**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas ha’azinu 5783**

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**The Slap, the Caress**

**And the Candy**

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**Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, zt”l**

A resident of Tzefas once approached Rav Shmuel Eliyahu, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu’s son and the chief Rav of Tzefas, with a story about his father, Rav Mordechai.

This young man had been in Rav Mordechai Eliyahu’s Shiur and learned Torah from him. Once, this young man said that he did something so out of place, that he deserved a severe punishment.

Rav Eliyahu called him over, rebuked him, and even raised his hand, and he gave him something between a light slap and a caress. With his other hand, Rav Eliyahu presented him with a candy. He said, “Take this and make a Brachah.”

The young man told Rav Shmuel, “I have received more than a few reprimands and smacks in my life, but I never received a rebuke that affected me like the one I had gotten from Rav Eliyahu. He knew how to admonish with such love and care, that it touched the deepest, most inner part of my being. It affected me in a way no other reprimand ever did and it helped me change my life!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Ki Seitzei 5782 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefilah.*

**Keeping Shabbat with**

**The Help of the Police**

**By Rabbi Reuven Semah**

Some years ago, Eddie was a student at Sinai Academy in Brooklyn, NY. His teacher did his best to impart to his students the values and Torah knowledge that they would need in order to live as religious Jews. Eddie, for one, couldn’t come to terms with the restrictions of Shabbat. He needed to carry money, he needed his cell phone, he just couldn’t make it through the day without these things.

           Eddie was adamant that if his Rebbe would keep talking about Shabbat, he wouldn’t come to yeshivah any more. Two weeks later, Eddie entered the classroom and made a beeline for his Rebbe. “Rabbi, this past weekend I kept Shabbat!”

           “Wow,” said the Rabbi. “That’s phenomenal!”

           Eddie explained that he got in trouble on Friday. The police falsely accused him of stealing someone’s cell phone and brought him to Central Booking. They took away his money and his cell phone and everything else he had, and Shabbat began as he was in jail. He survived the Shabbat and he saw that what he thought he could never do, he did. It was possible. Eddie became fully shomer Shabbat.

           Often we think that one thing or another is “impossible.” We are to remember that if Hashem placed us in a situation or commanded us to do something, we can surely do it. We need not wait until Hashem shows us, sometimes uncomfortably, just how possible it is.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Ki Tesse 5782 email of Rabbi David Bibi’s Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace. Originally published in the Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin.*

**Accepting Kavod (Honor)**

**For the Sake of Others**



The Chofetz Chaim and the Imrei Emes of blessed memories

The Chofetz Chaim and the Imri Emes were once traveling together to the capital city of Warsaw on one of their missions for the benefit of Klal Yisroel. In those days, the train would wait in the station for a designated amount of time, until it was time to continue the journey.

**The Custom of the Chassidim**

It was the custom of the Chasidim to gather large crowds in the train stations in order to greet their Rebbe, and wait with him until the train was ready to leave the station. Their custom was to arrange a ceremonious greeting for the Rebbe and to be in his environment of Kedushah while the train waited.

Some train stations were very small, and could not hold a large crowd. In these cases, the Rebbe would remain on the train and stand by a window, where he would wave his hand and give Brachos to the people gathered. When the train would stop in the station for a longer time, then the Rebbe would go onto the platform, and the Chasidim would arrange a brief “L’Chaim Tish,” where the people of that town would bring various desserts and hot drinks which they would bring from their homes and offer it to the Rebbe, and if time permitted, they would also bring a note to give to the Rebbe so that he can Daven for them and what they were requesting help with, and they would also speak with him about private matters.

On this specific trip that the Chofetz Chaim and the Imri Emes were traveling on to Warsaw, they were attempting to see if they could get the government to annul a specific decree. Word spread quickly throughout every Jewish community in Poland that these two Tzadikim were traveling, and at every train station a large crowd of people gathered to try to see them.

**Each Had a Very High Regard for One Another**

Throughout the trip, the Chofetz Chaim and the Imri Emes, two great world leaders, sat together with love and pleasantness, and had very high regard for one another, as is the way of Tamidei Chachamim. They always try to increase Shalom, peace in the world, and they discussed many topics of Halachah and Minhagim of Klal Yisroel.

When they reached the first station, a large crowd was waiting on the platform for the approach of these great Tzadikim. The Gabai approached the Imri Emes and notified him that the train was entering the station, and that there was a great crowd waiting on the platform. The Imri Emes asked the Chofetz Chaim to join him so that they could go out together to greet them, as it would be a great glory and honor to the Torah.

The Chofetz Chaim refused, as he felt that this would be a show of Gaavah, arrogance. The Imri Emes immediately responded to him, “For the benefit of Klal Yisroel, it is even appropriate to throw oneself into Gehinom.”

**A Benefit for Klal Yisroel**

Immediately, when the Chofetz Chaim heard that there would be a benefit to Klal Yisroel from this, he got up from his seat and exited the train with the Imri Emes, arm in arm, to the awaiting crowd. This happened at each and every station they stopped at. This was their approach to make a Kiddush Hashem.

Outwardly, the Tzadikim were being received with great honor, because Klal Yisroel had great Kavod and respect towards these Torah giants who enlightened and led the nation, yet, each one felt in his heart that it was like being thrown into Gehinom. They did it anyway as an effort at increasing Kavod Shamayim and to make a Kiddush Hashem, and because it would give Chizuk to others. This is how Tzadikim live. By giving up of themselves for Hashem and for other people!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Ki Seitzei 5782 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefilah.*

**Siberian Squabble**

**By Rabbi Paysach J Krohn**

           One winter, a father and son living in the frozen tundras of Siberia got into an argument. There was only one warm coat available in their home, and the father felt that he was entitled to wear it. “I am an old man,” he complained. “I am frail and it is freezing in this house. If I don’t wear the coat I will die.”

           The son countered, “I am out working in the field where the wind is howling and I must be protected. I am the one supporting the family. It is only proper that I should have the coat to wear.”

           The father and son could not come to an amicable solution so they decided to let their Rabbi rule on the situation. The Rabbi listened with astonishment to their selfish arguments and said, “I have never seen or heard of such a quarrel about a coat between a father and son. I need two days to think about it. Please come back then.”

           On the way home the father began thinking, “My son is right. He is out in the cold where the winds are terrible. He is more susceptible to getting sick. I am living off the money he earns. He should have the coat.”

           At the same time the son was thinking, “My father is the one who deserves the coat. He raised me all these years. I owe him so much. I am younger and stronger. I’ll figure out a way to stay warm. Maybe I can build a fire at the worksite.”

           Two days later when they returned to the Rabbi, the father and son explained that they were now having a different argument, as each one was insisting that the other have the benefit of the coat.

           When the Rabbi heard their new dispute, he told them to wait a moment because he had to go into a back room. He returned with a heavy fur coat. “Here,” he said. “One of you can use this coat; the other will have the coat you have at home. Now both of you will be warm.”

           The father and son thanked the Rabbi profusely for his generosity. After a few minutes though, the son said to the rabbi, “I hope you don’t mind my asking, but if you had this coat, why didn’t you give it to us two days ago, when we first came to you?”

           The Rabbi smiled and said, “When you came here two days ago and each of you was claiming, ‘I need the coat, I can’t manage without it,’ I thought about my own coat and said to myself, ‘I too need my coat. I can’t manage without it.’

           “But now that you each say, ‘I can do without the coat. Let the other person have it,’ I, too, say to myself, ‘I can manage without the coat. Let another person have it.’”

           King David teaches, “Hashem is your shadow (Tehillim 121:15), meaning that Hashem acts toward people the way they act to others. Hashem uses a man’s own behavior as a guideline for His actions toward that person.

           Thus, if one is tightfisted and refrains from giving charity or sharing his bounty with others, Hashem, in turn, will eventually withhold His generosity from him. However, if one is caring and good and shares his bounty with others, Hashem will bestow prosperity and good fortune upon him and his family. (excerpted from the ArtScroll book - Echoes of the Maggid)

*Reprinted from the Parashat Ki Tesse 5782 email of Rabbi David Bibi’s Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace. Originally published in the Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin.*

**Lights On**

**By Rabbi Yitzchok Hisiger**

Dr. Bernard Dickman was a brilliant professor and mathematician, and a writer for the Hakirah Torah journal, who utilized his knowledge to shed light on and enhance his Torah learning. In addition to his brilliance, Dr. Dickman was an extremely sensitive person.

When Dr. Dickman and his sister were sitting shivah in a Sheepshead Bay apartment building following the passing of their father, someone was menachem avel late one night. When the person left, it was clear that due to the late hour, no one else would be coming, so Dr. Dickman’s sister went to turn off the lights.

Dr. Dickman stopped her and told her to wait a few minutes.

“But no one else is coming,” she responded.

“True,” Dr. Dickman said, “but the person who just left is going to exit the building and pass the window of this apartment. If he sees the lights off, he’s going to think that he stayed too late and kept us up. Leave the lights on for a few more minutes until he drives away so that he won’t feel bad.”

Dr. Dickman’s brilliance apparently went far beyond academics, manifesting itself beautifully in his bein adam lachaveiro. (Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – “Powerful Moments.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Shoftim 5782 edition of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table.*

**The Awesome Mitzvah**

**of Checking for Shatnez**



The Seforim Hakedoshim write that a person who wears clothing made from a shatnez combination (wool and linen), will prevent his tefillos from being accepted in Heaven and can likewise stop himself from davening properly.

When the town of Mir fell to the Soviets in 1939, the students knew that their religious studies would be forbidden. Mir was one of the first yeshivos to escape on October 15, 1939, reaching Lithuania legally before the border was permanently sealed. They found temporary accommodations in the building of the Ramailles Yeshivah, in Vilna.

In early 1941, seizing an opportunity to further their escape, the entire yeshiva traveled as a group across the Soviet Union to Japan and onto Shanghai, where they spent the war years. Mir emerged as the only Eastern European yeshivah to survive the Holocaust intact.

A well-known incident which occurred when the yeshivah was temporarily stationed in Shanghai, involved a student who was having difficulty focusing his mind during the Yom Kippur davening. At first, he thought it might be the extreme heat, which caused him to sweat profusely. He ran out in the middle of the tefillos and changed into his weekday clothes.

To his great relief, from that point on he seemed to have better focus and concentration, and davened much better. After Yom Kippur, his Shabbos suit was checked carefully and shatnez was found in a most unexpected and secluded place. It transpired that although the garment was previously checked, the small amount of shatnez had escaped detection.

Another profound incident regarding shatnez was retold by a Kollel yungerman in Gateshead, England. The young man would, from time to time, travel around raising funds for his kollel. When he would come to the Jewish community in London, he would periodically visit a traditional Orthodox couple who befriended him. He would speak with them and offer advice and support, and over the years, developed a deep and warm friendship with them.

This couple always kept Shabbos, Taharas Hamishpacha (family purity) and Kashrus to the best of their ability, among other mitzvos of which they learned more and more as time went on. They had been married for six-and-a-half years, however, but they were not blessed with children.

**The Best Treatments Didn’t Seem to Make a Difference**

Being young and idealistic, they were very eager to start a family and over a considerable period of time, they sought out the best medical advice available. Unfortunately, it was all to no avail. Even utilizing the best treatments didn’t seem to make a difference, and the couple became devastatingly discouraged.

One year, when the yungerman from Gateshead visited their house in London, the young woman poured out her heart to him, weeping bitterly and languishing in great distress. She cried to him that she and her husband seemed to be destined to a life without children.

He tried to offer chizuk and told her to be strong - Hashem will not forsake you, he said. Upon his return to Gateshead, though, he made a point to discuss the matter with a good friend. After some thought, the latter recommended that the couple be encouraged to undertake an additional mitzvah that they had presumably hitherto not kept, in the merit of which they might be blessed with a child.

The yungerman thought about this idea and found great merit in it. After much consideration, he decided to suggest that they uphold the mitzvah of shatnez. When he told them, the husband’s immediate reaction was that he knew all about shatnez. He had even had his suits and coats tested for shatnez and they were perfectly kosher.

**But What About the Wife?**

He was then asked if his wife’s outfits and coats were tested. The man reacted with surprise. They had been under the impression that this mitzvah was only for men and did not apply to women. Upon realizing their error, they took his wife’s clothes to be tested and after inspecting her coat, it was indeed found to be laced full of shatnez.

The shatnez was promptly removed and the garment rendered kosher. This incident took place in mid-Elul 5753. In Tammuz 5754, almost nine months later to the day, the woman gave birth to a healthy baby boy and the yungerman was in attendance at the bris. The delight of the couple was indescribable and they were eternally grateful to Hashem Yisborach for having answered their tefillos in such a timely fashion.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Ki Seitzai 5782 edition of Rabbi Dovid Hoffman’s Torah Tavlin.*

**The Power of a Chassidic Farbrengen (Gathering)**

**By Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon**

It was the summer of 5649 (1889), and the noteworthy chossid Reb Gershon Dov of Paher came to visit Lubavitch. Additional outstanding chassidim were also visiting then, such as Reb Abba Person, Reb Menachem Monish Monesohn, Reb Chanoch Hendel, Reb Meir Mordechai, and Reb Abba. This was besides the known chassidim who lived in Lubavitch, such as Reb Nissan Skoblo (who was the Frierdiker Rebbe’s teacher), Reb Aharon the *chozer*, and Reb Yaakov Koppel Seligson.

**What a Chassidishe Gathering Can Accomplish,**

**Even the Angel Michoel Cannot Accomplish**

One day, these chassidim gathered at the lodging of Reb Menachem Monish. Reb Gershon Dov, who was one of Reb Hillel [Paricher]’s outstanding students, related that he had heard Reb Hillel speak in tremendous praise of a *chassidishe* gathering. Reb Hillel had said, “What a *chassidishe farbrengen* can accomplish, even the angel Michoel cannot accomplish.”

Reb Gershon Dov related that Reb Hillel heard this saying from is mentor Reb Zalman Zezmer. Reb Hillel continued that Reb Zalman related the following story that had occurred with the elder chassidim of Reb Menachem Mendel of Horodok.[[1]](#footnote-1) After Reb Menachem Mendel went to *Eretz Yisroel*, they became chassidim of the Alter Rebbe.

**The Teachings of Reb Menachem Mendel**

They were once *farbrenging* in Horodok, reviewing some of the teachings of Reb Menachem Mendel. The Alter Rebbe was present as well. After a while, someone brought some *mashke*, and the *farbrengen* continued. Among the group was a chossid who suffered from a debilitating sickness for which the doctors said they had no cure. He began to cry and plead that the assembled bless him with a complete recovery.

Some of the assembled replied, “Do you think we simple individuals have the ability to bless someone? That power was only given to a few truly elevated people in each generation.”

The chossid didn’t accept this response, and he persisted in pleading with them to bless him. His emotions became so intense that he broke out in a painful cry from the depths of his heart.

Those chassidim who had said there was nothing they could do began singing, hoping this would calm him down and help him relax.

**The Rebuke of the Alter Rebbe**

Suddenly, the Alter Rebbe exclaimed “*Sha*!” and everyone was quiet. He then said, “My brothers and friends! Have you forgotten the piece of parchment that descended from heaven during a gathering of the holy *chevraya*.[[2]](#footnote-2) The note stated, ‘What a *chassidishe farbrengen* can accomplish, even the angel Michoel cannot accomplish.’”

When the assembled remembered this saying, they became inspired with a passion of friendship, and together as one they blessed this chossid.

The Alter Rebbe then explained how is it that the blessing of [even ordinary] Jews can accomplish more than the intercession of the angel Michoel. The Alter Rebbe gave the following beautiful parable:

“By their very nature, when young children see a good item, they desire it for themselves. They have no interest or concern in sharing it with their friends. They are very possessive of their belongings, and they are also naturally jealous of something a friend has which they do not. Many of them get angry easily and have other negative character traits. Parents have tremendous pain from such children.

“A couple with children like these once searched for someone who would improve their children’s behavior. They found a wonderful educator and hired him to guide and educate them.

**Conducting Themselves with**

**Love, Friendship and Peace**

“After some time, the parents noticed that their children were now conducting themselves with love, friendship, and peace among themselves. Each one strived to fulfill the other’s wishes and was concerned about the other’s benefits as if they were his personal concern. Sometimes they even put their own interests aside and focused instead on their friend’s needs and desires.

“Seeing this, the parents were filled with delight over their children’s conduct and went out of their way to fulfill their requests. This is in addition to the excellent remuneration they gave to the educator.

“[Similarly, when Hashem sees the love between chassidim as it is expressed in a *chassidishe farbrengen*, He is filled with joy and pleasure, and He happily fulfills the brachos they wish each other.]”

After relating this story, Reb Zalman Zezmer concluded, “A *brochah* from chassidim can initiate more heavenly compassion than the compassion initiated by the angel Michoel.”

After Reb Gershon Dov conveyed these words of Reb Zalman, he noted that Reb Hillel added, “I would like to give an explanation of my own on that holy saying, ‘What a good, brotherly *chassidishe farbrengen* can accomplish, even the angel Michoel cannot accomplish.’ Not only can a *brochah* of chassidim during a *farbrengen* accomplish in thre material world, be it with children, health, or sustenance, even more than what is accomplished through the intercession of the angel Michoel. Additionally, a *chassidishe farbrengen* accomplishes in the spiritual sense by improving the daily conduct of the participants—Hashem’s children, giving Him tremendous pleasure.”



**Burial place of Reb Hillel Paricher, zt”l, 1795-1864 in Kherson, Ukraine.**

I will conclude with a story that occurred years ago. Reb Mendel Futerfas noticed a former student standing in line waiting to for the Rebbe. After greeting him warmly, he asked how everything is going. The person replied, it is almost ten years since our marriage and we have yet to be blessed with a child.

Reb Mendel grabbed his hand and said, By next year you and your wife will be blessed with a child.

The following Tishrei Reb Mendel once again noticed him standing in line, but this time he was holding an infant. After greeting him and wishing him a hearty mazal tov, Reb Mendel added, I knew you would have a child.

The person was somewhat shocked and asked, “Do you have *ruach hakodesh*?”

No, he replied. However, when I blessed you last year, I blessed you from the depths of my heart, and as Reb Hillel such a blessing is always fulfilled.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Ki Seitzei 5782 email of Rabbi Avtzon’s Weekly Story. Rabbi Avtzon is a veteran mechanch and the author of numerous books on the Rebbeim and their chassidim [of Lubavitch-Chabad]. he can be contacted at* *avtzonbooks@gmail.com*

**Not for All the**

**Money in the World**

**By Rabbi Shimon Finkelman**



**Shlomo Simcha Sufrin**

The phone rang in the home of Shlomo Simcha Sufrin, a popular singer who lives in Toronto. “Shlomo Simcha,” the caller said, “my name is Chezky Stein\* and I’m a chassan. I’m getting married on Lag Ba’Omer and I would like to hire you to sing at my wedding.” Shlomo Simcha wrote down the date, location and time of the wedding.

The next day, Shlomo Simcha received a phone call from an old customer. “This is Daniel Miller.\* You sang at the weddings of our other sons and now our youngest son is getting married on Lag Ba’Omer.”

**A Very Wealthy Man Who Could**

**Pay Much More that Chezky Stein**

Mr. Miller was a very wealthy man, and Shlomo Simcha knew that he would pay him a lot more money than Chezky Stein had agreed to pay. But that made no difference.

“I’m really sorry, Mr. Miller, but I can’t sing at your son’s wedding. I already agreed to sing at someone else’s wedding on that same night.” Mr. Miller was quiet for a few moments.

“I’ll tell you what,” he finally said, “tell the other fellow that I’ll give him $3,000 if he’ll allow you to sing at my son’s wedding.”

Shlomo Simcha called the chassan.

“I’m sorry,” Chezky said, “but I don’t agree to this deal. I still want you to sing at my wedding.”

But Mr. Miller was not ready to give up. When Shlomo Simcha told him what Chezky had said, Mr. Miller replied, “Tell him that I’ll give him $5,000.” Chezky still would not agree to release Shlomo Simcha from their agreement.

When Mr. Miller heard this, he said, “Tell him that I’ll give him $10,000.” Chezky did not agree. This time Mr. Miller said, “Look, you sang at the weddings of all my other sons and it added so much to the wedding. We want the same for this son. Tell that fellow that he should name his price.”

**Amazed at Chezky’s Reply**

When Shlomo Simcha told this to Chezky, he was amazed at his reply. “There is no amount of money that would cause me to release you from our agreement. I want you to sing at my wedding.”

“If you don’t mind my asking,” said Shlomo Simcha, “why is it so important to you that I should sing at your wedding? Wouldn’t it make more sense to take all this money he’s offering you and hire another singer for your wedding?”

This was Chezky’s answer: “My father took ill many years ago and is disabled. All these years, my mother raised us, took care of my father, and also earned money to support the family.

“When I got engaged and we started to plan the wedding, my mother commented, ‘It would so nice if Shlomo Simcha could sing at your wedding.’ That’s why I hired you. I hired you because that is what my mother wanted. By having you sing at my wedding, I’m expressing my hakaras hatov for all that my mother did for all of us all these years. And that’s why no amount of money can make me change my mind.”

Shlomo Simcha was touched by this young man’s words. What a beautiful way to show appreciation to a very special mother.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Ki Seitzei 5782 edition of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table.*

**How to Treat Another Person**

**By Rav Asher Bergman**

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**Rav Elazar Menachem Man Shach**

Once, Rav Elazar Menachem Man Shach had to travel to Yerushalayim for a meeting of the board of Chinuch Atzma’i. He would generally travel with Rabbi Shraga Grossbard, Director of Chinuch Atzma’i, but the latter was abroad at the time.

Someone who knew Rav Shach sent a message that he had to be in Yerushalayim in any case, and that he would be happy to take the rosh yeshivah, but Rav Shach firmly refused his offer.

The rosh yeshivah was asked to explain the reason for his refusal. “After all,” they told him, “you will save so much time! If you don’t take the ride, you will have to take a bus to Tel Aviv, another bus to Yerushalayim, and then a local bus in Yerushalayim.”

“Don’t you understand?” he asked. “If I travel with that man, I am indebted to him. As a result, I will have to carry on a conversation with him and express interest in all his affairs. I will be wasting time for the entire length of the trip, time that could otherwise be used to study Torah. If I travel by bus, however, I can learn Torah on the way to Tel Aviv, learn on the way to Yerushalayim, and learn in Yerushalayim.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Ki Seitzei 5782 edition of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table.*

1. Also known as Reb Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Frierdiker Rebbe notes of our teacher, which normally means the Maggid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)