**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas vayikra 5776**

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**The Frustration of the One Who’s Photos Were Deleted by Accident**

**By Rabbi Dov Brezak**

The following true story that was told over by Rav Yaakov Shayish of Israel and is printed in the new book “Aderaba” (Page 148).

**Nisan 5769/ April 2009**

A family from New York came to Israel for a visit. They came for Pesach and stayed for a month’s time. While here in Israel they traveled across the land and, as is the custom, made sure to have a camera with them.

One of the boys in the family was the proud owner of the camera and was also the proud photographer of this trip. He made sure to take loads of pictures everywhere they went. He put forth great effort to capture the best backgrounds get the best poses and come out with the best pictures possible. He took hundreds of successful pictures which would serve to capture and preserve those special moments for years to come.

Eventually the day came and they all had to go back home. As the family went onto the plane one of the family members decided to keep himself occupied by looking at the pictures of the trip.

The fact that it was not his camera and that he had no permission to use it did not serve as a deterrent. He began pressing the buttons and scrolling through the pictures one by one. Without realizing he pressed on the wrong button and suddenly ALL the pictures were erased.

The rest of the family members, who were all too familiar with how cameras work, understood what had just happened. They realized that it was not possible to retrieve the pictures. All the pictures had been erased, every single one, and that was that.

At once, the wrongdoer was flooded with a torrent of screams and reprimands. Sentences like, “Are you normal?! What’s the matter with you?! An entire month gone to waste! What did we come here for-we don’t even have any pictures!!!” and so on, were being hurled at the Eraser.

The frustration and disappointment was enormous. “Why did he press on the delete button? Why did he touch the camera altogether? It didn’t belong to him and he didn’t ask permission! Why did all the pictures have to get erased? There is no way to retrieve them!,” were the painful thoughts passing through the minds of the various family members.

There was only one family member that remained quiet, the owner of the camera. The photographer who put in painstaking effort to record everything they did in the most effective way. The one, who made sure to capture every memorable moment of this trip and to preserve these moments for years to come. He remained quiet and he did not lash back.

When the plane landed and they finally arrived at their home in the Boro Park section of Brooklyn, New York, one of the sisters approached the owner of the camera and asked to speak with him privately. She had something very important to discuss with him.

He agreed, and once in the room she turned to him and began to speak. “You know that I will soon be 27 years old and there is no apparent shidduch (match) for me on the horizon. This whole thing is very hard for me and you certainly are aware of all the difficulties and challenges I have been going through.

“I saw how you were quiet and you were mevater (gave in) when the pictures got erased. This must have been so hard. Someone took your camera without permission and after all that hard work to take hundreds of great pictures he erased everything, everything. Everyone was hurt, but I am certain that you got hurt much more than everyone.

“Please my dear brother, please have mercy on me and give me your zechus. Bless me that I will soon find my bashert.”

The brother became emotional and said, “I bless you that you will get engaged before your next birthday.”

Not long after that a shidduch was suggested and things progressed very quickly. Two days before her 27th birthday on Rosh Chodesh Sivan 5769 (May 24, 2009) this girl became engaged.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayakhel 5776 email of Peh Tahor.*

**Reb Zusha’s Special Collection of Charity**

**By Rabi David Ashear**

Everything is in the hands of Heaven. If a person did an honest effort , the money will come the way that Hashem sees fit. Rav Elimelech Biderman quoted Rabbi David of Tolna who related that the saintly Rebbe Zusha of Annipoli would go around collecting money for charity. With his divine inspiration, he knew in advance how much money he would collect in each city he visited.

It once happened that at the close of a visit to one city, the Rebbe's attendants counted all of the donations and presented them to the Rabbi, saying that we are ready to move on. The Rebbe said, "No. We are still short the amount that we are meant to collect here." A few minutes later, one of the attendants realized that he had forgotten to include a donation that was collected. The Rebbe said, "Perfect. That is the number. Now we can move on."

Rabbi David of Tolna continued, quoting one of Reb Zusha's grandchildren who said, "I am not on the level of my grandfather that I can know in advance how much money I am meant to make from each of my business encounters. However, I am able to find out afterwards the exact number that Hashem had in store for me. How? It's very simple. Whatever I got is what Hashem wanted."

This is the attitude that we are supposed to live by. We try our hardest, and we do what we think is best. Afterwards, no matter what, we say, "Baruch Hashem. Hashem was the one making it happen, and He insures that whatever is supposed to happen is exactly what happens."

*Reprinted from the March 8, 2016 email of Daily Emunah.*

**The Bulgarian Convert**

Stefan Stoyanov, an 18-year-old with a rare type of hemophilia, risked undergoing a circumcision in order to fulfill his dream of completing his conversion to Judaism.

After moving to Israel from his native Bulgaria and learning Hebrew and spending time studying in a yeshiva, Stefan decided he wanted to convert. But multiple doctors refused to circumcise him because of his medical condition. Undeterred, he sought advice from his rabbi who connected him to the Israel National Hemophilia Center where a doctor, under rabbinical guidance, performed the operation.

Though the risks were high, and Stefan admitted he had been afraid he would die on the operating table, the circumcision was successful and he was finally able to complete his conversion, taking the Hebrew name “Yosef.”

Rabbis and public figures came to visit and bless Yosef for becoming, in his words, “a kosher Jew.” [Algemeiner]

*Reprinted from the Parashat Vayakhel 5776 email of the Young Israel of Flatbush Bulletin.*

**Tatty, You Need**

**To Go Cry Now!**

**By Rabbi Yoseph Vigler**

On the way back from Avos uBanim last week, my seven year old ran ahead and crossed the street without me.  It was a small side street, there were no cars but I knew that a point needed to be made for the future.

"You know the rule in our home,” I told him, "if you do something dangerous, you get a patch. I have no choice, we are both bound by the rules.”  So I gave him a light tap on his hand in lieu of a patch but he was insulted, ”It didn't even hurt,” he blurted out.

Shneur, my five year old, was watching the whole scene when right there and then he gave me the most stunning lesson in chinuch I could have ever imagined.

"Tatty I want to tell you a story I heard from my Rebbi,” he said.

There was once a little boy called Shaul Yitzchok who’s father owned farm animals.  Little Shaul Yitzchok was a mischievous child who would always throw stones and taunt the animals.  "You can't be cruel to animals,” his father would tell him. "The Torah says you shouldn't hurt them.“

But little Shaul Yitzchok kept on throwing stones, annoying the animals and never listened to his Tatty.  His father warned him that he would have to give him a patch, but still Shaul Yitzchok never listened.  So one day his father went and gave Shaul Yitzchok a patch!

Then the Tatty went next door into his office.  Shaul Yitzchok stayed in the room when suddenly he heard his Tatty crying.  So he knocked on the door and entered the office.  He had NEVER EVER seen his Tatty crying.  The little boy was wondering why Tatty would be crying.

His Tatty had told him that he was crying because it hurt him so much that he had given his son a patch. Tatties love their children and never want to patch them but he had no choice because he had to teach him.

When Shaul Yitzchok heard his Tatty’s words, he decided that he would never ever throw stones at the animals ever again because he didn't want to upset his Tatty and make him cry.”

“Tatty," said my five year old, “You gave your son a patch, so you also have to go cry now."

Now, that's what I call a great chinuch and an awesome Rebbi....

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayakhel 5776 email of Mayan Yisroel Center in Flatbush.*

**The Knock on the Door**

The story of the *gvir,* (a wealthy man) in Flatbush who would open his door to all, giving to all with a generous heart. Once, he sat down for dinner and his wife had prepared a soup for him.

There was a knock on the door, and he got up to answer. His wife pleaded with him: “I will let him in and he can sit a few moments, at least eat the soup while it is hot.”

He turned to his wife and said ‘This is my opportunity to give something of myself. When I give money--I am simply distributing that which belongs to Hashem, hopefully in a manner which Hashem sees fit. Now, however, I have the chance to give up my hot soup for this person. Let me rejoice in the opportunity!”

*Reprinted from the March 4, 2016 Hakhel Community Awareness Bulletin email.*

**When a Setback in Life**

**Can be for One’s Good**

In the 1930s, Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky was Rav of a small, sixty-family community in a town called Tzitevien. His family lived in dire poverty and he could not even afford to buy a suit for his son Binyamin for his Bar Mitzvah. Unable to subsist on the income he earned, Rav Yaakov applied over the course of several years for rabbinical positions in larger towns.

The last one for which he applied was in Vilkomir, the third largest Jewish community in Lithuania . After several interviews, Rav Yaakov was offered the position. He returned home to tell his wife the great news, and the household erupted in jubilation; finally their crushing poverty would be alleviated.

Three weeks later, the jubilation turned to grief when Rav Yaakov received news that the position had gone to someone else. The Rebbetzin cried bitter tears over the loss of the rabbanus in Vilkomir, recognizing that it virtually ensured that Rav Yaakov would have to seek some means of support abroad.

The failure to win that position, as well as the others, profoundly affected Rav Yaakov’s own strong sense of Divine Providence. The successful candidates and their families eventually fell into the hands of the Nazis.

In counseling people undergoing difficult tests, Rav Yaakov would often point to his own experience as an example of how that which is perceived at the moment as the greatest tragedy may, with the passage of time, be revealed to be the greatest salvation.

(Editor’s Note: Because of his being unable to support himself as a rav in Lithuania, Rav Yaakov came to America where he became a rav in Toronto and was able to bring over his wife and children, thus saving them from probable annihilation in Churban Europe (the Holocaust.)

Reprinted from the March 9, 2016 Hakhel Community Awareness Bulletin email. The following is paraphrased in *Praying with Fire*, by Rabbi Heshy Kleinman from *Reb Yaakov, The Life and Times of HaGaon Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky*, by Yonoson Rosenblum (ArtScroll/Mesorah Publ.), pp. 108-110:

**The Special Donation**

**Of Gavriel’s Wife**

**By Rabbi Dovid Hoffman**

In the days of the Alter Rebbe, R’ Shneur Zalman of Liadi zt”l (Baal HaTanya), there were many incidents involving Jewish prisoners who were taken captive by marauding soldiers, corrupt barons and pillaging villagers. R’ Shneur Zalman involved himself in arranging for their release and was continuously raising funds to this end.

Large sums of ransom money were needed, which the Rebbe attempted to raise among his followers. One of his disciples, a man by the name of Gavriel, had been a prosperous merchant living in Vitebsk, and he never failed to accede to the Alter Rebbe’s wishes whenever he was called upon.

However, in the last few months, hard times and persecution had fallen upon him and decimated his fortune. Additionally, his marriage of twenty-five years to a righteous woman named Chana Rivka had yielded no children, and this, too, caused him a great deal of distress and consternation.

Most people were unaware of Gavriel’s financial difficulties as he did not wish for the world at large to know of his plight. The gabbaim of the Baal HaTanya had evaluated Gavriel to be a rich man and “estimated” him as being capable of donating a particularly large sum.

Unfortunately, Gavriel could not come up with the large sum and he was heart-broken at not being able to participate in the great mitzvah of Pidyon Shvuyim to the extent expected of him. Gavriel came home and told his wife about his distress and how he was unable to acquiesce to the Rebbe’s request on account of he simply did not have the funds the Rebbe thought he had.

Chana Rivka felt her husband’s distress and decided to take matters into her own hands. The very next day, she gathered up her pearls and valuable jewelry and took them to the marketplace. There, she found a merchant who was willing to give her the required sum of money. The exchange was made and Chana Rivka came home with a bag full of coins.

She then scoured and polished the coins till they sparkled, and with a heartfelt prayer that their fortune should also begin to shine, she packed up the coins in a tidy sack. When Gavriel came home that evening, she handed the sack to her speechless husband and told him to bring it to the Rebbe.

Gavriel did as he was told. When he came to the Alter Rebbe, Gavriel placed the package of coins in front of the Rebbe on the table. At the Rebbe’s request he opened the package and a bright light shone forth; the coins glistened with an extraordinary brilliance and all who beheld the sight were left breathless.

The Rebbe became pensive, lost in thought for a few moments. Then he turned to Gavriel and spoke. “Our Sages teach us that of all the gold, silver and copper which the Jewish people donated to build the Mishkan, nothing shone with the unparalleled brilliance of the kiyor, the brass washbasin and its stand.”

R’ Shneur Zalman looked deeply into the eyes of his disciple. “Tell me,” asked the Rebbe, “where did you get these unusual coins?”

Gavriel told the Rebbe of his plight and how his wife Chana Rivka had raised the money.

The Rebbe rested his head on his hand, and was lost for a long while in profound thought. Then, raising his head, he blessed Gavriel and his wife with children, long years, riches and extraordinary grace. He told Gavriel to close his business in Vitebsk and to deal with diamonds and precious stones.

The blessing was wholly fulfilled. Gavriel was beloved in people’s eyes and he became known as Gavriel “Nosei Chein” (the graceful). He was soon a wealthy man and the father of sons and daughters. He died at the age of 110 and was out-lived by his wife, Chana Rivka, who lived two years longer.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayakhel 5776 email of Torah Tavlin.*

**Story #954**

**The Royal Accountant**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[**editor@ascentofsafed.com**](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/5?session_redirect=true&userinfo=eff1e795994608ed6885dfdeac88e827&count=1457624904&randid=1369988663)

Once, there were three men, Reb Ezriel, Reb Anshel, and Reb Eliezer, who were partners in a business. Ezriel bought feathers and hides from Russia and Anshel bought similar merchandise from Galicia. The third partner, Eliezer, who was the son of **Rabbi Sholom, the Belzer Rebbe**, arranged financing for their ventures and kept the books, auditing all the expenses and income of their various transactions.

For a long time, all went well. Then, for some unknown reason, Ezriel and Anshel asked Eliezer if they could examine the books.  "We would like to know where we stand," they said.

To their surprise, Eliezer refused to show them the ledgers. His two partners decided to go with their complaint to his father, the Belzer Rebbe, and to see if he would adjudicate the matter.

"I cannot be the judge," the Rebbe told the men, "because I am the father of the accused and I am therefore disqualified to judge."

"Nevertheless," the two partners assured him, "we trust your decision even though you have an interest in the matter."

"Very well," said the Rebbe, "but it is late, just before Mincha and there is not enough time to hear all the details. For now, let me quickly tell you a story that relates to this situation":

There were once two brothers, one rich and one poor. The rich brother had a daughter who was of marriageable age and the poor brother had a son who was a fine Talmud scholar of the same age. The rich brother and his daughter had rejected many previous offers of marriage, so the matchmaker urged him to take his nephew, the poor brother's son, as a son-in-law. The rich brother and his daughter agreed and the two cousins were married.

The young man, whose name was Yisrael, soon found life under his father-in-law's roof very uncomfortable. Neither his wife nor his father-in-law appreciated his occupation with Torah study and would have preferred that he involve himself in business.

The situation became so tense that for the sake of peace for all involved, Yisrael decided to accept a distant job as a Torah tutor. He traveled far, to an isolated village, and there became the tutor for the children of a chasid of the Baal Shem Tov.

Some months later, the chasid took a trip to visit his Rebbe. At the end, just as he was about to depart with a group of other chasidim, Yisrael asked: "Can you kindly mention me to your Rebbe? I have a difficult personal matter that is a great burden. Perhaps the Baal Shem Tov will have some advice for me."

Yisrael's employer did indeed mention his name to the holy Baal Shem Tov, and returned home with an urgent message. "As soon as we mentioned your name to the Rebbe, he became quite upset. He told us to advise you to immediately return to your home. He said it involves a serious matter regarding your wife. Extraordinary! I didn't even know you were married."

"It is a painful story so I did not share it with you," he answered, and then questioned his employer skeptically. "How would the Baal Shem Tov know of me? How does he even know I'm married?"

"Never mind,"he insisted. "If the Baal Shem Tov was so adamant about your returning home, you must do as he says. He told us that he looked at the root of your soul and found a danger present. You must not delay. You should leave immediately."

"How can I go home?" Yisrael answered. "My belongings are here and besides, I don't have any money for the journey."

When the local chasidim heard the story, they immediately contributed funds to hire a wagon and driver to take Yisrael home. They even helped Yisrael gather his few belongings and load the wagon.

"What am I doing?" he thought to himself as the wagon bumped along the dirt road. "I wonder if the Chassidim were just trying to get rid of me. I wonder if they really even mentioned my name to the Baal Shem Tov. How could he know about me?"

Such doubts filled his mind as he traveled. He had thoughts of stopping the wagon and turning around, but the urgent words of the Baal Shem Tov disturbed him greatly.

Finally he arrived at his hometown. As the wagon came to a stop in front of his house, he hesitated. He finally summoned the courage to knock on the door. A strange man answered the door. "What did you want?" the man asked.

"Is Reb Yisrael's wife at home?"

"She is no longer Reb Yisrael's wife, and she doesn't live here. In fact, she is planning to get married in two days."

Yisrael was shocked. He had never divorced his wife. How could she get married again? He now understood the urgency of the Baal Shem Tov's words. The first thing he must do was to prevent his wife from marrying another man. But how?

Distraught, he went to the local Torah-study Hall and sat down to think. Moments later, he overheard several of the local beggars talking about the impending wedding. "I can't wait for the feast. It will no doubt be lavish because the bride's father is certainly rich."

Yisrael then knew what he had to do. He went immediately to the town Rabbi's home. He related his story, insisting that he had never sent his wife a divorce.

The town Rabbi remembered Yisrael and believed him. "Please stay here while I go to your father-in-law and discuss this matter."

It turned out that Yisrael's father-in-law had been deceived by an unscrupulous, traveling *darshan* [public expounder of Torah lessons]. The *darshan* had come to town and realized the rich man's great despair because his daughter had been deserted by her husband. So he approached the girl's father and said, "In my travels, I've met your son-in-law and we became friends. I'm quite sure that I can get him to divorce your daughter. Just give me power of attorney to act on your and your daughter's behalf and I will take care of everything."

"That would be wonderful! And you can be sure that I will pay you well for your kindness," the rich man told the *darshan*.

The *darshan* quickly traveled to another small town some distance away where he was not known. There he found three men of questionable honesty who were willing go along with his ruse for a profit. The darshan, accompanied by his three new companions, then went to a rabbinical court in yet another town, claiming that he had recognized a man at the local inn who was sought for abandoning his wife. "His name is Yisrael and he refuses to give his wife a divorce. Her father has asked me to force him to give a divorce at any cost."

The rabbis of the court were convinced by the *darshan*'s story. They had the man in the inn, who was one of the three conspirators, apprehended and brought before them. After some 'coaxing', the man admitted that he was the husband that had deserted his wife. Then, the two false witnesses -- the other two conspirators -- were brought to testify that they also knew the man to be the alleged Reb Yisrael, the runaway husband of the rich man's daughter. The *Beis Din* 'managed' to gain this Yisrael's acquiescence to prepare a *Get*, a document of divorce, which they gave to the *darshan*, after he showed them the power of attorney of the rich man and his daughter that he was carrying.

The *darshan* returned to the rich man with the prized bill of divorce.

"How can I repay you for all your efforts?" the rich man asked.

"I do not want any money," said the *darshan*. "I was just doing a kindness. However, I would appreciate the opportunity to introduce an eligible young man to your daughter. That is all I ask."

The eligible young man just happened to be the *darshan*'s son, and he made a favorable impression on the family. The wedding date was set and plans were made.

Once the real Yisrael spoke to the town Rabbi, the latter, accompanied by the local police, marched to the rich man's home. The Rabbi explained Yisrael's story and accused the*darshan* and his son of fraud. The policemen promptly took the two scoundrels to jail.

The rich man was embarrassed that he had been deceived, but was very happy that the plot had been foiled in time. His daughter expressed her deep regret over her unloving behavior towards Yisrael, and begged him to remain as her husband.

"Indeed," concluded the Belzer Rebbe, "they did live happily thereafter. But do you understand why I told you this story?" he asked the two men before him.

"You, Reb Anshel, and you, Reb Ezriel, were the two false witnesses and my son Eliezer was Yisrael in a former life. Your souls are in debt to his for the shame and discomfort he suffered. My advice is that you increase his share of the earnings and I am sure he will show you the books."

And so it was.

Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the rendition of Tzvi-Meir HaKohane Cohn, based on a story in Sipurei Yaakov as translated in Stories of the Baal Shem Tov by Y.Y. Klapholtz, and posted on Cohn's website, //baalshemtov.com.

Biographic notes: Rabbi Sar-Sholom [Rokeiach] of Belz [1779-27 Elul 1855] was the first of the Belz chasidic dynasty. He became the main rebbe of Galician jewry, and had tens of thousands of chassidim. His teachings are collected in Dover Shalom.

Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer (18 Elul 1698-6 Sivan 1760), the Baal Shem Tov ["Master of the Good Name"], a unique and seminal figure in Jewish history, revealed the Chassidic movement and his own identity as an exceptionally holy person, on his 36th birthday, 18 Elul 1734. He wrote no books, although many claim to contain his teachings. One available in English is the excellent annotated translation of Tzava'at Harivash, published by Kehos.

Connection: Weekly Torah portion -- The "book-keeping" for the Sanctuary donations is the theme for the entire Reading

*Reprinted from last week’s email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent Institute of Safed.*

**L’Maaseh A Tale to Remember**

**The Chofetz Chaim and the Young Man Who Struggled to Learn Torah with Great Difficulty**

When a person is young, he does not know the sweetness and pleasantness of the Torah, and he has to force himself to exert in learning it. It says in Avos D’Rebbe Nosson (3:6) that one thing that is achieved in distress is better than one hundred in comfort.

There was once a young man who was studying in the Yeshivah of the Chofetz Chaim, zt”l, who had a very difficult time understanding his learning, and his studies were a big struggle for him.

After working diligently over a long period of time, he saw that he had only learned four Daf of Gemara. He felt dejected that he was unsuccessful in his learning, and he turned to his Rebbe, the Chofetz Chaim, and said, “Rebbe, I’ve only covered four Daf of Gemara over an extended amount of time, and I’m considering that perhaps it would be better if I went to work instead of staying in Yeshivah. I see that I have not benefited from all the work I have put in to learning, and I have only accomplished very little.”

The Chofetz Chaim responded incredulously, “You have successfully learned four hundred Daf of Gemara in one period of time, and you are considering leaving the Yeshivah?! Can you be more successful than this?”

From the response of the Chofetz Chaim, the young man thought to himself that perhaps his Rebbe did not hear him well, because the Chofetz Chaim was already in his later years and was hard of hearing, so he repeated himself and said that his entire accomplishment was only four Daf of Gemara.

But the Chofetz Chaim was firm, and said that it was quite an accomplishment to learn four hundred Daf of Gemara! The Chofetz Chaim saw the confused look on his students face and explained his words based on that which is taught in Avos D’Rebbe Nosson: ‘One thing achieved in distress is better than one hundred in comfort’.

He said, “If you learned four Daf with difficulty and distress, it is considered like four hundred pages of Gemara, and this is why I am astounded. There are not many young men that merit to learn so many Daf of Gemara in such a short period of time! If a person exerts himself in the Torah like an ox in its yoke, then over time he will merit to taste the sweetness of the Torah, and he will see that Hashem is good! I think that an accomplished Masmid like you belongs in Yeshivah!”

The young man was tremendously uplifted by the words of the Chofetz Chaim. He stayed in Yeshivah and worked diligently in his studies, and shortly after, he saw great success in his learning

*Reprinted from the Parshas Pekudei 5776 email of Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**Analyzing a Tzadik’s Beracha**

When Rabbi Mordechai Shapiro was visiting Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer and his Rebbetzin Baila Hinda, the Rebbetzin told Rav Mordechai a story from her childhood.

“Once, I was on the train and saw the Gadol, Rav Gershon Rosenbaum coming down the aisle. Having always wanted a Berachah (blessing), I worked up the courage to stop and ask him for one.

“When I intercepted R’Gershon, he asked me what I wanted a blessing for. I replied that I wanted to be blessed to merit marrying a Gadol B’Yisroel – a Torah giant.”

“His reaction was, ‘I don’t think you mean it, but I wish you well.’ He then continued walking. But I started crying and was very upset that I didn’t get a blessing.

Rav Gershon saw me and spoke: ‘If you really are Machshiv Torah – show honor Torah and want to marry someone like that, I bless you that it should happen!’”

At this point, Rav Meltzer (one of the great Torah scholars of the first half of the 20th Century) said that this story always amazes him because of how the blessing of such a great Rabbi didn’t come true.

Comment: Some people like to put on a “humble show” and act like they are not great. This actually is one of the classic techniques of an egomaniac (according to the Path of the Just), since by acting with humility, one is in fact seeking/inviting praise for himself. Rav Meltzer was anything but that. It’s not that he thought low of himself. Rav Meltzer’s mindset was always fixated on growing more and more, not feeling that he has “arrived” at greatness.

When we complete a Book of the Torah (as we did last week) we proclaim “Chazak, Chazak, V’Nizchazek - be strong, be strong and we’ll be strengthened.” Why the double language?

One of the answers is that these words address two types of people: those who feel they’ve who feel they’ve accomplished and those who feel they never will. Both need “strength” to see the reality, which is that one should always think: “while I may have achieved (even a lot), as long as I’m alive I’m expected to still push myself to reach higher levels of excellence.”

Chazak!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Pikudei 5776 email of Reb Mendel Berlin’s Torah’s Sweets Weekly.*

**Good Shabbos Everyone**

**The Amazing Redemptive Powers Of a Simple Yiddish T-Shirt**

Ohr Somayach, both in Monsey, New York and in Yerushalayim is one of the foremost Yeshivas for Ba'aley Teshuvah, those who are returning to their Jewish roots. Every student at Ohr Somayach has his own special story of how Divine Providence led him back to his roots. The story of Jonathan Goldberg (not his real name) revolves around a T-shirt with some Yiddish letters on it.

It all goes back to a Jew [Aaron Lansky] in Massachusetts who watched with pain as refugees who had arrived in the U.S. after World War II daily threw away Yiddish newspapers and books as they stopped speaking and reading Yiddish in order to assimilate into the American culture.

Appalled by this abandonment of Jewish culture he began collecting the material left on the curb by his neighbors, and eventually established the International Yiddish Book Library in Boston.

Jonathan Goldberg's parents had little knowledge of Orthodox Judaism but were curious to see what went on at the book fair hosted by this library. For their son they bought a souvenir T-shirt, with the library’s name and logo imprinted on it in Yiddish.

Years later, Jonathan begrudgingly attended a Sunday morning class in a Conservative Hebrew School in the southern community to which they had moved. The class was taught by the wife of the rabbi of the local Orthodox synagogue.

Jonathan wore the Yiddish T-shirt to the class. The teacher was curious about the T-shirt and she began to speak the young man. The conversation about the T-shirt led to a relationship with the family, which eventually resulted in the entire family becoming observant and sending their son to Ohr Somayach. (From Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, zt”l)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Pikudei 5776 email of* ***Good Shabbos Everyone.***

**Guinness World Records Announces Holocaust Survivor Israel Kristal**

**As World’s Oldest Living Man**

[](http://matzav.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/yisrael-kristal.jpg)

Marco Frigatti of Guinness World Records today confirmed that

Yisrael Kristal of Haifa, Israel, is now the world’s oldest living man.

Born in Poland, near the town of Zarnow on September 15, 1903, to Moszek-Dawid and Brucha Krystztal, Mr. Kristal has lived through both World Wars and survived Nazi war camp Auschwitz in the 1940s before relocating to Eretz Yisroel.

Kristal claims the title at the age of 112 years and 178 days as of today, March 11, 2016, and was awarded his certificate at his home in Haifa by Guinness World Records’ Head of Records Marco Frigatti.

Upon being confirmed as the world’s Oldest living man and receiving his Guinness World Records certificate, Mr. Kristal said: “I don’t know the secret for long life. I believe that everything is determined from above and we shall never know the reasons why. There have been smarter, stronger and better looking men then me who are no longer alive. All that is left for us to do is to keep on working as hard as we can and rebuild what is lost.”

Marco Frigatti, Head of Records for GWR, said of Mr. Kristal’s achievement, “This record category continues to be one of particular human interest and we have been able to verify that as the new Oldest living man. Mr. Kristal’s achievement is remarkable – he can teach us all an important lesson about the value of life and how to stretch the limits of human longevity.”



A recent photo of Reb Kristal and his extended family in Israel.

At age 3, Kristal started to learn in a local *cheder.*At four, he learnt Chumash, and at six Mishna. At eleven, separated from his parents, he survived the First World War.

In 1920, he moved to Łódź in Poland to work in the family confectionary business.

Following the Nazi invasion of Poland and the occupation of Łódź, Kristal was moved into the Łódź ghetto with his family in 1939.

Four years later, he was sent to Auschwitz. Kristal lost his wife, Chaja Feige Frucht, and their two children in the Holocaust.

Kristal himself survived, performing backbreaking slave labor in Auschwitz and other concentration camps. He was rescued from the brink of death by the Allies in May 1945 weighing only 37 kilos.

A sole survivor of a large family, he emigrated in 1950 to the city of Haifa with his second wife and their son.

Since that time, Kristal continued to grow both his family and his successful confectionary business until his retirement. He now lives in Haifa, surrounded by his loving family.

Born to a *frum*family, Kristal never had a *bar mitzvah*due to the hardships of WWI. However, he has continuously and rigorously been performing the *mitzvah* of *tefillin*every morning for the last century, with the exception of the Holocaust and both world wars.

The previous oldest man, Yasutaro Koide of Japan, died in January 2016 at the age of 112 years, 312 days.

The oldest living person is Susannah Mushatt Jones, who is 115 years and 249 days, also making her the oldest living woman.

The oldest person ever to have lived is also female, Jeanne Calment (France), who lived to 122 years and 164 days.

*Reprinted from the March 11, 2016 website of Matzav.com Text and photo courtesy of*[*GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS*](http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/news/2016/3/guinness-world-records-announces-holocaust-survivor-israel-kristal-as-worlds-old)*.*