**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Tzav 5782**

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**Payback for a Car**

**Loan on Erev Shabbos**



 The Shlesinger family from Alon Shvut was vacationing in Northern Israel. On Friday afternoon, their 28-year-old son, Elisha, was driving up to be with his family for Shabbos. He needed to refuel, but inexplicably, he kept missing the turn offs as he sped toward his destination.

 After passing five gas stations in a row, he finally pulled off into the next one. He looked at his watch. It was 3 hours before Shabbos, and he was an hour from his destination. All in all, his timing was good.

 As he filled his car, he noticed a woman with children standing next to their car, noticeably upset. He approached her and asked if he could help. “I accidentally filled my car with diesel fuel instead of regular fuel,” she said, frowning, “and now it won’t start! I am not an expert in cars but I do know that I must get home before Shabbos.”

 Elisha listened to her predicament, and furrowed his brow. There was no way to remove the fuel. It needed professional attention and there were no mechanics on duty at the station. And besides, they were all off work now anyway.

 “Where are you headed?” he asked the woman.

 “To Alei Zahav in the Shomron,” she said, anxiety filling her voice.

 Elisha happened to know precisely where that was and he made a mental calculation ... Alei Zahav was far, almost three hours away, and there were only three hours left till Shabbos begins! She clearly needed to get there, with her family, but how? No wonder she was frantic. It seemed impossible. But not to Elisha. He didn’t think twice, he held out his car keys to the astounded woman.

 She looked at him uncomprehendingly.

**“Start Driving Right this Minute!”**

 “Here,” he said, with an urgency in his voice, “take my car and start driving right this minute to Alei Zahav! I just filled up so you have plenty of gas. Hopefully, if you leave now, you’ll make it in time! Here’s my cell phone number. Let’s be in touch after Shabbos and we can figure out how to get the car back to me.”

 The woman was flabbergasted. A young man, a total stranger, was giving her his car? Why? How? Elisha was insistent and told her again and again that if she didn’t leave right now, she might not make it. She thanked him profusely and took off for Alei Zahav with her kids.

 Meanwhile, Elisha called his father and explained the situation. His father promptly came to pick him up, and everyone made it to their respective destinations in time for Shabbos.

 On Sunday morning, the woman returned with the car. She met Elisha’s mother and told her how amazed she was by her son’s kindness and generosity. Elisha’s mother beamed with pride at her son’s gracious nature. “How can I thank him? What present can I give him?” asked the woman. She really felt sincere gratitude and she could afford to buy him something. She just needed to know what that was.

 “Trust me, Elisha doesn’t need presents,” Elisha’s mother exclaimed. “What he needs is a wife!”

 The woman made arrangements to get home and left the car. But she never stopped thinking about what Elisha’s mother said. “What he needs is a wife!” As soon as she arrived back in Alei Zahav, she wrote up the encounter and posted it on her online account, adding that the wonderful man in the story who went out of his way to help her, was in fact, seeking a wife.

 Suddenly, ideas came pouring forth. One of the first suggestions was a woman named Naomi. Amazingly, with Hashem’s help, just a few months later, Naomi and Elisha were happily married!

 It is hard to miss the tremendous Hashgacha here. Two people taking a trip on an ordinary Friday afternoon happen to meet each other at a random gas station in the north of Israel. Both display great acts of kindness - Elisha’s selflessness to help a woman in distress results in the woman’s tremendous act of kindness in helping to find him a life partner.



**Rav Yosef Tzvi Rimon**

 This was truly not an ordinary Friday afternoon! Hashem above is watching, helping, and moving the pieces on the chessboard... Source: This story was heard from Rav Yosef Tzvi Rimon, (Rabbi of the Gush Etzion Regional Council and Rosh

Kollel of Yeshivat Har Etzion) the rabbi who officiated at Naomi and Elisha’s wedding. (Chabad.org)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayakhel 5782 email of Rabbi Dovid Hoffman’s Torah Tavlin parsha sheet.*

**Unexpected Humility**

 Rav Yehoshua Trenk, zt”l, of Kutna was a child prodigy, and at the young age of twenty he was appointed Rav of his city. One day, Rav Yehoshua called a meeting with the leaders of the Jewish community of Kutna.

 The community leaders were sure they knew what the Rav wanted from them— a raise in salary. The people of Kutna were far from wealthy, and the community leaders were not sure how they would be able to gather together enough money to meet the Rav’s request. However, they loved the Rav so much that they agreed that they would somehow come up with the money.

 At the meeting, the community leaders learned that a raise in salary was not what their Rav had in mind at all. To their astonishment, the young Rav had gathered them to say that he felt the salary he was receiving was far too high. He wanted to request a reduction in his salary!

 After Rav Yehoshua had served loyally as Rav for thirteen years, to show their appreciation, the community planned a banquet in the Rav’s honor. Rav Yehoshua, however, refused to cooperate with the plans, insisting that he was completely unworthy of such honor.

 By way of explanation, he said, “Some babies begin walking as early as nine months old. Others take their first steps at the age of one year. Some children wait until they are two before they finally begin to walk. But if you look at a group of healthy five-year-old children, you could never tell which children began walking early and which began late.

 “All the children can run and jump with equal skill. It is the same with me. I may have been a child prodigy, far ahead of my peers in my learning. At this point, however, others have caught up with me, and there is no reason that I should be singled out for such honor!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayechi 5782 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefillah.*

**A Mother’s *Chesed***

**For the Departed**

**By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser**



**Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser**

 A righteous woman contributed money on a regular basis to the yeshiva in her city so that the students would recite *Kaddish*and learn *Mishnayos*for the departed souls who had no one else to say *Kaddish* for them. When her husband passed away, though, she no longer had the money to pay for this *chesed.*Nevertheless, she made a special request to the administration that they continue the practice, promising that she would pay them whenever she had the funds. The administration agreed.

 At this point, the woman also had daughters at home who had always hoped to be able to marry *talmidei chachamim.*Her financial situation, however, now seemed to eliminate any possibility of such a match. As time went by, with no prospects in sight, the woman would sometimes despair.

 One day, as she was walking in the street, an elderly, distinguished-looking man stopped to ask her why she looked so upset. Uncharacteristically, she suddenly found herself telling the stranger all her woes. The man pulled a banknote from his pocket, signed it in the presence of two witnesses – one of them being R’ Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, who would later be a renowned Rav in Yerushalayim – and instructed her to take it to the bank.



**Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld**

 When the widow showed the teller the banknote, she was immediately escorted to the president of the bank. When she presented him with the banknote, his face turned pale, and he asked, “Who gave this to you?” The woman related what had happened and brought the two witnesses to vouch for her story.

 “This is difficult to believe,” the bank president said in amazement.

 The widow then noticed a picture on his desk of the man who had given her the banknote. “That’s him!” she exclaimed.

 “The elderly man is my father who has passed away. He must have come from the World-of-Truth in order to thank you for the *Kaddish* prayers that you arranged. I am ashamed to admit that I never said *Kaddish* even once for my father,” the bank president said.

 “Last night my father came to me in a dream and told me that you would be coming into the bank. He instructed me to give you due honor and take care of you. When I awoke I totally dismissed the dream. But now that I see my father’s signature on the banknote, I have no doubt that the entire incident occurred just as you stated.”

 Such is the effect of one who leads a noble life. He paves the way for his children to receive abundant good in the world, as it is said, *“Biglal avos toshi’a banim*– because of the parents the children are saved.”

*Reprinted from the Parshat Vayakhel 5782 website of The Jewish Press.*

**The Porter Who**

**Almost Converted**

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

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 There was once a wealthy and prestigious man who occasionally traveled to the court of the saintly Seer of Lublin, where he would receive an honorable welcome.

 He always contributed generously, until, suddenly, due to a series of unforeseen events, he lost all of his wealth.

 Being healthy and strong, he sought work as a porter. He would stand outside the local inn, carrying guests’ belongings in and out, earning a meager living.

 The local priest, who had known him when he was well-to-do, regularly stopped by to offer words of support. Then one day the priest told him that if he agreed to convert, he would arrange loans and business contacts so that the erstwhile magnate would be reinstated to his former status.

**A Terrible State of Desperation**

 The man went home and shared the offer with his wife, who was in a terrible state of desperation. She told him to proceed, saying that it would only be external—inside their home they would remain faithful to Judaism. He decided that before committing, he would stop by the synagogue one last time to say goodbye. He poured out his heart, telling G‑d that he was only doing this out of duress, kissed the curtain of the Holy Ark, and left.

 On his way out, he felt a sudden strong urge to travel to his holy Rebbe in Lublin to part ways. He started the long trek on foot and finally arrived at his beloved Rebbe. After greeting him warmly, the Rebbe asked why he hadn’t seen him for so long. The poor man poured out his heart, telling the Rebbe everything that had happened. The Rebbe asked why he was even thinking about converting when so many others in worse predicaments would never think of it? “I’m different,” he answered. “I have real complaints against [G‑d](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/433240/jewish/God.htm).”

**Taking Your Claims Against G-d to a Din Torah**

 “If you have real claims against G‑d,” the Rebbe advised, “then you need to take Him to a Din Torah (court case).” The Rebbe called three of his students, announced the case, and took the role of attorney.

 First the “lawyer” asked the visitor to state his complaints against G‑d. Then he asked if he had ever done anything against G‑d, and proceeded to remind him of some misdeeds, of which he was mysteriously aware.

 To this the man answered, “Well, I know many others who do these things routinely and are still wealthy. Am I any worse than them? I gave generously to the needy! G‑d has definitely wronged me!”

 After some deliberation, the court announced their verdict: By the letter of the law, G‑d was under no obligation to restore the man’s wealth, they determined, for he had truly done wrong. But in view of his charity, and because of the [Torah](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1426382/jewish/Torah.htm) injunction “You shall do what is good and fair,” it was proper for G‑d to go beyond the letter of the law. They concluded that the man was to resolve to improve his ways, and G‑d would be obligated to return his wealth to the last penny within 30 days.

**The Innkeeper Becomes Upset with the Large Chest**

 The man happily went home with every intention of keeping his part of this agreement. On the 30th day he was standing outside the inn as usual when a large coach pulled up. The porter approached to offer his services to the passenger, who gratefully instructed him to bring in a large and heavy chest. After doing so, he waited at the entrance of the inn for the owner to enter so he could receive payment. Some time passed, and he realized the coach had left. The innkeeper was displeased with the large chest, taking up space and getting in the way of his customers, so he told the porter to take it home. “When the man returns,” he reasoned, “I will direct him to pick it up at the porter’s house.”

 After *shlepping* the heavy chest home, the porter dropped it and a few coins rolled out.

 Time passed and it became clear that no one was coming to claim the box, which had no label or identifying features.

 Despairing of ever returning the chest, he opened it and discovered that it was filled with coins, adding up to exactly the amount of money he had lost!

 “The person should pay strong attention and make great efforts to uphold that which the Creator has obligated him to do, as part of his service to Him, to fulfill His mitzvot and to refrain from that which He has exhorted us not to do in accordance with His requests. Then the Creator will agree to bestow on him the things for which he relies on Him.” (Gate of Trust (Kehot), Chapter 3, Pg 76.)

*Reprinted from the Parshat Pekudei 5782 email of Chabad.Org Magazine.*

**Moses’ Last Pleas to G-d**



 Shortly before the Jews were to enter the Promised Land G-d appeared to Moses, His beloved servant, and informed him that he would not be permitted to enter the Land with his people, but instead would die in the desert as a punishment for having struck the rock at Merivah.

 These bitter words were unacceptable to Moses. Could it be that he would be denied his supreme wish – to serve his Master in the holiness which is found only in the Land of Israel?

 The day of Moses’ death approached, but when the people heard of the decree, they cried out and said, “We will not allow it.” Even the sun came before G-d, saying, “I will not set today so that your servant Moses will not have to die.”

 G-d would not be moved. He sent the Angel of Death to bring Moses’ soul to Him, but Moses forbade the angel to approach, and the angel fled in fear. G-d Himself then came to Moses and consoled him, saying, “If you live longer than the usual number of years, people will turn you into a god and worship you. Furthermore, you know that even Adam, whom I fashioned with my own hands, had to die.”

 But Moses continued to plead his cause. “Please, allow me only to cross the Jordan River, if not as a leader, then as a plain Jew; if not as a plain Jew, then as a servant.”

**The Two Oaths of G-d**

 But G-d replied, “I have made two oaths: one that you will not enter the Promised Land; and the second, that I will never destroy the Jewish people. If I break the one vow, I will have to break the other.”

 When Moses heard this, He recoiled in fright. “I would rather die a thousand deaths than allow You to destroy even one Jewish soul. But don’t I deserve to witness the triumph of my people whom I led faithfully throughout all these forty years?”

 G-d replied only: “Moses, do not fear, I Myself will take care of them, but you must allow the Angel of Death to approach you, for it is Joshua’s turn to lead the people.”

 Moses still was not reconciled to his fate. He appealed to the heavens and the earth to intercede for him. They replied, “How can we pray for you when it is written ‘the skies were like smoke’ and of the earth it is said, ‘and the earth like a garment shall wear out’?”

**Asking the Sun and Moon to Pray for Him**

 Moses then asked the sun and the moon to pray for him, but they answered, ‘We can’t pray for you since it is said, ‘The moon was put to shame and the sun was disgraced.’” The stars and the mountains and the seas likewise were not powerful enough to help.

 Moses continued to plead for himself: “The Jews sinned many times, and yet You always forgave them. Am I worse than they that You cannot forgive me also?” But G-d replied to him, “Justice for the many is not the same as justice for one. I could forgive the sins of an entire people, but I cannot forgive yours.”

 Moses realized that nothing would avail, and that G-d would not retract His decree. He wrote out 13 Torah scrolls, one for each Tribe and one to remain in the Holy Ark. Moses and Joshua, the new leader, went together to the Tent of Meeting, where the Divine Presence always spoke with Moses.

 After they entered, a pillar of cloud descended separating Moses from Joshua. When it departed Moses turned to his former pupil and asked, “Master, what did G-d say to you?”

 Joshua relied, “I am forbidden to tell you.”

 This was the first time that G-d had communicated with Joshua instead of Moses, and Moses was deeply pained. He cried out, “Better one hundred deaths than envy even once!”

 Now Moses was ready to die. G-d showed him all the sights of Israel, present and future, even until the time of the Final Redemption. Then, commanding the angels to lock up the gates of prayer, lest Moses’ heart-rending pleas penetrate, G-d Himself descended to take Moses’ pure soul, telling it: “My daughter, leave his body immediately and I will allow you to rest under My Throne with the angels.”

 G-d then kissed Moses, took his soul and brought it up to Heaven where even the angels wept. Moses was born on the seventh of Adar and passed away on the seventh of Adar. On the day that he died a Heavenly Voice announced: “Moses was awarded the crown of Torah, the crown of the priesthood, and the crown of royalty, yet the most important crown he earned was the crown of a good name.”

 Moses’ body never degenerated, nor does anyone know the place of his grave, lest they see the light shining from there. When the Holy Moshiach redeems his people, Moses will be together with us once more.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Terumah 5782 edition of L’Chaim, the weekly publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY.*

**No Time for Silliness**

**Adapted from the teachings**

**of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l**

**By A. Ben-Ami**

 Nechemia and Shlomo nervously knocked on the office door. Why had the Mashgiach called for them? They didn’t think they had done anything wrong.

 “Come in!” called the Mashgiach warmly.

 The two bochurim walked cautiously into the office where their Mashgiach, Reb Yosef, was sitting at his desk waiting for them.

 “How are you boys doing?” he asked with a smile.

 “Boruch Hashem, good,” Nechemia said quietly.

 “I want to talk with you boys about what happened at the Shabbos seudah in Yeshiva,” Reb Yosef began.

 Nechemia and Shlomo exchanged a glance. What had happened on Shabbos? The Mashgiach continued, “I always love when I get the opportunity to spend a Shabbos seudah in Yeshiva with all of my talmidim. But this week, after the cholent was served, I noticed that the two of you were laughing and cracking jokes. I was disappointed to see such amazing bochurim like the two of you acting like that on Shabbos.”

 “I’m sorry,” said Shlomo. “We were in a silly mood and weren’t acting the way Bnei Torah should. But what does Shabbos have to do with it? It’s not like we were doing any melachos or moving muktzah.”

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**Illustrations by Yocheved Nadell**

 Just then, they were interrupted by a strange looking man who had appeared at the doorway to the office. He had long blonde hair, a banjo on his back, and a surfboard under his arm!

 “Em… can I help you?” asked the Mashgiach.

 “Sure, Rabbi!” said the man. “Hey guys, how’s it going?” he added, nodding at the two bochurim. “My name is Matthew Sweeney, but you can call me ‘Riptide’. I’ve been looking everywhere for a Rabbi and then I saw this Yeshiva building and I was like ‘whoa, I bet there’s a Rabbi in here!’ And what do you know, here you are!”

 Reb Yosef and the bochurim stared as Matthew continued. “So, I’m not Jewish or anything, but I find your whole religion fascinating. Every time I go to the beach, I see that huge ocean and think ‘man, that is awesome - there must be a Creator!’

 “So anyway, on Friday G-D gave me such amazing waves to ride that I realized that I need to do something in return for Him. So, I decided that I’m going to keep Shabbos just like you guys do. I went home and made kiddush on a cup of orange juice. I didn’t even turn on any lights! I just sat in the dark the whole Shabbos thinking about the wonderful ocean that G-D made for me and I decided I want to become Jewish!”

 “Oh no! Don’t do that!” shouted the Mashgiach, causing Nechemia and Shlomo to jump. “It’s dangerous to do such a thing if you’re not a Jew yet!”

 “Don’t do what?” asked Matthew

 “You can’t keep Shabbos!” answered Reb Yosef. “Here, take my number and give me a call this evening and we’ll talk. But don’t keep Shabbos!”

 “Okay, thanks Rabbi! Bye guys!” said Matthew, as he walked out of the office.

**What’s So Bad if He Keeps Shabbos?**

 Nechemia turned to the Mashgiach. “Why is it so bad if he keeps Shabbos if he anyway wants to be a Yid?” he asked.

 “Because Shabbos is special!” said Reb Yosef. “It’s not for goyim. Just like the Beis Hamikdash! Do you know that in the Beis Hamikdash they had a sign in Latin saying that any goy who comes in would be chayav misah (deserving of the death penalty)? And even the Romans understood and let them keep that sign there. Because the Beis Hamikdash was a kadosh place and only Yidden were allowed inside. “And Shabbos is the same - it’s a kadosh (holy) day that Hashem gave us and only to us. When we go into Shabbos we’re entering a day of kedusha. That’s why ‘Nochri sheshovas chayav misah’ - if a gentile keeps Shabbos, he gets the death penalty, just as he would if he walked into the Beis Hamikdash.

 “So you see, Shabbos isn’t just a day that we don’t do melacha. It’s a very special day, just for us. And we can’t act on Shabbos the way we act during the week. When we enter Shabbos, we are entering a time of Kedusha, just as if we were entering the Beis Hamikdash, where we would never, chas veshalom, act silly. We can’t talk on Shabbos the way we talk during the week. It’s a time to enjoy our closeness with Hashem, and we have to treat it with tremendous respect.”

 Nechemia and Shlomo thought about this for a second. “Thank you,” they said. “From now on we will make sure to always keep in mind Kedushas Shabbos and treat the day with respect.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayakhel 5782 email of Toras Avigdor.*

**Honor Shabbat**

 A girl from a non-observant family had become a *ba’alat* *teshuvah*. Her father was in the retail lighting business, and each of his children was required to work one day a week in his store. It so happened that this girl’s turn fell on Saturday. She was torn between her father and Shabbat, not knowing which to honor.

 Finally, she decided that she would honor her father – but in her own way. Every Saturday morning, she walked to the store and politely stood behind the counter waiting for customers. But when they asked her how much an item cost, she quoted prices so preposterous that the customers immediately walked out. The girl was very satisfied; she obeyed her father but never made a single sale, and so she was never *mechalelet* Shabbat.

 After three weeks, her father began to wonder why he was doing zero business on Saturdays. He decided to spy on his daughter. Just then, a man entered and inquired about a $180 chandelier. “That chandelier is very special,” the girl said. “It costs $1,000.” The man said the price was too high and he left. The girl was relieved, until she saw her enraged father coming toward her. “Why did you do that?!” he bellowed. “Do you know how much money you’ve lost me?” The next day, the father was surprised to see the same man walk back into the store. “I realize that $1,000 is a lot of money,” he said, pointing to the $180 chandelier, “but I really had my heart set on it. I looked all over the city for one like it and found nothing else. So here,” he added, reaching for his checkbook, “I’l1 give you $1,000 for it, all right?”

 Stunned, the shopkeeper sold him the chandelier, but only at its true price. He then called his daughter and announced that he had witnessed a supernatural event. “It came from *Shamayim*,” he said, and it imparted a profound message. “From this day forward,” he declared, “the whole family will be *shomer* Shabbat, like you.”

 May we all learn to appreciate the Shabbat and keep it to the highest standards that we possibly can, because it is the true source of all our *berachot*. May we also see the fruits of our Shabbat *berachot* through the *Shabbatot* that we enjoy with our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren! May we all stay safe and healthy and have an easy time ahead of us in the coming weeks and years! Amen!

*Reprinted from the Parshat Vayakhel email of Jack E Rahmey as based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.*

**Do Not Kindle a Fire**

 Moshe conveys to *B’nei Yisrael* G-d’s command to observe Shabbat, and he specifies the particular prohibition against kindling a flame. “Do not kindle fire in any of your residences on the day of Shabbat (35:3).” Rabbi Mansour asks why Moshe would single out this specific prohibition.

 He answers that this verse alludes to the fire of anger. While we are to always strive to avoid anger, this is especially important on Shabbat, and so Moshe warns in this verse that we not “kindle” the “fire” of anger on Shabbat.

 [Whenever we prepare to do something great, the *Satan* tries to sabotage the undertaking.](https://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/5?session_redirect=true&userinfo=eff1e795994608ed6885dfdeac88e827&count=1645979850&session_redirect=true&userinfo=eff1e795994608ed6885dfdeac88e827&count=1449696053&randid=774924411&session_continue=1) This is one reason given for the custom to break a glass at a wedding ceremony. Knowing that the *Satan* will try to disrupt this sacred, precious moment, we offer the *Satan* a “bribe,” breaking an expensive glass, as though telling the Satan, “Here, something went wrong, something valuable was broken. You got what you wanted, so now leave us alone.”

 This true of Shabbat, as well. The Chida wrote that there is a special *yetzer hara* that sets in during the final few hours before Shabbat on Friday afternoon. Knowing the immense spiritual benefits of Shabbat, the *Satan* slyly steps in to interfere on Friday afternoon in order to create tension and strife in the home.

 Electricians can attest that more ovens break in Jewish homes on Friday than on any other day of the week. Plumbers will tell you that they get more calls about leaks and clogs on Friday than at any other time. This is very real, and it is no coincidence. This is the *Satan* trying to arouse anger and tension in the home to prevent us from receiving the precious spiritual blessings that Shabbat offers us.

 Let us commit ourselves to foil the *Satan’s* weekly scheme by being especially patient and calm on *Erev* *Shabbat*, by avoiding anger so we can then receive the great benefits of Shabbat and bring Hashem’s presence into our homes.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Vayakhel 5782 email of Rabbi Amram Sananes as written by Jack E. Rahmey.*