**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas behar 5782**

Volume 13A, Issue 38 – 20 Iyar 5782/May 21, 2022

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

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**Three Stories from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman**



**Rabbi Elimelech Biderman**

We will tell three stories of people who excelled in doing chessed, each in their own way.

The following story happened to the Perl family of Yerushalayim, who are renowned for their devotion to the mitzvah hachnasas orchim. One evening, Mrs. Perl had just returned from a trip overseas. Exhausted, she was looking forward to a good night's sleep, but then their doorbell rang. The children looked through the peephole and rushed to tell their mother that "the veibel," an older, bitter lady who often came to their home for a meal, was at the door. They told their mother to answer the door. "You're tired…and the veibel will anyway not be satisfied with what you give her. She always complains that something isn't good enough." But the mother answered the door. She wanted to show her children that a good deed should be kept under all circumstances. And she also wanted to teach them the rule: "What you do for others, you do for yourself." As the Zohar teaches, "When Hashem wants to do someone a favor, he sends him a poor person."



**A poisonous snake**

**There’s a Snake on Your Bed**

And Chazal say, "More than the wealthy do for the poor, the poor do for the wealthy," because in the merit of taking care of the poor, you receive many brachos. "We will only gain by helping this poor woman," their mother assured them. The woman ate supper, and she took home some food for breakfast. The family was settling down for the night when the ten-year-old daughter came running to her mother. "There's a snake on your bed," she said, alarmed.

"It can't be a snake," the mother said. "Maybe it's a rat or perhaps a lizard. Snakes rarely get into houses." "No, it's a snake. I'm certain." "How do you know? Did you ever see a snake before?" She said that she saw pictures of snakes, and she is certain that it is a snake. The father wasn't home then (he was in chutz le'aretz), so the twelveyear-old brother was sent to the room to check.

**Unable to Shut the Bedroom Door**

He returned in panic. Yes, there was a large snake on the mother's bed. They shut the bedroom door closed and placed a towel at its foot, so the snake couldn’t crawl under the door. They called an exterminator, who caught the poisonous snake. Had the mother gone to sleep earlier that night, her life would be in danger. They saw that when you do for others, you do for yourself, and that when Hashem wants to do you a favor, he sends a poor person to your home.

**Collecting 200 Rubles for His Rebbe**

The Divrei Shmuel of Slonim zt'l told one of his chassidim that he needs two hundred rubles. This chassid was poor, but he wanted to do his Rebbe's bidding, so he went to the Slonimer chassidim and told them that the Rebbe requested two hundred rubles. Everyone gave something, and it didn't take long, and he was able to give the Rebbe the money he requested.



The next time he came to the Rebbe, the Rebbe asked him for another two hundred rubles. The chassid raised the money as he had done the previous time, and he brought the money to the Rebbe. This happened a third time, too. The chassid wondered why the Rebbe asked specifically him for money. There were wealthy chassidim, why didn’t the Rebbe ask them for the two hundred silver rubles? Soon afterwards, this chassid realized he had a major problem. His daughter reached the age of shidduchim, but no one agreed to marry her because he didn't have money to pay for a dowry.

**The Rebbe Returns the 600 Rubles to His Chassid**

He came to the Slonimer Rebbe to ask for advice. The Rebbe handed him six hundred rubles, the exact amount the chassid had collected for the Rebbe. That amount was enough his daughter’s dowry. The Rebbe knew that this chassid wasn’t saving up for his daughter’s dowry, so the Rebbe wisely asked him to money. The chassid collected the money among fellow chassidim in a respectable manner, as a messenger of the rebbe. The money was prepared and ready for him when he needed it.

**Giving the Poor Man His Only Shabbos Challos**

The renowned tzaddik Reb Zelig Braverman zt'l and his Rebbetzin would bake and distribute challos on erev Shabbos, to the poor of Yerushalayim. Once, a poor person came to his door late on Friday afternoon and asked for two challos. Reb Zelig replied, "I'm so sorry, but all the challos have been distributed. Nothing is left."

The man got angry and smacked Reb Zelig on his face, twice. Reb Zelig immediately took the two challos that were on his table for the Shabbos meal and gave them to the poor man.

When the poor man left the house, the family members asked Reb Zelig, "Why did you give away our challos? We need them for the seudah. And does he deserve anything after he slapped you?"

**The Explanation of the Poor Man’s Slap**

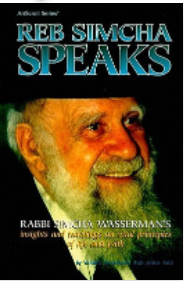
Reb Zelig explained that if this poor man slapped him, he probably needed the challos desperately. Reb Zelig understood that the poor man's wife would be angry if he came home without challos, and there would be a serious shalom bayis problem in their home.

"As for us," Reb Zelig said, "we can manage this week with some matzos." Then, Reb Zelig closed himself in his room, and from outside the door, people heard him say, "Zelig, why did you need to be slapped twice before you learned that you must give away from yourself to others?" He rebuked himself for not helping this poor man immediately.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Kedoshim 5782 email of Torah Wellsprings: Collected Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.*

**Reb Simcha’s Great Joy**

**By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser**



HaGaon R’ Simcha Wasserman, *rosh yeshiva*of Yeshiva Ohr Elchanan and renowned Torah personality, used to stay at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Eisner in Flatbush when he would come to New York.

I once had the privilege to spend time in his company during one of these visits. As I took leave of him in the hallway of Dr. Eisner’s home, his *rebbetzin* was coming up the steps. R’ Simcha began to smile broadly, and Dr. Eisner commented, “R’ Simcha, I am happy that you are enjoying your time here.” R’ Simcha replied, “Actually, it is when I see the *rebbetzin* that it gives me great joy. I am happy to be *zoche*to such a *rebbetzin*.”

Years later, both the *rosh yeshiva* and the *rebbetzin* took critically ill while in New York. One day when the *rebbetzin* was having a better day she asked the hospital staff if someone could wheel her to the *rosh yeshiva*’s room. “I know if he sees me,” she said, “it will give him great happiness, and perhaps it will aid in his recovery.”

To their last days, R’ Simcha Wasserman and his *rebbetzin*cherished the special relationship of their marriage, and their comportment with each other was an exemplar of *shalom bayis*to all.

*Reprinted from the April 28, 2022 website of The Jewish Press.*

**No Strings Attached**

**By Rabbi Paysach J. Krohn**

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**Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky**

           A young fellow appeared before R' Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky to get a blessing so that he would not have to go to the Soviet army. The hazards of war were frightening, and the term of service could be endless, especially if the Soviet authorities knew that the inductee was Jewish.       In the course of his discussion with the young man, R' Chaim Ozer asked him, "Do you wear sisit?"

           The boy was embarrassed to admit the truth but he wouldn't lie to the man to whom he had come for a blessing, and so he looked down and said honestly, "No."

           R' Chaim Ozer asked, "Do you at least put on tefillin every day?"

           The boy hesitated, and then said in a low voice, "Rebbe, I can't lie to you. I don't."

           "What about Shabbat?" asked R' Chaim Ozer. "Do you observe Shabbat?"

           Once again, the boy stared at the ground and said, "Rebbe, I must tell you that I am not religious and am not a Sabbath observer."

           Silence permeated the room as the frightened boy waited for R' Chaim Ozer's next words. He was sure that he would be asked to leave immediately, or be rebuked strongly. He braced himself for the harsh words that he knew must come. Instead, R' Chaim Ozer said softly to him, "I give you a berachah that the Soviet authorities should be as disappointed in you as I am."

           The boy thought his heart would melt as he understood at once both the rebuke and the blessing of R' Chaim Ozer. He nodded his thanks and left the room at once.

           Two weeks later he came back to R' Chaim Ozer and said, "Rebbe, I wanted to tell you that your blessing helped. I was rejected by the army." Then he lifted up his shirt and showed R' Chaim Ozer the sisit that he was now wearing. The young man wore sisit and tefillin, and observed Shabbat for the rest of his life! (Around the Maggid's Table)

*Reprinted from the Parshat Kedoshim 5782 email of Rabbi David Bibi’s Shabbat Shalom of Cyberspace.*

**Avraham’s Onion Crop**

**By Rabbi David Sutton**



**Part of an onion field.**

At the Agudah Convention this past year, a special guest named Avraham was brought in from Israel to share his story, which was especially relevant to the mitzvah of shemitah which was observed in Israel last year.

Avraham was born in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan, in 1945, to a Holocaust refugee from Poland and a native of Odessa. The family emigrated to Israel in 1948, and Avraham’s father fought in Israel’s War of Independence.

Having lost all their relatives during the Holocaust, Avraham’s parents gave up Torah observance. The only Jewish topic they ever spoke about was the Holocaust. Avraham left home at the age of 13, and lived on the streets until he joined the Israeli army.

During his term of service, he fought in the Six Day War. After the emotional capture of Jerusalem’s Old City and the Temple Mount, Avraham visited the Kotel. It proved to be a moving and inspirational experience, and on that day, Avraham decided to begin observing Shabbat and kashrut. He eventually married and worked as a farmer.

Though he devotedly observed Shabbat and kashrut, Avraham was not committed to other areas of Torah – until an experience he had one Shabbat, which had a profound impact upon his life. He and his fellow farmers had placed their onions out to dry before Shabbat so they would be ready to be taken to the market and sold after Shabbat.

Suddenly, after Shabbat begun, as though out of nowhere, a cloudburst erupted, and rain began to pour down from the sky. Avraham’s neighbors scrambled to cover their onions, in violation of Shabbat, but Avraham remained committed to Shabbat observance, and decided to leave his onions exposed.

On Sunday morning, Avraham went out to the fields and saw his neighbors crying. The weather became oppressively hot – topping 100 degrees Fahrenheit – and all the onions that were covered by plastic had become rotten due to the moisture trapped beneath the coverings. Avraham’s onions, however, had completely dried and remained fresh. He and his wife decided to move forward and commit themselves to all the mitzvot, including the mitzvah of shemitah.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Kedoshim 5782 edition of iTorah.com*

**Baby Born After 20-Years, Mordechai Ben David’s Advice, And a Hard Kabbolah**

At the end of the *shiur* of Rav Gamliel Rabinovich at the Shivti Bais Medrash in Yerushalayim, those present were happy to learn of the birth of the first child of Avi Revach, a volunteer for Ichud Hatzalah, after 20 years of waiting.

In his moving words in front of Rav Gamliel and the rest of the *chaburah*, Avi told what had happened and how he was *zoche* to a child after waiting so long.

“A year ago or so, we were here in the *shul*, and there was a very special Yid here. Everyone knows him: Mordechai Ben David. We were sitting at *Kiddush* after davening and someone told Mordechai that there is a Yid here who doesn’t have children and needs a *yeshuah*.

“Mordechai said to me: ‘Take on a *kabbolah,* something that is really hard for you to do, and then Hashem will give you too.’ I asked what thing I should be *mekabel*. *Netilas yodayim*? *Kibbud av v’eim*? He told me not to speak during *davening.* I told him that it’s hard, because I’m with friends and so on. He told me that that is precisely why I should make that *kabbolah* – because it’s hard for me to do. And then I’ll see a *yeshuah*.”



**From right to left: Mordechai Ben David and Avi Revach**

The new father continued: “That’s why I began to daven in another *shul* without my friends, so as not to fail at my *kabbalah*. A little more than a year after I made the *kabbalah,* I have been *zocheh* to the birth of my *bechor.”*

*Reprinted from the April 4, 2022 website of Matzav.com*

**Dealing with an**

**Impossible Cruelty**

Saying something kind not only makes a person feel good, but it can transform the lives of the benefactor as well as his beneficiary. The following story underscores this idea.

The heroine of the story was living in Germany in the late 1930’s, when Hitler’s anti-Semitic diatribes were becoming more virulent and the Nazis were carrying out threats with impunity. She was living with her husband and two children in a small town, and decided that if they were going to survive, they had to leave the country. Without a visa, however, it was impossible to leave.

The good news arrived in the way of information that a small number of visas for Jews was available in the office in Berlin. Her husband could not leave his job, so she decided it was her responsibility to do what she could to save her family. She boarded the train for Berlin with the hope that she would return that night with four visas.

She arrived in Berlin and immediately took a taxi to the address where the visas were to be available. When she reached the designated office, she was greeted by dozens of men and women who were also applying for the precious visas – to no avail.

One mean-looking, bored German bureaucrat was sitting at a desk. He refused to acknowledge anyone. Hours passed, and the people suffered in silence. It was foolish to complain. The Germans did not require an excuse or a reason to punish a Jew. Suddenly, after waiting all day, the bureaucrat stood up, looked at the people and, with a loud contempt-filled voice, announced, “No more visas today. Come back tomorrow!”

The thought of going through the same ordeal again pushed some people to the brink, but what could they do? Our heroine had to find a place to spend the night. She was at her wits end, but she had to dig in and try again. Without visas, she and her family’s lives were at stake. She found a room for the night, and, bright and early the next day, she presented herself at the office.

The line was shorter, because some people had lost patience. She did not have that luxury. She had no idea how many visas were available. Despite the people who had left, a crowd was still waiting. Hours passed in fear and silence. These people knew what going home without a visa meant. The bureaucrat continued to ignore them as if they did not exist, as he continued with his paperwork. Late in the afternoon, the bureaucrat broke the silence when he stood up and made another loud announcement: “No visas today. Everyone must go home!”

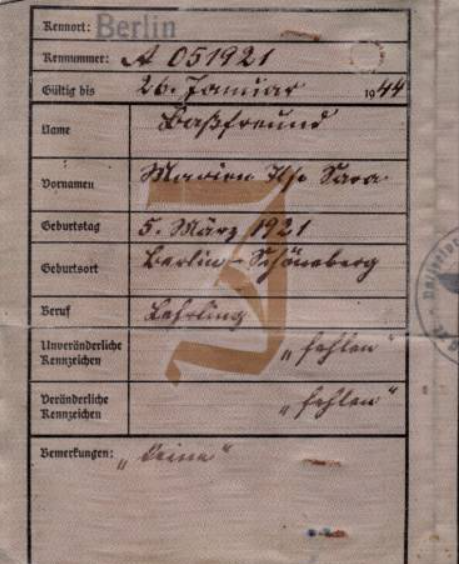
The people were crestfallen; the shock too much to bear. They could no longer hold their quiet, and they responded with declarations of anger. Their pent-up emotions were frazzled and, with raw anger, they exploded at the bureaucrat. The woman who had waited patiently for two days was tired, starved, and emotionally spent. How could she return home empty-handed? It was a death warrant for them all.

She was about to join the chorus of despair when she decided to do something else – something that no one would have expected. She went over to the bureaucrat’s desk, leaned over and said to him, “I would like to thank you for all your time. I am sure that your job is not easy. I would like to wish you a good day.”

She then slowly turned around and walked out of the room. She walked down the hall with the little strength she had left, her head held high, knowing that she was returning to despair and possibly worse.

Suddenly, she heard a voice calling out to her. She turned around to see the bureaucrat running towards her with a handful of papers, “Here, I have visas for you!”

She was saved, because she had controlled her emotions and said something kind to a man who probably did not deserve it. She realized that he must have had a small number of visas about which he had to decide to whom he would give them and whom he would ignore. Whatever he would do would cause a riot. So, he ignored everyone.



**Nazi era German visa for a Jew**

She had no idea what prompted him to act in such an ignoble manner, but she was not about to allow his despicable manner to shape her character. Neither should we. We come across people who are good at bringing out the worst in us. We should not permit their contemptible actions to influence our character.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Metzora 5782 email of Rabbi A.L. Scheinbaum’s Peninim on the Torah.*

**The Danger of a**

**Thoughtless Jest**



Often though, a practical joke or words spoken in jest without thought, can lead to misunderstandings which have the potential to do harm. For example, one year, late in the day on Yom Kippur, the Kedushas Yom Tov, R’ Chananya Yom Tov Lipa Teitelbaum zt”l, of Sighet, went into his private room a few minutes before Neilah, and remained there for quite some time.

People began wondering what had happened to the Rebbe and what was taking him so long. One man even approached the Rebbe’s young son, Yoelish, who was still a child at the time, and asked him if he knew where his father was.

Yoelish smiled and answered the man, tongue firmly planted in cheek, “He probably went inside to take a bite to eat before Neilah!”

No sooner had the words left his mouth, did the young boy regret saying them to some random man whom he did not know. Maybe the man actually believed him and thought that his father, the Tzaddik, was really eating on Yom Kippur!

Search as he might, the boy could not locate the man, and this caused him no small amount of distress. The Kedushas Yom Tov passed away in 5664 (1904) and his son, R’ Yoel Teitelbaum zt”l, went on to become the famous Satmar Rebbe. On one occasion, the Satmar Rebbe traveled to Chicago in 1953, to raise funds for the Satmar Mosdos, and many people came out to greet the renowned Tzaddik, and receive a blessing from him.

One elderly man sat before R’ Yoelish and reminisced how many years previously, he had been in Sighet and spent Yom Kippur with the Kedushas Yom Tov. He could not seem to recall the precise year but he did remember that right before Neilah, the holy Rebbe went into his private room and a young child who was there told him that the Rebbe was hungry and took a bite to eat!

R’ Yoelish jumped up and cried, “That young child was me, and chas v’sholom that my holy father should eat on Yom Kippur!” With a reassuring smile, the Satmar Rebbe explained to the witless old man that all those years previous, he had made a joke and regretted it immediately.

He could not contain his excitement and relief at having been afforded the opportunity to make amends for a humorless jest that had left his mouth close to sixty years ago. R’ Yoelish would always warn people to be ultra-careful to watch what they say because not everyone is given the same chance like he was for teshuvah!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Acharei Mos email of Rabbi Dovid Hoffman’s Torah Tavlin.*

**The Torah Tape**

  Yosef B. and his wife Leah were traveling on the New York State Thruway. A Torah tape was playing in the car’s tape deck, and so intently was Yosef concentrating on it that he did not even realize he was exceeding the speed limit. A state trooper, however, did realize it, and suddenly Yosef was stopped and pulled over to the side of the road. The trooper issued a speeding ticket, and then, noticing that Yosef’s seat belt was not buckled, wrote another ticket for this second infraction as well.

           Yosef was naturally quite upset, but he comforted himself by saying, “This was caused by the Torah tape. Well, I shouldn’t mind paying for the misvah of learning Torah.”

           “Actually,” responded Leah, “the second offense was caused simply by neglecting to use your seat belt. Come on, Yosef, buckle up. Please?”

           Yosef hated to feel constrained by the seat belt, but he gave in to his wife’s urging rather than argue. They continued on their way.



           Ten minutes later, BOOM! Blowout! The small car flew up into the air, spun around, tipped over onto its front wheels and finally landed with a thud. Yosef and Leah stared at each other, dazed.

           “Are you all right, Leah?” Yosef asked his wife.

           “Yeah. You?”

           “I’m fine,” he responded. “I can’t believe what just happened.”

           The two of them unbuckled their seat belts and climbed shakily out of the car to inspect the damage to the vehicle.

           “Thank you for making me fasten my seat belt!” Yosef exclaimed, as the realization of what might have happened suddenly hit him. “If I hadn’t been strapped in, I could have been thrown right through the windshield! You saved my life!”

           “Don’t thank me,” Leah replied. “Thank the state trooper!”

           “No,” whispered Yosef softly. “Thank the Torah tape…” (Glimpses of Greatness)

*Reprinted from the Parshat Acharei Mot 5782 email of Rabbi David Bibi’s Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.*