**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas mikeitz 5776**

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**American WWII Veteran Becomes**

**First Soldier Honored for Saving Jews**

**By the Associated Press**



**JERUSALEM**-- The Nazi soldiers made their orders very clear: Jewish American prisoners of war were to be separated from their fellow brothers in arms and sent to an uncertain fate.

[*i*](http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/12/02/458166709/u-s-soldier-posthumously-honored-for-protecting-jewish-pows-in-1945)

But Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds would have none of that. As the highest-ranking noncommissioned officer held in the German POW camp, he ordered more than 1,000 Americans captives to step forward with him and brazenly pronounced: "We are all Jews here."

He would not waver, even with a pistol to his head, and his captors eventually backed down.

Seventy years later, the Knoxville, Tennessee, native is being posthumously recognized with Israel's highest honor for non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during World War II. He's the first American serviceman to earn the honor.

"Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds seemed like an ordinary American soldier, but he had an extraordinary sense of responsibility and dedication to his fellow human beings," said Avner Shalev, chairman of the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum and memorial. "The choices and actions of Master Sgt. Edmonds set an example for his fellow American soldiers as they stood united against the barbaric evil of the Nazis."

**A Story that Remained Untold for Decades**

It's a story that remained untold for decades and one that his son, the Rev. Chris Edmonds, only discovered long after his father's death in 1985.

Edmonds was captured with thousands of others in the Battle of the Bulge in late 1944 and spent 100 days in captivity. His son vaguely knew about his father's past from a pair of diaries Edmonds kept in captivity that included the names and addresses of his men and some of his daily thoughts.

But it was only while scouring the Internet a few years ago that he began to unravel the true drama that had unfolded - oddly enough, when he read a newspaper article about Richard Nixon's post-presidency search for a New York home. As it happened, Nixon purchased his exclusive upper East Side town house from Lester Tanner, a prominent New York lawyer who mentioned in passing how Edmonds had saved him and dozens of other Jews during the war.

**Recalling What They Witnessed on Jan. 27, 1945**

That sparked a search for Tanner, who along with another Jewish POW, Paul Stern, told the younger Edmonds what they witnessed on Jan. 27, 1945, at the Stalag IXA POW camp near Ziegenhain, Germany.

The Wehrmacht had a strict anti-Jew policy and segregated Jewish POWs from non-Jews. On the eastern front, captured Jewish soldiers in the Russian army had been sent to extermination camps.

At the time of Edmonds' capture, the most infamous Nazi death camps were no longer fully operational, so Jewish American POWs were instead sent to slave labor camps where their chances of survival were low. U.S. soldiers had been warned that Jewish fighters among them would be in danger if captured and were told to destroy dog tags or any other evidence identifying them as Jewish.

So when the German camp commander, speaking in English, ordered the Jews to identify themselves, Edmonds knew what was at stake.

Turning to the rest of the POWs, he said: "We are not doing that, we are all falling out," recalled Chris Edmonds, who is currently in Israel participating in a seminar for Christian leaders at Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies.

With all the camp's inmates defiantly standing in front of their barracks, the German commander turned to Edmonds and said: "They cannot all be Jews." To which Edmonds replied: "We are all Jews here."

**The Nazi Officer Pressed His Pistol to Edmonds**

**Head and Offered Him One Last Chance**

Then the Nazi officer pressed his pistol to Edmonds head and offered him one last chance. Edmonds merely gave him his name, rank and serial number as required by the Geneva Conventions.

"And then my dad said: 'If you are going to shoot, you are going to have to shoot all of us because we know who you are and you'll be tried for war crimes when we win this war,'" recalled Chris Edmonds, who estimates his father's actions saved the lives of more than 200 Jewish-American soldiers.

Witnesses to the exchange said the German officer then withdrew. Stern, who currently lives in Reston, Virginia, told Yad Vashem that even 70 years later he can "still hear the words."

About 6 million European Jews were killed by German Nazis and their collaborators during World War II. The names of those honored for risking their lives to protect Jews are engraved along an avenue of trees at the Jerusalem memorial.

More than 26,000 have been designated "Righteous Among the Nations," the most famous being Oskar Schindler, whose efforts to save more than 1,000 Jews were documented in Steven Spielberg's 1993 film "Schindler's List," and Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat who is credited for having saved at least 20,000 Jews before mysteriously disappearing.

But prior to Edmonds, only four were Americans, who belonged to the clergy or volunteered for rescue groups. He's the first serviceman and the first whose actions saved the lives of fellow Americans. A ceremony for Edmonds is planned next year. And, thanks to his son's efforts, Edmonds is now also being considered for a Congressional Medal of Honor.

Irena Steinfeldt, the director of the Holocaust memorial's Righteous Among the Nations department, said all rescue stories were unique. She said Edmonds actions were reflective of those of a military man, who was prepared to take a quick, clear, moral decision.

"It's a matter of five minutes and that is it. When he tells the German, 'No,' that is something that can kill him," she explained. "It is something very dangerous that is happening in one moment. ... But it is very heroic."

Chris Edmonds, who leads a Baptist congregation in Maryville, Tennessee, said he believed his father had a "deep moral conviction" instilled in his faith that inspired his actions.

"All he had to fight with was his will power and his wits," he said. "I'm just glad he did the right thing."

*Reprinted from the December 2, 2015 dispatch of the AP (Associated Press.)*

**The Importance of**

**Finding Purpose**

**By David Bibi**

On Sunday I went to visit a friend, David, in the hospital. He had come into the hospital the night before as a result of a bad case of bronchitis touching on pneumonia which led to a fall. We recently celebrated David’s 100th birthday. It was important for me to explain to the nurses that this wasn’t a typical 100 year-old (if there is such a person).

David lives on his own, cooks, probably reads a book a day, does his 10,000 fitbit steps daily, climbs up and down the stairs, drives, regularly attends synagogue and is an integral part of the community. I could have mentioned that he is a brilliant man with a sharp mind, an inventor with many patents and a very, very successful businessman to boot.

David’s driver’s license might state 100, but his mind and body could easily pass for 25 years less. The nurse told me that my friend, who was the doctor in charge, let everyone on the floor know already. The same advice to the hospital staff would come from each of those who visited David the rest of that day.

As I sat on the side reading some Tehilim while David slept, I wondered what it must be like to be 100. David’s wife had passed away almost a decade ago as I was certain all of his longtime friends did too. When a person gets to be 100, they are in a pretty exclusive club. Less than 2 in 10,000 get to 100 and 80% of those are women. There has to be some sense of loneliness. How do people overcome the sense? How do they avoid depression?

**The Talmudical Story of Honi HaMaagal**

My mind was drawn to a story in the Talmud about Honi HaMaagal – Honi was a miracle worker and the Talmud tells stories of Honi overcoming nature and negotiating with G-d as a partner might with his partner. His name HaMaagal or the circle drawer is from one of those miraculous stories. And in that moment in the quiet hospital room, I could actually hear Rabbi Abittan quoting from the Talmud. This is probably the origin of the Rip Van Winkle story.

*Rabbi Yohanan said: "This righteous man [Honi] was troubled by the meaning of the verse, 'When the Lord brought back those that returned to Zion, we were like dreamers.' [Honi asked] Is it possible for seventy years to be like a dream? How could anyone sleep for seventy years?"*

*One day Honi was journeying on the road and he saw a man planting a carob tree. He asked, "How long does it take [for this tree] to bear fruit?" The man replied: "Seventy years." Honi asked him: "Are you certain that you will live another seventy years?" The man replied: "I found mature carob trees in the world; as my forefathers planted those for me so I too plant these for my children."*

**Falls into a Seventy Year Sleep**

*Honi sat down to have a meal and sleep overcame him. As he slept a rocky formation enclosed him. Hidden from sight he slept for seventy years. When he awoke he saw a man gathering the fruit of the carob tree and Honi asked him, "Are you the man who planted the tree?" The man replied: "I am his grand-son."*

*Honi exclaimed: "It is clear that I have slept for seventy years." Honi returned home. There he inquired, "Is the son of Honi HaMaagal still alive?" The people answered him, "His son is no more, but his grandson is still living." Thereupon he said to them: "I am Honi Honi HaMaagal," but no one would believe him.*

*He then went to the beit ha-midrash [study hall] and there he overheard the scholars say, "The law is as clear to us as in the days of Honi HaMaagal,”"for whenever he came to the beit ha-midrash he would settle for the scholars any difficulty that they had. Whereupon he called out, "I am he!" But the scholars would not believe him nor did they give him the honor due to him. This hurt him greatly and he prayed for mercy, and he died. Raba said: "Hence the saying, 'oh Chevrutah oh Metutah - Either companionship or death.'"*

I was always bothered by this story. I assumed that the lesson was that without friends, colleagues and learning partners who I could relate to and who could relate to me, there was no purpose to life. I saw this possibly as a generational lesson. As King Solomon said there is a time for everything. I can be in my generation, but not in another. I can relate to my generation, but not to another.

**Thinking of this Very Special Man**

But in this hospital room, thinking of this very special man who although almost twice my age was my friend, who had told me on more than one occasion that he “had my back”. When someone has your back, they are there to support you unconditionally. When life seems to blindside you with undesirable events, they’re there for you without complaint, supporting you in your moment of need, not for their own selfish, self-gratifying reasons, but because your wellbeing to them is foremost in their mind and heart. My friend David shown this quality of having my back more than once and very publicly.

Last week we read of Joseph who is hated by his brothers. He tells them of his dreams which causes them to hate him even more. Even his father Jacob is upset by the dreams. Jacob sends Joseph out to check on his brothers who decide to kill him and then relent by agreeing to sell him as a slave. He travels down to Egypt and is sold again and purchased and finally ends up in the house of Potiphar where he rises to become the assistant to his master.

**Yosef Refuses to Give Up**

Potiphar’s wife tries to seduce Joseph, and when he rejects her, she accuses him of trying to rape her. He is sent to prison. If anyone deserved to say oh Chevrutah or Metutah, either companionship or death, it was Joseph. Hated, denounced, abandoned and sold by his brothers into slavery and left to rot in an Egyptian prison, he may have wondered if he was the Yishmael or the Esav to be set aside and ejected from the household of the nation. He may have wondered if his father in response to his dream was part of the plot to be rid of him. Why would he not pray for mercy and to be taken from the world?

But Joseph finds purpose. Even if that purpose is temporarily becoming the chief slave of Potiphar and even if that purpose is rewarded with a false accusation. Perhaps it’s his dreams or his faith which drive him. In prison, he does not give up nor despair. Joseph again finds favor, this time in the eyes of the warden who appoints him senior prisoner in charge of all who are brought there. It is there where Joseph meets Pharaoh’s baker and butler and interprets their dreams. And this week we will see how this leads to his appointment as viceroy.

Honi didn’t need a learning partner. He needed to feel a part of the new world he woke up in and find a purpose. He couldn’t.

My friend David may not have any of his schoolmates around, and of his learning partners or his friends of his youth. But he also refuses to be a relic of a generation gone by. He is part of this generation and he has his new friends. Each day is a gift, a gift with purpose, to give and help, to learn and to teach and to benefit the world.

It took sitting in a hospital room with a sleeping centenarian to remind me of this.

*Reprinted from last week’s (Parashat Vayeishev 5776) email from Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.*

**Middos**

**The Power to Bentch Others**

Rav Gamliel Rabbinowitz writes that the study of Torah guarantees us well-being and abundance in this world, as well as in Olam Haba.

It is related about the Chozeh of Lublin, zt”l, that many times, when he would welcome the people that wanted to see him and ask him for a brachah (blessing), he would interrupt his visits for a short time and seclude himself in his room. Only after spending some time alone would he come out and continue to see the people. One of his students was curious as to why the Chozeh did his, so he hid in his Rebbe’s room to see what he did during this break. He was surprised to see that the Chozeh opened a Gemara, and he sat and learned!

The student was confused and asked his Rebbe if he could explain his actions. He thought the Chozeh came to Daven in private after hearing a particularly difficult situation, but couldn’t he have learned at a later time? Why was he delaying those waiting at his door?

The Chozeh answered his student that all the power he had to bentch (bless) Klal Yisroel, was from the power of the Torah, for all Hashem’s salvations and all the brachos in the world can only be found in the holy Torah.

Therefore, at times, when he felt the strength of the Torah diminishing a little and he did not have the energy to convey a brachah, he would excuse himself to sit and learn in order to receive a renewesd strength from the Torah, and through that he would be able to continue to give brachos.

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Parashas Vayeishev 5776 of Torah U’Tefillah: A Collection of Inspiring Stories compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**Story #940**

**Double Jeopardy**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[**editor@ascentofsafed.com**](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/5?session_redirect=true&userinfo=eff1e795994608ed6885dfdeac88e827&count=1449242388&randid=1024237940)

**The Rebbe of Sadigora** was in jail and the Russian government was in no hurry to pursue the investigation. Government officials still smarted from the memory of how the Sadigorer's father, the "holy Rhizhiner" Rebbe, had escaped through their fingers. They would get their revenge now - through his son.

The chief prison warden was an anti-Semite. He didn't care that the rebbe was innocent or that the rebbe had been cruelly torn from his loving family and his devoted followers. Nor did he mind if the rebbe suffered physical hardships in prison. On the contrary. He found a special pleasure in inflicting misery upon the Sadegorer.

The warden put the rebbe in a dark and tiny prison cell. No windows let in the light of day. There was nothing to sit on. All day long the rebbe had to stand. At night one of the guards unlocked and unfolded a shelf from the wall, and that was the prisoner's bed.

**Prison Was Next Door to a Church**

Next door to the prison stood a church. At regular intervals the church bells tolled, disturbing the prayers and meditation of the rebbe. He would close his ears tight so that the noise would not interfere with his prayers. He had to do this many times each day.

The rebbe was forced to share his narrow cell with a roommate--a vile Ukrainian, Jew-hating hoodlum who ridiculed and insulted the rebbe continuously. Coarse faced, course-tongued, and repulsive to look at, he made the rebbe's life miserable. When the Sadigorer chasidim bribed the prison guards to allow a sofa to be placed in the cell for the rebbe to sit and sleep on, the thug did not let the rebbe sit there. Instead, he sat there himself.

At night when the rebbe began to study, the Ukrainian criminal would holler in protest, "He's not letting me sleep," until the rebbe had to give up and lie down resignedly on his hard shelf.

The chief warden was delighted with the Ukrainian's pranks. The hoodlum had known what to do even without the warden's having to tell him anything. As a reward, the chief warden doubled his food portions.

**Thought of New Ways to Torture the Rebbe**

Seeing that he was rewarded for his mischief, the Ukrainian thought of new ways to torture the rebbe. When the rebbe prayed, the thug would sing at the top of his lungs. This made it very difficult for the rebbe to concentrate on his prayers. Somehow the Ukranian knew that this was the cruelest form of torture he could inflict on his fellow prisoner, for the rebbe suffered more from this than he did from any physical pain.

One day while the rebbe was reciting the morning prayers, the Ukrainian was acting particularly obnoxious, hurling insults, cursing, and singing coarse Ukrainian songs. The rebbe could not take it anymore. He could bear physical deprivation, but not this. What meaning did life have if he could not pray to G-d with devotion? This was the final straw.

The rebbe came to the place in the prayers with the following verse:

*"Look out from Heaven and see*

*How scorned and disgraced we are by the nations;*

*Nevertheless we have not forgotten Your name*

*Please do not forget us either."*

**Suddenly the Thug Became Very Agitated**

Over and over the Sadigorer repeated these verses. Suddenly a change came over the Ukrainian. He became very agitated. He threw himself wildly against the walls of the room, tearing out clumps of hair from his head. At first he could not speak. When at last he recovered the power of speech, he shrieked. "Help me! -- He's killing me! Save me!"

His screams echoed down the dark prison halls. The guards came running to see what was the matter. The strangest sight met their eyes. The rebbe stood calm and unmoving in one corner of the cell, his face to the wall, wrapped in a tallit. Meanwhile the hoodlum was flinging himself in terror and screaming, "Get me out of here! He's killing me! He's tearing me apart, limb from limb!"

A guard ran to the office of the chief warden to ask him what to do. He was shocked to see the chief warden acting much to same as the Ukrainian, writhing on the floor in agony. "Oh, no! Both of them!" thought the guard.

He sped back to the rebbe's cell, unlocked the door, and pushed the Ukrainian with all his might until he got him through the door and out into the hall. As soon as the Ukrainian was out, he stopped screaming and subsided into quiet. Now that the Ukrainian prisoner was out of danger, the guard ran back to see how the chief warden was doing. Lo and behold, he too was coming out of his strange fit.

After that, the Ukrainian adamantly refused to set foot into the rebbe's cell. He was afraid for his life.

**The Chief Warden Begged for Forgiveness**

The chief warden, realizing he had been punished for afflicting the holy man, humbly begged the Sadgorer for forgiveness. To show that he really meant it, he transferred the rebbe to a larger, sunlit cell with a chair and a comfortable bed. He wanted to do more for the rebbe. He asked him, "What else can I do for you? As long as I am within the prison rules, I will do anything for you."

The rebbe requested two things; first, that his *gabbai* be permitted to stay with him, and second that on Shabbat and Yom Tov a *minyan* of worshippers come so he could pray with a *minyan*. The warden promptly acceded to his requests.

Eventually the investigation was completed. The Sadgorer Rebbe was found innocent and released. But the suffering had taken its toll upon him. After having stood on his feet for days and weeks, his feet had grown weak. They never regained their former strength. And from closing his ears so tightly, he suffered the rest of his life from painful earaches.

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 *Source*: Supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from *Why the Baal Shem Tov Laughed* by Sterna Citron (Jason Aronson).

*Biographic note*:

**Rabbi Avraham-Yaakov Friedman of Sadigura** (20 Cheshvan 1819-11 Elul 1883), the first of the**Sadigorer** dynasty, was the second son and successor of his famous father, the 'heiliker Rhyzhiner,' the holy R. Yisrael of Rhizhin (1797-1850), who passed away in Sadigora. Rabbi Avraham-Yaakov's elder son, R. Yitzchak (1849-1917), became the first Boyanner Rebbe. His younger son, Yisrael (1853-1907), succeeded him in Sadigora as the rebbe of tens of thousands.

*Connections:*Weekly Reading (Yosef in Egypt) and Yud-Tet Kislev (the founder of Chabad, in Russia) - a tzadik in prison.

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**The Rebbe Suggests that His Chasid Become a Thief**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**

Some two hundred years ago lived a great Tzadik (miraculous Jew) called the Magid of Kosnitz. He was known from far and near for his superhumanly deep insights and accurate advice, and here is an example.

In the community of Kosnitz were many great Talmudic scholars; Chassidim of pure spirit and impeccable character that spent almost all of their waking hours deeply immersed either in prayer, learning Torah or helping others.

But one such fellow, we will call him Reb Yitzchak, had a problem. He was a pauper. He was a talented fellow and had tried all sorts of jobs but they all ended in failure. And he wouldn't have complained if only he suffered. But he had a wife and ten children who were constantly on the verge of starvation because of his bad luck.

Of course he could always beg for charity. But just the thought of it made him cringe so, with no other choice he decided that he had to bother the Rebbe; the Magid of Kosnitz, for advice.

He received an audience almost immediately. The Rebbe heard his question, thought for a moment and said.

"Listen, I see that there is only one craft that you will really succeed in but I'm sure you won't want to do it.

"No no!" he protested "I'm willing to do anything. My family is starving! No matter how manual or degrading …. just as long as it leaves me a few hours a day for learning and praying."

"Oh" the Rebbe answered "This job will leave you a lot of time. In fact it is clean and quiet and with the proper attitude you will even enjoy it and be a success …. but I don't think you will take it."

Reb Yitzchak was almost in tears. Was the Rebbe playing with him? His wife and children were suffering and the Rebbe is playing jokes?!

"Rebbe!" He pleaded "I promise I'll do it. What is it?"

"Stealing" He answered. "To break into stores and houses and steal. You have no idea what a talented thief you are and I guarantee it will make you a rich man."

Reb Yitzchak could not believe his ears. "Rebbe!" He gasped. "A thief? A sinner? But…. Rebbe! I could never …!"

"See I told you." He replied shrugging his shoulders as he looked into the book before him indicating that the meeting was over.

That night Reb Yitzchak couldn't sleep. The crying of his hungry children and words of the Rebbe gave him no respite. He put on his coat, left his house and paced the empty streets of Koznitz accompanied only by the moon and the wind rustling in the tree tops. He made up his mind; tomorrow he would beg. His back was to the wall.

But suddenly he noticed that the front door of one of the stores was open and a glittering coin was lying on the floor in front of the counter. It was as though the store was calling to him.

The next thing he knew he found himself turning the doorknob and entering.

In fact the door wasn't open, it was just unlocked, and the coin wasn't exactly on the floor but behind the counter in the cash box under a bunch of papers … but it was so easy to find; so…. obvious! He took one golden coin and left.

The next morning when the store owner found his door ajar and his cash-box opened he let out a bitter cry! He was sure he had lost his week's earnings… but, lo and behold! Only one coin was missing.

The next day all the store owners heard the news and began to worry and when the same thing happened again a few weeks later they went to the police.

But it didn't help. After a few more weeks the thief struck a third time and a month later a fourth! The store-owners were frantic. They put on new locks, the police added more men, longer hours, promised rewards, increased surveillance; but nothing helped. The thief seemed to always know where to go when no one was looking and exactly where the money was hidden.

But what was most perplexing was that he never stole more than one or two coins.

Finally the chief of police himself decided to join the battle. This thief was making a fool of him and his entire police force; his job and reputation were at stake! But really, deep inside he had another motivation.

On one hand this man was a master criminal; a perfect genius! But on the other…. why did he steal such small amounts!? It simply baffled him. He had to catch him!

Meanwhile Reb Yitzchak was going strong and, although his conscience bothered him terribly, he was strangely beginning to enjoy it. After all, he was only stealing small amounts, no one was really being damaged, he had every intention to pay back every penny, his family finally had what to eat and he did 'sort of' have a blessing from the Rebbe!!But that next night he got caught.

He walked the streets unnoticed, like every night, went into a store at the precise moment that the guard was gone, entered found the cash box and just as he was opening it suddenly heard a booming voice from behind him … "HANDS UP!! Don't make a move or you're dead! So you're the thief ehhh? Don't turn around!!" It was the chief of police himself who was also gifted with a sixth sense that had told him exactly where the break-in would be.

But suddenly he had a weird urge.

Instead of just taking him into custody he pulled up his coat collar and pulled down his hat so as not to be recognized and said in a disguised voice; "Listen Rabbi. I know who you are. But do you know who I am? I'm the head of the thieves in this town and because of you the town is crawling with police and my men can't work.

"So I'm giving you your choice. Either I turn you in and get the reward which will shame you and your family to death or you do what I say."

The Rabbi began crying. "Don't kill me! Don't turn me in! What do you want?"

"Good!" the disguised Chief of police continued. "Now listen. You don't have to steal anything. I have inside information that the Chief of Police just won a million English Pounds in the British national raffle and its hidden somewhere in his house. I want you to get into his house and tell me exactly where it is hidden. If you do it then I'll give you one hundred gold coins and let you go. If not…death and degradation!"

Poor Reb Yitzchak had no choice. Then and there they left the store and went to the Chief's house. Reb Yitzchak told his 'captor' to wait and in just minutes in the dark of the night he went around to the back of the house, scaled the wall and entered an open window.

But just moments later he returned, huffing and puffing.

"What happened? Did you find the money?"

"No!" he answered. "Something even better! Listen!" he whispered excitedly. "I got into the house and from the room I was in I overheard two of the house servants saying that tomorrow morning they are going to put poison in the Chief's tea, steal his money and divide it!"

He paused to catch his breath and continued. "Early tomorrow morning go tell the chief and I'm sure he will reward you! You'll get the money honestly. Listen, if you want you can hold me prisoner till you tell him. I swear I'm telling the truth."

The chief couldn't believe his ears. He managed to conceal his surprise, told Reb Yitzchak to go home and warned him not to leave the town. The next morning when his servants served him his tea he pulled out a pistol and ordered them to drink it. Of course they refused. So he gave a couple drops of the tea to his dog who fell over half dead and then promptly arrested them for attempted murder.

That day he went to Reb Yitzchak's home, revealed his true identity and gave him half of the million pounds… and needless to say, from then on transformed into a friend of the Jews.

Just as the Rebbe said… Reb Yitzchak became rich from stealing!

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.*

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

**A Lesson on the**

**Importance of Time**

Rav Simcha Wasserman once said a story about his father, Rav Elchanan Wasserman, the Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivah Baranovich.

“Once my father, zt”l, had to travel from Baranovich, and I was accompanying him to the train station. We were walking together and I was carrying a small suitcase for him.

My father was wearing new boots that my mother had bought for him, which he had refused to wear until my mother gave away his very old and worn shoes to the girl who carried the water buckets through the snow.

My mother explained to my father that the girl had no shoes and she really needed them, and it was only then that he agreed to wear the new ones. I could tell that something was bothering him.

After a while he said, ‘These boots are troubling me.’

My father never spoke without a specific reason, so I knew that I was about to learn something.

He said, ‘What is bothering me is that they have laces, and I estimate that it is going to cost me half a minute a day to tie and untie them when I put them on and take them off.’

He was teaching me how valuable the gift of time is!”

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Parashas Vayeishev 5776 of Torah U’Tefillah: A Collection of Inspiring Stories compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**In Hawaii, 9-Year-Old Soccer Player Keeps the Real Goal in Mind**

**By Menachem Posner**



Yudi Weinbaum is passionate about many things—chief among them, Judaism, with soccer trailing behind as a close second.

So he really took it to heart when his normally cheerful son, Yossi, came home from a recent soccer match almost in tears.

“I don’t know what happened,” said the 9-year-old, who is home-schooled and takes classes at [Chabad of Hawaii](http://www.chabad.org/article.asp?AID=3142874) in Honolulu. “Before we began playing, the referee saw my *tzitzit* hanging out of my shirt and told me I couldn’t play unless I took them off or cut off the strings.”

The referee claimed that the *tzitzit* somehow broke the ban on wearing extra sporting equipment to the game.

Unsure of how to proceed, Yossi—who had been playing soccer since he was 6 and had never encountered a problem like this before—took the advice of his coach to tuck in his*tzitzit* and get back on the field, joining his teammates on “Hawaii 808.” Within minutes, he scored a goal, and things appeared to be back to normal.

It took until the second half before the referee noticed his *kipah* and ordered him to remove it or leave the game. So Yossi walked off the field, knowing that was non-negotiable.

“This was something that had never happened before,” says coach Tye Yamada, who had been coaching children’s soccer for five years. “Yossi is one of our most reliable offensive players, and we’ve never had any issues. Boys should not have to sit out of games for reasons of religion.”

Weinbaum comforted his son, assuring him that he had done the right thing. It was the day before Sukkot, so after the holiday ended, he and his wife, Estee, set about to address the issue.

“We suspected that this was either the result of ignorance or anti-Semitism, and we wanted to clear the air as fast as we could,” says Weinbaum, a London native who runs Hawaii’s only kosher-catering business, [Oahu Kosher](http://www.chabad.org/article.asp?AID=3142871). “I immediately wrote an email to the coach asking him to look into it.”

In the past, they say, Yamada and his co-coach, Michael Lancet, had always been supportive of Yossi missing practice and games, for example, when it coincided with the Sabbath or Jewish holidays.

Within days, the family was gratified to learn that the incident was the result of unawareness on the part of the individual referee, and they were assured that it would not happen again.

“Please let your son know that we wholeheartedly support him, in his religious convictions and his wearing of religious attire at soccer games,” wrote Phil Neddo, Oahu League President. “Furthermore, we have asked the State Referee Committee about measures by which referees can be made more aware of the allowances of non-dangerous religious attire, more alert to situations where a player might fall under that rule, and as sensitive as possible to the diverse backgrounds and religions of all participants.”

After receiving an equally sincere letter from the offending referee, who said he honestly did not know what *tzitzit* were, the Weinbaums say they felt confident enough to send Yossi back onto the field.

“Soccer is a great unifier, bringing together people from different cultures and backgrounds,” says Weinbaum, himself a long-time fan of the Liverpool F.C. (Football Club). “It was so refreshing that this unpleasant incident served to open more doors and educate others about the Jewish people, and our unique faith and traditions.”

As for Yamada, he adds that he’s grateful that Yossi is again with the team, dribbling and dragging the ball towards the goal: “He is one of our strongest, most fearless players, and it’s good to have him back.”

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