**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Ki Seitzei 5780**

Volume 11, Issue 51 9 Elul/August 29, 2020

**Printed L’illuy nishmas Nechama bas R’ Noach, a”h**

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**Story #1182**

**New/Old Security Technology**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

**Editor@ascentofsafed.com**

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**Rabbi Dov Henig**

 *Four years ago, Rabbi Dov and Sarah Henig, the emissaries of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Chengdu [1], China since 2012, returned there with their three small daughters from a visit to Israel, where he is from (she is from Brooklyn). The rabbi tells:*

 After a very long flight and with lots of suitcases in tow, we headed towards the complex where our house is. But the security guards wouldn't let us in. They told us that they need to call the police.

 What was the reason? While we were away there were many robberies in the area, so they were sure that during the three weeks we had been out of the country the robbers had also "visited" our house.

 The police officers arrived with devices to check fingerprints and walked with us towards our home. We opened the doors with a heavy heart. When burglars break in, they also leave a big mess. We were also worried to see what they took.

We all went inside and thank G-d, everything was in its place, looking exactly as we left it. Nothing was stolen from us; all was well.



**The Chabad House of Chengdu, China – XinXiwang Road #12, JinGuang New City East E-2 Chengdu, Sichuan, China**

 Two weeks later I received a phone call from the commanding police officer in the area. He said "Rabbi, please come. I want to meet with you!"

 I arrived at the police station and immediately was shown into his office. He says to me, "Remember what happened when you arrived and we told you about the burglars? Well, we caught them! And can you guess what our first question to them was? It was: 'Why didn't you break into the house of the foreigners, the home of the Rabbi?'

 "In reply, the burglars took out their phones and showed us photos of the doorways of your home, and that thing attached on the right side of the doorframe of each of your external entrances. They said, 'We know how to deal with and control many different security cameras, alarms, remote programs, wireless and WiFi systems, but this is a technology that is completely unknown to us. That's why we took photos of it, so we can investigate it and know how to deal with it in the future.'"

**Is This a Special Technology from Israel?**

 The commander turned to me and asked, "Rabbi, maybe this is special technology from Israel? Perhaps you can bring it here as well!"

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 [1] The capital of southwestern China's Sichuan province, with the country's fifth highest population, more than 16 million in the 2019 census.

***Source*:** Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the video of Rabbi Henig telling the story, based on the faithful transcription by Mrs. C. R. Benami. (If you would like to receive a copy of the video by WhatsApp, send a whatsapp request to +972-526-770-137.)

 Rabbi Henig's conclusion: I explained to the Chengdu police what a mezuzah is all about. For those Jews who are unfamiliar with this mitzvah, know that we are commanded in the Torah to put a mezuzah parchment scroll on the entrances to our home.

**A Protection for Us and for Our Home**

 This mitzvah is first of all a protection for us and for our home. On the outside of the rolled scroll is written the Hebrew letters shin-dalet-yud, which, in addition to spelling one of G-D's holy names, is an acronym for "Shomer Deletot Yisrael" -- "He who watches over the doors of the Israelites." [Indeed, an excellent security device! -yt]

 Too, it reminds us that we have to be proud Jews also when we are at home and no one is watching us as well as when we are outside on the streets. So if you want this special 'security technology' and you don't have it yet, order it from the Chabad House nearest to you [or from a reliable authorized Jewish scribe]. If you already have a mezuzah but haven't had it checked in a while, and especially if it has been years, it's worthwhile to have it checked now.

***Connection*:** Weekly Torah Reading of Ekev -- and of Vaet'chanan) - contain the source verses of the mitzvah of *mezuzah.*

*Reprinted from the KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed.*

**The Would Be Opera Singer And the Tomato Purchase**

**By Rabbi Moshe Borgor**



**Rabbi Shmuel Wosner, zt”l**

 There was a young Austrian woman who had a beautiful voice, a gift. Her father came to the Kopshintzer Rebbe zt’l one day crying that his daughter has found a bad friend who gotten her involved in the Opera scene. She had been interviewed and accepted by the Vienna Opera house as the leading soloist not exactly the position for a religious Jewish girl.

 The Rebbe asked to speak to her. He could immediately tell that she was a G-d fearing, modest girl and that it was just the evil inclination trying to take hold of her.

 She explained to him that under no circumstances would she be prepared to give up on this great opportunity. This was a dream come true for her. She was looking forward to being the shining star of Vienna and the world.

 The Rebbe told her he understood what a huge sacrifice it would be for her to give up on her dream. It is a very big challenge to give up on the fame and fortune that this position promised. He told her that if she would be strong and turn down this role she would be blessed with a son who would light up the world with his Torah and guidance.

 ‘The Opera is something that comes and goes’ he told her ‘but a righteous son is something that lasts forever’.

 This brave young woman agreed to the Rebbe wholeheartedly and went on to have a son who did indeed light up the world with his Torah, the famed Shevet HaLevi, Rav Shmuel Wosner zt’l (1913-2015). Rav Wosner was one of the surviving students of the Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva in Poland and went on to become one of the greatest Rabbis in Bnei Brak and the world.

 Rav Shimon Harari, zt’’l was a very Holy Jew who was famous for his daily bursts of inspiration between Mincha and Maariv. He used to choose something topical and relatable to the congregants. One day his son Rabbi Boruch Harari had picked up some tomatoes on his way home. He had paid 10 shekel a kilo. It became obvious to him that he had been ripped off because everyone else (seemed) to be charging 3 shekel a kilo.

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**Kilo of Tomatoes**

 He was livid and wanted to give the seller a piece of his mind. When he stopped in for Mincha, his father was emphasizing the attribute of overlooking and giving in. He gave the following example ‘If a person bought tomatoes worth 3 shekel a kilo for ten shekel a kilo, it isn’t worth getting angry about it.

 ‘On the contrary you helped another Jew. Consider it as if he asked you for help.’ Rav Boruch was astounded by the clear providential message to him and just another of the many examples where his father seemed to show a spirit of Holiness in his message.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Eikev 5780 email of Oneg Shabbos (United Kingdom).*

**Judging Favorably #98**

**“Lady, Move Your Baby!”**



 My friend Faigie was invited by close friends, Ruchama and Akiva Leiner, to the bris of their first-born son. It was a lovely spring day. Putting a lightweight blanket over her own newborn, Faigie strolled leisurely, enjoying the fifteen-minute walk to the home of Ruchama’s parents.

 As she entered, a roomful of happy faces greeted her. After mazel tovs were exchanged, the Leiners graciously guided their guests to their places at the carefully arranged tables. Faigie was happy to find herself among old friends. She parked the carriage in a quiet corner near the table so she could keep her eye on the sleeping infant.

 It felt wonderful to relax and meet people she hadn’t seen in ages. She was in the middle of listening to a fascinating story when a lady approached her.

 “Why don’t you take your baby over there?” she said, pointing to another table.

 “Over there,” Faigie said as she told me this story, “was the other side of the crowded room, not near anyone I knew, and was difficult to get to. I thought to myself, the baby’s sleeping, not bothering anybody. And the carriage isn’t in anybody’s way. But what bothered me more than anything else,” she went on, “was the lady’s attitude. She sounded like the type who just didn’t like babies around. I smiled and hoped she’d leave it at that.

 “But the woman insisted, ‘This is not a place for a baby.’

 I didn’t want to make a commotion in front of everyone, so I decided just to move with the baby. I had to weave through tables and squeeze past a pole till I got to the other side of the room – ‘over there.’

 Sitting in my new seat, not near anyone I knew, do I have to tell you how I felt?” She didn’t have to tell me. I thought it was the end of the story, but one look at Faigie and I sensed there was more to come.

 “With no one to talk to and nothing to do, I glanced back to where I had been sitting. And blinked. For the first time, I noticed the very large fan that was blowing strongly exactly on the spot where the carriage had been parked.” (The Other Side of the Story by Mrs. Yehudis Samet)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Re’eh 5780 email of The Weekly Vort.*

**The Forgotten Pair of Tefillin**



 A rosh yeshiva in America of the previous generation tells that in the Holocaust, he and his brother escaped to the forest and joined a partisans' army. There were Jewish partisan groups and non-Jewish ones, and generally, they didn’t mix.

 This time, these two Yidden joined a nonJewish partisan group. They were the only Yidden among them. The partisans always had a person hiding up in a tree, to see whether the Nazis were approaching. Once, he came down and told the partisans that soldiers were approaching.

 They immediately escaped deeper into the forest, and the two brothers went along with them. But then they remembered that they forgot to take their tefillin with them. They didn’t know what they should do. If they wouldn’t go back to get the tefillin right then, who knows when they would have another opportunity?

s On the other hand, their partisan friends were telling them that it was dangerous to go back; their enemies would surely find them. They decided to go back for the tefillin. They didn’t want to lose out on this great mitzvah and wanted to act with mesirus nefesh

 They went back using alternate routes (and not through the regular paths in the forest) to avoid detection by the enemy. When they got to their old camp, they found their tefillin where they left them. With immense joy, they put them on and davened Minchah.

 Then they went back to the rest of the partisans, and they found them dead. The Nazis had killed them all. Only the two brothers survived, because of their mesirus nefesh for tefillin. Hashem performs wonders for His children.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Re’eh 5780 email of Torah Wellsprings: The Torah Thoughts of Rabbi Eli Biderman.*

**The Succah on the Roof**

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 A story is told about a person who lived in an apartment building in Manhattan. As there was no place to build a succah, he asked permission from the owner of the building to build his succah on the roof.

 The owner said that he would rent the roof to him for $799. The Yid explained to him that there was no reason to charge him for the roof since no one was using it, but this wealthy man insisted that he rent it. As if that wasn't enough, he wanted a signed contract in front of a lawyer that he is renting the roof.

 The Yid didn’t understand why he was making such a big deal about a rental for a week, but he didn’t have a choice other than to agree to those terms. Many things were littering the roof. He spent time cleaning up, so he could have a place for his succah, and that's when he found a bag, filled with expensive gems, concealed under an old rotting pipe.

 He brought the bag to the police so that they can assist in finding the rightful owner. A few days later, the police contacted him that the owner of the gems wasn't alive anymore, and according to the law, all the gems belong to him, the finder.

 The owner of the apartment building heard about the treasure that was found on his roof and claimed that since it was found on his roof, it should go to him. The matter went to court, and the court ruled that since the money was found when the roof was legally rented out (and there was a document signed by the parties and a lawyer, legalizing the rental), the money should go to the finder.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Re’eh 5780 email of Torah Wellsprings: The Torah Thoughts of Rabbi Eli Biderman.*

**The Rebbe Rashab**

**And the Maskilim**

**By Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon**

 *As preparations are beginning for the new school year and seminars over zoom are being held for the mechanchim and mechanchos (Jewish religious teachers), to ensure that it be a successful year, I decided to post a section of a chapter from my upcoming biography on the Rebbe Rashab, where he espouses his views on the criteria of an educator. The threat that the authorities will evict him from Lubavitch because of him being so outspoken didn’t faze him.*

 *A short introduction to the background to the story will give you a clearer perspective of what was happening:*

 *The Rebbe Rashab (Rabbi Sholom Dovber Schneersohn, zt”l, 1860-1929) successfully persuaded the fund of YKA to stop supporting the maskilim(so-called Enlightened Jews who rejected the legitimacy of the Torah) and instead they used the remaining 650.000 francs to partner with him to build a weaving factory in Dubrovna, employing and providing a decent living for two thousand Jews.*

 *However, the maskilim weren’t going to accept this defeat without a battle.*

 On Monday, the 6th of Teves, 5663 (1903), at five in the afternoon, an inspector from the regional education ministry came to the Rebbe’s house. He demanded an explanation as to why the Rebbe opposed the educational and vocational schools of the *maskilim*.

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**The Rebbe Rashab, zt”l (Rabbi Sholom Dovber Schneersohn)**

 “The instructors in these schools deny the authenticity of the Torah,” the Rebbe replied. “They do not observe the *mitzvos*, and they speak against our religion. Furthermore, the curriculum, as well, is antithetical to our religion.”

 “But the teachers are certified,” countered the inspector.

 “By whom?”

 “By the government.”

 The Rebbe replied:

 “The government should not get involved in religious matters, nor does it have the right to do so. The ministry doesn’t realize that for the Jewish people, education is a religious affair and not an academic one, as it is with other nationalities.

**A Jewish Obligation to Educate**

**And Guide Our Children**

 “We Jews are obligated to educate and guide our children only in accordance with the guidelines that were given to us by the Creator at Sinai. These are the guidelines our ancestors had self-sacrifice to follow, and we must fulfill them with the same passion, without allowing anything to interfere.”

 “Rabbi Schneersohn!” replied the inspector. “Your limitations are restricting the government’s power. You are saying that the government can take care handle certain things, but in other matters, it has no right to voice its opinion. Not only does this mindset smell of disrespect to the government’s authority, it is outright rebellious!”

 “This is something for the judges to decide,” the Rebbe replied. “Let them decide whether saying ‘I am a Jew, I love and fear the G-d of my fathers, and I will obey His commandments without allowing anything to interfere’ is considered rebelling against the laws of the land. On my part, I am not concerned at all, for I fear no punishment whatsoever. No one has the right to force someone else to change his opinion with regard to religion!”

 “I didn’t come here,” retorted the inspector, “to hear your opinion about the educators and curriculum of the schools that the government helped establish for its Jewish citizens. I am here to inform Rabbi Schneersohn of the following message and warning from the regional director of education, in the name of the director of the entire Vilna province, which was decided two months ago.

**A Threat to Honored Citizen Rabbi Schneersohn**

 “Honored citizen Rabbi Schneersohn: You must cease to interfere with the work of the *maskilim* among the Jewish people. This includes refraining from speaking or writing against them. If not, you will be evicted from the entire region, including Mohilev, Vitebsk, Minsk, Vilna, and Kovna!”

 The Rebbe was not fazed by this threat. Calmly and confidently, he replied:

 “I hear your warning, and I am replying in no uncertain terms: No punishment or circumstance will change my ironclad decision, that it is forbidden for every Jewish man or woman to allow their children to attend the heretical schools of the *maskilim*. With the help of the Almighty, I will broaden my opposition to their schools to the greatest extent possible!

 “If I am exiled from the Vilna province, I will go wherever Divine Providence makes my dwelling, and there I will establish my *chadorim* to teach and guide Jewish children based on the foundation of Torah and *mitzvos*. Those students, in turn, will purify the Jewish streets from the poisonous heresy against the Creator and His Torah espoused by the *maskilim*.

**The Power of the Fist**

 “I am astonished,” the Rebbe continued. “You come in the name of education and philosophy, yet you speak as if you are a representative of brutal force. Please give over the following to the local regional director, as well as to the Vilna regional director: It is unheard of for a debate of ideas to be won through the power of a fist!

 “I have informed you of my reason, that education is a religious matter. Only those who are personally observant may be teachers, and the curriculum must be in accordance with our religion. Yet, you reply with the strength of a fist.”

 Evidently, the Rebbe’s words were effective, as the officials did not follow through with their threat.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Re’eh email of Rabbi Avtzon’s Weekly Story. Rabbi Avtzon is a veteran mechanech and the author of numerous books on the Chabad Rebbeim and their chassidim. 510 pages of the 635 pages of the Rebbe Rashab’s biography have been edited. He hopes bezras Hashem to have the book available for Chof Cheshvan.*

 **‘The Treasured Nation’:**

**'סגולה עם'**

 He taught children in Talmud Torah for more than 22 years. He married off four children and he was now marrying off his fifth daughter. When I asked him how he was going to marry off his daughter, he replied as he always does: “By saying Bircas HaMazon with kavanah from a siddur. This is a tried and true segulah, why do I have to try harder than this?!”

 I replied, “Fine.”

 About a month later we met again in the office. This time he grabbed hold of me and said, “Do you have doubts about the Creator? Do you disparage segulos? If Chazal say that saying Bircas HaMazon inside with kavanah is a segulah for parnasah, then why disparage it? What do you think, there are limits to the Creator?!”

**Caught Off Guard by His Attack**

 I was caught off guard by his attack, and I apologized that I had no intent to disparage, I was simply curious… He wanted me to hear him out until the end:

 “A week ago I went to several addresses in Yerushalayim that I have gone to before marrying my children just to put in the effort. It was cold outside, and there was no answer at the first two addresses. I went out in the cold to another house, perhaps they would answer.

 “Suddenly, a cab stopped and asked me to join him as he was going near that address. I was glad because that had always been a good address and it was difficult to walk. I felt that I would be successful since no one answered at the first two houses. I had not finished thanking the driver when he apologized that he had to hurry to the other side of the city for a fare. He asked if I wanted to get out or continue with him.

 “I remember that there was someone in that neighborhood who gave me 50 shekel last time and I decided to stay in the warm car. I arrived and knocked lightly on the door. A boy opened the door who I did not recognize. I asked if I had the wrong address, his father came and invited me inside. He explained that he had recently rented the house and was pleased with the mitzvah.

**Thanking Hashem with All My Heart**

 “After talking Torah for a few minutes, he gave me $500 from his wallet. Instead of 50 shekel I had $500. Upon leaving I told him another dvar Torah about tzedakah and he gave me another $100. I thanked Hashem with all my heart and went on my way.

 “Suddenly, something told me to go back and again I knocked lightly on the door and the man answered. I apologized, but I asked if he were returning overseas, could I give him my address so that if anyone sent money it would help. “He invited me back inside. He asked me how much I needed for the wedding and I told him $10,000. He thought for a moment, took out his checkbook and wrote the sum.

 “I asked him to write several checks as it is easier to cash and he agreed to this as well and he sent me off with the full amount. Now tell me if you should stamp your feet and go crazy. When I tell you there are segulos of Chazal and one of them is to say Bircas HaMazon with kavanah!!! Isn’t it worth it!!!???

*Reprinted from the Parshas Re’eh 5780 email of Tiv Hakehila.*

**How Many Apples?**

 Baron Rothschild had purchased five apples from a grocer and as he walked down the street with his young grandson, a beggar asked for some food. Mr. Rothschild handed the man two apples then asked his grandson, “How many apples do we have?”

 The boy, proud to show off the math he was learning, said, “We had five apples and gave away two, so we have three.”

 His grandfather corrected him. “We have two apples,” he said. “The apples we will eat will be gone in a few moments, but the apples we gave to that poor man will live on as a merit forever.”

 He paused for emphasis as he looked into the boy’s eyes: “We only have what we’ve given away.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Re’eh 5780 email of Migdal Ohr.*

**The Man with the**

**Kaparos Chicken**



 Someone told the Tchebiner Rav zt'l that he has older children, and he hasn't yet found a shidduch for them. He was worried about that.

 The Tchebiner Rav told him the following story:

 "One Erev Yom Kippur, before dawn, a person was walking to do kaparos. He held a chicken in one hand, his other hand held the machzor, and then his eyeglasses slid off his nose to the ground. What should he do?

 “How could be pick up his eyeglasses? If he puts the chicken down for a moment, it will run away. He certainly can’t put the machzor on the ground. So, he stood there perplexed, not knowing what to do."

 "So, what did he do?" the man asked.

 "I don’t know," the Tchebiner Rav replied. "But one thing I'm certain of; he's not standing there anymore."

 With this story, the Tchebiner Rav was telling him that life goes on. There are hurdles, there are challenges, but they pass. The difficulties aren't forever.

 Reb Yehudah Rabinovitz zt'l (a student of the gaon of Tchebin) told the following mashal: When you look at the horizon, you think that the horizon is the end of the world, and there is nothing after that.

 However, if you travel there, you see that the world continues onward. Now, the end of existence seems to be several miles ahead. If you go there, you will see that the world goes on, and there is still more to go.

 He told this mashal to explain how it is in regards to chasunos. People think, "I have money for the upcoming chasunah, but how will I manage the next ones? I still have several children; how will I manage? Where will I get the money from?" But when one reaches the horizon, he discovers another horizon before him. Similarly, when one passes one hurdle, Hashem will help him pass the others as well.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Re’eh 5780 email of Torah Wellsprings: The Torah Thoughts of Rabbi Eli Biderman.*

**The Fulfillment of Rav Aharon’s Promise**



**Rav Aharon Kotler**

 Rabbi Ephraim Shapiro told a story about a holocaust survivor who lived in Borough Park. He walked the streets aimlessly and alone. Rav Aharon Kotler would take time out of his extremely busy schedule to give the man *hizuk* weekly.

 One day, the Rav told the man that when he remarries he will have a daughter, and the Rav will dance at this man’s daughter’s wedding. The man was doubtful but he went on his way. Just as the Rav said, the man later remarried and had a daughter. When she was about 10 years old, Rav Aharon Kotler sadly passed away. The man was devastated by the Rabbi’s passing.

 Years later, the daughter got married. The dancing had just begun, and in walks Rav Shneur Kotler, the late Rav Kotler’s son. He danced and danced with the father of the bride, and brought tremendous joy to the *kallah*.

 The father took the Rabbi aside and asked, “We are so honored to have the Rav but what brought Rav Shneur here?”



**Rav Shneur Kotler**

 The Rabbi answered, “10 years ago before my father passed away, he called me into his room and told me, ‘There’s a man in Borough Park who I told I would dance at his daughter’s wedding but I will not be able to. Take his name and address, and follow the girl’s life. When you hear that she is a bride, go to the wedding and dance in my place.’”

 It is well known that when Rav Aharon was passing away, he had a meeting with Rav Shneur about the entire future of B’nei Yisrael. But first on his list was this promise he made to dance at a little girl’s wedding.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Pinhas 5780 email of Rabbi Amram Sananes as written by Jack E. Rahmey.*