, “Please Hashem! Please help me!” Suddenly there was darkness and silence.

The next thing Rav Yeshaya knew, he felt the sun beating down on him as he lay on the shore. When he finally managed to open his eyes, Rav Yeshaya looked around and realized that he had made it alive! But where were the children?!

He looked down the shore and saw his son lying there. He ran over and picked him up, and after a moment, the little boy gave a cough and opened his eyes. He was alive!

Rav Yeshaya then looked around and noticed his daughter lying farther down the shore. He ran to her and with a feeling of dread, he bent down to pick her up, and just as what had happened with his son, she began to cough, and she too was alive! It was a miracle!

A short while later, she explained to her father that the two children had somehow managed to grab hold of one of the pieces of wood from the Succah on the ship, and had floated on it to the shore. Rav Yeshaya held onto both of his children and looked up to Shamayim. How could he ever thank Hashem?!

He made his way to the center of town where he was welcomed, and the people helped him get settled. Soon after, he traveled to Yerushalayim, settled there, and became one of their most prestigious Rabbanim, where he was Zocheh to live with his children and grandchildren for the rest of his life.

When reflecting on this incredible episode, Rav Yeshaya Bardaki saw in it a very significant lesson. He compared it to times when people feel that they are drowning in life. When life has overwhelmed them and they feel that they can’t hold on or perhaps they don’t deserve to continue because they have failed in their service to Hashem.

That is exactly when they must cry out, “Hashem! Please don’t let go of me!”, and Hashem will never let go. Hashem is our Father and has abundant compassion for each and every one of us. When He sees our fear of drowning in the sea and that we are desperately trying to hold onto Him with all of our strength, Hashem will not ever let go of us!

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**In Defense of the Amish**



A Talmudic scholar was travelling by train from Philadelphia to Harrisburg. The man had a beard, long dark coat, and a large wide-brimmed black hat. After placing his bags above his seat, he sat down next to a well-groomed businessman who looked at him scornfully.

For the first 20 minutes of the trip, the secular gentleman kept eyeing the student as if he wanted to tell him something. Finally, the businessman could no longer contain himself.

With passion in his voice, the man began to shout, “*You know, I’m sick and tired of Jews who think they are still in the Middles Ages! You are a disgrace! I’m Jewish, too. I even speak Yiddish. But do I wear a black coat? Do I let my beard grow? Must I wear an oversized hat? No! Why do you wear those clothes?  Why do you wear that beard? Why do you need that hat? It’s time you woke up and joined the modern world – the world of America!”*

The startled student look at his accuser quizzically. In a perfect Pennsylvanian accent, he began to speak. “*Jewish*?” he queried.” *Excuse me, sir, I’m Amish, and I’m on my way back home from a visit with relatives in Philadelphia. I am sorry if I offend you with my style of dress, but this is part of our heritage and culture. It was passed from our families in Europe to our families here in Lancaster. I’m sorry if I have disturbed you.”*

The businessman’s face turned red. “*I’m awfully sorry*,” he said contritely, “*I did not mean what I said. In fact, I think it is wonderful that you maintain your heritage, culture, and tradition with such enthusiasm. It shows courage, fortitude, and commitment. Please forgive me. I was truly insensitive*.”

Suddenly a wide smile broke across the young scholar’s face. In perfect Yiddish he asked the reeling traveler one simple question. “*For the gentile it’s wonderful, but for the Jew it’s a disgrace*?”

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