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Remembering Rabbi

Dovid Trenk, zt"l

By Rabbi Paysach J Krohn



For many years Rabbi Dovid Trenk zt"l (who was niftar last month) was a rebbi and mashgiach in Adelpia Yeshiva. One Friday night a boy in the yeshiva stole Rabbi Trenk's car and went to a movie theatre!

Somehow Rabbi Trenk found out about it and walked all the way to the movie theatre, which was a long walk. He came to the ticket booth and he said: "I don't want to buy a ticket but I have a student that is sitting inside and I need to tell him something. Can I just go in and I'll come right out?"

The woman agreed and so he went into the dark movie theatre... he searched the seats for his talmid... and finally he found him. He sat down right next to him... (Imagine the boy's reaction!) said to him: "The popcorn they sell here is not kosher, make sure you don't eat it."

That's what he said, nothing more. Then he turned to leave.

The talmid grabbed a hold of him and said: "Rebbi, I'm coming with you" and walked all the way back to Yeshiva with Rav Dovid. When they returned he said to his beloved Rebbi: "I swear I will never be mechalel shabbos ever again."

And that's how this neshama was saved. We have lost a giant...

Reprinted from the Parshas Pinchas 5779 email of Oneg Shabbos (London, England)

Who Gets to Lead the Davening and Eat the Figs



In his sefer Chashukei Chemed on Sukkah, Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein cites a fascinating chiddush (novel ruling) from Rav Eliyahu Dovid Rabinowitz-Teomim, known as the Aderes. The situation involved a man who wanted to lead the prayer services as a merit for his grandfather, whose yahrtzeit was that day, but when he arrived at the synagogue, he discovered to his chagrin that they were lacking a minyan (quorum).

He went outside in an attempt to find people willing to complete the minyan, and when this effort also failed, he began knocking on doors of houses in the area until he was finally able to round up 10 adult men.

Just as they were about to begin davening, another man entered the shul and announced that that day was his father's yahrtzeit, which gave him precedence to lead the prayers.

Although the newcomer was correct on a strictly halachic basis, since a grandson does not have the same level of chiyuv (obligation) to lead the services as a son, the Aderes maintained that in this case, the grandson was entitled to lead the davening because it was only through his persistent efforts to assemble the minyan that the communal prayers were even taking place, and he who tends the fig tree shall eat its fruit, just as Hashem told Moshe regarding Yehoshua.

Reprinted from the Parshas Pinchas 5779 email of Parsha Potpourri as compiled by Rabbi Ozer Alport.

Ivanka Trump Sends Her Daughter Off To Jewish Sleepaway Camp



Staff and campers at Camp Morasha must have been surprised to see Secret Service show up to buses as President Trump's daughter Ivanka arrived to say goodbye to her daughter Arielle who is taking a 3 day trip at Camp Morasha.

According to the camp's website, the 'Morasha Mania' program is meant for prospective campers to experience Morasha first-hand.

"Children enjoy three days and two nights in camp, immersed in all aspects of Camp," the website says." From sports to swimming, theater productions to pool parties, horseback riding to rock climbing – your children will come home with a great feel for what Camp Morasha is all about."

Secret service reportedly will be staying with the Trump grandchild, with one agent staying at a bunk next door and others in a hotel nearby.

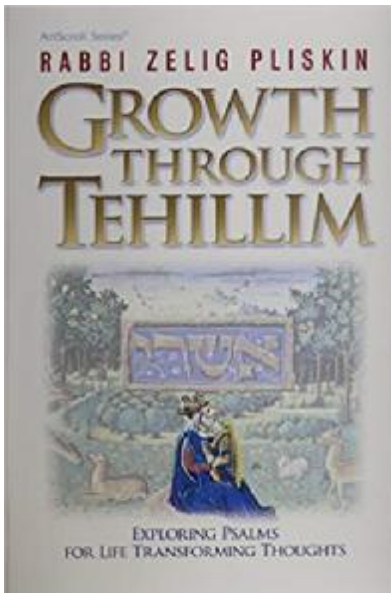
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Story #1128

Making Peace in Heaven

From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

editor@ascentofsafed.com



"To what better purpose can I use my riches than to have a Torah scroll written?" thought the wealthy Reb Meir to himself. From that day on he busied himself in his grand project which he executed carefully in all its details. At first he bought the animals which were to provide the parchment for the scroll.

These he had carefully slaughtered and the meat thereof distributed among the poor. The hides were then sent to a tanner to be cured and prepared for parchment.

Next Reb Meir sought a G-d-fearing sofer (scribe) to do the major job. "You will concentrate only upon this work," he stipulated, "in return for which I will pay you a weekly salary to sustain you and your family for as long as it takes to complete the job. Take your time, purify your mind and body before each writing session, but produce a perfect Torah scroll."

The scribe agreed and entered the employ of Reb Meir for eight years, during which he worked exclusively upon the scroll. When he finished, Reb Meir made preparations for a huge feast to dedicate his new acquisition.

The celebration was to include most of the local population, crowned by all the notables. Reb Meir arranged to provide for their comfort by hiring waiters to

cater to their individual needs. Among them was Chayim, known by all as "the Tehilim reciter."

Chayim the Psalms Sayer was a simple man, unlearned but sincere and G-d fearing. He had earned his title through his recital of psalms, which never left his lips from morning to night. To earn his livelihood he worked as a water-carrier and at this celebration Chayim was to perform his usual task, that is, to bring water for hand-washing and in addition to serve drinks of all sorts.

The party began in the late afternoon. While the celebrants awaited the evening prayer to begin they partook of sweets and drinks, for the main feast would commence only after Maariv. Chayim was there, circulating among the guests with trays and alcoholic beverages, imbibing himself from time to time.

Soon, all the guests arose and went into an adjoining room to davven (pray) while the tables were prepared for the meal. The relatively short prayer was over quickly, whereupon the guests drifted back in and took their places. An air of gaiety and warmth filled the hall, for this was the grand climax of eight years of expectancy, of work and expense, now culminating with a feast in honor of the Torah.

The guests sat down and waited for water to be provided for washing their hands. Reb Meir looked around but couldn't find Chayim, whose job it was to provide the washing water and vessels. He was nowhere to be found. Reb Meir searched in adjoining rooms for the missing waiter, upset that things were not going as smoothly as he had so carefully planned. He finally discovered him curled up in the cloakroom, fast asleep in a drunken stupor.

"What chutzpa is this!" he reprimanded his waiter as he grabbed him by the collar and shook him vigorously. "Here you are drunk on my liquor, shirking your duties. You should have stayed at home if you can't be relied on. All my guests are being kept waiting for the meal to begin while you calmly curl up and fall asleep."

Reb Meir raised his voice louder and louder while shaking his employee roughly, then dragging him towards the main dining hall until the latter had thoroughly shaken off his drunkenness.

Finally the water-carrier was able to get a word in and he made his plaintive apologies, "Sir, you said that the party was for all of us and that we were to feel free to partake of the food and drink too. I simply did not realize how strong your schnaps was, not being accustomed to such quality spirits. Before I knew it I fell asleep. Please don't shame me before all these people. I am thoroughly awake and will fulfill my duties as a waiter."

The host left the abashed waiter to his work and went to sit among his important guests. He hadn't been seated for five minutes before his attention was diverted.

"Sir, an important person awaits you outside. He says he won't keep you long but what he has to say is urgent." Reb Meir got up and followed his servant outside reluctantly. A well-dressed stranger asked to have a few words with him.

"Come, sit in my carriage just for a moment, please," urged the stranger. Reb Meir obliged and sat half in, half out, waiting impatiently. Suddenly before he could bat an eyelash, he found himself transported to a deep wood which he realized was many many miles away from home. He stood on the strange road in his light indoor clothes not knowing which way to turn. "What has happened to me?" he wondered dazedly. "And why?"

As the cold that began penetrating his bones also cleared his mind, he perceived a light from afar. He drew closer and had to rub his eyes in surprise; a magnificent palace stood in a clearing. Reb Meir entered the spacious hall which led into a huge, brilliantly lit chamber. He went over to the stove to warm himself. None of the people there paid him any attention. However, when an old man with a snowy white beard entered shortly afterwards, he received a warm welcome.

"Peace unto you. *Avraham Avinu* ('our father Abraham')," exclaimed the people seated at the table. The venerable man took his place to be soon joined by another and then another. Each succeeding sage was greeted in turn, "Welcome, *Yitzchak Avinu*," and "Welcome, *Yaakov Avinu*," etc., until the last expected guest took his place. When he arose, everyone became quiet and turned to face him.

"I have a complaint against the man over there by the stove," he announced. All eyes turned to Reb Meir. "This person shamed the Psalms Sayer in public. I demand retribution, for it is as if he had shamed my holy *tehilim* which possess the power to abolish evil decrees, heal the sick, and bring balm to troubled souls." "This man must be judged," agreed the seated people. "He must pay for his wicked deed." They discussed what should be the suitable punishment, and a speedy verdict of death resulted for Reb Meir.

"One moment," called out *Dovid HaMelech* (King David), rising once again. "Are we not defeating the purpose of the judgment? Would it not be preferable for this man to exonerate himself by his own deeds? Rather, let him return to the scene of the sin and expiate it by a public confession. Let him attest to the importance of saying psalms by relating this episode to all his guests."

"Your suggestion is wise," one man spoke up. "But I have another score to settle with him first. I demand to know why this man, who lives right in my city, in Mezibuz, has never visited me before nor invited me to his Torah celebration. If he is allowed to return home will he rectify this sin of omission?"

This was the *Baal Shem Tov* who had been present all the while among the rest of the spectators, but until this moment had not uttered a word. Reb Meir was called upon to express his view about this second charge against him. He heartily

agreed to amend his wrongdoing. Suddenly he found himself in the same coach, which immediately spirited him back to his home.

Reb Meir stood shivering in front of his house. He paused. It seemed as if eons had passed since he last stood there, yet when he entered he saw the festivities were at exactly the same point as when he had left them. It must be that only a few moments had passed!

Reb Meir loudly asked for everyone's attention and then announced, "I beg you all to wait patiently for me. There is an important guest whom I must bring to tonight's celebration. I will return shortly."

Reb Meir ran quickly to the Baal Shem Tov's *beis medrash* (Torah-study hall) and saw the very man who had spoken against him during the strange scene in the forest. He begged the Besht to forgive him and join him at the feast. The Besht forgave him wholeheartedly.

They hurried back to Reb Meir's home, where once again Reb Meir demanded everyone's attention. He told his strange story, and then called Chayim the Psalms Sayer to stand next to him. In the presence of the entire assembly, he begged the water-carrier to forgive and forget the shameful treatment he had been subject to.

The Baal Shem Tov spoke after him, adding some words about the importance of reciting *tehilim*, and all present felt that the celebration had taken on a more meaningful tone.

Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from *Tales of the Baal Shem Tov* by Y. Y. Klapholz (translation by Sheindel Weinbach), who based it on "Sipurei Yaakov."

Biographic note: Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer [of blessed memory: 18 Elul 5458- 6 Sivan 5520 (Aug. 1698 - May 1760 C.E.)], the *Baal Shem Tov* ["Master of the Good Name"-often referred to as "*the Besht*" for short], a unique and seminal figure in Jewish history, revealed his identity as an exceptionally holy person, on his 36th birthday, 18 Elul 5494 (1734 C.E.), and made the until-then underground Chasidic movement public. He wrote no books, although many works claim to contain his teachings. One available in English is the excellent annotated translation of *Tzava'at Harivash*, published by Kehos.

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The Rav's Mistaken Judgement



The Rebbe of Zviyel, zt"l, once requested from the Tepliker Rav, zt"l, that they set a time to study together B'Chavrusah, to learn Tur, and Shulchan Aruch, to cover certain specific topics that they wanted to clarify amongst themselves.

Of course, the Tepliker Rav happily accepted the proposal. One day in the middle of their learning, through Divine Inspiration, a complicated Halachah that had many difficulties was clarified for them. After they had debated the various elements from every angle, the ruling became clear as day and the words that they said were as bright and shining as if they had been given at Har Sinai!

Suddenly, the Tepliker Rav began to tremble. He turned white, fear and trembling seized him, and he became very upset! The Rebbe of Zviyel asked him, "What happened? Why did this fear and trembling suddenly come upon you?"

The Tepliker Rav told him that just then in the middle of their learning, he remembered that once many years ago a difficult Din Torah was brought before him in his Bais Din in Teplik, and it involved this Halachah that they had just clarified, however, back then, he had ruled exactly the opposite of what they had just clarified what the Halachah should be! He had made guilty the innocent, and he had made innocent the guilty, and his ruling was not correct and truthful.

The Rav began to cry and he regretted his mistake, and because of his great distress, he fainted on the floor. Even after he got back to himself from the faint, he could not calm down, and he immediately began to go over the details of that Din

Torah from long ago, who the litigants were and where they could be found today, in order that he could return the money to the rightful party.

After great effort and frantic inquiries, associates were able to discover the name of the man who was involved in that case. However, when they tried to locate him in Teplik, they were informed that several years ago he moved to another city and they could not find anybody who knew where he currently lived.

The Rav was greatly distressed over this, and he went to the Rebbe of Zviyel and asked him for advice as to what he should do. The Rebbe said to him, “Don’t worry about finding him, he will come to you!”

When the Rav heard this amazing response from the Rebbe, the Tepliker Rav prepared the full amount that he was obligated to pay the man in an envelope and he placed it in his jacket pocket so that it would be prepared with him wherever he went.

A few weeks passed when one day, as the Tepliker Rav was leaving Shul from davening Minchah, he saw the man he had been looking for, who was coming towards the Shul to Daven. The man was delighted to meet the esteemed Tepliker Rav by chance, from his past years in Teplik, and he told the Rav that he now lived in a faraway city in the United States, and he was here now for a short visit to the Holy Land.

The Rav was thrilled to meet him and he asked him to step to the side with him for a moment. The Rav reminded him about the Din Torah from years ago. The man had already forgotten about it, but the Rav reminded him specifically about the judgment. He told him that he had recently reviewed the topic, and he determined that the clear ruling was the exact opposite of what he had ruled in his case.

The Rav then reached into his jacket pocket and took out the envelope he had prepared. It had the man’s name on it, and the Rav handed it to the man, who was thrilled and excited because of the exceptional righteousness of the Rav.

A short time after this event, the Rebbe of Zviyel concluded his learning with the Tepliker Rav.

Rav Gamliel Rabbinowich relayed this story, and he noted that the whole purpose of the Chavrusah was only so that the ruling in the Din Torah should be overturned and the money would be repaid. Additionally, Rav Gamliel says, the great Yiras Shamayim of the Tepliker Rav is very admirable, when he realized his mistake in a matter of Halachah— so much so that he was filled with pain and fear until he passed out! How many times are we wrong in a matter of Halachah, R”L, and we do not faint!

Reprinted from the Parshas 5779 email of Torah U’ Tefilah compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.

Rabbinical Respect For Animals



Rabbi Chaim Scheinberg, Rabbi Aryeh Levin and Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer

Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, zt"l, had love for even the smallest of Hashem's creatures. One time, Rav Scheinberg was seen holding his Tzitzis close to his face.

A Talmid asked him what his Rebbe was doing, and Rav Scheinberg told him there was an ant crawling on them. The Talmid offered to get a tissue to dispose of the ant, but Rav Scheinberg asked for a paper cup instead.

He told the student to knock the ant into the cup, bring it downstairs, and gently set the ant free in the garden just outside the apartment building. With this seemingly insignificant act of kindness to a tiny bug, Rav Scheinberg displayed that he tried to emulate Hashem, by showing mercy and compassion to even the tiniest of Hashem's creations.

Rav Aryeh Levin, zt"l, wrote that when he was young and he came to Eretz Yisroel, he first went to visit Rav Avraham Yitzchok Kook, zt"l. After they Davened Minchah, they went out to walk a bit in the fields, and Rav Aryeh writes that as they walked, he plucked a branch or flower that was growing.

Rav Kook gently told him, "In all of my days, I have taken care never to pluck a blade of grass or flower for no reason, when it had the ability to grow or blossom. Chazal teach us that there is not a single blade of grass here on earth which does not have a Malach above it telling it to grow. Every leaf and blade of

grass conveys some meaning. Every stone whispers some hidden message in its silence. Every creation utters its song in praise of Hashem!”

Rav Aryeh notes that those words which were spoken from a pure and holy heart engraved themselves deep within him, and from that day on he began to feel a strong sense of compassion for every one of Hashem’s creatures.

Another time, Rav Aryeh was once walking on the sidewalk when he suddenly stopped and stood there, waiting. When asked why he had stopped, he quietly said, “There is a kitten drinking its milk, and I don’t want to walk by and startle it. I will wait until it finishes.”

In a similar manner, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, zt”l, would always take the longer route when he would walk from his house to the Yeshivah. His Talmidim asked him why he did this, but he wouldn’t answer them.

Eventually, the reason for this became known. Chickens used to run back and forth looking for food along the road that was the most direct route to the Yeshivah. Rav Isser Zalman was concerned that if he walked down that path, he would frighten the chickens and they would run away without having eaten anything. He explained, “I have no right to disturb the chickens from getting their food!”

Reprinted from the Parshas 5779 email of Torah U’ Tefilah compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.

Nathan the Prophet

By Avrohom Bergstein

Nathan (c. 880-790 BCE¹) was a prominent prophet during the reign of King David and King Solomon. According to tradition, Nathan studied in an elite academy of mystics² under the tutelage of the prophet Samuel.³ Although no book in the Biblical Canon is associated with his name, the Talmud tells us that Nathan concluded the writing of the book of Samuel.⁴

Nathan Rebukes David

Nathan first gains fame in the Biblical account, in the heat of the great debacle of David and Batsheba. King David had cohabited with Bathsheba after observing her beauty from the palace rooftop and was severely reprimanded by G-d for doing so.⁵

Nathan delivered G-d’s rebuke by opening the conversation with a parallel. “There were two men,” said Nathan, “one rich and one poor. The rich man had

very many sheep and cattle, and the poor man had nothing but one small ewe which he had bought. He cared for it, and it grew up [under his care] along with his children. It ate from his bread, drank from his cup, and slept in his bosom. It was a daughter to him.”

Nathan continued. “Then a guest came to the rich man. The wealthy host was too miserly to take any of his own sheep or cattle to prepare for the guest who had come to him. [Instead,] he took the poor man’s ewe and prepared it for the guest who had come to him.”



King David was outraged by the arrogance and impudence of the rich man, and declared, “As G-d lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He shall pay fourfold for the ewe, since he did this and had no pity!”

By issuing a verdict in the case set before him, David had unwittingly set the rules for his own prosecution and conviction.⁶

Nathan responded and said, “*You* are the man! . . . Why have you treated G-d’s word with contempt, doing evil in My sight? You cut down Uriah (Bathsheba’s husband) with a sword and took his wife as your wife! . . . I will raise evil against you from your own house . . . I will do this in the sight of Israel, in the open!”

When David recognized the scope of his sin, admitted his guilt and repented for his actions, Nathan conveyed G-d’s message that He had accepted his atonement.⁷

Nathan was thus instrumental in restoring King David's dignity (allowing him to "raise his head") in the aftermath of this sin. Having been informed of G-d's forgiveness by Nathan, David remarked, "Instead of my beheading, you have raised my head."⁸

Prophecy Regarding Building the Temple

When quiet finally reigned in the land of Israel, after King David subdued the enemies of Jews through many bloody battles, he sought the counsel of Nathan with respect to building a sanctuary for G-d, a Holy Temple. Despite his initial nod, Nathan was informed by prophecy that King David was ineligible to erect the House of G-d, which was to be a house of peace. King David, he was told,⁹ whose sword smote the enemies of the Jewish people, would be unsuitable to construct the Temple.¹⁰ Instead, his son, King Solomon will build the Temple.¹¹

Through his prophetic vision, Nathan helped design the configuration of the Temple's floorplan as well as develop the appropriate activities performed therein. The verse states:

"[King Hizkiyah] also stationed the Levites in G-d's Temple with cymbals, and harps and Iyres, as commanded by David, Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet, for this was the commandment of G-d through his prophets."¹²

The Appointment of King Solomon

As the reign of King David was winding down and David took ill, the race was on for a successor to the throne. David's son, Adoniyahu put forward his candidacy and as the prospect of his nomination appeared to gain traction, a growing number of royal dignitaries declared him king.¹³

But David had already sworn to Bathsheba that her son Solomon would inherit the throne.¹⁴

Nathan proceeded to inform Bathsheba of the development and together they coordinated their appearance before the king.¹⁵ When David heard the news he swore, saying: "By the Living G-d . . . I swore to you by G-d, L-rd of Israel: 'Your son Solomon will reign after me and he will sit on my throne after me,' and I will fulfill [my vow] today!"¹⁶

David then proceeded to have Solomon coronated in public view, by the agency of Nathan, Zadok the high priest, Benayahu ben Yehoyada and many other dignitaries.¹⁷

Nathan remained one of the closest confidants of King Solomon. The Midrash teaches that two honorary seats flanked the throne of King Solomon, one for Gad the Seer and the other for Nathan the prophet.¹⁸

FOOTNOTES

1. See *Shalsholet Ha-Kabalah* p. 98b, cited in *Seder Ha-Dorot*, s.v. 2935 that Nathan's lifespan was 94 years.
2. See I Samuel 10:5. Radak, *ibid*.
3. See R. Yehuda Ha-Levi Lifshitz, *Dor Yesharim* (Piotrkow, 1908) vol. II, p. 10.
4. Bava Batra 15a.
5. II Samuel 12:1-12.
6. R. Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, cited in *Likutei Maharash, kama*, 113. See also the Lubavitcher Rebbe's exposition of this teaching in *Likutei Sichot*, vol. IV, p. 1208 where this is understood as a testimony to the transcendence of the divine soul vested within a Jewish person, insofar as no force of nature or spirit can assert control over his destiny, unless he himself has granted that force the authority to do so, abdicating his state of transcendence above the natural order.
7. II Shmuel, 12:13-14.
8. Pesikta d'Rav Kahana II, Parshat Ki Sisa, 1. Midrash Tanchuma, *ibid*, 3.
9. I Chronicles 22:7-8. Radak, *ibid*.
10. Much like the prohibition against using metal instruments to carve the stones of the altar in the Temple (Metzudat David, I Chronicles 22:8).

Radak (*ibid*) adds that David also orchestrated the death of Uriah, husband of Bathsheba (See II Samuel 11:15-17). In addition, the tragic slaughtering of 85 *kohanim* (priests) of the city of Nob (I Samuel 22:22) by the instruction of King Saul, was an inadvertent result of David's actions. In lamentation, David stated, "I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he surely told Saul. *I have caused* the death of your clan."

With respect to casualties of war, the Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 63:8) states that David's actions were sanctioned by the Sanhedrin. See also, *Kli Yakar* (R. Shmuel Laniado, II Shmuel 2:7 p. 133). Yachin Uvoaz-Zera Rav, p. 126. Ezrat Kohanim, p. 48.

11. I Chronicles *ibid*. 9.
12. II Chronicles 29:25.
13. See I Melachim, 1:5-7. *Ibid*, 25.
14. *Ibid.*, 17 and Abarbanel. See Radak, II Shmuel, 12:24 who explains that Bathsheba initially refused to bear another child with king David, fearing that he would be taunted for his being of tainted lineage. David assured her that he had been informed by the prophet of G-d that the first son that would be born to her would inherit the throne.

A commentary attributed to Rabbi Yehuda Ha-Chassid (*Pirushei Ha-Torah l'Rebi Yehudah Ha-Chassid, haftorah* of parashat Chayei Sarah, cited in *Chumash Otzar Ha-Rishonim*) presents an alternative narrative. After Solomon was born, Nathan had informed David that Solomon would reign, which prompted David to

seek qualified teachers to prepare Solomon for the position. When his mother, Bathsheba, protested saying that she feared that he would be slain by his older brothers such as Abashalom, Adoniyahu and Amnon, David swore that he would ensure his ascent to the throne. He then enlisted Nathan, Tzadok (the high priest), Benayahu ben Yehoyada (the chief commander of the military) to train Solomon in various fields, and an entire corps of guardians to provide physical protection for Solomon. I am grateful to Rabbi Joseph Asia (publisher of *Chumash Otzar Ha-Rishonim*) for sharing the original source with me.

15. I Kings 1:13-14.

16. I Kings 1:30.

17. I Kings 1:32-40.

18. Midrash Abba Gurion, 1.

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