**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas lech lecha 5777**

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**I Have No Time**

**By Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss**

 As I was walking home from shul on Friday night, I was thinking about the sermon I had just delivered exhorting my congregants to always be on guard from the wiles of the Yeitzer Hara, the Evil Inclination, when who did I bump into, the “Man” himself, the Yeitzer Hara in the ‘flesh.’ Always anxious to find out what tricks he has up his sleeve to snare people into his net, I excitedly asked him if I could pick his brain for a few minutes.  The Yeitzer Hara, who seemed to be in a jovial mood, answered me…

 **Yeitzer Hara:**  I’ll give you a few pointers.

 **Rabbi Weiss:**  As we start the new year and people are trying to be better, what’s your latest plan to throw a monkey wrench into our spirituality?

 **YH:**  I’ll make it short and sweet.  I get people to say “I have no time.”

 **RW:**  What do you mean by that?

 **YH:**  I’ll give you an example.  It would be the smartest thing in the world, as we start the new Torah cycle, for people to start reviewing the weekly portion, saying the Chumash twice and the Targum once.  After all the Gemora promised that if you do so, you’ll live long and be blessed with quality days.  Yet, what do people foolishly say?  “I have no time.”

 **RW:**  You mean the trick of Paroh when Moshe Rabbeinu wanted to take us out for three days to serve Hashem, Paroh said in response, “Tichbad ha-avodah al ha-anoshim v’alyish’u b’divrei shoker – Let the people work harder so they won’t have time to turn to such foolishness.”

 **YH:**  Rabbi, you’ve been reading Mesilas Yesharim, I see.  This is one of my best methods to get people to ignore the important pursuits of life – by convincing them that they are too busy to have time for these activities.

 **RW:**  In what other areas do you use the “I have no time” ploy?

 **YH:**  Oh! that’s easy.  My favorite area is in Shalom Bais, Marital Harmony.  If husbands would realize how desperately their wives crave some intimate time with them, or if wives would grasp how their husbands are starving for their exclusive warmth and attention, they would drop everything and attend to this life’s mission.  But they procrastinate their marital duties with the battle cry “I have no time for this now.”

 **RW:**  Yes.  Many people feel their lives are lackluster because they’re missing the magic of a dynamic marriage and how easily this is solved! If people would just remember that under the chupah, they made a commitment to each other that from now on you’re going to be the most important person in my life.

 **YH:**  It’s not just with a spouse!  You know how many children are messed up because both mommy and daddy say “I have no time?”

 **RW:**  It is frightening how many children at risk there are.

 **YH:** It used to be that mommy was home to talk about Chavi’s first pimples and the bully in Yossi’s class, and Devorah not getting along with the teacher.   Daddy used to have the time to notice if his son wasn’t enjoying learning Gemora and to fix it before it’s too late – but now, “I have no time” rules the universe.

 **RW:**  It’s pretty grim.  But, does this problem affect the young as well.

 **YH:**  Of course, I start when they’re young.  Hashem gave a glorious mitzvah of honoring your parents, but do you think children grab these diamonds?  No! They say “I have no time.”  I’m too busy to take out the garbage, too preoccupied to clean my room, and I definitely shouldn’t be expected, with my workload, to help prepare for Shabbos.  If people want to upgrade their spirituality, they need to make the time for what is really important, for what is eternal, and what is spiritually rewarding.  Anyway, Rabbi Weiss, but excuse the pun, “I have no more time” for you today!

 **RW:**  Well, thank you Yeitzer Hara, and we will surely be on guard from using this excuse to dodge what Hashem expects us to do.

 And to my readers, may we be zoche to use our time wisely, and in that merit may we blessed with long life, good health and everything wonderful.

*Reprinted from the November 3, 2016 website of Matzav.com*

**The Girl Who Tried to Dissuade a Customer from Making a Shabbos Purchase**

 People were considering building a girl’s school in a non-religious area as a kiruv initiative, and asked the Brisker Rav whether it was a good idea. The Brisker Rav told them the following story:

 There was a girl who did teshuvah but she didn’t want her parents to know. One Shabbos, her parents were traveling, and they asked her to man their store. The girl was afraid that she may need to desecrate the Shabbos, so she prayed that no customers should come. Her tefilos were answered. No one came.

 But then, she feared that if she doesn’t make any sales, her parents will accuse her of keeping Shabbos. Someone came into the store in the afternoon. He asked the price of a small, inexpensive product. “It costs five liros” she told him. He was ready to buy it, so she immediately changed the price.

 The man was incredulous, "So much money for this product?" and he left the store. But he really needed the product, so some time later he returned to the store and said that he was willing to pay this higher price. But she raised the price again, “It costs one hundred.”

 “Are you insane?” the man asked her, and he left the store once again. But it didn’t take very long before he returned again. He said that he was prepared to pay what she requested.

 “I’m sorry” the girl told him. “Now it costs two hundred." He left the store. A half hour before Shabbos was over, he returned and said: “I really need the product, so I’ll pay this exorbitant price.”

 She told him to wait a half hour until her parents return, and then he can buy it. When Shabbos was over, she said to the man that he can have it for five liros, like she originally told him. She didn’t want to earn from business transactions which took place on Shabbos.

 But the man said that he was a man of his word, and since he said that he is ready to pay two hundred, that is what he will pay.

 When her parents returned, she gave them all the money and said, “This is the reward for keeping Shabbos.” Her parents were astonished, and they also did teshuvah.

 Hashem’s providence was clearly seen in this story; the reward for keeping Shabbos was evident. But generally, things aren’t as evident. There are questions, questions, and questions – similar to the questions that Avraham Avinu endured when he was confronted with his ten tests. Yet we persevere. We stand up to the challenge and pass all the tests.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Lech Lecha 5776 email of Torah Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman as compiled by Rabbi Boruch Twersky.*

**Kosher Food Coming**

**To U.N. Cafeterias**

 (JTA) — The United Nations will begin serving kosher food in its cafeterias.

The decision to introduce kosher food to the United Nations eateries on Monday comes less than a month after Israeli Ambassador to the U.N. Danny Danon wrote to U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon calling for the change, pointing out that there are many U.N. employees and diplomats from around the world who observe kashrut, Ynet reported.

 U.N. cafeterias already offer halal, vegetarian and vegan selections.

“For many Jews around the world, eating kosher food is a fundamental aspect of religious practice,” Danon wrote in his letter last month. “We believe that all citizens of the world should feel welcome in the U.N.”

 This year for the first time no official meetings took place on Yom Kippur at the international body’s New York headquarters, and Jewish employees were able to miss work without using vacation hours.

*Reprinted from the November 2, 2016 email of The Forward.*

**Thoughts that Count**

And Abram called there in the name of G-d (Gen. 13:4)

Our Sages taught: Do not read vayikra--"and he called," but rather vayakri--"and he caused others to call." Abraham erected a way-station for travelers in the middle of the desert, and taught each person who partook of his hospitality about the oneness of G-d. Avraham was not content to be the only one to call on G-d's name--he caused others to come to appreciate and thank G-d for His goodness.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Lech Lecha 5752/1991 edition of “L’Chaim Weekly.”*

**The Pnei Menachem’s Lesson**

**About How Banking Works**

 The Pnei Menachem said, “When I was a child I was once in a bank, watching the going-ons. I saw someone give a large package of money to the teller. I remember feeling bad for him. He had so much money, and the bank took it all. Then another person went to the teller. He signed a contract, and the teller gave him a large stack of bills. I remember feeling jealous of this person. He entered the bank empty handed, and now he was leaving with so much money.

 “But when I became older, I understood that the man who gave a package of money to the teller was probably depositing money in the bank to earn interest. The other person was taking a loan. He received a lot of money, but he would have to return it with interest. I discovered that when one gives, he isn’t always losing, and when one takes, he isn’t always gaining.”

 The Pnei Menachem told this story to a man who had a lot of troubles. The Pnei Menachem wanted him to understand that often, things aren't the way we perceive them to be. Sometimes when we suffer, we are gaining, sometimes, when we think we are gaining, we are losing. The truth isn't always the way it appears. Yosef Itche of Baranowitz (a chosid of the Yesod HaAvodah of Slonim) was having a very successful day in the marketplace. On that day he earned twenty five rubles. When he returned home, he discovered that his fur coat, which cost twenty five rubles, was stolen. The money he earned in the marketplace would go to buy a new coat. He understood that it wasn’t a coincidence so he asked his rebbe, the Yesod HaAvodah, for an explanation.

 The rebbe told him, “Heaven decreed that you must die. But you had merits; therefore the decree was exchanged for money. Instead of losing your life, it was decreed that you should lose your fur coat. You had even more merits, and therefore heaven decreed that you will earn enough money to buy another one before the coat would be taken away from you.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Lech Lecha 5776 email of Torah Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman as compiled by Rabbi Boruch Twersky.*

**The Siddur Speaks**

**Rav Moshe Feinstein’s Inspiration from His Great-Grandfather’s Kavanah**

 When Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt”l, was young, his parents wanted to inspire him to trust in Hashem and serve Him with absolute devotion, and they would tell him a story about his great-grandfather which made a powerful impression on him. Rav Moshe’s father was named after his own grandfather, Rav Dovid Feinstein, who was a man who worked as a common laborer, but was full of Yiras Shamayim.

 When Rav Dovid was hired to work for a non-Jew, he made the condition that every day he must be allowed time off to Daven Minchah. However, Rav Dovid’s employer was not very happy about this condition. He was angry that precious time that could have been used for work would be ‘wasted’ because the Jew had to say his prayers. But Rav Dovid was a good worker and the man needed him, so he agreed.

 The employer became even angrier when he saw that Rav Dovid’s Shemoneh Esrei was recited carefully and with intense Kavanah, and lasted a very long time.

 The man said, “Who does he think he is? This is not a synagogue where you can pray as long as you like. I only intended to allow him a couple of minutes off, and nothing more!”

 Instead of speaking to Rav Dovid directly, the man decided to send the Jew a message to show how upset he was, and he wanted it to be a message that Rav Dovid would remember for a very long time.

 The next day, as Rav Dovid stood with his eyes closed Davening Shemoneh Esrei, his employer moved behind him, and held a shotgun in his hands. He waited for Rav Dovid to bow, because after watching him Daven a few times, he knew that there were times when he would bow his head, and when the moment came when Rav Dovid bowed, he shot his gun just above Rav Dovid, and a bullet whizzed right over him.

 The goy watched with joy, expecting to see the Jew fall to the ground from fright or start running like mad for the door, but he was greatly disappointed. Rav Dovid simply continued to Daven as if nothing at all had occurred. His Kavanah was so intense that he may not have even heard the gunshot at all!

 Later, the employer told Rav Dovid what he did and that he tried to scare him by showing that he had been angry enough to kill him for taking so long in his prayers, but when he realized how intensely Rav Dovid was concentrating on his prayer, he realized that Rav Dovid was truly a G-d-fearing man.

 He said, “I see now that you actually are not wasting any time at all as you are actually talking with G-d, and I am no longer angry about this. I thought you were trying to fool me just so you can take a break from work.” From then on, the man would refer to Rav Dovid as ‘my Jew’, and never again complained about the length of his Davening when Rav Dovid Davened

*Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5777 email of Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**A Comedian's Return**

**To Judaism**

**By Danny Lobell**

**I used to see Judaism as a restriction, but now I view it as a way to take better care of my soul.**

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 I’m standing on the boardwalk in my hometown of Long Beach, New York, leaning over the rails and looking out into the ocean. Seagulls are flying over my head, and the clouds are moving fast through the electrifying magenta sky. It’s Yom Kippur. I close my eyes and make a silent vow to God: I will fully observe one Shabbat this coming year.

 At this point in my life, I’d hit a low point in my Jewish practice. I was eating at White Castle and Popeyes and even some classier Manhattan steakhouses. I gave up Shabbat in favor of performing comedy, it had been years since I put on tefillin, and I didn’t date Jewish women.

 My family started off in a Conservative synagogue when I was a young kid and we were living in Flushing, Queens. Then we moved to Long Island, where I went to the religious Zionist school. Over my years there, it turned more right wing, and I didn’t feel like I fit in as much.



Comedian Danny Lobell

 My parents kept me in private Jewish schools until the ninth grade, when I got kicked out of a highly academic yeshiva for subpar grades in secular studies. I was sent to a yeshiva for rejects, which was run poorly and made me feel like even more of an outcast. Finally, I finished my education at the public Long Beach High School, and became involved with NCSY, an Orthodox youth leadership group, and B'nai B'rith, a Reform one.

 I started doing standup and moved to the Upper East Side after college. I looked for a synagogue but I didn’t feel welcome anywhere. I tried to be part of both the comedy and religious Jewish community. I was lacking in both areas, and decided that it wasn’t worth it to straddle both worlds. I had a lot of built up resentments from my childhood, mainly being kicked out of yeshiva when I loved Judaism. I figured it wasn’t worth it to try and fit in anymore.

 I made my vow on Yom Kippur to keep one Shabbat because it was always the holiday in which I most connected to God. I would pray with my family at the Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach, where we’d collectively sing beautiful songs like *Aneinu*. Somewhere in the midpoint of the day, I’d stop worrying about the fast and connect on a deeper, more spiritual level with the world. I’d go to the beach and talk to God one-on-one.

 After the heavenly gates closed that Yom Kippur, I went back to my life as a comedian living in Brooklyn as if nothing had changed. It was not until a few months later, while walking down Bedford Avenue in Williamsburg on my way to a comedy show, that I ran into a young Chabad rabbi on the street.

Instead of him approaching me, as Chabad rabbis often do, I went up to him. I asked him if he was a rabbi, and he said he was. I told him about my vow on Yom Kippur. He said that they had Friday night dinners and services at his Chabad House just a few doors down on Bedford.

 For me, at the time, keeping Shabbat only meant attending a meal. Free food was all I needed to hear. I took mental note of the address and the time that the meal was held, and went about my night.

 It would not be another five months until I actually decided to show up.

What I saw when I went was an ambitious rabbi with a beautiful family. He hosted people practicing various levels of Judaism. Some were completely reform, and sometimes Chassidim in shtreimels would show up. They would cook huge meals, and never ask for anything in return except for our participation.

 Two years later, I was a regular attendee and had started dating [a non-Jewish girl named Kylie](http://www.aish.com/sp/so/How-I-Chose-My-Hebrew-Name.html). I mentioned that there was a place we could go for a free meal on Friday nights, so she came along with me. I didn’t anticipate that she would end up loving it and decide to pursue an Orthodox conversion. It was not without difficulty that I came back to traditional Judaism, but that’s a whole different story.

 These days, I am observing Shabbat, the holidays, and kashrut with Kylie, who is now my Jewish wife.

 I used to see Judaism as a restriction, but now my attitude has changed. I view it as a way to take better care of your soul.

 I see Shabbat as a time to recharge my spiritual battery, and putting on tefillin gives me inner peace. In terms of my comedy career, I learned that the restriction on Shabbat was not only to do work, but not to specifically do creative work. That really resonated with me. If God, the ultimate Creator, can take a day off from creating, then as a comedy creator, I had a good role model to follow.

 Since I’ve been taking off for Shabbat, I’ve felt more creative than ever. It’s been a struggle not performing on Friday nights, but I’ve found my niche. I put out two podcasts, host a live standup show on weeknights, come up with original characters, make my own YouTube videos, and tell stories on public radio.

 I used to grapple with labels, and wondered where I fit in. Was I Chabad? Modern Orthodox? Right wing? Left wing? Sephardic? Instead of trying to identify with one group, I let myself be a part of all of them.

 I am, simply put, a Jew. And I’m proud to be a part of it all.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5777 email of the Aish.com website.*

**The Rebbe, the Professor, the Taxi Driver, the Dog and More…**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**

 Rabbi Benyamin Klein was one of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's personal secretaries and he saw a lot of miracles. Here is one of them that was told at a wedding I attended recently.

 A well-known Jewish lecturer-professor (the person who told me the story did not remember his name or personal details) had had several private audiences with the Lubavitcher Rebbe since the 1970s and now was accustomed to visit the Rebbe's grave (called the 'Ohel') in the Old Montifiori Cemetery in Queens every time he was in New York (It seems that he lived in Europe).

 He once arrived in New York to give a lecture to a group. They sent a driver to pick him up from and return him to the airport but after the lecture he told the driver that on the way back to the airport he wanted to stop in at the 'Ohel' for just five or ten minutes to pray.

 The driver became interested and began asking questions. It turns out that the driver was Jewish. He admitted that he had never in his life done anything Jewish but nevertheless he was sure that both he and his wife were Jews and their parents were Jews.

 The idea of prayer in such a holy place interested him so he asked the Professor how much it cost and if it was late to order a ticket.  When he heard that it was open 24 hours a day to everyone, for free, he announced that he was going.

 He parked the taxi, the professor gave him a Yarmulke and together they entered the cemetery and then to the grave.

 As soon as they were standing there the taxi-driver closed his eyes for a moment and then burst into uncontrollable weeping. His body was shaking as he held his face in his hands and cried aloud like a baby.

 The professor was astounded but he managed to ignore the sobbing for a few moments and pray. When he finished he tapped the driver on the shoulder and they both returned to the taxi.

 The driver blew his nose, wiped his eyes and started the car. "What was that?" asked the professor. "What happened? What is wrong? Why were you weeping?"
 "My dog!" He was barely able to say it. "Our dog, Freddy is having an operation!" his eyes were all red and puffy and almost began crying again.

 "Your what?" asked the professor incredulously. "Your DOG?! Are you kidding?!" he said, covering his mouth so the driver wouldn't see his smirk, staring at him to see if it was really true. "Are you kidding? I don't believe it!!"

 'Yes" the driver said sadly as he started driving. "The doctors all said that me and my wife can't have children so we adopted a dog. Such a special, wonderful dog! He is everything to us. But last week he had a stroke!" He was in tears again. "And the vet said that there's no chance he will ever be well. Best he can do is try to save his life by an operation, and he has doubts if even that will work. The operation is tomorrow and me and my wife are going crazy! That's what I prayed for; that the operation would succeed."

 The professor was trying to empathize but he wasn't doing a good job, especially when he said, "Listen my friend, if worse comes to worse you can always buy another dog" and the driver began whimpering so heavily he almost had to pull over to the side of the road and stop.

 When they got to the airport the professor gave the driver a nice tip together with his calling card and said. "Please excuse me if I said anything wrong. I'm really interested to know what happens to your dog. Here is my number. Call me collect after the operation" and wished him the best. The driver thanked him for everything and they parted.

 But months passed and the entire incident was forgotten - almost.

 One year later the professor received a collect call from New York and, not recognizing the caller and not expecting any collect calls, didn't accept. But after the same person called five times he decided to accept the charges.

 It was the taxi driver.

 "Hello professor. How are you?"

 "Thank G-d, fine my friend. It's been a long time. Sorry I didn't accept charges, I forgot you completely. Tell me how was the operation?"

 "Thank G-d, Thank G-d. It was a miracle!! A real miracle. In fact our Freddy came back to life and is healthier than ever!! You should see him!! You have no idea how grateful we are to you and the Rebbe. He is so healthy and happy. Even the doctor said it was a miracle!!"

 "Well, that is really good news. I'm so happy for you." Said the professor. "But why did you wait for a year? You said a year ago that the operation was in a few days. Why didn't you call immediately? Why did you wait so long?"

 "Well," the driver answered. "I saw back then that you really didn't understand about my dog so I figured that I wouldn't waste your money calling you collect or your time by calling direct. I figured that I had bothered you enough."

 "Too bad" replied the professor. "I certainly would have liked to have heard the good news back then and I'm happy to hear it now" He hesitated a second and continued. "But, tell me, if you didn't call back then, then why are you calling now? A year later?"

 The driver answered. "Ahh, that's the point.

 "So after Freddy got better, my wife and I were so happy that we went back to the 'Ohel' to say thanks. When we got there we asked one of the Chassidim what to do to show our gratitude. He said that what the Rebbe wants is for every Jew to do the commandments and he suggested that we take on at least one commandment.

 "So we spoke for a while and finally decided that I would put on Tefillin every day and my wife would keep family purity, you know, going to the Mikva and all that. The Chassid even set up a time to come to our house and teach us.

 "So that's why I'm calling you. After we started doing all this, keeping the Tefilin and Mikva and everything, well.... my wife got pregnant!

 "That was months ago, professor, and, well, you won't believe it but today is the Bris of our son!! We had a baby boy!! Thanks to you and the Rebbe!!!

 And that is why I'm calling. Maybe you don't appreciate dogs but I knew you would appreciate this!"

 Rabbi Klein finished the story by saying that today the taxi-driver and his wife are completely observant Jews.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5777 email of Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.*

**A True Jewish Baseball Hero**

**By** [**Ilana Rubenstein**](http://www.aish.com/authors/48869302.html)

**Meet the Most Inspiring Player**

**Of this World Series Season.**

 The Cubs and the Indians may be battling for the World Series title, but I know a young man who is this season’s true baseball hero. Meet Josh Schwartz \*, regular 6th grader at a local public school in Toronto.

 Only, he’s not so regular: he keeps Shabbat. Which means that even though he has a passion for baseball (and quite the throwing arm), he can’t join the local league – their games are all on Shabbat. It also means that when the school team was slated to play this fall, his parents made sure none of their games were on Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur.

 First round he pitched five games and his team made it to the conference finals. Amazing. Josh pitched a 2-hour game in the rain. And pitch he did, leading his team to a 6-0 victory. It’s the stuff baseball dreams are made of; they were going to the city tournament. But here’s the clincher: the tournament was scheduled for Simchat Torah. And suddenly Josh’s dream-come-true turned into a nightmare. How could he let his team down? How could he miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity?



 While the school board had been aware of the “major Jewish holidays,” Simchat Torah was deemed a “minor festival”. And just like that, Josh was faced with his Sandy Koufax moment. He and his parents talked it over. Yes, some of his Jewish team mates would be at that game; he would be the only one missing. But observing the holidays was not a sometimes kind of commitment. The baseball field was over an hour’s drive away; there was no way to get to the game and play while observing Simchat Torah. Staying true to his values meant only one thing: he could not play. And so with a heavy heart, Josh told his team and school.

 I’m not sure how many of us could stand by our convictions with a team depending on us and the lure of winning. Would you try to bend the rules? Find some wiggle room or make a “just-this-once” exception? But Josh stood strong. And then he received a call from the school principal: he had taken matters in hand – the tournament date was changed to Friday. And not only that, the school board was beginning a process where all Jewish holidays would be marked as “the same level of significance” on the calendar, ensuring this struggle will hopefully never be repeated.

 Josh may have simply been standing by his own values, but he won a victory far beyond his 11 years.

 Whichever team wins four games will take the World Champion title. Here are four winning lessons we can all take to heart from Josh’s victory:

**1. The real winning happens off the field**

 Josh might have been focusing on his curve ball, but just like most pro-athletes, he learned that what happens between games is also crucial. Michael Jordan knows this well. He was cut from his high school varsity team, wasn’t recruited by his choice college and wasn’t drafted by the first two NBA teams that could have chosen him. Jordan remarks, “the mental toughness and the heart are a lot stronger than some of the physical advantages you might have”. It's easy to look at what happens when the world is keeping score, but it's how we navigate the in-between challenges that defines our mental toughness. We might not be baseball players, but we can all dig deep into our hearts when life throws us challenges.

**2. When we do the right thing we inspire others**

 There is something truly amazing about someone who stands in their truth. No excuses. No apologies. Simply living according to their values. It is even more amazing when sticking to those values means swimming against the popular current. And that’s exactly what Josh did, and why his principal went to bat for him. When we are brave enough to do the right thing, we create the possibility for others to do so as well.

**3. Sometimes holding the line is the kindest thing**

 It was not easy for Josh to make this decision. It was equally challenging for his parents. It might have been tempting to compromise “just this once”. Like the child who begs for one more cookie, it's harder to stick to saying ‘no’ than it is to give in and say ‘yes’. Sticking to the lines we draw for ourselves and our relationships is a true act of love. When we maintain the perimeters we commit to, we allow those we love to rise to the occasion. Had Josh’s parents wobbled on this point, he never would have achieved such greatness.

**4. Our greatest victories happen when no one is cheering**

 When Josh’s team won, the crowd went wild. Granted, it was mostly parents and friends in the stands, but the cheers and applause were infectious. Talk about a feel good moment. We all love validation, hearing we’ve done a good job. But no one was cheering when Josh was struggling to decide he wouldn’t be playing on Simchat Torah. The truth is, most of our life defining moments will happen in the quiet of our homes, the privacy of our relationships. No one will do the wave when we are patient with a child or give us a round of applause when we struggle to take the higher road. But, like Josh, *we* will know our private victories.

 I am watching the World Series but I already know who is the true winner this baseball season: a young man who stood up to the world and proclaimed, “I am a Jew and that comes before baseball.” Now that deserves a standing ovation.

\*The family requested to use a pseudonym

*Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5777 email of the Aish.com website.*

**Thoughts that Count for Parshas Lech Lecha**

*Go out of your land... and I will make your name great (Gen. 12:1,2)*

Why did G-d find it necessary to promise Abraham that his name would be great? Did Abraham really care about personal fame? Our Sages taught that the mention of Abraham's name caused G-d's name to be sanctified. Abraham's whole life was spent spreading the knowledge of the one G-d. Wherever he went he caused people to think about their Creator. Thus, whenever Abraham's name was mentioned, G-d's name was sanctified, too. *(Likutei Sichot)*

*Abram took Sarai his wife... and the souls they had made in Charan (Gen. 12:5)*

If all the scientists in the world attempted to create even a mosquito, they could not succeed in imbuing it with life. What then, is meant by "the souls they had made"? Rashi explains that this refers to those whom they "brought under the wings of the Divine Presence." Abram spread the belief in one G-d among the men, and Sarai among the women; they are therefore credited with having "created" the new believers. *(Midrash)*

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