**Shabbos Stories for Parshas**

**Mikeitz (Chanukah) 5772**

**Volume 3, Issue #13 28 Kislev 5772/December 24, 2011**

***For a free subscription, please forward your request to*** [***keren18@juno.com***](mailto:keren18@juno.com)

**The Hidden Light**

**By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach**

What is so special about the mitzvah of Chanuka lights? This is the question that arises when we read the words of Rambam (Laws of Chanuka 4:12): “The mitzvah of Chanuka is a very beloved mitzvah.”

This extraordinary title for a mitzvah, one not assigned to any other mitzvah, calls for an examination of the special nature of this command.

The answer lies in the mystical concept of *Ohr Haganuz*: When G-d created the world and said, “Let there be light”, the illumination that resulted was not what we see today. This was a light, say our Sages, which enabled one “to see from one end of the world to another.”

**What Happened to the “Special” Light?**

What happened to this light is explained in the *gemara* (*Mesechta Chagigah* 12b) quoted by Rashi in *Parshat Bereishet* (1:4):

“G-d saw that the wicked were unworthy of enjoying it and therefore set it aside for the use of the righteous in the World to Come.”

Where did the Creator store this *Ohr Haganuz* hidden light in the meantime? Our sacred commentaries have suggested that the *Ohr* *Haganuz* was stored in the words of the Torah. When one learns Torah he gains some of that world-spanning perspective provided by this magical light.

**Tradition About the Lights of Chanuka**

There is also a tradition that the *Ohr Haganuz* was stored in the lights kindled by Jews on Chanuka. The 36 lights of the eight days of Chanuka correspond to the 36 hours of the primeval light before it was set aside.

This explains the custom of spending some time looking at the Chanuka lights so as to gain a tiny glimpse of the hidden light which they reflect.

What can we hope to gain from such a virtual reconnection to a light which enabled one to see from one end of the world to another? Chanuka brings together thousands of miles of the universe and thousands of years of history. It celebrates the end of the Hellenist exile, the third of the four exiles our people have experienced at the hands of four different superpowers.

Exile, and the suffering that goes with it, can challenge one’s faith. But when one looks at those Chanuka lights, and sings the “Maoz Tzur” song about miraculous survival in all of those exiles, he sees the world – time and place – from

one end to another and gains an understanding of the Divine design for the destiny of His beloved people.

May we merit to see the hidden light within the lights of Chanuka and enjoy a glimpse of the World to Come.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of OHRNET, the Ohr Somayach Magazine of the Internet.*

**Story #734**

**The Chanukah Heirloom**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[**editor@ascentofsafed.com**](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0000dLk0:001EnDpX00003l83&count=1322060863&randid=485364713&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=0&randid=485364713##)

Private, W. was with the United States Army as it marched through Europe at the end of World War II. His unit was assigned to a village with the orders to secure the town and search for any hidden Nazis. While there, they were to help the villagers in any way they could.

The private was on patrol one night when he saw a young boy running through a field just outside the village. "Halt or I'll shoot," he shouted. The boy ducked behind a tree. The private waited patiently.

**The Boy Retrieves the Item**

Eventually the boy came out. Figuring that the soldier was no longer nearby, the boy went to a spot near a large tree and started to dig. Private W. waited patiently again, this time until the boy had retrieved the object of his digging and was on the move once more. He stepped out and shouted, "Halt or I'll shoot!" The boy ran but Private W. decided not to shoot. Instead, he began pursuing the furtive figure. He caught up with the boy and tackled him to the ground.

In the scuffle that ensued, the boy dropped an ornate ***Chanuka menora*** that he had been holding tightly against his chest. Private W. picked up the menora. The boy tried to grab it back shouting, "Give it to me. It's mine!"

Private W. looked deeply into the frightened youth's eyes and assured him that he was among friends. "I myself am Jewish," he told the youngster.

The boy, who had survived the concentration camp, was mistrustful of all men in uniforms. He had been forced to watch the shooting of his father. He had no idea what had become of his mother.

**Soldier Adopts the Boy**

In the weeks that followed, Private W. took an interest in the young boy's welfare. The boy, David, became closer and closer with the American soldier. Private W.'s heart went out to the boy. He offered to bring David with him to the United States, to New York City where he lived. David accepted and Private W. went through all the necessary paperwork to officially adopt David.

Private W., now Mr. W. and back in the private sector, was active in the New York Jewish community. An acquaintance of his, a curator of the Jewish Museum in New York City, saw the *menora*. He told David it was very valuable, a relic of European Jewry, and should be shared with the entire Jewish Community. He offered David $50,000 for the *menora*.

**Refuses to Sell the Menora**

David refused the generous offer, saying the *menora* had been in his family for over 200 years and that no amount of money would ever make him part with it.

When Chanuka came, David and the Mr. W. lit the *menora* in the window of their home in New York City. David went to his room to study and Mr. W. stayed in the room with the *menora*.

The quiet stillness of the house was interrupted by a knock on the door. Mr. W. went to answer the door. A woman speaking with a strong German accent stood before him. She seemed flustered and excused herself for intruding. She had been walking down the street when she looked up and saw the *menora* in the window.

"We once had a *menora* just like that in our family," she said in broken English. She had never seen any other like it. Could she come and take a closer look?

Mr. W. invited her in to look at the *menora*. He said that the *menora* belonged to his son who could perhaps tell her more about it. Mr. W. called David from his room to tell the woman more about the menora's history.

In the mystic glow of the ancient Chanuka *menora*, David was reunited with his mother.

Source: From a posting on *//lchaimweekly.org* (#746), with permission.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of KabbalaOnline.org. a project of Ascent of Safed.*

[www.ascentofsafed.com](http://www.ascentofsafed.com) [ascent@ascentofsafed.com](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0000dLk0:001EnDpX00003l83&count=1322060863&randid=485364713&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=0&randid=485364713##)

**What’s The Right Thing to Do? Hunter and Hunted**

**Question:** Some friends have invited me to join them on a safari to Africa which will include hunting wild animals. Is hunting proper for a nice Jewish boy?

**Answer:** This question was put to the rabbi of Prague, Rabbi Yechezkel Landau, over two centuries ago. His answer, as it appears in *Responsa Noda B’Yehuda*, rejects the idea of hunting on cultural, ethical and halachic grounds.

“Who are the hunters mentioned in the Torah?”, he asks rhetorically. Nimrod and Esav, the two individuals identified as hunters, were also the personification of rebellion against Heaven and cruelty towards man. Hardly models for a nice Jewish boy!

**Wishing Someone “Tibaleh Vetitchadesh”**

He also calls attention to the Jewish custom of wishing someone who wears a new article of clothing that he live to see it wear out and be replaced by another (“*tibaleh* *vetitchadesh*”).

This blessing is withheld, however, in regard to items made of leather, such as shoes, because it implies the death of an animal to make such renewal possible. If such compassion for animals is expected of us in the blessing we offer, he concludes, how much more so in regard to refraining from slaying them simply for the sake of pleasure.

After stating these reasons based on *mussar* (ethics) the author issues his ruling that hunting is forbidden because of the risk it presents to the hunter. (“Just as the hunter is out to kill his prey, the animal is out to kill the hunter.”)

If someone hunts for his livelihood he is permitted to expose himself to this level of risk just as the Torah permitted one to climb high fruit trees, cross oceans and travel deserts for his livelihood despite the fact that each of these carries with it a degree of risk.

But if hunting is done simply as a form of sport one is guilty of exposing himself unnecessarily to such a degree of risk, and therefore violates the Torah command to guard against danger to life, a sin that makes his situation even more precarious.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of OHRNET, the Ohr Somayach Magazine of the Internet.*

**A Lesson Learned from Yosef**

**By Rabbi Reuven Semah**

“***Yosef answered Pharaoh saying, ‘It is beyond me. It is Hashem who can restore Pharaoh’s peace.***’” (Beresheet 41:16)

Sir Moshe Montefiore was well respected among the British aristocracy, yet he remained a proudly observant Jew throughout his entire life. He once said that he took his cue from Yosef.

When Pharaoh needed a dream interpreted he called upon Yosef., saying that he had heard that Yosef was skilled in interpreting dreams. Yosef denied having any expertise. He gave all the credit to Hashem. Yet this denial so impressed Pharaoh, in spite of being the idolator that he was, that he appointed Yosef as his viceroy.

The Jew gains greater respect by acknowledging his beliefs than by hiding them.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of the Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin*

**A Store Where Toys**

**Must Be Kosher**

**By Joseph Berger**

IN this toy store, Batman and Spider-Man are not heroes.

For one thing, said Barbara Shine, manager of Double Play Toys in Borough Park, Brooklyn, the characters encourage interest in television, and the ultra-Orthodox Jewish families who make up her clientele do not watch television. More important, those toys might also teach lessons Hasidic parents don’t want their children to learn.



Angel Franco/The New York Times

Thomas the Tank Engine “is a kosher character,” she said, illustrating her store’s philosophy. “He’s not hitting and killing people. We don’t want kids to learn violence.”

Even if gift-giving is not central to Hasidic celebrations of [Hanukkah](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/h/hanukkah/index.html?inline=nyt-classifier), which begins Tuesday evening, toys are crucial year round. Families tend to have flocks of children, and mothers need ways to amuse them when the fathers are at synagogue or study hall and when the parents take their customary Sabbath naps.

So Mrs. Shine, an effervescent mother of seven who is strictly Orthodox but does not follow any sect’s grand rabbi the way most Hasidim do, knows she has a ready market. And her business flourishes because she understands the neighborhood’s unwritten codes.

**Not Your Typical Toy Boutique**

The store is not the kind of airy boutique that might be found in one of the city’s tonier neighborhoods. Its aisles are narrow and the shelves run floor to ceiling, crammed with all manner of toys and games so her customers — dark-suited men, and women in long skirts and wigs — can pick out what they need.

“You have something for an upsherin?” a bearded Hasidic customer asked on a recent Friday, inquiring about a gift appropriate for the celebration marking an Orthodox boy’s first haircut, usually on his third birthday.

Mrs. Shine steered him toward a tool set.

Little boys with coiling earlocks and girls in long sleeves do come in for toy figures like the Mitzvah Kinder or the magnetic building set Magna-Tiles, though school days that stretch to 5 p.m. limit their presence.

**A Certain Code of Dress**

Hula-Hoop-like toys are a hot item, but Mrs. Shine keeps them tucked away because the packaging has pictures of scantily clad women. “We have a certain code of dress,” she explained. She said she had persuaded the manufacturer of the popular card game Perpetual Commotion to change the packaging because she considered the clothing immodest.

Double Play has been in business since 1994, when Mrs. Shine, now 42, founded it in her home to earn some income for her growing family. She is now on 14th Avenue. Mrs. Shine, who grew up in Minnesota — her mother went to a Zionist camp with Bob Dylan when he was still a Zimmerman — was not raised Orthodox, but she was deeply influenced by her Minneapolis yeshiva. She sold the store 11 years ago, but remained as the manager.

**A “Mashgiach” of Toys**

One customer, Alexander Rapaport, a father of six who is executive director of the [Masbia](http://www.masbia.org/) Soup Kitchen Network, said the community had confidence in her judgment. “She is her own mashgiach,” he said, using the Yiddish word for a kosher inspector.

Mrs. Shine knows not to sell stuffed lions to a Lubavitch family because members of that movement do not want their children playing with animals not kosher to eat. She is very careful about stocking books because some themes may not sit well — like the “Chronicles of Narnia” series and its Christian symbolism.

On the other hand, she is not afraid to sell an Advent calendar that consists of intriguing small toys. Though the set literally counts down to Christmas, it does not trade in religious imagery or mention the holiday by name, only Advent. “And nobody in the neighborhood knows what Advent is,” she said.

*Reprinted from the December 15th edition of The New York Times.*

**The Human Side of the Story**

**A Monument to Caring**

**By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach**

“I feel so terrible that I can’t sleep at night,” cried the widow to Rabbi Aviezri Auerbach, the rav of the Jewish community in Halberstat, Germany. “Not only did I lose my husband but I couldn’t afford to put a marble monument on his grave and had to settle for a simple gravel one.”

The rabbi thought for a moment how he could comfort this broken widow so upset at not having properly honored her husband. In a flash of inspiration he took a sheet of his rabbinical stationery and wrote on it a Will instructing his children to place on his own grave after his death a monument made of gravel and not of marble.

**Promising that Her Husband’s Memory**

**Would Suffer No Dishonor**

He then read this document to the heartsick widow and thus assured her that

her husband’s memory would suffer no dishonor.

The rabbi’s instructions were faithfully followed when he passed away. When the residents of the city, Jews and non- Jews alike, expressed wonder at seeing such a simple monument atop the grave of such an illustrious spiritual leader, they learned what a Torah leader was ready to do to comfort a widow.

Selections

*Reprinted from this week’s email of OHRNET, the Ohr Somayach Magazine of the Internet.*

**A Slice of Life**

**Finding Light on Chanuka**

**By Rabbi Ben Tanny**

"You wander in the jungles of Borneo, climb the highest mountain in Africa and spend months at a Thai boxing camp in Thailand... how do you keep Shabbat and kosher in all these places?"

I have been traveling since 1997 and never really stopped. My house is my backpack where I have everything I need; clothing, a tooth brush, juggling balls, and a pair of Tefilin.

People would joke and say, "Ben you will see the whole world before you turn 25, then where will you travel with your wife?" My response was, "I am leaving the exciting places like Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen for my honeymoon."

One of my highlights of traveling is having the opportunity to be chazan/cantor for the many communities I pass through. I have been a chazan since my Bar Mitzva and I thank G-d for giving me the gift of leading people in prayer.

**The “Undercover Rabbi”**

When the situation permits, I look for opportunities to speak to fellow Jews about Torah and the divine, and with non-Jews about the seven Noahide Laws and what really goes on in Israel. I often call myself the "Undercover Rabbi."

Indonesia is the fourth largest country in the world by population, with 250 million inhabitants. It is also the largest Muslim country in the world, with over 120 million Muslims. There aren't many Jews still living in Indonesia, perhaps a few dozen, and there is no Torah scroll there. Holders of Israeli passports are barred entry, and the general anti-Israel/anti-Jewish sentiment does not make it to the Jewish person's list of "top ten travel destinations."

**Toured Indonesia Anyway**

I went there anyway - mostly to Bali where the people are Hindu and more accepting of foreign tourists. I rode a motorbike around the island, did some scuba diving, went snorkeling, and visited a couple of monkey temples.

The majority of tourists visiting Indonesia don't get past Bali, but there is more to see. I traveled across the main islands of Java and Sumatra and climbed to the tops of a few active volcanoes. I spent time in local villages.

At one point I was on the east coast of Bali with plans to dive Tullamben, a famous wreck site. I was the only tourist in the resort. On Shabbat afternoon, I sat on the beach talking to G-d. "Please Hashem, I've been in Indonesia for a few weeks now and have not yet met one Jew. Please send me someone to talk to on this fine Shabbat afternoon."

A few minutes passed until I heard voices of a family chattering noisily. I turned around and spotted mommy, daddy, and their three kids, who had just checked into the resort.

I introduced myself to the father and when he responded I recognized his accent.

"Where are you from?" I asked.

"Montreal," he replied.

"Wow, I'm from Montreal too. Maybe our families know each other?" I suggested. "What's your family name?"

The man shrugged. "You probably don't know us. The name is Cohen."

**Reminding the Cohens About Chanuka**

I laughed and wished them "Shabbat Shalom." Mr. Cohen was just as baffled to meet another Jew from Montreal on a beach in Bali. I reminded the Cohens that the following night Chanuka started. Mr. Cohen's wife looked at him, "I told you honey, you were supposed to find out when Chanuka starts!" He told his wife he would buy candles the next day.

I sat back down on the beach and thanked G-d for giving me the opportunity to remind the Cohens about the light of Chanuka. It seems there is always a Jew somewhere out there no matter how where one travels.

**Spending Chanuka in Laos**

I remembered years earlier when I was in Laos for Chanuka. I was walking around the marketplace looking to buy olive oil. I could have used candles but I thought it would be nice to light with olive oil like they did in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, reminiscent of the miracle that took place with the small cruse of oil on that first Chanuka. I spotted a Western guy talking in the Lao language with one of the vendors. I thought, "he speaks the language. Maybe he can help me."

We got to chatting. Daniel was from the United States and had been coming to Laos over the years to buy native musical instruments. He was a bit strange looking to me. He wore his hair in dreadlocks, sported a wild beard, had a few tattoos, some body piercings, and wore strange baggy clothing. Most prominent were his two stretched earlobes over large wooden pegs.

Daniel helped me to a chemist shop where they sold small bottles of olive oil used for skin treatment. The shopkeeper and Daniel were equally mystified when I wanted to buy all the bottles he had. I explained to Daniel about the upcoming Jewish holiday of Chanuka and how I needed the oil to light the Chanuka menora.

"Man, I've not seen a menora in over 20 years," Daniel remarked. "When I was a kid we would light one in the house."

**Mesmerized by the Chanuka Lights**

It was Friday. I invited Daniel to join me for menora lighting and Shabbat dinner. On Friday, the menora needs to be lit before Shabbat begins. I waited for Daniel until the last possible moment and then lit without him. The sun had already set when Daniel arrived. I could not have waited for him to light the menora. Daniel did not mind. He sat down next to the menora and watched the burning flames with great intensity. When I offered him to join my Shabbat meal he did not want to leave the lights. For the next three hours he sat staring at the menora, letting his Jewish soul reignite with the flames of Chanuka.

*Reprinted from this week’s edition of “L’Chaim,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY.*

**A Message from the Kalever Rebbe For Chanukah 5772**

**Chanukah a “Culture Clash Over Life’s True Purpose”**

[](http://go.madmimi.com/redirects/69b96efc97f4888cc76918b3f7d5cd76?pa=6830350832)

We live in a world of great beauty, one that offers tantalizing material benefits and pleasures for humanities taking. But what is the true purpose of these resources, and to what end should mankind exploit them? This question is as old as the world itself and has garnered a myriad of responses from different individuals and peoples throughout the course of human history.

What’s the Purpose of Our Existence?

Is our life’s journey limited to the short time we spend on this earth with the logical conclusion that we should spend our time here in the pursuit of maximum material pleasure while we can yet enjoy it? Is this world, in fact, the be all and end all of our existence?

Or are we here only temporarily with a higher purpose that transcends our fleeting presence in this infinitesimally small corner of the universe? Do we have a mandate to serve a Divine Creator and, thus, connect ourselves to the eternal? Is there an unseen yet palpable, spiritual realm whose beauty and pleasure far surpasses the temporal bounds of the world we see in front of us? These trenchant but diametrically opposed viewpoints form the basis of the Chanukah story and inform the philosophical outlooks of its key protagonists, the Jews and the Greeks.

Our patriarch Abraham (Avraham Avinu) taught the world the truth of the existence of the One Eternal Al-mighty G-d, Creator of heaven and earth. And Hashem rewarded these efforts by entering into a special covenant, a Bris with Avraham and his children for all time. The Bris served to bring us closer to G-d and raised us to a lofty spiritual plane.

**An Obligation to be a Priestly and Holy Nation**

But at the same time it imposed upon us a new mandate: to live in accordance with G-d’s holy will as a model nation and in so doing, raise all humanity with us into the radiant aura of G-d’s supernal light. We are to be a Mamlechet Kohanim V’Goi Kadosh, a priestly and holy nation.

As heirs to Avraham’s legacy, we recognize that the pleasures we derive from this world are but a means and pathway to a far greater and eternal future in the world to come. And accordingly, we are more than willing to devote our time, energy and resources in the service of our Creator and for the benefit of our fellow man.

**A Concept the Greeks Rejected**

The Greeks scoffed at this notion. They believed only in that which they could see. But in truth, their rationalistic philosophies were mere excuses to absolve themselves of a greater responsibility and allow themselves to pursue with abandon the momentary gratifications of this limited world.

Perspective and perception in life are so critical to our understanding of pure, ultimate truth. The Greeks allowed themselves to be blinded by the immediate esthetic and refused to acknowledge a greater power which might infringe on his hedonistic predilections. The Jew, however, beholds this world and sees it as a wondrous veil concealing an infinite beyond.

When the Greeks saw the Jews performing the service in the holy temple ”taking healthy bullocks, oxen and sheep and consecrating them as Korbanot, sacrifices to an unseen G-d, it stirred within them pangs of conscience and enraged them against this people that presumed to curtail their quest to satisfy every last desire this world has to offer. The notion of wasting a perfectly good animal that could otherwise provide physical pleasure was antithetical to their pragmatic sensibilities. Consequently, the Greeks decreed that their secular philosophies should supplant Torah study and that the performance of Mitzvos be outlawed.

Many Jews Were Swayed by the Greek Philosophy

The Talmud records that many Jews fell under the spell of the Greek way of life; they tried convincing their brethren to join the Greeks in their new-found freedom, to live moment to moment and seek instant gratification. One prominent Jewish woman, Miriam the daughter of Bilga who hailed from a family of Kohanim, priests who served in our holy Temple, married an officer in the Greek Helenist army.

When he entered the Temple with his garrison to defile its precincts, Miriam entered with him and proceeded straight to the sacrificial altar. She violently kicked the side of the altar and screamed, “Lukus, Lukus, (Oh wolf, wolf) how long will you continue to consume the sacrifices of your people but fail to protect them in their time of need?” She mirrored the attitude of her Greek husband in refusing to acknowledge a higher purpose in life.

Greek Attack Against the Jewish Faith

Against this background we gain profound insight into a cryptic practice the Greeks instituted in their zeal to strip the Jews of their last vestige of Jewish faith and practice. As recorded by our Rabbis, the Greeks decreed that all Jews must inscribe upon the horn of an ox the statement ‘We renounce our connection to the G-d of Israel.”

While we understand their desire to uproot the last trace of Torah observance, what was the significance of inscribing this pronouncement on the ox’s horn. But, as we observed, one of the practices most demonstrative of our willingness to consecrate our possessions to a higher purpose was the sacrifice of a perfectly healthy ox on G-d’s altar. The Greeks took this symbol of our immortality and sought to degrade it to the lowest levels by turning it into a symbol of blasphemy.

Fortunately, with G-d’s help, there arose a tenacious remnant of our holy people who refused to crumble under the Greek influence and who reasserted their undying, unflagging faith in Hashem. Known as the Chashmonaim, they rallied their brethren to their cause and kindled a flame of religious renewal that burned brightly enough to repulse an enemy far greater in numbers, one whose evil darkness could not smother the light of Divine truth. And as the story concludes, the little bit of holy oil remaining in the temple shone luminously for eight days until new holy oil could be manufactured to supply the rededicated service of the restored Bais Hamikdash.

The Spiritual Challenge Remains the Same today

Today, we battle against the same forces of secularism and assimilation that our ancestors prevailed against 2,200 years ago. We musn’t fail in carrying forth the torch in this generation and passing it on to future generations of holy Jewish children.

May your lives be filled with the light of Chanukah bringing true spiritual joy and serenity into all of your endeavors. And may we all merit to see the Divine light of truth justice and love shine forth once again from Yerushalayim and our holy Bais HaMikdash, may it be rebuilt speedily in our days.

*Special Thanks to: Rabbi Avraham Shalom Farber & Yehuda Leib Meth, for the Translation*

*Reprinted from a special email of the Kalever Rebbe’s Gabai – Zalman Rosenberg*

*Tel: (718) 782-4553 Fax: (718) 486-5918 Email:* [*mail@kaalov.org*](mailto:mail@kaalov.org)

**It Once Happened**

**Yemenite Chanuka Menoras**

Sa'id and Yihya the sons of Yosef the silversmith, lived in the city of Sanaa, Yemen. They were beautiful children, with brilliant dark eyes and long curly peyot in the style of the Yemenite Jews.

Every morning Sa'id, who was older than Yihya by a year, would take his younger brother to their teacher's house, where they would learn Torah for hours on end. The children sat on mats arranged in a circle, their legs folded under them. Everyone would read from the one book that was placed on a small stool in the center.

**Praying Together in the Sallah Synagogue**

In the evening, Sa'id and Yihya arrived home at the same time their father was returning from his workshop in the marketplace. Together they would go to pray the evening service at the Sallah synagogue, not far from their home. Afterwards, they would all sit down to enjoy the delicious evening meal their mother Saada had prepared.

Life continued as usual, until rumors began to circulate that giant "metal birds" were taking Jews from Yemen to the Holy Land. Yosef wanted very much to emigrate, but was reluctant to give up his steady source of income for the great unknown. He continued to weigh the pros and cons but could not come to a decision.

**Yemen Plunges into a State of Political Turmoil**

In the meantime, Yemen was plunged into a state of political turmoil. The king was overthrown in a bloody coup by his second-in-command, who was then promptly overthrown by the murdered king's son, Prince Ahmad. In a beneficent gesture, the new ruler announced that Yemen's Jews were free to leave the country.

The situation in Yemen was very unstable. No one could predict how long the latest regime would last, or if the newly-opened gates to freedom might suddenly come crashing down. It was a very frightening time for Yemen's Jews.

In the end, Saada and Yosef decided that they couldn't leave just yet. But they would send their two children, Sa'id and Yihya, on to Israel ahead of them. It was a daring and brave move, but the anguished parents felt that it was the best alternative. G-d willing, they would join the children soon.

But life in the Holy Land wasn't exactly what the two brothers had anticipated. For a few months the boys were in a temporary transit camp. Then, tragically, the brothers were separated and sent to different kibbutzim. Sa'id, who had meanwhile changed his name to Chaim, was taken to Kibbutz Ein Shemer. From that day on he lost contact with Yihya.

The Small Silver Chanuka Menora

The only memento Chaim had of his former life was a small silver Chanuka menora his father had fashioned especially for him. Right before leaving, Yosef had hastily thrust it into the boy's knapsack. Chaim remembered that his father had also made one for his younger brother. Every year on Chanuka, when Chaim took it out and kindled its lights, he would be filled with sad and distant memories.

Years passed. Chaim grew up and served in the Israeli Defense Force. Soon afterward he married and became a father. Then the Yom Kippur War broke out, and Chaim was again called upon to defend his country. At first his regiment was stationed in the north, but a few days later it was sent to the Egyptian front. With G-d's help, the Jewish soldiers were able to fight off the enemy.

Stationed in the Sinai Desert

When Chanuka arrived, Chaim was still stationed in the Sinai Desert. Luckily, he had remembered to pack in his small silver menora. That night, as he lit the first candle, his thoughts as always returned to the past. He missed his wife and children, but at that moment he longed for his childhood home more than anything. Oh, how he missed his mother and father, his younger brother Yihya, his beloved teacher, his native Sanaa...

For a long time Chaim sat in front of his tent, staring into the candles. Then, when they had almost burnt down, he decided to stretch his legs and go for a walk. Wandering about the campsite, Chaim didn't realize that he had covered quite a distance. Suddenly, he noticed a tiny light flickering in a tent doorway. He ran over and saw that it was a Chanuka menora.

He was about to turn away and return to his tent when he noticed something that stopped him in his tracks. Why, that menora looked very familiar... He bent down to take a closer look and his heart began to pound. The menora before him was the exact duplicate of his own.

"Whose menora is this?" he called out in a trembling voice.

"Yaron's," a soldier answered from within the tent.

"Yaron?" Chaim repeated the name. A moment later a soldier appeared at the entrance and stuck his head outside. "Did someone call me?" he asked.

A Brotherly Reunion

It was the sound of his voice that confirmed it, the familiar inflection that brought back a flood of memories. A second later the two men were staring at each other, their eyes locked. "Yihya?" Chaim whispered. For a split second there was no reaction, then a shiver went through Yaron's body. "Sa'id, my big brother..." he said in a voice choked with emotion. The two brothers fell on each other, crying and embracing. Tears flowed freely throughout the entire camp when word spread of the brothers' reunion.

*Reprinted from this week’s edition of “L’Chaim,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY. Translated from L'Chaim's sister publication in Israel, Sichat HaShavua.*

**In Tiny Gibraltar, an Outsized**

**Jewish Infrastructure**

**By Alex Weisler**

GIBRALTAR (JTA) -- Four synagogues, a mikvah, a kosher coffeehouse and separate boys and girls religious high schools.

Combined, they suggest a community far larger than just 750 Jews. But Gibraltar -- the tiny British overseas territory of 30,000 that sits at the foot of Spain and at the gateway to North Africa and the Mediterranean -- has spent centuries cultivating its individuality.

"We've got an infrastructure that could cope with a community of 2,000, and we've only got 700," said Mark Benady, a native Gibraltarian and vice president of the territory's Jewish community.

Gibraltar's largely Orthodox and Sephardic Jewish community has grown substantially in the past decade, increasing its rolls by 25 percent in just the last three years. The Jewish primary school now has a record 140 pupils and recently added a floor of modern classroom space with the help of government funding. Along the way, the community has become more religiously observant and, many say, more insular.

**Israelis Don’t Affiliate with**

**The Local Jewish Community**

There is also believed to be a substantial population of Israelis in Gibraltar who generally don't affiliate with the wider community.

Fueling the growth in part are soft loans of 10,000 pounds ($15,500) repayable over 15 years that were issued by the community to attract newcomers, who arrive mainly from England and Spain. Many, like Jo Jacobs Abergel, who moved here from Leicester, England, are married to native Gibraltarians. Now a mother of three, Abergel says she's somewhat of an anomaly among Gibraltar's Jewish women.



Members of Gibraltar's largely Sephardic, largely Orthodox community pick up children from the community's primary school, which is seeing record enrollment. (Alex Weisler)

"I'm kind of a heathen because I wear trousers and I don't cover my hair," she said, laughing.

Jews have lived in Gibraltar since at least 1356. For more than 200 years, beginning with the expulsion of Jews from the Iberian peninsula in 1492, there was no Jewish life here. That changed in 1713 when Britain took control of the territory affectionately dubbed "Gib" or "the rock."

**Jews have Occupied Major Political Positions**

In the centuries since, Jews have occupied major political positions. In 2008-09, the largely ceremonial post of mayor was occupied by Solomon Levy. Still, some say the walls between Jew and non-Jew in Gibraltar have grown taller.

"There's Jews here that have absolutely no contact with non-Jews,” Abergel said. “They won't send them to anything -- swimming lessons, ballet, judo, etc., -- if it's not organized by the Jewish community."

That wasn’t always the case. As a student, Benady attended a non-Jewish comprehensive school and had many non-Jewish friends -- that's less common for young Jewish Gibraltarians today. But Benady says he appreciates the warmth and closeness brought by a sense of shared purpose.

**We All Join Together for Smachot**

"When it comes to chagim [holidays], it's really lovely," said Benady, who left to work in Manchester, England, for about a decade but returned because he preferred Gibraltar. "It's very much a single community where we feel like one family, where we all join together for smachot [joyous occasions] and we all join together, unfortunately, for sad occasions as well."

Gibraltar's Jews, like the territory itself, straddle two worlds. The territory's border with Spain was closed in 1967 by dictator Francisco Franco following a referendum indicating that Gibraltarians overwhelmingly wished to remain British. The border, which is marked by Gibraltar's airport runway, didn't reopen fully until 1985, on the eve of Spain's accession to the European Economic Community.

Today the territory -- its skyline dominated by the famous Upper Rock and its resident Barbary macaque monkeys -- is a destination for bargain hunters, who take advantage of its tax-haven status to purchase inexpensive cigarettes and perfumes, among other goods. As a British territory, English is the official language, the queen is head of state and the Gibraltar pound -- pegged to its British equivalent -- is the official currency. But the Spanish influence remains strong. Many Spaniards cross the runway each day to work, and native Gibraltarians speak their own language, Llanito, a blend of English and Spanish with a sprinkling of Hebrew.

Idan Greenberg, an Israeli who moved to Gibraltar with his wife 3 1/2 years ago, runs the Verdi Verdi kosher coffeehouse on Casemates Square, an open-air plaza dotted with boutiques, cafes and pubs at the entrance to Main Street. Two of the thoroughfare’s biggest outlets -- the S.M. Seruya perfume store and Cohen and Massias jewelers -- are Jewish-owned.

**Similar to a Chic Upper West Side Manhattan Coffeehouse**

With its chic brown-and-gold suede seating and vibrant orange chairs, Verdi Verdi wouldn't be out of place on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. On a recent Friday afternoon, an American Jewish woman studying abroad in Spain popped in to grab a soup and was shocked to discover a Jew running a kosher establishment, despite the mezuzah on the door.

"Kvetching about the price of soup?" Greenberg asked her.

"How do you know that word?" she responded in surprise.

Greenberg says he wants his restaurant to appeal broadly to Gibraltarians, but like Abergel he laments the insularity he associates with the community’s increasing piety. And according to Benady, the isolation is a concern even beyond the confines of the community.

Difficult to Decide Where to Draw the Line

"There is a bit of a concern amongst the non-Jewish population that we are isolating ourselves a little,” Benady said. “But it's very difficult to decide where to draw the line.”

That sort of closeness yields little room for those Jews who don’t observe in the Orthodox fashion, some say. There are no non-Orthodox synagogues in Gibraltar, and the community observes the religious dicta published by the relatively strict Orthodox religious court in London.

"The social life very much revolves around Shabbat,” Abergel said. “It's very different from my life in England, completely. In the UK, you could be Jewish culturally. There were dances, there were fundraising events, there was loads of stuff you could get involved in whatever level you were at."

But for Benady, there’s a careful line that must be drawn between assimilation and isolation.

“I think,” he said, “we've managed to draw the line in a comfortable place."

*Reprinted from this week’s email of the AJOP (Association for Jewish Outreach Programs. The article was originally published by the J.T.A. (Jewish Telegraph Association) on December 11, 2011.*

**A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt”l**

**Religion and War**

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION:** |

There's a successful business man, a liberal and educated business man, and when he's asked why he's not interested in being *frum*, he says [it is] because the religions caused wars in the world, caused fighting in the world.

|  |
| --- |
| **ANSWER:** |

|  |
| --- |
| barthol |

My answer to him is, “Where do you see that Judaism caused wars and fighting in the world?”

That they fought against us, we see. They persecuted us, we see. Where do you see that the Jewish religion, the Torah caused fighting in the world? No such thing! We didn't go out to conquer nations and force them to accept the Torah. No fighting caused by us.

On the contrary, if you want any reason why you should go back to Judaism, it’s because we are the most peaceful of all nations. And if somebody will say, “Don't because we are the most peaceful of all nations. And if somebody will say, “Don't *frum* Jews fight among each other?” Show me a cemetery with war victims, with graves of *frum* Jews who fought with each other. *Chasidim* and *Misnagdim* had a war, but there are no victims, nobody died as a result of that war.

**Only an Excuse for a Man Who**

**Wants to Get Lost Among the Goyim**

But between the Protestants and the others, oh, sure. Between the Christians and the Mohammedans, oh, yes. Whole armies of people were put to death by each other, and to this day there is battling. But not by us. So it's only an excuse for a man who wants to get lost among the *goyim*, probably he knows nothing about the whole subject anyhow. If he cared he could easily discover that the objection is not an objection at all, it's ridiculous.

The Jews don't fight. The Jews are My [G-d’s] Dove, My Perfect One. It's a peace loving nation, and that's why a Jew should feel proud that we are the only ones that never caused any trouble in the world.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of “A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt’l,” from a trasnscript of his reply to a question asked as his famous Thursday night lectures at his Flatbush shul – the Bais Yisroel Torah Center.*

**What's In A Name**

MATITYAHU means "gift of my G-d." Matityahu was a priest in the Holy Temple and the father of the five Hasmonean brothers, Judah "the Maccabee" the most famous among them. He encouraged the uprising against the Selucid/Greek rulers and the Hellenization of Jewish life. Matityahu is a variant of Matitya, who was a contemporary of the Jewish leaders Ezra and Nechemya (Ezra 10:43, Nechemya 8:4)

MACHLA means "fat." Machla (Num. 36:11) was one of the five daughters of Tzelafchad, and lived while the Jews were in the desert. Since Tzelafchad died without any sons, Machla and her sisters argued that they should receive their father's inheritance in the Land of Israel. When Moses was consulted, he brought the matter before G-d. A command was established in their merit for all time.

Reprinted from this week’s edition of “L’Chaim.”

**Dr. Fred Goldman:**

**At 100 Years Old, an**

**Ohio Doctor Is Still In**

**By Cliff Radel**

**Associated Press**

CINCINNATI — The 100-year-old doctor still makes house calls.

He must, explains Dr. Fred Goldman.

That's where the patients are.

"If they're sick and can't leave home," he said, "I go to see them."

They came to see him Dec. 12. Patients, friends and family — some using walkers, some in strollers — gathered in numbers passing the century mark at the office he calls, "the dump," to throw a surprise birthday party for the internist who is the oldest licensed physician practicing medicine in the state of Ohio.

He surprised them. The guest of honor arrived 90 minutes early.

"I almost had a heart attack seeing all of the people in the hall and the waiting room," Goldman said between greeting well-wishers with a question about their health.

[](http://www.news-herald.com/articles/2011/12/18/news/nh4874220.txt?viewmode=fullstory#photo1#photo1)

Dr. Fred Goldman sits in his office Saturday in Cincinnati. Goldman, who turned 100 years old on Dec. 12, is a practicing physician and has been for 76 years. He still works three days a week and has an office in the old Jewish Hospital on Burnet Avenue. (Photo by Liz Dufour/Associated Press )

How's your ankle?

You still smoking?

"People ask me why do you go to a doctor who's 100?" said Patti Levine, a fourth-generation patient of the doctor. "I tell them, because he's seen it all and he knows everything."

The Blue Ash woman stood by a stroller holding her 10-month-old daughter, Madyson. "She's not his patient," Levine said, "yet."

**Never Dream of Advising Him to Retire**

Fellow physicians also gave birthday greetings to Goldman.

"He asked me to come work for him in 2007," said 85-year-old Dr. Leo Wayne. That's the year Wayne retired and Goldman, at the age of 96, cut back from five, eight-hour days a week to three.

"I told him I would not work for him," Wayne added. "I'm too young."

Would he prescribe retirement for his older friend and colleague?

"I would not dream of advising him to retire," Wayne replied. "Dr. Goldman is an excellent diagnostician. He knows his patients, including himself. He knows this patient is still up to the task."

As the birthday doctor worked the waiting and the hallway, his guests peppered him with questions.

How does it feel to be 100?

He examined both of his hands. He squeezed one. Then, the other.

**“Don’t Feel Anything Different”**

"Don't feel anything different," he said with a sly smile.

"Most people my age," he added, "can't feel anything. They're dead."

The crowd laughed. So, did the 100-year-old birthday boy.

When Fred Goldman was literally a birthday boy, he was born on Dec. 12, 1911, at his family's home on Ninth Street in the West End.

"My mother — a housewife — was from Poland. My father — a shopkeeper — was from Russia," he said, "and I was from both of them."

On the day the good doctor was born, another native Cincinnatian, William Howard Taft, waddled about the White House as the 27th President of the United States. Czar Nicholas II sat on the throne in Russia. George V, Queen Elizabeth II's grandfather, reigned as the King of England. Sun Yat-Sen had just been elected the provisional president of China. Sigmund Freud was seeing patients in Vienna.

"Hell, when I became a doctor in 1935," Goldman said, "Freud was still seeing patients."

In 1911, Madame Curie won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry. George Washington Carver was in the midst of developing 100 products from peanuts. Alexander Fleming was 17 years from discovering penicillin. Arizona voters had removed the last obstacle for their territory to become the 48th state.

**Doctor’s Favorite Sport Was Baseball**

In baseball, the doctor's favorite sport as a kid, Ty Cobb won the 1911 American League batting title by hitting a robust .420. Goldman's hometown Cincinnati Reds finished sixth that year. The 1911 Reds lost 83 games, the same number of losses suffered by the Redlegs 100 years later in 2011.

Goldman shares a birth year with the 40th President of the United States Ronald Reagan, comedian Lucille Ball, fellow Cincinnatian, Roy "King of the Cowboys" Rogers, Baseball Hall of Famer Hank Greenburg, the founder of Bluegrass Bill Monroe, legendary bluesman Robert Johnson, playwright Tennessee Williams, politician Hubert H. Humphrey and actresses Jean Harlow and Ginger Rogers. He has one thing going for him they don't. He's still alive.

**Sees 12 Patients a Day in**

**His Computer-Free Office**

"Want to see the rest of the dump?" he asked before leading visitors on a tour of his office. He sees 12 patients a day in his computer-free suite. His schedule is set by hand by his sole employee, office manager Patti Heath.

"I came to work here when he was 91," she said.

She thought she would be a short-timer. "Here I am nine years later. And he's still going strong. The first year I worked for him, I collapsed on a beach for my vacation. He hiked the wilderness in Alaska and lived in a tent. They don't make men like Fred Goldman anymore."

The century-old doctor's office overlooks Burnet Avenue, the former site of Jewish Hospital and the towers of University Hospital. When the latter was Cincinnati's General Hospital, he was making his rounds one day when he met, wooed and eventually wed Esther Nelson, a red-haired farm-girl turned nurse from Amelia.

"She was tending to my patients," he recalled. "And, she had her own ideas about things, which I admired. The best thing was she became the mother of our three kids, the best gifts she ever gave me."

One of his three sons, Tom Goldman, an audiologist at Jewish Hospital, joined the tour. He beamed at those words.

"I was a little, shy guy when I first dated Tom's mom," the doctor added. "I had never had a date with a woman before. This was around 1937. I asked her to go to dinner. She said, sure. I guess she was hungry."

They married the next year in Galveston, Texas, while he was teaching at the University of Texas.

"We were married by a justice of the peace," he recalled. "We stood in line with 30 drunken Mexicans who had just been arrested. The justice of the peace pushed me aside and asked if I had $25. I did. He married us right then and there with 30 drunken Mexicans as our witnesses."

**Enlisted in the Navy During World War II**

Three years later, with America at war, the Goldmans returned to Cincinnati. He enlisted in the Navy.

"They took me three months later, and I got out of the Navy in 1946. I served in the Pacific," he said.

"I was in a unit with six docs and 20 corpsmen. We were sent wherever they had a battle."

He tried to gloss over his service.

He mentioned in passing the names of five bloody battles: Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, Bougainville, New Guinea, Leyte Gulf. Sometimes, he said matter of factly, he went to the front. Sometimes the front came to him.

**A Citation from Admiral Nimitz**

His son produced a copy of a citation, signed by Adm. Chester Nimitz and awarded to Lt. Frederick M. Goldman, Medical Corps, "for meritorious service . . . on numerous occasions when the camp was subjected to Japanese bombing and shelling attacks, he left the comparative safety of his foxhole and proceeded to the aid of injured personnel."

Goldman shrugged his shoulders. "I saved some people," he said with a wave of his hand. "That's what I was supposed to do."

He returned to his office tour. Next stop: His examining room.

The birthday doctor pointed out the original art work on the wall. Every painting, every photo came from a patient.

"These are paintings of scenes from Switzerland," he said with sweep of his steady hands.

"They're by a painter who just signed her works with her first name, Jenetta. She's dead now — as are most of my patients."

A wise-guy on the tour asked if that reflected poorly on his skills as a physician.

Goldman grinned and explained: "I just outlived them."

Another party guest asked the centenarian tour guide for his secret to a long life. The doctor looked around the room. He spoke in a whisper as if he were giving directions to the Fountain of Youth.

"I have no secrets," he confided. "Haven't a clue why I've lived this long. Maybe it's because my office is a mess, and I keep saying I'm going to clean it up. That keeps me going. That and it's in my genes. My mother died at 91. So did one of my brothers. Another brother died in his 80s. So did my sister."

**A Short List of His Vices**

He made a short list of his vices.

He doesn't exercise.

"I keep moving. That's my workout," said the man who gave up cutting his grass two years ago. (He lives alone on a cattle farm in Bethel.) He stopped hiking the wilds of Alaska ("the place I love") in 2007. That same year he quit cleaning his gutters — "my balance was off. I still miss doing that."

He "never" smoked cigarettes. He "rarely" smoked a pipe. He "temporarily" smoked a Cuban cigar after dinner "but then Castro took over Cuba. When Cuban quit (being a free county), I quit smoking." He has "no taste" for alcohol. He drinks a beer "once in a while." As for wine, "only on Passover."

He recalled an overseas Passover during World War II. "The Navy sent a rabbi ashore to celebrate Passover with wine," he said. "Suddenly, everyone around me was Jewish."

**Surviving Some Bumps in Life**

He admitted to "having some bumps in life."

He survived major heart surgery and licked prostate cancer.

"I had good doctors," he explained, "who took good care of me. "

Last winter he suffered several bumps. While making a house call, he went up a snow-covered set of steps that had no handrail. He slipped. Down he went. Bruised. But not broken. He has already told that patient "if you get sick this winter, I'm coming in by way of your garage."

The biggest bump he suffered was when his wife of 60 years died in 1998.

"She suffered from a brain tumor," he said. For the first time on this festive day, a trace of sadness appeared in his strong voice. He suffered, too. "I still miss her," he said, looking toward a photo of "my Esther" standing on a shelf by his desk.

"When she died, I had to go on," he said, "I could not afford to feel sorry for myself. I had to be diverted by work."

He looked once more at the photo of her holding an infant.

"There she is with one of my babies."

He keeps her photo within view for inspiration.

On the same wall hangs another source of inspiration, a close-up of Abraham Lincoln's face as it appears on his statue in Lytle Park.

"Old Abe's my favorite president," Goldman said.

"Dad likes him so much because he was one of his patients," joked Tom Goldman. His dad feigned a frown.

"I have no patience for such remarks," he said, laughing with his son and at his pun.

**Never Regretted Going into Medicine**

Fred Goldman decided to become a doctor right before graduating from Hughes High School — "shortly before the dawn of time."

He said he waited "until the last minute to apply to the University of Cincinnati's medical school. I never regretted for a minute going into medicine. And I have no plans of getting out of it."

He followed in the medical footsteps of his older brother, Leon Goldman, world-famous long before his death, in 1997 at the age of 91, as the father of laser surgery.

"He founded UC's dermatology department. The laser made him famous all over," the younger Goldman brother said. "He was a genius. I was never as good as he. I am just a doctor."

**A Humble Physician with No Plans of Stopping**

And a humble physician at that.

"He is adverse to publicity," noted Jay Goldberg. The 93-year-old Mason man and his wife, Leah, have been Goldman's patients for six decades.

"I don't like attention," Goldman admitted. "I just like to work." He has no plans of stopping.

"Work is life," he said. "I work on demand. If there's not much demand, there's not much work. Fortunately, the demand exists. I feel I can still be helpful to people. And, I can still do the job. So, there's no sense to consider retirement."

He has not changed his approach to caring for his patients since he entered private practice in 1946.

"I am not the commander. I am not the boss," he said. "We're working together to help the patient."

He spends "at least 30 minutes with each patient. I give them time. Sometimes, that's the best medicine."

Then he bids them adieu.

"Peace and quiet," he says as they leave.

As they open the door into the hallway, they must pass a photo of Albert Einstein.

Under his smiling face are the words: "The world could use more Einsteins."

The world also would be better off with a few more Fred Goldmans.

*Reprinted from the Associated Press dispatch of December 11, 2011.*