**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas shemos 5781**

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**What Should I Tell Him?**

**By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser**



 Every night I wonder to myself if I should leave the ringer on my phone on or off. A dilemma ensues in my mind as to whether I should simply aim for an undisturbed, good night’s sleep, or perhaps I should keep the possibility available that someone will need me in case of an emergency.

 One night at 3:00 am, my phone began ringing. Waking up from amidst a deep sleep, I grabbed the phone and picked up. “Rabbi, Rabbi!” I heard yelling on the other end, “I’m going to jump! That’s it, I’m done with my life! I don’t care about anybody or anything! I’m jumping!”

 I immediately broke out into a cold sweat, now fully alert and aware of the severity of the matter at hand. “Who is this?” I innocently asked. But instead of getting a name, I only heard more frustrated yelling. “I’ve gone through enough of life; I don’t need to experience any more pain!”

 As the caller continued speaking, I soon recognized that it was a young woman who had attended a few of my classes in Manhattan.

**Wasn’t Sure What My Next Step Should Be**

 Unprepared to receive such a heavy phone call in the middle of the night, I wasn’t sure what my next step should be, although I knew I needed to move quickly. Of course, I wanted to genuinely show the woman that, despite her despairing thoughts, there was a purpose to her life and she should never give up, but how would I do that on the phone as she stood several flights up a building about to end it?

 My positive affirmations of how commendable it was of her to attend my Torah lectures did nothing to sway her, nor did my pleading to spare her parents the agony they would experience if she would jumped. I was troubled with what I could say to her, though I was quite sure that I was her last stop before everything would sadly be over.

 But then I said to her, “Wait a minute, just tell me one thing. What should I tell your chassan?” A moment of silence settled in between us.

 “My chassan?” the woman said. “What are you talking about rabbi? I don’t have a chassan… I’m not even going out with anybody now!”

 But I repeated myself again. “What should I tell your chassan?” It was clear that the girl was quite confused. “Allow me to explain,” I said.

**Forty Days Before a Person is Born**

 “Our Sages tell us that forty days before you were born a Heavenly voice announced that you will marry someone (Sotah 2a). And so, I ask you, if you jump, what should I tell your chassan…?”

 The girl paused for another moment before responding. “You mean I have a chassan and one day I will get married?”

 “Yes, absolutely. You can rest assured one thousand percent. With G-d’s help, you will have a chassan who will be proud of you and you will be proud of him.”

 I then heard sobbing tears from the other end of the line and a bang. I could tell that the phone had dropped. Panicking, I immediately began mumbling words of Tehillim.

 But then, within moments, someone came back on the phone. “Hello, this is Officer Constanza. G-d bless you, Rabbi…We have her… she is now safe…”

*Reprinted the Parshat Vayishlach Newsletter email of Torahanytime.com as compiled and edited by Elan Perchik.*

**The Six-Door Wood Cabinet**

**By M.B.**

 I try to buy used furniture for the house. I look and wait for good quality items, of course at a low price, and this is how we save a lot of money. I patiently waited for a six-door sandwich wood cabinet until I found one in good condition in a neighborhood a little far away, but the price was only 600 shekel to start… I asked my sister who did not live far from there to check it out and see if the cabinet was in good condition as described by the seller or perhaps, he was just trying to get rid of it…

**My Sister Assured Me that the Cabinet was in Good Condition**

 After examining it, my sister called me and assured me that the cabinet appeared to be in new condition. I asked my sister to give him 200 shekel on account and I arranged with the owner that I would pay the balance when I picked up the cabinet.

 After Shabbos I went with a friend to my father’s house and I took his large car so I could transport the cabinet and we went on our way. We arrived and I saw that the cabinet was indeed very nice. But then I realized that it was not made of sandwich wood as described, but rather of chipboard which I would not have bothered even a minute.

**An Argument Broke Out with the Owner**

 The owner began to yell at me that I promised to take it and that the apartment had to be empty by the next day, but I claimed that we had discussed sandwich wood and not chipboard, and not only that but I troubled my sister, and I borrowed my father’s car, and it got worse when I asked for my money back.

 Then an amazing thing happened, my friend who came to help me said that his sister just called him asking if he had a cabinet for her, “I will add 200 shekel” and we took the cabinet to his sister.

 The seller was pleased as was I since at least I did a chesed for someone and I did not go to the trouble for nothing, and my friend was happy for his sister. We loaded the cabinet in the car, and we left.

**The Friend Wanted to Find a Garbage Dump**

 As we left, my friend told me to find a garbage dump.

 I asked him why, and he explained that he did not have a sister looking for a cabinet, but he wanted to avoid a chilul Hashem, so he agreed to buy the cabinet so there would be no argument.

 Now, after all the trouble, he wanted to toss it out?! I called a friend, a Rosh Kollel, to see if he knew anyone needing a cabinet. He thought and recalled someone saying, “If I only had a six-door cabinet!!!” He gave me the number and we delivered the cabinet.

 He was in tears and he praised Hashem when he heard all the details. We are all pleased as our effort was not for nothing.

 About a week later, I got a call from a relative who was leaving the country and asked if I wanted to take anything from the apartment that he was leaving. I got there and among other things was a wooden six-door cabinet that could not have been better. I thanked Hashem for all the kindness He bestowed on me.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeishev 5781 email of Tiv Hakehila.*

**A Tale of Two Apples**



 A little boy was holding two apples, one in each hand. His mother came in and softly asked her son with a smile: “Darling, could Mommy have one of your apples?”

 The boy looked up at his mom for a few seconds, and then he quickly bit into each apple.

 The mother felt the smile on her face freeze, as she tried hard not to reveal her disappointment in her son’s failure to share.

 But then, the boy handed one of his bitten apples to his mom with a huge, loving smile and said: “Here, Mommy. Take this one. It’s sweeter.”

 No matter who you are, how experienced you are, and how knowledgeable you think you are, be careful. What you see may not be the reality.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeishev 5781 email of Migdal Ohr.*

**The Desire of a Jew to**

**Come to the Holy Land**

 “A recent issue of the Israeli newspaper Ma’ariv relates that there was an old Breslover Hasid in Jerusalem. He came to Israel, then called Palestine, at the end of the 1920’s, when Russia forbade emigration and the British let no one into the Holy Land.

 The late Rabbi Elimelech bar Shaul tells that he once asked this old Jew how he managed to cross the international borders at such a difficult time in order to get to Palestine.

 The Hasid answered, ‘What kind of question is that? I knew that a Jew must come to the Holy Land, and so I wanted to come, and so I came.’

 ‘But what about the certificates (needed for immigration)?’ the rabbi asked the Hasid.

 “‘Bah, that’s nothing. I knew that if I wanted to come, that if I believed that I must come to Eretz Yisrael, then I will, with the help of G-d, reach it. Indeed, I once stole across the border in Syria, but the British caught me and sent me back.’ ‘And after that did you get a certificate?’ asked the rabbi.

 ‘No, not at all. I knew that something must be wrong with my faith, that I did not believe with my whole heart, and that is why I did not succeed in stealing across the border. So I sat in the beit midrash and I worked on my faith.

 ‘Again I tried, and again I was caught. So again I returned to the beit midrash, to strengthen my faith and my trust. I thought that if I believed with all my heart and all my might, that I desired with every bone in my body to reach Eretz Yisrael, that the Holy One would help me. So I tried a third time, and then I believed as one must believe, and that is why I am here.’ (Retold by Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, a”h)

*Reprinted from the Chanukah 5781 email of A Short Vort by Mrs. Michal Horowitz.*

**Yehuda’s Story**

 Hello, My name is Yehuda Zimberg. I'm from New York, I am 26 years old, and I have a stutter.

 I have been stuttering since I was eight years old. There wasn't any traumatic experience that caused it; it just popped up out of the blue. I would not consider it a terrible stutter, but a stutter nonetheless. The fear and humiliation of stuttering made me very self-conscious and I became shy, quiet, and reserved.

 This was not the person I wanted to be, but rather the person I became due to my stutter. My parents took me to get speech therapy and constantly reassured me that everything would be fine. I met with wonderful people who helped along the way (Deirdre Casey, Uri, and Phil Schneider, Yanky Kaufman to name a few), but my ego was at a point where I was too stubborn and proud to get help or let people help me. Over the years,

 I learned to deal with my stutter - I wasn't happy about it but I learned how to live with it.

 Fast forward a few years later, I am in Israel learning in Yeshiva. I was in Jerusalem one day and went into Manny’s Book Store. As I was browsing the shelves, a title jumped out at me: “The Gift of Stuttering.” I thought to myself: "who is this sick guy calling stuttering a gift?! Stuttering is a curse!

 Of course, I picked up a copy, skimmed through the pages, became intrigued, and purchased the book. Moe Mernick is the author’s name, and the book is about his personal journey confronting life challenges, i.e., Stuttering.

 While reading through the book, I could not help but note that Moe and I have a lot in common. I have a stutter; Moe has a stutter. I am a Kohen; Moe is a Kohen. I use Preparation H… Never mind the last part, but you get the idea.

**I Felt Like I Was Meeting an Old Friend**

 The way that Moe was describing his struggles made me feel like I was meeting an old friend who understood everything that I was going through. Even the little things that were easy for someone else, such as being asked your name, ordering food, or talking on the phone, Moe and I found extremely difficult.

 However, I think the point that spoke to me most is that Moe has this confidence to embrace his stutter; to be open and forthcoming about it. He writes that when he would meet new people, he would often say, “I would like to introduce you to my stutter; he might pop up soon to say hi.” He showed that a stutter is not something to hold you back from accomplishing your goals. It is not something to be afraid of. It is just another piece of the puzzle, making up the larger picture of one’s life. To me, the very idea of being forthcoming and open about stuttering was taboo. The very thought that I could introduce myself to someone and say I have a stutter was something I never dared to do until I read Moe’s story.



**Moe Mernick and Yehuda Zimberg**

 My time in Israel came to a close, and I returned to New York to begin dating. Using Moe’s openness technique, I started the dates off by introducing myself and my stutter. People were so taken aback that I was comfortable with my speech! They saw this as a plus in my personality.

 Long story short, I got married to a wonderful girl, and we now have a child! I work as a Concierge in a nursing home, which forces me to meet and talk with people and their families every day. A job your typical stuttering person wouldn’t be signing up for! I do not believe I would’ve had the confidence to pursue this job or get married if I hadn’t read The Gift of Stuttering.

**Got Hooked to the Teachings of Reb Noach Weinberg**

 Another thing that happened during my time in Israel is that I got hooked to the teachings of Reb Noach Weinberg. Since then, I have invested a lot into buying his books and other similar reading material to help deepen my connection to Judaism and hopefully some else’s.

 My sister joined Partners in Torah almost 2 years ago, and she says it has changed her life. We speak on the phone pretty often, and I offer books or reading material that may help her and her partner deepen their connection to Judaism. She has been telling me for the past year: “Yehuda, you’ve got to join Partners in Torah!” I kept pushing her off saying I do not think I am ready to take on such an undertaking.

 Then, a few weeks ago, she sent me an email showing how the Shabbat Project and Partners in Torah were teaming up for a “get your feet wet 3-week learning experience.” She said the material is given to you by Partners in Torah, and all you have to do is read off a paper 30 minutes a week for 3 weeks. I told her I would think about it.

 After debating in my head for a few days, I hesitantly agreed, but only this one time! She was very excited and sent me a link to sign up. The form asked what the best time available to learn is; I filled out from 5-8 AM, not really thinking someone is available at those times because A: it would be too early, and B: people are on their way to work.

**Looking Out for a Text or Email**

 After I submitted it, I was told it might take a few days until they find someone compatible. They said to be on the lookout for a text or an email to notify me if they found me a partner.

 A few days later, I got a text saying they found me a partner and that I should check my email for more information. I logged onto my email nervously and saw they partnered me up to learn with someone from Israel at 5:00 AM on Tuesdays.

 What was my partner’s name? None other than… Mr. Moe Mernick. I did a double-take, and I reread the email slowly to make sure my eyes were working properly. I quickly called my sister to tell her they found me a partner, and his name is Moe Mernick.

 She got very excited over the phone and asked, “Do you know who that is?!”

 I said, “Unless there are two Moe Mernick’s, the one I am thinking about is the one who wrote the book The Gift of Stuttering.”

**“Do You Know Who He Is?”**

 She replied, “I know, but do you know who that is?!” Now I know that I have a stutter, but I did not know she also has one! So I told her again,

 “Yes, he is the author of the book that has influenced me in a great way!”

 She said, “Not only that… Moe Mernick is also in charge of Partners in Torah!”

 When Moe and I started on that first Tuesday at 5 am, just to be sure, I asked him if he is the one who wrote the book, and he responded yes! I then proceeded to tell him all that you have just read and said, “What are the odds that the algorithm set us up?!”

 The three weeks of learning ended, and so did our official learning partnership. But I finally took the plunge and signed up to be a participant for Partners in Torah!

 Looking back at the 3-week learning experience, I am still so awed at the amazing “coincidence” that I was paired up with Moe Mernick!

 This why I truly believe our partnership is truly A Match Made in Heaven.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Vayeishev 5781 email of Partners in Torah. If you would like information on becoming a Partner, click Partners in Torah.*

**A Stranger Pays a**

**Poor Man’s Debt**

 Yeshayahu Galinsky wrote a post on his Facebook page. He tells of an unemployed man that went to but some food at a local grocery store for his little girl. When the man came to the cash register and asked the store owner to put the purchase on his credit account at the store the owner refused. “I’m sorry”, he said very loudly in front of everyone present, “you already owe me thousands of Shekels, I can’t sell to you.”

 That wasn’t enough, the store keeper kept berating the poor man with questions; “when do you plan on paying me? Did you find work yet?” Mortified, the man broke down crying and explained; “it’s true I haven’t yet found work but I plan on paying you back every penny (agorah in Israel).”  “When?” asked the store keeper.  “I don’t know yet” the man replied.

 A wealthy looking person intervened. He was on his way to a business meeting and he just stopped to get a quick cold drink when this episode played out in front of him. After the embarrassed man left with the food bought on ‘credit’ the wealthy man approached the store keeper and said, “I want to pay up his debt.”

The storekeeper insisted; “You don’t need to do this, the man is a loser, an unemployed nothing! Listen to me, you don’t need to pay his debts, not even one cent!”

 But the wealthy man also insisted and said; “why I’m paying is none of your business, just tell me how much he owes and let’s get it over with.”

 The debt was 5,267 shekel but the man wrote a check for 7,500 saying, “I want him to have some money for future purchases, to be able to buy honorably these next few months.” But the wealthy man wasn’t finished. He asked the store keeper, “What did this man work in before he lost his job?”

 The storekeeper answered, “He was a carpenter”. When he heard that the wealthy man took out his business card and gave it to the storekeeper and asked him: “Do me a favor and give him my business card. Tell him there’s someone who needs carpentry work in his house.”

 He also quietly spoke to the storekeeper off to the side and said: “You look like a fair and proper person and it really is not nice to embarrass someone like that in public .Please take him to the side and ask him for forgiveness for hurting his feelings and tell him you won’t do it again. It’s painful enough to be unemployed and can’t honorably provide for his family. He doesn’t need more outside difficulties.”

 The next day the wealthy man got a knock on his door. The man’s wife opened and was shocked to see people who she didn’t recognize with a box of chocolates giftwrapped for them. These were the poor man his wife and baby daughter. They told the wife of the wealthy man “you are like angels from heaven for us. You saved us and we wanted to say thank you,” they said explaining to her what happened the day before.

 The wealthy man was in the kitchen listening and he came out an invited them in. The poor man told him “you came at the worst time I ever had in my entire life and you saved us from shameful hunger. But I promise you I’ll pay back every penny even if I have to work in the garbage.”

 But the wealthy man said “Perhaps you misunderstood my precious friend. I didn’t give you a handout. This was a down payment on your future renovation work that I need done in my house. Aren’t you a carpenter?” The poor man came to the realization that not only did this wealthy man save him from hunger but he also gave him the money in a wise manner that saved his pride.

 But the story doesn’t end there! After the carpenter completed the renovation in his kind benefactor's house, the man insisted on helping him establish his own business- a boutique carpentry shop for high end customers. This kindness enabled the carpenter to provide for his family in a most honorable fashion.

 The wealthy man until this day doesn’t want to be mentioned and doesn’t want to be in the limelight. He just mentioned that “I did what I did because it was the right thing to do. If every Jew that has would give to a Jew that doesn’t have our country, Israel would look different”.

 Indeed the whole world would look different!

*Reprinted from the website of Hidabroot.com*

**An Easy Path to Gan Eden**

**By Rabbi Reuven Semah**

 There is a famous joke:

           Yoni (not his real name) was a good Jew. He would do all the misvot he could and occasionally find time for some learning. However, with every misvah, he would always look for the most lenient opinion, always happy to rely on the one Rabbi who said that it was ok to do less. But at least he had someone to rely on in every misvah, and he was happy with how he lived his life.

           After 120 years, Yoni was summoned to the Heavenly Court. Yoni wasn’t scared; he knew that he had kept all the misvot, even if every one of them had been according to whichever leniency he could find. So he waited for the verdict. “Gan Eden” was the call. Just as Yoni had expected!

 So off he went with his accompanying angels towards Gan Eden. After a long journey, the angels finally showed him a wooden door with a little window and ushered him inside. Slightly surprised, Yoni peeked inside and saw a small room containing a bed and a desk and nothing else.

 As the angels turned to leave he exclaimed, “I think there has been a mistake. Didn’t you hear I was told that I can go to Gan Eden?” With a smile on their faces the angels responded, “This is Gan Eden according to the most lenient opinion!”

*Reprinted from the Parashat Vayesheb 5781 email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace (compiled by Rabbi David Bibi. Originally published in the Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin email.*

**Give My Regards to**

**The G-d of America**



**The Chortkov Rebbe, zt”l**

 There was a wealthy Hassid who was a fervent follower of the Rebbe of Chortkov, R’ Yisrael Friedman. He was a successful businessman who traveled far and wide in the varied interests of his prosperous enterprises, but he would always make the time to visit his Rebbe to discuss important matters and seek his advice on many facets of his personal and professional life.

           Early in the spring of 1912, he was scheduled to travel overseas to the shores of the United States on important business issues. As news of the completion of the huge passenger luxury liner, the R.M.S. Titanic, swept throughout the world, he decided to travel in style on the “grandest ship in her Majesty’s fleet.” He purchased a ticket and prepared himself for his voyage.

           Before his voyage, he visited his Rebbe in Chorktov. The Hassid explained that he was planning to travel to America very soon and he requested a blessing for a successful trip and a safe passage back and forth.

           R’ Yisrael listened quietly. Then he looked at the Hassid and cryptically replied, “Give my regards to the American G-d!”

           The Hassid blinked hard in confusion and astonishment. Of all the things he was expecting to hear, he never dreamed of the unusual statement that the Rebbe just said. He was totally at a loss and remained quiet, swallowing hard.

           Finally R’ Yisrael broke the silence. He told the man, “What I meant to say is that the same G-d that can help you in America can help you just the same here in Europe. Why must you travel there in order to be successful? If Hashem intends to allow you to succeed, He will do the very same thing here!”

           The Hassid nodded in understanding. The Rebbe disapproved of his trip to America and was telling him not to go. He cancelled his plans and returned home. How fortunate he was and how utterly amazed at the Ruah Hakodesh of his spiritual mentor when he and the rest of the world learned of the enormous tragedy and loss of life that took place just a few days later. His belief in the words of the Sages was what saved his life from the ignominious fate of the Titanic. (Torah Tavlin)

*Reprinted from the Parashat Vayesheb 5781 email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace (compiled by Rabbi David Bibi. Originally published in the Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin email.*

**#114 Judging Favorably #114**

**The Preferred Seat**

**At the Chasana**

 My husband and I made an effort to arrive early at a neighbor’s wedding so that we could get good seats. I can’t enjoy a wedding unless I can see what’s going on. I usually pick the aisle seat, about four rows back, so as not to take the seats of relatives.

 When I got there, the hall was still quite empty and I picked my seat. Ten minutes later, when the seats were filling up, a woman came to where I was sitting and asked if I could move down. I thought that was unfair of her since I had come early just to get that seat. But I did not respond and just pointed out that the seats next to me were filled.

 “Could everybody move down?” she asked, pointing out that there was an empty seat about six chairs down. Here I had made this big effort to come early to get the seat of my choice and this late-comer just says, “Move over!” I didn’t want to make a scene, so I passed the message to the people in the row.

 No one seemed to mind, so we all moved over one, and she sat in the aisle seat. As she sat down, she turned to me and said quietly, “I have to keep an eye on my son,” pointing to the boy right across the aisle. She was referring to a boy of about 15 years of age.

 Who’s she trying to kid? I thought to myself. That boy looks old enough to take care of himself just fine. It was one thing to ask for my seat, but to make up such a flimsy excuse – that she needed to keep an eye on her son, who was no baby – took double chutzpah.

 She struck up a getting-to-know-you conversation. She said she had come as a guest of the kallah, who was her son’s teacher. Every so often she would bend over towards her son and explain to him what was going on.

 And then it hit me. I remembered that the kallah was a teacher for developmentally disabled children. As I watched more carefully, I could see that this boy was a special child. My indignation and her “chutzpah” – both evaporated. (“The Other Side of the Story” by Yehudis Samet)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Mikeitz 5781 email of The Weekly Vort.*

**The Rosh Hayeshiva and the Millionaires**

 The Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Yehuda Zev Segal, zt”l, when he was already an elderly man, once visited a certain community. He had visitors all day and well into the night, and by 10 PM his host insisted that he stop seeing the people and finally take a break and eat something.

 As he was being taken to where he would be staying, he noticed a van of Yeshivah students pulling out of the driveway. Rav Yehuda Zev said to his host, “Did you sent them away?”

 The host replied, “Yes, I know how hard a day the Rav had.” The Rosh Yeshivah said to his host, “Tell me, if it was a millionaire coming to give a nice donation to the Yeshivah, would you send him away and say it’s been a long day? Probably not. These Bachurim learn Torah all day. They are millionaires to the Jewish people!”

 Rav Yehuda Zev then ran after the van calling, “Millionaires! Millionaires! Come back!” He ended up meeting with the Yeshivah boys for well over an hour, and gave honor to the young Talmidei Chachamim!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Lech Lecha 5781 email of Torah U’Tefilla as compiled by* Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.

**The Importance of Proper Behavior in the Shul**



 Someone once asked Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l, “In the Shul that I daven (pray) in, people are always talking and making noise. Should I try to make some sort of quiet by making a scene about it, or should I just leave and find a quieter Shul?” Rav Avigdor replied, “The best thing to do is to leave that place altogether, unless you are a very important personality there. Otherwise, you are not going to change them. It’s a great tragedy, this tragedy of talking in the Shuls. It’s a Bizayon, a disgrace, for HaKadosh Boruch Hu.

 If a gentile, L’Havdil, would come into a Shul and see what type of place it is, he would lose all interest, and all respect. You have to realize that it’s a great cancer of our nation, Chas V’Shalom. It’s a terrible cancer. And if you cannot heal it — and you can’t go and get into a fight with them — then find a better place to daven, and at least rescue yourself!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeira 5781 email of Torah U’Tefilla as compiled by* Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.