**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas bo 5782**

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**You’re An Only Child!**

**By A. Ben-Ami**

**Adapted from the teachings of**

**Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l**



**Illustrated by Yocheved Nodell**

 “Supper time!” called Mommy from the kitchen, as she wrestled the four quadruplets into their high chairs. She made extra certain that Moshe’s strap was tight around his waist so he wouldn’t be able to climb out of his high chair this time. She brought the serving bowls to the kitchen table, and then served each of the four toddlers their spaghetti, meatballs, and mashed potatoes.

 Rivka promptly turned her bowl over on her head and started eating the spaghetti that was now hanging out of it around her face. From the other side of the house Mommy heard a bang and a scream. Leah, always wanting to be a part of things, started bawling, while continuing to shove handfuls of spaghetti into her mouth.

**“Can You Please Help Me?”**

 “Ezra, are you okay?” called Mommy, just as Shmuel began loading clumps of mashed potatoes onto his spoon and flinging them across the room. Just then Aidel walked into the kitchen with her homework. “Mommy,” she said, being careful not to step in any of the large number of tomato sauce puddles on the floor, but otherwise completely oblivious to the commotion. “I NEED to finish my homework before supper, but I don’t understand this Rashi. Can you please help me?”

 Mommy chanced a daring glance at Aidel’s homework, but just then Ezra limped into the kitchen with a large rip in his pants. “Mommy!” He cried. “I tripped and cut my knee and it’s bleeding and it hurts so much! Call Hatzalah! I need an ambulance! We have to go to the hospital right now! I’m going to need stitches and a cast, and probably surgery too!”

**“Why Aren’t You Paying Attention to Me?”**

 Startled, Mommy looked over at the small scratch on Ezra’s knee, but not before quickly turning back to grab Moshe, who had managed to escape from his strap and was attempting to climb over the back of his highchair.

 “Mommy,” kvetched Aidel. “Why aren’t you paying attention to me? Can you please tell me how to understand the Rashi?” Leah was now slathering tomato sauce on her knee so it would be red just like Ezra’s. Shmuel, now standing up in his high chair, managed to launch a ball of mashed potato right into Mommy’s tichel. Rivka watched the scene curiously as she pulled a meatball out of her hair and popped it into her mouth.

**Totty Walked in to Save the Day**

 Boruch Hashem, just then Totty walked in to save the day and give Mommy a hand. He took Shmuel’s mashed potato ammunition away, gave Leah a sippy cup so she’d stop crying, and tied Moshe securely to his highchair with the five-point harness.

 Then, as Mommy put a bandaid on Ezra’s knee, Totty mopped up the tomato sauce from the floor, while calmly explaining the Rashi to Aidel. Fifteen minutes later, with the little ones safely in bed and the house much calmer, the rest of the family sat down to eat. “Ezra, how’s your knee?” Mommy asked.

 “Much better,” Ezra answered. “I’m sorry for overreacting. But you know, it’s hard sometimes to be part of such a big family. Sometimes I wish that I was an only child so I would get more attention.”

 “But you are an only child,” Totty said.

 Ezra looked up, shocked. “You mean Aidel, Rivka, Leah, Shmuel, and Moshe are all adopted?”

 “No, no,” smiled Totty. “Boruch Hashem, you are all our children. But you are also the only son of Hashem.”

**Hashem Has Gazillions of Children!**

 “Hashem has gazillions of children!” Ezra said, confused.

 “Ah, but let’s look at what Moshe said to Paraoh in Parshas Shemos,” said Totty. “He said in the name of Hashem, ‘Bni Bechori Yisroel’ - My only son, my first born, is the Bnei Yisroel.

 “This means that each and every Yid is considered the bechor and only child of Hashem! A parent can really love each child as if they were the only one. While it may sometimes feel that you might not be getting enough attention from Mommy or me, we do love you as if you were our only son, Ezra.

 “And actually, you don’t need us to take care of you every second of the day because Hashem has unlimited attention and takes care of every single one of us, at all times, with endless love and patience.

**Hashem’s Only Child is Klal Yisroel**

 “There’s more! Klal Yisroel as a whole are also considered Hashem’s only child. That means that, as Yidden, we are the most special people in the world. The same way Mommy and I spend way more time with our children and give so much to them, Hashem cares about us as Yidden more than any other people in the world!” Ezra and Aidel both smiled. “Thank you Totty and Mommy,” they both said, “for bringing us up as Torah Yidden with an appreciation for being Hashem’s only children.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Shemos 5782 email of Toras Avigdor Junior.*

**Story # 1254**

**WWII Dream Mission**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**



**Rabbi Yitzchak Alpheya**

 They were the days of tension and fear. The Nazis were advancing step after step on their way to fulfill their insane ambition to conquer the whole world. They left death and incomprehensible atrocities behind everywhere they went. Millions of Jews had already been deported to the ovens. Jews in other countries were overcome with anxiety, dreading the possibility that their countries would also be conquered by the Germans.

 In the spring of 1943, the "Two Hundred Days of Fear" began in Eretz Yisrael. The small Jewish settlement, which was already threatened by the Arabs, now found themselves in an even more ominous situation: the division of the German army in North Africa, under the command of Field Marshal Rommel, were advancing towards the Suez Canal.

**An Easy Path Towards**

**Invading Eretz Yisroel**

 From there it would be easy to invade Eretz Yisrael. Opposing the Nazis was the British army, under the command of General Montgomery. Everyone was expecting a big battle that could change the face of the world.

 In Egypt, the Arabs, under the protection of the German victories, had already begun to abuse the local Jews. In Eretz Yisrael the Arabs were rubbing their hands in excitement, gleefully imagining what they would do to the Jews, their hated enemies.

**The Tension Continued to Increase**

 The atmosphere of tension continued to increase like the heat of the desert towards midday. One day Arab rioters entered the Jewish cemetery in the city Damanhur in Egypt. They approached the burial place of the tzadik (perfectly righteous Jew) Rabbi Ya'akov Abuhatzeira, around which a prayer hall had been built Inside stood a glorious Holy Ark, containing a Torah Scroll.

 The rioters destroyed everything that they could lay their hands on. In their crazed impudence, they took out the Torah Scroll, trampled and burned it, after which they set the whole building on fire.

 At that time there lived in Jerusalem a holy Jew, Rabbi Yitzchak Alpheya. That same night he had a dream. He beheld a Jew of refined and impressive appearance, dressed in the distinctive garment of a Moroccan Torah scholar. His whole being compelled respect.



**Rabbi Ya’akov Abuhatzeira**

 Turning to Rabbi Yitzchak he said: "You are accustomed to pray at the grave sites of righteous men, why do you not come to me?"

 In his dream Rabbi Yitzchak answered him: "Who are you, honored sir, and where is your resting place?"

 "I am Ya'akov Abuhatzeira."

 "And where is your resting place?" repeated Rabbi Yitzchak.

 "In Damanhur in Egypt", was the answer, and after a pause he added: "And now, go quickly to my grave; know that the saving of the Jewish People depends on you doing so!"

**The Rabbi Awoke in Panic**

 Rabbi Yitzchak awoke in panic, overcome by the astounding dream. He hurried to the synagogue Beth-El, and there shared the dream with his colleagues. Together they decided to go to the Commander of the British district to get a permit to travel to Egypt.

 At first, the guards would not allow them entry to the Commander, but Rabbi Yitzchak insisted and refused to budge. Suddenly a high officer came out of the Commanders' office, and when he saw the Rabbi, he asked the guards why he is standing outside.

**A State of Emergency**

 "There is a state of emergency", the guards explained, "People without invitation are not allowed in."

 The officer turned around, went into the room of the Commander, and after a moment came out again and invited the Rabbi to enter. The Commander listed attentively to the request of Rabbi Yitzchak, then responded: "You want me to allow a minyan (a quorum of ten men) of Jews to go down to Egypt to prostrate yourselves on a grave? And you say that in that merit the Germans will retreat!" asked the astounded Commander.

 "No civilian can enter Egypt! Only soldiers making their way to the front." After pausing to reflect a moment, he said: "If you want, I will allow just you to join the soldiers. If the border police won't stop you on the way, you will be able to realize your dream."

**His Friends Tried to Discourage**

**Him from Making the Trip**

 Rabbi Yitzchak thanked him and returned to his friends, who tried to prevent him from making this trip. "You will be endangering your life!" they warned him, "Anyway, you will stand out in the company of the soldiers and the border police will stop you from going."

 Rabbi Yitzchak told them decisively that he was not afraid, and the merit of the tzadikim would protect him. The next morning, he took his tallit and tefilin and went to the train station. While standing on the platform and looking around him, two officers approached him and asked his name. His heart started pounding…will they send him away?

 To his great surprise the two officers told him to accompany them and took him on the train to Egypt. They sat next to him all the way to Cairo. There they brought him to the Jewish quarter and quickly disappeared.

**Revealing His Dream**

**To the Jews in Cairo**

 Rabbi Yitzchak entered the synagogue "Keter Torah", where he was received by the scholars with great surprise. They couldn't believe that the famous scholar from Jerusalem succeeded in coming to Cairo in these chaotic times. When they heard about the dream, they hurriedly gathered food and arranged a large delegation consisting of tens of Jews to pray together at the burial site of Rabbi Ya'akov Abuhatzeira.

 For three consecutive days Rabbi Yitzchak and his companions prayed and studied Torah in the burnt study hall next to the grave of Rabbi Ya'akov. On the third night one of the scholars went outside and to his astonishment discovered that the city of Damanhur was completely lit up, in contradiction to the blackout orders of the military command.

**Good News to Celebrate**

 Soon it became known that it was in celebration of the good news from the battle field: the British army was victorious and had defeated Rommel's forces. When Rabbi Yitzchak returned to Jerusalem, he hastened to write a beautiful Torah Scroll in gratitude for the success of his mission, which after some time was

brought to the study hall at the resting place of Rabbi Ya'akov Abuhatzeira.

 Source: Translated by C. R. Benami, long-time editorial assistant for AscentOfSafed.com, from the rendition in “Sichat HaShavua” #1519, based on Ayelet HaShachar. Edited and supplemented by R. Yerachmiel Tilles. Photo of Rabbi Alpheya is from Wikipedia (Hebrew); of Rabbi Abuchateira from worldjewishcongress.org.

 Biographical notes: Rabbi Ya'akov Abuhatzeira 1808 - 20 Tevet 1880] served as the chief rabbi of Tafilalet, Morocco, until shortly before his death. He was an accomplished scholar and kabbalist renowned for his piety, who performed many miracles. His many distinguished descendants include his grandson known as "Baba Sali."

 His written works include Torah commentaries (Abir Yaakov) ethical works (most of a kabbalistic nature) and responsa on Jewish law. His tomb in Egypt is an official antiquity site protected by the government of Egypt. On his yahrzeit a ceremony attended by hundreds of devotees is held there, many travelling from Israel whenever permissible

 Rabbi Yitzchak Alpheya [5638 – 26 Elul 5715 (1878 – Sept.1955)], born in Aleppo, Syria, became a leading rabbinical judge and Kabbalist in Jerusalem. Former Chief Rabbi of Israel, R. Mordechai Eliyahu, testified of him that he was one of the 36 tzadikim upon whom the continued existence of the world depends. Connection: Tevet 20 (Friday) is the yahrzeit of R. Yaakov Abuhatzeira.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Shemot 5782 email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed.*

**The Day that the**

**Insurance Ran Out**

 A chilling story was told at the shiva of Pnina Moskowitz, z’l, of Ashdod, a mother of 16 children who passed away several days ago at the age of 66 after being ill for many years with cancer.

 Chinuch adviser Yechiel Broner heard the story personally at the shiva and publicized it: “I just left the shiva home of the Moskowitz family in Ashdod,” Broner wrote, adding that the husband of the nifteres told him what transpired in the past four years.

 “Over four years ago, the nifteres was diagnosed with cancer and was told she only had a month and a half to live,” the husband said.

 “pWhen she returned home, she told us: ‘I’m taking care of my sick and elderly mother. In her zechus, I’ll continue to live.’ That’s how the next four years passed – difficult years – as she tended to her mother and underwent treatments at the same time.”

 “A month and a half ago, her mother passed away. When we heard the news, she said: ‘My ‘insurance’ has run out.'”

 “And sure enough, exactly one and a half months after the death of her mother, she passed away,” the husband sadly concluded.

 Broner added: “Yehi Zichra Baruch. And we’ll be mechazeik in Kibbud Horim and ‘למען יאריכון ימיך’ should be fulfilled for us.'”

Reprinted from the December 23, 2021 website of Yeshiva World News.

**Rav Avigdor Miller’s “Serious” Mistake**

**By Daniel Keren**

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**Rabbi Avigdor Miller and Rabbi Aharon Kotler**

 Recently Rabbi Eliyahu Brog, shlita, the grandson of Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l, and mora d’asra of Congregation Bais Yisroel of Rugby on Ocean Parkway that was founded by his grandfather spoke of the time his grandfather once made a “serious” mistake back in the early 1950’s a few years after taking over as the rabbi of the Young Israel of Rugby in East Flatbush.

 He had attended a meeting of Brooklyn rabbis and one of the participants got up to speak about what he perceived as a major threat to American Jewry in general and to young Orthodox Jewish men in particular. This rabbi was speaking of the danger of “Kotlerism”, a movement created by Rabbi Aharon Kotler, zt”l, who had just founded the Beth Medrash Govoha yeshiva in the Lakewood Township, New Jersey in 1943 with just 15 students.

**The Uniqueness of Beth Medrash Govoha**

 What distinguished Beth Medrash Govoha from other American yeshivas was Rabbi Kotler’s enthusiastic emphasis that young men should dive into the Yam HaTorah and study Torah lishmo, the sake of trying to understand the complexities and beauties of the Torah for the sake of Hashem and not for any ulterior purposes such as trying to gain smicha (rabbinical ordination) for parnassa (livelihood) or even to be a religious teacher in a yeshiva or Jewish day school.

 However according to the rabbi at the Brooklyn conference which Rabbi Miller attended almost 70 years ago, this Torah concept then uncommon in America constituted the dangerous cult of Kotlerism [almost on par with Communism, atheism, secular Zionism and other isms] that was a terrible threat to the future of American Jewish youth. Instead, young Jewish men should be encouraged to attend universities and thereby qualify for good professions in order to be able to comfortably support their families.

 Unable to continue listening to the terrible lashon hora being unleashed against Rav Kotler, a great gadol b’Torah by this arrogant and ignorant American-born modern rabbi, Rabbi Miller stood up from his seat and approached the podium and began forcibly pushing the offending anti-Kotlerism rabbi away, while hushing him to be silent.

**Was He Wrong to Publicly Embarrass**

**The Lashon Hora Speaking Rabbi?**

 Afterwards that night, Rabbi Miller began to think that perhaps he was wrong to of have embarrassed a fellow Yid, even if he was repulsed by the awful lashon hora recited by the victim of his defense of Rav Kotler. So he decided to get the opinions of two gedolei Torah who lived in Brooklyn – Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum, zt”l, the Satmar Rebbe and Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, zt”l,

 In those days in the early 1950s, the Orthodox Jewish community was quite small especially compared to the dynamic rapidly growing community of today. Both the Satmar and Lubavitch Chassidic communities were also much smaller than today. It wasn’t that difficult for Rabbi Miller to call the offices of both the Satmar and Lubavitcher Rebbe and be quickly connected to the great Torah leaders.

 In each of his conversations with the respective Chassidic rebbes, Rav Miller repeated what had happened the day before. And he added that the previous night he had called the rabbi that he had embarrassed at the Brooklyn rabbinical conference and asked him for mechila (forgiveness) for having humiliated him in front of all the other rabbis at the gathering.)

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**The Satmar Rebbe and the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

 After relaying in separate phone calls to the Satmar and Lubavitcher Rebbes what he had done, Rabbi Miller asked whether he was wrong for having rushed to defend the honor of Rav Kotler. He later told his grandson almost a half century later that both the Chassidic leaders had sharply criticized him for his “serious” mistake. Why they asked him without knowing what the other Rebbe had answered did he degrade the honor of the Torah by asking that other “rabbi” for his worthless “mechilah.”

*Reprinted from this December 24, 2021 edition of The Jewish Connection.*

**An Exceptional Expression**

**Of Appreciation**

**By Rabbi Joey Haber**



**Shlomo Yehuda Rechnitz**

 Shlomo Yehuda Rechnitz, a businessman from Los Angeles who is renowned for his generosity, was once in an airport in Ireland waiting for a connecting flight. In the airport, he saw a large group of U.S. soldiers who were on their way home. He watched as the troops sat on the floor and ate from their lunch bags.

 The scene did not seem quite right to Mr. Rechnitz. These troops, he thought to himself, devote themselves to protect Americans. He reflected on the fact that he was able to build a business and go about his life only because of their work and sacrifices. Was it right that while the other travelers sat comfortably at restaurants in the terminal enjoying large meals, these soldiers – to whom we all owe so much – were eating sandwiches out of their lunch bags?

 Mr. Rechnitz went over to the general and said that he wanted each and every soldier to order a $50 meal from a restaurant on his account. There were 400 soldiers – for a total of $20,000. As the soldiers enjoyed their free meals, Mr. Rechnitz gave a short, impromptu speech, thanking them for their service to the country and expressing his joy over the opportunity to show his appreciation.

 This is somebody who understands what appreciation is, who, like Moshe Rabbenu, thinks about and reflects on all those people who help us live and do what we do. And this quality is so vital for Torah life, as it is what allows us to recognize Hashem and commit ourselves to fulfilling our obligations to Him.

*Reprinted from the Parshot Shemot 5782 edition of iTorah.com*

**How to Answer a**

**Non-Jew’s Question**



 In Rabbi Avrohom Birnbaum’s inspiring biography of, and tribute to, Rav Shlomo Gissinger, one chapter is entitled, The Great Mekadesh Shem Shomayim; it is a collection of vignettes underscoring Rav Gissinger’s interaction with people from all elements of society.

 The opening paragraph encapsulates his character. Reb Zelig walked into Mahibar Cleaners two weeks after Rav Gissinger’s passing. He had a long-standing relationship with the owner, who was not a Yehudi. In their ensuing conversation the owner said, “Rabbi Gissinger was a real, good rabbi.” Coming out of the blue with such a statement piqued Reb Zelig’s curiosity, and he asked him, “Why do you say that?”

 “Well, a few years ago, the Rabbi came into my shop, and we got to talking. I told him that I was bothered by the fact that some Orthodox Jews seemed to be uncomfortable about shaking my hand or physically interacting with me. I guess being a gentile excludes me from their society.

 “Do you know what Rabbi Gissinger did? He came behind the counter and gave me this great big bear hug! He was a real good rabbi.”

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

**Never Giving Up**

**On a Young Jew**

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 One of today’s legends of chinuch and achievement in an area that fifty years ago was considered impossible is Horav Yitzchak David Grossman, Shlita.

 To read the book of his life and achievements (Living Legend, by Rabbi Nachman Seltzer) boggles the mind.

**Motivated to Do the Inconceivable**

 While space does not permit to focus on his accomplishments, let it suffice to say that they are many. I would like to focus on: what/who motivated him to undertake the inconceivable; and the message of daas Torah which he received at the outset of his impossible dream.

 Rav Yitzchak David enjoyed a very close relationship with Horav Moshe Mordechai Biderman, zl, the Lelover Rebbe. He never made a move without prior consultation with the saintly Rebbe.

 One day, the Rebbe told him, Itche Duvid (Yitzchak David), Efsher vest arupgein a kik-tun vos ir kent eppes auftun in Migdal HaEmek; “perhaps go down, look around and see if you can accomplish anything in Migdal HaEmek.”

**Just a Suggestion**

 That was it – not even an order, just a suggestion. Rav Grossman had hardly heard of the place and, when he did, it was far from complimentary. However, the Rebbe had spoken. They had no room for discussion, regardless of the improbability of success.

 He had no idea how or where he would obtain funding, but he had an idea, and he would do whatever he could, but, ultimately, it was up to Hashem to make it happen.

 One of his first students was a boy who, at a young age, was self-inducted into a life of crime. Rav Grossman refused to give up on him, and he took him from yeshivah to yeshivah, to no avail.

 Crime and street life seemed more alluring than Rava and Abaya. Finally, at wits’ end, he decided to ask the Steipler Gaon, zl, how much time

and energy he was obligated to expend for this one boy who had no desire to learn.

 The Steipler replied, “There is no limit. If there is even the slightest chance that you might save this boy’s life, you must continue doing your best.”

 Rav Grossman renewed his efforts, and today that boy is a revered talmid chacham with an impressive resume. We do not give up. We do what we can, and the rest we leave to Hashem.

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

**The Importance of Just Making the Effort**



 A story is told that R’ Meir Shapiro zt”l was once leading a meeting of a group of askanim discussing matters of pikuach nefesh. Some of the people told R’ Meir that his suggestions were absolutely impossible.

 R’ Meir looked at the group and asked them, “Tell me why did Basya bas Pharaoh stick out her arm in the direction of the baby floating in the river? Didn’t she realize it was impossible for her to reach baby Moshe?

 “The Kotzker Rebbe zt”l explains that a person must do anything and everything in his power to save another person even if he thinks his efforts have no possibility of succeeding. If your efforts are sincere, you will be surprised to see that you can accomplish way more than you ever imagined. Basya’s arm became elongated and somehow, she retrieved the basket with the baby inside. This applies to us,” concluded R’ Meir. “We must do everything we can even if we do not really believe that we will be successful. Hashem helps and then anything is possible.”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Shemos 5782 email of Rabbi Dovid Hoffman’s Torah Tavli*