**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas mishpatim 5782**

Volume 13A, Issue 23 - 27 Shevat 5782/January 29, 2022

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

For a free subscription, please forward your request to [***keren18@juno.com***](mailto:keren18@juno.com)

Past stories can be found on the website **ShabbosStories.com**

**Ahavat Yisrael**

**A Refined Soul**

**By Rabbi David Sutton**



**Rabbi David Sutton**

The following story was told over by Rav BenSion Felman, who was very close to the Chazon Ish (Rabbi Avraham Y. Karelitz, zt”l). When he was still single, he had a grandmother that lived in his house, and she wasn’t well. The grandchildren set up a rotation system to visit her.

For some reason, the grandmother had a special place in her heart for this boy and she asked him to come more often than the others in the rotation - twice a week, instead of once every two weeks. The boy was learning in Yeshiva at the time, and wasn’t sure if he should give up his learning time to visit his grandmother.

As he often took walks with the Chazon Ish, he decided to ask him what to do. The Chazon Ish listened very carefully, and asked some questions to get some details about why she wanted him specifically, what was special about him, etc.



**The Chazon Ish**

Once he got the full picture, the Chazon Ish told him that he should spend as much time with his grandmother as she wanted.

“But what about Talmud Torah,” the boy asked.

The Chazon Ish replied, “Not only are you fulfilling the mitzvah of chesed and bikur holim, you are also fulfilling the Mitzvah of Talmud Torah.”

This was even harder for the boy to understand. How could he be learning if he was visiting his grandmother?

The Chazon Ish said, “Torah is a spiritual, high and lofty concept. We want the Torah to connect to us, yet we are physical beings. How can the spiritual Torah connect to a physical being?”

The Chazon Ish explained that, “The Torah only connects to a refined soul.” In order to merit that the Torah becomes part of you, you need a refined soul. That is the receptacle for the Torah. And that is how you connect to the Torah. How does one acquire this refined soul?

**Chessed Helps Refine the Soul**

It happens with chessed, by giving into others, and middot Tovot. When a person gives up of himself for others, as in this case when he was asked to give up his learning in order to visit his grandmother, that creates refinement of the soul, and that will cause the Torah to connect.

He said that it doesn’t mean that you have to close your Gemarah to go looking for opportunities, but when an opportunity does come, you have to take advantage of it. “Now that you have this opportunity, you should realize that every second you spend with your grandmother, give her medicine and involve yourself with her, you are creating refinement in your soul and that will cause the kedusha of the Torah to better connect to you. This is not just a fulfillment of the Mitzvah of hesed, but it is also fulfillment of the Mitzvah of Talmud Torah.”

What a powerful lesson for all of us who want to be great learners, and yet sometimes feel that when we visit somebody, we are missing out on our learning. That is not the case. If anything, we are enhancing it. Have a wonderful day.

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

**A Hei Teves Story**

**By Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon**

*[Editor’s Note: One of the most important moments in the history of the Chabad/Lubavitch Chasidic movement occurred 35 years ago when a federal court case in New York determined that hundreds of rare seforim, books taken from the library of the Previous Rebbe belonged not to the Previous Rebbe’s family, but to his Chassidic community. This court decision which was announced on the Hebrew date of Hei Teves, the 5th day of the Jewish month of Teveth brought great joy to the Previous Rebbe’s son-in-law – the last Rebbe of Chabad and his chassidim.]*

**

**Rabbi Alter Bukiet**

In 1987 Rabbi Alter Bukiet was on shlichus in Sarasota Florida, and around nine on the morning he received a phone call from his father-in-law, Rabbi Feivish Vogel of London, England.

Rabbi Vogel had been instrumental in finding and convincing many dealers and collectors of rare seforim to return the seforim they innocently purchased that were stolen from the Lubavitcher’s Rebbe’s library.

So out of courtesy to a co-worker, one of the lead lawyers in the case called him up and said, “Feivish, the judgment is coming out today, and we believe it is in our favor.”

So therefore, my father-in-law said, "Altie, I am telling you to fly to 770 [Lubavitch World Headquarters in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, NY] as you don’t want to miss the celebration."

I booked a flight and arrived at 770 around three in the afternoon. I entered the lobby, which was basically empty as everyone was waiting downstairs in the Shul awaiting the Rebbe to come and daven Mincha.

**Noticed an Elderly Jew Crying**

In the lobby, there is a showcase with seforim of Kehos on the wall and standing next to it was an elderly Jew, without a yarmulka who was crying.

Going over to him I said loudly, “Sholom Aleichem, my name is Altie Bukiet.

He stretched out his hand and replied, “My name is Feivel Ditschick.

I then asked him, “Is everything alright?”

At that moment the Rebbe opened the door to the lobby and evidently, he heard my question to that individual and he saw the man crying, so he asked me, “What is with him?”

I translated the Rebbe’s question to that individual and he responded, “I just came from the hospital where the doctor said to me, ‘Medically there is nothing that I can do to help your wife and she will pass on very shortly.

“However," the doctor continued, “I am a religious Jew and I am telling you that in Crown Heights Brooklyn there is a great spiritual Rabbi, go to him in 770 Eastern Parkway and request a blessing. So, I am here.”

**Asked For the Wife’s Name**

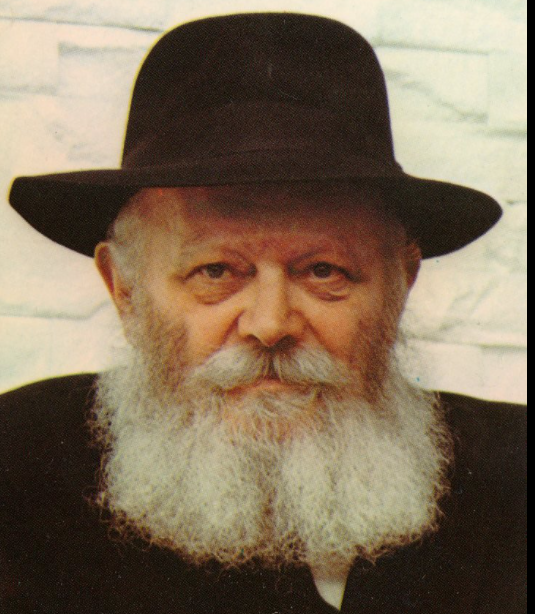
The Rebbe asked him, “What is your wife’s name?”

The man responded in English, Feiga the daughter of Brocha.”

The Rebbe then spoke directly to the man in English and said, “Hashem has many years for me, and I am positive that He also has many years for your wife.”

The Rebbe then took out a nickel from his pocket and gave it to Feivel, indicating that he should place it in the pushka that is attached to the wall in the lobby.

After placing the coin in the pushka, he returned and stood next to me and the Rebbe proceeded to enter the elevator. But then suddenly the Rebbe turned around and said, “Bukiet nu.”

****

**The Lubavitcher Rebbe, zt”l**

I didn’t understand what the Rebbe was asking and I remained silent. The Rebbe repeated himself a second time and I didn’t know what the Rebbe was asking, so I just stood there dumbfounded and didn't reply.

The Rebbe then said, “Is it possible that this man hadn’t put on tefillin today?”

After I translated the Rebbe’s question, Feivel responded that indeed he had not.

The Rebbe then said to me, “Take him downstairs and put tefillin on him.”

The Rebbe continued on his way to Mincha and we went downstairs and Feivel put on tefillin. Towards the end

of Mincha, I mentioned to Feivel, that we should stand close to the exit door and see the Rebbe on his way out of Shul.

The Rebbe noticed Feivel and he made an encouraging and upbeat sign with his hand to him, as he was walking out of the Shul.

Rabbi Bukiet concludes the story; that day was Hei Teves, the day the Rebbe won a legal case that put an end to a very painful ordeal.

Yet, at that moment what was the Rebbe occupying himself with, to see that a Jew puts on tefillin! [and thereby perform an important mitzvah]

Hearing this story, I thought to myself, how similar is this to what we learn in Parshas Vayigash, that while Yosef cried on his father’s shoulder when they finally met after twenty-two years, Yaakov didn’t cry on Yosef’s shoulder.

The obvious question is, Yaakov expressed his tremendous emotions when he knew that Yosef was alive, so why when they met, didn’t he? Rashi answers at that moment he was saying Shema.

Here too, the Rebbe wanted to thank Hashem and the best way was encouraging another Jew to put on Tefillin and say Shema.

*Reprinted from the December 16, 2021 email of Rabbi Avtzon’s Weekly Story.*

**How to Jump to**

**The Top of the List**

Rabbi Duvi Bensoussan told a story about a *Ben Torah* that was rewarded for his learning. About ten years ago, there was a 17-year-old boy from Israel who was extremely dedicated to his learning in *kollel*. He lived and breathed Torah.

One day, he wasn’t feeling well, so he went home to his mother, who knew he wouldn’t have left the *kollel* in the middle of the day if it wasn’t urgent. She drove him to the hospital, where they did extensive tests and learned that the boy was in desperate need of a kidney- and not just a regular kidney, but a kidney suited for a teenager.

They told him to go to Belgium, the kidney transplant capital of the world, but warned him that Belgium had a law that priority will be given to European citizens for kidney transplants, ahead of citizens from other countries. If no one on the European list qualified to receive a transplant, due to blood type, location, or some other reason, then they would look at the list of citizens from other countries.

The boy went to his *Rosh Yeshivah* to ask what he should do, if he should risk going to Belgium knowing he may never receive a kidney. The rabbi looked at his beloved and prized student and said, “Your life revolves around Torah, and Hashem will make the world revolve around you. Go to Belgium. Hashem will give you the perfect kidney.”

The boy flew to Belgium with his father and arrived at the hotel near the hospital to wait for kidney that matched. He was told there were hundreds of European citizens that were on their list, and they would be obligated to go through the entire list of names before reaching his, should a kidney become available. He went to the Belgium *kollel* to resume his learning.

The next day, an incredible miracle occurred. Huge plumes of volcanic ash coming from an Icelandic volcano floated into the air, and every single European flight was grounded. No one was able to fly in all of Europe! It was chaos.



***Photo of the unexpected eruption of Eyjafjalkajokul volcano in Iceland in April 2010***

Some kidneys became available for donation, and the hospital began calling the people on the European citizen list to find a match. They called number after number, name after name. No one could fly in to receive the transplant!

They finally called this young *kollel* boy and informed him there was a perfect kidney waiting for him, but he would have to be in town within 24 hours. He went straight from the Belgian *kollel* to the hospital. The kidney took really well, and this boy’s life was saved!!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayishlach 5782 email of Jack E. Rahmey based on the teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.*

**Challenging the**

**Angel of Death**



**Rav Eliyahu Chaim Meisels**

The city of Lodz, located about 85 miles southwest of Warsaw, contained the second largest Jewish community in prewar Poland, after Warsaw. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Rav, R’ Eliyahu Chaim Meisels zt”l, was sought after for his sagacious wisdom, piety and righteousness, and he earned the respect and affection of both the Chassidishe and Litvish communities residing in the city, a feat nearly unmatched at the time.

Lodz was a city dominated by a clique of prosperous, assimilated industrialists and merchants. In addition to overseeing the provision of basic religious needs, the Rav worked energetically to convince many of his community’s wealthiest assimilated members to join in organizing a series of institutions to serve the growing numbers of impoverished Jews drawn to economic opportunities in Lodz.

**Prevented Programs**

Stories about R’ Elya Chaim credit him with preventing pogroms in Lodz and protecting Jewish interests in the city and beyond. One specific story stands out and was spoken of with awe and incredulity, among the citizens of Lodz.

It is recorded in old Chevra Kadish records from that time-period and it recounts the following incident. In the late 1800’s, a calamitous plague - most likely Typhus - broke out in the city of Lodz, affecting its residents and the nearby environs. The plague swept across the area felling Jews and gentiles alike.

Accounts from local newspapers from those days reported that the plague prowled among the citizens and villagers in a terrifying way and there was almost no house without someone ill. Mortality was huge and carpenters around the city and nearby towns did nothing but build coffins.

**No Way to Prevent the Plague**

“People walk around apathetic because there was no way to prevent the plague,” wrote one Polish newspaper. Another delivered an even more dramatic account: “Funerals usually take place without crying, because often the whole family of the deceased lies in a fever and there is no one to cry over the coffin. It often happens that a mother lying unconscious in a fever does not know that her dead child is being taken away from the house.”

Often death came very quickly. “In the morning you are healthy, in the evening you are gone” one could hear constantly back then.

R’ Elya Chaim remained healthy throughout the terrible days when the plague ravaged his community and he worked above and beyond to care for and assist all those in need.

**Demanding Even More Charity**

He called for public fasts and demanded even more charity from those who could afford it. He practically didn’t sleep as he was called from house to house to soothe his constituents and often say Viduy and recite Krias Shema with them before they passed away.

Finally, R’ Elya Chaim decided that enough is enough and he must be more proactive if he wished to remove this teribble catastrophe from among his midst.

**He Suddenly Appeared**

**Wearing a White Kittel**

One day, he suddenly appeared in the middle of the day, wearing the special white kittel that he only wore on Yom Kippur, as well as his Talis and Tefillin. As curious bystanders watched in awe, R’ Elya Chaim marched to the Lodz Jewish cemetery and halted as he reached the front gate.

Then, in an ethereal voice that sounded almost other-worldly, he announced: “I will not allow the Malach Hamaves (angel of death) to take one more person from my city. Hear me now. It is either you or me! Either you go or I will go!”

**Walked Silently to the Cemetery**

With that, he walked silently into the cemetery and laid himself down inside the front gate. He took out a sefer Tehillim and began to daven with copious tears streaming down his cheeks that Hashem remove the plague from the city.

He didn’t care if onlookers watched him with their jaws agape. He needed to stop the plague right now and he intended to make sure that happened. Members of the Chevra Kadisha were called and they were the first ones to testify that their great and holy rabbi’s efforts bore fruit.

R’ Elya Chaim insisted that he would not leave until the plague was gone and he did not have to wait long. Within a short while, the infections began to drop and soon nobody was becoming sick anymore.

And those who were sick, started to get better and their symptoms faded, almost overnight. People in Lodz would comment with a mixture of love and devotion, that their holy Rabbi literally forced the angel of death to leave the city of Lodz. (Ish L’Rayahu Shemos 5763)

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

**Hashem Has Wondrous**

**Ways of Helping Us**

**By Naomi Brudner**

I heard a wonderful story in the name of Rabbi Elimelech Biderman and I must share it with you. He was speaking of what we say in the daily *Shemona Esre*i prayer: “We thank You for… Your miracles that are with us every day and for Your wonders and the good that He does for us every moment… that are with us at every hour, evening, morning and afternoon.”

He said that sometimes the miracles and wonders are obvious, and sometimes they are concealed or hidden. But whether or not we are aware of them, the wonders are a constant part of every aspect of our lives – even when things look dark and difficult.

And then he told the following true story.

There was a religious man who lives in America, we’ll call him Mr. Cohen, who somehow ended up being accused of a very serious crime of which he was innocent. If he would be convicted, it would mean a huge fine (or possibly even imprisonment).

He was given a date for the impending court case, and of course he prayed and prayed, beseeching Hashem to save him from the worst scenario. He also gave *tzedaka*, made *kabbalas* (promises to Hashem), asked for and received blessings from rabbis and did everything else in the spiritual realm that he hoped would give him the merit to be found innocent. And, of course, knowing that we’re not allowed to depend on miracles but rather, we must make our best human effort to get the results we want, he also made numerous inquiries until he found the person known to be the very best lawyer for such a case.

He contacted him and after discussing the matter, was told that the fee would be five thousand dollars. Since the alternative could be far worse, Mr. Cohen hired him. And of course, he also continued with his prayers and everything else he could think to gain merits from Hashem, and be acquitted.

**Mr. Cohen’s Defense Lawyer**

**Was No Where to be Found**

On the day of the court case Mr. Cohen arrived at the prescribed time. The judge was there but Mr. Cohen’s defense lawyer wasn’t. Mr. Cohen looked for him, waited for him, called him, but he didn’t arrive and didn’t answer his calls. He called again and again, but all he heard was a recording telling him to call back later.

And then the time came for the case to be called up and there was Mr. Cohen, facing the judge alone (of course, he knew that he wasn’t alone, but his lawyer wasn’t there.) The judge was ready to start the hearing and asked Mr. Cohen:

“Where’s your lawyer?”

And Mr. Cohen responded: “I don’t have a lawyer.”

The judge was obviously extremely surprised and even curious. And then he said: “Okay, just tell me yourself everything that happened regarding this case.” Cohen quietly asked Hashem to help him and then stood up and began to tell the judge everything that had transpired, explaining his part as carefully and exactly as possible, describing every detail he could think of which would prove his innocence.

**Told by the Judge to Sit Down**

When he finished, he was told to sit down, which he did, and then he just waited, praying under his breath that despite the odds, he would be acquitted. There was still no sign of his lawyer. He discreetly looked down at his phone but the lawyer hadn’t called. And meanwhile the judge was looking over and contemplating the case.

And then, finally, the time came for the verdict, and the judge said: “The fact that you didn’t bring a lawyer means that you’re totally confident that you are innocent, and that everything you are saying is true. So even if I wouldn’t have believed you, the fact that you didn’t bring a lawyer proves to me that you know that you are saying the truth, and that you’re totally innocent. And so, I am convinced that you are innocent. The verdict is innocent. The case is closed.”

And so it was that with enormous relief, and gratitude to Hashem, and five thousand dollars still in his pocket, Mr. Cohen left the court house. Shortly after that, his phone rang. It was his lawyer who understandably sounded extremely perturbed and even frantic. He apologized profusely and said that in his twenty-five years of practice this never happened to him.

And then he added: “I never even heard of such a thing. I don’t understand this. I never missed appearing in court for a client. I have no explanation how this happened,” he said, obviously embarrassed and filled with feelings of guilt as he wondered what happened to his client after presenting his complex case without an attorney defending him. And then he said in a low voice filled with shame: “It’s hard for me to say this, but what happened is that I overslept.” And then he continued apologetically: “I have a wake-up call on my phone but I didn’t hear it. Either it didn’t ring or I simply didn’t hear it.”

**The Lawyer Asked Nervously**

**“What Happened?”**

He continued his explanation: “I didn’t even wait to check it out, I just called you right away as soon as I woke up and saw what time it was.” And then he added in a small, humble voice: “I’m sorry. I’m terribly sorry.” And then he finally asked: “What happened?” fearing what he would hear, assuming that Mr. Cohen was indicted with a guilty verdict and that it was his fault because he wasn’t there to defend him.

There was another silence as Mr. Cohen contemplated the miracle that had happened, the miracle that led to his being judged innocent, and also to his saving five thousand dollars. The lawyer broke the silence by asking again: “What happened?”

And Mr. Cohen answered, his voice filled with the exhilaration of knowing that he had experienced a miracle: “Everything’s okay,” he said. “My loving Father in Heaven took care of everything.”

And then Mr. Cohen went to shul, and there he saw an unfamiliar face, someone who was trying to collect money for some worthy cause. And after the amazing events that he had just experienced, Mr. Cohen asked him: “What are you doing here?”

**Came to America to be able to**

**Make His Daughter Wedding**

And the man shyly explained that he came from Eretz Yisrael to America to collect money in order to be able to make his daughter’s wedding. And then he continued that he had done what many Eretz Yisrael Jews do when they come to America to raise funds. They hire a special, highly recommended Jewish driver who has many addresses of wealthy people who are likely to donate nicely, and that was what this man did.

He and the driver made up that he would be picked up that morning to start their rounds of collecting. “But,” said the man, with disappointment, “he didn’t show up at the time we had arranged. I called him and there was no answer, and then much later he called me back and very apologetically explained why he hadn’t picked me up and why he didn’t answer any of my calls. He said that this never happened to him before and he’s very, very sorry, but the truth is that he simply overslept!

When Mr. Cohen heard that, he knew beyond any doubt, that this too, was part of Hashem’s wondrous ways, and on the spot, he gave the man the five thousand dollars that he had wondrously saved/made just an hour or so earlier!

Rabbi Biderman concluded the story by saying that the lawyer didn’t show up because just as we say every day – Hashem does miracles and wonders for us!

Sometimes we’re aware of them, and sometimes they’re concealed, but they’re always there!

*Reprinted from the January 9, 2022 website of The Jewish Press.*

**Riding Alone on the**

**New York Subway**



Once, when the Ponevezher Rav (Rabbi Yosef Shloo Kahaneman, 188601969), zt”l, was in New York to raise money for the Yeshivah, there were many who looked suspiciously at him.

These people, generally those who were clearly unlearned, felt that Yeshivos were backwards at best, and that giving them money was a complete waste. There were many incidents in those years of people humiliating fundraisers or even beating them up.

During that trip, when he was on the subway, the Rav noticed a group of youths who seemed to be gesturing at him in a way that made it seem as though they were about to single him out for some ‘fun’ at his expense. Since not long before, a fundraiser had actually been pushed

around by a group of youths, the Rav realized that these were probably the culprits who were now coming after him.

Obviously, it was of the utmost importance to avoid being alone with them. But how could he get rid of them? The Rav went up to the young man who appeared to be the leader, and pulled out a piece of paper with an address.

**Asking for Assistance**

He asked, “Could you please direct me to this address? I am a visitor here and I don’t know my way.” The youthful leader looked very pleased as he answered, “With pleasure! Just get out with us at this next stop, and we will be more than happy to lead you there!”

At the next stop, the Rav indicated to the ruffians that they should disembark first and made it appear that he was planning to follow. While the group of young men waited on the platform, the Rav slowly got his things together and made his way to the exit of the train.

Much to their surprise, he ‘accidentally’ missed the closing doors. Imagine their disappointment as the train pulled away with the Rav safely inside, while they looked on from the platform, completely baffled!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Lech Lecha 5782 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefilah*

**“Why Waste Your Time**

**On a Hopeless Cause”**

The following story, quoted in He’emanti Va’adabeirah, demonstrates the incredible effect that positive speech can have on a person. Yaakov made a point to stop by the hospital daily to visit various patients; people he knew that could use some extra attention.

It was not as if Yaakov had nothing else to do. He had a sizable family, and he spent a good part of his day learning Torah in the local Kollel. He then worked in the afternoon and evening in order to earn enough to support his family. Yet, Chesed, acts of lovingkindness, was a part of his daily schedule.

One of the patients that he visited daily was a forty year old man who had been injured in a car accident, R”L. While his body had healed, his mind had not. He lay there with his eyes closed, breathing through a ventilator, with every breath sounding like it was his last.

The doctors had basically despaired of him ever regaining consciousness, and they were bothered that Yaakov ‘wasted’ his time by visiting him. They would ask, “Would it not be more constructive if you would make better use of your time by visiting a patient who would actually benefit from your visit? This is a lost cause.”

**Refused to Give Up Hope on the Patient**

However, Yaakov would not give up on this patient. He continued visiting him, and told the doctors and nurses, “Your job is to heal, not to give up hope. To determine if a person will live or die is in Hashem’s domain, not yours!”

Over the years, Yaakov had indeed witnessed miracles, where patients who had little to no chance of survival recovered to lead full and happy lives. Yaakov continued visiting and speaking with him, always full of hope. It did appear to be for nothing, as this patient only appeared to be out of it.

Eight months of visiting and talking had gone by, when suddenly, the doctors came running over to Yaakov, screaming excitedly, “He opened his eyes! The patient opened up hsis eyes and motioned to have the ventilator removed, so that he could speak!”

**“You Saved My Life!”**

Yaakov ran to the room, and when the patient heard his voice, he motioned to the doctor to bring over the one whose voice he heard. Yaakov bent his ear close to the patient’s lips, and, with tears streaming down his cheeks, he heard the patient whisper, “You saved my life! Every day that you came and spoke to me encouraged me to fight, to want to live, and to once again see my family. It was your constant encouragement that brought me out of my stupor!”

One month later, that patient left the hospital with his arm around the ‘Malach’ named Yaakov. Positive words had broken through the dense fog that had enveloped his mind!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Lech Lecha 5782 email of Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg’s Torah U’Tefilah*