**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas shemos 5782**

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**The Five Loaves of Bread**



There is a story told over that happened in the time of Rabbi Avraham Ibin Ezra. There were two people travelling together. One had three loaves of bread and the other had two. They met another traveler who had no food and was very hungry. They all sat down together and shared out their bread equally between all of them. The hungry traveler was very grateful and before he bid them good bye he gave them five golden coins. The one who had three loaves of bread claimed that he was entitled to three coins and his partner should only get two. The other one claimed that they should split the money in half. They decided to go to the local judge.

The judge ruled that the one who had three loaves of bread should receive four coins and the one who had two breads should receive one gold coin. The latter was very disappointed with the ruling of the judge. Whoever heard the story agreed that the judge had ruled with injustice. He decided to go to the Ibin Ezra and told him his story.

Rabbi Avraham listened, but his reply took the man completely by surprise. “The judge is right!” said Rabbi Avraham, “let me explain.” Altogether between both of you, there was five breads. You were kind and shared your bread equally between the three of you.

“So, if we split every bread into three, each one of you had a third of a bread. To start, you had two breads, that is six thirds of bread. You ate five thirds and gave the traveler one third of one of your breads. Your friend, however, had three breads, that is nine thirds of bread. He ate five thirds and gave the traveler four thirds of bread. If so, you rightfully deserve one coin and your friend deserves four coins for the four thirds he gave the traveller. So simple and fair.

“But until someone explained it to him, he never understood. The truth is that the same is with all of us. We don’t understand what Hashem does and why. To us it may look unfair but that is because we don’t understand or know what Hashem does. Our Avoda is to realize that even if it doesn’t make sense, if it looks wrong to us, but to know and realize that Hashem knows exactly what He is doing and it is what is best for us.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeishev 5782 email of Inspired by a Story by Rabbi David Caro.*

**The Benefits of Having Difficulties in One’s Life**

For twenty-two years Yaakov Avinu grieved for his precious Yosef. No one should experience the pain of mourning a child. It was all part of Hashem’s plan. Yaakov’s years mitigated the cumulative pain that his children would have endured had they been subjected to descend to Egypt in iron fetters as slaves.

Instead, they went down as honored guests of the viceroy and Pharaoh of Egypt. We simply do not know Hashem’s purpose, but the mere fact that we know that it comes from Hashem should in and of itself serve as an agent to ameliorate the pain.

Everyone has a story of Divine Providence, in which what he thought was travail was actually the precursor to a happy, joyous ending. The following story reinforces this idea and will, thus, inspire those who think about its message to realize, Ki l’michyah shlachani Hashem lifneichem, “For it was to be a provider that Hashem sent me ahead of you.”

One evening, Reb Shlomo Pinchas Schwimmer, a resident of Monroe, N.Y., noticed a teenager wandering the streets. Clearly, the boy was lost and was finding it difficult to navigate the streets. Reb Shlomo Pinchas pulled over and asked, “Can I help you get to your destination?”

The boy replied, “I live in Monsey, where I attend yeshivah. During the summer, my yeshivah moves to a summer camp situated at 441 Sckunemunk Rd. I went to Monsey to see a doctor concerning the pain I have been experiencing in my arms. I took a taxi back to camp. However, the driver could not locate 441, so he dropped me off at the corner of Sckunemunk and Berditchev – assuming that it was a short walk to the camp. I have been walking around looking for 441 and have not been successful.”



Reb Shlomo Pinchas said, “I will be happy to drive you there.” The problem was that 441 did not appear on his GPS. After a few moments of searching, he came to the conclusion that Sckunemunk is a very long street, and 441 is situated in another village past the Monroe line.

They began to drive, but, once again, they could not locate 441. Apparently, as is not uncommon in small, rural villages, the address might be there, but not always in plain sight.

The boy remembered a landmark, “Every morning, we use the mikvah on Koritz Street. If you can take me there, I know a shortcut to the camp. They drove to Koritz Street where the boy showed Reb Shlomo Pinchas how to get to the camp. This was an area to which he had never been. Indeed, he was impressed by the size of the camp’s old, large building and the beautiful private lake in the background. He now knew how to get to 441 Sckunemunk. The two parted, with the boy thanking Reb Shlomo Pinchas for the time he spent accompanying him to his destination. It was the type of chesed, act of kindness, in its complete, unvarnished form.

Accompanying someone who is lost is much more beneficial than giving him directions and expecting him to find his destination on his own. The next day, the yeshivah boys went boating on the lake. One of the boats, carrying four students, turned over. Three students swam to shore. One boy was unable to make it to shore. Hatzalah of Monroe, which was closest to the area, received the call to come quickly to 441 Sckunemunk.



The problem was that the Hatzalah volunteers could not locate 441. Reb Shlomo Pinchas, who is a member of Hatzalah, was fortunately able to direct the volunteers who arrived just in time to save the boy’s life. The fact that the previous evening Reb Shlomo Pinchas had performed a chesed for a lost boy enabled him to help save a life the following day.

Did I mention the identity of the boy? He was the same boy whom Reb Shlomo Pinchas helped the night before. Since he still had pain in his arms, he was unable to swim ashore. A few minutes later, and chas v’shalom, Heaven forbid, Hatzalah would have been too late.

We often think that something is bad; the cards are stacked against us. Hashem does only good. We are not able to see the large picture until we retrospect and look through the lens of hindsight. The combination of the taxi driver’s mistake, dropping the boy off in the wrong place, and a Yid’s incredible act of kindness proved to be quite beneficial for the boy. Hashem was setting the stage for the next day’s salvation.

***Reprinted from the Parshas Vayigash 5782 email of Rabbi A.L. Scheinbaum’s Peninim on the Torah.***

**A Trip to Washington, D.C. During the Second World War**

As conditions in Europe deteriorated for the Jewish population during World War II, activism in relief and rescue efforts increased ten-fold, and many of the great American shtadlanim continued to press any and every influential government official on this side of the Atlantic Ocean, to do what could be done to save the remaining Jews caught in the clutches of the German vise.



**Rabbi Aharon Kotler**

The renowned Rosh Yeshivah of Lakewood, R’ Aharon Kotler zt”l, was the spiritual leader of the Vaad Hatzalah organization, which worked above and beyond to help their unfortunate European brethren. He traveled quite often between New York and Washington D.C., accompanied by various Hatzalah leaders, including Elimelech (Mike) Tress z”l, Irving Bunim z”l, and others.



**Irving Bunim**

R’ Aharon hoped that the many meetings with top officials in the Roosevelt administration and the State Department, would bear fruit and ultimately allow the salvation for his suffering brethren, in the form of easing American immigration quotas for Jewish refugees and military strikes on strategic German landmarks and railroad supply routes.

**Despite the Setbacks**

Unfortunately, more times than not, government officials turned a deaf ear to their heartfelt requests or didn’t even give them the courtesy of a face-to-face meeting. Despite these setbacks, R’ Aharon never lost his drive to save as many Yidden as possible. At the same time, though, he was always concerned for those around him.

Once, for example, he and the well-connected activist, Irving Bunim, scheduled an appointment with a State Department official on an urgent matter. The date was December 26, 1944, corresponding that year to Asara B’Teves, the Tenth of Teves, the fast day commemorating the original siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonian armies of Nebuchadnezzar in the year 3336 or 425 Before the Common Era.

**Traveled by Train**

The two traveled by train to Washington D.C. the night before the scheduled meeting. Bunim stayed in a hotel, while R’ Aharon went to the home of a close friend. The next morning, they met at their pre-arranged spot, and the Rosh Yeshivah handed Bunim a small satchel containing rolls and hot coffee. Bunim looked at the food in puzzlement. “Vos is dos - what is this?”

R’ Aharon explained that it would no doubt be a grueling day of meetings, requiring all of Bunim’s diplomatic skill and energy. Certainly, he said, the Fast of Teves is rabbinically decreed. But by eating and maintaining his strength on this important day, it might help Bunim sway government officials and in turn, save Jewish lives. Irving Bunim was hesitant. After all, it was a fast day and he was feeling strong and well at the present time of morning.

**Urged by R’ Aharon to Eat**

“Bunim,” R’ Aharon wagged a finger at him, sensing his hesitation, “I hold you should eat.”

“Rebbe,” Bunim responded pleading, “I feel all right. Really. I can fast” He smiled encouragingly at the Rosh Yeshivah, hoping to alleviate his concerns.

Finally, R’ Aharon gave a curt nod of approval. “Good,” he said, turning to go, Bunim fast on his heels. “If you feel well enough, then fast.”

Bunim held out during the long, enervating day, enduring tedious meetings with intransigent government officials. He spoke from his heart and pleaded from his soul. R’ Aharon was with him every step of the way, providing sage advice and moral support. But the meetings were long, and when they finally concluded late in the afternoon, Bunim was weak with hunger.

The Rosh Yeshivah and the layman finally settled in on the return

train ride home. Bunim sighed. Looking distractedly out the window, he said, “Rebbe, now I feel like I could really use something to eat.” R’ Aharon barely looked up from the sefer he was learning from. “Now,” he retorted gently, “you could fast.” The effort was over and the heter was not needed anymore.

But in truth, it wasn’t over. Directly from the train station, the Rosh Yeshivah and Irving Bunim went directly to make an appeal for critically needed Vaad Hatzalah funds. Standing before a sizable crowd in New York, his head still light from fasting, Bunim gave an impassioned speech which touched the hearts of his listeners. (Heroes of Spirit, Israel Bookshop Publications)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayigash 5782 email of Rabbi Dovid Hoffman’s Torah Tavlin.*

**The Gold Ring**

**By Rabbi Lazer Brody**

There was a family living in Israel whose mother, unfortunately, came down with a severe sickness, which led to her passing. She left four children behind, the youngest being four years old, the eldest, a seventeen-and-a-half year old girl in eleventh grade, a fifteen-year-old boy and a twelve-year-old boy just months away from his bar mitzvah.

While the father worked long hours, the girl would work very hard, studying in school all day, after which she’d come home and do housework, including cooking, cleaning and doing no less than raising her brothers and sisters who were still at home.

**Watched with Awe His Sister’s**

**Dedication to the Family**

The twelve-year-old brother watched with awe how she was a sister and a mother who was so dedicated and would do everything for her siblings, from laundering to baking challah for Shabbos to preparing food for them all week long. One day, the twelve-year-old boy heard her sigh, as she was working hard in the kitchen, “Hashem, I wish I had a nice gold ring.”

The twelve-year-old boy heard this and it went right to his heart. He began saving his money, from birthdays to holidays, and filled up all the money that he could in a jar. Finally, the jar was full, and it was three months before his bar mitzvah. He went to a jewelry store and approached the proprietor, proud of the coins he had accrued and yet timid.

“Do you sell gold rings?” asked the boy.

“Yes, I do,” replied the owner. “Who do you want to buy a gold ring for?”

“I want to buy a gold ring… for my sister,” the boy softly answered, his voice quivering and eyes beginning to moist.

Struck by the boy’s behavior, the owner softened himself. “Son, why are you crying?”

“Sir, my mother passed away a year and a half ago, and my sister is seventeen-and-a-half and she acts just like a mother and sister. She works so, so hard. She helps my father and she cooks for us and cleans for us and she wants a gold ring, and I’ve been saving up all my money.”



With that, the boy poured the money in the jar onto the counter. He then looked up to the owner, and with a twinkle in his eye, asked, “Is this enough money to buy a gold ring?”

“Wait one minute,” said the proprietor, “and I will check.” Coming back just minutes later with a box, he displayed the different rings he had in stock before the boy and said, “Why don’t you pick out a ring that you think your sister will like.” Selecting one to his liking, he looked up to the owner and said, “Can I afford this ring? It’s beautiful!”

The owner gathered together all the coins and put them in a box, without even counting them. “Yes, you can afford this ring.” The owner then took the ring and placed it in a beautiful gift box, the type that someone would give to a fiancée for an engagement, and handed it to the boy. “Go home and give this to your sister,” he said with a smile.

The little boy ran straight home to his sister, and handed her the elegantly wrapped box. “Racheli, look, I got this present for you!”

She was amazed. “It’s gorgeous! Where did you get it from?”

“At the jewelry store, at the shopping center,” the boy got out, tongue-tied amidst excitement. “The one close, right across the neighborhood.”

**Admiring the Beauty of the Ring**

“It’s beautiful!” she gasped, admiring its beauty and elegance, the likes of which she had never held before. “But where did you get the money for this?”

“I saved up my birthday money, my chanukah money, the Purim money I collected and my chore money.”

She kissed her brother and thanked him. She then went right to the jewelry store and approached the owner. “Did a young boy, who would be my brother, come to this store?”

The owner replied in the affirmative.

“How did my brother pay for this?”

“Your brother gave me the coins that were saved up in his jar.

“Well, that was five agurot and fifty agurot and one-shekel coins. How could he get enough money for this ring; it must cost hundreds of shekels.”

The owner told her, “Young lady, I gave him the ring and that is fine. The ring is yours.”

“But he didn’t have nearly enough money to pay for it! How can I take this?” To this, the owner said something very profound. Don’t ever forget this: “Young lady, there are some things which are purchased with money; and there are some things which are purchased with tears.”

**Not Everything Can Be Bought with Money**

We can’t buy everything with money, but many things we can purchase with our tears. The Midrash tells us that Hashem has a jar of tears, and when that jar fills up, Hashem will build the Beis Hamikdash and bring us Mashiach. When you pray to Hashem from your heart with sincerity and tears, you can believe that Hashem will hear your tears. And if they are not answered the first time, they will be answered the second time; and if not the second time, the third time. But no prayer ever goes to waste. Always remember that. “There are some things which are purchased with money, and there are some things which are purchased with tears.”

*Reprinted by the Parshat Chayei Sarah 5782 email of TorahAnyTimes.com as compiled and edited by Elan Perchik.*

**A Mother’s Tears**

**By Rabbi Dovid Golwasser**



A few years ago, Rav Gamliel [Rabinowitz] received a call from a distinguished woman in America. She was deeply troubled because her grown son was in a precipitous spiritual decline, and she wanted to know what they could do. In light of the boy’s attitude and manner of conducting himself, the parents primarily wanted to know whether he should be allowed to continue to live at home, surrounded by love, or he should be shunned and removed from their home.

Rav Gamliel, who had been acquainted with the boy when he was younger, suggested that the young man be allowed to remain at home. Since he continued to live with them it seemed to indicate that he savored the warmth and love of his family. Additionally, as there were no younger children at home who could be negatively affected by his presence, he should not be sent away.

The mother cried that she could not just sit by with folded hands and watch his spiritual descent. Rav Gamliel reminded her of the admonition of the Talmud *(Yevamos 65b)*that just as it is a mitzvah to rebuke someone when it will be heeded, so too it is a mitzvah not to rebuke the individual if he will not listen. He did advise her, though, to accept Shabbos early and to light the candles approximately a half-hour earlier than the set time.

**Instructed the Mother to Tearfully Pray**

**To Hashem to Have Mercy on Her Son**

He told her to tearfully pray at that time to Hashem that He have mercy on her son’s soul that had strayed, and he cautioned her that if her son questioned her tears, she should simply say, “You alone understand.”

This advice is based on the Magen Avraham, commentary on the *Shulchan Aruch,*who wrote that at candle-lighting time it is proper for one to pray for one’s children to follow the ways of Torah. In fact, it is the custom for women to pour out their hearts at this time of favor *(eis ratzon).*

That week the mother cared for her son as usual – preparing his meals, washing his laundry, and cleaning his room. On Friday afternoon, a half-hour earlier than the designated time for candle-lighting, the mother lit her candles with awe and reverence, made her blessings, and tearfully with much emotion poured out her heart to Hashem.

**“You Alone Understand”**

After half an hour, she concluded her prayers and turned to put the final touches on the Shabbos table. Her son walked in and asked why she had been crying so bitterly. As instructed, she replied, “You alone understand.”

Although the son was stunned and deeply troubled by her answer, nothing changed.

Whenever the son was home at candle-lighting time and observed her crying, he would again ask why she was crying, and she would inevitably give the same answer: “You alone understand.”

Although there was no discussion during the week about this, the boy began to realize that although his mother continued to shower him with love and acceptance, she was, in fact, unable to come to terms with his weak spiritual state.

A change slowly became discernible. The son began to remain at home over Shabbos. He began to wear a *yarmulke* and come to the table for *Kiddush*and *Hamotzi.*Little by little he found his way back to Yiddishkeit, until he fully embraced his heritage and *mesorah.*

Reprinted from the December 9, 2021 website of The Jewish Press.

**Holy Gatherings**

**By A. Ben-Ami**

**Adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l**

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**Illustration by Yocheved Nadell**

“Ari!” cried Shimmy as Ari Holtzbacher walked into the schoolyard on Tuesday morning. “Welcome back! How was the Horki Chasuna (Wedding)?”

Dozens of boys crowded around Ari. Mosdos Horki had run full-page ads in all the magazines about the Grand Horki Chasuna, calling it the “Kiddush Hashem Event of a Lifetime!”, but nobody was sure what that meant.

Some boys thought that goyim would be invited to see how beautifully a Yiddishe chasuna was held. Others thought that maybe just the Horki Rebbe’s presence itself was a massive Kiddush Hashem. Everyone quietly listened as Ari spoke.

“It was incredible! First, my father had his private jet freshly painted with the word ‘Horki’ across the side of the plane. And the Rebbe said we needed to hire frum pilots – he wanted only frum Jews to be involved in preparing for the Kiddush Hashem Event! Even the ground and maintenance crews for the airplane were all Horki Chasidim!” The boys listened in amazement as they imagined a chosid holding orange wands, leading the plane to the parking place, as Ari continued.

**Chasuna was Held in a Large Airplane Hangar**

“The chasuna was so big that it had to be held in an airplane hangar – that’s what they call the huge airplane garages – at the airport. They hired a heimishe team to convert the massive building into the most beautiful chasuna hall you could ever imagine! There were gold finishes on the walls and diamond chandeliers on the ceilings. And one hundred and sixty THOUSAND chasidim filled the bleachers! “My father and I flew on the plane with the Rebbe and his family. When we landed, the air traffic controller was talking to the pilots in YIDDISH! And then the plane pulled up in front of the hangar and the Rebbe walked straight down the airstairs to the chuppah! It was so incredible!

“The food was amazing too, and all of the waiters were frum and wearing shtreimels! The music was incredible – they had a 42-piece orchestra of ultra-frum players, and the singing and dancing was so powerful!”

Everyone listened with bated breath as Ari went on. “And then in the middle of the dancing the Rebbe held up his hands in the middle of the dance floor. The music fell silent and he began to speak. He said that a lot of people were wondering what the big Kiddush Hashem was and he explained with a vort on the Parsha:

**The Power of a Full Room of Yidden**

Why did Yosef tell all of the Mitzrim to leave the room when he told his brothers who he was? Why couldn’t they be there? And he said something amazing. He said that when Yidden get together, there is more hashro’as hashechina, more kedusha. “And now, for the first time, Yosef and his brothers were fully reuniting – they couldn’t have any goyim around because it was a time of kedusha, of the Shechina resting among the Bnei Yisroel. Just like goyim weren’t allowed in the Beis Hamikdash years later.

“The Rebbe said that this was the largest Horki gathering ever and the largest amount of Yidden getting together in our city at one time. So, the hashro’as hashechina, the huge Kiddush Hashem from such an event was so great, that he didn’t want any goyim around, just like when Yosef reunited with his brothers.”

The crowd of boys smiled in amazement as Ari finished relating the events of the Horki chasuna.

“Wow, that is truly an incredible story!” said a voice behind the crowd. Everyone turned in surprise to see Rebbi Cohen standing behind them. Rebbi Cohen smiled. “You know,” he said, “we have a similar situation right here in our cheider.”

The boys looked around, puzzled. The walls were nice and clean and cheerfully colored. But there were no fancy gold finishings on the walls and chandeliers on the ceilings of the school. And there certainly was no jumbo jet parked outside.

Seeing the boys’ confused looks, Rebbi Cohen continued. “Look around! Everywhere you look here you see Yidden. The children, the teachers, even our janitor is a frum Yid. Our cheider is filled with Kedusha! The Shechina delights in our school!

“But not just the Cheder. Today, when you walk home and you pass by a frum family’s home or the Kosher butcher where all of the Shomrei Shabbos buy their meat for Shabbos, you need to think ‘wow! That house or store is filled with the Shechina – it’s a place of kedusha!”

As the bell rang and the boys hurried off to their classrooms, they all thought about this new appreciation they now had for being among frum Yidden and being constantly surrounded by the Shechina Hakedosha.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayigash 5782 email of Toras Avigdor Junior.*

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**A late 19th Century Indian silver Esther Scroll cast that sold for $12,500 in the December 17, 2013 Sotheby’s Judaica auction in New York City.**