**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Mikeitz -Chanukah 5774**

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**It Once Happened**

**Reb Zushe and the**

**First Night of Chanuka**

The followers of Rabbi Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezritch, awaited his entrance into the synagogue for the lighting of the Chanuka menora on the first night of Chanuka. For the past few years, Reb Zushe, one of the Maggid's greatest disciples, had been honored with lighting the shamash candle. Reb Zushe would then hand it to the Maggid who lit his menora from it. But Reb Zushe was nowhere to be seen and the chasidim wondered if his absence was the reason the Maggid had not yet lit the menora.

**The Hours Quickly Ticked Away**

Minutes, then hours ticked by, as the chasidim waited for their Rebbe to emerge. Finally, at about midnight, the Maggid emerged from his room and walked towards the menora. As if to himself, the Maggid said quietly, "Reb Zushe will not be with us tonight. We will light the menora now."

The Maggid honored another of his chasidim with the privilege of kindling the shamash for him, the blessings were chanted and the one, solitary wick was lit. Then all of the holy assemblage joined together in singing the traditional Chanuka hymns.

The next morning, just as the Maggid and his chasidim were finishing the services, Reb Zushe walked in. Weary from traveling, Reb Zushe shuffled over to his customary place and dropped down on the bench. His friends came over and gave him a hearty welcome. One of them reported, "The Rebbe waited a long time for you last night. What happened?"

"After we light the Chanuka menora tonight," promised Reb Zushe, "and with the Rebbe's permission, I will tell you what happened."

All of the chasidim gathered around the Maggid's menora on the second night of Chanuka. After the Maggid lit the menora they eagerly listened to Reb Zushe's story:

**Scheduled to Return to Mezritch**

**In Time for Chanuka**

"As you all know, immediately after the High Holidays, it is my custom to travel throughout the small villages and hamlets near Mezritch. I go from town to town, speaking with the adults and teaching the children about the wonders of our heritage. I also speak to them about how G-d loves each and every single Jew and that they are all important to Him. I tell them about our Rebbe and explain some of the Rebbe's teachings.

"Each year, I plan my schedule so that I can return to Mezritch in time for Chanuka. Yesterday, I was on my way back to Mezritch when a terrible snowstorm started. I pushed on through the storm, though many times I felt I could not continue. Knowing that I would soon be back in Mezritch near the Rebbe was what kept me going.

"The storm worsened and I soon realized that I would have to stop and rest a bit before continuing, if I wanted to make it to Mezritch at all. And so, I stopped at the home of Yankel in a village not too far from Mezritch. By this time it was already quite late in the afternoon. I pounded and pounded on the door until finally, someone called out, 'Who is it?'

"'It is I, Reb Zushe,' I said loudly.

**Yankel’s Wife Looked**

**Absolutely Terrified**

"Yankel's wife opened the door. She looked absolutely terrified as she bid me inside. I noticed that the children, too, looked frightened.

"The poor woman burst out, 'Yankel left the house early this morning to gather firewood. He promised he would come back early, for even then he saw we were in for a terrible storm. It is late already and still he has not returned,' she wailed.

"For a split second I hesitated. If I went into the forest now, who knew if I would come out alive? But I knew I had no choice. I put on my coat and scarf once again and set out toward the forest.

"I passed a few rows of trees when I saw the upright form of a man covered with snow. Only his face was visible in that white blur. I saw right away that it was Yankel, and I thought for sure that he had frozen to death. But when I came very close, I noticed to my surprise, that he was still breathing. I brushed Yankel off and tried to warm him up.

"Somehow I managed to drag and carry Yankel back to his house where his wife and children greeted us with cries of joy. With my last ounce of strength I deposited Yankel on the bench near the stove and fell to the floor myself. Miraculously, Yankel's wife was able to "thaw" him out. She brought us a bottle of strong mashke which we drank eagerly to warm our insides. At about midnight we felt sufficiently strong enough to stand up and light the Chanuka menora. As we said the prayer, 'who made miracles for our ancestors, in those days at this time," we knew without a doubt that G-d had made a miracle for us now, too.

**As Soon as the Sun Rose**

"As soon as the sun rose in the morning I set out for Mezritch and arrived when you saw me this morning."

Reb Zushe finished his story. The Maggid looked deeply into Reb Zushe's face. "Know, Zushe, that in Heaven they waited--as it were--to light the Divine Chanuka menora until you lit the menora together with Yankel. In the merit of your saving a Jewish soul from death, the Heavens awaited you."

Reprinted from the archives (Issue #246 – Parshas Vayeshev 5753/December 18, 1992 of L’Chaim, a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY.

**Who's Who**

**Yehuda HaMaccabi**

Judah the Maccabee (Yehuda HaMaccabi) was one of the five sons of Mattathias the Priest (Mattisiyahu the Kohen) from the city of Modiin in Israel. Judah was called "Maccabee," a word composed of the initial letters of the four Hebrew words "Mi Kamocha Ba'eilim Ado-shem - Who is like You, O G-d."

On his deathbed, Mattathias enjoined his sons to follow the advice of their oldest brother, Shimon in general matters and Judah in waging war. Judah was considered one of the greatest warriors in Jewish history.

*Reprinted from last week’s edition of “L’Chaim,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY.***The Menorah That**

**Lit Up My Life**

**By Laura P. Schulman**

Two years ago I was in Baltimore on business, and happened to pass by the public menorah [orchestrated by the Chabad shaliach] in front of Johns Hopkins University just as the first light was being lit. My eyes welled with tears. Although I was raised a secular Jew, my family has always celebrated Chanukah.

**Felt Cold and Lonely**

To be away from my family that first night of the holiday felt cold and lonely. Now, seeing the lights of the first night’s flames of that big menorah, my heart lit up also, and I felt the warmth of my people all around me.

The next day I was walking by the waterfront, and a young man in a black hat ran up to me and politely asked, “Excuse me, are you Jewish?” Somewhat surprised that anyone would care, I answered in the affirmative.

“Do you know that it’s the second night of Chanukah tonight?” he asked earnestly.

I nodded.

“Do you have a menorah?” he inquired, looking a bit anxious.

“No,” I replied.

“Do you want one?” he asked hopefully.

**Almost Shouting with Joy**

“Do you have one?” I asked, almost shouting with joy.

“Yes, I’ll get you one!” he replied, almost as excited as I.

He ran off, and returned moments later with an entire menorah kit in a box: little brass candleholder, box full of the right number of candles, and complete instructions. Also a DVD full of Chanukah stories, how-tos, even recipes. I politely declined the offer of a doughnut (fried foods are traditional on Chanukah, but I have to pace myself), and raced off to my hotel room to examine the contents of the box and watch the DVD.

**Childhood Memories of Chanukah**

Childhood memories of Chanukah lights, my father telling stories of the Maccabees, the miracle of how one day’s worth of oil somehow lasted for eight days . . . it all came flooding back. I knew I had been given a gift that Chanukah in Baltimore: the gift of the return of Judaism to my life, and of my life to Judaism.

All this because of a menorah on the steps of a public institution. And all because I “happened” to be passing by that day, and the flame of the menorah ignited the spark that had been sleeping in my Jewish heart for nearly 50 years.

When I returned to Seattle the following week, I called a rabbi for the first time in my life. I told him what the menorah in Baltimore had stirred in me. Over the next two years, with his wise and gentle guidance, I found my way as a fully observant Jew. The spark that was rekindled by a public menorah is now a steady burning flame.

**Grateful to Live in a Country**

**That Offers Religious Freedoms**

How grateful I am to live in a country that is founded on the right to worship as we choose, in the manner in which we choose. I thank our founding fathers who crafted the Constitution of the United States of America, which recognizes our freedom to express and practice our religion. And I thank those who have the courage, in these sometimes dark times, to defend those rights.

We never know how many hearts and lives are touched and, yes, even transformed by the sight of the miraculous Chanukah lights, shining into the darkest reaches and reminding us of miracles long ago and not so long ago.

All those selfless souls whose courage and staunch commitment fuel the kindling of light the world over deserve our heartfelt gratitude. I know they have mine.

*Reprinted from Chabad.Org The article was originally printed* The Jewish Press

**Kiddush Hashem**

**In New Haven**

**By C.B Weinfeld**

Yated interviews Reb Noach and Esther Muroff

What would you do if a windfall just falls into your lap?

What if that windfall wasn’t chump change, but $98,000 in cold, hard cash?

What if you could simply pocket it and nobody would notice its absence?



#### WTNH

#### Rabbi Noach Muroff said he and his wife knew right away that they had to return the $98,000 they found stuffed inside a desk they bought after finding it listed on Craigslist.

Rabbi and Mrs. Noach Muroff of New Haven, CT, answered that question in a way that created a massive kiddush Hashem [sanctification of G-d’s name,] reverberating across the world.

**A Ninth Grade Mesivta Rebbi**

Rabbi Noach Muroff, a ninth grade mesivta rebbi in the Yeshiva of New Haven, and his wife Esther made a massive kiddush Hashem recently. After buying a used desk for $150 on Craigslist, they found a treasure inside. But what they did next was truly remarkable. When the Muroffs brought the desk home, they realized it wouldn’t fit through the door by a fraction of an inch. The couple had to pull the desk apart and dismantle the file cabinets. Behind the drawers, they discovered a plastic bag filled with cash.

As Rabbi Muroff recalled, “We counted up and there’s $98,000 cash sitting in the bag. Right away my wife and I sort of looked at each other and said, “We can’t keep the money.”

They immediately picked up the phone and called the original owner, who was shocked and in tears. Patty had hidden her inheritance some years ago, and forgotten where she’d stashed the money. “You could have kept it and I would never have known,” she marveled. “I don’t know too many people who would have done what you’ve done.”

**Called the Home While Reb Noach**

**Was Being Interviewed by the BBC**

I tracked down a member of the warm, vibrant New Haven Yeshiva community, who gave me Reb Noach’s cell phone number. When I called, his wife, Esther, picked up, apologizing, saying her husband was on the phone with the BBC.

The story was definitely picking up steam.

A few minutes later, Rabbi and Mrs. Muroff graciously shared their perspective of the powerful story that has taken the world by storm.

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Here is Rabbi and Mrs. Muroff’s account of the incident:

This actually occurred a couple of weeks before Rosh Hashonoh, but we kept it low-key, because we’re quiet people. We didn’t think what we did was so exceptional. We figured most people in our situation, who found a lot of cash and knew who it belonged to, would do the same thing.

The story begins when we found a used desk for sale locally, on the Internet. It was being sold by Patty, a middle-aged woman who lived nearby, for the great price of $150. We had been looking for a desk for a while and were very happy that we finally found a suitable bargain.

The next day we went to pick up the desk. The desk was beautiful and perfect for our needs. We schlepped the desk out of the car, through the front door, and up the stairs, and it fit without a problem.

**Unable to Get the Desk**

**Through the Door of the Study**

The trouble began when we tried to get it through the door of the study. It almost fit - but was too wide by literally a fraction of an inch. We tried to squeeze, but the desk wouldn’t budge. So we figured we’d take the off the door’s hinges and get it in that way. For some reason, that didn’t work, either. And I’m glad it didn’t, boruch Hashem. Otherwise this story would never have happened, and the money would still be hidden.

We finally decided to take the desk apart and set it up again. I (Esther) took off the top of the desk, and tried loosen the file drawers underneath by pushing the tabs. Suddenly the whole thing came apart, and we noticed a bag wedged behind where the drawers were. We opened it and went, “Omigosh!”

The bag was stacked with neat piles of cash, wrapped with markings from a bank, all of them 100 dollar bills. We started counting and couldn’t believe our eyes. Ten thousand, twenty thousands, thirty, forty... all the way to 98,000. The tirchah turned into a brochah.

**“We Can’t Keep the Money!”**

What was our first reaction? Shock, of course, but then right away we looked at each other and said, “We can’t keep the money.” That reaction was instinctive. It just... it wasn’t ours. And we knew it belonged to the desk’s previous owner. Patty said she had bought it in Staples and assembled it herself.

It was late at night, around 11:30 p.m., but we didn’t want to wait. We dialed her number and recorded the conversation on our phone. When we asked Patty if she was missing any money, because we found a bag of money in the desk. She became hysterical, crying and laughing, telling us it was her inheritance, a gift from her deceased parents. We agreed to return the following day.

That night, I (Noach) had a hard time falling asleep. I had no regrets about contacting the woman to return the money, but still, I wanted to hear from my rosh yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel that I’d done the right thing. I reached my rosh yeshiva very late, and he said that we absolutely made a massive kiddush Hashem. My rosh yeshiva advised me to refuse a reward for my actions, unless the owner insisted.

The following day, we strapped our four children (ages six, four, three and one) into the car and brought them along on our trip to return the money. We wanted this to be a learning experience for them, to teach them about honesty and doing the right thing.

**Patty Was Filled with Gratitude and Wonder**

When we arrived at Patty’s house, she was waiting for us, filled with gratitude and wonder. She then explained how the large sum money fell behind the drawers in the desk.

Patty had been grief-stricken when her parents passed away within a short while of each other. When she received the inheritance, she planned to put it into the bank, but didn’t have the emotional energy. Instead, she put the bag of money inside a desk drawer. When she decided to deposit it in the bank, it had disappeared, literally into thin air. Apparently, it had slid out of the drawer she placed it in and fell down behind the big filing drawers of the desk. When she sold her desk, Patty had no idea the money had been there! Had we not taken the desk apart to get it into the room, we never would have found it.

Patty repeatedly insisted that we accept a reward. We initially refused, but when we saw how strongly she felt about it, we agreed. She also gave us a handwritten note, which read, in part, “I cannot thank you enough for your honesty and integrity. I do not think there are too many people in this world that would have done what you did by calling me. “Included in the card was the money we paid for the desk!”

**Going Home on a High**

We went home on a high, grateful that we’d returned a treasure to its rightful owner. Apart from friends and close family, no one knew our story, and we preferred it this way. We were about to begin a new school year, followed by the Yomim Tovim, so our story remained hidden.

And then a couple of weeks ago, we attended the regional Torah Umesorah Convention in Boston. At the convention, I (Noach) had the zechus of meeting Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky and related the story. The rosh yeshiva was insistent that we publicize the story, to make a kiddush Hashem. This is especially important nowadays, when there is so much bashing of anyone who appears to be religious.

We called CNN the following day to share our story. They sounded interested, but gave us the runaround, finally telling someone to get in touch with our local branch first. The local branch was very excited and dispatched someone to our home that day to get the scoop.

Within hours, or so it seemed, the story we’d almost forgotten went viral, k’heref ayin, like the blink of an eye! It became quite a sensation. Almost every news outlet carried it, and many called us for interviews. In fact, when you first called, we were speaking to the BBC.

Ironically, we are quiet people by nature and weren’t expecting so much attention for what we thought was the only natural response. To us, it was a no-brainer.

It was only in the past few days, when we heard people’s comments, that we realized we actually did have a choice.

We are very grateful that to us this was our natural choice.

If we could, we would do it all over again.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of the AJOP (Association of Jewish Outreach Professionals) Update. The article was originally published in the Yated Ne’eman.*

**The Golden Column**

**The Saintly Poet,**

**Rabbi Yisrael Nagara zs"l**

 There is a well-known story of the great singer and poet, Rabbi Yisrael Nagara zs"l (who composed, "Y-ah Ribon," and his name - Yisrael - is formed by the first letters of each stanza) who was sitting as his Shabbat table singing, as was his want, and at that moment the Ar"i zs"l was sitting with his students.

The Ar"i beheld tens of thousands of angels gathering in the house of Rabbi Yisrael to listen to the sacred prayers, as all his songs were song with "ru'ah hakodesh." Suddenly, he saw one angel come and scatter the crowd of angels, because Rabbi Yisrael sung with his arms uncovered.

The Ar"i immediately sent two of his students to inform Rabbi Yisrael. Upon hearing what had happened, Rabbi Yisrael was gripped with fear and immediately covered his arms. The angels once again joined his table to listen to his beautiful, soul-stirring song.

 When Rabbi Yehudah Gizfan zs"l, the author of "Minhat Yehudah" and one of the great leaders of the Jewish community in Yemen around two hundred years ago, heard this story, he could not believe that it actually happened as recorded, "For it is impossible to say about such an individual that he would make this grave error, especially at a moment when the 'ru'ah hakodesh' rested upon him!"

He explained the concept of the "outstretched arm" with which Hashem smote the Egyptians on the basis of Kabbalah. The future redemption is to unfold in a similar manner, as the prophet promises, "Like the days when you left Egypt, I will show you miracles."

**Wanted to Hasten the Ultimate Redemption**

Therefore, Rabbi Yisrael Nagara zs"l most likely wanted to hasten the arrival of the ultimate redemption, the period of great wonders, and, in this way, revealed his arm of sanctity in order to arouse this attribute of the Almighty.

However, the time for the redemption had not yet arrived. The Creator therefore sent an angel to scatter the other angels from the table. The Ar"i saw all this in his ru'ah hakodesh and sent a messenger to inform Rabbi Yisrael that he should cover these proverbial "arms," for the time of redemption had not yet arrived.

The story nevertheless assumed a more simple, straightforward form, in order to teach, quite simply, the proper respect and decorum with which one must sit at his Shabbat table.

*Reprinted from the Vayishlah 5774 edition of the Aram Soba Newsletter.*

**The Inspiration of Chanuka**

**From: Josh in Melbourne**

*Dear Rabbi,*

*I just wanted to ask you a few questions about Chanuka. Why is Chanuka so important? What is the main feature of Chanuka? What do you think would happen if the Greeks were successful in the battle against the Maccabees? Why were the Maccabees chosen to fight the Greeks? Thank you for your time and I hope to hear from you soon.*

Dear Josh,

Chanuka is so important because it means the victory of Torah over Greek philosophy. Unlike previous pagan ideas so revolting to Jews, Greek

paganism was bound up with beauty, art and philosophy.

Therefore, it captured the imagination of many Jews. Many Jews became “Greekified,” or “Hellenists.”

This may surprise you, but the Greeks did win. You see, there was a battle and there was a war. The Maccabees won the battle and were able to hold on for a while but eventually they succumbed to Pompeii’s conquest 80 years later.

But the miracle of the oil inspired us to realize that G-d is with us no matter what. Without that inspiration the Jewish People might not have been able to survive future periods of even greater persecution.

Why the Maccabees? Because their father Mattityahu possessed faith in G-d which gave him the courage to stand up against power and corruption. The name “Maccabee” comes from the Hebrew acronym “*Mi Camocha B’eilim* *Hashem*” — who amongst the mighty is like You, G-d?”

Although the Maccabee’s military victory didn’t last, the miraculous events of the war and the oil inscribed the message of faith and loyalty indelibly into the Jewish soul.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of OHRNET, the Ohr Somayach Torah Magazine of the Internet.*

**Love of the Land**

**Modi’in – the City**

**Of the Maccabees**

Modi’in is the historical name of the mountain stronghold of the Maccabeans whose victory over the vastly superior forces of the Hellenist Greek oppressors is celebrated on Chanuka.

In his historical account of that epic struggle between pagan idolatry and Hebrew faith, Josephus describes how the wicked Antiochus ordered his officers to wipe out any trace of Judaism. They did indeed slay anyone who remained faithful to Torah observance, except for those who fled to the mountain area of Modi’in together with Matitiyahu, the son of Yochanan.

It was from this Modi’in that Matitiyahu and his five sons led their small band of faithful Jews in a seemingly hopeless war of “the mighty against the weak, the many against the few, the impure against the pure, the wicked against the righteous, the sinners against those who adhered to the Torah” — a war ending in a miraculous victory, climaxed by the miracle of the oil in the Menorah which burned for eight days.

Since the Six-Day War, the Modi’in area has been intensely developed and is the home of the fast-growing city of Modi’in I’lit, a thriving Torah-observant community, midway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of OHRNET, the Ohr Somayach Torah Magazine of the Internet.*

Hanukkah is NOT Thanksgiving

Why Hanukkah is the Most Anti-American Holiday of All.

**By Emuna Braverman**

I have to confess that I don’t understand the whole [Hanukkah/Thanksgiving](http://www.aish.com/sp/ph/Thanksgivukkah.html) dilemma. Perhaps it’s because I grew up in Canada where Thanksgiving is a holiday of recent creation, added to the calendar in imitation of the Americans. It never caught on, perhaps due to its lack of historical antecedents. I led a deprived childhood, missing out on roast turkey, cranberry sauce and yams with marshmallows. So I don’t really get all the fuss, not the mention the fantastical numerical calculations about the infrequency of this occurrence.

As you may have been noticed, it is not unusual for [Hanukkah](http://www.aish.com/h/c/mm/sf/The-Black-Miracle-A-HanukkahThanksgiving-Poetry-Slam.html) to go head to head with another, more widely celebrated holiday. And, unfortunately, it often gets lost in the shuffle. It gets trivialized or downplayed or treated as a simple children’s celebration.

And that’s unfortunate because it’s a profound holiday with many important messages.

I like to think of Hanukkah as the holiday of Jewish pride – we place our menorahs in our windows to publicize the miracle, to proclaim to the world that the Almighty takes care of His people – and to express our gratitude.

**The Most Anti-American Holiday of All**

It is, ironically, the most anti-American holiday of all (don’t jump on me yet; I like living in this country and am very appreciative). Why? Because America is all about assimilation, about fitting in; this is a country that prides itself on being a melting pot.

Sociologists have even developed a model for the stages of assimilation – including some Malcolm X-style anger and national pride in the middle – with the ultimate goal and resolution being a seamless participation in American life, a quiet loosening of the ties to other countries, other values, other customs (unless it’s something quaint to be trotted out in a yearly festival of costumes and food but otherwise invested with no daily significance).

There is even a course like this taught in grad school. In my class, everyone had to map their personal or family’s trajectory, starting with their immigration to the United States. But the model just didn’t work for me. I didn’t assimilate. I chose to live differently, separately. My people’s laws and customs infuse my daily existence, with each holiday offering deeper meaning and significance. I couldn’t contort my belief system, my national heritage and identity, to fit the sociological paradigm. So I got a B in the course!

**It Just Fueled My Jewish Pride**

But that just fueled my Jewish pride. Maybe it’s the rebel in me but I was happy to be different, to make my own choices, to stand apart from the crowd. But maybe it’s not just me. The Torah mentions over and over again that we are a stiff-necked people. That’s why the Greek’s initial strategy didn’t work. They tried to forbid the learning of Torah but that just got us annoyed. Even people who weren’t learning previously wanted to participate!

Thanksgiving is a nice holiday. It’s about gratitude and family – and lots of pie! There’s nothing not to like about it (except that over-stuffed feeling).

But Hanukkah is about transcendence, about elevating our lives, about focusing on our relationship with G-d, about using the material to accomplish the spiritual. The Greeks may have been known for the Olympics but the truth is it’s no competition at all; [Hanukkah](http://www.aish.com/h/c/) wins it hands down.

I’m grateful to live in America but it’s a privilege to be a part of the Jewish people and to have a covenant with God – and to proclaim our pleasure through our blazing Hanukkah lights – the lights of hope, the lights of wisdom, the lights of intellect, the lights of Torah. No turkey-shaped menorah for me…

*Reprinted from this week’s email of Aish.com*

**Story #835**

**The Light in the Window**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[**editor@ascentofsafed.com**](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0000tt00:001I%5emvx00001zvm&count=1385424805&randid=1662107364&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=0&randid=1662107364)

During World War II there was a group of fighting partisans who had broken out of the Nazi camps in Poland. The group comprised a few Jews and some former Polish army officers. They organized a resistance force that used to harass the Germans.

On one of their missions, they found an old, starving rabbi who had been left for dead by the Nazi murderers. One of the Catholic partisans took mercy on the man and nursed him back to health. The rabbi was of no real use to the partisans, so he was given the job of cooking and praying for the safety of the fighting men. Remarkably, this group of partisans suffered no casualties for the rest of the war.

**The Group Broke Up**

**When the War was Over**

When the war was over the group broke up. Some went back to Poland; others traveled to Latvia. Others became wandering people with no homeland. As the Russian government clamped down on the people, depriving them of their freedom, those of the group that were still in Russia decided to flee together.

A plan was made to leave the Russian territories by night. An informant helping these escaping partisans told them, "You must cross the river in the winter when it is frozen. When you reach the other side of the river you'll be entering no-man's land. There you will find a hut. This hut is used by a Russian soldier who is in charge of preventing border crossings by all unauthorized people.

**His Job was to Shoot Anything that Moved**

His job is to shoot anything that moves. However, at one o'clock in the morning he leaves his hut and walks a few miles to the next hut, where he meets another soldier. There the soldiers exchange reports and supplies. Then he returns to his watch. The complete trip takes him approximately two hours. During that time, you can warm yourselves in his hut but you must be out of there by the time he returns."

This group of brave men consisted only of the younger people. Most of the older people had given up hope, deciding to remain behind in the Russian territories. The only old man willing to travel with them was the rabbi. A heated argument broke out: "Let's leave him," said one. "After all, he can find food in one of the towns. We really do not need to be slowed down by a frail, old man. We have done our share."

But then, a religious Christian partisan exclaimed, "If we leave him, we are all doomed. I will not leave without him." So, reluctantly, they included the rabbi.

**A Cold and Miserable Night**

It was a cold and miserable night. A blizzard broke out. Sure enough, the leader was correct: the old man could not keep up with the rigorous climbing and running. The blizzard increased and more than once they had to stop to carry the old rabbi. As light as he was, he was now a big burden, slowing down the entire group. More than once, they argued if they should just leave him.

It was one o'clock in the morning when they arrived at the hut which, by now, was half buried in the snow. They could smell the fire and warmth coming from the hut. They waited and waited for the soldier to leave. It seemed like forever. It wasn't a moment too soon that the soldier left. Almost frozen to death, the fleeing group fell into the hut, each one trying to get his icy hands and frostbitten feet closer and closer to the fire.

The old rabbi moved away from the group. He opened a small bag and took out an old and rusty menorah. Then he took a small piece of string, rolled it into a wick and proceeded to fill the menorah with some oil from a small tin bottle that he somehow had managed to bring with him. The act taking place put everyone into a trance. Not a word was uttered nor a sound heard. Spellbound, everyone watched the rabbi.

In a barely audible voice, the rabbi recited the blessings for the lighting of the menorah, picked up the menorah, and placed it by the window of the hut. Then he lit the menorah and began to sing an old Jewish song traditionally sung after lighting the Chanuka candles: "Maoz Tzur/ Rock of Ages," which speaks of G-d's miracles for his people through the generations.

**Like an Erupting Volcano**

Like an erupting volcano, the leader was jolted out of his stupor and yelled, "Put out that light!" You will bring the Russian soldier back here. We will all be caught and shot."

The rabbi tried to explain that it was the first night of Chanuka and that he had kindled the light in order to keep the commandment of remembering the miracle of Chanuka. "No," said the rabbi. He would not extinguish the flame. "It must burn for half an hour. This is according to the ancient Hebrew law."

Suddenly the door of the hut flew open. A tall soldier holding a machine gun yelled at the startled group to put their hands up into the air. The Russian soldier approached the old rabbi, looked at the menorah, and said to him in Russian, "I, too, am a Jew. I have not seen a menorah in six years." He kissed the rabbi's beard and broke into tears.

The soldier proceeded to tell the group, "After I left the hut I suddenly remembered that I had left some reports in a drawer. As I was returning I saw a light coming from the hut. I couldn't believe my eyes - a menorah in no-man's land, in the middle of a blizzard, right in my hut."

**Proceeded to Offer Out Vodka**

The soldier told the group that they were safe and proceeded to take out a large bottle of vodka, giving each one a drink. He said, "It's good that I was on guard. Another guard would have killed all of you! Come, I will show you how to cross the border. Remember me, Rabbi. Pray that I have a Chanuka miracle and will be able to leave the army safely and be with my family."

The very shaken but relieved little group followed the soldier out across the border. Somehow they made their way to freedom and then they all went their separate ways. The old rabbi went to Israel. He told his story to fellow survivors. One of them, in turn, told it to me as a small boy.

[Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from an article by Rabbi Eli Hecht written for //LchaimWeekly.org, and then reprinted by Living Jewish (a Jerusalem weekly).]

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**Tales of the Gaonim**

**A Time to Throw Away**

**By Rabbi Sholom Klass**

The great Shlomo *HaMelech,* wisest of all men, wrote that there is a time for all things. There is a time to be born and a time to die, a time to cry and a time to laugh, a time to preserve and a time to throw away.

When one thinks of these words he soon realizes the wisdom that lies in them. Everything in this world had its place – even seemingly foolish things. Here is a story that clearly brings out this lesson.

**Eliphelet**

In the city of Bais Lechem there once lived a very wealthy man by the name of Eliphelet. He had amassed a great fortune through his wisdom and business knowledge. He was also blessed with an only son whom he loved very much. The lad, whose name was Yigal, was a good son who loved G-d devotedly and who spent his days in the study of Torah. He was devoted to his parents, respecting them in every way and was generous and kind to all who were in need.

As the years passed, Yigal grew into a handsome, wise and ﬁne young man. One day, he approached his father and said: “It is time that I began to learn something about your business. Allow me to go with you on your next trip across the seas. There I can see the wondrous lands where you buy and sell, and I, too, can learn to be great merchant.”

“What you say is right, Yigal,” replied his father. “It is indeed time that you began to learn. On my next trip you shall come with me.”

**An Ocean Voyage**

Yigal could barely contain his excitement and impatience as he waited for the great day to arrive. Together with his father, Yigal went to the dock to board a ship that would take them across the seas to wonderful and strange lands and peoples.

Yigal stood on deck, his eyes shining with excitement as he looked out at the gently rolling waves and dreamed of the adventures that awaited him. His father, however, had his mind on other, more serious things.

He had noticed the captain and the crew eyeing him and Eliphelet felt a sense of foreboding crept over him. Stealing away as evening fell, he crept into the hold of the ship and silently listened as two crewmen spoke to each other:

“The captain insists that the older Jew is a man of great wealth. He says that his pockets are lined with money and that he would be an easy prey.”

“What does he plan to do?” asked the other.

“Tomorrow afternoon we will pounce upon the two Jews and kill them. We will then divide their money and no one will ever be the wiser for their bodies will never be found.”

**A Plan**

When Eliphelet heard this, he trembled and prayed to G-d: “Father in Heaven, be with me in my time of terrible danger.”

Leaving his hiding place he sought out Yigal, who was calmly resting and learning. Coming close, Eliphelet saw that his son was learning *Koheles* and was reading the verse that says: “There is a time to preserve and a time to throw away.”

Suddenly a thought entered his mind. Of course, that was the way. It could yet save their lives. Approaching his son, Eliphelet whispered: “Listen, my son, we are in great danger.”

“What do you mean, Father? What has happened?” Yigal asked anxiously.

“Do not raise your voice,” Eliphelet cautioned. “If they hear us, we are doomed. I have just learned that the captain and sailors intend to kill us and take our money.”

“Woe unto us,” cried Yigal. “What can we do?”

“There may be an answer, and it is a thing that I thought of as I read the verse in *Koheles*. We must pretend that we are quarreling over the money. I will then begin to grapple with you, seize the bag of gold that we have and throw it in the sea. Perhaps then the captain will see that we are poor and that it is pointless for him to kill us.”

**The Plan Succeeds**

“Very well,” replied Yigal. “We have little choice but to follow your plan. May the Almighty be with us in this time of our great danger.”

As morning came, Eliphelet and Yigal put their plan into action. They began to shout and quarrel violently and the captain and sailors hurried to the deck to see what the commotion was about. When Eliphelet saw that the entire crew had assembled to watch he called out:

“Very well, if that is how you want it, the money will belong to neither you nor to me. It shall belong to no one!”

And as he said these words, he seized the bag of gold and as the startled crew looked on, he ﬂung it overboard into the sea. As the chagrined captain beheld this he hastily called together his crew for a meeting.

“The mad Jew has thrown away the gold. There is no longer any reason for us to kill him.”

**The Ship Docks**

Within a few days, the ship landed at one of their usual stops. Eliphelet hurried away and rushed to court. There he told the judges all that had transpired. Police were hurriedly sent to the dock and all the crewmen were rushed to the courtroom.

After a brief investigation, the judges reached a decision. Calling upon the captain to stand before them, one said:

“It is obvious that you planned to kill this man and his son. Had he not cleverly outwitted you, you would have the blood of two people on your conscience. In reality you are deserving of death for your foul plan but we will give you one chance to save your worthless neck.

“If you repay this Jew the amount of gold that he was forced to throw away, we will allow you to live. If not, you will hang by your heels from the highest tree.”

The terriﬁed captain was only too glad to comply with the judges’ demands and he quickly paid Eliphelet every penny he had lost.

Afterwards, the judges asked Eliphelet: “Where did you learn such wisdom as you exhibited during your ordeal?”

“I am a Jew,” replied Eliphelet, “and the words of our sages and wise men are my eyes in everything I do. In this most critical time of my life, I followed their advice too. The great King Solomon wrote: ‘There is a time to throw away.’ I did exactly what he said and it saved my life.”

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