**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas nasso 5772**

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**Lost & Found in L.A.**

**By Rabbi Shraga Simmons**

 Embodying Jewish values is the best PR for Torah and the Jewish people.

Imagine losing your wallet at a large public event. What do you estimate the chances of ever seeing that wallet again? Especially if the wallet contained $350 in cash, plus credit cards, gift cards and more.

 Ethan Youssefzadeh, an 18-year-old in Los Angeles, was at a high-school track meet last week when he found a wallet lying in the grass. Looking at the driver’s license, Ethan was able to identify the owner’s address. So he immediately did the right thing: He got into his car and drove 45 minutes out of his way to the owner’s house.

**About Ready to Cancel His Credit Cards**

 The owner had been getting ready to cancel his credit cards, never expecting to have the wallet returned. When Ethan came to the door, the wallet-owner was in disbelief.

 They got to talking. The owner asked Ethan about his school and his Jewish observance. The owner was so inspired by the young man’s sincerity and honesty, that he offered Ethan reward money.

 “No thank you,” Ethan replied. “I was just fulfilling what the Torah teaches – it’s a mitzvah to [return any lost article](http://www.aish.com/jl/i/fw/91465714.html) you find.”

 That night, the wallet-owner, who is Jewish, wrote to the administration of Ethan’s school, YULA Boys High School, saying, “The truth is, I am not sure if my children, or even I, would have ever returned something with such great value.”

 Then the man added: "If this is what Jews do, then I want my kids to be like your students."

 In today’s world, when Torah observance is so widely misunderstood and under attack from various socio-political camps, acts of kindness such as Ethan’s carry enormous value.

 “People think that Jewish observance is so far-fetched,” Ethan told Aish.com. “But my Torah studies teach that caring for others and respecting their property is normal. I always try to think: How would I want someone to treat me if I were in the same situation?”

**The Focus of a Special School Assembly**

 The morning after returning the wallet, Ethan’s story became the focus of a special school assembly. From there, word has spread, demonstrating how, in Ethan’s words, “small things can have a big impact.”

 “There was never a moment where I thought to keep the money,” says Ethan. “A few hundred dollars comes and goes, but this story will stay with me for a lifetime.”

 But that’s not the end of the story. When the wallet-owner found out that Ethan is president of his school’s student council, he offered to donate the $350.

“Okay,” said Ethan. “For the benefit of the Student Council, I will gladly accept.”

**Lost Connection**

 The great Jewish philosopher Maimonides writes that a Jew’s purpose in this world is to create [*Kiddush Hashem*](http://www.aish.com/tp/b/sw/Israel_and_Kiddush_Hashem.html) – positive PR for God and His Torah. The litmus test of fulfilling this lofty directive is when people look upon a Jew’s actions and say: "If this is the effect that Torah has on a person, then I want it, too."

Ethan and the wallet-owner have since kept in touch. The man says that he never before appreciated the importance of being Jewish, but this deed has now sparked a renewed interest in his heritage.

 Which brings the story full circle. The Torah imperative of "returning lost objects" goes beyond just ”wallets lying in the grass.” Another aspect is that if someone has lost their connection to Judaism, we must do what we can to help restore that connection. This, Ethan has unwittingly accomplished as well.

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

**Good Shabbos Everyone.**

**The Long Way Home**

**(Part Two)**

**Continued from** [**last week**](http://www.notspeeding.com/gs/Behar-Bechukosai5772.html)

 "…Well, maybe Hashem was watching us for another reason, too. You see, I was one of the Yaldei Teheran, the refugee children gathered from the concentration camp survivors who were transported through the Balkans and Turkey on the way to Teheran, from where they were eventually brought to Eretz Yisroel.

 “I was placed in a kibbutz and there I spent my days and nights, thinking that I would be there forever. I met a girl who had come from Germany and I asked her to marry me. It was then that she told me she had a secret of great importance to tell me.

**Last Request from Her Mother**

 She told me of her last emotional moments with her mother. The Germans had burst into her home and the Jews knew they were going to be carted away. Rumors abounded about parents being separated from their children, never to be reunited again. The desperate mother took her seven-year-old daughter, held her tightly, and said to her:

 "My dear child, they will soon take us away and who knows if we will ever be together again. I want you to promise me one thing. There is something called a Kosher Jewish home. You're too young to understand what it is, and there is no way that I can explain it to you today. When you get older go to a rav and he will explain what it means. Promise me that you will abide by those laws."

**Promises to Obey Her Wishes**

 The little girl was bewildered but saw the seriousness in her mother's face and promised to obey her wishes. Mother and daughter were torn apart and never saw each other again. But she remembered. Years later, after being freed from the torture of imprisonment in the valley of horror and death, she went to a rav and learned the significance of her promise. Although she was not an observant Jew, she resolved to keep "a Kosher Jewish home."

 "As we walked in the field," continued Mr. Kruger, "she told me that she could only consent to marry me if I would agree to her commitment. The fact that we would be living on a kibbutz where no one else observed these laws would make matters very difficult. But the young woman was determined to uphold these laws. I told her I would need time to think about it and asked for three days.

 After much thought I told her that I would agree to her condition. All the years that we lived on the kibbutz, we had to make extra efforts, usually in secret, and often go to the nearby town. Nevertheless, we were very serious about the promise, and until we met Rabbi Shapira, that was the one mitzvah that we observed.

 Now R' Boruch Yadler smiled broadly. "I knew your children were special. Indeed, they are truly holy children." And then he repeated it again softly. "Pure and holy children. It's no wonder Hashem gave you both the opportunity to become observant Jews." (From, The Maggid Speaks, R. Paysach Krohn, p.106)

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Good Shabbos Everyone.*

**It Once Happened**

**The Poor Widow**

**And King Solomon**

 In the time of King Solomon there lived in the Land of Israel a poor widow and her children. Their home was a wretched, tumble-down shack, and their sustenance was sparse and hard to come by. But the widow managed to keep high spirits and their poor existence was marked by the great joy they took in the simplest pleasures of life.

**Gathered Wheat Stalks Reserved for the Poor**

 The widow and her children tended a small garden outside their little house and were able to harvest some meager vegetables, but their main meal consisted of the bread which the woman baked every day. For each day she went to the fields and there gathered the wheat stalks which, according to the dictates of Jewish law, were reserved for the indigent; she then ground them and brought home the flour which she baked into three loaves.

 One might think that a woman in these circumstances would jealously guard her hard won food, but such was not the way of this particular woman. She was quite unusual, in that her greatest pleasure was performing the mitzva of receiving guests, and so, it was her daily custom to give away two of her three loaves of bread to people even poorer than herself.

One day, the widow had followed her usual routine and was removing the fragrant loaves from the oven with her hungry children standing around her in happy expectation. As the bread was cooling, a man knocked at the widow's door. He was local beggar, well known to the good woman, a frequent benefactor of her open-handedness. Again, this time, he left her small hut with an entire loaf of fresh bread under his arm - food to quell his hunger a whole day.

**Giving a Loaf of Bread to Another Indigent**

 Shortly after, the old beggar was followed by a woman, another frequent recipient. She was not as old, but the dullness of her eyes and the drag of her feet identified her as a member of the small group of indigents who received the widow's kindness. She too, left with a whole loaf of bread in hand, blessing her benefactors.

 Finally, the children were gathered around the table as their mother took a knife to divide the third loaf amongst them. Their anticipation as well as their hunger had peaked; how delicious it smelled.

 But just at that moment there was another knock at their door. They opened it to see an emaciated young boy standing at the threshold. He had been directed to their door by one of the woman's customary "patrons," knowing that she would see to his needs. When she heard that he hadn't eaten in days, she gave him the last loaf of bread. To her disappointed children, she quietly said that she would get more grain and bake more bread.

**A Great Gust of Wind Tore Away the Sack**

 The widow again headed of the fields where she picked some stalks from the corners reserved for the poor. She was headed home with her pack of wheat when all of a sudden, a great gust of wind tore the sack from her hand and carried it off far into the air. This was too much for the exhausted woman to bear; she sat down on a tree stump and wept in heartbreaking sobs. How could she return to her starving children empty handed?

 Instead, she decided to go to the palace of King Solomon. His throne room was open to all of his subjects and he, the wisest of men, would surely have an answer for her. She entered the sumptuous palace and soon stood in a cavernous hall, the likes of which she had never even dreamed of. Before her in the distance sat King Solomon, and he beckoned her to approach. She walked steadily toward the great king, emboldened by her pain. When she stood before him she related her whole story, leaving no detail untold.

 As she reached the end of her tale, three merchants approached the king, carrying a heavy chest. And they, too, were eager to tell their tale. The leader of the three began: "We were sailing far out at sea, when a sudden violent storm arose. Our ship sprung a leak, quickly filled with water and was in danger of sinking. We began to pray to G-d to save us, and we made a vow that if we were allowed to come to dry land, we would give half of our treasure to charity. Praise be to G-d, we were saved, and now we are here to fulfill our vow."

**Commands the Merchants to**

**Examine the Hole in the Boards**

 King Solomon heard them out, and responded by telling them to return to their ship, look for the hole in the boards, and bring him whatever they would find.

They left and returned sometime later carrying a piece of material, very wet, but unmistakably a sack. The King turned to the widow who had been instructed to wait and said, "You see, it was your sack of grain that stopped the leak in their ship. This chest of gold belongs to you. Because you always helped others, G-d has helped you. Now, go home to your children in peace."

 Back at her house, the hungry children waited and worried; where could their mother be? When she arrive their concern turned first to relief and then to joy, as she related her wondrous experience. As she served them a festive meal, she quietly promised to honor the mitzva of receiving guests in a manner equal to her new circumstances. And her following of poor, dejected and hungry also had ample reason to celebrate and bless her forever after.

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**May a Kohen Work for Hatzalah, or Inspect a Body**

**To Prevent an Autopsy?**

**By Rabbi Eli J. Mansour**



Rabbi Shmuel Wosner The Hatam Sofer

It is forbidden for Kohanim to contract Tumat Met - the status of impurity that results from contact with a human corpse. The Halachic authorities addressed the question of whether it would be permissible for a Kohen to volunteer for an emergency medical corps, such as Hatzalah.

A person working as an emergency medical responder is likely to come in contact with a human corpse, Heaven forbid. In light of this likelihood, is it forbidden for a Kohen to volunteer for such services?

**Response of Rav Wosner**

 The Shebet Halevi (Rav Shemuel Wosner, contemporary) rules that a Kohen may volunteer for Hatzalah, as long as he exercises caution and tries to avoid contact with a human corpse.

If he tries to avoid Tumat Met, then it is permissible to join emergency ambulance services, and it would in fact be considered a Misva for him to do so. Of course, in situations where a Kohen’s involvement could save a life, then he is certainly allowed and required to intervene, even if this poses the risk of becoming Tameh. Just as one may violate Shabbat and eat and Yom Kippur when this is necessary for Pikuah Nefesh (saving a life), similarly, a Kohen may come in contact with Tumat Met for the purpose of saving a life.

**Response of the Hatam Sofer**

The Hatam Sofer (Rabbi Moshe Sofer of Pressburg, 1762-1839) addressed the situation of a Jew who had passed away, and the coroner insisted on determining the precise cause of death. If the cause of death could not be definitively determined through an external inspection, then the coroner would order an autopsy.

As it turned out, the only available physician who was capable of determining the cause of death was a Kohen. The Hatam Sofer ruled that the Kohen was allowed to and in fact should inspect the body in order to prevent the autopsy. This situation, the Hatam Sofer explained, was no different than that of a Met Misva, where a Kohen is the only person available to bury a body, in which case he is allowed, and even required, to perform the burial.

Here, too, the Kohen is needed to ensure the body’s immediate burial and avoid disgrace, and therefore he should inspect the body, even though he would then become Tameh.

These Halachot should remind us of the need for Kohanim to consult with Rabbis on all matters involving situations of possible contact with a corpse, to determine when it is forbidden, permissible, or even obligatory to come in contact with a corpse.

Summary: It is permissible and even a Misva for a Kohen to serve on an emergency ambulance corps, provided that he exercise care to try and avoid contact with human corpses. If a body needs to be inspected to determine cause of death and thereby avoid an autopsy, and the only available doctor to perform the inspection is a Kohen, he is allowed and even urged to inspect the body, even though he would thus become Tameh.

*Reprinted from Rabbi Eli Mansour’s Daily Halacha email from July 14, 2011.*

**Chasidic Story #757**

**Saturday Night Special**

**From the Desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

 One Saturday night, when the chasidim of Rabbi Dovid-Moshe of Chortkov gathered for the *"Melave Malka"* meal, singing soulful melodies and telling stories of great righteous Jews, the Rebbe himself unexpectedly appeared and joined them. He sat down and expounded on the significance of this meal, which was established by King David himself, and how the merit of King David protects those who celebrate it.

After that, he next related a story of two Jewish business partners who were very careful to escort the Shabbat queen with a proper *Melave Malka* each Saturday night, even when it was exceedingly difficult.

**Beginning their Journey after Havdalah**

 "Once, the central fair was to take place on Sunday, compelling the partners to begin their journey on Saturday night, soon after Shabbat ended and they officially completed it with the *Havdalah* ceremony. As for *Melave Malka*, they packed food and planned to stop and eat somewhere on the way.

 "It was a frigid, cold night, and as they were traveling, snow began to fall, concealing the road they were following. Remembering that they had not yet eaten *Melave Malka*, they decided to stop and conduct the meal, but then suddenly realized that they had no water with which to wash their hands.

 "Looking around, they noticed a light twinkling from afar, so they traveled towards it, arriving at a peasant's small hut. They knocked on the door and asked to wash their hands. The peasant agreed, offering them to come in, warm themselves and eat their meal on his table. The partners sat down, ate, and sang the traditional Saturday night songs in honor of the Shabbos queen.

**Concluding their Melave Malka**

 "Concluding the *Melave Malka*, they prepared to leave and continue on their journey, when without warning, a group of thugs appeared, forcefully blocking them from exiting. "You will not leave from here alive," they shouted. "We kill all those who come here and take all their belongings." Seeing no way out, the two Jews begged for a few minutes to say the *vidui* confession before death. The criminals laughingly granted them this last request.

"Suddenly ringing chimes, announcing the approach of a carriage, were heard, followed by knocks at the door. A travelling nobleman, a duke, had come to ask for directions, for he too had lost his way in the snowstorm. Laughing, the robbers told him that also he would not leave their hut alive and demanded that he hand over all his money. Having no choice he obeyed, and then requested a last wish, that he be given some whiskey to quench his thirst.

Inviting the Duke to Join in Drinking Whiskey

They agreed, and the duke invited the wild criminals to join him in drinking. As soon as they began to drink, the would-be murderers suddenly became paralyzed, unable to move, like stones. The nobleman turned to the partners, instructing them to quickly take their belongings and escape. In a short amount of time, the two grateful Jews were far from the danger zone."

The Chortkover Rebbe concluded, "Do you know who the gentile nobleman was? It was King David! He came to save the partners in the merit of their extra care to eat *Melave Malka* properly, including washing hands for bread and sitting at a table."

The next morning, two strangers arrived in Tchortkov, and began to excitedly tell everyone they met about the miracle that had occurred to them while traveling to the fair.

Source: *Divrei David Likutim*. Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the rendition in *Lma'an Yishme'u* # 86.

Connection (among others): King David passed away on Shavuot.

Biographic note: Rabbi David-Moshe Friedmann (20 Cheshvan 1828-21 Tishrei1903), the first *Chortkover Rebbe*, was the fifth of the holy six sons of the famed Rabbi Yisrael of Rhyzhin (1797-1850). After the death of his father, he attracted a large following. He is the author of Divrei Dovid.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of the Ascent Institute of Safat, Israel.*

**Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak**

**Of Lubavitch**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**

1. 

 When the Communist government took control in Russia in 1917 they began as friends of the people. But as they became more organized and powerful their true ruthless, paranoid nature surfaced. Secret police and spies were so ubiquitous that neighbors and even family members could not trust one another.

 It was then that Stalin formed an organization called the Yevsectzia: Jews against Judaism’; Jews who made it their life’s goal to destroy any sign of religious Judaism in Russia. And their number one enemy was the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson because he had a large network of followers who provided clandestine Jewish Torah instruction to thousands of children throughout the country.

**The Interrogation of the Rebbe**

 But they had no proof. Eventually the Rebbe was called to interrogation. One wrong word could mean death. Each of the interrogators had a pistol on the table before him in addition to the gun each one carried on his belt.

 But the Rebbe began by announcing, in Yiddish, that he was only going to speak to them in the language of the Jews, Yiddish, being that all of them were Jewish.

 “How are you so sure we are Jews?” they asked.

 “My father said that when a Jew has a circumcision at the age of 8 days a bit of flesh grows on his nose in place of the foreskin that was removed. My father could see this but although I cannot, it seems to me that you are Jews.”

 One of the officials then pointed his gun at the Rebbe and said “You will speak any language we tell you to. This toy has made many people do what we want and if you’re smart you will join them”

 The Rebbe answered “That toy scares people that have many gods; a different one for each of their desires and fears, and only one world. But I have only one G-d and two worlds so I am not afraid of you. You should know that there has not yet been created any man or demon that can shake me from my principles. And one of them is to speak only Yiddish to you.”

**Is it a Matter of Certainty or a Matter of Faith?**

 Strangely these words had an effect on them and they changed the subject.

 “Tell us, Rabbi Schneerson, all these Jewish rituals you do; keeping your holidays and all, is it because you are certain or is it a matter of faith. In other words; do you know it as a fact that there is a G-d who said these things or do you just believe. (They were certain that he would say the latter and admit that religion is only superstition.)

 “I know it for a certain fact.” The Rebbe answered

 The officials looked incredulously at one another and one of them smiled, leaned forward toward the Rebbe and asked him what he was sure would be a knockout question:

 “If you are convinced that your religion is absolute truth than can you convince us so we can be certain as well?”

**An Analogy of the Student of Advanced Astronomy**

 “Yes,” answered the Rebbe immediately, “I can and I am totally prepared to do so but first you must cooperate and give me a chance to fulfill your request. We both know that if a man while strolling in the city, meets his friend who learns advanced astronomy and asks him to show and explain to him the orbits and paths of the stars certainly his friend will reply that here in the street it is impossible. Rather if he desires to know these things then he should accompany him to a planetarium where there is a huge telescope that will enable them to see and understand the stars. Is this not correct?” The Rebbe did not wait for an answer and continued.

 “So too here, if you really desire to attain certainty about the religion of G-d and His Torah then come with me to the house of G-d, to the Synagogue, and put on Tefillin, eat Kosher food and keep the Shabbat. This will refine your brain and heart so you will be able to understand first what is right and wrong, then slowly you will rise on the rungs of intelligence until I will bring you, first to intellectual awareness and then to absolute certainty that G-d and His Torah are true.

 But the interrogator was too clever to fall for that. “It is unrealistic to expect us to do things without understanding. First, begin to explain some proofs of your religion,” he said, “then we will accept on ourselves to keep your commandments and rituals. First you bring a proof. Without absolute proof we cannot accept Judaism.

 The Rebbe replied, “Certainly you are aware that food, in addition to satisfying and giving us energy also adds weight and health to our system; food transforms to flesh and blood. Exactly how this works; the processes of nutrition, is very complicated and requires much study. Now what would you say about a person that refuses to eat until this entire process of digestion and nutrition is explained to him? That person would not only be a fool but he would not live long.

**Eat Even if One Doesn’t Understand**

**How it Nourishes Us**

 “In fact, first we must eat even if we don’t understand how it nourishes us. Then, in the course of time we can come to a certain understanding of how food works.

 “So too with Judaism” the Rebbe concluded, “first you must do. Then you can understand.”

 The Rebbe commented that he saw that his words made a definite impression on his interrogators.

Now we can understand our questions; What do we care if the Jews were counted and what does this have to do with the giving of the Torah.

**No One is Worth More than Any Other Person**

 The reason G-d wanted the Jewish people to be counted was to show two things; first, that EACH of them, regardless of intelligence or status, was number ONE. And second, that essentially no one was worth more or less that any other; each one was ….only ‘one’.

 This is basically what the Rebbe said to his Communist inquisitors; regardless of how great or small your comprehension of G-d and His Torah you must begin with ‘one’ simple deed.

 This is the essence of Judaism and by virtue of it the Jews received the Torah at Mount Sinai when they said, “Na’aseh V’nishma’ ‘We will first DO whatever You say, G-d, and THEN we will understand’. (Talmud, Shabbas 88a).

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

**The Importance of Being**

**Able to Give to Others**

**By Rabbi Reuven Semah**

“*So shall you bless the Children of Israel…May Hashem bless you*” (Bemidbar 6:23-24)

 If Hashem commanded the Kohanim to bless the people as the verse above says, “So shall you bless,” why do the Kohanim pass this duty on to Hashem?

 The Ktav Sofer (quoted by Torah Ladaat) explains that the best blessing a person can give his friend is to wish him that Hashem should bless him. This is due to the fact that only Hashem knows what is best for each person. What a human being may perceive as being a blessing for his friend may in reality be to his detriment, and what may seem a difficulty is a true blessing.

**Why Flee from Goodness?**

 In a similar vein it says in Tehillim “May only good and kindness pursue me all the days of my life.” The term “pursue me,” implies that the person will be running away from it. Why would someone flee from goodness?

 The Hafess Hayim answered: Very often people don’t realize what is truly best for them and they go to great lengths to avoid things which are really beneficial to them. So King David implored Hashem: Even if in my nearsightedness I attempt to run away, please be certain that goodness and mercy pursue me and overtake me.

**A Miser Who Fell Overboard**

 The following story is a perfect example of someone who didn’t know what was good for him. There was once a miser who refused to give a penny to charity. He was so stingy that the word “give” was literally foreign to his vocabulary.

 One day this man was traveling by ship, when he fell overboard and began to drown. Another passenger stretched his hand out to the fellow and said, “Here, give me your hand!” But the miser could not understand the word “give” and continued to struggle helplessly. Finally, the other man yelled, “Take my hand!” The miser did so and was saved. He could think only in terms of taking rather than giving.

 We must thank Hashem for all the opportunities for us to give, because you are actually saving yourself by becoming a better person.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of the Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin.*

**Israel Forever**

**The Special Division**

**By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach**

 “You shall count them (the Levites) everyone who comes to join the *tzava* to perform work in the Sanctuary.” (*Bamidbar* 4:21)

Thus was Moshe commanded by G-d, as recorded in this week’s Torah portion.

Why were they not counted in the same census recorded in the portion preceding this? The answer given by Rashi citing the Midrash is that “the legion of the King deserves to be counted separately.” (*Bamidbar* 1:49)

**Serving in the Sanctuary**

**Instead of the Battlefield**

 In both the census of all the tribes and in the census of the Levites, the term “*tzava*”, literally translated as “army”, is used. In regard to all the tribes the terminology used is “who goes out the army” to indicate that they have the responsibility of military duty. Regarding the Levites, the term used is “those who come to join the army” as mentioned above because their duties were performed in the Sanctuary and not on the battlefield.

 All Jews were thus described as being in the “*tzava*” but with different responsibilities. Our Sages have already pointed out that those who dedicate their lives to the study of Torah are the virtual Levites of today when we lack a Sanctuary.

**An Indispensable Division in**

**The Jewish Nation’s Army**

 Those populist politicians in Israel who are clamoring for an end to the practice in this country of deferring military service for yeshiva students should learn from these Torah chapters that today’s Levites are really another indispensable division in the army of the Jewish nation.

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

**The Human Side of the Story**

**Magic Michael**

**By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach**

 What is an Orthodox immigrant from Baltimore, U.S.A. doing with a case full of balloons, musical instruments and all sorts of gadgets in a hospital for kids in Jerusalem?

 The answer is that Michael Tulkoff (a.k.a. “Magic Michael”) has arrived at Alyn Hospital, the national pediatric and adolescent rehabilitation center, to do his weekly session of entertaining the kids. Proudly billing himself as the “only medical magician in the Middle East”, Michael also helps out with his endearing clown-like antics in the general pediatric wards of Dana Children’s Hospital in Tel Aviv and the Safra Children’s Hospital at Sheba in Tel Hashomer.

**Greeting Every Patient by Name**

The hospital staffs are very enthusiastic about Michael’s impact on the youngsters. As he wanders through the wards he greets every patient by name. Not all of these incapacitated patients are capable of returning the greeting but they acknowledge it with widened eyes.

Just one example of what he achieves is the story of his encounter with a 17-year old victim of cystic fibrosis, a living skeleton attached to a respirator, who used a communication board to spell out that he wants to die.



**“Magic Michael” (a.k.a. Michael Tulkoff)**

Michael told him a story he liked and then proceeded to build up his self-esteem and raise his spirits with a variety of magic tricks. Before leaving, Michael placed his hand on the youngster’s curled fingers as a sort of handshake.

Michael felt good when a visitor sitting next to the boy told him, with tears in his eyes, that this was the first time this unfortunate boy had actually smiled.

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