**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas chukas 5775**

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**L’Maaseh… A Tale to Remember**

**The Awesome Unity**

**Of Shema Yisroel**

Rav Yaakov Galinsky, zt”l, related in a public address that once he was on a railroad platform during wartime. He said, “The Germans were advancing upon my town in Lithuania. I was a young yeshiva student, and many of us had no other plan but to put as much distance between ourselves and the Nazis. Trains were still running, and I purchased a ticket to head eastward, as far as I could get.

“We all figured that we were better off with the Soviets. I got off the train in a strange location, not knowing anyone, with the winds of war threatening to blow in at any time. Where could I go? I looked for a Jewish face on the railroad platform and found none.

“I did notice a figure at the other end, shining shoes and wearing a cap. Jews commonly wore such caps, but then again, so did many others. I could hardly go over to him and ask him if he were Jewish, and give away my identity and vulnerability.

“Without uttering a word, I sat down at the shoeshine stand, and the local fellow began to work, without even establishing eye contact. After a minute or two, I turned my head to the side, and quietly muttered the first line of ‘Shema Yisroel’ under my breath. I thought to myself that if the fellow was not Jewish, he would hardly take notice.

“The man did not look up, and continued his rubbing and polishing. But the words that escaped his lips in a whisper were unmistakable: ‘Baruch Sheim K’vod Malchuso L'olam Va'ed’, the familiar response to the first line of the Shema. The fellow took me to his home and hid me for a week before I could find transportation further east. That week enabled me to survive, and to eventually reach Siberia, where I took refuge for the rest of the war.”

Rav Galinsky further explained, “Fellow Jews may not know each other, but that Shema immediately established our brotherhood and common faith. It only takes a few words for unrelated Jews to prove themselves brothers. Jews share a history and a belief system that unites them and makes them one. Their unity and common convictions is a mystery to others, and to some, like our enemies, our instant connection arouses jealousy and hatred. But for us it is our lifeblood. It is what keeps up going and enables us to survive throughout the generations. We can only exist through our Achdus!”

*Reprinted from last week’s email of “Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights” compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg*

**A Boy’s Request to**

**Rav Aharon Kotler**

**By Tzvi Yaakovson**

This past week, I found myself at the community center in the neighborhood of Ramat Shlomo, Yerushalayim, for the *Chumash* party of my grandson, who attends Talmud Torah Avnei Shlomo - named for Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt”l* - in Givat Shaul. We sat on plastic chairs, we gazed at the primitive “crowns” adorning the little boys’ heads, and, somehow, we were deeply moved. From that vantage point, all of the politicians in the world, even Obama, seemed so small. In fact, they *were* small.

On the subject of small people, one of the grandfathers was asked to speak, and he told a story from his own experience as a child in *cheder*:

“Our *rebbi* brought us to Lakewood during the last year of Rav Aharon Kotler’s life. We didn’t know Yiddish and Rav Aharon didn’t know English, but it was enough just to see him. One of the children jumped up and asked for a *brachah* to become a *talmid chochom*. Rav Aharon asked his interpreter what the boy had said.

“When it was explained to him, Rav Aharon stood up and said emotionally, in Yiddish, ‘It is impossible to receive a *brachah* to become a *talmid chochom*. In order to be a *talmid chochom*, you have to sit and learn, and learn, and learn!’

The boy didn’t understand the words Rav Aharon was saying, but he could see that the *gadol hador* was very emotional. The interpreter translated for him, and to everyone’s surprise, the boy shouted in English, ‘I *will* learn and learn and learn, but I also want a*brachah*!’

Rav Aharon asked for a translation again, and when he heard the explanation, he smiled and gave the boy a warm *brachah*. Today, that boy is one of the greatest *talmidei chachomim* of our generation.”

*Reprinted from last week’s email of the Yated Ne’eman.*

**It Once Happened**

**The Baal Shem Tov and the Son-in-Law Who Had Doubts About G-d**

Shavuot is the anniversary of the passing of the Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chasidic movement.

There was a wealthy Jew, whose only daughter was becoming of marriageable age. While there were many promising young Torah scholars in his own town, he desired to have an exceptional Torah scholar as a son-in-law. After much effort, he indeed found one such young man. The couple were married, settled down and were extremely happy. The young man learned in the yeshiva study hall and grew in his learning and Torah knowledge. Everything was going as desired.

Some years passed, and the wealthy father-in-law began noticing small changes in his son-in-laws conduct and observance of mitzvot (commandments). At first, he tried to dismiss them as insignificant changes, and perhaps his learned son-in-law has reasons to conduct himself in this new manner. After all he knows much more than I do, so who am I to question him!

But as the weeks and months passed, he began noticing that he was taking off much more time from his learning and was seen in the company of others who were known to be completely non-observant. This was a situation that he was no longer able to ignore and pretend all is well.

So one day, he sat down with his son-in-law and asked him, "What caused this drastic change. Are you perhaps unhappy about something or is something or someone bothering you?"

The son-in-law replied, "I am extremely happy and fortunate. Your daughter is an excellent and kind hearted person. She is the perfect wife, and you are very gracious to us. A man couldn't ask for more.

"But you want to know if everything is perfect, what caused these changes? I began having some questions about G-d's ability to do certain things that our sages stated had happened. I noticed that some of the great commentators also wrote that these things are exaggerations. So I no longer knew what is real and what is being said as a way of a parable or metaphor.

"Whoever I asked either replied that those are dangerous questions, that one is not allowed to ask, or gave me such weak answers and explanations, that they themselves admitted weren't complete answers, they weren't satisfactory. So now I have my doubts about many things, such as does G-d really care about such minute details, for example, when you wash your hands for bread, does it have to go until the wrist and a drop off makes it invalid or it isn't so important. And therefore I decided not to do it all."

The father-in-law was torn with grief. This is the son-in-law that he had hand-picked for his wonderful daughter, who is so proper in her observance of every mitzva (commandment). Is everything lost G-d forbid? "No! It can't be," he told himself. "I must find a way to correct this."

Turning to his son-in-law he said, "My dear son-in-law, you are much more learned than I, and if the great Torah scholars of the town couldn't answer your questions satisfactorily, I for sure don't have the ability. However, I am asking you one thing, please come with me to a great sage and allow him to answer and clarify everything."

Wanting to please his father-in-law, especially as he always has the ability to say that the answer this sage gave was not a convincing or even good answer, he agreed.

The father-in-law didn't waste any time, but immediately set out with his son-in-law to see the Baal Shem Tov. They arrived in Mezibuzh on a bright sunny day and the father-in-law poured out his troubled heart to the Baal Shem Tov and pleaded with him that he does whatever is in his ability to bring the son-in-law back to the ways of G-d.

The Baal Shem Tov asked them to join him on a small journey. With the father-in-law sitting on his right and the son-in-law sitting on his left, they left Mezibuzh. Once they were out of the city and on the road in midst of an open field, the Baal Shem Tov turned to the son-in-law and said, "Young man can it rain now?"

Looking at the clear blue sky, the young man replied, "No, there isn't a cloud in sight."

The Baal Shem Tov said, "And I say it can rain!"

Looking up once again, the young man peered in all directions to make sure that he saw correctly and indeed there wasn't a cloud in sight. So he smugly retorted and said, "It is impossible! No way in the world can it rain here at this very moment."

The Baal Shem Tov smiled and said, "And I say it will rain momentarily!" A few seconds later the heavens opened and a deluge of rain came pouring down. The young man was bewildered at this happening. Not only is it pouring from a cloudless sky, but the Baal Shem Tov's wagon is remaining completely dry. This is truly miraculous and beyond human comprehension.

Being an extremely intelligent person, he realized why the Baal Shem Tov showed him this and didn't try to answer his questions verbally. Far be it that the Baal Shem Tov was merely showing off to him his miraculous powers. It was much more than that; he had clearly demonstrated, that stories of our sages that are beyond human comprehension, doesn't mean that they never occurred or are not real. There are many happenings that human intellect says one way, but in actuality they happened the opposite way - the way he thought was impossible.

Once this question was answered, he realized that all of his other questions and doubts were based on this premise. And therefore if this was resolved they all have nothing to stand on.

Full of remorse he turned to the Baal Shem Tov and beseeched of him, to guide him back to the way of G-d.

During the first year after his passing, the students of the Baal Shem Tov gathered and many of them related a miraculous story of the Baal Shem Tov that they personally were privy to. That night the Baal Shem Tov came to one of his students in a dream and said, "My greatness is not my ability to do miracles, it is my awe of heaven for even the smallest detail of a mitzva.

*Reprinted from the Bamidbar 5775 edition of “L’Chaim,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization of Brooklyn, NY.As told by Rabbi Shalom Dovber Avtzon.*

**Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos**

**The Reward for**

**Honoring Shabbos**

There once was a very wealthy man named Reb Isserles who owned a large silk store where he sold fancy and exquisite silks. It was his custom that every Erev Shabbos when chatzos came he would immediately close his store, so that he could leave and get ready for Shabbos.

One time the Satan decided to test Reb Isserles and came to the store on Erev Shabbos dressed as a great and prominent ruler. He started to choose many fine and expensive silks. Soon it was chatzos, but the ruler had not yet decided how much of the materials he wanted to buy.

Realizing what a big sale he was about to give up, Reb Isserles still began closing his store as he always did at this time on Fridays. He told the ruler that he was sorry, but the store was closed for business for the rest of the day.

The ruler got upset and said that these silks were very important to him and he must have them right away. He even offered to pay a very high price for them! But Reb Isserles could not be swayed and insisted that his work was done for the day and it was time to get ready for Shabbos. The ruler left and the deal was lost.

When Hashem saw how Reb Isserles was so committed and strong in his love for Shabbos that he even gave up such a big sale, it was decided that he deserved a great reward. Hashem blessed Reb Isserles with a very special child, who grew up to be a great Rebbe and leader of Klal Yisroel, the famous Rama! (Sefer Meor HaShabbos)

*Reprinted from last week’s email of “Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights” compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg*

**Horse Racing on Shabbat**

**By the Bais HaVaad Institue of Talmudic Law**

On Saturday, June 6, a horse named American Phaoroh won the Belmont Stakes, making it the first horse to win the Triple Crown in 37 years. The horse’s owner, Mr. Zayat, is an observant Jew originally from Egypt.

The story has raised much curiosity among frum Jews as to the permissibility of having one’s animal do work and conduct business on Shabbos. In this article, although we will not address the actions of this particular race, we will however present an overview of these concepts.

The Torah states that your animal should not do work for you on Shabbos. This concept is known as ‘*Shvisas Behemto*’, the resting of animals. For this reason, the Rambam (Shabbos 20,1) writes that it is forbidden to have one’s animal carry an item in the public domain.

Likewise, the Shulchan Aruch (OC 246, 5) writes that it is forbidden to rent one’s animal to a non-Jew over Shabbos if he will use it to plow his field. There is also a prohibition to direct an animal to do work. This prohibition is called ‘*mechamer*’.

The Minchas Chinuch (Mosech Hashabbos) explains the difference between *shvisas behemto* and *mechamer*. Shvisas behemto is a prohibition on the owner to allow his animal to do work, regardless of whether he or even a non-Jew works the animal. Mechamer is a prohibition on any Jew to direct an animal to work regardless of whom it belongs to.

The Pnei Yehishua (cited by the Minchas Chinuch) understands that both the prohibitions of shvisas behemto and mechamer are only when the animal is doing one of the 39 melachos. For example, if a non-Jew plows a field with my animal, it is a transgression of shvisas behemto.

If I command a non-Jew’s animal to carry through the public domain it is a transgression of mechamer. If, however, the animal carries items in a private domain, it is not a transgression of these prohibitions. Likewise, it seems from the Rambam (20, 4) that a horse carrying a person on Shabbos does not transgress shvisas behemto because of the concept of ‘chai nosei es atzmo’ (“A living being carries himself”). However, an animal carrying a saddle in a public domain does transgress Shvisas Behemto.

The Aruch Hashulchan (246, 18) disagrees on the entire premise of the Pnei Yehoshua, and understands that all strenuous labor violates these prohibitions. Based on these sources we can analyze if horseracing transgresses shvisas behemto and mechamer. If the Jockey is Jewish and he is directing the animal, this could possibly be violating mechamer regardless of who owns the animal. If the horse is owned by a Jew, the owner could be violating shvisas behemto.

However, according to the opinion of the Pnei Yehoshua, these are only issues if the horse is doing a melacha. It would seem that the running of the race itself is not a melacha. Going further, the horse carrying the Jockey is not a melacha either, as we mentioned previously. However, carrying the saddle and other gear is considered the melacha of carrying, but only if the raceway is not enclosed and is a public domain.

As most raceways are enclosed, this does not seem to be a major issue. On the other hand, according to the Aruch Hashulchan, all racing is strenuous activity and violates shvisas behemto. (For further discussion see Yabia Omer 8, 30) Schar Shabbos & Maris Ayin Although we have demonstrated that the issues of shvisas behemto and mechamer could be negligible, the prohibition of profiting from Shabbos earnings is a serious concern.

Generally, it is only permitted to profit from Shabbos dealings if it is part of a weekday transaction. This concept is called ‘havlaah’ (literally swallowing). For example, if a person rents his car to a non-Jew for a week at $100 a day, he can charge him $700 for the week because the Shabbos fee is included with the weekday fee, but he can’t rent it for Shabbos alone.

In the case of the races, the prize is awarded for a race that is entirely on Shabbos. It should therefore be forbidden to have benefit from the money. The Shulchan Aruch (245,1), however, permits a Jew to partner with a non-Jew, and stipulate at the beginning of the partnership that the non-Jew will take his portion from the Shabbos sales.

In the case of American Pharoh, the horse is not owned directly by Mr. Zayat, but by his corporation, Zayat Stables LLC. Assuming that there are non-Jewish investors who have large shares in the corporation, it is possible that a similar arrangement could be made with the horseracing corporation.

The money from such prizes would go to the non-Jewish partners and Mr. Zayat could take his share from other revenues like the selling of the breeding rights that do not conflict with Shabbos.

There is yet another issue. While ‘maris ayin’, giving the appearance of doing a transgression, is a general halachic concern, in the area of non-Jews doing melacha for Jews on Shabbos, the sages were particularly stringent. The sages forbid a Jew from leasing his bathhouse to a non-Jew over Shabbos although it is technically permitted. The reason is because it will appear that the non-Jew is the Jew’s worker who is running it on the Jew’s behalf, which is forbidden.

Therefore, in our situation, even if the appropriate arrangements were made, due to the great publicity of these races, there could be an issue of maris ayin. In summation, using animals on Shabbos could possibly transgress shvisas behemto and mechamer. Even in the event that it doesn’t, there are issues of profiting from Shabbos dealings and maris ayin. Therefore, before you consider horseracing, make sure to discuss these issues at length with your Rabbi!!

*Reprinted from last week’s email of David Bibi’s Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace. The article is from thewebsite of the Bais HaVaad Institute of Talmudic Law.*

**The Siddur Speaks…A Closer Look at Davening**

**Why Are You Still**

**Holding Your Bag?**

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein once taught about Tefilah, that in the Tefilah for Parnassah in Shemoneh Esrei, in the brachah of Shomei'a Tefilah, we mention the pasuk from Tehilim (55:23), השלך יכלכלך והוא יהבך 'ה על, Cast your burden on Hashem, and He will sustain you.

The Dubno Maggid explains this by way of an analogy to a poor man who is traveling with a very heavy bag on his back. As he walks along the road, suffering from the weight of his bag, a wealthy man with a spacious carriage drives by, and offers the poor man a ride.

The poor man steps into the carriage, takes a seat, but still holds onto his heavy bag. The wealthy man notices this and says, “My friend, why don't you put your bag down on the floor?”

he poor man answers, “You are nice enough to offer me a ride, I don't want to make you carry my bag for me too.”

The wealthy man responds, “My horses are already pulling the weight of you and your bag regardless of whether or not you hold on to it. It won't make any difference to me if you put down your package and not struggle with it!”

The Dubno Maggid explains that so many people act like that poor man. They unnecessarily carry heavy burdens throughout their lives. However, we must realize that Hashem is “pulling the wagons” and carrying us anyway, and we should simply put down our burdens and let Hashem carry them as well.

The Medrash Tehilim, comments on this pasuk that Hashem is not like human beings. When a person asks his fellow for a favor, the fellow will likely be happy to do it. When he is asked a second and third time, he will likely agree to the favor, but with less enthusiasm. By the fourth time, though, he will likely say, “Enough already!” and refuse.

Whenever we “throw our burden” on Hashem, He responds favorably, as the pasuk in Ashrei says, 'ה קרוב קוראיו לכל, Hashem is close to those who call out to Him. Sometimes we find ourselves in situations and wonder how it can ever work out because it seems impossible. However, we must realize that no burden is too heavy for Hashem!

*Reprinted from last week’s email of “Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights” compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg*

**Short Story of the Week**

**Rabbi Kaminentzky**

**And the Catholic Nun**

At the funeral of Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky, people were shocked when a [Catholic[ nun came in. When she was asked how she knew the Rabbi, she said that every morning on his daily walk, Rabbi Yaakov would pass by the convent where this nun lived. Although other religious Jews who passed by the convent never paid any attention to the nun, Rav Yaakov would graciously nod to her and wish her a friendly “Good Morning.” The nun related that she was so impressed by the aged Rabbi’s friendliness, that she felt she had to pay her respects at his funeral.

*Comment: We are being closely watched. The world, like it or not, learns from our actions. We can be the “Light unto the Nations,” (Yeshaya 49:6). Or we can be a bad example, gracing the scandalous covers of secular newspapers. It goes without saying that either path we choose the impact is long-lasting and the reward/consequence eternal. Let us be cognizant to make Hashem’s Great Name great in the eyes of those who are observing us.*

**Quote of the Week**

“If somebody overlooks those who wrong him, the attribute of judgment
overlooks his sins.” (Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 17a.)

Hashem judges us the way we judge others. Even if we have fallen short in our personal lives, when we are patient with others, give them the benefit of doubt and choose to concentrate on the greatness within them, our Heavenly report card grades will sky-rocket. We just have to learn to get past the erroneous notion that overlooking an affront shows that others can take advantage of us.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Nasso email sent by Reb Mendel Berlin.*

**Story #916**

**The Rebbe and**

**Science Fiction**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[**editor@ascentofsafed.com**](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=Inbox&msgNum=00015n00:001LWKP600000Os9&count=1434570705&randid=2047557583&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=0&randid=2047557583)

**Part 1: 1995-1996**

William Morrow & Company published *Toward a Meaningful Life*, by Rabbi Simon Jacobson, the first widely-distributed book of the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. Among the many responses received by Rabbi Jacobson was a letter from a woman named Nechama Cohen describing how, when she was a child of five, she had met the Rebbe in 1946, “When he was not yet the Rebbe and ... walked freely around the neighborhood [of Crown Heights, Brooklyn].” Below is an extract from a second letter that describes subsequent sidewalk conversations with the Rebbe.”

“Mr. Menachem (a.k.a. The Lubavitcher Rebbe, zt”l)

**Part 2: 1945-1950**

“As a young Jewish girl who was born into a traditional family in Crown Heights in 1940, and who had the great merit and good fortune, thank G-d, to know the Rebbe as a beloved childhood friend, reading *Toward a Meaningful Life* brings tears to my eyes and overwhelming feelings both of joy and loss to my heart. I have been deluged with memories of events that I’d forgotten for approximately 50 years.

 “I knew the Rebbe first as Mister, and then when I learned that Mister was not his name (as I thought it was when I was 5), I asked him his name. But I just couldn’t get the name that he told me. He must have been saying Schneerson. So he told me that we had similar names, and could I say Menachem. That I got immediately, so he told me to call him Mr. Menachem. So I did.



“It was not until I saw a picture of him, taken about 1950, that I realized that my beloved Mr. Menachem was also the Rebbe. I had been praying for the Rebbe forever, or so it seemed, but I never knew that I was also praying for one of the dearest friends I ever had.

“Mr. Menachem always asked me what books I was reading. When I was seven “Spring of ‘48 I think “I discovered Science Fiction in the public library on Schenectady Avenue. I loved it. I gave him rave reviews of two [of its most famous] authors, Robert Heinlein [1907-1988] and Isaac Asimov (1920-1992). He was intrigued by the idea of teaching children science through fun-to-read novels. I always told him he should read them, that he would love them. He always told me that he only read Jewish books.

“One day, a year or more later, I told him about Asimov’s book *Foundation*. If you haven’t read Asimov’s Foundation Series then I should tell you it’s about a secret foundation set up by a psycho-historian named Hari Seldon. The purpose of psycho-history and the Foundation was to perfect the Universe. And that is basically what I told him.

“Anyway, Mr. Menachem later told me that he read the book which floored me and told me to concentrate on Asimov, not Heinlein. (And he was right.) He then went on to tell me he’d written to Asimov and had gotten a reply.\* I was thrilled that Asimov thought enough of him to write back (I already told you I didn’t know who I was talking to.

“At that point I had no concept of what he truly was, much less what he would become.) He was corresponding with Asimov, and as far as I was concerned that was even better that writing to Jackie Robinson [a star baseball player at the time for the Brooklyn Dodgers], which I think I told him.

“Then he asked me what I thought of the idea of setting up a foundation. I thought it was better than Asimov and Robinson combined and told him so. He then told me he was setting up a foundation. I was so excited I started jumping up and down, telling him I wanted to join, please, please please. He said I could. Well, he did set it up, and I did join for a while. He was talking about Chabad and his *shluchim*. Maybe other things that I haven’t found out yet. Who knows?

*“Kol tuv*-All the best.”

Nechama Cohen,

Tamiment, PA

**Part 3: 2010-2014**

[*Translated from the Hebrew*:]

“I [David Boas] first read the above story in an email from Rabbi Simon Jacobson a few years ago. I’ve told it to others a few times since then. The last time was a few weeks ago, whereupon someone challenged that it is not true. I called [from my home in Jerusalem] a contact of mine in Brooklyn, told him the story, and asked him to try to verify it. He spoke with Rabbi Simon Jacobson, who told him that it is true that he received such a letter, in 1996. After that, he tried to establish personal contact with the woman, but he never succeeded.

“My contact then decided that he would do whatever he could to locate the woman. He works for JEM [Jewish Educational Media], an organization that among its other fine projects, seeks to record video testimony from seniors who had personal contact with the late Lubavitcher Rebbe of blessed memory. To find and record Nechama Cohen would be a genuine coup.

“Eventually, he somehow managed to obtain her current telephone number. She was living in Pennsylvania. For two weeks he rang her number regularly, but no one ever answered.

“Finally, on Monday, January 27, there was a click and a male voice said ‘Hello.’ It turned out that he was a local policeman. Nechama Cohen had passed away at age 74 that very day in the hospital, and he had entered the apartment to search for details about her relatives. What he discovered was that that she dwelled alone and had no living relatives. Because of this, following official regulations, he had arranged to have her body sent to be burnt the following day. Now, thanks to the chain of Heaven-guided events, this would not take place.

“The JEM man contacted the nearest Chabad emissary, who was able to arrange for the next day, the 27th of the Jewish month of Shvat (1/28/14), a kosher Jewish burial for the newly departed friend of Mr. Menachem in her childhood a half century earlier.”

*Sources*: The English letter (part 2), *as* adapted by Yanki Tauber,was printed in *The Week in Review* in 1996 (vol VII no 23). Part 1 is his introductory editor’s note. Part 3 is from a letter to me from Rabbi David Boas of Jerusalem.

\**F*rom *Turning Judaism Outward,* by Chaim Miller, p.470, note 48:

"It is known that he [Asimov] replied to over 90,000 of the 100,000 thousand letters that he received over his professional career. Unfortunately, most of Asimov's correspondence before 1965 has not survived, since he threw it away. If a copy of the Rebbe's letter to Asimov does exist, it probably is in the Nissan Mindel archive, which has not yet [2013] been opened to researchers."

*Editorâ€™s note:From //chabadtalk.com*

â€œI've heard from a [Chabad] Azimov (distant cousins of Isaac) that the Rebbe did have contact with Isaac via the shluchim in Massachusetts .â€

*Connection*: Shabbat, 3rd of Tammuz, is the 21st yahrzeit of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

*Biographical note:*Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe [11 Nissan 5662 - 3 Tammuz 5754 (April 1902 - June 1994 C.E.)], became the seventh Rebbe of the Chabad dynasty after his father-in-law’s passing on 10 Shvat 5710 (1950 C.E.). He is widely acknowledged as [one of] the greatest Jewish leaders of the second half of the 20th century. Although a dominant scholar in both the revealed and hidden aspects of Torah and fluent in many languages and scientific subjects, the Rebbe is best known for his extraordinary love and concern for every Jew on the planet. His emissaries around the globe dedicated to strengthening Judaism number in the thousands. Hundreds of volumes of his teachings have been printed, as well as dozens of English renditions.

*Reprinted from last week’s email of KabbalOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed.* [*www.ascentofsafed.com*](http://www.ascentofsafed.com) *ascent@ascentofsafed.com*

**An Incident with**

**The Chofetz Chaim**

I heard directly from Rabbi Mordechai Schwab zt'l who was known as ‘The Tzadik of Monsey’ an incredible story from more than 90 years ago. He had gone to see the sainted Chofetz Chaim who was quite elderly at that time. When it came time to take leave he shook hands with the Chofetz Chaim who grasped his hand firmly.

Then the Chofetz Chaim seemed to dose off. The young Rabbi Schwab tried to gently remove his hand. The Chofetz Chaim held on even tighter as he appeared to be slumbering.

Reb Mordechai called out to the sleeping Rabbi that he needed to go to catch his train but his grip was firm and so he remained. After a period of some time he awakened and released the young would-be Tzadik.

Reb Mordechai hurried to town only to discover that he had missed the train. Later it was learned that the train he was hoping to travel on was in one of the worst train accidents in Poland’s history.

*Reprinted from the Shabbos Candle Lighting email of Parshas Be’haalasocha.*

**The Test of Praying Minhah**

**By Rabbi Reuven Semah**

“Therefore the rulers would say, ˜Let us go to Heshbon.’” (*Bemidbar 21:27)*

The *Talmud* (*Baba Batra* 75b) homiletically comments on this passage, that a person who wishes to rule over his inclination must make a personal accounting, a *heshbon*, of his deeds.

Harav Ovadiah Yosef, zt”l tells a true story of Mr. Polity who was the *gabbai* (treasurer) of the *Yeshivah Porat Yosef*. Before he moved to Israel he lived in Turkey.He had a factory that produced men’s clothing. One day a high ranking soldier from the Turkish army entered the factory to purchase tens of thousands of uniforms for the army. However, it was very close to *Minhah* and so Mr. Polity asked the customer to wait a half hour so that he could go to shul, pray *Minhah*, and come back.

However, the officer refused to wait, so he went right away to another clothing factory and purchased the uniforms. When Mr. Polity returned from shul he made a calculation and figured out that he lost thirty thousand gold coins on this lost opportunity. But, he rejoiced and thanked Hashem that he was able to stand up to this test despite this great loss.

Shortly after that, the officer realized that the uniforms he had purchased were not the quality needed for the army and so he returned to Mr. Polity and bought uniforms from him, and Mr. Polity made double the profit than he would have made on the first deal.

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