**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Korach 5772**

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**By Michael Peikoff**

*I lost my parents, my house and job, and my wife left me after 25 years. Why was G-d doing this to me?*

 I had just started my consulting assignment at Paramount Pictures Studios in Hollywood, California. By outward appearances it appeared that I had life firmly in hand. I pulled my British, racing green Jaguar through the fabled arch gates of the oldest movie studio in the world, found my temporary parking space (isn’t everything?) and walked to my new office. But my life was in turmoil and the Paramount lot was a fitting place to be – it was filled with faux edifices and shallow, ephemeral experiences with sets built in the morning and struck down by nightfall.

**Living by My Father’s Fabled Line**

 Ryan, a colleague, took me to lunch on my first day and the conversation turned to the obligatory “So what’s your story Mike?” I live by my late father’s fabled line, “I sleep well because I hide behind the truth” and I began to honestly summarize the vicissitudes of my life.

 I told Ryan that I was mad at G-d after going through what felt like a compound fracture. In the last 48 months I had lost my father (my hero), my mother, my beloved English setter, was ‘reorganized’ out of my senior position at another fabled studio after four dedicated years, lost my home in the housing crisis, and my wife – the love of my life – left me after 25 years. It was nothing short of soul-crushing.

 Ryan looked at me with compassion in his eyes and said, “Gee, Mike – your life is like a walking Country western ballad.” You know the ones penned by Cash, Nelson or Jones, with lyrics like: my dog died today, my truck won’t start, and my gal just ran off with another cowboy – only it was *my* life here.

**Beginning to Doubt if G-d was in My Corner**

 I began to doubt if G-d was in my corner.

 I began to seriously doubt if G-d was in my corner. I felt I didn’t deserve this relentless onslaught of heartache, loss and pain. I had lived my life as a good Jew, a good husband, father, son, son-in-law and uncle. My trust in the Almighty was severely shaken and my belief in his unconditional love came into question.

 What did I do to deserve this? Didn’t G-d realize that I was endeavoring to live a meaningful life filled with performing mitzvahs, giving charity, bringing my daughters to the Torah, and trying to perform *Tikkum Olam,* doing my part to fix the world whenever I had the opportunity, however small and seemingly insignificant?

 I was grappling with one of Judaism’s oldest conundrums: “Why did seemingly bad things happen to good people and the arrogant, evil person thrives?”

**Jewish Exploration**

 I needed answers. I needed someone I could relate to, who wouldn’t judge me. In fact, I was bolstered by the words of a friend, a newcomer to traditional Judaism, who said to me, “It doesn’t matter what rung of the Jewish learning ladder you’re on, it only matters that you’re *on* the ladder.”

 I was raised as a Conservative Jew. We raised our children mostly in a Reform temple. But I needed some high octane fuel at this intersection in my life.

**Remembering a Friend of a Dear Friend**

 I had a light bulb moment. I remembered Marc, a friend of a dear friend of mine who used to hang out at the beach with us and listen to Crosby, Stills and Nash. He had become a religious Jew, strictly observant. This is what I needed. Some guidance and inspiration from a peer, and someone I could relate to (and who understood that Neil Young added a layer of nuance and complexity to the trio).

 I called Marc after many years, gave him a short de-briefing, and asked if we could meet to get his perspective. “Let’s meet at Coffee Bean, it’s kosher.”

 And thus began my deeper dive into Torah.

 Intellectually I believed in G-d, but I didn’t genuinely trust Him.

 I began to learn more about Judaism, inside the texts, and I began to pray more deeply. I delved into the concept of *Bitachon* – unshakable faith in G-d, even in the face of adversity. I discovered that I had succeeded in attaining *Emunah* – an intellectual understanding that G-d exists, but the crucial element was getting *Bitachon* – genuine *trust* in G-d. Even Moses struggled with *Bitachon,* so I felt I was in good company. I needed to struggle to see the blessing in the hardships.

 G-d wanted my attention – and I learned He has His ways of getting our attention. I now feel that I have become closer to G-d than ever before. And that everything that happens, even the seemingly soul-crushing experiences in life, are for the ultimate good: To get closer to G-d and to know that He loves us more than we can ever possibly imagine.

**Gaining Clarity**

 I previously thought that if G-d really cared about me, my life would be stress-free, without challenges; certainly not filled with relentlessly numbing personal and professional loss.

 When I reflect on all that transpired, I can now see that G-d actually had my back in myriad ways throughout the struggle. He brought me even closer to my cherished daughters who taught me the power of unconditional love and loyalty. My hardships crystallized for me the meaning of genuine friendship and illuminated for me the difference between the "wheat and the chaff," what is really important in my life*.*

 It gave me, in a word, clarity. The clarity to recognize the difference between those who are there for you when the proverbial chips are down, and the ones who are only there when you're good company. I learned who my friends really were and witnessed the beauty in people (some brand new to my life as a suddenly single man) who reminded me that compassion can come from corners you didn’t even know existed.

**An Opportunity for Expanded Self Awareness**

 I also learned that in life's harshest moments the opportunity for expanded self-awareness and personal growth is exponential. I felt as if I took my soul in for service and got it re-calibrated.

 But perhaps the most important benefit that came out of this struggle was a firm renewal of my personal covenant with G-d, which had become something I took for granted. I became more diligent in my Sabbath observation, my Torah study, and my level of gratitude. And with more Torah study comes more wisdom and more spiritual growth. And with more selflessness comes a deeper contentment and a richer understanding of life.

 Now that the tsunami waves have subsided and I can finally pick the seaweed out of my ears and the rub the saltwater from my eyes (in more ways than one), I can see that G-d has my back. He certainly has my attention. What I thought was a G-d who was ignoring me was in reality a G-d who wasn’t going to stop until He got my attention, just like a good father who loves his child more than anyone and will stop at nothing to get his point across.

 My late father used to say, “Son, kites can’t fly very high without a heavy head wind.” I am flying a bit higher these days.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of Aish.com*

**Catering a Glatt Kosher Affair at the White House**

 The occasion was the White House celebration of American Jewish Heritage Month on May 30th at which some 200 guests enjoyed glatt kosher food, under the supervision of Chabad of Washington in conjunction with the Rabbinical Council of Greater Washington.

 Rabbi **Levi Shemtov** of the Chabad of Greater Washington supervised the kosher fare at the event which included an impressive delegation of the kosher food industry, headed by Alain Bankier of Manischewitz, Greg Rosenbaum of Empire Kosher and Yakov Yarmove of SuperValu.

 Manischewitz has been particularly active in promoting American Jewish Heritage Month (AJHM). Launched in 2006 by President George W. Bush, AJHM is celebrated nationwide, including events at the Capitol and the White House. This year President Barak Obama evoked the dark memory of the 150th anniversary of an order that was issued by General Ulysses Grant, expelling Jews “as a class” from the military department of Tennessee.

 “It was wrong. Even if it was 1862, even if official acts of anti-Semitism were all too common around the world, it was wrong and indicative of an ugly train of thought,” Obama said. He went on to note that American Jews protested the order.

 "What happened next could have only taken place in America," he said. "Groups of American Jews protested General Grant’s decision." He described how a Jewish merchant from Kentucky met with President Abraham Lincoln and how following the meeting, the order was rescinded.



*Davening (praying) Mincha (the afternoon service) in one of the elegant and historical rooms at the White House)*

 In years past, particularly during the Clinton era, the White House would reach out to a local caterer, sometimes even from neighboring Baltimore to cater kosher at the White House. But at recent events, including the much celebrated Chanukah celebration, the fare is arranged and supervised by Rabbi Shemtov.

*Reprinted from the June 15, 2012 edition of KOSHER TODAY.*

**The Man Who Thought He Could Control Anything**

**By Laurie Zalmanowitz and Dale Hardin**

**Grade 5 - Talmud Torah, Edmonton, Alberta (Canada)**

 There was once a man named Dimitrious. He was a very rich man. He thought he was the ruler of the Universe, and could control anything. He made an announcement to the world that he could control everything. If anyone found something that he couldn't control he would give that person anything they could imagine. If the person gets it wrong they will become his slaves.

**A Big Line Up at the Door of His Palace**

 A few days later there was a big line up at the doors of Dimitrious's palace. He summoned the first person into the palace. The first man said: "I bet you can't control me". Dimitrious said: "Get me some milk". The man said: "I will not get you milk, ever!" Dimitrious said: "Oh yes?? you will!". As he pulled a knife out of his pocket, the man ran away to get some milk.

 Another man came up to try Dimitrious. He said: "Try to control time." Dimitrious commanded everybody to bring their clocks to his palace. He took the clocks and turned all of them back five hours. So the man became his slave. Several other people tried to trick Dimitrious, but no one succeeded.

 Finally a poor beggar came up to the rich man Dimitrious. He said: "I know something you can't control." "What?" Dimitrious said. The poor beggar said, "Control the shabbat."

**Asks “What is this Shabbat Thing?”**

 "What is this Shabbat thing you're telling me to control." "Shabbat is a holiday celebrated by Jews. It starts on Friday night and ends on Saturday night and you are not supposed to work."

 "Well, I could easily tell people to celebrate Shabbat on Monday and work all day." Said Dimitrious. "Oh no you can't." Said the poor beggar.

 "I will announce that all Jews must celebrate Shabbat on Monday and it will work." said Dimitrious. "I don't think so, because only G-d can control everything." Said the beggar.

 Dimitrious tried to control the Shabbat but everyone obeyed G-d instead. So the beggar commanded that Dimitrious would give him half of everything he owned. Dimitrious eventually started to believe in G-d and studied the laws of the Torah.

*Reprinted from the current website of the Joint Authority for Jewish Zionist Education and the Torah Education & Culture Department of Canada.*

**A Miracle from 9-11**

 David Miller\* [\*not his real name], a pious observant Jew was at Logan Airport [in Boston] getting ready to board United Flight 175. He was going to Los Angeles on an important business trip and had to make this flight. A lot depended on it. He boarded the plane, watched the doors close, and sat down.

 Suddenly he remembered that he left his tefillin (ritual boxes with straps worn by Jewish men in prayer) in the terminal boarding area. He politely asked the stewardess if he could go back and retrieve his tefillin, which were sitting just a few feet from the gate.

 She told him that once the doors of the plane closed, no one was allowed off the plane. Not about to take this sitting down, he asked if he could speak to the pilot to obtain special permission. Surely the pilot would understand. The pilot did not comply. He simply restated

the policy.

 David was not about to lose this precious mitzvah, or let the holy tefillin get lost like that, so, not knowing what else to do, he started screaming at the top of his lungs, "I am going to lose my tefillin." The crew asked him to be quiet, but he refused to stop making a fuss - a rather loud fuss.

 Finally, he was making such a ruckus and a tumult that the flight crew told him that they would let him off the plane, simply because he was a nuisance. In fact, even though it would only take about 90 seconds to run out, grab his tefillin, and run back - they were not going to wait for him.

**Not About to Lose His Tefillin**

 No matter. David was not about to lose his tefillin, even if it caused him great inconvenience or cost his business a loss. He left the plane, never to reboard.

 This flight was United #175. The second plane to reach the WTC. David's devotion to a mitzvah saved his life.

 The consequences of David's actions do not end there. Originally the terrorists wanted both towers struck simultaneously to maximize the explosive carnage. Later it was learned that due to this whole tumult, the takeoff was delayed, causing a space of 18 minutes between the striking of the two towers. This delay made it possible for thousands more people to escape alive from both buildings.

 Literally thousands, if not tens of thousands, of lives were spared because one Jew would not forsake his beloved tefillin. [The foregoing true stories are documented in "Even in the Darkest Moments" by Zeev Breier.]

*Reprinted from the website of Chabad of Bel Air (California).*

**Tefillin After 72 Years**

**By Gutman Locks**

 Last week at the Western Wall, I asked an elderly man to put on *tefillin*. He strongly refused.

 I asked him, “When was the last time you put on *tefillin*?”

 He smiled and proudly said, “72 years ago!” He held out his arm to show me the fading tattooed numbers. “1938,” he said. “It was the day of Kristallnacht. Do you know what Kristallnacht is?”



 “Of course I do,” I told him.

 “Two hundred and sixty-seven synagogues were burned down in one night. They burned down our synagogue, too. My *tefillin* were burnt up, and I have never put them on again,” he said.

 “I have a friend who was in the camps, too,” I quickly said, “and he not only puts on *tefillin* today, but he even put them onto others inside the camp! Do you want to hear how he got *tefillin* into the camp?”

**The Tattooed Survivor Who Still Puts On Tefillin**

 “Yes,” he said strongly. “How did he get them in there?”

 “His name is Laibel. Whenever he comes to Israel, he prays with our *minyan* at sunrise. He also has numbers tattooed on his arm. When we first met, he asked me, ‘What do you do around here?’ and I responded, ‘I put *tefillin* on people here at the Western Wall.’

 “‘Oh yeah?’ he said, ‘Well, I put *tefillin* on people in the death camp.’

 “I stared at him. There was nothing I could say. I was dumbfounded. I asked him, ‘How did you get the *tefillin* in there?’

 “He began his story. The Nazis had come to the ghetto and grabbed 137 young boys. He told me that only five of them survived. Only five.

**Hid His Tefillin in One of His High Boots**

 “He was thirteen and a half years old. He was wearing the high boots that his father had bought him, and when he saw them coming, he stuffed his *tefillin* into one boot and his prayerbook in the other.

 “They pushed the boys into a cattle car and drove them to the death camp, not far from the ghetto. When the train stopped, they slid open the side of the cattle car and immediately began pushing them toward the open door of the gas chamber. The boys were frightened and cried out. They asked Laibel, ‘What should we do?’ He told them, ‘We’re going to stand in rows five across, and we’re going to march right into that gas chamber singing a song of faith, the “Ani Maamin.”’ And they did just that. They stood in rows five across, and started singing and marching right into the chamber.

**The Nazi Guards Became Confused**

 “The guards became so confused that they did not know what to do. They screamed, ‘You can’t do that! No one has ever done such a thing before. Stop it! Stop it at once! Here! Go over there to the showers instead!’

 “They pushed them over to the showers, and forced them to undress and throw their clothing into a pile in the middle of the floor. They made them empty their shoes, and the *tefillin* and prayerbook fell out onto the pile.

 “After the shower, when they were dressed in camp clothes and were being pushed out, past the pile of their clothes, Laibel saw his *tefillin* and prayerbook lying there. He wanted so badly to run and pick them up, but terrifying guards were watching. He said to the boys, ‘I did something for you, so now you do something for me.’

 “‘Whatever you want,’ they said. ‘You saved our lives.’

 “He said, ‘When I give the signal, start a fight and scream out loud. Okay . . . now!’ The boys started to fight and scream. The guards ran over and tried to pull them apart, but they wouldn’t stop fighting. In the confusion, he ran over and grabbed his *tefillin* and prayerbook, and hid them under his arms.

**A Problem with the Head Tefillin**

 “Later, he was in the barracks, and wanted to put on the *tefillin*. He was able to put the arm-*tefillin* on without anyone seeing, by pulling his sleeve over it, but how could he put on the head-*tefillin*? There were guards all over. He opened the window and stuck his head outside so he could put on the head-*tefillin*.

 A guard came by and screamed, ‘Who said you could open that window?’ He told him that he was sick and throwing up, and if he made him close the window he would throw up inside, too. The guard left him. And he looked me in the eye and said, ‘And I put *tefillin* on other men, too.’ I started to cry, and I kissed him on his *yarmulke*.

**Laibel’s Story Changes the Heart of a Soldier**

 “The day after Laibel told me his story, there was an Israeli soldier at the Western Wall who wouldn’t put on *tefillin*. No matter what I said, he simply refused. Then I told him Laibel’s story, and he quickly said, ‘Okay, I’ll do it.’

 “And you can do it, too,” I said to the elderly gentleman who hadn’t donned *tefillin* in 72 years, as I gently slid the *tefillin* I was holding onto his arm. He said the blessing and started to cry. We said the Shema, and he prayed for his family. He began to smile even while the tears were streaming down his face. A crowd gathered around and congratulated him on overcoming all those years of rejection.

 You do not always succeed, but you always have to try.

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Chabad.Org Magazine*

**Good Shabbos Everyone.**

**Money Talks**

 Last week's parsha Shlach describes many of the sacrifices which we were commanded to perform in order to gain atonement for misdeeds. The Sages tell us that these days, when we cannot bring sacrifices, we can attain atonement by giving tzedaka - charity. The following story illustrates this principle.

 "Rebbe help please! My wife and baby are in terrible danger!" Pinchos ran into the Nadvorner Rebbe's shul in Tzefas crying bitter tears. His wife had been in labor for many hours, and the doctors had started to suspect that things were not going well. Her blood pressure had risen to a dangerously high level, and they told him that unless there were some drastic changes, both she and the baby were not going to make it.

**Begging the Rebbe to Daven for Him and His Family**

 The panic-stricken Pinchos begged the Rebbe to daven for him and his family. He could hardly control his emotions. The Rebbe looked at Pinchos and tried to calm him. Finally, he declared, "Pinchos, everything will be all right. I promise you. Everything will be fine!"

 Although Pinchos was startled by the Rebbe's optimistic proclamation, he was not about to question it. He thanked the Rebbe and ran back to the hospital to be with his wife. Moments after he arrived, the doctors told him that they could not explain precisely what had happened, but that his wife's blood pressure was once again normal and she and the baby would be fine. Sure enough, an hour later his wife gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

**Rebbe Brushes Off the Talkof His Miracle Making Abilities**

 The chassidim informed the Rebbe of the wonderful news, and the Rebbe wished them all a "Mazel tov." One of the more curious chassidim wondered aloud how the Rebbe could have possibly known that the mother and baby were going to be all right.

 While some declared it a miracle, the Rebbe himself brushed this thought off as nonsense. Then, as the chassidim gathered around, the Rebbe began to explain how he knew that all would be well. It was a lesson they would never forget. "You see, a few days ago I was sitting in the front of the beis midrash when I noticed a poor person come into the room.

 Pinchos was sitting in the back of the room, preparing for Minchah. We took out our siddurim, put on our gartlech, and began to recite Ashrei. "The beggar walked around the room, collecting. His face was an image of brooding and discontent. He obviously had a very difficult life. One by one, the men placed coins in his hand.

 As soon as Pinchos placed a coin in the beggar's hand, however, there was a huge clattering of coins as they dropped to the floor, causing a commotion in the beis midrash. Everyone thought that the beggar had dropped the coins, but one quick look revealed otherwise. He had not dropped the coins, but had thrown the entire handful at Pinchos.

**The Begger Lashes Out at Pinchos**

 Besides the fact that the coins had hurt Pinchos, now everyone was staring at him. The man stared at Pinchos; it seemed as if his gaze would bore a hole right through him. None of the others said a word, hoping that the distraught man would just leave them alone, but it was not meant to be.

 Suddenly, he lashed out at Pinchos with a verbal assault the likes of which they had never heard before. He was obviously channeling his anger at Pinchos only because he had been the last one to give a coin. The tirade lasted for a few minutes, with everyone looking on in horror. As the shul began to fill with more people, each individual who entered was treated to a whole new diatribe aimed at Pinchos. The man would ask them if Pinchos was always so cheap and despicable or if it was just this time. His invective tore through Pinchos' heart.

**Pinchos Accepts the Abuse Quietly**

 At this point, many tried to stop the beggar's unfair and unwarranted criticism. Everyone knew that Pinchos was one of the nicest and sweetest people in town. However, that day he demonstrated that he was more than just nice. He was a gibbor — a man of true might — and thus able to control himself in an unbelievable fashion. While everyone else was trying to get the man to stop, Pinchos sat there quietly.

 The Rebbe continued telling the story to the large crowd. The next detail was the most amazing one.

 "Then, Pinchos pulled out his checkbook and walked over to the beggar! .,.

 "'I am so sorry you felt that I was slighting you ... what would I be able to give you to help?'

 The beggar himself was shocked. "Pinchos is not a wealthy man by any stretch of the imagination, but he felt the tzaar - pain of another Jew in a real way. He knew that this man lived a pathetic life and was terribly embarrassed after the scene he had created. He also knew that the yelling was not directed at him personally. Rather, the poor man was lamenting his own sad situation.

 Pinchos wrote him a check for a sizable sum and wished him well, as he escorted him on his way." The Rebbe concluded, "The Gemara in Chullin (89a) tells us that the world is upheld in the merit of those who are 'bolem (seal)' their lips at the time of a quarrel, as the pasuk states, 'Toleh eretz al bli mah — He suspends the earth on nothingness' (lyov 26:7). I reasoned that if the entire world is upheld in the merit of these great individuals, then most certainly Pinchos' restraint would be able to save his wife and child." (A Touch of Warmth, P. 94, Reb Yechiel Spero)

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Good Shabbos Everyone.*

**Serving Hashem & Klal Yisroel 7/24/365 in Tokyo, Japan**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**



**Rabbi Benyamin Edrei (left)**

 The following story is about two Luvavitcher ‘Shluchim’ (emissaries) in Tokyo, Japan, by the names of Rabbi Benyamin Edrei and his wife Efrat.

 They opened a Chabad House in Tokyo more than ten years ago, mainly to cater to the myriads of Jewish back-packers, especially Israelis, that pass through that city in the quest to ‘clean head’ (nikui rosh) after graduating from university or finishing their military obligations.

**Searching for Meaning, Warmth,**

**Identity…in Other Words - Judaism**

 Most, if not all, of these wanderers are searching for meaning, warmth, identity, friendship, fun, action and good food … in other words; Judaism. And that is exactly what Rabbi Edrei has to offer.

 But it’s not always easy. It’s basically a 24/7/365 proposition; there are no days that are identical and no times that are predictably inactive. Guests may arrive in the middle of the night any day of the week and the Shaliach has to be ready. The main thing is to do is to provide Judaism for Jews.

 So he and his wife made an agreement that, barring extreme cases, they would try to never leave their Chabad House unmanned - no matter what.

 One of the first tests of this principle was when Rabbi Edrei received the joyous news that his brother was engaged to be married in Israel, and his father was willing to buy plane tickets for him and family to attend.

Unable to Find a Temporary Replacement

 He had a few months to find a replacement but nothing worked. He sent out advertisements, called and contacted friends and acquaintances but either they weren’t able or weren’t available. His wife alone couldn’t manage it all; both the children and the Chabad House and so, with no other choice he sorrowfully but dutifully told his father and brother of his choice;-- he couldn’t leave the Chabad House alone.

 His father tried to convince them that a few days couldn’t hurt; they could arrive on the day of the wedding and leave the next day, for sure nothing THAT urgent would arise, maybe no one would even knock on their door, they could put a sign on the door telling people to call them collect in Israel, they needed a vacation etc. etc.

 But Rabbi Edrei was sure that, as logical and convincing as all these arguments were and as much as he wanted to attend the wedding, the Lubavitcher Rebbe would have wanted him to stay.

 But sure enough, as the wedding approached things began to slow down and the day or two before the event no one even visited the Chabad house at all. Could it be he made a mistake? Maybe his father was right after all? But the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s face of blessed memory kept popping up in his mind.

 The day of the wedding he called his brother, wished him a tearful Mazal Tov, told him how sorry he was that he couldn’t come and finished the conversation with a heavy heart wishing he could be in two places at one time.

**A Chassid Does His Mission with Joy**

 But he reminded himself; A Chassid does what the Rebbe wants with JOY!

 That evening they did have a guest; a young fellow from England by the name of Daniel Moskovitz. It was nothing special; he only wanted something to eat and a place to sleep and had to set out early in the morning. Really he could have gotten a youth hostel for that but something drew him here and in any case the Chabad House was free. But he didn’t even have time to talk much because he had to get some sleep and wake early in the morning.

 Nevertheless Rav Edrei struck up a conversation that revealed that his guest intended to go mountain climbing - alone. He did everything alone! His plan was to begin early in the morning and to make his first encampment and rest on the way to the top of the mountain nine or ten hours later about an hour before sunset at three or four in the afternoon.

 Rabbi Edrei tried to discourage him but Daniel wouldn’t listen. All he wanted was to get some sleep for tomorrow’s climb. The best the Rabbi could do was get him to reluctantly promise to call (it seems there is cell phone reception even from such heights) at 3 p.m. when he took that first rest.

**The Wife Reminds Him of Their Recent Guest**

 The next day morning Rabbi Edrei woke up and got involved in his daily schedule of taking his children to their teachers, visiting various Jews in the area etc. When the afternoon arrived he had forgotten about the entire incident (Daniel had left before daybreak).

 But his wife didn’t forget. She announced; “it’s three o’clock and that boy who slept here last night hasn’t called yet. Call him!” Luckily he got Daniel’s cellular phone number the previous night so he called him.

 But the phone just rang and no one answered.

 “He’s probably in the middle of climbing” he said to his wife. I’ll try later.

 “No, later you’ll forget’ she answered. “Try again”.

 So he tried again, and then a third time and a fourth. But each time the phone just rang twenty or so times and then stopped. ‘Maybe he dropped his phone. Or maybe it’s not turned on. Or maybe there’s no reception.” He said. But his wife kept telling him to try again.

 Finally after almost a half hour of trying there was an answer! First there was a moan, then a few seconds of silence, then a groan then a feeble, “help, help…… I’m dying….. I fell. I can’t….. ahhh…..! Broke my arms, maybe my back….. I’m hanging here, freezing cold. Help! Ahhh’

**Where Are You Daniel?**

 “Daniel, where are you!? Tell me … where are you? I’ll send help!” The Rabbi yelled.

 “Ahhh….. Between the seventh and eighth peaks of Mount Fuji, that’s what the climbers call it. I can’t move.” Then the call cut off. Rabbi Edrei tried to call a few more times but there was no answer. So his wife said, ‘call the British Embassy. He’s English. For sure they’ll help.

 The embassy answered immediately but it wasn’t good. The best they could do was to promise that “First thing in the morning we’ll send someone, we’re closing in five minutes and no one is here now. Maybe try the police.”

 Rabbi Edrei tried the police with no luck, no one answered and then he called a Japanese neighbor that was a friend of the Chabad House. As soon as the neighbor heard what the Rabbi wanted, he immediately called a private rescue company who told him that if he had called in another few minutes it would have been too late. It takes fifteen minutes to get to the spot of the accident, the sun sets in just another half-hour and afterwards it would have been impossible to locate an injured person in the mountains.

**Located and Rescued Despite All Obstacles**

 But, despite all the obstacles, miracle of miracles… they located him, and were even able to send rescuers down on a cable, bring him out on a stretcher and fly him to the nearest hospital.

 Rabbi Edrei drove the hundred miles to the hospital and saw that Daniel’s condition was very serious. But thanks to the rescue medics and the doctors, it was not life-threatening. But they all agreed that had they not arrived when they had, for sure Daniel would not have lasted another few hours, or perhaps even a few more minutes.

 Suddenly the Rabbi realized with a startling clarity what had happened. If he had flown to his brother’s wedding Daniel for sure would not be alive. Who else would care and worry enough to try calling a total stranger for a half hour with no success just to see how he is?

 But that isn’t all.

 Daniel’s condition was still very serious and the doctors were sure that he would never function normally again. But against all their negative prognoses, after several operations and many months of physical therapy, Daniel miraculously left the hospital a totally healthy young man.

 Shortly thereafter he underwent more changes. He began learning Torah, became an observant Jew and, Daniel the loner even got married. What he called even a bigger miracle and transformation than getting saved from his accident!

Needless to say the Rabbi that presided over the wedding ceremony was ….. Rabbi Edrei.

 All thanks to his stubborn loyalty and devotion to helping Jews at all costs.

*Reprinted from last week’s email from Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.*

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

**Reflections on Eating Natural Health or Organic Foods**

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

Should we eat natural health foods in order to preserve our health?

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| **ANSWER:** |

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This is a subject which I'm not competent to speak about, I would be happy to give you information. I am sure that if the foods are free of pesticides and free of additives, they are more healthful, because there is no question that Hakadosh Baruch Hu can concoct better things than mankind can. But more than that I can not say.



 If you have whole wheat bread for instance, we understand that you have all the elements that Hakadosh Baruch Hu intended you to have. Whereas if you mill out certain parts… Like everybody knows the story of rice. There was a time when white rice was considered the only way of eating it. They used to mill off the brown covering of the rice kernel. That's when they started suffering from beriberi and they didn't understand the cause. They saw the chickens were thriving; the chickens were fed the husks and were thriving. But the human beings were declining. A Dutch physician discovered that they were giving the best part to the chickens!

 That's why we understand that Hakadosh Baruch Hu put the husks on, not merely to protect the kernel inside. The husks are there to be eaten because they add certain things. There is no question that human beings have made great errors in matters of foods, but I cannot tell you anything because I know nothing about the subject at all.

*Reprinted from last week’s email of “A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller” that was transcribed from Rabbi Miller’s answer to questions tht were posed to him by members of the audience to his classic Thursday night lectures at his Brooklyn shul.*

**Limitations of the**

**Groom’s Kingship**

**By David Bibi**

 The following is a cute story I heard recently when I had the pleasure of attending a magnificent wedding at the Waldorf for Elliott and Rose Chehebar. Although there were many rabbis in attendance, at the last minute Rabbi Eli Mansour was asked to speak. And as usual he did not disappoint, even with no preparation.

 His opening story makes a great wedding or sheva berachot “vort” and I had never heard it told this way.

 We know at the wedding, the groom is considered a king and the bride is considered a queen. We also know that Jewish law as dictated by the Shulchan Aruch tells us that upon seeing a king of the nations of the world, one must recite the blessing, “who has given from His glory to (humans of) flesh and blood”.

 So the question is asked. When we encounter a groom, we encounter a king. Why don’t we make the blessing.

 Rabbi Mansour related the famous question that was posed to Rav Ovadia Yosef by a person attending the Aqaba summit in 1994 where he saw at the same time President Bill Clinton, King Hussein and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The person asked whether he needed to make the blessing upon seeing any or all of these leaders.

 Rav Ovadia advised as follows: Although President Clinton was the man leading the most powerful nation on the planet, the answer was no. And although Prime Minister Rabin was the leader of the government of the State of Israel, again the answer was no. With regard to King Hussein though, it didn’t matter that Jordon was akin to a third world country with no resources or economic power. While President Clinton and Prime Minister Rabin could be overruled by their respective congress or parliaments, only King Hussein had the power to do whatever he wanted within his nation without regard to due process...and thus only he was a true King.

 Rabbi Mansour continued. Before the wedding, the groom really is in charge of his own world. He decides, what, where, when and how. But as soon as he gets married, he has to check with his wife. And as we all know, like a president or prime minster can be overruled by Congress or Parliament, this king-like-groom finds that this is his reality too. Thus, no kingly blessing is recited upon seeing him.

*Reprinted from last week’s email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.*

**We All Scream**

**For Ice Cream!**

**By Rabbi Reuven Semah**

“And he shall not be like Korah and his followers.” (Bemidbar 17:5)

 Our perashah records the most devastating argument the Jewish people ever had. In order to end it, Hashem performed a miracle that the ground opened up and all of Korah’s people died. This should not go to waste. It’s important to learn the lesson of this story. Jews can disagree and even compete but it must end there.

 On August 14, 2002, there was a major blackout in much of the eastern part of the United States. This created financial loss for many companies. Power was restored to the Klein’s kosher ice cream company in Brooklyn (a Chalav Yisrael ice cream company). The power was restored early the morning after the blackout began, and they did not suffer any loss.

 Abba Klein’s first thoughts, then, were how his main competitor, Mehadrin Dairy (another Chalav Yisrael company), was faring. Upon hearing that Mehadrin’s power had not yet been restored, Mr. Klein called the owner and offered him space in his freezers. Mehadrin accepted the generous offer.

 Mr. Klein also hooked up special cables to the Mehadrin trucks, which precluded their suffering any loss. What could have been an opportunity for great gain between two rivals was used instead as a great opportunity to sanctify Hashem’s name.

 Mr. Klein clearly learned the lesson of the perashah. I hope and pray that we all can learn the lesson as well.

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