

**CELEBRATING THE TENTH WEDDING
ANNIVERSARY OF ZALMAN &
ELISHEVA ROSENFELD**

**With a Collection of Inspiring and
Interesting Jewish Reading Materials
Compiled by Daniel Keren**



DEDICATION



It is hard to believe that a decade has come and gone from one of the happiest moments in the history of the Keren and Rosenfeld families. I can still remember coming to Tiferes Rivka on 38th Street in Boro Park with my late wife Nechama, a”h. It was a magical night full of excitement and hope as our families and friends came from far and wide to join us for the simcha of the wedding of our daughter Elisheva to Zalman Rosenfeld.

And over the years, we Kerens and Rosenfelds have come together to celebrate the simchas of Zalman and Elisheva beginning with the birth of the Rosenfeld bechor – Yonason Simcha [partly named for my father Sigi (Simcha) a”h]. Then there was the birth of Gila and a few years later her brother Yosef.

As we come to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of chasana (wedding) of Zalman and Elisheva Rosenfeld, we recall that wondrous night. To commemorate that joyful night, I have put together this book of inspiring and interesting Jewish reading materials. I hope you enjoy reading them. And may Hashem bless Elisheva and Zalman and their children and future offspring.

Daniel Keren (15 Iyar 5781/April 27, 2021)

Only Him

As we know, our efforts are not what produce results, they are a tax we must pay. If we honestly believe that, it will make a difference in the way we make those efforts and in our attitude after we have made them. Sometimes, Hashem gives us extra *chizuk* in this area by showing us so clearly that it was not our efforts which accomplished. Rather it was only Him.

A woman who has been trying to have a baby for many years just informed me that, baruch Hashem, she was blessed with a baby boy. After many long and painful years of shattered hopes and failed treatments, she finally received her long anticipated *yeshua*.

Something was different about this last treatment, which proved to be the one she was hoping for. Everything went wrong. The timing and medications were wrong, there were complications, and it seemed to be a wasted treatment. The doctor told her, “There is not really a chance that it worked and, hopefully, the next one we’ll do better.”

Lo and behold, this was the treatment that finally worked. Hashem showed her and the doctor that it is not really the treatments that produce results; it’s Him. He decided the time was right and He brought this woman and her husband their little miracle to, *b’ezrat Hashem* to raise in the ways of Torah and mitzvot.

If we are able to make a *hishtadlut*, then it is our obligation to, but if we are not able to, then we are exempt from it and we can fully rely on Hashem to help us. A woman told me, her husband passed away some years ago and left her a real estate business to run. Baruch Hashem, she has been doing well with it. But when Covid hit last March, her business began suffering.

She has also not been able to collect a lot of the rent money she is owed and still has to continue paying the mortgages. This past week, she received a bill that she had to pay for about \$4,500 and she was down to her last \$4,000. It was a Wednesday and the money needed to be paid by the end of the week. Even if she could somehow find some extra money to pay with, she would still be left penniless and unable to make Shabbat food for her family.

There was no *hishtadlut* for her to make at this point, and so she fully relied on Hashem. On Wednesday night, she poured out her heart to Him. She mentioned how He has always been there for her in the past, and she’s hoping that He’ll take care of this now as well.

The next morning on Thursday, she randomly selected a short emunah recording on a hot-line to hopefully give her *chizuk*. The recording was about a yeshiva that was out of funds and couldn't even afford lunch for the students. The rabbi who runs the yeshiva told the cook, "Don't worry there is still some time. Hashem has always been there for us in the past and He'll be here for us as well." Shortly before lunch time, a driver pulled up to the yeshiva to deliver an envelope that he found on the floor addressed to them. It was a check for \$1,800. The rabbi immediately went to cash it and bought pizza for the entire yeshiva that day.

The woman received *chizuk* from this clip and, once again, prayed from the bottom of her heart to Hashem to help in her situation. That same afternoon, when she came home and opened the mail, she saw a check saying "Tax Refund" \$1,900. She immediately turned to Hashem and said, "Thank You! Thank You! First You gave me a story where I got *chizuk* from the yeshiva getting \$1,800 and then You gave me \$1,900, a hundred more than them." She paid her bill and had plenty left over to buy food for Shabbat.

Our efforts are just motions. If we can do them, then we do. And if not, then we don't need to. The main thing is to know that Hashem is always in change, and to act and pray with that emunah. (Living Emunah by Rabbi David Ashear – February 1, 2021)

Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser Highlights the Importance Of Promoting Shalom Bayis

By Daniel Keren

One of the featured speakers at last month's Martin Luther King Jr. Hakhel Legal Day Yarchei Kallah Event was Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, internationally renowned Maggid Shiur and Rav of Congregation Bais Yitzchok. He spoke on the topic of "Halachich Perspectives for Current Times."

Rabbi Goldwasser quoted the Chiddushei Harim (Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Alter, 1799-1866) who said that if a person makes an effort to study halacha to determine what one should do, he can separate kedusha (holiness) from tumah (spiritual impurity.) Rabbi Goldwasser noted that one of the major areas that he

frequently get calls from people is regarding the subject of shalom bayis (harmony in the home). There is no greater zechus (merit) than to help restore harmony between a husband and wife.



Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser and Rav Elazar Shach

The Greatness of Being Mevater

Oftentimes, the quality of being mevater (giving in to satisfy another person) is essential towards promoting shalom bayis. A newly married wife grew up in a home when before Yom Kippur, the family would go together to perform the ritual of kapporas by shugging (waving) a chicken over their heads while reciting verses from the Yom Kippur machzor.

In the week before Yom Kippur she asked her husband to do the kapporas ceremony with her. He was a Litvak (a Jew whose family came from Lithuania) and he happily went to get the machzor and some money. His wife was shocked and said that this was not the way she wanted to perform the ceremony, but with real chickens.

Seeking a Solution from the Ponevezh Rosh Hayeshiva

Not knowing how to handle the crisis he went to Rav Elazar Shach, 1899-2001, the Rosh Hayeshiva of Ponevezh in Bnei Brak and was told to do kapporas as his wife desired. The husband complained that this would take up extra time from his learning Torah. He also asked Rav Shach how he performed kapporas. The Rosh Hayeshiva admitted that he also perform the ceremony with money but that for the sake of shalom bayis, the new husband should be mevater to the wishes

of his wife. Rabbi Goldwasser explained that in order to ensure shalom bayis, a person may sometimes have to take a few steps back and swallow his pride.

Rabbi Goldwasser recalls a person who stopped him on the street and told him that he was involved in a major business deal and if it would become successful, he would want to give Rabbi Goldwasser a large amount of money from his profits to distribute as the rav sees fit for tzedakah. Rabbi Goldwasser told the gentleman that if he wants a zechus (merit) that his business deal should indeed turn out well, he should give now a small amount of tzedakah and once the deals works out, follow through with his desire to give a larger amount to help Jews in need.

The Chiloni Soldier's Vow To Become a Gerrer Chassid

Rabbi Goldwasser told a story about a chiloni (secular) Israeli reserve soldier who was sent into battle. He was confronted by an Arab enemy who had a grenade and was preparing to throw it at the helpless soldier. At that moment, this Jew who had no previous thoughts of becoming a baal teshuvah declared out loud in a vow to Hashem that if He would save his life, he would do teshuvah and become a Gerrer chassid. At that moment the grenade blew up in the hand of the Arab before he could throw it at the Jew and the soldier's life was saved while his enemy died a very painful and deserved death.

Discovered that Becoming Gerrer Chasid Was Not Such a Simple Thing

Afterwards, this Jew when returning to civilian life discovered that being a Gerrer Chasid was maybe after all not such a simple thing. He still wanted to do teshuvah and become Torah observant. But did he have to go the whole route of wearing white socks and black clothes? Someone told him that if he would daven in the Gerrer shteibel once a week or once a month, that might qualify as his fulfilling his vow to Hashem to become a Gerrer chassid, while he could still dress in a more moderate but non-Chassidic manner without the white socks.

However, when Rav Moshe Sternbuch, the Av Beis Din of the Eidah Chareidis in Yerushalayim heard of that solution, he disagreed. He said something more substantial was required. Before Jewish holidays this baal teshuvah must like other Gerrer chassidim come before the Gerrer rebbe and request a brocha and give tzedakah money. That would qualify as fulfilling his vow to become a Gerrer chassid.

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Rav Meir of Premishlan, The Poor Misnagid And the Gentile Smithy

By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton



Some two hundred years ago in the Polish city of Premishlan, lived a very holy Jew by the name of Rav Meir who became known far and wide as Rav Meir of Premishlan.

He was a great scholar in both the legal and mystical Torah but most of all he was known for his ability to miraculously help Jews in supernatural ways.

In fact this idea was very emphasized in Chassidic Judaism: namely just as Moses helped the Jews to leave Egypt, survive the desert and finally enter Israel so too G-d provides 'Tzadikim' (Righteous Jewish leaders) in every generation to take Jews from their personal limitations (Egypt), survive in this hostile world (desert) and prepare for Moshiach.

Jews Who Opposed Chassidic Ideas

But there were Jews, who called themselves 'Misnagdim' that opposed these ideas. But it just so happened that one of these Misnagdim, we will call him Reb Zundel, was desperate. He had several daughters of marriageable age, needed money to marry them off and didn't have a penny to his name.

Time was passing, his daughters were aging but his poverty remained. He considered begging but he just couldn't bring himself to do it, so when he heard of Rav Maeir and that he had helped other Jews with worse problems than his, he went.

He didn't tell anyone where he was going, and after a few days journey was

standing before the Tzadik pouring his heart out. He hoped Rav Meir would recognize his abilities as a Torah scholar and give him loan or perhaps a job as a teacher in one of his Torah academies. But he didn't. He just looked at him blankly and said,

"I can't help you till I smoke my pipe, but my pipe is clogged and I need a pipe-needle to clean it. You bring me a pipe-needle to clean my 'lilke'" (Lilke was a long-stemmed pipe the likes of which were smoked by the Baal Shem Tov and other Tzadikim before doing miracles).

Disappointed to be Given Such a Menial Task

Rav Zundel was very disappointed to be given such a menial task that had nothing to do with his plight. He was tempted to just get in his wagon and head back home but his back was to the wall.

So he went looking for the pipe-needle, it wasn't so easy; he discovered that not one store carried such pipe needles and all the blacksmiths were too busy to make one. But after a few hours of searching he was told there was one old smithy in a run-down hut at the edge of the town that might have time to do it.

He found the hut, the old blacksmith agreed and told Rav Zundel to take a seat as he set to work, first lighting the fire, then finding the proper piece of metal, then finding the proper hammer and all the time, he talked.

He told Rav Zundel how, a long time ago he used to be the only smithy in town. He built his house and shop far from the town so as not to disturb people with his pounding and with the smoke from his fire. But that was when he was young and strong and people didn't mind walking to his place. Since then, other blacksmiths moved in nearer to town and he was now stuck here with no one to talk to.

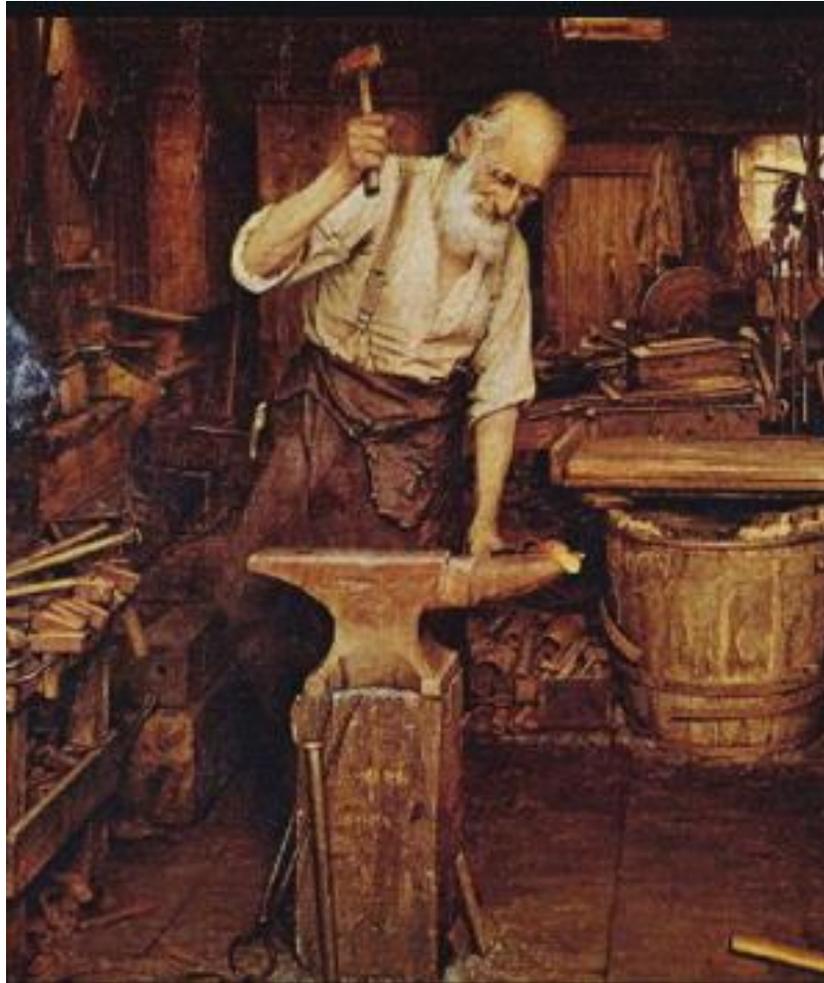
The Smithy's Wife and Child Died in a Tragic Fire

He once had a wife and child but they died tragically in a fire over ten years ago. He considered remarrying but at his age and meager income he couldn't find anyone willing to marry him.

Rav Zundel had never really had a conversation with a gentile before in fact he never had much of a conversation with anyone. His whole life had been devoted to learning Torah. But now he was beginning to enjoy it. In fact, he felt he had found a friend. The smithy also sensed that he finally had someone to talk to and began to really open up.

They both talked about their pasts, their parents, their jobs and ideas on life. The smithy revealed that he was quite knowledgeable in worldly matters but when he began talking about the riches he had saved up it was a bit hard to believe him.

"Thousands, that's right, thousands of Gulden right here in this room. Yep! Thousands!! That's right! Heh heh! Why!! If the people in town knew why I'd have a lot of friends then, wouldn't I! Yep!! This place would be packed with leeches!! Why, I'm a rich man!!



Wants to Prove that He is a Wealthy Man

"Well, here it is finished!!" He said as he held up the needle. "Hey you know what? I like you! I like you! You have a good heart, Rabbi!! I can tell. Hey, why don't you come back and we can talk some more. Ahhh! I bet you don't believe what I said about being rich right? I saw it in your eyes. Right Rabbi? Well, look at this, just watch!"

The old smithy stood, grabbed hold of both sides of his anvil, spread his legs, braced himself, his face turned red as a beet and with one mighty heave lifted the anvil and moved it several feet aside revealing a square hole in the floor.

"There it is! See? I was telling the truth. See?" He stooped down, brushed away some dust on a small metal box that was in the hole and opened it to reveal it was full of golden coins. Then he closed the box, returned it to the hole and repeated his feat of strength returning the anvil.

He refused to take money for the needle, but instead made Rav Zundel promise he would come back to talk to him, shook his hand warmly and they parted.

It was dark by the time Rav Zundel stepped outside and he was disappointed that he would have to wait till tomorrow to see the Rebbe to get his blessing but the conversation with the smithy gave him a good feeling and he was looking forward to their next meeting.

Noticed a Group of Gentiles Talking in the Center of the Town

The next morning as he was on his way to pray, he noticed a group of gentiles talking heatedly in the center of the town and approached to hear what they were talking about.

The smithy had passed away.

Someone went there late last night and found him dead. Zundel almost began to cry, but someone turned to him and said maybe he wanted to help pay for the burial.

They decided to raffle off his tools and his old hut to pay some of the twenty-five gulden that the gravediggers and the coffin maker were demanding.

Rav Zundel, a tear in his eye from the bad news, immediately pulled out his wallet and paid the entire amount. The gentiles happily took the money, quickly signed the papers and set off to bury the blacksmith.

Waited Until He was Sure He was Alone

Rav Zundel went to the hut, waited till they left with the body and when he was sure they weren't coming back, set to work moving the anvil until he got the box and pried it open took out the money and counted it. It was a small fortune!!

He took the money to Rav Meir's synagogue where he finished his morning prayers and slowly realized what happened. Rav Meir taught him to find that even in a simple gentile is meaning and in a simple needle are riches.

Reprinted from the Parshas Yisro 5781 email of Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad. Adapted from "The Power of Ruach HaKodesh" by Uri Auerbach page 218.

What Matters Most

Unless a person is on a very high level of emunah, when something goes wrong, his initial reaction is usually a negative one. The work is to stop and think how Hashem wants him to react, and then change. From all the emunah that we have gleaned, we know what the proper response should be. Even if we don't fully feel it in our hearts, acting it and moving on as if we feel it is also a precious *avodah*.

We would love to see the circumstances changing in our favor after we respond with emunah, but even if they don't, we will know that we have passed our test in emunah and earned immeasurable rewards as a result. We acted the way Hashem wanted us to act, and that's what matters most. When we do see things changing after we respond the right way, it's an added bonus which gives us extra *chizuk* to want to act properly once again the next time we are faced with adversity.

A man told me he works in the servicing industry. A few weeks ago, he did a job for a homeowner who spends most of the year living in a different city in a second home. As this man was working in the garage, he closed the garage door and it got stuck on something. He removed the obstacle and then pressed the button again. As it moved, the top two glass windows shattered. He realized then that the door was bent out of shape at the top and the pressure it got from the resistance before caused the glass to shatter.

Since he was the only one there, and no one could testify on his behalf, he was going to have to take responsibility. He called the homeowner and explained what happened and said, since it happened when only he was there, he would fully pay for it.

On his way home that day, he stopped off to pray Mincha and realized he forgot to say *Tehilim* as he usually did before he went to work. He also decided he was going to change his mood and accept what happened was from Hashem for his best. Then he said to himself, I could still pray now to have the most favorable results regarding what I will have to pay.

Later that night, the owner called to tell him he got an estimate of \$486 and he only wanted him to pay half. A few days later, the owner called back saying the repair company only charged \$350 and all he wanted from him was \$150. Then, a couple of days later, the owner called again saying he heard the same thing happened with other garage doors in his neighborhood and he did not hold this man accountable at all, and he didn't have to pay anything.

The man was so happy with his response of emunah, and then he was even happier afterward when the results changed in his favor.

A woman emailed about a recent experience. She lives in Israel and the government there has a whole department tracking people's cell phones to see if they were in proximity to someone who was diagnosed with COVID. If they were, they have a mandatory quarantine that can last anywhere from 10 days to two weeks.

On December 31 at 11:00 am, this woman got a computerized phone call to her cell phone saying that on December 27, she was around someone who tested positive for COVID, and thus requires quarantine. She did not recall being next to anyone for the 15-20 minutes that was required to go into quarantine.

As well, she had a very busy schedule for the upcoming two weeks and this would put a hold on everything. She was so disturbed. She tried to call the Ministry of Health but just got a bunch of extensions until her call was dropped. She decided to go read some emunah emails for *chizuk* and then, with a lot of strength, she said, "That's it. I completely accept this from Hashem. If I'm meant to be in quarantine, I'm going to do it happily."

She did make one more *hishtadlut* with the Health Ministry, and this time she got through. They asked her for the verification number for the computerized phone call she received and, strangely, her name did not come up on their list of people who needed to quarantine. The representative said, "It can't be you got a phone call. Your name is not here." She was released from her quarantine. The woman knew what happened. Her response of emunah changed the circumstances.

Again, we don't always see immediate results, but we should know, if we do respond the right way, we are automatically successful, and that's what matters most. (Living Emunah by Rabbi David Ashear – February 2, 2021)

The Life-Saving Power Of Keeping Shabbos

By Rabbi Yosef Weiss

Let us begin this week with a short piece from the Kabbalah. The holy Zohar teaches us, that "Anyone who keeps the Shabbos, it is as if he has fulfilled the entire Torah." (Zohar, Part 2, 92a) The only way truly to understand this piece of Kabbalah is for one to keep Shabbos. Because, keeping Shabbos empowers a Jew to reach the highest spiritual heights. A Jew can only reach his potential with Shabbos.



Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Gruskin

We read about Shabbos this week in the 10 Commandments. As the Holy Torah commands us in the fourth commandment: "Six days you shall work... but the seventh day is Shabbos to Hashem, your G-d, you shall not do any work..." (Shemos 20:9-10) The Sages have taught us that more than the Jewish people have kept the Shabbos, Shabbos has kept the Jewish people. The following amazing true story, told by Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Gruskin, Rav of Congregation Bnai Zion in Detroit, Michigan, illustrates the power of Shabbos.

Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Gruskin, of blessed memory, was a chaplain of the State of Michigan. Part of his duties involve making rounds in hospitals for the mentally ill. Every year before Pesach, a secular Jewish man named Milton helped Rabbi Gruskin in the distribution of Pesach boxes to the mentally ill. One Sunday morning, Rabbi Gruskin received an unexpected phone call.

"Hello, Rabbi. This is Milton." "Milton! How are you?" There was a short silence. Then, "I'm calling from Sinai Hospital, Rabbi." Milton's voice broke. "Rabbi, please pray for me. I'm very ill." "I'm so sorry to hear that, Milton. Not only will I pray for you, but I'll also come down to see you as soon as I can."

Rabbi Gruskin went to see Milton the very next day. He had lost weight, his cheeks looked sunken, and his complexion appeared jaundiced. "Rabbi, please pray for me," Milton begged. The doctors say that I have a tumor in my pancreas."

"Milton," Rabbi Gruskin began, "You're a kindhearted person, and you've helped me a lot during the past few years. I am certainly going to pray for you. But I have to tell you that there is someone else you should consider asking to pray for you-someone whose prayers will be answered faster than mine will."

"Who is it, Rabbi?" Milton asked anxiously. "I must call him immediately!" Shabbos, Milton. The Shabbos can pray for you." "What do you mean?" Milton asked. "Milton, start keeping the Shabbos," Rabbi Gruskin said. "In that merit, she [Shabbos] will pray to the Almighty to heal you."

Milton thought for a moment. "But I don't know anything about keeping Shabbos!" "Don't worry," Rabbi Gruskin told him. "I will send you books that will introduce you to Shabbos, and describe every thing that you have to do." Several days after Rabbi Gruskin brought the books, Rabbi Gruskin dropped in for another visit. Milton was in a somber mood. "They think the tumor is malignant," Milton told him "and they want to operate." He paused for a moment. "I thought about our conversation, and I decided that I will keep Shabbos."

Milton pressed the call button for the nurse, and sat silently until she arrived. When the nurse came in, he said to her, "Tomorrow is the Sabbath. I don't want the television on, and I won't be taking any phone calls. I am going to observe the Sabbath from now on." Rabbi Gruskin turned to Milton and said "Let's shake on it." Milton took his hand and shook it vigorously.

Rabbi Gruskin came to visit Milton on the day of the operation. It was after 4 p.m. by the time he arrived at the hospital and he was sure that the operation would have long since finished, with Milton already out of the recovery room. But Milton's bed was empty. He must still be in the recovery room, Rabbi Gruskin thought. But he wasn't there either.

Nervously, he went downstairs to the surgical lounge, where he found Milton's family waiting on tenterhooks for news of the patient's condition. Just as he arrived, a doctor entered the corridor to meet the family and report on Milton's

progress. The expression on his face already told them that the news was not good.

"The tumor was malignant. As we had suspected," the doctor said. "But that's not our problem now. We're having difficulty closing the incision, and he's hemorrhaging badly." He paused. "We don't expect him to make it through the night." Milton's wife broke down crying.

Rabbi Gruskin calmed her down the best he could. After she was somewhat calmed, Rabbi Gruskin said, "As long as Milton is with us, we must do everything we can. I'm going to shul now for the afternoon prayers, and afterwards I'll add the name Rafael to his name. We are in Hashem's Hands now." After davening (praying) Minchah (the afternoon prayers), the men recited Tehillim - psalms for Milton, and the name Rafael was added to his Hebrew name. (Rafael means "Heal him, G-d." It is commonly added to the name of a seriously ill person as a prayer and plea to Hashem)

Rabbi Gruskin went back to the hospital at eleven-thirty that night. He found the family still sitting in the waiting room, hoping to hear good news from the doctors. Rabbi Gruskin stayed for several hours, giving them some badly needed emotional support. When he finally left, he reassured them that he would return immediately after davening Shacharis the following morning.

As soon as Rabbi Gruskin walked in the door of his home, the phone rang. "This is Bill, Milton's brother," a tired voice said. "The doctor just told us that he doesn't think Milton will live another hour. Do you think you could come back to stay with us during Milton's last moments?"

"I'll be right over." Said Rabbi Gruskin

Rabbi Gruskin returned to the hospital, and he went to where the family was waiting. He asked the doctors for permission to see Milton. The doctors gave their consent, and Rabbi Gruskin quietly entered the room, with the family filing in behind him.

Milton lay quietly in bed, with tubes in his nose and mouth helping to keep him alive. As Rabbi Gruskin came closer, Milton suddenly opened his eyes. He looked at Rabbi Gruskin, looked at his family, and then raised his hand. He tapped his fingers against his thumb and pointed toward heaven. "Do you want us to pray for you?"

Rabbi Gruskin asked. Milton shook his head, no. Rabbi Gruskin was puzzled; he could not figure out what Milton was trying to tell him.

Rabbi Gruskin went over to the doctor. "Is it possible to remove those tubes?" he asked. "It might be important to know what he is trying to tell us."

The doctor thought for a moment. "I suppose it's all right," he said finally. Rabbi Gruskin turned to Milton. "Do you want the doctor to take the tubes out of your mouth, so you can speak?" he asked. Milton nodded vigorously. So the doctor removed the tubes and stepped back.

To everyone's surprise, Milton sat up in bed and began speaking. His voice was hoarse, and they had to strain to hear him. "All of you can go home, I am going to be all right," he whispered. "Rabbi please stay here."

Milton's wife was in shock. The doctor was staring open-mouthed at his patient. They filed out slowly, turning their heads for one final look at Milton as they left the room. After they had gone, Milton said, "I had to ask them to leave, because they wouldn't understand what I'm about to tell you. The truth is that since the operation began, I have not been on this world-I have been in heaven."

Rabbi Gruskin looked at Milton a bit dubiously. It sounded like the effects of anesthesia to him. But Milton shook his head emphatically. "I know what it sounds like, Rabbi, but it's the truth. They told me up there that if the Rabbi will be at your bedside when you first open your eyes, you'll know that you'll live. But if he's not there, you will die." Milton stopped to catch his breath. "When I opened my eyes and saw you, I knew I was going to make it."

From that point on, Milton began the long slow road to recovery. Shortly after the operation, Milton told Rabbi Gruskin, "Thank you for praying for me. It saved my life." Rabbi Gruskin took hold of Milton's hands. "No, Milton, it wasn't me. It was Shabbos."

Milton stayed in the hospital for seven months, running up a medical bill that exceeded \$260,000. When he was finally able to go home, he weighed a mere eighty-three pounds-and he is six feet tall! The horrible disease in the pancreas kills quickly-usually two or three months after diagnosis-but more than thirteen years have passed since Milton's operation. His oncologist says that Milton is a medical miracle.

Today, Milton fully observes Torah and mitzvos. Every weekday he drives twenty-five miles to daven in shul. And for many years before Pesach, he continued to help Rabbi Gruskin deliver packages to the inner city. (from *Visions of Greatness*, p.26, Rabbi Yosef Weiss)

More than the Jewish people has kept the Shabbos, Shabbos has kept the Jewish People. If you are keeping Shabbos, let this encourage you to be more dedicated to keeping Shabbos properly. If you are not keeping Shabbos, let this encourage you to find out what you are missing.

Reprinted from the Parshas Yisro 5781 email of Good Shabbos Everyone.

Experience Life the Way Hashem Wants Us To

A man told me he has been basically going through the motions in religion for the first 58 years of his life. Then, someone began teaching him about Hashem, and his life changed instantly for the better. Instead of the worry and stress filled days he had been used to, he now enjoys the peace and serenity of a *ba'al emunah*.

He had been very unhappy at his job and sent his resume out to several companies. In five years, he didn't even get one phone call requesting that he come. On the day he discovered Hashem, he said, "Hashem, I am enlisting in the life that You want me to live. I am giving over everything to You. I feel completely in Your hands."

That same day, he was called for the first time in five years for a job interview. The very next day, he was offered another job, in a different company, with a religious environment and a much better salary than he had been earning. He took that job and for two and a half years, he grew spiritually and benefited greatly from that work environment.

A few months ago, he was laid off due to a Covid related downsizing. He has no anxiety over it. He is making a normal *hishtadlut* to find another job. In the meantime, he spends his days learning all the Torah that he missed in the first part of his life. His emunah is inspiring. He sits in shul with a smile on his face, loving every second of every day.

It is so important for a person to know that even when a situation looks bleak, it is still the same loving Hashem who is doing the best for him. So many times, we see with our own eyes that what we thought was bad was really a blessing. The blessing was there the entire time; we just weren't able to see it yet.

One of the places the Jewish People encamped after they left *Mitzrayim* was called *Mara*. When they arrived there, they were thirsty, but the water was bitter. They complained to Moshe. Moshe cried out to Hashem, and Hashem told him to throw a branch into the water. Then the Jewish People tasted the water again. This time it was sweet and delicious.

The same waters that had been bitter were the same waters that were eventually going to quench their thirst. The Jewish People couldn't see it right away, so they complained. But the key is for us not to be bitter when we don't see the blessing right away. Rather, trust Hashem and wait patiently with heartfelt *tefila* to see what He has in store for us.



Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman told a story which took place a couple of months ago in Israel. An orphan was having his Bar Mitzvah celebration, and he loved music. A singer that he liked agreed to come to play there free of charge. A few days after the celebration, the Bar Mitzvah boy was diagnosed with Covid and many people at that small party caught it as well, including the singer.

He was so upset. Here he did a favor for an orphan, and now he had to cancel two upcoming jobs that he was going to be paid for? Baruch Hashem, he had a very mild case of the virus and didn't even feel it. Three weeks later, he was called by an organization in America saying they were making a joint Bar Mitzvah celebration for many orphans, and they heard that he sang at an orphan's Bar Mitzvah in Israel free of charge and everyone loved it. They wanted to fly him in for the occasion, and the money they were offering was more than he would earn in ten jobs.

The one condition they had was that he already had the virus. When he heard that, he said, "*Yishtabach Shemo!* Hashem knew exactly what He was doing. I didn't lose by playing for that orphan, I only gained." As well, playing for those orphans in America was such a gratifying experience for him.

Whatever happens to us is for our best. Sometimes we see it and sometimes we don't. As long as we know it, we'll always be able to experience life the way Hashem wants us to. (Living Emunah by Rabbi David Ashear – February 3, 2021.)

A Cup of Tea for Rav Leib Chasman



R' Leib Chasman, famed mussar giant of the Chevron Yeshiva in Jerusalem in the early twentieth century, was speaking to a boy who had come to him asking how to improve his service of Hashem. After some discussion, R' Leib asked the bochor to go to the Rebbetzin in the kitchen and ask her for a cup of tea for him.

The boy jumped up to do as he was asked. As he did, R' Leib grabbed his arm. "Wait! Why did you jump up so quickly?"

The boy hesitated, thought a moment, and then replied, "I guess I ran because I have the opportunity to serve a Talmid Chacham!"

"Oy," sighed R' Leib. "It is exactly as I thought. A young man is presented with the chance to improve his Avodas Hashem by doing a true kindness for another and bringing a feeble old man a cup of tea. However, instead of focusing on doing kindness for its own sake, he chooses to focus on other considerations like serving Torah scholars, which in my case is even questionable."

Reprinted from the Parshas Yisro 5781 email of Migdal Ohr.

A Miracle of Nations

Adapted from the Teachings of
Rav Avigdor Miller, zt"l

By Ari Ben-Ami

Elazar stood up and made believe he was clearing his throat; it was his turn to say a dvar Torah at the Friday night Shabbos seudah. "The parsha begins like this," he said. "Va'yishma Yisro – And Yisro heard about everything that Hashem did for the Am Yisroel; how He took them out of Mitzrayim ... and he decided to go and be with the Yidden in the Midbar.

"So my rebbi's question was," continued Elazar, "What was so great about Yetzias Mitzrayim and Kriyas Yam Suf that it made Yisro leave his home and join the Am Yisroel? It's not easy to just pick up and move! So Rabbi Berkowitz said that when Yisro heard about what Hashem was doing for the Am Yisroel, things that had never happened before in the history of the world, he realized that this was something so special, that he wanted to be a part of it – even if it meant uprooting his whole life!"

"Very nice Elazar," said Mommy. "That was beautiful."

"But, I have a Kasha! (Question)

"But I have a kasha!" Dovid called out. "Yisro heard about the special things that were happening, but he didn't hear that anything else was going to happen!"

"All the makkos happened already! Everyone already had the fun of watching Paroi in pajamas in the middle of the night! Kriyas Yam Suf happened already – the fun of watching all the wicked Mitzrim drowning – and now they were all loaded with gold and silver from the Mitzrim. At this point all those special things were over already! Why would Yisro join now?"

"You know what, Dovid?" Totty said. "I've never thought about this before. Let's go ask Rav Ruttner after davening in shul tomorrow."

Shabbos Morning In Shul As soon as mussaf was over Dovid and Elazar began gathering together and putting away all the siddurim and chumashim on the tables. That was their weekly minhag and as big of a job as it was, they loved doing it. As they were putting away the siddurim on the shelves, Mr. Abrams approached.

Mr. Abrams was new in the shul – Totty had told the boys that he had recently moved to Flatbush from Montana. Montana!? Dovid and Elazar didn't

even know where that was but it sounded like it was far away – probably even further out than Lakewood!

“Boys, would you mind if I helped you?” said Mr. Abrams,

“I would love joining in the mitzvah of keeping the shul nice and orderly.”

“Sure,” said Dovid. “Did you have this job in your shul in Montana too?”

“Well,” said Mr. Abrams with a twinkle in his eye, “Actually we didn’t have a shul in my town in Montana. There aren’t even any Jews there.”

“No Jews?! No shul?!” said Dovid, “So what were you —I mean how were you — I mean why were you in Montana?”

The Only Jew from His Town

Mr. Abrams smiled. “I’m the only Jew from my town because I’m a ger – I converted to Judaism.”

“Wow! That’s so interesting!” said Dovid, “We were just learning about Yisro in yeshiva but I never met a real live ger before. When did you become a Jew?”



Illustrations by Yocheved Nadell

“It’s a very long story,” said Mr. Abrams, “but to make a long story short I loved reading history books even after I finished high school. And the more I read, the more I became curious about the Jewish people. I was reading about all the

ancient nations and how they were so big and powerful but eventually they all went lost.

“There’s no more Ancient Egypt, no more Ancient Greece and Rome and Bavel! And meanwhile, the little Jewish nation has survived. I realized that it’s a real miracle! “When I learned about all the miracles that Hashem did for the Am Yisroel like Yetzias Mitzrayim and Kriyas Yam Suf and the Mann and everything else, I realized that those miracles were a way of Hashem showing the Jewish people that He loves them.

Hashem Will Do Anything for the Yidden

“Hashem could have saved the Am Yisroel in other ways without miracles. Pharaoh could have just gotten the flu and he would have been too sick to chase them. But the Chovos Halevavos says that the nissim were a special present that Hashem gave to the Jewish people to show them how much He loves them and that He’ll always be watching over them. It was a way of Hashem saying that He’ll do anything for the Yidden and that they will be around forever.

“When I read about all these nissim that Hashem did, I decided that I wanted to join this special nation. If Hashem loves them so much that He’ll split oceans for them, I want to be a part of it too!”

Just then Totty walked over to the boys, “Thank you Mr. Abrams for helping out. Boys, did you forget that we have a shailah for the Rov? Let’s catch him before he leaves the shul!”

“Don’t worry Totty,” said Dovid, “because of Mr. Abrams we know the answer to my question from the seudah last night. When Yisro saw that Hashem made such great miracles for the Am Yisroel he realized that this was the nation that Hashem loves most. And he decided not to stay in Midyan and get lost in history, when he could instead join the forever nation.”

Reprinted from the Parshas Yisro 5781 email of Toras Avigdor Junior.

Keep Our Eyes Open

The *Shomer Emunim* writes, if we would know how great the *avodah* of believing in Hashem’s *hashgacha* over our lives every second of the day is, our hearts would become filled with the greatest enthusiasm to believe in it even more. The *pasuk* says “צִלְהָהּ – Hashem is our Shadow,” which means He deals with us according to our actions.

The more belief in His *hashgacha* we have, the more special treatment He'll give us. The *Shomer Emunim* writes elsewhere, believing in Hashem's *hashgacha* is a positive commandment in the Torah, found in *Devarim, perek 8*. Hashem is controlling everything that happens every second of the day. If we keep our eyes open, we'll see it clearly.

The other day I was learning in an office in a shul in the afternoon and I dozed off. Exactly as Mincha was starting, my phone buzzed and woke me up. I saw it was a message from someone responding to what I said to him a long time before that. At that specific moment, when it was so crucial for me to get up, he replied, "Thank you," which prevented me from missing Mincha. I thanked Hashem for the obvious *hashgacha* and appreciated Mincha that day even more.

A man told me, he arrived back on a flight very late at night, and his car was in the airport parking lot. He and his wife made their way to the car, and at about 12:30 am, when he tried to start it up, it was completely dead. He is a man who lives with Hashem and therefore did not get frazzled. Although he and his wife were obviously anxious to get home, they calmly got out of the car, went back inside the airport to get out of the cold to figure out what to do next. He saw another Jew there and asked him if he could help. Before this person even heard his request, he said, "Sure, whatever you need, I am here to help you."

The man said, "Wow, thank you," and he told him about his car.

This person says, "Okay, let me get my family settled in my car and then we will drive over to you and see what I can do." Five minutes later he showed up and had a battery pack on him. He said he doesn't know why but just a few days before he bought a battery pack jump starting kit and he said, "Here it is."

The hood of the man's car wouldn't open. The person said, "Don't worry, I have a tool kit in my car as well. He went to get it, and he opened the hood. In a few minutes the car was running smoothly. The person told this man, "I usually get a ride to the airport. For some reason, this time I drove and parked here. Now I see why. Hashem caused me to buy a jump start kit and have my car available in the airport at 1:00 in the morning just so I would be here to help you."

Rabbi Duvi Bensoussan told of a Rosh Kollel from Bnei Brak who once traveled to America to raise funds for his Kollel many years ago. At that time, money was tight, and he wasn't even able to collect 10% of what he needed. He came back to Israel a little dejected. On his way back from the airport, he shared a small bus with a few other people.

A man approached him and said, “I’m from South America. My father passed away this year and wanted to be buried right outside Bnei Brak. Now it has been eleven months, and I’m coming to see his tombstone for the first time. I don’t have any family or friends here. Maybe you could help me get a minyan for Kaddish?”

The Rosh Kollel told him, “Of course. You can come with me to my Kollel and we’ll say Kaddish there.” They arrived, prayed Mincha and the man said Kaddish. Afterward the man asked the Rosh Kollel for a minyan to go with him to the cemetery and say Kaddish there. The Rosh Kollel agreed and personally went along to accompany them.

Afterward the man said to Rosh Kollel, “I can’t thank you enough.” Then he said, “If I give you a check for one million dollars, would you name the Kollel after my father?” The Rosh Kollel couldn’t believe his ears. On the spot, this man gave a one-million-dollar check and ended up becoming a major supporter of that Kollel for years to come.

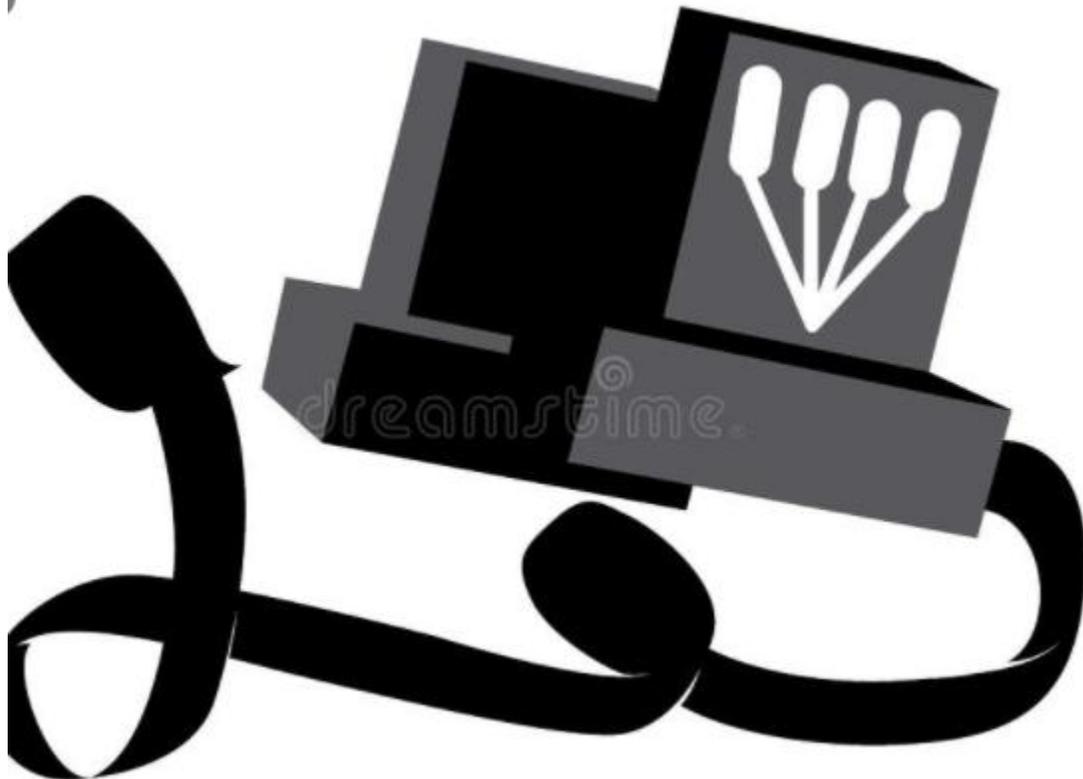
This Rosh Kollel traveled all the way to America, thinking he would get money there. Hashem had other plans. He put him next to the person who He wanted his help to come from. Hashem is setting up circumstances, meetings, and all types of situations at every moment of the day to billions of people. The more we believe in His *hashgacha*, the more help we’ll get. (Emunah Living by Rabbi David Ashear – February 4, 2021)

‘Protection from Above’ – ‘שמירה עליונה’

This happened when I was beginning to get close to Yiddishkeit. The journey was long and arduous, but I strengthened myself day to day in avodas Hashem, and continuously accepted on myself another mitzvah to keep. The journey was filled with ups and downs, and I always had to renew strength in every holy thing, the same held true for putting on Tefillin, difficult encouragement and difficult battles with the yetzer.

We were on maneuvers and we were travelling every day, so I did not have time to put on Tefillin. I felt bad about it but I had no choice until just about sunset

when we stopped to rest a little from the long trip. Immediately when we stopped, I told the driver to come with me to put on Tefillin.



He tried to refuse because he was exhausted and he wanted to rest a little, but he could not refuse my insistence knowing that I would not let him be until he put on Tefillin. Since I left him no choice, he accompanied me to the back of the military vehicle and I took out my Tefillin bag and we put on Tefillin, me first and then him.

I helped him put on the Tefillin and when he said the first posuk of “Shema Yisrael” a missile exploded destroying the front half of the carrier, exactly where the driver was going to rest and gather strength to continue. We all got out without a scratch, except a ringing in the ears.

It was clear to us that the merit of the Tefillin saved our lives. From that day on, he stood by me in line every day, close friends putting on Tefillin, and it was a great encouragement to all, how the mitzvos protect us. It is important for me to point out that I do not usually push myself on others. Whoever does not want to do something loses out, but here, it was from Heaven that I was a nudnik and I urged him to put on Tefillin, something against my nature. (By A.B.D.)

Reprinted from the Parshas Yisro 5781 email of Tiv Hakehila.

The Fascinating Tale of the Rebbe Doctor of Pietrekov

By Levik Gourarie



Rabbi Dr. Chaim Dovid Bernhard of Pietrekov (1770s - 1858). Credits: GFDL

Teshuvah, “repentance,” is as old as time itself. From the time of the creation of the world, when G-d created the possibility of sin, G-d also gave us the ability to repent, or, better translated, "to return" to our original state of being—G-dly creations with G-dly aspirations. The returnee, the man or woman who has

made this journey back home, is referred to as a *baal(at) teshuvah*, and serves as a great inspiration to each and every one of us.

Ever since the beginning of our history, many illustrious *baalei teshuvah* have not only rejoined the Jewish circle but have gone on to greatly contribute to Jewish life and thought. Starting with Ishmael, who grew up in Abraham's home only to leave it and then eventually return, through the famed Reish Lakish, the great sage of the Talmud who began as a wild and dangerous bandit, our history is filled with the tales of these great champions of *teshuvah*.

About 1500 years after Reish Lakish and his mentor (and friend and brother-in-Law) Rabbi Yochanan, we meet another fascinating duo, the great Rabbi Dr. Bernhard and the Rebbe of Lelov, Rabbi Dovid Biederman.¹

The Makings of Dr. Bernhard

Polish-born Dr. Chaim Dovid Bernhard served as the official doctor of Kaiser Friedrich Wilhelm the II, King of Prussia, and King Stanislaw August Poniatowski of Poland. He spent his youth studying in the great schools in Berlin, and then went on to study at the prominent University of Breslau (Wrocław) and the University of Erfurt. After serving as the official doctor of the Prussian military, he was brought to the royal palace to serve as the king's doctor.



Left to right: General Józef Zajączek, Kaiser Friedrich Wilhelm the II, King of Prussia, and King Stanislaw August Poniatowski of Poland

The doctor was well-respected in the medical world. He was sought-after and corresponded with the greatest medical minds of his times, and he later went on to teach medicine at the University of Warsaw. He continued to serve as the doctor to many Polish nobles until the Polish uprising in November 1830.



Clockwise from top left: University of Breslau, Erfurt, Berliner Schloss - the Prussian palace, and Berlin.

But what may come as a surprise is that Dr. Chaim Dovid Bernhard had a devoutly religious upbringing in the small Polish town of Zhaloshin (Działoszyn). His life didn't play out quite the way anyone would've expected, making the arc of his life quite a fascinating one.

According to legend, Chaim Dovid was born sometime in the 1770s after his parents received a blessing from the famed Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk. As the story goes, the boy's father, Yissachar Ber, spent an exorbitant sum of money (more than he could afford) to help release a fellow Jew who had been imprisoned for failing to pay the unreasonable land use fees. Reb Elimelech, who arranged the negotiation and release, promised Yissachar Ber that G-d would bless him with a son whose radiance would shine across the whole world. A little while later, Chaim Dovid was born.



Headstone of Rabbi Dovid Biederman of Lelov (1746-1814).

In his early teens, Chaim Dovid became ill and needed to be under medical supervision. While under the doctor's care, his Torah study waned, and his interest and attraction to the secular world strengthened. Under the influence and urging of the doctor and his wife, who were "enlightened" Jews, young Chaim Dovid set off to Berlin, the Enlightenment capital of Europe, to study in the prestigious universities there.

It seemed as though Chaim Dovid had fallen into a fully secular lifestyle. He married Helena (Hadassah), a seamstress and tutor at the palace, and began raising

a family. He moved back from Prussia to Poland, where he continued his medical work, while fraternizing with the Polish high society, making the most of the extravagant lifestyle he created for himself.



Headstone of the R. Yaakov Yitzchak Horowitz, "Seer of Lublin" (1745-1815). Credits: Comik

The Path to Teshuvah

But G-d had other plans, and by Divine Providence, the doctor came across the great Rabbi Dovid Biederman, the rebbe of Lelov. Known as Reb Dovid'l, he was renowned for his great love for others and his emphasis on seeking out lofty souls, including those that had “wandered.” His protégés included Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Rabinovitch ("The Holy Jew"), Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Peshischa and Rabbi Yitzchok of Varke. While there are many legends and versions of how these two great men met, we will share the most common one.

Yom Kippur. The shul in Lelov is packed; young and old of all types and stripes are there, pouring out their hearts to G-d on this spiritual day. Reb Dovid'l, their Rebbe, is leading them in prayer, his gentle yet passionate fervor uplifting them to the highest realms of devotion and connection with their Maker.

An unknown visitor arrives in Lelov. No one knows why he came; he may be passing through on his way back from visiting one of his high-profile patients, or it could be that his soul is drawing him to the Chassidic court in Lelov (Yom Kippur can do that to people). Whatever the reason, he is traveling through the Jewish neighborhood, when he hears shouts of "Doctor! Doctor!"

The visitor, Dr. Bernhard, runs to the rescue. A young woman is in labor, and things aren't going well. She is fighting with her last vestiges of strength to stay alive and save her unborn child. The doctor could not have come at a better time—he guides her through the birth, saving her and her child's life.

The young woman's father-in-law—who has arrived, frantic, at the scene—thanks the doctor profusely and invites him into his study to talk.

The father-in-law is the rebbe, Reb Dovid'l himself. They sit for a couple of hours on Yom Kippur, talking about life, purpose, Judaism and G-d. Reb Dovid'l finishes off their conversation with the words "Chaim Dovid! Return! You cannot imagine how much pleasure this will give your Father in heaven!"²

The switch is flicked. The doctor stays on in Lelov and begins to slowly make his way back to Judaism, guided ever so carefully by Reb Dovid'l. Chaim Dovid succeeds in turning his life around, growing every day in his service of G-d.

Rabbi Doctor

Reb Dovid'l brought Chaim Dovid to Lublin to meet his rebbe, Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Horowitz, the great Chozeh of Lublin ("Seer of Lublin"). Reportedly, the Chozeh struck a deal with him, saying, "You, Doctor, will heal my frail and weak body, and I will help heal your soul." So in addition to kings and noblemen, Chaim Dovid's list of high-profile patients included the great rebbes of Poland.³

Following the advice of the Chozeh, Chaim Dovid continued working as a doctor, caring for his patients and teaching medicine.

However, he was now referred to not just as "Doctor," but as "Rabbi Doctor." He reduced his work hours and spent the rest of his time in study and prayer. When he was called to see a patient, he would recite Psalms on their behalf on the way over and would write "with the help of G-d" at the top of each prescription. He began to be known across Poland for his spirituality as well as his remarkable medical record.

At the request of General Józef Zajączek, he settled in Pietrekov (Piotrków). While he neither sought nor accepted the position of Rebbe, he did acquiesce to the requests of the masses and became a spiritual leader akin to the Polish rebbes of his era.⁴ He taught them Torah from his teachers and inspired them at the Friday night "*tishes*" (festive meals that featured spirited singing, Torah teaching, and

storytelling).Independently wealthy, Reb Chaim Dovid gave tremendous sums of money to the poor and supported Torah study across Poland.

Rabbi Dr. Bernhardt formed deep and close relationships with all the great rebbes of Poland. The Rebbes of Lublin, Peshische, Lelov, Kotzk, Radomsk, Varke, Izhbetza, Kozhnitz, Strikov,⁵ Radoshitz, Gur, and Volbrash⁶ were all amongst his friends and confidants; they would consult with him not only on medical matters but rather on all aspects of Jewish life in Poland, specifically on those issues that would require a more broad and worldly vision.

He championed the Jewish community's rights and wellbeing. He had anti-Semitic doctors fired, he supported the Jewish community in the Holy Land and at home, and he built the famous shul in Pietrekov, even bringing in special architects and designers.



The great synagogue in Pietrekov. (Credits: Chrumps)

Even after his *teshuvah*, the wondrous Reb Chaim Dovid was not only loved by his fellow Jews, but by the gentiles as well; both the aristocrats and the peasantry had great respect and adoration for him. This painting was actually commissioned by a gentile doctor in Pietrekov who—coming from an anti-Semitic background—initially tried railing people against Reb Chaim Dovid. But after getting to know him a bit better, his erstwhile antagonist regretted what he had done, and as a show of remorse, commissioned a portrait of the great *tzaddik*.

His Legacy

On the twentieth of Shevat, 5618 (1858), Reb Chaim Dovid returned his soul to his maker, leaving behind a wife,⁷ three children, and their families. He was buried in the old Jewish cemetery in Pietrekov, and an *ohel* (structure) was erected over his resting place a while later by a few Chassidim. The Nazis destroyed it, and it laid in ruins until 1992, when a generous Jewish family restored it.

"The Rebbe, Rabbi Chaim Dovid, Professor, Dr. Bernhard *ztz"l*." Perhaps these words inscribed on his tombstone, coupled with a brief entry in a Polish medical directory, can summarize the amazing life that he lived and the great impression he had on so many. The entry reads:

Bernhard, David, was born in Zhialozhyn in 1782. From 1805 he trained himself in medical sciences in Breslau. He was licensed as a doctor in Erfurt. He served for a while as the doctor of the Polish legions and afterward served in the study of "Physik" in Radomsk county. He lived in many cities in Poland, but for the most time he lived in Pietrekov, where he served as the doctor of the Jewish hospital. He died on Feb. 3, 1858. Bernhard was an observant Jew and devoutly Chassidic.

The journey of Reb Chaim Dovid served in some ways as a harbinger for the *teshuvah* movement that we have come to know, the reconciliation of a secular background with an intense Chassidic zeal and passion. Through combining these two contrasting forces, Reb Chaim Dovid imbued his career and worldly demeanor with a powerful and spirited connection to G-d. Not only was he not hampered by his secular past; he could reach broader audiences than his peers.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Note that many details of his life, as described in the sources cited below, parallel those of another doctor who attached himself to the Chassidic movement, Dr. Ahron Gordia, a disciple of the Maggid of Mezerich.
2. This line from Reb Dovid'l is found in almost all versions of the story of Reb Chaim Dovid's return. In *Chachmei Yisrael* (Dovid Halachmi, Israel, 1957), it is recounted that Reb Dovid'l prayed and healed a patient that the doctor had already given up on. After checking his patient again, the doctor was amazed by this great

rebbe. He traveled to Lelov to meet the rebbe, where the rebbe invited him in and spoke for a few hours, finishing off with, "Chaim Dovid! Return! You cannot imagine how much pleasure this will give your father in heaven!"

3. Rabbi Dr. Bernhard cared for the Chozeh during his final illness, after enduring a fall from a window following Hakafot on Simchat Torah, 1814.

4. His wife Hadassah became a great *tzadeket* in her own right. It was at her request that he never accepted the official position of Rebbe.

5. Rochel, Reb Chaim Dovid's daughter, married the Rebbe of Strikov's grandson. Her sister Hinda Leah stayed in Pietrekov as a midwife.

6. Yaakov Yitzchok, his son, actually became a chassid of Volbrash, and it was the Volbrasher chassidim that erected the *ohel* at his resting place.

7. His wife Hadassah had passed away in 1848. He remarried Rebbitzin Faiga Wiener, who survived him.

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Parashat Yitro:

Even More Than a Korban

In this week's *Parasha, Yitro*, we read about receiving the *Aseret Hadiberot* on *Har Sinai*. Right after *Matan Torah*, Hashem commanded the Jewish People to build a *mizbe'ach* (altar) to bring *korbanot* upon. The *pasuk* says, that it will become a place of *kedusha* where Hashem will rest His Presence and bring blessing from.

The *mizbe'ach* brought us closer to Hashem, because through the *korbanot* we offered upon it, we became purified from our sins. But what about today when we don't have a *mizbe'ach*? How are we supposed to achieve that closeness to Hashem when our sins create barriers?

The *Midrash* at the end of *parashat Yitro* says, see how beloved *yisurin* – afflictions are, because they accomplish for us even more than a *korban* ever could. The *Gemara* adds, for the person to get the most out of his *yisurin*, he has to accept them with happiness. Naturally, nobody likes getting hurt or losing something. But if we can overcome our nature, and, with *emunah*, understand that the *yisurin* are good for us, each time we do that, we'll be accomplishing more than we would get out of a *korban*. If somebody heard that there was an opportunity today to bring a *korban* to Hashem in the *Bet HaMikdash*, they would do everything in their power to do it. Accepting *yisurin* right from where we are is better than that.

When we are happy, even though we experience difficulties, there's another added benefit that will be illustrated in the following story. On one occasion, a businessman who incurred a large loss came to a Rebbe and cried over his plight. The Rebbe shared with him the *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* which says when a Jew is feeling pain, the *Shechina* feels every bit of it. The Rebbe said, "We are supposed to care about Hashem's pain, and if you will alleviate yourself out of your pain, it will take Hashem out of His pain. And if even you can't be fully happy about it, the less pain you feel, the less pain Hashem will feel."

Rabbi Moshe Kabriner told, he was once at the funeral of his Rebbe's daughter, Rabbi Mordechai from Lechvitch, and he saw that the Rebbe looked like his usual self. The Rebbe explained, he didn't want to cause Hashem pain by being in agony, so he worked on himself to accept it with love.

Rabbi Menashe Reizman brought down an explanation of Rabbi Mordechai of Lechvitch on the *pasuk* which speaks about Yaakov working for Rachel for seven years and, in his eyes, it was just like a few days in his great love for her. The question everyone asks is, if someone wants something so badly, every day of waiting seems like an eternity. How could it say that Yaakov worked for seven years and it was just like a few days?

The Rebbe explained, looking at the *pasuk* with a deeper meaning. He said Rachel also refers to the *Shechina*. Yaakov loved the *Shechina*, and he did not want Hashem to experience any pain, so Yaakov worked on himself to be happy with the waiting time on behalf of the *Shechina*," because he knew any pain that he would feel, Hashem would feel and that's why it seemed to him like just a few days.

There was a great Rebbe who, before he went to sleep, would wish Hashem a good night, praying that no one should have any pain during the night, so Hashem wouldn't have to feel their pain.

This sounds like a high level, to worry about Hashem's pain, but it is not all or nothing. Even just to think about it a little bit, and alleviate some of our pain, in honor of Hashem, is a great *avodah*. It will purify us and bring us closer to Him, and it will accomplish for us even more than a *korban*. (*Living Emunah by Rabbi David Ashear – February 5, 2021*)

The Tree I Sprang From:

Mark Jacoby, 1925-2021

By Jeff Jacoby



Markus Jakobovic (later Mark Jacoby) in 1946, just a year out of the death camps. Having survived the Holocaust, he regarded every day as a bonus.

My first byline in *The Boston Globe* appeared long before I became a columnist. A letter to the editor I had written was published on Jan. 2, 1986. It was just six sentences long:

I was moved by “The great divide,” Alan Lupo’s touching column on Dec. 14 about the way we react — and often don’t react — to the destitute among us.

Years ago, my father — who knew poverty and hunger at first hand, and who makes a point of giving some money to charity every day — taught me a lesson. After watching him give a few dollars to a panhandler who had no excuse

scrounging for handouts, I asked why he gave money to somebody so patently undeserving.

“Why do I have to decide if he’s deserving?” I was asked in return. “A man came up to me with an empty hand. When somebody asks for help and holds out an empty hand, you don’t turn him away.”

My most recent byline in the Globe appeared two weeks ago, above a column headlined “The politics of an Auschwitz survivor’s son .” Like that letter to the editor 35 years ago, it expressed values that I absorbed from my father’s example and instruction. A few hours after the column appeared online, my father — who had tested positive for COVID-19 two days earlier and was in quarantine — began suffering respiratory distress. He was taken by ambulance to Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv, where my mother was already a patient in the COVID ward. Two days later, he took his last breath. My mother, in the bed next to his, was stroking his arm.



My father, an immigrant from Czechoslovakia, made a happy marriage to a girl from Cleveland. They were together for more than 64 years.

More than once, my father told me that he regarded as a bonus every day since May 6, 1945, when the US Army liberated Ebensee, the last of the four German concentration camps in which he had been imprisoned. By that measure, my father was blessed with 27,660 bonus days. He made the most of them.

To be sure, in his 95 years my father did not build up a great business, hold high office, or accumulate financial riches. He wasn't a noted speaker and he didn't write books. When it came to what the New York Times columnist David Brooks, in *The Road to Character*, calls the "résumé virtues" — the achievements we list on our résumé, the qualifications we bring to the marketplace, the skills necessary for a great career — my father's life was not particularly noteworthy.

But résumé virtues are only one yardstick by which a life is judged. There are also the "eulogy virtues." Those are the character traits that are recalled at your funeral: Were you kind? Were you honest? Were you faithful? Were you humble? "We all know," Brooks writes, "that the eulogy virtues are more important than the résumé ones."

My Father Excelled in the Eulogy Virtues

In the eulogy virtues, my father excelled. And as that long-ago letter to the editor suggests, I didn't wait until his eulogy to acknowledge them.

In occasional pieces over the years, I have recounted something of my father's experiences during the Holocaust and afterward. Sometimes I have written to help keep alive the memory of the terrible evils committed during the Nazi nightmare; sometimes to draw broader lessons about the urgency of defending human rights and resisting tyranny; sometimes to express gratefulness for the democratic freedoms I have grown up with.

"Fifty years ago this week, the Nazis came for my father's family," I wrote in an early *Globe* column.

The Jakubovics — there were seven of them in the house — were awakened before dawn when the SS pounded on their window. Like the other Jews in Legenye, a village on the Czechoslovak-Hungarian border, they were ordered to gather their belongings and prepare to leave at once.

Thirty minutes later they were put on horse-drawn wagons and carted out of Legenye. In the nearest large Hungarian town, [they were] herded into a ghetto. The walls were still going up around it as the Jakubovic family arrived.

It was the day after Passover, the ancient Jewish festival celebrating freedom and redemption.

The Jewish Ghetto was Emptied

For several weeks the ghetto grew increasingly crowded as more and more Jews were brought in. Then it began to empty, as Jews were taken out.

About 3,000 at a time, they were marched to the train station. The waiting boxcars were filled with families. The doors were chained and locked. There were no seats inside, no windows, no water. The only toilet was a bucket on the floor.

For three days, the train moved — three days of suffocation, thirst, and filth.

When it stopped, David and Leah Jakubovic and their five youngest children, ages 21 to 8 — Franceska, Markus, Zoltan, Yrvin, and Alice — were in Auschwitz.

I described in that column how I had once attempted to chart a family tree, only to realize that the tree got narrower, not wider, as it grew. My family tree, I wrote, “has stumps where branches ought to be.” One line after another ends abruptly, with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins all murdered in the 1940s.

My father rarely spoke about the Holocaust, but I pressed him to tell me what he remembered of his first day in Auschwitz.

“We arrived in Birkenau” — part of the Auschwitz complex — “on Sunday morning. It was still dark, so it must have been before 5 o'clock. All of a sudden the train stops. The doors open. People started shouting and dogs were barking. There were guards yelling ‘Raus! Raus!’ – ‘Out! Out!’

Going in Front of Mengele

“I remember going up the platform. We had to line up, men and women separately, and go in front of Mengele. He had a little crop in his hands and was waving, left, right, left, right. There were two or three other guys, and they were pushing you, whichever way he pointed with his crop.

“So my parents had to go to the right. Also my youngest brother and sister; they were not much more than babies, small children. What it meant — left, right — I didn't know. You just went where you were pushed.

“I went in the other direction. I tried to stay together with my brother Zoli. We had to get undressed, and they gave us the uniforms, and tattooed us. And that was it. But within a few hours Zoli and I were separated, and that was the last I ever heard of him.

“I guess they killed off my family that day, but I didn't know it until later.”

Like many survivors, my father admitted that he felt guilty for having lived when virtually everyone he knew had been killed. But neither survivor's guilt nor the trauma of starvation and enslavement left him mean or embittered. Despite the cruelties he had endured, my father retained the ability to laugh and to love. He was never violent, never insulting, never harsh, never overbearing.

Made a Happy Marriage and Raised Five Kids

He made a happy marriage and raised five kids in a home that was safe and stable. No one would ever have called my father an extrovert; he tended to be on the shy side, and was hardly the life of any party. Still, he was never unapproachable or intimidating — not to his neighbors, his customers, and his employees, and especially not to kids.

In the days since my father's passing, my siblings and I have heard from people who were children 50 years ago, yet still remember my father's particular brand of gentle encouragement.

None of which is to say that my father was a Pollyanna, or that he was incapable of losing his temper.

One of my vivid teenage memories is of my father blowing up over a piece of bread. It was during lunch, and my sisters and brother and I were horsing around at the table. One of us flung a piece of bread at another. My father exploded.

"What's the matter with you?" he shouted. "That's food! Don't you ever let me see you treat food like that again!"

I was startled by his outburst, which wasn't typical. It wasn't until I was older that I finally understood that eruption of anger: To a man who has lived amidst hunger, seen those around him die of starvation, and nearly starved to death himself, a piece of bread is not a joke.



Jeff Jacoby

No doubt for the same reason, my father never complained about food. He ate what he was offered and never asked for something different. I couldn't tell you if he liked Brussels sprouts, if he preferred white bread or rye bread, or if his

favorite ice cream was chocolate, vanilla, or strawberry. If he asked for coffee and was given a cup of instant lightened with powdered milk, he drank it with appreciation.

If he asked me for coffee and was given a cup of freshly ground, freshly brewed Starbucks with light cream, he drank it with the same appreciation. I'm quite sure that, at some unarticulated level, my father would have regarded the very idea of a "favorite" food as a kind of ingratitude.

"You May Bring Me Anything"

The classic illustration of my father's unfussy attitude toward food occurred during a visit to Boston a dozen or so years ago. My parents insisted on taking my family out to dinner, and we went to a kosher Chinese restaurant. When the waitress came to take our orders, each of us made a selection from the extensive menu. But when my father was asked what he would like, he answered, with perfect ingenuousness: "You may bring me anything."

"Dad," I said, "it's a restaurant. They need you to select something."

"Fine," he said, mostly, I suppose, to humor me. "In that case, I'll have something with beef." That was as detailed as he was going to get. He was simply incapable of being choosy about food. Even in a restaurant, where choosing your food is the whole point.

In all my years growing up in my father's house, when money was very short and luxuries were few, I cannot recall ever hearing him complain about his circumstances. It was as if he decided that, after Auschwitz, no setback or misfortune was worth even a moment's self-pity. Nor can I ever recall hearing him boast – about anything. Perhaps he was never one to blow his own horn. Or perhaps he lost the urge to brag once he saw the utter degradation to which human beings can be reduced.

He Didn't Hate G-d for What He Lost

Some Holocaust survivors emerged from their ordeal furious with G-d for not having stopped the slaughter. Many turned their backs on faith; some became enemies of religion. Such responses my father understood only too well, but they weren't his responses. He didn't hate G-d for what he had lost and didn't abandon the Judaism in which he had been reared.

On the contrary, he deepened it with observance, study, and prayer. He attended morning prayers faithfully — driving or walking when he was in good health, using a cane or a walker as his legs deteriorated, and finally being pushed in wheelchair when he could no longer stand on his own. His Jewishness went to the very core of his identity. In his retirement years, even at the very end when he

could do little else, he studied daily. When the pandemic prevented his Talmud study group from meeting in person, he had study partners by phone or via FaceTime.

“He is a Jew who survived,” I wrote about him once, “and he survived as a Jew.”

On the Jewish calendar, my father drew his last breath on the 15th day of the month of Shevat. Also called Tu Bishvat, the day is a minor festival — the “birthday of the trees” — on which Jews traditionally celebrated the fruit trees of the Holy Land, and which to this day is widely commemorated by planting tree seedlings. For me and my family, Tu Bishvat will unavoidably have a bittersweet tinge from now on. I will mark the date each year by planting trees in my father’s memory, and will reflect, with love and gratitude, on the opening words of the Book of Psalms:

(1) Happy is the man

Who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor taken the path of sinners,
Nor joined the company of scorners;

(2) But his delight is in the teaching of the Lord,
And in that teaching he studies day and night.

(3) He shall be like a tree

Planted by streams of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaves shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.

My father never had a byline, not in *The Boston Globe* or anywhere else. But his life, so rich in “eulogy virtues,” has influenced my writing for more than 35 years. My father’s formal education ended when he was just 13. But no man ever taught me more.

May his memory be a blessing, as his life most assuredly was.

Obvious Dividends

One of the mitzvot that Hashem pays dividends for in this world is *gemilut chasadim* – doing kindness for others. It's not easy for us to give up of our own time and energy for someone else. So, if we need extra motivation, *Chazal* have told us we never give up anything. We get a mitzvah for our *chesed* and Hashem pays us back for it. When it is so obvious to a person that Hashem gave him his dividends, it gives the person a lot of *chizuk* to continue doing more *chesed*.

A young man, who is starting out in his music career, was asked to sing a song about a little girl who passed away at a young age. The song was already made and had been recorded for the female public by a woman. Now, the mother of this girl wanted to make this song available for men too. The singer had just produced his very first album with a professional producer and wanted to continue with the same professionalism.

He told the woman he would be happy to do it, but it was going to cost a lot of money to hire all of the musicians necessary to do it the right way. When he told her the number, she almost dropped the phone. It was extremely expensive. She said she would think about it. She called back the next day and asked if there was any way to possibly negotiate the price.

He knew this was a very emotional project, doing it in memory of her daughter, and so he told her he was going to try his best to help. He then went and called all the people who would be involved in producing this song and asked them if they could lower their prices. Every person agreed. He called the mother back and said, "I got everyone to do it for cheaper and I myself am happy to do it for you for free." He then recorded this song so professionally, and it has been very well received by the public thus far.

After that, his high-end producer told him he's ready for another song. They decided to do a wedding song, *Boi Kallah*. Baruch Hashem, in the meantime, this young singer got engaged and realized that this new song would be coming out just about the same time as his wedding. How beautiful it would be if he could sing that new song for his bride when she marched down the aisle.

But, with expenses mounting and the very high cost of producing that song, he decided it was not the right time. For this song, they were using the best musicians, everything was going to be at the highest quality, hence the large price tag. So he told the producer to give it to someone else. The producer felt bad but said there were many other singers who would jump at this opportunity. The

producer called back this young singer a week later and told him to come into the studio to start practicing the song. The young man said, "I thought we are not doing it anymore."

The producer said, "Just come in, and I'll explain when you get here." When the young man arrived, the producer told him he decided to call all the people involved to see if they would do the song for cheaper. Every one of them said, as a wedding present, they wanted to gift it to you and so did I."

The young man was elated. He made that song and was able to sing it at his own wedding, which *b'hashgacha pratit*, fell out on the *yahrtzeit* of the young girl that he made the song for. He said, "Look at what Hashem did for me – I did *chesed* and got other people to produce a song for that family, and then Hashem did a *chesed* for me by getting others to help me produce this song."

Hashem loves when we do *chesed*, and He is *ne'eman* to pay us for all our efforts. (Living Emunah by Rabbi David Ashear – February 8, 2021)

Story #1209

The Positively Handicapped Genius

From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles
editor@ascentofsafed.com

Despite severe physical limitation, Uri-Yitzhak Shachor became one of the prominent scholars in the Nahalat Yosef Yeshiva in Shavei Shomron, in central Israel.

"Up until the second year, I struggled with my disability. I did not want to be disabled," shared Uri Yitzhak Shachor, a fourth-year student at Nahalat Yosef Yeshiva in Shavei Shomron. "Being handicapped is suffering. How much more money should be spent each month on a disabled person? Therapeutic swimming, transportation from *yeshiva* and back to *yeshiva*... It requires a lot of money and loads of strength, which I did not always have."

In 11th grade, he reached a breaking point. I returned home and was very depressed. I had tremendous pity on my parents. During this time they raised seven children. It was difficult for me knowing I was a burden. All I wanted was to have

a normal life. " However, at one point Uri Yitzhak's attitude towards the disability changed. It was a sentence he heard from one of the rabbi's during a moment of crisis.



"The rabbi asked me, 'Why are you crying? Perhaps there might be something positive about you being handicapped.' At first, I was amazed, but after a few minutes I started to change my thinking."

Became a Prominent Scholar Despite Severe Physical Limitations

Despite severe physical limitations, Uri Yitzhak Shachor became one of the prominent scholars in the Nahalat Yosef Yeshiva in Shavei Shomron. Today, he is considered a rare phenomenon in the *yeshiva* world. At the age of only 22, he has already managed to complete the entire Talmud -- 2711 folios (5422 pages) divided into 63 tractates -- no less than eleven times! He achieved this almost unprecedented level despite his cerebral palsy, which confines him to a wheelchair.

Now he aspires to the next goal: to become a rabbi in Israel, and at the next stage - a *dayan* -- a rabbinical judge -- probably the first disabled *dayan* in Israel. He is the eldest son of eight brothers and sisters. His family lives in the religious settlement Sde Yaakov in the Jezreel Valley, where his father Yishai is a doctor and a *mohel* (circumcizer), and his mother, Yehudit, is a veterinarian who runs a home clinic.

From the moment of birth, the parents realized that they were expecting quite a challenge, but only after a few months did the extent of the challenge become clear: Uri Yitzhak was afflicted with cerebral palsy.

Willing to Share His Life Story

Today, after a long and intense process, Shachor is willing to share his life story, with the goal of empowering those who are in a similar situation to his own. His speech is slow but confident, and he's not hesitant to open his heart.

Undoubtedly this is a brilliant kid. Beginning from second grade, he attended the local school in his *moshav*, and did his high school studies at the Nahalat Yisrael Yeshiva in Migdal Ha'emek.

After that he went on to senior *yeshiva* studies, but it was only after two years at the *yeshiva* in Shavei Shomron that his consciousness changed with regard to his condition, as mentioned above.

He gives the major credit for his attitude change to his *yeshiva* friend, who also helps him physically on a daily basis.

Encouraged by His Good Friend – Re'em Bernstein

"The person who really opened a completely different view of things, of what it means to be a disabled person, is Re'em Bernstein, my close friend and aide, who said a powerful and true sentence. He said that the disabled have tremendous powers that not everyone sees, and that the handicapped are the greatest people of the generation.

"At first I couldn't understand how a disabled person can be so great, and only then did I realize that I had the opportunity to live life to the fullest. True, it is hard to be disabled and all things are done slowly, but there is also a positive side to it. A person who does things slowly, lives every moment of life. Realizing that I have limited physical power, but with the power I have, I do my best. Every person must understand that, even though their powers are great, they have a limit too. Not everything is achievable.

Re'em Bernstein, the friend and aide, describes Uri Yitzhak's upheaval during his first *yeshiva* years. "At first, he didn't do much for himself. His friends would help him and pamper him endlessly. By the second year, I started demanding things from him, like getting out of bed alone, brushing his teeth,

adjusting the water in the shower on his own, getting in and out of the shower alone, putting on a shirt - and today he does it all by himself. I help him only as a caddy, to bring him the objects he needs.

He went through a profound change here. It really stabilized him. That's how he managed to write his own Torah commentaries. Next year he also plans to do a year of *Sheirut Leumi* (National Volunteer Service). Without the *yeshiva*, his situation would have remained stagnant for many more years. He became more independent and balanced."

Still Has to Devote a large Part of His Day to His Physical Needs

Despite the physical progress he has made in recent years, Uri Yitzhak still has to devote a good part of his day to physical needs, and he still requires basic-function assistance. But he does not give up.

"Although I am disabled, in place of everything God takes, He also gives. I can study Torah very swiftly. My fantastic memory makes me proficient about much of the studying. In Talmud studies I learn between 15 to 20 pages of *Gemara* daily!"

In response to the question, What remains in memory of the vast volume of pages you study daily? Uri Yitzhak usually invites the questioner to test him on the pages.

Or else he replies simply, "The L-rd granted me great memory. The head of the *Yeshiva*, Rabbi Yehoshua Schmidt, tested me and can testify that not only am I a constant learner, but that I am well versed in everything I have learned. For example, when he was only in the 10th grade, he went to the national Bible quiz and came in sixth place.

Bothered by the Public's Attitude Towards the Handicapped

One of the things that has caused him many years of frustration is the public's attitude towards the handicapped. "This is mainly due to the speed at which the world is running today," he assesses. "The world is moving at a very fast pace. There is hardly anybody who does not think about several things at the same time. It causes a great glitch in society. Today one looks only at the quantity, how much one has achieved. That's all. No appreciation for hard work or all the challenges one has overcome".

This insight, which meant that the handicapped can only proliferate through a language that is appropriate to their lifestyle, led to the fact that last winter, he began studying for the rabbinic tests, "so that there will be a handicapped rabbi in Israel who for once, will truly understand their struggles."

The reality of a disabled person, even in the perspective of *halacha* (Jewish law), is something that a normal person finds difficult to comprehend. To understand better, Uri Yitzhak gives as an example the *mitzvah* of holding and shaking the four *minim* (species) [1] on Sukkot. "What will a man do with only one hand? How will he complete the *mitzvah* of the four *minim*? In *halachic* law there are two options. Take each one of the *minim* separately, or do it with your mouth or foot.

What About Motorized Wheelchairs on Shabbat?

So is the question of a disabled person being wheeled with a motorized wheelchair on Shabbat and Festivals. "These are examples of questions that an ordinary person does not think about."

He relates that *halachic* issues have occupied him from an early age, as all his handicap issues were accompanied by not so simple *halachic* questions. When he first received a motorized wheelchair, Uri Yitzhak debated about his permit to use it on Shabbat. "Basically, there are such chairs today with a Shabbat command system. When I was 14, I contacted Rabbi Dov Lior[2], who is our relative. Rabbi Lior said the only problem was incandescent light bulbs, because they technically were a real burning fire, but in the chair itself there was no problem of a Torah prohibition. So we replaced the lights in the chair with LED bulbs." On Shabbat he reads the Torah from time to time as he sits in his chair, as he did on his Bar Mitzvah.

This past summer, the Chief Rabbinate changed the prerequisite conditions for becoming a rabbi, so that any man who turned 21 could take the exam, and not just the married ones. Uri Yitzhak pounced on the opportunity.

First Exam was on the Laws of Circumcision

"Not long after I arrived at the *yeshiva*, Rabbi Schmidt urged me to study well without any exemptions, including all *halachic* subjects discussed in the Beit Yosef and 'Shulchan Aruch' compendiums[3], so that I had extensive background in the many topics. The first of many exams which I began to study for was the laws of circumcision.

In the month of Cheshvan this year [Oct. 2020), Uri Yitzhak and his mother traveled from Sde Yaakov to Jerusalem to take the exam. "I don't know any other parents who pushed and supported so much so their son can succeed in the Torah. I'm not sure a normal parent would be able to face the challenge".

According to the Chief Rabbinate, close to 5,000 people from all over the country were tested at this time, with Uri Yitzhak being the only disabled candidate. "They told my mom this is the first time a person in a wheelchair came to take the bar. Basically, the test is in writing, but since I can't write, a tester was

assigned to type the answers for me. The test was long and hard, with no reference material, I needed to remember it all, including the '*shakla v'terya*' (the back-and-forth debates before the final conclusion of a difficult law was reached).

His Relationship with His Grandfather

Six months ago, his 75-year-old grandfather, the late Rabbi Shmuel Friedman, died suddenly. He was a very active person and came to Shavei Shomron at least once a week to study one-on-one with his brilliant grandson. Towards the end of the 30-day mourning period for his grandfather, Uri Yitzchak published a booklet "*Lehavot Yitzchak - Siftei Shmuel*" - Torah commentaries on the book of Numbers he wrote himself, along with reminiscences about his grandfather."

In the booklet, he collected Torah commentaries on the book of Numbers, which were already written down by his *yeshiva* friends. They are now in the final stages of preparation for the publication of the full book of Uri Yitzhak's Torah commentaries, planned for Adar 21 (in 3 weeks, on March 5), the anniversary of the death of the great 18th century chasidic master, Rabbi Elimelech of Lyzansk, who wrote "Let us see the virtue of our friends and not their shortcomings." Uri's aspiration and main goal is to make "Handicapped Day" a day in which the public stops and salutes the disabled.

The idea of publishing his Torah thoughts was conceived even earlier. "I thought to myself: 'If I'm not for myself, than who is and when I'm only for myself then what am I? If I study Torah only for myself, what am I? It's time to put my thoughts into action.'"

Wants to Help Every Jew Benefit from Basic Services

In addition to investing his time and energy in rabbinical studies for subsequent ordination as a *Dayan* for litigation, Shachor also works to make the basic services needed for every Jew available, such as the *mikvahs*.

He discovered that things could be changed and executed better. When he came to study at the *yeshiva* in Shavei Shomron, the *yeshiva* was not accessible and handicapped friendly at all.

"The *yeshiva* has turned itself inside out for me," he describes excitedly, "the place was inaccessible and had to raise more than NIS 40,000. They brought in a contractor so that the *yeshiva* will be accessible. Today we are proud that the *yeshiva* is accessible. The Torah belongs to all people of Israel, including the disabled."

In contrast, the status of the *mikvahs* in Israel, he says, is far from satisfactory. "Today, for a handicapped man[4] to bathe in the *mikveh* is a tremendous effort. I have to find where and how. I want to change that reality. To

create a situation that every city will have an accessible *mikveh*. The next stage after that is to make all *yeshivas* accessible."

In the near future, Uri Yitzhak has plans to open a Facebook page where he will share his personal experiences as a disabled person, with the aim of changing the public consciousness towards people with disabilities. My slogan is: 'A person with a disability is not inferior'," he said.

Why a Handicapped Person Becomes Disabled

He quotes a rabbi who once said to him: "A handicapped person becomes a disabled person because the body could not meet the size of the soul and is therefore broken."

"Some people do not understand it," he said, "sometimes even people who are very close to the handicapped do not understand it. Disability is a cover, and when you open the cover, you find unbelievable spiritual strengths."

"Uri Yitzhak is a symbol of strength in his determination," says Rabbi Yehoshua Schmidt, the head of the *yeshiva*, "he could give up and get lost so easily. Even in classes, he participates and does not give up. Apart from the single individuals that help him every day, the entire *yeshiva* is committed to him and wants him to be happy. We're glad he doesn't feel alone. Many times we take him to the center of the dance circle. He joins us in weddings also and we don't give up on him. On Simchat Torah we danced around the neighborhood and, and of course, took Uri Yitzhak with us.

"When Uri Yitzhak first arrived, we knew there was a big task to be managed," Rabbi Schmidt recalls, "to take a boy with disabilities who leaves home for the first time to a full time boarding school. Apart from the physical difficulty, there was also the difficulty of moving. We saw this as a task, but we didn't know exactly how big it was going to be. At first there were difficulties and it was unclear how we would get past them. We had a lot of conversations with the boy and his parents, who have boundless powers, very strong people who give us great sustainability.

An Essential Light in the Yeshiva

Today we are at the point that Uri Yitzhak is an essential light in the *yeshiva*. We cannot picture the *yeshiva* without him. His knowledge, his thoughts, his behavior, his Torah and his wisdom of life. We hope that all the *yeshivas* will take on boys with disabilities. It will enhance them as well as the boys and make them all better people."

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**Source:** Excerpted and adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the above mentioned Arutz 7 article. Photo credit: Amichai Bachar

**Connection :** The Weekly Reading of *Mishpatim* is the basis for nearly all the Torah's rulings in matters of civil law.

**Footnotes:**

[1]Lulav (date palm frond), etrog (citron fruit), hadassim (at least 3 myrtle stalks), and arovot (two willow branches).

[2]The chief rabbi of Hebron and Kiryat Arba and currently a rosh yeshiva and the head of the Council of Rabbis of Judea and Samaria

[3]Both authored by the great 16th century sage Rabbi Yosef Caro, the latter during his years here in Tsfat.

[4]And much more important, for handicapped women

*Reprinted from the Parshat Mishpatim 5781 email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed. Based on an article by Yosef Ehrenfeld on //israelnationalnews.com (Feb. 27, 2020).*

# The Inspiration You Need

Getting inspiration or *chizuk* is such an important part of life. There are times when a person finds himself struggling to live up to his potential. It could be because something is bothering him or just that he's lacking in motivation. Hearing the right words could change everything. It could change a person's outlook, bring back joy into his life and give him the motivation he needs to produce the way he is capable of producing. A person should always look for inspiration by reading *sifreh musar* or listening to inspirational speakers and, of course, the person should pray to Hashem to direct him to the right *chizuk* that will be especially beneficial to him.

Rabbi Shmuel Hirth told me that when he was sitting *shiva* for his daughter Malky, he had a lot to say about her. Whoever came to visit would just sit there listening to the inspirational words being said over by Reb Shmuel. The Rabbi noticed a young man under twenty who would come every day and just sit there listening for hours. The Rabbi didn't even know who he was.

Towards the end of *shiva*, the boy approached the Rabbi and told him why he was there. He said his father had passed away three years before and nothing anyone said or did was able to console him. Then he heard video clips of the Rabbi's daughter Malky who was just 7 years old and her words gave him so much *chizuk*, he was finally able to be consoled. Now he was coming just to hear more

about her. Ever since then, this boy does something *l'ilui nishmata* every single day. And as *hashgacha* would have it, he just got engaged on Malky's *yahrtzeit*. The boy couldn't find *chizuk* even hearing words from rabbis but Hashem guided him to hearing just what he needed to hear to be able to move on in life with *simcha*.

*Chizuk* could come from anywhere. And with the help of Hashem, every person can get exactly the *chizuk* he needs. A man told me his grandparents recently passed away, a few months apart from each other, both around 90 years old. They were people who lived *emunah* and were always thanking and praising Hashem, no matter what was going on in their lives. They were a source of inspiration to all those around them, including their gentile caretakers.

When the second grandparent passed on, one of the caretakers fell into a depression and felt she no longer had any purpose in this world. This went on for several weeks until she recalled that the grandparents always mentioned how much inspiration they got from a book they had on *emunah*. This caretaker went to get the book and began reading it herself.

After a short while, she emerged from her depression and was back to living a regular life. She keeps in touch with some of the grandchildren and recently told them the following story. She lost 200 British pounds which, for her, was a major loss. She said to herself at that time, if Hashem made this happen, it must be for my best. A few hours later, she discovered that her bank had mistakenly credited her with 600 pounds. She then said, "This must be Hashem compensating me for my loss."

When this man heard that story, he became so inspired, seeing how far a little *emunah* could go. The next time he found himself in a difficult situation, he said to himself, "If this gentile is capable of genuinely feeling Hashem's love, in spite of her loss, surely it is within my capabilities to do the same."

Inspiration can do wonders for a person, and it can come from anywhere. May Hashem guide us all to receiving the inspiration that we need. (Living *Emunah* by Rabbi David Ashear – February 9, 2021)

# Is It Kosher to Short Stocks?

By Rabbi Yehuda Shurpin

Addressing the practice from an ethical and halachic perspective



There has been a lot of news coverage lately about a bunch of amateur investors coming together through various platforms to drive up stock prices to “get back” at those shorting stocks (something generally reserved for the more professional and experienced traders). What is the Jewish view on shorting stocks?

Short selling (or shorting) stock is an investment or trading strategy. Think of it like this. You borrow someone’s lawn mower, sell the lawn mower, and then find the same model on Craigslist at a cheaper price, give that one back to the lender, and pocket the difference, assuming (of course) that he is OK with the switch. When shorting stocks, the investor borrows shares and then immediately

sells them in the belief that the price of the shares will soon fall. He can then buy these shares at a significantly lower price to return the shares to the lender, pocketing the difference.

If, however, the price of the stock rises, the short seller, in order to return the stock to the lender, will be forced to buy back the stock at a higher price than what he sold it for and will incur a loss. In the analogy above, if you can't find that same mower on Craigslist at a cheaper price, you're forced to buy it at a higher price to return the mower to the lender.

### **Motives for Shorting Stocks**

Before discussing potential technical halachic issues with shorting stocks, the reason and motives you have for shorting the stock can itself be an issue.<sup>1</sup>

If you short a stock because, in your estimation, based on publicly available information, the stock is overvalued and will likely very soon decrease in price, then it usually isn't considered a problem from an ethical perspective. However, it would not be halachically permissible to short stock based on inside information or suspicion of corporate fraud or similar issues (in which case the stock is overvalued).

Here's why: According to Jewish law, when you sell a product (in this case shares), you must inform the buyer of any flaws you know of. If you fail to disclose a flaw in the product, then the sale is considered void.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, it is not halachically permitted to short stocks if you're the company's competitor and want to make money off the competition. Although in some situations you're allowed to open a business in direct competition with another,<sup>3</sup> you must be making money off your own assets, not the competition's (which is essentially what you are doing when you short stocks).<sup>4</sup>

### **Returning Stock-for-Stock and Usury**

We can now turn to the underlying issue with shorting. According to the Torah, a Jew is prohibited from borrowing or lending money to another Jew with interest (usury).<sup>5</sup> This law applies not just to money, but also merchandise (e.g., you cannot lend someone 5 lb. of apples and have them give you back 6 lb.).<sup>6</sup>

Biblically, one would be allowed to borrow, use and return the same amount (but different) merchandise. However, in many situations, the rabbis prohibit doing so, since the value of the merchandise may have gone up (e.g., the 5 lb. of apples were worth \$5 when they were borrowed, but are worth \$8 now). This prohibited practice is called *se'ah b'se'ah* ("measure for a measure").<sup>7</sup>

For this reason, "loans" of merchandise need to be repaid based on the merchandise's value at the time it was borrowed. If you want to return actual

merchandise, then you need to return the amount equivalent to the value of the merchandise at the time it was borrowed (e.g., only \$5 worth of apples, even though that is now less than the 5 lb. that were borrowed).

Shorting stocks, which is essentially borrowing and returning a product at a different price, is the poster child of this prohibition, if you are borrowing from a fellow Jew. Furthermore, while there is an exception to this prohibition when there is a fixed market price for the product and it is readily available,<sup>8</sup> this obviously would not apply to shares, which are always fluctuating.

### **Owning Some of the Share and *Heter Iska***

There are, however, a number of possible solutions to avoid this prohibition. In general, the rabbis are lenient (since this prohibition is, to begin with, rabbinic in nature) in a situation where the borrower already has the same type of item in his possession (e.g., apples or shares of the same company) at the time the item was borrowed. In this case, we view the transaction as if the borrower simply traded his item for that of the lender's.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, even if the price of the item changes, there is no concern of interest, since it is as if the item is already in the possession of the lender.

Thus, if you actually own some of the shares, it would seemingly be permitted to short.

Alternatively, one would need to draw up a halachic partnership called a *heter iska* with the Jewish person that you are “borrowing” the shares from. In a *heter iska*, the transaction is structured in such a way that both parties are considered partners in the “investment.” Drawing up a *heter iska* can often be complicated, depending on the transaction, and a competent rabbi needs to be consulted.<sup>10</sup>

### **Be Wary of Investing in Stocks**

In general, the Lubavitcher Rebbe discouraged people from investing in the stock market, as he felt it was “largely a matter of speculation . . . [and] it is particularly objectionable because of the anxiety and nervous strain that it creates in some people.”<sup>11</sup> Instead, the Rebbe advised people to consider other types of investments.

### **FOOTNOTES**

1. Much of what follows is based on Rabbi Aaron Levine's article “Short Selling and Jewish Law.” *Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2010.
2. *Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat* 233:1.
3. The details are beyond the scope of this article.
4. *Pitchei Choshen, Hilchot Geneivah v'Onaah* 9:11, 26.

5. See Moneylending and Jewish Law for why this prohibition only applies to loans when both parties are Jewish.
6. Deuteronomy 23:20.
7. Talmud, Bava Metzia 75a.
8. See *Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah* 162:3.
9. *Ibid.*, 162:2.
10. For more on this, see Moneylending and Jewish Law.
11. See, for example, letter from the Rebbe, dated 5726 [1966].

*Reprinted from the Parshat Mishpatim 5781 email of Chabad.Org Magazine.*

## Even the Thoughts

Hashem is involved not only with our physical actions; He is also involved in our thoughts as well. A man told me this morning he looked at his watch and saw he had 15 minutes to spare after he prayed Shacharit and, since he was in his mother's neighborhood, he decided to stop in and say hello. He pointed out to me that he had never done that before.

When he arrived, he saw his mother trying to shovel her car out of the driveway. It would have taken her at least an hour with all that snow there, and she is a woman in her sixties. Her son said, "Mom, what are you doing?"

She said she needed to go give breakfast to her mother, who is in her nineties. She didn't want to get anyone else to do it, because she wanted to fulfill the mitzvah of *kibud Av v'Em* herself. Her son told her he would be happy to drive her, and that's what he did. He said afterward, "My mother wanted to honor her mother, and so Hashem put in my mind for me to go and honor her."

The *gabai tzedaka* at Mosdot Kever Rachel told me he sent out a request a couple of weeks ago for people to sponsor food packages being given out for Shabbat at Kever Rachel. A woman aged forty contacted him and said she pledged to give \$1000, but on condition that people would pray for her at Kever Rachel to find a certain individual she has been looking for. She explained, twenty years before, she had publicly humiliated someone and never asked for forgiveness.

When she was 25 and having so much difficulty with *shidduchim*, her father went to the great *mekubal* Rav Yitzchak Kaduri to get a *beracha* for her. That meeting took place just about a month before the Rabbi passed away. Rabbi Kaduri told her father, "She will not find a *shidduch* until she gets forgiven for the public humiliation she caused the other girl. It was amazing how the Rabbi knew that

about that without even being told. Ever since then, this woman has been trying to find that girl, but she was never able to. Now, at age forty, she was asking the *gabai tzedaka* to get people to pray for her at Kever Rachel and have the *zechut* of giving money for food for people to get extra *siyata d'Shamaya*.

That took place on a Thursday. A few days later, this woman received a phone call from someone who she went to high school with, who wanted to suggest a possible *shidduch* for her. She admitted it was a little embarrassing, being that the caller was already a mother of children of marriageable age. The woman told her, “Thank you for the offer, but I need to find a certain girl first,” and she explained.

The friend said, “I have information about her. I think it might be able to help you find her. She gave over the information and within hours, the woman finally had that girl on the line. She begged her for forgiveness with tears and she was forgiven. We hope to hear more good news, b’ezrat Hashem, about the engagement of this woman soon.

Look how Hashem put the thought in the mind of that friend from high school, the person who had information on that girl, to call with that *shidduch* suggestion. That was Hashem, getting involved in a person’s thoughts. We must know Hashem can help us with any problem, and always pray with that *emunah*. He is in charge of everything, even the thoughts that go through our brains. (Living *Emunah* by Rabbi David Ashear – February 10, 2021)

# Jews of Myanmar: 10 Facts

By Dr. Yvette Alt Miller



*Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, has a fascinating Jewish history.*

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Here are some little-known facts about Myanmar, Jews, and the Jewish state.

## **Early Jewish Visitors**

In the early 1800s, Jewish traders – primarily from India and Iraq – began to venture into present-day Myanmar. The first Jew to live permanently in the country is said to have been an Indian Jew named Solomon Gabirol, who served as commissar in the army of King Alaungpaya, the 18th Century Burmese monarch who established the Konbaung Dynasty, which ruled Burma until 1885.

Once British forces entered Burma in the 1820s, there are records of some Jewish traders working in the country. One of them, Solomon Reinman, moved from Galicia to the bustling city of Rangoon in 1851, where he traded teak and bamboo. Reinman later moved to the Indian city of Cochin, which had a Jewish community at the time, married, and spent 25 years there. Late in life, he returned to Europe, moved to Vienna and wrote a Hebrew-language account of his travels

called *Masot Shelomo*, or Travels of Solomon. It was one of the first western accounts of Myanmar.

### **Bringing Baghdad Jewish Culture to Burma**

By the mid-1800s a large community of Jews from Baghdad lived and worked in Burma. Writer Ruth Fredman Cernea, author of *Almost Englishman: Baghdadi Jews in British Burma* (Lexington Books: 2006) notes that these Jewish traders came “as an extended family,” and used their extensive social and familial connections to facilitate trade throughout Asia.



**Indian Jews soon could be found in Rangoon working as clerks both for British colonialists and Baghdadi Jewish traders. Some Bene Israel workers labored at the docks in the Burmese port of Mandalay.**

In addition to trading a range of goods, she notes, “They also serviced the ships that docked in the busy Rangoon harbor. Some entered the civil service as government officials and customs officers; others worked as clerks in Baghdadi stores on Mogul or Dalhousie Streets (in Rangoon). Even as they became more comfortable in Burma, the Burma Jewish community was an intrinsic part of the broader Baghdadi world that existed throughout Southeast Asia... Rangoon or Mandalay (another Burmese city) might be their mailing address, but their ‘home’

could not be so easily defined or confined.” These Jewish traders brought a slice of Baghdadi Jewish life to their new homes overseas.

### **Jewish Cultural Mixing**

Soon, other Jews began to settle in Burma. Ruth Fredman Cernea notes that although the Baghdadi Jews were sophisticated traders, their English was often poor and prevented them working for Burma’s new British colonizers. Instead, it was Indian Jews – from the city of Cochin which had long been home to a thriving Jewish community and poorer Bene Israel Jews from smaller towns and villages – who were often more fluent in English and who found it easier to work for the British.

### ***Arook Thayin: Chicken Croquettes Burmese Style***

Food historian Claudia Roden notes that culinarily, “It was Jews of Baghdadi origin who organized the congregation (of Burmese Jews), and it is their style of cooking that influenced the Jewish style that developed locally.” She supplies this recipe as an example of the Burmese style of Jewish cooking that developed in Burma.

4 scallions, very finely chopped

½ – 2 fresh green chilies, seeded and very finely chopped

¼ cup chopped coriander leaves

3 chicken-breast fillets weighing about 12 oz (350 g)

3 T flour

4 eggs

Juice of 1 ½ inch (4 cm) piece of fresh ginger, crushed in a garlic press, or the grated pieces

Salt

Light vegetable oil for deep-frying, about 1 inch (2 ½ cm) deep

Chop the scallions, chilies (“half a chili is enough for me,” Claudia Roden notes), and coriander in the food processor. Then add the chicken, flour, eggs, ginger, and salt, and process until the chicken is finely chopped and all the ingredients are well blended. Chill, covered, for 1-2 hours.

Deep-fry by the heaping tablespoon (dip the spoon in oil so that the mixture does not stick) in medium-hot oil turning over once, until browned all over. Drain on paper towels. The recipe makes about 14 2 ½ inch (6 cm) fritters and up to 36 tiny ones. Serve hot or cold.

(From *The Book of Jewish Food: An Odyssey From Samarkand to New York*, Claudia Roden: 1996.)

## Azariah Samuel

One of the first Baghdadi Jews to settle in Burma moved to the remote city of Akyab (later called Sittwe), a port city on the Bay of Bengal. Cut off from Jewish communities, Azariah nevertheless came prepared to live a religious Jewish life. He traveled with his own *shochet* or Jewish ritual slaughterer, to ensure that he and his family could have a supply of kosher meat, and seemingly never compromised his Orthodox Jewish lifestyle.



*Sammy Samuels, second from right, sings at a Hanukkah event with Burmese leaders. Israel's ambassador to Myanmar, Ronen Gilor, is third from left; between them is Phyto Min Thein, the chief minister of the Yangon region, Dec. 7, 2018. (Charles Dunst)*

Azariah's family eventually numbered five children. He and his wife built a Jewish cemetery, which still exists in Sittwe; one of their sons tragically died in childhood and is buried there. As a Jewish community grew up in the Burmese capital, Rangoon, the Samuel family would sometimes travel there for Jewish festivals, or else host other Burmese Jews in Akyab. By the 1880s Azariah Samuel was a prominent businessman in the town. His son Samuel Haim Samuel took over many of his father's properties, which included a wine store and cinema. Samuel

Haim was also a *shochet*, having learned the trade from the *shochet* his father first brought with him to Burma.

The entire Samuel family left Burma in 1931, moving to the Indian city of Calcutta, and eventually moving on to Australia and London.

### **Working in the Royal Court**

Other Jews traveled to the royal city of Yadanabon, also known as Mandalay or “The City of Gems” to work in the Burmese royal court there. Jewish merchants Aaron Jacob Elias Aaron and his son David Hai Aaron were royal accountants working for King Mindon.

In 1878 King Mindon’s son Thibaw was crowned. A bloody ruler, he tried to regain his kingdom from the British and was eventually defeated and forced into exile in 1885. Through these long years of fighting and bloody mayhem, a Jewish community managed to hang on in Mandalay.

Saul Reuben Hakham Rabbi Sasson arrived in the royal city in 1878 along with his son Mordechai Saul. The pair had just travelled from Baghdad on a bizarre errand. Mordechai Saul was engaged to marry his teenage second cousin Seema, but Seema and her family fled Baghdad after a bandit – the family said an Arab sheikh – kidnapped Seema’s older sister and held her for ransom.

Reunited in Mandalay, Mordechai Saul and Seema married. Seeking permission to set up a business in the royal city, Mordechai Saul petitioned for an audience with King Thibaw. He wanted to make a good impression, so he brought with him some bottles of expensive perfume he’d carried to Burma all the way from Baghdad, and presented them to Queen Supaylat as a gift.

Delighted with the beautiful bottles – and presumably unfamiliar with the concept of perfume – Queen Supaylat opened them, poured the perfume out onto the floor, and declared herself delighted with the beautiful flower-holding bottles which she had placed in front of the palace’s Buddha statue.

Mordechai and Seema Saul quickly travelled to Baghdad to buy more perfume bottles, and for years they operated a store on the palace grounds, selling perfume so that Burmese customers could enjoy the beautiful bottles, just as Queen Supaylat had done.

### **Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue**

In 1854 the small Jewish community of Rangoon built a synagogue, Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue. In 1896, when the city’s Jewish population had swelled to over 200, the community rebuilt the synagogue out of stone. The building bears a striking resemblance to the Magen David synagogue in Calcutta in India: one visitor described it as having a “soaring ceiling, memorial lamps suspended in midair and pale beams over a central carved bimah located in

the center of the prayer hall, surrounded by benches for the worshippers. Above them is a women's gallery."



*Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue, (Photo by Ben Frank)*

### **Glory Days in the 1930s**

By the 1930s, about 3,000 Jews lived in Burma, most in Rangoon, the country's new capital. A second synagogue, Beth El, was built there in 1932. Then known as Yangon, the capital city even had a Jewish mayor in the 1930s: local businessman David Sofaer.

Locals have recalled that "Jewish restaurants, pharmacies, and schools once marked the city's streets." Even today, some buildings in downtown Rangoon boast Jewish stars on their facades, a hint that years ago they might have been owned by Burmese Jews.

Burma was devastated during World War II when it was bombed and invaded by Japan. Nearly all of the country's Jews fled, moving to India, present-

day Israel and elsewhere. After the war, a few hundred Jews returned, but they nearly all left the country as it pursued repressive policies. By 2010, only about 20 Jews remained in all of Rangoon.



*The beautiful Sofaer building still stands at the corner of Pansodan (Phayre Street) and Merchant Street. The photograph is of an early Sofaer business along Merchant Street.*

### **Burmese-Israeli Friendship**

Burma and Israel each gained independence in 1948, and the two countries forged a close relationship in the 1950s. In 1955, Burmese Prime Minister U Nu became the first foreign prime minister to visit Israel.

Journalist Joe Freeman notes that this was an immensely important event. “Today, it’s difficult to revive the importance of his act, but at the time, it was highly significant. U Nu was a major figure among leaders of non-Western countries, many of which had opposed Israel’s establishment.” That same year,

Israel appointed its first envoy to an Asian country, naming David HaCohen Israel's minister to Burma.



*Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion accompanied by Burmese Former Chief Justice U Thein Mg, in Rangoon December 10, 1961.*

Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir wrote extensively about Burma in her autobiography *My Life* (1975). “I think there was no developing country in the world...with which we conducted such an ardent love affair. For years there seemed to be nothing about Israel that the Burmese did not admire or want to emulate...” Golda Meir organized visits of Burmese people to Israel so they could learn from the Jewish state. Sharing a hostile border with China, it was especially instructive for Burmese civilians to learn how Israel managed to survive surrounded by hostile Arab neighbors.

In 1961, Golda Meir and her husband Menachem visited Burma. “I could...hardly believe that I was not dreaming when we landed at a northern airport and all the Burmese wives and children who had once been in Israel greeted me with Hebrew songs and Israeli flags. I don't think I will ever forget walking up to

one of the little houses in Namsang and saying in Hebrew to a young Burmese who stood in the doorway: *'Shalom, ma nish ma?'* ('Shalom, how are things?') and hearing him answer, like a real Israeli, *'Beseder, aval ein maspeek mayim.'* ('Fine, but there isn't enough water'.) I might have been in (the Israeli city) Revivim," Meir recalled.

### **Last Jews in Rangoon**

For the past six years, it's fallen to one man, a Burmese Jewish entrepreneur in his 40s named Sammy Samuels, to maintain Rangoon's Jewish sites. He took over leadership of Burma's Jewish community in 2015, when his father Moses, who was the leader, passed away.



***Sammy Samuels***

Sammy's Burmese name is Aung Soe Lwin, and he's one of perhaps twenty Jews who still live in the city. These days, nearly the only visitors to Burma's Jewish sites are tourists. Despite the almost total lack of local Jews, Sammy is optimistic about Jewish life in Burma today. "People (here) would not understand what 'anti-Semitism' is," he explains; "Thank G-d, there's no such word here."

*Reprinted from the February 6, 2021 website of Aish.com*

# The Power Of Shalom

The power of forgiving is great. The more difficult it is to do, the greater the merit the person gets for doing it. When we forgive others, Hashem forgives us. A person who has been wronged or humiliated might say to himself, “How is it possible for me to forgive someone who hurt me so badly?”

The person may have suffered for days, weeks or even years, as a result of what someone else did to him. It’s a very difficult feat to accomplish, but our Rabbis have suggested ways to go about doing it. One approach is to talk to Hashem first, to beg Him to give the strength and ability to forgive. A person could say, “Hashem, you know how much pain I have suffered. You know how difficult it is for me to forgive. I know everything comes from You, and I am supposed to look at the wrongdoer as a puppet, but I am just flesh and blood, and it is extremely hard for me. Please help me do it in Your honor.”

A person could also take a pen and paper and write, “*L’shem yichud...*” about the fact that he is going to forgive, and then write it should be *l’ilui nishmat* a loved one, or in *zechut* for someone else and that it should atone for all the person’s sins, whether during this lifetime or a previous one. The greatest gain that a person will get is that he will be doing the *ratzon* Hashem. And of course, there will also be side benefits that come along with it.

A man told me he has had an ongoing lawsuit regarding the mortgage on his house, and it has been dragging out for years. If he loses, he’s going to be thrown out of his home. As well, recently, his father-in-law had gone into the hospital and was on a ventilator not doing well. He and his wife spoke to a rabbi for guidance on how to access Hashem’s mercy. The rabbi asked them if they were in a dispute with anyone. His wife said she hasn’t spoken to her mother in eight months. The rabbi told her, “Go right now and ask forgiveness. Go and make peace and, *b’ezrat* Hashem, that will help you.” It was extremely difficult for her to do, but she talked herself into doing it.

Last week, at 1:00 in the afternoon one day, she started writing a text message to make peace with her mother. While she was in the middle of typing the message, the lawyer called and said, “Good news! We just won the case on the mortgage.” After five long years, the moment she was going to forgive is when Hashem gave her the victory. She then sent the text message. Five minutes after that, the hospital called and said her father had an improvement in his condition.

They felt that Hashem was talking to them so clearly and were so excited to share this story.

Another woman was in the hospital with Covid and the doctors told her husband she had a pulmonary embolism, which is massive blood clots in the lungs, and her life was in jeopardy. Her husband spoke to a rabbi who told him, if there is anyone that you are in a dispute with, make peace with them; it will be an enormous *zechut*. There was someone who had hard feelings towards him. He went to that person's house and made amends. Within hours, his wife took a major turn for the better and was released from the hospital just a couple of days later. The doctors were in awe.

This is the power of shalom. It is extremely difficult to forgive, or to apologize, but it is well worth it. (Living Emunah by Rabbi David Ashear – February 11, 2021)

## The Daughter of a King



There are some women who have been so accustomed to wearing immodest clothes that they find it difficult to comprehend the great importance Jewish law attributes to a modest dress code. If they could only imagine the high level of morality the nation of Israel would be on had all the women dressed in a respectable, modest way, their perspective would change.

The tensions that exist in the workplace and in other places outside the home would dissipate and many destructive behaviors and damages that occur as a result

of these tensions would break. It's no secret that many cases of domestic turmoil, emotional breakdowns, violence, and even murder and suicide are caused by impulses that could have been prevented had a modest dress code been adopted, as this kind of unassuming style creates an inner and outer atmosphere of respect. When a woman's appearance is proper and befitting, it's easier for her to avoid inappropriate places of entertainment or conversations that wander off into tasteless territory.

#### **Four perspectives on modesty:**

1. As we know, diamonds and other valuables are kept in respectable hiding places; they do not roll around on the streets like useless pieces of trash. A woman who maintains her dignity and doesn't publically display certain parts of her body is proving to herself and to the world that she is a precious diamond that people do not have a right to stare at. The self-image and self-worth of this woman is elevated in her own eyes as well as in the eyes of others. However, a woman who tries to attract attention by exposing parts of her body is showing that she does not have any inner substance that she can be valued for and therefore must use her body to receive that recognition.

2. When you look at something, it's as if you're using it. That's why you need to pay to see a show, a concert, or a film, even though you don't actually walk away with anything physical. So what kind of respectable woman would allow the eyes of random passersby to use her body in such a way?

3. Staring is like touching. As we know, the eyes give off a certain beam that forms a connection with the object that the person stares at (staring is different than looking, as it involves closer examination). Our sages say the following regarding this type of staring: "One may not stand over his neighbor's field when its crop is fully grown,"[1] when its stalks are ripe and its crops are standing in the field in all their glory. This kind of staring can cause damage to his neighbor's crops. The same is true for any kind of staring that attracts the eye, as it can cause an "evil eye" on that which is stared at with great concentration. A woman's modesty protects her from this kind of damage that can potentially cripple many areas of her life.

4. One of the negative mitzvot of the Torah is, "Do not place a stumbling block before a blind man." [2] This prohibition includes anything that causes spiritual damage to another person. The Rambam says in *Sefer HaMitzvot*, "This prohibition also includes assisting another in the commission of a sin, for he will lead that person, whose rational sight was clouded by his impulse and desire, to become blind, and he will tempt and assist him in completing his sin or he will set the stage for him to carry out the sin." [3]

If someone sees a woman dressed immodestly, and seeing her this way causes him to have improper thoughts, she becomes guilty of committing a severe Torah prohibition by simply walking down the street. Knowing this, what woman would agree to put herself in such a position? By doing this, she accumulates heavy bags of transgressions without even knowing it. (And what about at a pool or beach? Is the dignity of a woman who exposes herself at the beach or the pool any different than that of a woman who exposes herself to the guests in her living room?)

A Jewish woman must always remember that since she has always been a highly esteemed princess, she cannot allow herself to imitate the simple girls of the land. Anyone born from or has lawfully converted to the seed of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov[4] belongs to a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”[5] This is the nation concerning which G-d said, “You are children to Hashem your G-d,”[6] and “I have separated you from the peoples to be Mine.”[7] In other words, “The nations of the world are citizens of My country, but you are My children, as you are the descendants of the Patriarchs who maintained their loyalty by sacrificing themselves to Me, and I have therefore chosen their children to represent Me in the world.” – [8]

This noble title was not granted to her by humans, rather the Creator of the world gave her the title of “princess.” She is the daughter of the King of the world! It is certainly proper for every Jewish woman, through her appearance, to hold herself and her Father in high regard—as He is the King of all Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

### Notes and Sources

[1] *Bava Metzia* 107a.

[2] *Vayikra* 9:14.

[3] *Sefer HaMitzvot*, negative mitzvah 299.

[4] A lawful conversion means circumcision, immersion in a *mikveh*, and acceptance of the mitzvot. This process transforms the structure of the soul. If one of these steps is missing, a person remains a total gentile. For further reading on this topic, see *HaTzofen*, pp. 336–337.

[5] *Shemot* 19:6.

[6] *Devarim* 14:1.

[7] *Vayikra* 20:26.

[8] *Tehillim* 45:14.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Mishpatim 5781 website of Hidabroot.com*

# Sages Under the Stars



Rabbi Moshe Karelman, a brilliant Talmudist and his star pupil Yeshaya are traveling to Vilna when they have to stop for the night, and pitch their tent in an empty field. After the evening prayers Rabbi Karelman and Yeshaya retire for the evening.

Some hours later, Rabbi Karelman wakes up and nudges his student. “Yeshaya, look up at the sky and tell me what you see.”

“I see millions and millions of stars, Rabbi Karelman.” “And from this, what do you deduce?” Yeshaya ponders for a minute. “Well, astronomically, this view conveys the vastness of the heavens. Chronometrically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. Theologically, I can see that G-d is all powerful, and that we are a small and insignificant part of His universe. What does it tell you, Rabbi Karelman?”

“Yeshaya, someone has stolen our tent.”

*Reprinted from the Parshat Mishpatim 5781 email of Lekavod Shabbos Magazine*

# The “Gross” Doctor and The Czenger Tzaddik

By Dovid Hoffman

In the city of Grosswardein, Hungary, lived a man who was experiencing terrible pain in his leg. The pain became so excruciating that he was finally persuaded to see a specialist, a top doctor in the city by the name of Dr. Gross.

Many people were hesitant to go to this doctor for he was known as a haughty individual who had very little sympathy or empathy for his patients. He looked at each one as a case subject and when he made a pronouncement or a diagnosis, there was nothing one could do to convince him otherwise.

## **Yet He was Jewish and a Gifted Specialist**

On the other hand, he was Jewish and he really was a gifted specialist. Many Rabbanim would consult with him and send their congregants to him for medical treatments. On the day of the appointment, the man was seen by Dr. Gross who evaluated that he had developed a serious infection in his leg and gangrene had already set in.

Therefore, pronounced the doctor, without the slightest bit of sympathy, he must travel to the major medical center in Budapest where his only recourse was to have his leg amputated from the knee down. The patient was terrified and asked if there was some other way, but Dr. Gross merely looked at him and stormed out of the examination room, angrily muttering, “How dare he question Dr. Gross’ diagnosis!”

The downtrodden man was devastated by the news but his family urged him to book a train ticket and travel to Budapest as soon as possible, before the infection could become life-threatening. The man did as he was told and the next day, he found himself traveling alone on the Bahn from Grosswardein to Budapest.

## **Met a Fellow Jew on the Train to Budapest**

A fellow Jew was on the train and couldn’t help but notice how sad and depressed the man looked. He sat down next to him and asked if there was anything he could do to help. The man shook his head and explained with tears in his eyes, that he had a serious infection and a big specialist told him that he needed his leg amputated to save his life.

The Jew took his hand warmly and said, “I live in Czenger, which is a few stops along the way, and you must come with me to R’ Asher Anshel (Yungreis)

zt"l, the Tzaddik of Czenger. Let him give you a beracha and you will see that all will be well."

The man protested that this was a matter of life and death and he didn't have time to make a stop-over, but the Jew insisted saying, "So many people have seen yeshuos from the tzaddik. I'm sure you will too. You must come with me!"

### **Wouldn't Take No for an Answer**

He wouldn't take no for an answer so the two got off in Czenger and went straight to the home of the Menuchas Asher. Once again, the man tearfully related his tale of woe and R' Asher Anshel listened with a pained heart. Then, he stood up and took out a vial of cream from a drawer. He handed it to the man and said, "Rub this on your leg right away."

The man took the cream and rubbed it on the affected area and within minutes, he could feel a tingling in his leg. He watched in amazement as over the course of a few hours, the redness and swelling in his lower leg were reduced to almost nothing and incredibly, the pain was gone! He was shocked and thrilled and went back to the tzaddik to thank him.

Then, instead of continuing on to Budapest, the man got back on the Bahn and traveled home to Grosswardein. He arrived in the late afternoon and headed straight to the home of the Rav, R' Binyamin Fuchs zt"l. When he walked in, he was shocked to meet none other than the famous Dr. Gross, who had come to the rabbi's home to consult on an important matter.

### **Told the Doctor About the Miracle**

The newly recovered man told Dr. Gross about the miracle cream that the Czenger Tzaddik had given him and how in a matter of a few hours, he seemed to be totally cured. Dr. Gross recognized the man and was annoyed that he had not followed his advice and gone straight to the hospital in Budapest for the scheduled amputation.

He was skeptical and examined the man's leg. He probed and touched it from all angles, and even did a meticulous examination. He was shocked. The leg was totally and inexplicably healed!

"How is this possible?" asked the doctor, and the man again described how the Tzaddik had given him a beracha and a basic cream, and Hashem had healed him in a matter of hours.

This time, Dr. Gross was thoughtful. After a moment, he looked up and declared, "All this time, I thought that Dr. Gross is G-d and G-d is not all that grois (great). Now, I see that really G-d is grois, and Gross is no G-d after all!"

*Reprinted from the Parshas Mishpatim 5781 email of Torah Tavlin.*

# Hagaon Harav Dovid Feinstein, Zt”l — Chasdei Dovid Hane’emanim

By Rabbi Binyomin Zev Karman



“He was a Gaon, a brilliant tamid chacham. Decades ago, his father (Hagaon Harav Moshe, zt”l) attested that “er ken Shas — he knows Shas.” Rav Moshe was measuring it with his own comprehension, and he said Rav Dovid knew it expertly. And he continued learning without pause.

“He was certainly a Posek. Harav Elyashiv, zt”l, considered him the Posek for America.

“He was ehrlich. The Rosh Yeshivah (Rav Moshe) said, “Du vest nisht gefinen aza ehrliche vi ehm — You will not find another ehrliche person like him.”

“So what can I add?” Harav Chaim Ganzweig, shlita, the Mashgiach of Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim asked the crowd of thousands mourning the loss of Harav Dovid Feinstein, zt”l. “The passuk in Yeshayah (55:3) states, “Chasdei Dovid hane’emanim.” Although the meforshim explain it refers to the kindnesses that Hashem does, which are permanent, I would like to explain, b’derech drush, that it may be going on the chessed that our Rav Dovid performed the entire day.

### **Interacted with People Regardless If They Were Rich or Poor**

“He was not obligated to take responsibility for the yeshivah, nor for the kollel. And, indeed, all the harbotzas haTorah that he performed was entirely chessed. The way he interacted with people, regardless if they were rich or poor, wise or foolish, talmid chacham or am haaretz, great or small, all were recipients of his endless chessed. Most did not even realize the chessed he was doing for them, as he did a tovah for each person according to the individual’s need.”

As these poignant words of Rav Ganzweig reverberated through the crowd, tears streamed down not only from his eyes, but undoubtedly down the faces of the thousands who gathered to pay the kvod haacharon to the humble figure who nevertheless towered above the rest. He wore a plain jacket and no kapote, and his hat was just as plain. But those who knew him, or even happened to meet him for just a short time, soon came to realize that he was clothed in greatness.

### **He Remained Oblivious to All of the Fame**

“Before my zeide was niftar (in 5746/1986), few people out of the circle of his talmidim knew who he was,” his son, Rabbi Mordechai said. “He sat behind a beam and never sat on the mizrach until he was forced to move there when he took over the yeshivah and kollel after my zeide passed away. Suddenly, he exploded on the scene, and he was famous, but he remained oblivious to it all. He never rubbed shoulders with the prestigious people, but rather remained together with every single Yid.

“He shouldered the burden of the yeshiva and kollel, and undertook responsibilities for the klal like Chinuch Atzmai, and for the yeshivah of Rav Michel (Feinstein). But he still shlepped to weddings, and not only for those close to him. If someone who only knew him in passing needed a mesader kiddushin, he

shlepped there. And he would come even if he was not accorded any kibud, because that was irrelevant to him. He did it to help another Yid.”

Rabbi Shmuel Fishelis, the son-in-law of Rav Dovid, began the levayah with reciting several kapitlach of Tehillim, and then summed up what Rav Dovid was for our generation. “Moshe Rabbeinu asked Hashem to appoint his successor as ‘Ish asher ruach bo’ (Bamidbar, 27:18) which Rashi explains to mean a person who could deal with the spirit of each individual. Rav Dovid knew how to give chizuk to each individual, how to give a smile and encouragement as the person needed.

### **Rav Dovid Embodied all the Virtues of the Avos**

“We know that Avraham was the pillar of chessed, Yitzchak the pillar of tefillah and avodah, and Yaakov was the ish tam yoshev ohalim. Rav Dovid embodied all these virtues. His chessed encompassed all, his tefillos in which he davened for all who approached him for brachos, and for Klal Yisrael as he carried their tzaros, and of course the Torah, where he was the address for the she’eilos from all corners of the world. The passuk (Shmuel I, 16:18) says concerning Dovid, ‘vaHashem imo.’ The Gemara in Sanhedrin (93b) explains this to mean that the halachah was like him in all places. And Rav Dovid’s psak was indeed respected in all places.”

Harav Reuven Feinstein, shlita, spoke about the need to understand the loss of such a towering Gadol. “My father (Rav Moshe) asked why in this week’s parashah, it says that Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and to cry for her. We know that Chazal say that bechi — crying — comes first (for three days). So why does it mention that Avraham said a hesped before it says he cried? The answer is that it depends on whom you are speaking to. If people do not realize what they lost, then you must first explain it in a hesped, and only then they can cry properly.

### **The Eyes of the Congregation**

“The Gedolei hador are called the einai ha’eidah — the eyes of the congregation. They have the ability to see the future ramifications of everything that is transpiring now. Rav Dovid was able to foresee what lies in store because he lived through so many difficult tekufos. He saw the yeridah of Torah when he lived under the Stalinist regime, when he was unable to learn Torah with his father, yet er iz oisgeshtigen — he grew in that time, and eventually saw the Torah’s growth. He saw the tzaros of the world, and we need him so much now, to analyze and guide us in what is happening. If we do not understand that, then we should cry for that lack of understanding alone.”

Rav Dovid was born in Luban, Russia, in 5689/1929, while his father, Hagaon Harav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, served as Rav. As the Stalinist regime began harassing the Rabbanim, the family fled to America and settled on the Lower East Side. Rav Dovid learned in Mesivtha Tiferes Jerusalem with his father, and eventually began delivering shiurim there.

### **Following in the Footsteps of His Illustrious Father**

When his father was niftar, he took over the yeshivah and many of his responsibilities, including becoming a prominent chaver of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of Agudas Yisrael of America; a member of the Vaad Roshei Yeshivah of Torah Umesorah; and was involved in Chinuch Atzmai, Agudas Harabbonim, and many other communal organizations. He wrote several sefarim, and answered she'eilos throughout the day and night from around the world.

\* \* \*

Rabbi Moshe Dovid Tendler, a brother-in-law of Rav Dovid, described how Rav Dovid dealt with each person exactly as he should, and was a perfect fit. He explained that Rashi tells us in the beginning of this week's parashah that Sarah was as beautiful at 20 as she was at 7 years old. In what way is a 20-year-old better than a 7-year-old? At 20, a girl may dress in a way which is not proper, and she stands out as not fitting.

A 7-year-old has a certain charm that no matter what, she seems to fit perfectly, which helps people overlook minor infractions of social standards. That attribute was most befitting for Rav Dovid, since he knew exactly how to deal with each person; he interacted with his talmidim in the best manner, he answered she'eilos in the best manner. And, with his family, as was proper for them. "In each situation, he dealt with it as Hashem would want it to be dealt with. The informality of his smile belied the manner in which he spoke."

### **Described as an Extraordinary Person**

Harav Shmuel Kamenetsky, shlita, Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshiva of Philadelphia, spoke briefly and described Rav Dovid as "an oisnahm fuhn ah mentch (an extraordinary person). It is especially hard to describe the many facets of his personality. He was kulo tov, kulo geshmak. He was a chaver tov, a good friend. He was a min bifnei atzmo (a breed unto himself). He understood everyone and what they needed, and he did whatever he could do to help."

Rabbi Shlomo Fishelis, his grandson, who served as his gabbai in recent years, described some of the personal hanhagos he was able to observe. "He was so consistent. He would sit for three or four hours saying Kinot, and after three hours he was saying it exactly the same as he was at the beginning. His hasmadah was

indescribable. Even when his boisterous triplet grandchildren entered the room, he continued his learning as he was oblivious to everything while he learned.

“He walked the streets with such hatzneia leches, like he was one of us, while he was actually on a different plane. He once said that he was born during the week of Behaalos’cha, where the Haftarah speaks about lashon hara. He said it had an effect on him, as he was quiet by nature, which helped him keep out of trouble. Yet he knew how to speak when he had to, and he let his family know that the door was always open to speak to him whatever they felt the need to.

### **Following the Will of Hashem that He Drink of Yom Kppur**

The final speaker, his son Rabbi Mordechai Feinstein, told how over the past few months, he was able to perform many of the mitzvos and he did them with such simchah, which was a characteristic he exuded throughout his lifetime. He related how when the doctors told him he had to drink on Yom Kippur, he was not upset, since it was now the will of Hashem for him to drink. His entire life, he was vigilant to daven b’tzibbur, but when he was not able to do it lately, he was not upset, since this was now the retzon Hashem.

Reb Mordechai thanked all the people who helped over the years and over the last few months in particular when he was ill, and asked mechilah if he was negligent in giving the proper kavod. During his recent illness, Rav Dovid mentioned that he wished to ask others to be mochel him if he slighted them, and therefore Rav Mordechai was requesting everyone to oblige.

### **Transported to Eretz Yisroel for Kevurah (Burial)**

Rabbi Adelman, the director of Mesivta Tifereth Yerushalayim recited the Kel Malei Rachamim and asked mechilah in the name of the staff of the yeshivah. The aron then headed to the airport where it was transported for kevurah in Eretz Yisrael.

Yehi zichro baruch.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Chaye Sara 5781 email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace [as compiled and edited by Rabbi David Bibi.] Originally published in the Hamodia.*

# The Power of Seeing Good in Others

By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser



R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld [pictured above] related the following incident about R' Nachum Shadiker (cited in Tiv HaMaaseh):

R' Nachum was a young yeshiva student in a town whose inhabitants were persecuted by a moser (informer). He hated his brethren, but every Shabbos he would come to shul and demand an aliyah, and he would receive it because everyone feared what he would do if he were denied it.

Once, as he was walking, he encountered a Jew carrying a case of eggs and summarily demanded them, but the man refused to hand them over. The informer became infuriated. He promptly grabbed the carton of eggs out of the man's hands, and smashed all its contents over his head, covering the poor man in eggs from head to toe.

## **The Victim Demanded a Din Torah**

Deeply pained, the man ran to the rav to request a din Torah. The rav's patience had already worn thin from the moser's abominable behavior, and he sent his attendant to summon the informer to court. The moser grabbed the summons, but did not show up on the appointed day. Nor did he respond to a second and third summons.

The following Shabbos, the moser came to shul as usual and demanded an aliyah. As he approached the bimah, though, the rav rose from his place and shouted, “You arrogant rasha! Leave the shul immediately! You have been intimidating the residents of the town, and you scorn daas Torah. You have brazenly ignored the summonses to a din Torah, and you therefore have no permission to step into the House of G-d.”

As the moser walked past the rav, he threatened, “I will get my revenge on you.”

That same week, the rav set out for a bris in a nearby city accompanied by two of his students, one of whom was R’ Nachum Shadiker. On the road, they saw the moser with a gun in hand pursuing them, and they became very frightened.

However, when the informer approached, he fell at the feet of the rav and begged for his forgiveness. He then gave the rav a large sum of money to pay for the carton of eggs he had broken and to compensate the poor man for the embarrassment and pain he had caused him.

### **The Rav Sternly Warned the Moser Against Any Further Wrongdoing**

The rav accepted his contrition and sternly warned him against any further wrongdoing.

As he was leaving, though, the moser remarked, “I will have to break the bones of these two disciples,” and with the gun in his hand, he struck R’ Nachum Shadiker.

The rav later explained to his students what had transpired. “When I saw this evil person in pursuit, I tried to justify his actions. I considered possible events in his life that could have fostered such cruelty in him – his parents, his teachers, his education. Surely it was not his fault that he acted this way, I speculated. Perhaps I should not have embarrassed him as I did in public.

“It was as if he intuited my feelings. His mindset and demeanor began to change, and he realized that perhaps I had been correct in rebuking him so harshly. He understood that I had no other choice but to deal with him in the way that I did so that people would know that they could not defy the rav or reject daas Torah. With that recognition, he began to truly regret what he had done.

However, the two of you were consumed with negative thoughts and hostility toward him, so he was hostile and antagonistic toward you in return.”

*Reprinted from the April 15, 2021 website of The Jewish Press.*

# The Unusual Kiddush Hashem

By Rabbi Joey Haber



The story is told of an Orthodox Jew who went on a business trip and was at the airport for his flight home. As he went through security, he experienced everyone's nightmare – after he took off his shoes and his belt and went through the metal detector, his shoes were gone.

He looked everywhere, the security personnel looked everywhere, but the shoes were nowhere to be found. There was nothing he could do – he needed to rush to the gate for his flight.

He walked barefoot to the gate, and he saw that the passengers would have to walk outside on the tarmac to get onto the plane – and it was raining.

A fellow passenger, a woman, saw his predicament and offered to help. She said she had a pair of slippers with her that she'd be happy to lend him. The woman pulled them out of her bag – and the man saw a pair of bright pink, fluffy slippers. He had no choice, so he put them on, and wore them onto the plane.

Needless to say, he felt very self-conscious, walking around in these bright, feminine slippers...

As he was sitting on the plane, he overheard two passengers talking.

"Look at this guy, his shoes were lost, so he needs to wear women's slippers!"

The man said to himself, "As I thought, everyone's looking at me and laughing at me."

But then he heard the other passenger say, “I’m amazed. The whole time, he was perfectly calm. He didn’t angry, he didn’t get upset, he didn’t lose his cool. It’s amazing.”

The man was afraid he was being humiliated – but in truth, he was creating a beautiful kiddush Hashem.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Chaye Sara 5781 email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.*

## *19<sup>th</sup> Century Italian Wine Cup*



**The above large 19<sup>th</sup> large Italian Silver Covered Wine Cup from Turin was sold in the Nov. 20, 2019 Sotheby’s Auction of the Arthur and Gitel Marx collection for \$37,500.**