**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Vayishlach 5772**

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**THE GOLDEN AGE**

Rabbi Hai Tayyib, Zs’l

 This Thursday marks the nineteenth of Kislev, the anniversary of the death of the sacred Rabbi Hai Tayyib zs"l, the author of "Helev Hitah," who passed away in Tunis in 5597 (1837).

 It is told that once, during a terrible drought, the Jews gathered numerous times to plead with G-d but were unanswered. They decreed a public fast in hope that it would invoke Divine mercy.

 Rabbi Hai was involved in his in-depth study of Torah and knew nothing of the drought or the fast. In the morning he asked his wife to prepare him a cup of coffee.

**Wife Informs Husband of the Public Fast Day**

 She responded, "How could I? A public fast day was decreed." Taken by surprise he asked, "For what?"

 She answered, "Because of the lack of rainfall."

 He said, "I didn't know. In any case, please prepare for me a cup of coffee."

 A proper wife carries out her husband's requests, and in the meantime Rabbi Hai went outside his house, raised his eyes up to the heavens, and said, "Master of the Universe! Your sons need rain. Please, do not withhold it from them!"

**Immediately a Driving Rain Came Down from the Skies**

 Immediately, the skies darkened and a driving rain came pouring down from the skies. He returned to his room and asked for the coffee.

 His wife said, "What have you done?! This powerful rainstorm will destroy homes and cause severe damage and catastrophe!"

 He went back outside and once again facing the heavens he said, "Master of the Universe, please bring down rain of blessing!"

 And so came a calmer rain and the fast was annulled.

Gentile Neighbor is Scared

 Rabbi Hai went back inside to drink his coffee, and his gentile neighbor ordered a wagon and traveled to the owner of the building, because the building was rented and he decided to move.

 The gentile told how his neighbor prayed and was answered instantly, and said, "Who wants to live next to a lion? Maybe tomorrow he will get angry with me and turn me into a heap of bones!"

 The owner took the terrified neighbor to the great rabbi who guaranteed everyone's well-being so long as they caused no harm to the Jews.

Reprinted from this week’s email of The Aram Soba Newsletter (bnaiyosef@gmail.com)

**The Road to Karlin**

**By Shoshannah Brombacher**

 There was a chassid who used to travel a great distance to be with his rebbe, chassidic master Rabbi Aaron of Karlin. Once, while making his journey, he was asked why he couldn't find a rebbe who lived closer to his own town.

 "Going to the Karliner gives me special powers," the chassid replied. "I can read everyone's thoughts."

 "In that case," one man challenged, "can you tell me what I'm thinking of right now?"

 "You're thinking about G-d," said the chassid.

 "You're wrong." said the man. "I wasn't thinking of Him at all."

 "You see?" said the chassid. "*That's* why I travel to Karlin..."

Reprinted from the Chabad.Org website

**Love of the Land**

**Matana Tova –**

**The Good Land**

**By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach**

 “Three good gifts were presented to the Jewish People by the Holy One, Blessed be He, and all of them were given only through suffering.”

 One of the gifts mentioned in this statement by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (*Mesechta Berachot 5a*) is Eretz Yisrael. This is based on the Torah promise of “For the L-rd, your G-d, brings you into a good land” (*Devarim 8:7*) being preceded by the assurance that “As a man chastens his son so too the L-rd, your G-d, chastens you” (ibid. 8:5).

 The great Talmudic commentator Maharsha points out that such suffering has always been necessary to avoid the nationalistic conceit described in the following passages which may cause Israel to forget its dependence on the Creator who gave Jews the land.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of OHRNET, the Orh Somayach Torah Magazine of the Internet (*[*www.ohr.edu*](http://www.ohr.edu)*)*

**The Human Side of the Story**

**The Unborn Shidduch**

**By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach**

 A man seeking a shidduch visited Rav Chaim Kanievsky, *shlita*, seeking advice and a *beracha*. He was one of the many people who visit with the Torah giant during the afternoon hours.

 The man, in his 30s, visited the rabbi about two months ago. The teary-eyed man explained he could not find a shidduch and asked Rav Kanievsky for a *beracha*.

 The rabbi probed the man’s details somewhat and reportedly responded, “Your *zivug* hasn’t been born, *beracha v’hatzlacha*”, leaving the man in tears, apparently despondent over hearing these words.

 The man recently returned to the great rabbi, this time with a smile on his face, announcing “I am engaged”.

 Those present were somewhat surprised, wondering how he accomplished this in the two months after hearing the rabbi’s previous words. The happy groom explained that his bride-to-be is a convert who converted a month earlier, thus explaining the great rabbi’s words “your *zivug* has not been born”.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of OHRNET, the Orh Somayach Torah Magazine of the Internet (*[*www.ohr.edu*](http://www.ohr.edu)*)*

**Faced With Chaplain Shortage, Army Lets Rabbi Keep Beard After All**

 Rabbi Menachem Stern has wanted to be an army chaplain since August 2008, when he came across a Jewish news site that got him thinking it was the right job for him. Halfway through an introductory meeting, he texted his wife to tell her, “I think I’ve found what we’re looking for.”



Rabbi Menachem Stern

 Several years and a lawsuit later, the graduate of Chabad-Lubavitch yeshivas expects to be sworn in next Friday and begin attending chaplain school in January. It could have happened sooner, but his beard got in the way.

 In keeping with Jewish teachings regarding preserving a man’s facial hair, Stern does not cut or trim his beard. This previously stood him in opposition to official military codes for dress and appearance. Back in 2009, he had received preliminary approval for a reserve commission in the U.S. Army, but he was twice contacted about errors that would delay his swearing-in because the issue of his facial hair was not resolved.

 The Aleph Institute, a Chabad-Lubavitch organization that assists Jewish military personnel, Jewish inmates and their families, and Sens. Charles E. Schumer, Kristen Gillibrand and Joseph Lieberman sought to persuade top brass that the rabbi should be able to keep his beard.

**The Case of Col. Jacob Goldstein**

 They cited the case of Col. Jacob Goldstein, a bearded Chabad-Lubavitch rabbi and Army Reserve chaplain who has served with distinction in the reserves and National Guard on numerous international combat missions over the past 33 years.

 When Stern was ultimately unable to secure the same exemption that Goldstein received years ago, he filed a federal lawsuit in December accusing the Army of violating his Constitutional rights to religious freedom and equal protection under the law.

 Rabbi Stern, of Crown Heights, Brooklyn, filed a federal lawsuit against the Army last year for barring him from joining its Chaplain Corps unless he shaved, something he has never done, since first sprouting whiskers at age 16.

**Never Shaved in His Life**

 “I’ve never shaved, ever — it’s Jewish law [Editor’s Note, many Orthodox rabbis do allow men to shave with electric shavers],” Rabbi Stern said Tuesday. “My beard is only maybe two inches long, but it’s part of my faith.”

 “Keeping an unshorn beard is a tenet of my faith, and it’s not something I’m willing to negotiate,” he said. “For me to shave before entering the Army would be like asking me to cut off my right arm.”

 “It says in Leviticus, Verse 27, Chapter 19, that ‘You shall not round the corners of your head, nor shall you mar the corners of the beard,’ ” he said, citing a biblical passage supporting Jewish law against shaving.

**Violation of His Constitutional Rights**

 In his suit, Rabbi Stern argued that the Army’s decision violated his constitutional rights to religious freedom and equal protection under the law. In a recent settlement, the Army agreed to grant Rabbi Stern a waiver allowing him to keep his beard, according to an Army spokesman.

 In the suit, Rabbi Stern cited instances in which the Army granted waivers recently to several Sikh men and a Muslim man seeking to keep their beards and turbans on active duty.

 The Army just recently settled the case.

 According to Stern, from the military’s point of view, there’s a shortage of Jewish chaplains, while a cadre of bearded rabbis like himself are lining up for the chance to serve. Ultimately what matters, he said, is the ability of a Jewish soldier to be served by a rabbi sensitive to their needs and spiritual concerns. He believes others in the military will respect him for holding fast to his principles.

**An Example of Faith without Compromise**

 “A soldier, whether they’re Jewish or not, will see someone who is serious and standing by his faith without compromise,” explained Stern. “They’ll respect that person and come to trust him.”

 Rabbi Sanford Dresin, a career Army chaplain for more than 26 years who now serves as director of military programs for the Aleph Institute, said it has been a long road, but that he is happy the Army was able to work things out with Stern. He pointed to the rabbi’s academic skills and physical prowess as contributing factors, and added that he hopes the case will set a precedent for other rabbis and in the other branches of the military.

 “Currently, there are only nine Army rabbis on active duty throughout the world,” he stated back in March, “and about 37 Jewish chaplains in the entire U.S. armed forces, including the reserves.

**Military Would Benefit from Chabad Selflessness**

 “Many Chabad rabbis would be willing to serve,” continued Dresin. “The military would benefit from the selflessness exhibited by emissaries like the Holtzbergs in Mumbai and other young couples who would go anywhere.”

 Stern’s next step is his formal commission ceremony, which will take place at the Aleph Institute’s headquarters in South Florida. After chaplain school, he wants to request active duty.

 “There’s always the possibility of being deployed somewhere overseas,” said Dresin. But Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries are willing to go anywhere for the sake of their mission, “which is exactly what chaplaincy is all about.”

*Reprinted from both the Matzav.com website of December 4, 2011 and the New York Times blog website of December 7, 2011.*

A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt”l

**Reflections on Envy (Kin’ah)**

**By Rabbi Avigdor Miller, zt”l**

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| **QUESTION:** |

What is wrong with the quality of envy, and what are some practical ways to work on it?

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| **ANSWER:** |

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| Green_with_Envy!-488pds-d |

Envy is a glorious mechanism that Hakadosh Baruch Hu bestowed on mankind, in order to achieve perfection. Envy is a way of acquiring good things that you don't have.

 Kin’ah means the word Konoh to acquire; only Kin’ah means you want to take from somebody else. Like Shoresh means, L'hashrish to put root, L'sharesh to pull out the roots. Sokol, to throw stones, L'sakeil, to take out stones.

 So Konoh means to acquire, and Kin’ah means to take away what someone else has acquired. So therefore, if you see somebody has good practices, it's good to be envious. Be jealous of good things. When people are polite: you see a man and his wife talk politely to each other, you come home and practice it to your own wife.

**Jealousy Can Be Good**

 Be jealous. When you see people who are standing a long Shmonei Esrei, try to stand a longer one. People are learning; try to learn too. All good things are facilitated by Kin’ah. Kin’as Sofrim Tarbeh Chochmah; the envy of book-men increases wisdom. That's why Hashem gave Kin’ah.

 Only when you don't intend to acquire any good things, only you don't want that person to have it, that's wicked Kin’ah. You're jealous because he has it, that's wicked Kin’ah. Also material things: you have a right to try to better yourself, you have a right to buy a better house, better furniture. But that it should eat you up?

 That means your head is on the wrong subjects. Why aren't you eaten up when other people are more pious and more decent than you are? But that kind of Kin’ah also is wickedness. How to work on Kin’ah, that's a different subject, it needs more than this lecture, some other time.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, zt’l.*

**A Slice of Life**

**Why Doesn't Mama**

**Love Me?**

**By Suri Marozov**

 It was a busy week, like any other week as emissaries of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Ulyanovsk, Russia: running the preschool, preparing kosher meals for the public, making time for family... the usual.

 My husband [Rabbi Yossi Marozov] would be away for Shabbat on a fundraising trip so for this Shabbat I decided to invite only women for the Shabbat meal.

 Natasha who helps us around the house, is not Jewish, but she has two Jewish friends and another non-Jewish friend who always spend lots of time together. I decided to invite all four of them for the Friday night meal.

**Guests Arrive an Hour and a Half Before Shabbat**

 An hour and a half before Shabbat they arrived at my door. I showed them to my living room, brought them some tea, and joined them in their conversation. The atmosphere was pleasant and the women were very happy to be there for a "night out." Yet, the other non-Jewish woman, Rima, was acting a bit unusual. Every few minutes she looked at me with wide-opened eyes as if inspecting me.

 For about 20 minutes, Rima just gazed off and was not part of the conversation. Then she cleared her throat and said in a shaky voice, "You know?" we all turned to her, "my mother was Jewish!"We were all shocked. "Your mother was Jewish? How can that be?"

**Tells of Her Fascinating Story**

 She took a deep breath and told us her fascinating story:

Rima was born in 1935 in Odessa, Ukraine, and was raised together with her four younger siblings. From a very young age, Rima noticed that her mother treated her differently than the rest of her siblings, by giving her less attention and care. Rima, was always served last which meant that she got the leftovers.

 When there was an opportunity for education or a trip to the grandparents, Rima was always last choice. Eventually, Rima realized that it was an intentional behavior. Her mother clearly loved all the children and didn't show the same love to Rima. Rima's mother made her take care of her younger siblings; she was responsible to cook food, to clean up, wash the laundry and babysit.

**Why Can’t Mama Be A**

**Good Mother for Me?**

 Eventually Rima began asking her father, "Why can Mama be a good mother for everyone and not for me?" Rima asked this question many times, and on different occasions. Her father would answer her, "You're the oldest in the family, you can tolerate more." Yet, Rima believed that such answers were just a cover up for something her parents did not want to reveal to her.

 Thirty-five years ago, when Rima was 42-years-old and married with two children, her father was diagnosed with a severe case of tuberculosis. The doctors sent him home to spend the remaining few months of his life with his family.

 For the next two months he lay in bed surrounded by immediate family and close friends. Everyone knew that he was about to leave forever. He, too, knew exactly what was going on and maturely prepared for his death.

**Finally Answer Her Question Truthfully**

 One day, Rima was with her father alone in his room. Rima was asked by her father to lock the door from the inside. "I'm about to die," her father said. "I want you to know who you really are and I want to answer your question that I never answered truthfully."

 "In the early 1930s, when I was a young man, I married a beautiful Jewish girl. After about a year that we were happily married, she became pregnant. Her parents both worked in the main theater of Odessa and I worked for the NKVD. Those years weren't easy for Jews. One day, my wife heard that they were rounding up Jews.

**Father’s First Wife Ran To**

**Check Up on Her Parents**

 My wife, late in her pregnancy, ran quickly to the theater to check up on her parents. Unfortunately, when she got there she found out that it was too late; both her parents had been taken away. Out of shock and from the devastating blow, she went into labor and gave birth to a sweet baby girl right there in the theater. That adorable baby girl is YOU!! I was notified by the theater that my wife had given birth and then disappeared. The baby was there, waiting for me to come pick her up.

 "I went to fetch you. I felt that I did not have the ability to take care of you so I set you up in a foster home on the condition that when I would marry again, I would come and take you back home with me. And so I did."

 Shortly after, Rima's father passed away.

**Travels to Odessa to See the**

**Theater She Was Born in**

 At the next available opportunity, Rima traveled to Odessa, Ukraine, to see for herself the theater she was born in. When she got there, she was amazed to see the exact theater still existing, exactly the way her had father described it to her. Inside, Rima found a bench and sat down. From all of the emotion that had been built up inside, Rima burst into a sobbing cry. She cried bitter tears: for her mother who she never knew; for the void she always felt; and for the truth that she finally found out.

 From a distance, a worker in the theater had been watching Rima. When she noticed Rima was unable to calm down she went over to her to ask if she could be of any assistance. Rima's uncontrollable tears kept rolling down her cheeks. Finally she told the worker the reason for her visit.

**Worker Tells Rima About Her Birth**

 The worker looked at Rima, and said, "It is really you! I was there when your mother found out that her parents were taken away. I was the one who helped your mother through her delivery here in the theater. I was there when your mother fled and I took care of you until your father came to get you." The two women embraced each other, until Rima was able to compose herself and ask the woman for more details.

 After hearing this, we all sat in out chairs numb with emotion. I finally broke the silence, "Rima, it's time for all of us to light the Shabbat candles, would you please join us?" At 76, Rima lit Shabbat candles for the first time in her life.

 The next week I presented Rima with a gift: candlestick holders, candles, a booklet that explains the significance of lighting Shabbat candles, and our very own Jewish calendar so she has the candle lighting times for Ulyanovsk.

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