**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Shemos 5776**

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**Reb Yonasan Eybeschutz Teaches a Lesson to the Priest**

**By Rabbi Yosepf Vigler**

 [Last week] In honor of Nittel Nacht, many had the minhag to refrain from learning Torah but rather spend time on constructive pastimes. In that regard, here is a little maaseh from an era of friction between Jews and Christians:

 Reb Yonasan Eybeschutz (1690 - 1764) once took a walk with the priest in the city park. In their conversation, the priest asked, “Does it not say in your Torah that you should follow the majority? Since the Christians are the majority, why do you not follow us?”

 Reb Yonasan says to him, “Please look toward the heavens and count the angels.”

 "Are you out of your mind?" said the priest. "There are no angels!”

 "I know, said Reb Yonasan, "but work with me please. Look up and count the angels.”

 So the Rabbi and the priest stood there and gazed up at the sky.

 Seeing them looking up, a crowd slowly gathered around, and when they heard that the rabbi and the priest saw angels, they also began to "see" them. One sees six, the other sees eight, one fellow sees dancing angles, another sees sleeping angels.

 After a few minutes, with a sizable crowd attracted and counting angels, Reb Yonasan took the priest aside and said to him:

 "Between you and me, how many angels are there really?"

 "Zero, of course", replied the priest.

 "How can you possibly say that with certainty when such an impressive crowd is convinced they see the angels...Don't you follow the majority?"

 Realizing the point, the priest replied, “But you Jews also follow blindly, you follow the Rabbis regardless!”

 Reb Yonasan invited him to attend his shul services that Shabbos.

 When the time came for the Haftara, Reb Yonasan announced that this week they were going to lain a completely different random Haftara. This ignited a huge uproar in Shul.

 "Am I not the Rov?" he asked the mispallelim.”

 But the commotion only grew.

 Reb Yonasan motioned to the priest as if to say, "I rest my case" and continued with the regular Haftara.

*Reprinted from last week’s email (Parshas Vayechi) of the Mayan Yisroel Center in Flatbush.*

**L’Maaseh… A Tale to Remember**

**The Principal’s Ticket**

**To the World to Come**

 Rabbi Hanoch Teller tells a story about a ten-year-old Jewish boy who had gone to public school for the first four grades, and his parents decided that they wanted him to start attending a private school at fifth grade. They were not sure which school to send him to, but they knew that they didn’t want it to be a Jewish school.

 A certain Rabbi, who was the dedicated principal of a large Jewish Day School, had met the boy by chance, and was convinced that he was a definite candidate for his Day School. He saw that the boy was clever and sensitive, with a bright future in store for him.

 The Rabbi tried to persuade the boy’s parents, but to no avail. The mother stated firmly that she had no interest in her son receiving a Jewish education, and she didn’t want to ‘waste’ even a penny for it.

 At this, the Rabbi countered her and said, “What if it won’t cost you anything?” The mother considered, and finally agreed to send the boy, but only if it’s on a full scholarship.

 But now the hard part began for the principal. The boy’s parents were quite affluent and could well afford the full tuition. The school was finding it hard to make ends meet as it was, and was not inclined to allow a full scholarship for this boy, especially when he came from a wealthy family.

 This did not deter the Rabbi from trying to persuade the Board of Directors that in this case they should allow it. He made an impressive presentation but he was flatly refused.

 The Rabbi was not ready to give up and came up with a different idea. He knew that the boy himself wanted very much to attend the Day School, so the Rabbi decided to let this ten-year-old boy plead his own case. The boy agreed and wrote a letter with words straight from his heart.

 It said, “Dear Rabbi, If you allow me to attend the Day School, I may become an important Rabbi myself someday. But if you do not allow me to enter, who knows what will become of me?” and he signed the letter.

 The principal presented the letter to the Board of Directors, and the young boy’s heartfelt words succeeded in winning the hearts of the board, and they allowed him to enter the Day School. Many years have passed and this boy is now a prominent Adam Gadol, a great person.

 The Rosh Yeshiva of the High School that this boy attended said that it would have been worthwhile to establish the whole Day School which this boy entered in fifth grade, just for this boy alone, because it started him on his path to greatness.

 Eventually, the principal of that Day School passed away, and the family was sorting through his possessions. His wallet was empty, for the most part, except for a very old folded piece of paper— it was the letter the boy had written when he was in fourth grade. The principal had carried it around with him for all those years, and he viewed it as his ticket to the World to Come!

*Reprinted from last week’s Parshas Vayechi 5776 email of Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Stories compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**The Bais HaLevi and the Importance of Emunas Hachamim**

 Once at Shacharis, the Bais HaLevi approached a young man, and told him that his Tefilin were Pasul. The young man was quite surprised, since the Bais HaLevi only saw him from across the Shul and couldn't possibly have seen his Tefilin very well.

 The Bais HaLevi advised him to remove them right away and have them checked immediately. The young man followed the advice and went to the local Sofer to have his Tefilin checked.

 Sure enough, the Sofer told him that the Tefilin were Pasul because they were missing a letter. The young man was astounded! He returned to the Bais HaLevi and asked him how he had known about the problem, when it was concealed inside his Tefilin?

 The Bais HaLevi answered, “Chazal teach us that when one looks at the Tefilin shel Rosh, the head Tefilin, he should feel a certain inspiration to have Fear of Hashem. When I looked at your Tefilin, I didn’t feel anything, and I realized that they must not be Kosher. Looking at your Tefilin should have stirred within me an awe of Shamayim, but clearly, that doesn’t happen when the Tefilin are Pasul!”

 This boy demonstrated Emunas Chachamim. He had his Tefilin checked like his Rebbe advised him, even though logically there was no reason to!

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**It Once Happened**

**The Rebbe’s Promise of G-d’s Help Coming Even from Mice**

 Hillel ran a tavern, which he rented from the wealthy non-Jewish landowner. His customers, the local peasants, appreciated Hillel's service and honesty. Only one peasant showed open animosity toward the Jewish tavern keeper. Stefan, a coarse, foul-mouthed lout who was almost always drunk, resented the fact that Hillel, as he was known affectionately, refused to serve him more whiskey when he had had too much.

 Stefan swore revenge on the Jew. And so, he decided to implicate Hillel in a crime. Stefan went to the government authorities and told them that Hillel was not collecting the proper tax on the whiskey he sold. To back up his accusation, he provided the names of several of his fellow Jew-hating peasants willing to swear that Hillel sold them "illegal" whiskey.

 An investigation was launched. The false witnesses appeared and swore their false statements. The judge, an anti-Semite himself, took this opportunity to condemn all Jews for their thievery and trickiness, and imposed the harshest sentence possible on the hapless Hillel.

 Hillel, of course, denied any wrong-doing. With tears in his eyes he claimed that he was the victim of a vicious plot. Many of his customers came and gave testimony as to Hilke's good character, and even the landowner himself spoke warmly of "his" Jew. The investigators saw that Hillel was indeed, not guilty, but what could they do? They couldn't simply ignore the sworn testimony of Stefan's friends. The case dragged on for almost a year, during which time Hillel became depressed and broken, staying in his house much of the time reciting Psalms.

 Hillel's wife, Devorah Leah, watched as her husband grew more and more discouraged. Her father had been a chasid of Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch. She requested her husband travel to Lubavitch to seek the advice and blessing of the Rebbe.

 Hillel, however, did not come from a Chasidic family, and had never visited a Rebbe, and wasn't anxious to do so now. But, as the date of the trial drew nearer, he decided to listen to his wife and set off for Lubavitch.

 In Lubavitch, Hillel saw many people waiting for days to see the Rebbe privately, so many that Hillel was discouraged and almost returned home. It was only after explaining the urgency of his situation to the Rebbe's secretary that he managed to get an appointment for the following day.

 When he entered the Rebbe's room, Hillel suddenly felt at a loss for words. He began to weep as he poured out his heart to the Rebbe, explaining the terrible plot which had been instigated against him.

 The Rebbe listened patiently, and then said, "Don't cry, Hillel. G-d will surely help you. Everything in the world, every single creature, was created for a particular purpose. Even mice sometimes benefit man. Go home, Hillel, and put your trust in G-d."

 Hillel left the Rebbe encouraged, though he did not exactly understand the Rebbe's words. Hilke's wife was equally mystified, but she trusted that G-d would fulfill the blessing of the tzadik.

 The day of the trial arrived, and Hillel and Devorah Leah traveled to the courthouse which was filled to overflowing with people eager to hear the verdict. Hillel sat on the defendant's bench, pale, reciting Psalms with such an intensity that he became oblivious to his surroundings.

 The trial opened, and Stefan was brought in. He repeated all his false accusations but when he was questioned by the defense lawyer, he became confused and was caught in his own contradictory statements. He wasn't worried, though, since he was sure that the testimonies of the other witnesses would wrap up the case.

 But when the names of the next witnesses were announced, there was a long silence. Not one of Stefan's gang members had shown up; it seemed that something had happened to each one to prevent him from appearing.

 Things were going well for Hillel, but the prosecutor wouldn't give up. He requested the original documentation, and so, the judge sent his clerk to bring the papers from storage. All present waited impatiently for the clerk to return, but when he did, he was empty-handed. He whispered something to the judge, who roared back, "Bring whatever there is!"

 "But Judge," said the clerk, "There is nothing left. Mice have eaten up the whole file!"

 "That's impossible," roared the judge. "Go and bring me the whole drawer." The clerk soon returned with a large, heavy drawer filled with shredded bits of paper.

 And so it was that although every other document in the drawer was in perfect condition, only the file of Hillel had been completely destroyed by the mice.

 Hillel, absorbed as he was in reciting Psalms, had no idea what had happened, and was surprised by the crowd of well-wishers and relatives who ran to him wishing a mazel tov. When he learned that the charges had been dropped, he thanked G-d for having saved him from this terrible plot. As they returned home, his wife filled in all the details of what had transpired in the courtroom, and only then did Hillel begin to understand the words of the Rebbe.

*Reprinted from last week’s Parsha Vayechi’s edition of “L’Chaim Weekly,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization.*

**A Rebbe’s Blessing**

 The place was Krakow, Poland. The year, 1890.The elegant carriage stood in front of the humble dwelling, surrounded by a swarm of black-clad Chassidim. Suddenly, a 6-year-old child stood in front of the carriage, boldly holding onto the horse's reins and bawling his head off. "I want a blessing from the Rebbe! I want a blessing from the Rebbe!' he screamed above the din of the Chassidim.

 The house belonged to Rabbi Beinish Sheinberger, an elderly chassid who had just received the honor of a visit from the Grand Rabbi of Shiniv, Rabbi Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam, one of the great spiritual luminaries of Galitzia (southern Poland).

 The Rebbe had officiated at a Bris Milah in Krakow, and on his way home, had stopped off to visit the venerable Rabbi Sheinberger. The little boy was his grandson. His name was Dovid Nosson Lesser, and his father, renowned in Krakow as Reb Yokel Lesser, lived on the second floor of Rabbi Sheinbereger's humble abode.

 The youth refused to let go of the reins until he caught the Rebbe's attention. The boy's father was looking very embarrassed, until the Rebbe motioned him to bring his son into his carriage.

 Rabbi Halberstam did not dispense blessings freely; his custom was only to bless a groom before his marriage. When Reb Yokel carried his jubilant son to the Rebbe and said, "My Dovid wants a blessing."

 The Rebbe was so impressed with the boy's sincerity that he took him on his lap and blessed him that he should have pious children who would follow in his ways. That little boy, Reb Dovid Noson, was forced to leave Europe after World War I and ended up on the shores of the United States.

 He lived in the midst of materialism and assimilation for 50 years, and with the help of the A-mighty, the Rebbe's blessing was fulfilled, and he succeeded in bringing up generations of Torah loyal Jews.

**Comment:** The formula is quite simple. There are special people out there whose blessings can be powerful. Find one. Sincerely ask for a blessing. With Hashem’s help and a lot of hard work, you’ll be successful (Story from R’ Avi Geller).

*Reprinted from last week’s Parshas Vayechi 5776 email from Mendel Berlin’s “Torah’s Sweets Weekly.”*

**The Incredible Power**

**Of Emunat Hachamim**

**By Rabbi Reuven Semah**

 Rabbi Yitzchak Hisiger tells an amazing true story of emunat hachamim. Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein related that he was once learning with his brother-in-law, Rav Chaim Kanievsky, at his home several years back.

 There was a knock on the door. Rebbetzin Batsheva Kanievsky opened the door to find a harried young man, who muttered something about having an urgent question for Rav Chaim.

 The Rebbetzin ushered in the young man, who told Rav Chaim that his wife was in critical condition. A particular treatment had been recommended by doctors, who claimed that there was no choice but to have this treatment done. Otherwise, her life would be in serious danger. The woman replied that she would not consent to the treatment until she received the approval of Rav Chaim. (I must interject at this point that it is well-known that Rav Chaim had saved many lives with his medical advice.)

 Rav Chaim, after hearing the details, dismissed the doctor’s claims. “She does not need the treatment,” he said simply. “Everything will be okay be’ezrat Hashem.”

 One of the people in the room mustered the courage to ask Rav Chaim what everyone else was wondering. “We’re not dealing here with doctors who don’t know what they are talking about,” he said. “If a doctor says that there is an urgent need to perform a certain treatment, how can the Rav rule for the woman not to listen to his recommendation?” Rav Chaim waved his had once more and repeated, “Everything will be okay be’ezrat Hashem.”

 The young man left the house satisfied, fully accepting the advice he had been given by Rav Chaim. Those who remained behind were still looking for answers.

 Rav Chaim turned to his listeners and said, “Of course the doctors know what they are talking about. They don’t recommend such things without reason. In general, they direct a patient to receive the treatment that is appropriate and necessary. However, in this case, by coming to ask a question, this woman demonstrated that in her mind there is something more significant than the views of the doctors.

 “It is this very act her submission to emunat hachamim that is the deciding factor. By demonstrating this belief, she is no longer under the control of normative medicine and the knowledge of doctors. She entrusted her well-being elsewhere, namely in emunat hachamim. In light of this fact, she has the power to nullify the natural medical channels followed by other people and adhere to a completely different approach.”

*Reprinted from this week’s (Parashat Shemot 5776) email of the Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin.*

[**How Chai from China Became a Chassidic Jew**](http://matzav.com/how-chai-from-china-became-a-chassidic-jew/)



 The guy sitting in front me of has all the characteristics of an ultra-Orthodox person: A hat, a suit and a beard. His name is Aaron Waldman, but his parents, his grandparents and their grandparents were not born in Europe and likely never set foot in Israel.

 Chai left his homeland of China in favor of the land which was promised to a different people, far from everything he knew.

 He see himself as a “rootless tree,” as “in modern China we were not educated with tradition. We were cut off from the root. I feel the spiritual emptiness.”

 So what brings a young man born in modern, communist China to the State of Israel and to Chassidic Judaism? In fluent English (he also speaks “biblical Hebrew”), Waldman talks about his long search for the truth and his family’s difficulties accepting his metamorphosis.

 “I was taught when I was young, in elementary school, that the universe has no beginning and no end,” he recalls. “If you believe there is a beginning of everything, you are religious. You’re like superstitious, you’re stupid. In university I was taught that the universe has a beginning, called Big Bang. If you do not believe that the universe has a beginning, you are stupid. What’s the truth?

 “When I was young, communism was the truth. After the research, I realized that it cannot be. At the end of university, I was approached by this English teacher who was a Christian missionary in disguise. He told me that a man who died on a cross, he was the truth. Who’s telling the truth?”

 “In 1995, I started to research Christianity,” Waldman told Ynet and Orot TV. “I read maybe 10 versions of the Bible. English Bible or Chinese Bible are all translations. To know the truth, I have to read the original text. So in order to know, I learned Hebrew, biblical Hebrew. After a while, maybe five years, I could read the Bible in Hebrew.

 “Who’s telling the truth? Check the Bible. Hashem is one, and they say Hashem is three. There’s no three there. You should keep Shabbos. The Christians don’t keep Shabbos.

 “Five years later, in 2000, I reached the conclusion that Christianity was wrong. Judaism has the whole piece. So I made the choice that I want to live this way of life.”

 That was when Chai began intensive Judaism studies. “In China I couldn’t, there was no synagogue when I decided. How can I keep kashrut? So I decided I have to go away. I felt that the Land of Israel is my homeland. I found home. This was what I was looking for: A sincere, honest, devoted life,” he says.

 “When I came to Israel my parents were furious. The media isn’t friendly to the Jewish people. We ‘occupied Arab lands,’ we ‘slaughtered or massacred the Arab people.’ So from my parents’ point of view, they thought that I joined an evil cult and I went to an evil country. Now I think they reconciled somewhat.”

 Waldman likes to joke about the similarity between Judaism and the Chinese culture. “I wear a suit, I have a hat, and now I have a beard. But think about it, it isn’t such a big difference. This suit is made in China. It’s a Chinese suit. I have black shoes made in China. Also this hat, which they call a charedi hat, is also from China. So everything I have is made in china. So what’s the difference?”

*Reprinted from the November 30, 2015 website of Matzav.com The item was disbributed by* [*YNET NEWS*](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0%2C7340%2CL-4732458%2C00.html)

**What “Butter” Way to Trick the Nazis in the Concentration Camp**

 In one of the Concentration Camps, the daily ration included some butter taken from a vat. After the murderous Nazis (may their names be erased) doled out the butter, they allowed one inmate to climb inside the vat and lick the sides clean, as they stood around laughing at the Jews’ plight.

 The privilege to lick the vat was understandably desired by all inmates and “fought for,” with the exception of one individual, who refused “the honor” even when offered.

 One day, however, he told the Nazis that he’d like to partake in this activity. The beasts gladly allowed him in, proud that they have finally broken this man. The man entered the “buttered” vat and went “berserk,” jumping around, hitting himself into all the sides of the vat and getting fully soaked in the butter.

 The Nazis realized that he wasn’t eating, quickly pulled him out and beat him for “tricking” them. After the Nazis left, the other inmates asked the bloodied Jew what had gotten into him that day.

 “My friends,” he replied, “Chanukkah is around the corner!” He then proceeded to collect the butter off his clothes and squeeze it into a container from which he’d light the Menorah candelabra

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeshev email of Mendel Berlin’s Torah’s Sweets Weekly.*