**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas vayeilech 5782**

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**Do Something for Hashem!**



A childless woman was complaining to Reb Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt'l about her life. **Reb Shlomo Zalman** explained to her that she can't have complaints against Hashem, because Hashem doesn’t owe her anything. However, if she will do for Hashem more than she is required to do, Hashem will do for her more than she deserves, and she will merit children. She became a volunteer in Shaarei Tzedek hospital in Yerushalayim to help the ill. This was a kind deed that was not required of her. A year later, she had a daughter.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Va’eschanan 5781 email of Torah Wellsprings: Torah Thoughts of Rabbi Elimelch Bidernman.*

**Be Careful with the**

**Wording of Your Prayers**

There was a couple in Yerushalayim that had only one daughter. They wanted more children, and they would daven (prayers), "Fill our house with children." With those somewhat ambiguous words, they prayed for more children. Their one and only daughter merited to have many children. Unfortunately, she was divorced, and she and her children moved into her parents' home.

The parents' tefillos were answered. Their home was now "filled with children," but that wasn't what they meant. It is imperative to be specific and express oneself properly while davening.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Va’eschanan 5781 email of Torah Wellsprings: Torah Thoughts of Rabbi Elimelch Bidernman.*

**Give More Praise to**

**Hashem than Requests**



**The Beis Yisroel of Gur**

A man living in one of the southern cities of Eretz Yisrael was having a hard time marrying off his children. His oldest child was twenty-eight, and he had another four children above twenty. He also had financial problems, because he had taken out a mortgage on his house to help his chavrusah marry off his children. His chavrusah was supposed to pay the monthly fees, but he wasn't able to, and the bank put up his house for foreclosure.

One evening, this man was in Yerushalayim for a chasunah, and he met with a relative. He told his relative about his hardships marrying of his children and his financial problems.

The relative replied, "There’s a great tzaddik in Yerushalayim – the **Beis Yisrael of Gur (Rabbi Yisroel Alter**, 1895-1977). Tell him your problems. He will certainly help you."

This man wasn't a chassid, but his relative convinced him to go. He poured his bitter heart out before the Rebbe. The Beis Yisrael asked him, "Do you ever praise Hashem? Praise should be 60% and requests should be 40%."

This man told his relative the counsel he received. The relative said, "You have a lot to thank Hashem for. You have health, a wife, and children. You always have food on your table… Focus on the good. Get into the practice of praising Hashem as the Rebbe suggested: 60% praises and 40% prayers."

Two months later, his oldest daughter was engaged. Within a half year, three of his children were married and two more were engaged. Around that time, his chavrusah's mother was niftarah, leaving a large inheritance. The chavrusah immediately paid up the debt, and this man was able to redeem his house from the bank.

This man realized that the Rebbe's counsel of 60% praises and 40% requests can be found in Hallel. We say there טוב כי' לה הודו six times, while 'ה אנא is said four times. This is exactly as the Beis Yisrael advised: 60% praises and 40% requests. This ratio brings yeshuos.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Va’eschanan 5781 email of Torah Wellsprings: Torah Thoughts of Rabbi Elimelch Bidernman.*

**Tefillin in Auschwitz**

In Parshas Eikev we are commanded with the mitzvah of tefillin. When Mendel and Moshe were deported to Auschwitz, they vowed that they would try to fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin every day. Upon arrival at Auschwitz, their tefillin was confiscated.

They soon discovered that all religious articles had been thrown into a shed. Mendel approached a gentile, who seemed to be a decent fellow, to ask at what price he would get him a pair of tefillin from the shed. The gentile wanted a day’s food ration. Mendel agreed.

The next day, the man brought the tefillin and Mendel handed over his bit of bread and watery soup. But Mendel was disappointed – they were both tefillin shel yad ! He sought out the gentile, who told him that a second trip to the shed would cost another day’s ration. Mendel agreed. He fasted 2 consecutive days, but he got his pair of tefillin.



Mendel and Moshe shared their tefillin with others. Before long, as many as 50 Jews a day took turns fulfilling this mitzvah, fully aware that getting caught meant certain death.

One day a kapo entered the barracks and asked Mendel if he could borrow the tefillin. Mendel had no choice but to give the kapo the tefillin. He never returned them.

The next day, when a new transport of Jews arrived, Mendel stood near the barbed wire fence. As soon as they entered, Mendel hurried over to them. “Who has tefillin, who has tefillin?” he asked frantically.

Finally, one man called out, “I have tefillin.”

“Then please give them to me,” said Mendel. “If you hold on to them, they will be confiscated. But if you give them to me, I will guard them, and return them as soon as I can.”

The man gave Mendel the tefillin. Old and weak, the man was sent to the gas chambers. Mendel kept the tefillin and shared them with everyone. One day, while one of the prisoners was wearing the tefillin, a Nazi y”s entered and flew into a rage, demanding that the tefillin be handed over. He asked to whom they belonged. Mendel raised his hand. “You should really die for this,” the Nazi said, “but I have an even better punishment. This afternoon, we’ll assemble all the prisoners in this section around a fire, and you will throw your ‘treasure’ into the flames!” He tossed the tefillin back to Mendel and left.

But Mendel had prepared for such an eventuality. He bent down near his bed and withdrew from under the floorboard what looked like a pair of tefillin, which he had made a while back, thinking they might one day come in handy. That afternoon, the Jews assembled around a bonfire. As the Nazis looked on mockingly, Mendel threw his empty wooden black boxes into the flames.

The next morning, he and his friends donned the tefillin. Towards the end of the war, as the Nazis realized their defeat was imminent, even the prisoners’ pitiful rations were stopped. Mendel was dreadfully weak. He lay on his bed with his eyes closed, barely alive.

Moshe was in somewhat better health and he rushed about the camp, trying to find a crust of bread with which to keep his brother alive. He managed to find a lump of sugar, which he traded for a few slices of bread. He crumbled the bread into Mendel’s mouth, which revived him.

Mendel then attempted to speak, and barely whispering said, “Moshe… Please bring me the tefillin… I haven’t worn them today…” The next day, Auschwitz was liberated. Mendel and Moshe, along with their precious tefillin, eventually made their way to America. (Shabbos Stories)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Eikev 5781 email of The Weekly Vort.*

**Weekly Chasidic Story #1233**

**The Kapo that**

**Helped a Rebbe**

**From the Desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

When Rabbi Mordechai Weber was younger, he merited to serve as an attendant to the great Chasidic leader, **Rabbi Aharon of Belz**. In later life, he traveled every day by bus to teach a Torah class.

On one occasion, when the regular bus came, it was full. The rabbi waited patiently for the next bus, but it was also full. And then a third bus which was also full. The rabbi pondered: he takes that bus every day at the same time and he never had to wait even for a second bus. It was very strange.

When the fourth bus came he was finally able to board and take a seat. Shortly afterward, a young rabbinical student requested to sit next to him. The student knew that Rav Weber used to serve as an attendant to Rabbi Aharon of Belz, so he asked him if he could please share some noteworthy insights that he heard from the mouth of the Rebbe.

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**Rabbi Aharon Rokeach of Belz, zt”l (1880-1957)**

Rabbi Weber began pouring forth from the wellspring of knowledge that he learned from the Rebbe. When the conversation turned to memories from World War II, he mentioned that the cursed Nazis got Jews to be in charge of other Jews in the Camps to make sure they were following orders. They were called kapos. Similarly, as in the camps, there were Jews in the ghettos who wanted to find favor in the eyes of the Nazis and were willing to inform on their own people to save themselves.

Some of the appointed kapos, however, who were Torah-observant[1], refused to do anything that would hurt other Jews. They were willing to take the beatings themselves rather than report what their Jewish brothers were doing.[2]

Rabbi Weber then said, "Rav Aharon of Belz once mentioned a certain one by name," and he said the name, adding, "he not only wouldn't report on Jews, but he went out of his way to help them. He used his position to benefit them. The Rebbe would always tell me how much that person had helped him personally in the Bochnia ghetto."

They then went on to speak about other topics until the rabbi got off the bus.

A few days later, a man phoned Rabbi Weber, inviting him to come celebrate the engagement of his daughter. Rabbi Weber did not recall ever meeting that person, but he went anyway to bring him joy.

**Celebrating an Engagement**

When Rabbi Weber arrived at the party, he was greeted by the host with great honor. The host said to him, "You don't know me, but I was sitting behind you on the bus the other day and I heard what you said in the name of the Rebbe of Belz about that special kapo.

"Well, because of you my daughter is now engaged. You see, last week we were ready to finalize on this *shiduch*, but then some people told me the boy's grandfather was a kapo in the Holocaust and we should stay far away from them. Because of that report I was going to break it off. But then I heard you say the name of that man, the *chatan*'s grandfather, and how he was really a hero.

"So you see, you saved our *shiduch*. Thank G-d, my daughter is now engaged."

Rabbi Weber then began to reflect. What explanation could there be for three buses being filled to capacity that day? Clearly, it was 'Divine Supervision' in order that Rabbi Weber would get on that fourth bus where a young man would request to sit next to him and ask about the Belzer Rebbe, and that the man who was already sitting in back of the seat that Rabbi Weber chose would overhear what he needed to hear, precisely when he needed to hear it.

**The Incredible Intervention by G-d**

He sincerely hoped that the man whose daughter is now engaged to the kapo's grandson also realized that those three filled buses, plus the fact that the young rabbinical student sat next to Rabbi Weber, was all instigated by G-d Al-mighty just for him, his family and the *shiduch*.

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**Footnotes:**[1]The original text is "G-d fearing," but in addition to those heroes there must have been at least a few whose main motivation was "love your fellow Jew as [you love] yourself."

[2]See Ex. 5:14 and Rashi's explanation or the interesting note in Artscroll.

**Source:** Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from a transcript of an audio lesson (#1817) by **Rabbi David Ashear**, submitted by Mrs. Shulamit Tilles.

Biographical note: **Rabbi Aharon of Belz** [5660 - **21 Av** 5717 (1900 - August 1957)], the fourth rebbe in the Belz dynasty, was considered one of the purest holy men of his generation. In 1944 he miraculously escaped from the Nazis and moved to Israel, where after a brief time in Jerusalem he set up his court in Tel Aviv. The current Belzer Rebbe, who has established a huge center in Jerusalem, is his nephew.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Eikev 5781 email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed.*

**Can a Kohen Take**

**A Divorced Woman?**



Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, ZT”L (1863-1940), was once giving a shiur (class) to a group of young men in his home when a man came in running and interrupted. “Rebbi,” he began, “I am a Kohen – may I take a divorced woman?”

The students were justifiably disturbed by this interruption. How does someone have the Chutzpah to disturb Rav Chaim Ozer’s shiur for such an elementary question? The Torah clearly states in no uncertain terms (in this week’s Parsha, Vayikra 21:7) that a Kohen may not marry a divorced woman.

  Rav Chaim Ozer looked up at the man, thought for a moment, and responded, “yes, you may take a divorced woman.”

The students were shocked at this response. How could the great sage render a decision that clearly contradicted the Torah? Yet, Rav Chaim Ozer continued the shiur as if nothing had occurred.

Finally, when noticing how distracted the students, said, “you’re probably wondering about my decision, so allow me to explain. You probably noticed the man’s boots and riding gear. He is a simple wagon driver. In his mind, he once heard that a Kohen may not take - that is, marry - a divorced woman. He understood the word “take” literally, and didn’t want to give this woman a ride. He feared violating a prohibition in the Torah.”

    Sure enough, the students went outside to see if their Rebbi’s words reflected reality and saw the Rav’s brilliant deduction play out. A well-known divorced woman was in the process of boarding this man’s wagon for the ride.

*Comment: Although this is a humorous story (from Rabbi Paysach Krohn), it drives home the greatness of* *our Torah giants’ grip on reality and the fact that even the simplest Jew can have a holy sincerity about them.*

*Reprinted from the Parshas Emor 5781 email of Mendel Berlin’s Torah Sweets Weekly.*

**True Brotherly Love**

Rav Erez Chazani writes a story. There was once a fine young man who was getting a little older, and he still was not married. All his friends had gotten married and were raising children, but he was still waiting to find the right one. When his younger brother reached marriageable age, this older Bachur told him, “I want you to know that I have no problem with you getting married before me. I Bentch you wholeheartedly to find your Bashert quickly, and build a beautiful home together!”

His Brachah worked, and his younger brother quickly got engaged. Before the wedding, the older brother ran around with his younger brother helping him with all the errands, shopping, and wedding arrangements, without the slightest amount of jealousy or resentment, or any bad feelings that could consume a person from the inside.

A few years later, this young man was still single. He was broken-hearted, and did not have a lot of hope of finding the right Shidduch. He decided to call up his younger brother to see how he was doing, as they hadn’t spoken in a few weeks. He asked, “How are you doing?” and his younger brother could hardly conceal his stress and said, “Hashem will help, Hashem will help!”

It wasn’t difficult to conclude that his younger brother was under financial stress, and in their conversation, he managed to discover that his younger brother was broke, and he had no food at home for Shabbos, and it was already Thursday afternoon.

**Filled Up a Few Carts with Food**

The older brother immediately hopped on a bus and went to the town where his brother lived, and took along the savings he had put away. He went to the supermarket and filled up a few carts with food, paid for it and brought it to his brother.

He knocked on the door, and when they answered, they were astounded to see him, and even more astounded by the amount of groceries he bought for them. The younger brother tried to refuse the gift, but his brother hugged him and said, “I’m not taking it back to the store!” He left them an envelope with another 2,000 Shekel in it, and then went back home.

That evening there was a wedding that the younger brother’s wife was supposed to go to, but with the financial stress they were going through, she had originally decided that she just couldn’t go. But when the house suddenly got filled with food, her spirits lifted and she happily went to the wedding.

**Observed a Young Woman Davening Tearfully**

During the Chupah, this woman observed another young woman standing at the side, Davening tearfully. Her lips were whispering silent Tefilos for salvation. The Chupah concluded and the sister-in-law approached the young woman, and asked why she was crying and Davening like that, and perhaps she could also help her with Davening, or some other assistance.

The young woman replied, “I am waiting to get married for many years already, but I haven’t yet found my Bashert. I simply cried out to Hashem and asked Him to send my Chasan to me, so we could build a house of Torah together.”

They spoke for a little, and it became clear that this young woman would actually be a very suitable match for the older brother-in-law! She said to her, “I have a Shidduch for you. I know someone who has a sterling personality.”

The two were set up, and shortly after, the Shidduch was finalized, and they became engaged! Rav Chazani taught that because he put aside any feelings of jealousy and went to help his younger, this man ultimately helped himself and went on to build a beautiful house of Torah filled with Simchah and Chesed, with his wife, who he may have never even met were it not for his own kindness!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Behalosocha 5781 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefilah.*

**Ticket for the Train Ride**



Rav A. Leib Scheinbaum wrote that there was once a Rosh Yeshivah in Europe whose dedication to his students was legendary. The Yeshivah regrettably had no money, and often, they were forced to miss providing meals. Yet, the Talmidim reciprocated with devotion to their Rebbe. Sometimes, they went to bed satiated spiritually, but physically starved.

One day, the Rosh Yeshivah heard that in a neighboring community, there was a wealthy philanthropist, who was very generous to Yeshivos. The Rosh Yeshivah decided that he had no alternative, but to go to this man and appeal for his assistance. He said goodbye to his students and left for the train station.

**One of the Town’ Outspoken Skeptics**

While he was waiting for the train, one of the town’s outspoken skeptics appeared. “Rebbe,” he asked, “what brings you out of the Yeshivah into the ‘real’ world?”

The Rosh Yeshivah ignored the derogatory comment and responded, “I am going to the next town in an attempt to raise money for the Yeshivah.”

The man asked, “Have you purchased your ticket?”

The Rosh Yeshivah replied, “No.”

The man said, “What do you mean? You do not have a ticket? The train will arrive any minute, and you will be left here!”

The Rosh Yeshivah answered, “I have no money for a ticket, but I am not concerned. Hashem will help.”

Hearing this, the skeptic shook his head and muttered under his breath, “These Frum Jews are out of their minds.” He decided to hang around the station to see what would happen. Would Hashem really help the Rosh Yeshivah? Five minutes later, the train whistle sounded and the train pulled into the station. The conductor called out, “Tickets! Tickets! Have your tickets ready!”

To the man’s bewilderment, the Rosh Yeshivah proceeded to get into the line. He said, “Rabbi, are you out of your mind? How do you get into line without a ticket?”

**The Confident Response of the Rosh Yeshivah**

The Rosh Yeshivah answered, “Do not worry. Hashem will help.”

The skeptic scratched his head in amazement. “I cannot figure out the Rabbi. He has no money to buy a ticket. Yet, he gets into line to board the train.” As he got closer to the train, he finally said, “Ok, Rabbi, I am going to give you the money for the trip now, but do not rely on me again! How could you be so naive as to think that Hashem will help?”

Rav Scheinbaum comments that here we have a case of a believer and a non-believer. The believer had no doubt that he would get on the train. The non-believer was so obsessed with his heresy that he never realized that he was the medium through which Hashem helped the Rosh Yeshivah, and to sustain his entire Yeshivah. His bias prevented him from believing that ‘Hashem will help!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Behalosocha 5781 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefilah.*

**His Name Shone**

**By**[**Hillel Baron**](https://www.chabad.org/search/keyword_cdo/kid/24128/jewish/Baron-Hillel.htm)

A group of chassidim were traveling from Krakow to their Rebbe, the Choze (“Seer”) of Lublin. When they arrived, after a trip of several days, their wagon driver asked if they could be so kind as to bring his note to the Rebbe, among the other notes they had brought from the people in Krakow. They happily obliged.

When they delivered all the notes, the Rebbe began reading through them, when suddenly, he picked up one and said, “Wow! Who wrote this note? His name glistens and shines!”

They explained that it was from the wagon driver, and the Rebbe said, “There is something special about this man.”

After their audience with the Rebbe, the chassidim decided to find the wagon driver and figure out what was so special about him. They went to the inn and found his wagon and horses, but not the driver. They set off around town looking for him, until they reached an outdoor marketplace, and there he was, dancing and singing. “What is the occasion?” they asked, and he explained that this was a wedding of two orphans.



Art by [Sefira Ross](https://www.chabad.org/3159160)

They asked his connection to the celebration, and he explained:

“After you left to go to the Rebbe, I took care of some maintenance with the wagon, fed the horses, and walked about town to see what was going on. I came across the marketplace, and saw people singing and making merry. I asked about the occasion, and was told that a wedding between two orphans was about to begin.

“Then, I discerned sounds of unhappy talk. ‘Oh,’ they told me, ‘there are some mixed feelings here. The people who arranged the match told the groom that the bride would provide him with a *tallit*. Unfortunately, this did not pan out, as they are both very poor.’

“What did I do?” the wagon driver said. “I quickly pushed my way through the crowd, and when I reached the bride, I took out the money which I happened to have on me, gave it to her and said, ‘Here, with this money you will buy your groom a [*tallit*](https://www.chabad.org/multimedia/video_cdo/aid/1749430/jewish/Do-It-Yourself-Tallit.htm). It’s on me. No worries.’

“After that, the wedding went ahead without a hitch. And that’s why I’m singing and dancing right now,” the wagon driver concluded. “I may not have much money left in my pocket to show for this trip, but I am gratified to know that a new Jewish home will be established in joy and peace.”

At that point, it was clear to the chassidim why the wagon driver’s name shone so. It was because he had shown up and done his part immediately when an opportunity for a mitzvah presented itself to him.

*How can we be on the lookout for “small” mitzvot which will make a big difference? Let’s utilize every opportunity that arises.*

*Reprinted from the Parshat Eikev 5781 email of Chabad.Org Magazine.*

**Remembering Three**

**French Kodeshim**

One of the most tragic murders that shook up the world in general – and the Jewish community in particular – occurred in 2012 in France, when an Arab terrorist, bent on murdering Jewish children, succeeded in murdering Rabbi Yonasan Sandler, his two sons and a young girl. The bodies were immediately flown to Eretz Yisrael for kevurah, burial.

One week later, a memorial service was held in Bayit V’Gan, attended by dignitaries and as many Jews as could fit into the area. The speakers, who spoke in French, were Rabbi Sandler’s father, father-in-law and Rosh Yeshivah, Horav Michoel Toledano.

**Recalling the Deceased’s Mesira Nefesh**

They reiterated the mesiras nefesh, self-sacrifice, of the deceased, how he went out of his way to reach out to Jewish children of all walks of life. The last speaker spoke of the incredible reward in store for those who perish Al Kiddush Hashem.

The service had ended, and a noise was heard from the rear of the room when an elderly, distinguished looking gentleman asked to address the assembled. He was the Ambassador of Cameroon and also the senior ambassador of all foreign services. He was not on the roster of speakers, but he felt that he had a message to convey to the crowd of mourners.

This is a synopsis of his brief speech. “The entire ride from Tel Aviv to Bayit V’Gan, I conjectured to myself that the speeches would be hate-filled, with a cry for revenge and continued bloodshed. Behold, I entered a room filled with 400 people – everyone calm, no screams, no clenched fists, no visible signs of bitter animus against the perpetrator and his supporters; nothing at all about the tragedy that had occurred. It is as if the act of wanton murder committed by a murderous terrorist did not happen. All of the eulogies focused on the positive character traits of the deceased, about his commitment to the Jewish People, to G-d, to the future. No one mentioned the past.



**Rabbi Jonathan Sandler, hy”d, is seen here with**

**his sons Arieh, hy’d, (left) and Gabriel, hy”d (right)**

“I asked myself: ‘What is the Jew’s secret? How do they continue on, wipe themselves off and move on to the next day, the next project?’ The reason I think is that the Jewish People do not focus on the past. You always look toward the future. This is why you never give up hope. You always have a tomorrow to work for, to look forward to. This is your secret. This is why I envy you.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Eikev 5781 email of Rabbi A.L. Scheinbaum’s Peninim on the Torah.*