**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Metzora 5776**

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**Story #958**

**The One Honest Man**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[**editor@ascentofsafed.com**](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0001IqG0:001N1DwJ00001slE&count=1459949021&randid=45639971&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=0&randid=45639971)

In the city of Disna, towards the end of the 1800's, lived a melamed, a teacher of small children, by the name of Rabbi Boruch-Yosef Kozliner, whom everyone referred to as "Reb Boruch *Der Melamed*." His sons learned in Yeshivah Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch.

In Disna, at that time, it was possible to avoid conscription into the czar's army by bribing one's way through the military bureaucracy. Army doctors, officers and office clerks were only too happy to accept a monetary gift to free someone from military service. This practice had flourished for many years.

Boruch Yosef, too, was instrumental in freeing young Jewish men from military service. But Boruch Yosef took no money for his troubles; he risked defying Russian law solely to fulfill what is said to be the most precious commandment of all, pidyon shevuyim, the redemption of prisoners.

Life continued as usual until someone informed the government of what was going on. The entire scheme began to unravel. A special delegation was dispatched from the Russian capital in Petersburg to investigate the charges and to act upon their findings. The whole city was thrown into a panic, for there was no household in Disna that had not participated in bribing government officials in one form or another. After all, for a Jew to be drafted into the Czar's army - which was usually for 25 years! -- meant the end of his life as a Jew.

An investigation was launched; each new charge was followed by an arrest. Scores of people were thrown into prison - both governmental officials accused of receiving bribes and the unfortunate citizens charged with having offered them. Fresh accusations were leveled every day, as more and more people were arrested and detained. The members of the delegation were determined to substantiate each and every minute detail.

Boruch Yosef was terrified, for his activities to free Jewish *yeshivah* boys from the draft went back many years. As soon as the delegation reached Disna, Boruch Yosef left for Lubavitch.

He happened to arrive on one of the days the ***Rebbe Rashab*** - **Rabbi Sholom-Ber Shneersohn**, the 5th Chabad rebbe -- granted private audiences (his custom was to receive individuals in private audience on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, except during the summer months, which for health reasons the Rebbe spent in Zaulsha, when it was once a week on Mondays).



**Rabbi Shalom Ber Schneersohn**

Boruch Yosef asked Reb Nachman, the Rebbe's attendant, to let him speak to the Rebbe, but Reb Nachman abruptly informed him that he would have to wait at least several days before he could get in. Boruch Yosef was not a familiar face to the attendant, as he generally only came to Lubavitch for Rosh Hashanah, and even then, not always had *yechidus* with the Rebbe.

When Boruch Yosef realized he would not be given a turn he wrote a quick note to the Rebbe, telling him he had something urgent to discuss and that Reb Nachman refused to let him inside. He handed the slip of paper to the next person about to go in to the Rebbe and asked him to deliver it.

Boruch Yosef's plan worked. The Rebbe read his note and insisted that his attendant send Boruch Yosef in to him at once.

Once inside, Boruch Yosef poured his heart out to the Rebbe. Where could he seek refuge? he asked. One thing was clear: Under no circumstances could he return home, for he would be arrested immediately. He thought it best to relocate to another city. But which one? Should he move to Kremenzug or to Poltava? he inquired.

The Rebbe listed as Reb Boruch spelled out the two alternatives and then paused a minute, deep in thought. He then asked two questions:

"Does anyone know that you are here in Lubavitch?" asked the Rebbe.

"No one, except for my wife," he replied.

"And was absolutely everything you did to free the young men for military service done for the *mitzvah* itself, and not for monetary compensation?" (Great sums of money were generally involved in these transactions, and the lure of money is one thing many people find difficult to resist.)

"I did everything honestly and faithfully," Boruch Yosef answered.

After a slightly longer pause, the Rebbe took out his watch and checked the time. "I think you can still find a cab driver to bring you to the train station in time for the next train back to Disna. In case it is too late, however, return and my own wagon will take you there. Travel in peace, and may G-d be with you," he said, ushering Boruch Yosef out the door.

Once outside, Boruch Yosef did not know what to do. How could he return to Disna? This was not the answer he had sought. He had asked the Rebbe which of two cities he should settle in to escape the wrath of the Russian government.

But there was no time for Boruch Yosef to stand and speculate. He hurried off in the direction of the cab drivers and took the last carriage to the train station. The next morning he was back in Disna.

For the next few days Boruch Yosef sat at home, broken and depressed, expecting the authorities to knock on his door and arrest him at any minute. More and more people were being carted off to jail every day, and Boruch Yosef figured it was just a matter of time until his turn came. Anyone with even the slightest connection to bribing officials was being sought. Afraid to show his face in public, Boruch Yosef remained indoors, fearful and desperate.

A few days later he was paid a surprise visit by his friend and fellow chasid, Reb Yaakov-Reuven Meller, whose sons also learned in Lubavitch. "*Mazal Tov!*" he cried as he entered the door. "Your salvation has come!" he announced to the astonished Boruch Yosef.

Reb Yaakov then told him how he had learned that Boruch Yosef was no longer in danger. A vegetable seller by trade, Reb Yaakov made the rounds of Disna aristocracy, selling vegetable he had raised on his own property and on land that he leased. Some of the homes he visited belonged to high ranking government employees, whose wives were among his regular customers.

That day, Reb Yaakov had gone to the home of a highly placed deputy officer to settle a bill. When he got there he heard the sound of heartrending sobs and weeping coming from within. The deputy's wife, who had been sitting and crying, opened the door and took Reb Yaakov into her confidence, as if talking to an old and trusted friend.

Many years previously, she explained, her husband had accepted a bribe to alter some official papers, without the knowledge of his superior officer. When the superior officer got wind of the bribe, he too demanded money and insisted on being part of the scheme. Since that time, however, the deputy officer had been uninvolved in the whole corrupt business, and was free of any wrongdoing. Now, with the arrival of the governmental delegation from Petersburg, the superior officer had been arrested and was in prison. Only her husband and the office clerk remained on the job, sorting and classifying the mail that arrived at the office and putting it in the proper mail slots.

On this particular day, the deputy had, in his pocket, a letter informing on the illegal activities of one Boruch Yosef Kozliner. He was planning to hand it over to the governmental delegation, which was due to visit his office that very morning.

As the two employees sat and sorted through the mail, the clerk happened to open a letter denouncing the deputy officer, informing on his past participation in unlawful activities. Names, dates, and all their particulars were clearly spelling out in the letter, which had been sent by the already incarcerated superior officer. Why should he be the only one to suffer, when he had only followed the example set by his deputy? And maybe he would be shown mercy for informing on someone else.

The two men had been sitting on opposite sides of the same desk. "Look at this!" the clerk said, holding up the incriminating letter. "You're in big trouble now."

The deputy blanched. He began to plead with the clerk for the letter. The delegation was due to arrive any minute! At first the clerk was afraid to withhold the information from the investigation. But then, after listening to his superior's pleas he agreed to hand over the document, especially since the deputy promised him a 'present' for doing so. The deputy gratefully took the letter from the clerk and put it in his pocket.

At that very second the door opened, and in walked the dreaded delegation. The two employees were quaking in their boots, for they had only narrowly missed being observed. In his fear and confusion, the deputy reached into his pocket and handed the officials the wrong letter. Instead of informing on Reb Boruch Kozliner, he gave them the letter sealing his own fate.

When the deputy was immediately arrested and was let off to prison, the clerk figured out what must have had happened. He ran to tell the deputy's wife, who in turn, related the whole story to Reb Yaakov.

Reb Yaakov had gone at once to give his friend the good news. Boruch Yosef was never informed upon and remained free the rest of his days.

*Source*: Supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from the rendition in *Extraordinary Chassidic Tales*, vol. 1 [Ozar Sifrei Lubavitch] by Rabbi Rafael Nachman Kahn, as translated from Hebrew by **Basha Majerczyk**

*Biographical note:***Rabbi Sholom-Dovber Schneersohn** [of blessed memory: 20 Cheshvan 5621 - 2 Nissan 5680 (Oct. 1860 - April 1920)], known as the ***Rebbe Reshab***, was the fifth Rebbe of the Lubavitcher dynasty. He is the author of hundreds of major tracts in the exposition of Chasidic thought.

*Connection*: Seasonal-the 96th yahrzeit of Rabbi Shalom-DovBer Schneersohn starts this Saturday night.

Reprinted from the Parsha Tazria 5776 email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent Institute of Safed. www.ascent ofsafed.com ascent@ascent of safed.com

**Homeless & Hebrew**

**By Sara Cohen**

Walking through Penn Station today I saw a homeless man playing music. In the busy NYC train station this is not an unusual sight and I try to remember that behind each man begging is a sad and tragic story, and I give what I can.

I was on my way after a long day at work and I stopped to give the beggar an uneaten sandwich that I had in my purse and a couple of granola bars that I didn’t end up eating for lunch.

**Handed the Man the**

**Sandwich and Granola Bars**

As I handed the man the sandwich bag and bars from my knapsack he asked me, "**Ma nishma** [how are you]?" and started to speak to me in Hebrew, throwing out various sophisticated phrases. I was definitely not expecting that! I sat down and started talking to this stranger and asked him how someone so seemingly distant from anything remotely Jewish knew so much Hebrew.

His response blew me away. "I’m not Jewish but all my friends are," he said confidently. "They always stop and give me food and flash a big smile when they pass by. Over the years they've been the people that consistently come back and make sure that I'm okay. You guys are my best friends you know." He paused and took a deep breath.

"Lately I've been reading Hebrew for Dummies at the library so that all the Jews I meet will know how much I appreciate their friendship. You folks always care because you're my friends. And that's what friends do." And with that, he wished me a "**Layla tov** [good night]" and picked up his guitar and continued to play.

**Thought About the Amazing Experience**

I brushed off my skirt, wished him a good night and joined the hundreds of people rushing to the train. As I sat on the train for my final leg home, I thought about the amazing experience that I had just had. Who knew what a difference we could be making in one person’s life by giving him a bag of pretzels, a spare sandwich and a smile?

This man’s connection to Jews was so deep that he went out of his way to learn our language so he could properly thank us for our friendship. My heart fluttered with an inner pride and I felt so proud to be part of such an amazing people. I feel very fortunate to be on the list of this fellow’s "Jewish friends" that he has made over the years as a homeless man.

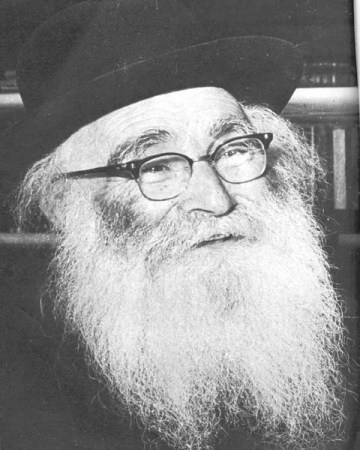
During the mad rush in the dark winter nights, let’s keep in mind the opportunities that we have to spread a little bit of light. I suspect we really have no idea just how bright that light really is.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayakhel 5776 email of Torah Teasers.*

**The Good, the Bad**

**And the Ugly**

**By Rabbi C.D. Green**



The story is told of Rabbi Aryeh Levin that one of the many unfortunates he and his wife took into their home stole a precious article from the Levin household. The Rabbi saw what occurred and immediately pursued his wayward guest calling "I forgive you!" "I relinquish all ownership!" "It's yours!" "It's yours!" He didn't want the thief to have the transgression on his head for the rest of his life.

What Rabbi Levin did, and the beauty of it was that it was his first reaction, was he saw the thief not as a cunning robber who was out to rip off his family but as a very unfortunate poor person who had sadly fallen so low as to actually steal. He was mature enough not to take the transgressors actions personally.

Someone robs you and you don't take it personally?! The thief didn't hate the Rabbi. He would have stolen from anyone who hosted him. If Rabbi Levin could have recovered the stolen item, he certainly would have done what was necessary to do so. He wasn't looking to be robbed or to give away his heirlooms. Judging others favorably in the face of the inevitable undeserving "slaps in the face" one receives from others does not mean to lie to yourself or turn the other cheek to let others slap the other side, in the case of our story, to offer the thief more of ones possessions...gratis. It means to put the negative occurrences aimed at us into perspective. Don't take it personally.

Miserable people try to make others miserable. How sad. We can attempt to halt the ugly spiral of bad speech one on another if we'll learn to judge others favorably.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayakhel 5776 email of Torah Teasers.*

**The Detour**

**By Chessed Halberstam**

(*Editor’s Note: Chessed Halberstam worked in the employ of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson, wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, for eighteen years—from 1970 until the Rebbetzin’s passing in 1988—performing household chores and serving as the Rebbetzin’s driver.)*

“The Rebbe requested that I try to see to it that the Rebbetzin gets out of the house every day for fresh air. Usually, we would drive out to a park in Long Island. In the years that my son, Ari (may Hashem avenge his blood), was a young child, we would often drive by his school on Ocean Parkway to take him along. The Rebbetzin enjoyed playing with him, pushing him on the swings in the park playground, etc.

“One day, as we neared the park, we found our regular route closed off due to road work, and were forced to proceed instead on a parallel street. As we drove along that street, we heard the sound of a woman screaming in Russian.

“When I stopped at the next traffic light, the Rebbetzin turned to me and said: “I heard a woman screaming. Can you go back and see what that was about?” We drove back to the beginning of the street. There we saw a woman standing on the curb and weeping, while near her, workers were carrying furniture and household items from a house and loading them on to a truck belonging to the county marshal.



**Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson**

**Parked Behind the Marshal’s Truck**

“At the Rebbetzin’s request, I parked behind the marshal’s truck and went to learn the details of what was going on. The marshal explained that the woman had not paid her rent for many months, and was now being evicted from her home.

“When I reported back to the Rebbetzin, she asked me to go back and inquire from the marshal how much the woman owed, and if he would accept a personal check; she also asked that I should not say anything to the family being evicted.

“ At this point, I still did not realize where all this was leading, but I fulfilled the Rebbetzin’s request. The sum that the family owed was approximately $6,700. The marshal said that he had no problem accepting a personal check, as long as he confirms with the bank that the check is covered; he also said that if he received the payment, his men would carry everything back into the house.

**She Took Out Her Checkbook**

“When I informed the Rebbetzin of the details, she took out her checkbook and, to my amazement, wrote out a check for the full amount, and asked me to give it to the marshal. The marshal made a phone call to the bank, and then instructed his workers to take everything back into the house.

The Rebbetzin immediately urged me to quickly drive away, before the woman realized what had transpired. I was completely amazed at what I had seen. Later, when we were in the park, I could not contain myself, and asked the Rebbetzin what had prompted her to give such a large sum to a total stranger.

“Do you really want to know?” asked the Rebbetzin.

“Yes, I do,” I replied.

“Then I’ll tell you,” she said. “Once, when I was a young girl, my father took me for a walk in the park. He sat me down on a bench, and started to tell me about the idea of hashgachah peratis (specific Divine providence).

“Every time—said Father—when something causes us to deviate from our normal routine, there is a divinely ordained reason for this. Every time we see something unusual, there is a purpose in why we’ve been shown this sight.

“Today,” continued the Rebbetzin, “when I saw the ‘Detour’ sign instructing us to deviate from our regular route, I remembered my father’s words, and immediately thought to myself: Every day we drive by this street; suddenly the street’s closed off, and we’re sent to a different street. What is the purpose of this? How is this connected to me? Then I heard the sound of a woman crying and screaming. I realized that we had been sent along this route for a purpose.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayakhel 5776 email of Torah Teasers.*

**Advice on How to Save a Valuable Orchard**

**By Rabbi Dovid Hoffman**

One of the wealthiest men in the entire Romanian region of Satu Mare (Satmar), was an ardent follower of R’ Eliezer Fisch zt”l of Bixad, author of Shem Eliezer.

He once came to Bixad to discuss an important matter. His fruit orchards became infested with crop-eating bugs and no amount of pesticide was able to rid him of these vermin. He called in experts in the field and their only advice was to chop down a large swath of his valuable orchards, burn the bark, and destroy the fruit. This, they said, is the only way to truly rid himself of the pesky insects.

The man walked into R’ Eliezer’s private room with a heavy heart. His entire livelihood was at stake and he poured out his heart to the Rebbe.

Suddenly, R’ Eliezer pointed to his head and remarked, “Do you not believe in cutting your hair? Why must you walk around with such a large mane of hair? It is no wonder to me why you are having such issues. It is clear that if you would simply cut your hair, you would not need to cut down your trees! Accept upon yourself to do this and I assure you no harm will come to your orchards!”

The man did as he was told - and his entire crop was saved!

Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria 5776 email of Torah Tavlin.

**From Abby to Avigayil**

**By Rabbi David Ashear**



**Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein**

I saw a story in the "Torah Anytime" newsletter that was told by Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein(compiled by Elan Perchik). He once gave a class to a group of teens who had undergone drug rehabilitation. The class was held at a center designed to keep youth at risk off the streets and prevent relapse. When he arrived, he was approached by three girls. One of them was a fourteen- year old named Abby. She was pierced with rings all over her face-her eyebrows, her nose and even her tongue.

As she approached, the Rabbi saw she was fuming with anger. She began to yell at him, putting him down, putting Hashem down and putting Judaism down. After she released all of her anger, the Rabbi told her, "I want you to know that you are very special. I came here tonight to prove that there is a G-d. However, I see that you already believe in Him. You may be angry with Him, but you know that He exists and is in charge of this world. I spend so much time trying to convince teens that there is a G-d, and you already believe in Him. You are way ahead of them."

Abby was softened. She listened to the Rabbi's lecture that night. She eventually became part of his family, frequently coming over for meals. The Rabbi said that the one thing that really bothered him was the tongue ring. Every time she talked, you could see it bobbing up and down. He asked her one day to give it up. She refused, saying, "The tongue ring is my identity. It makes me different. You will never get me to remove it, Rabbi."

A couple of weeks later, he asked her again, this time offering her five hundred dollars to remove the ring. Although she was very poor, she once again declined saying, "You don't understand Rabbi. If I give it up, I don't exist. It defines who I am."

Weeks later, on the night of Simchat Torah, the Rabbi had an idea. He remembered a story he once heard about a Rabbi working with Ba'ale Teshuva in Israel. The rabbi convinced them to remove their various rings by using them to adorn the פרוכת-the curtain that hangs in front of the Holy Ark housing the Torah. He told her, "Abby, I will make you a deal. If you give me your tongue ring, I will put it in my Tallet bag. I will look at it every day and remember Abby for the rest of my life."

When she heard that, she said, "Close your eyes Rabbi and put out your hand." She removed the ring and gave it to him.

Years later, Rabbi Wallerstein and his wife took a trip to Israel. It was a Friday afternoon, the day before Lag B'omer. As they were walking up a hill, he heard a familiar voice saying, "Rebbe!" He turned around and he could not believe what he saw. It was Abby, dressed modestly with her hair covered, standing next to her husband and three little Chassidishe children.

"Abby?" he said.

"No. It's Avigayil," she responded. "Rabbi, you are not going to believe it, but I live here in Israel, and I am a third grade Morah.

This lost soul went from Abby to Avigayil, from hatred of Hashem to love of Hashem, from a tongue ring to a wedding ring and beautiful children. She was a lost soul reconnected to its creator. All she was looking for was recognition and love. Once she was told, "I will think about you every day; I care about you," she was ready to change.

If we would only know how much Hashem cares about us and thinks about us all the time, we would roar and chase after Him like lions.

*Reprinted from the April 6, 2016 email of Daily Emunah.*

**How to Focus on the Good in a Seemingly Completely Bad Situation**

After the end of World War II, the brilliant and flamboyant Torah sage, Rabbi Eliezer Silver OB”M visited and aided thousands of survivors in Displaced Persons camps in Germany and Poland who were waiting to find permanent homes.



**Rabbi Eliezer Silver, zt”l**

One day, as he was handing out Siddurim (prayer books) and other Torah paraphernalia, a Jewish man flatly refused to accept any.

"After the way I saw Jews act in the camp, I don't want to have any connection with religion!" he bellowed.

Rabbi Silver asked him to explain what exactly had turned him off from Jewish practice.

"I saw a Jew who had a Siddur, yet he only allowed it to be used by the inmates in exchange for their daily bread ration. Imagine," he sneered, "a Jew selling the right to daven for bread!"

"And how many customers did this man get?" inquired Rabbi Silver.

"Far too many!" snapped the man.

Rabbi Silver put his hand around the gentlemen and gently explained. "Why are you looking at the bad Jew who sold the right to pray? Why don't you look at the many good Jews who were willing to forego their rations and starve, just in order to pray? Isn't that the lesson you should take with you?"

**Comment:** We may claim that there exist at least some times where a situation cannot possibly be viewed in a positive light. This story proves otherwise. Where did Rav Silver learn to find “silver lining” in dark clouds?

The Talmud (Makkos 24b) relates that Rabbi Akiva and a number of other dignified Rabbis passed by the former location of the Bais Hamikdosh (Temple) in Jerusalem and saw a fox run out of the Holy of Holies.

As the Rabbis began crying at this pathetic sight, Rabbi Akiva started laughing. He explained his actions to his surprised colleagues: “We have two prophecies. One (by Uriah) that Zion will be plowed like a field and one by Zechariah that again the streets of Jerusalem will be filled (and the Temple rebuilt). “Now that Uriah’s prophecy was fulfilled, it’s clear that so will Zechariah’s!” No tragedy, national or personal, is so complete that nothing good can be seen from it. Sometimes, however, the emotions are too overwhelmed to see it.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria 5776 email of Mendel Berlin’s Torah’s Sweets Weekly.*

**Don’t Talk Slander!**

*For the person undergoing the purification there be taken two live kosher birds, cedar wood, yarn dyed crimson in the blood of a worm, and a hyssop branch.* (Lev. 14:4)

The disease of tzaraat is the result of slanderous talk which is like babbling words. Consequently birds which babble continuously were required for his purification. The disease was also caused by pride. Through humility one rid himself of this trait. The lowly hyssop and the worm from the purification process allude to the necessity of viewing oneself with humility. (Rashi)

When Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev would hear someone speak poorly of another person he would go up to him and say, "My dear friend, aren't you ashamed? You are slandering G-d's tefilin upon which it is written, "Who is Your People Israel."

*Reprinted from last year’s issue #1368 of L’Chaim Weekly (Tazria-Metzora 5775.)*

**What it Takes to Serve Kosher to 18,700 AIPAC Conference Attendees**

**By Margie Pensak**

The Walter E. Washington Convention Center, famous for hosting the official inaugural balls for Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, earned its newest claim to fame, March 20-22, when it hosted the largest Kosher event ever—the 2016 AIPAC Conference. Actually, the 2,300,000-square-foot facility in Washington, D.C., was not large enough for the event which was addressed by Vice President Joe Biden, Democratic presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton and Republican presidential hopefuls Senator Ted Cruz, Governor John Kasich, and Donald Trump. The 1,020,000 square foot field Verizon Center and the 105,000 square foot Marriott Marquis, were utilized, as well.

Here are just some of the stats so you can try to fathom what it took for the The Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington (the “Capitol K”) to ensure the event was kosher: 18,700 attendees; 55 mashgichim; 10 kitchens; 4 caterers; 12,000 lamb chops; 5 actual days of catering; 14 carriers of Kosher certified Dunkin Donuts; and, Kosher room service around the clock at the Marriott Marquis for 2.5 days!

STAR-K certified Foremost Ram Caterers started its Kosher prep in December. As site manager of the Washington Convention Center’s operation, Capitol K’s 5-year-veteran lead mashgiach for the conference, Rabbi Binyomin Steinmetz, said his attention was required for 36 hours straight.

With the conference’s expansion, last year, to the adjacent Marriott Marquis, more administrative staff was needed. Marriott site manager, David Lapin, oversaw the kashering of two hotel kitchens, three restaurants, and scheduling up to 15 mashgichim for the 79 kosher events, ranging in size from 15-1,500 guests.

Early March, the Redskins’ kitchen at FedEx Field was kashered in preparation for the Verizon Center’s upscale events. Next, a week of intense food production took place. The kitchen was manned by a team of four mashgichim led by STAR-K Kashrus Administrator Rabbi Tzvi Shaul Goldberg.

The week prior to the event, 10 experienced mashgichim kashered and marked hundreds of pieces of equipment.  The actual process of cleaning the kitchen equipment began days before and continued up until the kashering process. How each piece of equipment was to be kashered had been determined at meetings and walk-throughs that took place months before. Kashering continued all day Wednesday and Thursday; production began at 3:00 a.m. Friday morning.

During full production, in each location five mashgichim were required in the main kitchen areas, between the convention center’s three main kitchen areas and the Marquis’s massive production kitchen which housed six ovens, (two just for fish) three braziers, two soup kettles, a flat top griddle (for meat only), a six burner stove top, and a 7-grate grill (for fish only) and more modest Dairy kitchen which only needed one mashgiach.

All equipment and areas were carefully labeled with color coded signs. Almost all of the events had their vegetables checked offsite; the Marriott vegetable checking operated almost non – stop from Friday to Monday night (with the exception on Shabbos).

Led by insect checking specialist, Mordecai Levy, hundreds of pounds of salad mixes, berries, and assorted produce were carefully washed and inspected for use throughout the event.

On Motzei Shabbos, Rabbi Steinmetz, Rabbi Goldberg and Capitol K’s Director of Field Operations and STAR-K Kashrus Administrator Rabbi Zvi Holland, and their crew, kashered and prepared four Verizon Center kitchens and dozens of concessions and pantries servicing the facility’s four levels. Their team of 20 mashgichim prepared the Verizon Center in time for the Sunday 3 p.m. opening, the first General Session, until the last session on Monday night.

In total, 11 kitchens, over 500 speed racks, almost 100 hot boxes, and innumerable pieces of equipment were kashered, marked, and dedicated for the 18,700 AIPAC Policy delegates who enjoyed kosher l’mehadrin food during the 3-1/2 day event!

As Rabbi Holland, quipped, “It was, possibly, the largest single kosher event since the destruction of the second *Bais Hamikdosh*!”

*Reprinted from the April 7, 2016 website of Matzav.com Ms. Margie Pensak is the Director of Public and Media Affairs for Star-K.*