**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Chukas 5776**

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**Wherever You Are,**

**No Matter How Far**

**By Rabbi David Ashear**

No matter how far a Jew has strayed from the proper path, Hashem still loves him and yearns for him to come back. It says in the Tanna D've Eliyahu that more than a woman sits and waits for her husband to return from a long journey, Hashem waits for every Jew to return to Him. The lengths that Hashem will go to give people opportunities to get closer to him are unbelievable, but ultimately, the decision whether we take that step is left up to us.

In the year 2012 a man by the name Sanad Zagadi from Hungary, at the age of thirty, discovered that he was Jewish. At that time, he thought it was the worst day of his life. As a University student in 2003, this man had co-founded the far right anti-Semitic Jobek party, which was created to strike terror into the hearts of minorities, making him the embodiment of Hungarian Jewry's worst fears. Members of his party had swastikas tattooed on them. For ten years, he publicly spoke out against Jews, and by 2012, Jobek had grown to be the second largest political party in Hungary. It was at that time that a political rival claimed to have documented proof that Zagadi was a Jew himself.

Zagadi was shocked and insulted at the claim, but in order to clarify, he sat down swith his maternal grandmother and discovered that she had survived Auschwitz, and had a number tattooed on her arm. She started a family after the war, but didn't want her children to know that they were Jewish. Yet, now, Zagadi couldn't escape this truth.

He was experiencing extreme inner turmoil. He had never even met a Jew. He decided to find a Rabbi to speak to. He ended up dropping the Jobek party and started learning about Judaism. Amazingly, he eventually changed his name to David, started wearing a kippah, learned Hebrew, visited Israel and even got a Brit Milah. Now, he keeps Shabbat, attends Shul regularly and recently spoke at an Aish Hatorah dinner.

He told everyone there, "Some of you may not consider yourselves observant. But I doubt that any of you went further away from G-d than me. Hashem has proven to me that He is quick to forgive, and wants all of His children, no matter what they have done."

Rabbi Yechiel Spiro told the story of a young woman whose life was in danger during labor in the early 1800's in the town of Lelov.  It was Yom Kippur, and she was having extreme complications. The doctors were expecting the worst, but salvation came from a very unexpected source.

At that time, a distinguished gentleman rode into town and identified himself as Doctor Burnhart, one of the most prestigious doctors in all of Europe. He explained to the people there that he received a message that a well-known Polish nobleman was on his death bed and would pay any price for Doctor Burnhart's services. However, shortly before he arrived, that nobleman died. Now he was passing through this little village. He was not religious. He didn't even know that it was Yom Kippur. The Lelover Rebbe came out and asked the doctor to help the woman in labor, who was also his own daughter-in-law. Baruch Hashem, he was able to save the woman and the baby.

Afterwards, the Lelover Rebbe asked to speak to Doctor Burnhart privately. They spoke for a while, and after the meeting, the doctor did not go on his way, rather he went with the Rebbe into the Shul and started praying. From that day on, he started a spiritual journey and after many years of intense study, this doctor became the great Reb Chaim Dovid of Pietrikov, a Chassidic legend and Rebbe to thousands.

One day he was asked, "What was it that the Lelover Rebbe told you on that fateful Yom Kippur so many years ago?"

He smiled and revealed the words which had transformed him into the person he had become. He said that the Rebbe showed him a Pasuk in the book of Shmuel (Ch. 9) which showed that every place in which a person finds himself is orchestrated by Hashem for a reason. The Rebbe told him that the real reasons he found himself in Lelov on that Yom Kippur was to save the woman and her child, to have the opportunity to see what Judaism was all about and to come to Shul on the holiest day of the year.

The Rabbi continued, "I could have dismissed it as a random occurrence, but the Rebbe's words made an impact on me, and that's what ultimately brought me back to Hashem.

Everyone can improve in his own way. Hashem wants all of us and gives us opportunities all the time. Any step that we take towards him is so precious.

*Reprinted from the July 4, 2016 email of Daily Emunah.*

**The Beracha of the**

**Beis Yisrael of Ger**

The Beis Yisrael of Ger (Rabbi Yisrael Alter, 1895-1977) cared deeply for the well-being of all his followers, and was a great Gadol BaTorah, a Torah Giant. One time, a non-observant Jew had gotten into some legal trouble. His case was going to court and things were not looking like they would turn out good for him. He met a Chassid of the Beis Yisrael and when he told the Chassid of his predicament, the Chassid suggested that he request a Brachah, blessing from his Rebbe.

The man liked the idea and asked the Chassid to go see his Rebbe and request a Brachah for him, and he also sent a very large donation for the Beis Yisrael. The Chassid, upon his arrival, handed the money to the Rebbe and told him of the man who sent it. The Rebbe gave his Brachah and put the money aside. Meanwhile, the court case continued, and the man started to realize that there was no way for him to get out of the trouble he was in. However, at the very last moment, the presiding judge discovered a flaw in the case, and threw it out on a technicality!

The man and his defense team were baffled. Afterward, he decided to go meet the Beis Yisrael. He entered the Rebbe’s study and told him who he was and about the donation he had sent earlier.

The Rebbe reached into his drawer, took out the man’s envelope, and handed it back to him. The Rebbe said, “The Torah says, ‘Give me the souls and keep the possessions.’ Meaning to say, here’s your money, and see the hand of Hashem in your success, and return to an observant lifestyle.”

The man, impressed by the Rebbe’s sincerity, was very moved by these words and returned to being Frum. His sons soon followed after him, and they all became devout followers of the Beis Yisrael! The Rebbe helped this family attain a much higher level in serving Hashem, because he was on the level of Aish Tamid. He possessed a burning drive to continually grow spiritually and help others do so as well.

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

**The Matteh Efraim and**

**The Broken Crystal Bottle**

A very precious, crystal bottle broke in the home of Reb Efraim Zalman Margolis zt"l (the Matteh Efraim). His wife was hysterical, but he remained calm. "How can you be so relaxed? Don't you realize how much that vase costs?" "I can't answer you now, but ask me again in a year, and I will explain it to you."

She didn’t forget. Exactly a year later, she asked her husband for an explanation.

He asked her, "Does it still bother you that the bottle broke."

"So many things happened since then," she replied. "To tell the truth, I've almost forgotten the entire episode."

He said, "What you grasp now, I understood immediately, when the vase broke."

He explained, "Your father chose me to be his son-in-law, because he said that I am an iluy (genius). I am able to grasp in a moment, what others need a year to comprehend. I knew that the broken bottle wouldn’t bother me in a year's time, so I didn’t let it bother me then either."

With a machlokes, one should also think ahead. Right now, you are angry at someone, because you feel that he wronged you. But how will you feel about this wrongdoing in a year from now? Will it bother you then? If it

*Reprinted from the Parshas Korach 5776 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman as compiled by Rabbi Boruch Twersky.*

**The Baka Fly Doesn’t**

**Live More than a Day**

When discussing the laws of bugs found in fruits and vegetables, the Gemara (Chulin 58) says, "The baka fly doesn’t live longer than a day."

Rav Papa asked Abaya, "People say that for seven years, a female baka fly rebelled against her husband." Doesn’t this prove that the baka lives for seven years, at least?

Abaya answered, "In their years." The baka only lives for one day, however, if one would compare the baka's short life with the lifespan of a human, the ratio of this baka bug's dispute would be the equivalence of seven human years.

The Baalei Mussar teach that this Gemara helps us acquire a truer perspective on time. When one sees baka bugs fighting, he thinks, isn't it a pity that they are fighting? Life is so short for them. Shouldn’t they make the most out of their short life?

For human beings, life is longer, but it is also relatively short. Does it make sense to fill this short period of time with disputes and quarrels?

*Reprinted from the Parshas Korach 5776 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman as compiled by Rabbi Boruch Twersky.*

**Emunas Chachomim #5**

**The Skolye Rebbe and the Woman Whose Child Had**

**A Rare and Fatal Disease**

A woman once tearfully told the Skolye Rebbe (R’ Dovid Yitzchok Isaac Rabinowitz) that her only child, a daughter, contracted a rare, debilitating illness and had lapsed into a coma. She was the seventh known case and all six other patients had succumbed.

The Rebbe said, “If this is the situation, why have you come to me? What is there that I can do?”

The mother was overcome and begged the Rebbe to save her child. The Skolye Rebbe’s heart melted at the plight of every Jew. He wept along with her, gently reiterating that only Hashem could help.

The woman, however, would not relent. “Rebbe, you can save her! I am sure you can!”

Finally, the Rebbe said that he would say Tehillim, which calmed the woman.

The next morning at 5:00 a.m. the girl’s eyes fluttered open. She awoke two hours later, and within a few days she had completely recovered.

When the Rebbe recounted this incident, he began to cry. “Believe me I accomplished nothing, nothing at all. It was all in the merit of that woman’s faith that my prayers could somehow save her daughter, that the child was saved.” (Torah Luminaries)

Reprinted from the Parshas Korach 5776 email of The Weekly Vort.

**The Foolish Highway Robber**

WORDS CAN BE VERY COSTLY A distraught father once came to R’ Zalmen Plitnick (d. 1984), Rav of Liverpool, England, and implored him to speak to his daughter to convice her not to marry her gentile fiancee.

R’ Plitnick spoke with her for a long time, but to no avail. She was determined to marry him.

When the father heard that R’ Plitnick had been unsuccessful, he was bitterly disappointed.

R’ Plitnick (whose father-in-law, R’ Moshe Londinsky, was Rosh Yeshivah of the Chofetz Chaim’s Yeshivah in Radin, as well as the Chofetz Chaim’s neighbor) told the father of the girl a story which he heard from the Chofetz Chaim, based on the Yerushalmi (Brachos 38b).

A great doctor discovered a cure for a debilitating children’s disease. He would travel to cities and villages to dispense the medicine and heal children. One night, as he was traveling, he was assaulted by highway robbers who took all his belongings. Having found no valuables, they threw his belongings into the river. The next morning, the doctor dejectedly told the patients waiting at his next stop that he had no medicine. At the head of the line of patients was a man whose son was very ill. He had been relying on the doctor’s medicines.

The doctor looked at the man and said, “Don’t you recognize me? I was the one whom you robbed last night. Where is everything you took from me?”

The man was startled, as he replied, “I threw it all into the river.”

The doctor shook his head sadly, “You had the remedy in your hand and you threw it away. Now there is nothing I can do for you.”

The Chofetz Chaim explained, “We want our rabbis to provide all the answers for our children. But if people come home from shul on Shabbos and sit at the table criticizing what the Rav said in the drashah, or if people in general ridicule what the rav stands for, then when the Rav is needed to remedy theirs or their children’s problems, he will be powerless – because the parents have undermined his credibility.”

R’ Plitnick’s message was clear to the distraught father. He had come to the Rav for advice to prevent his daughter’s inter-marriage, yet, through his criticism of the Rav over the years, he had unwittingly undermined the Rav’s sage advice to his daughter. (Along the Maggid’s Journey by Rabbi Paysach J. Krohn)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Korach 5776 email of The Weekly Vort.*

**A Private Tour of Bnei Brak: With a Side of Cholent**

**By Dana Kessler**

Unless there’s an investigative report on TV, or a new melancholic film about the Orthodox world, secular Israelis rarely seem to think about [Bnei Brak](http://www.tabletmag.com/tag/bnei-brak), a city just east of Tel Aviv whose residents are mainly ultra-Orthodox Jews. But Pini Gorelick, an Orthodox Jew from Kfar Chabad, a Chabad-Lubavitch village in central Israel, believes the culture of Bnei Brak—particularly its culinary offerings—is something more people should experience, and tour.

Two years ago, Gorelick, who works in Israel’s high-tech industry, began leading private tours of Bnei Brak for his friends. Since then, interest has grown mightily — [Gorelick guides tours every week](https://www.facebook.com/%D7%91%D7%A0%D7%99-%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%A7-%D7%9B%D7%9E%D7%95-%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%90-%D7%94%D7%99%D7%9B%D7%A8%D7%AA%D7%9D-461094010681853/), for groups that average 15-20 people. His tours, which last about 3-4 hours, are given in either Hebrew or English.

“Most people who go on these tours are secular Jews, with a few kippah sruga (knitted kippa–a term used to describe religious Zionists), and tourists,” Gorelick told me. “Orthodox Jews don’t come, not even from other countries, because they’re familiar with this lifestyle.”

A few weeks ago, I joined a group from a kibbutz on the tour. It started with a taste of sweet Jerusalem kugel and potato kugel at Muchan Umezuman deli. Then we tasted pastries at Katz Bakery, which has one table and a coffee machine in the corner, making it the closest to a café that you can get in Bnei Brak. Later we sampled [p’tcha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P%27tcha), chopped liver and pickled herring, among other treats, outside a local deli.

**A Jerusalem Kugel Stack.**

In between food stops we heard stories about local fashion, shidduchim, family life, and education. We learned the difference between a rabbi and a rebbe (I’d never known there was one), and saw children on Rabbi Akiva Street, Bnei Brak’s main thoroughfare, downloading a MP3 Gemara lesson from the street, through an ATM-like computer store window.

One of the highlights was a visit to the home of Rabbi Yehoshua Rokeach, current [Machnovka Rebbe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machnovka_(Hasidic_dynasty)) of Bnei Brak, where his wife Chagit told us about her life, and the life of the community, and showed us around her kitchen. This treat, I learned, isn’t always a part of Gorelick’s tour; that depends on whether or not the Rebbe’s wife is free that evening.

The tour ended at 11 p.m. at the [Shloimale](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4740727,00.html) kiosk, located near the Itzkovitch shtiebel, which is open for prayer 24/7. The huge kiosk offers much more than sweets, drinks and cigarettes; there you can buy take-away kugel and bilkas (sweet rolls), and bags of popcorn and cholent. The streets were full of young mothers with baby strollers, as well as young men eating cholent from plastic bowls.

“Thursday night’s cholent scene is Bnei Brak’s equivalent to Tel Aviv’s bar scene,” Gorelick explained. “Young men go out, eat cholent, drink a soft drink or beer—never stronger alcohol—and talk. There are many places you can get cholent on a Thursday night—restaurants, take-out places for Shabbat and also improvised places that bring a cooler for drinks and two giants pots of cholent and stay open really late, until the cholent is done.”

*Reprinted from the July 5, 2016 email of Tablket Magazine.*

**My Mother-in-Law: Jewish Heroine and Nazi Killer**

**By Yaakov Astor**



**Rachel Blum as a young lady in Poland**

**The thrilling, true story of Rachel Blum’s struggle to survive in a world bent on destroying her.**

It was a daunting assignment: speaking to 120 eighth grade girls about the Holocaust in the last hour of the last day of their school year. Compounding my challenge, it was gloriously sunny outside. The girls would be anxious to take leave for their summer vacation.

In my favor, I was going to tell them a remarkable story: that of my mother-in-law, Rachel Blum, may her soul rest in peace – a story I have told to spell-bound audiences and have recently published in book form under the title *Nothing Bad Ever Happens*.

I told these teenage girls that my mother-in-law was roughly their age during the war years, beginning in June 1941 when the Nazis invaded her town, until July 1944 when the Russians liberated Lublin where she had been hiding with a non-Jewish family.

Then I dove into the story, which is truly incredible and gripping – including a Hollywood-worthy climax as Rachel rides in the caboose of a speeding train transporting a thousand SS soldiers to Germany. Fearful an SS officer is about to discover she is Jewish, she convinces the conductor – Ivan Roluk, husband of the non-Jewish couple who took her in – to overturn the train by speeding up around a sharp bend and blowing the horn just beforehand to allow her and his family to jump. (It worked, the family survived and many Nazis were killed; 15-year-old Rachel was responsible for the death of more SS Nazis in one shot than the combined efforts of all the legendary fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising!)



**Rachel Blum in America as a grandmother**

Despite the dramatic nature of that story, I will save the details for the book and instead share another story, one which is in some ways even more incredible.

***The Main Shul in Ludmir***

Rachel’s childhood town, Ludmir, was home to about 22,000 Jews before the war. On Rosh Hashanah 1942, the Nazis, with the help of local collaborators, began marching columns of bedraggled Jews to a spot outside town and machine-gunned them to death into open pits. Between 15,000 and 18,000 Jews lost their lives that way. And Ludmir was just one of countless Jewish towns in Eastern Europe; all told, some million-and-a-half Jews suffered a similar fate under Nazi domination (even before the gas chambers started operating).

Rachel and her family survived thanks to an ingenious attic hideout. And for the next year, she survived by staying in hiding, smuggling in food for her family and ultimately joining the few thousand survivors in the Ludmir ghetto who had been conscripted into brutal slave labor battalions. Over the year, though, each family member was killed or died of starvation.

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**The Great Synagogue in Ludmir**

Finally, on December 25, 1943, the Nazis came to finish off everyone left in the ghetto. In miraculous fashion – Rachel found a hiding place beneath a wooden porch. A few days later she emerged and made her way to a Polish woman her family knew before the war.

This woman risked her life to keep Rachel – until one day when an anti-Semitic neighbor discovered her. Frightened for her own life now, the Polish woman told her she had to leave by the early morning.

It was January 1944. A fresh layer of deep snow lay on the ground. The air was biting cold. And a little girl, improperly dressed, was alone and on the run again.

She wandered the streets of non-Jewish Ludmir for a while before entering a barn. Her entire body chilled to the bone, she found a spot at the far end and stuck her feet into a stack of hay to warm them up.

Suddenly, a woman walked in. Their eyes met. Rachel pleaded with her to be quiet, promising she would be gone by the next morning. The woman said nothing, gathered some items and left.

As the day turned into evening, Rachel prepared to leave. The night before she had experienced a powerful dream where her recently-deceased father appeared to her and told her everything would be alright. Drawing courage from the dream, she exited the barn and approached the house next to it.

She knocked on the door. The woman she had seen earlier in the day opened it and invited her inside. The woman then introduced husband and their seventeen-year-old son (who Rachel later found out worked in the local SS office!). They offered her a bowl of soup. During conversation it emerged that this family, the Roluks, knew Rachel’s father. They praised him for being a very righteous and honest man they had had business dealings with. If they did not have money to pay for the items he gave them on consignment, he did not pressure them to pay.

At this point in the war, both Rachel and the Roluks knew the Nazis would kill any family caught harboring a Jew. Understanding the predicament, Rachel asked Mrs. Roluk if she and her family were religious. She answered affirmatively. Rachel then asked her if they had a Bible. Again affirmative. Rachel next requested that she take the Bible and place it on the table. She did. Finally, Rachel said to the entire family, “I want all of you to place your hands on the Bible.” They complied.

“Now, promise me the following,” the 14-year-old recently orphaned Jewish girl said. “I have nowhere to run. I’m tired and I’m alone. After this, I will go outside to your backyard and lie down in the snow. There I will freeze to death. You will bury me. Now, promise me on this Bible” – and it is difficult to convey the quality of conviction in my mother-in-law’s voice even as she retold it decades later – “that after the war you will find Jewish people and tell that there is a little Jewish girl buried in the backyard. Promise me that you will tell them that her last wish was that she be reburied with other Jews in a Jewish cemetery.”

A deathly silence fell upon the room. The Roluks looked at each other. One by one, they rose from the table and walked into the next room. Rachel could hear them talking. After a while, they returned and said to her, “You will stay with us. We will tell people that you are our niece from another village.”

What the Roluks did not know at the time was that in saving Rachel they were saving themselves – not only in soul but in body too. (This is detailed in the book. Hint: it has to do with the train story above.)

By the end of my lecture, the 120 girls were mesmerized. The most amazing part of Rachel’s story is that – despite the fact that by war’s end she had no family, friends or money – she became the happiest, most active, most loving and helping human being; someone who regularly said with absolute sincerity, “Nothing bad ever happened to me.”

The story of my mother-in-law inspires on many levels. She is a genuine heroine. As Jews, her story impresses upon us an added message: the value of what it means to be Jewish. Perhaps most of all, we learn from her that even if very bad things happen to us, we have within ourselves an astonishing, mysterious, inextinguishable untapped capacity to love; to be truly happy, active, focused and a magnet of joy for others. God knows, the world needs more of that.

[Nothing Bad Ever Happens](http://www.menuchapublishers.com/nothing-bad-ever-happens.html)*tells the thrilling, true story of Rachel Blum’s struggle to survive in a world bent on destroying her.*

*Reprinted in the Parsha Korach email of Aish.com*

**Love of the Land**

**Binyomin Hatzadik**

**By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, A”H**

Binyamin Hatzadik (a great Talmudic Sage, not Binyamin the son of Yaakov who was also a tzadik — i.e. righteous), whose grave is in Tsefat according to Rabbi Chaim Vital in the name of the Arizal, is mentioned only one time in our sources.

The gemara tells of the time that a woman came to him as manager of a charity fund for help during a drought. When he informed her that there were no charity funds left she cried, “Rabbi, if you don’t help me a woman and her seven sons will die!”

This tzadik was so moved by her plight that he gave her his own funds.

Soon afterwards he became deathly ill. In his behalf interceded angels who said to G-d: “Master of the Universe, You said that whoever sustains one life in Israel is considered as if he has saved the entire world. Binyamin Hatzadik supported a woman and her seven sons. Must he die at a young age?”

The decree of death was rescinded and twenty-two years were added to his life.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Shelach 5776 email of OHRNET, the Ohr Somayach Torah Magazine of the Internet.*

**Rabbi Natan Gamedze**

**By Mrs. Rosalie Moriah**

From a scion of the [African] royal family of Swaziland to a Rabbi in Israel. That is the unlikely story of Rabbi Natan Gamedze. Rabbi Gamedze’s journey of self-discovery began while he was in college in Oxford.

He was intrigued when he noticed a fellow student writing from right to left in strange letters. Having learned that the language was Hebrew, Rabbi Gamedze, who always welcomed a new challenge, decided to add Hebrew to the other eleven languages he already knew.

He mastered basic Hebrew in a very short time, and was able to move on to Rambam’s Mishneh Torah. He was so enthused by the sefer that he began expounding on it to his Jewish friends, who were secular and mostly ignorant of their own religion.

Apparently his exceptional aptitude for languages had reached the ears of academics in Israel, who offered him a full scholarship to the Hebrew University, which he gratefully accepted. Since Rabbi Gamedze’s family had converted to Christianity, he was well versed in the Five Books of Moses, and so Israeli culture was not totally foreign to him. In fact he felt very much at home in Israel!

As much as Rabbi Gamedze enjoyed his classes in Biblical Hebrew, modern Hebrew and Aramaic, he felt a certain “Higher dimension” was missing. Paradoxically, the very same Jewish friends to whom he had exalted the wisdom of Mishneh Torah years before, and who had since become religiously observant, suggested that Natan try out Ohr Somayach, where they were learning.

And it was indeed at Ohr Somayach that he felt in his element. He stayed for five years, thriving under the tutelage of Rabbi Yehuda Samet shlita, and Rabbi Nachman Bulman zatzal. It was in 2000, after a period of study at the prestigious Brisk Yeshiva, that Rabbi Gamedze received semicha (Rabbinical ordination), dazzling the examining Rabbis with his brilliance.

Since then Rabbi Gamedze has settled with his family in the spiritual city of Tzefat, where he continues to teach and give inspiring lectures. He has said that he has the distinct feeling that it was G-d’s will that he convert and by so doing “give additional glory to the Creator”.

Reprinted from the Parshas Shelach 5776 email of OHRNET, the Ohr Somayach Torah Magazine of the Internet.

[**40 Years Since Entebbe**](http://www.mayanyisroel.net/templates/blog/post.asp?aid=2792698&PostID=61476&p=1)

**By Rabbi Yoseph Vigler**

B”H, our soldiers had to come up with daring solutions:

How do you land a plane if the enemy turns off the lights on the runway?

How do you maintain the element of surprise that they not shoot the hostages before our men reach them?

How do you ensure the enemy doesn't pursue your planes?

How do you obtain fuel for the way back when your planes can only carry enough for one way?

The answers were creative and spectacular, but also surreal.

And the people who did it were beyond heroic:

What does it take for a group of soldiers to travel thousands of miles to a foreign country to take on a whole army to rescue fellow Jews?

What does it take to believe that they could maintain the surprise factor against a band of murderous terrorists where seconds could spell disaster?

[](https://www.idfblog.com/about-the-idf/history-of-the-idf/1976-operation-entebbe/) **One of the aircraft crews that landed at Entebbe poses with their plane after the mission**

How many coincidences have to all add up that no one detect them on the radars, that no soldiers suspect the motorcade in the wee hours of the night?

Yet, against all odds, the Jewish army flew two oversized and overweight planes to enemy territory, surrounded by enemy countries who would not likely permit them to refuel, ignored a million potential obstacles and rescued those hostages.

Courage and mesirus nefesh.

Conviction and belief.

They didn't consult with any other nations. Had they consulted they would've been talked out of it. No, they believed that this was the right thing to do, regardless. And G-d was on their side.

This week marks forty years since the glorious breathtaking Entebbe miracle on July 4 1976, 6 Tammuz 5736. The day G-d's Hand was openly displayed!

הימים האלה נזכרים ונעשים

G-d opens up new herizons for us. And He is always out there looking out for us.

Their mesirus nefesh and our mesirus nefesh make us worthy of revealing His bountiful brachos.

May we see them today revealed again in all their glory!

*Reprinted from the Parshat Korach 5776 email of the Mayan Yisroel Center in Flatbush, Brooklyn.*

**The Young Torah Genius Who Didn’t Know How to Drink a Cup of Coffee**

**By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky**

Rabbi Meshulm Igra of Pressburg was one of Europe's leading scholars in the latter part of the 18th century. As a young man, he was engaged to the daughter of a prominent community leader in the city of Butzatz.

A few months before the wedding the young chosson ate a meal at the home of his future father-in-law. Dessert was served together with a hot treat a delicacy that the impoverished Reb Meshulam had never heard of -- coffee.

The servant brought out a cup of brewed coffee together with sugar and milk. The prospective father-in-law directed his son in law to partake. The young scholar looked quizzically at each of the entities and began to ponder. There were two liquids and sugar.

The Talmud teaches that eating precedes drinking. He took a spoon of sugar and ate it. Then he was unsure what to drink first the milk or the black brew. Noting that darkness in the Torah comes before day, he drank the black coffee. Noticing the grinds at the bottom of the cup, he took his spoon and began to eat them. Not wanting to embarrass his soon-to-be father-in-law who had served such a difficult-to-eat dessert, he slowly chewed and swallowed the grinds. His prospective bride stood in shock.

"Father," she cried "I cannot marry a man who does not know how do drink a cup of coffee. He is a total klutz!" The engagement was broken.

Years later this same community leader visited the home of Rav Yeshaya Pick the prominent Rav of Breslow. Upon entering the study he noticed the rav engrossed in a letter. He looked totally concerned and distraught.

When the man asked what problem was, Rabbi Pick told him that he just received a letter that is filled with the deepest insights. "I have to be totally immersed in Torah thought to begin to comprehend the level of this man's brilliance. In fact," he continued, "I do not think a man of this caliber has emerged in the last fifty years! And," he added, "besides the brilliance, one can note his amazing humility and fine character throughout every word he writes."

Then he looked up at the man. "You come from Butzatz. Have you ever hear of a man called Meshulam Igra?"

The man didn't emit a verbal response. He fainted.

When he came to, he recounted the entire story of the engagement and its dissolution, how Rabbi Igra was meant to be his son-in-law but the match was broken over coffee grounds.

Rabbi Pick looked up at him and shook his head sadly. "Is that so?" he exclaimed. "You gave up the opportunity for this great man because he did not know how to drink a cup of coffee?"

Then he looked at the man and simply declared, "Faint again!"

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